

PREACHER

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based on the series by
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THE PLAINS.

Under an impossibly epic sky, the prairie stretches to the horizon. Birds CALL. Insects BUZZ.

RUSTED BARBED WIRE

runs along a lonesome dirt road. Dark clouds.

TREES BESIDE A CREEK

sway in the breeze. Then a man speaks. His voice is calm but haunting.

DEBLANC (V.O.)
Listen. Listen and you can hear
it.

There, tucked in the wind, the sound of metal CLASHING.
A TRUMPET.

DEBLANC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
A war fought in Heaven, and in
Hell.

The ROAR of an unearthly beast.

DEBLANC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The battle began here. It began
in Texas.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAINS - NIGHT

WHIPPING SNOW, a blinding whiteout as a blizzard bears down on the Llano Estecado.

TITLE OVER: **1886**

FLASHES OF FIRE. GUNSHOTS.

A horse CRIES OUT as it falls, shot through the head.

CLOSE ON a man's eye, blinking away blood and snow.

His POV, low. Watching as THREE ROBBERS ride away.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

Snow blankets the plains. We find THE MAN lying face-down beside his dead horse.

Suddenly, he pushes up on his elbows. COUGHS blood.

DEBLANC (V.O.)

Robbers left a man to die, but he refused.

He sits up. Checks inside his beaten duster for a small wrapped bundle.

DEBLANC (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He had ridden six days to buy medicine for his wife and young child. They were waiting for him.

The Man pushes to his feet.

As he gets his bearings, we take our first real look at him: an old gunfighter with a wide-brimmed Antietam hat. An ashen face so long and worn it looks pulled from river clay.

The Man starts walking.

EXT. HILLS - DAY

In a shot as wide as Texas, The Man walks.

DEBLANC (V.O.)

The man had been a villain, a merciless killer -- first for the South, and then for himself. But a woman's love had changed him. She gave him a daughter. His daughter's eyes gave him hope.

EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY

Just a nondescript farm with a single humble cabin.

DEBLANC (V.O.)
He walked for eleven days. And on
the twelfth, all hope died.

INT. CABIN - DAY

The Man stands at the doorway.

CROWS pick at the remains of his wife and daughter as
they lie in bed.

INT. RATWATER SALOON - NIGHT

The Man's hand pushes open the saloon door. He draws two
revolvers and OPENS FIRE on the 25 PATRONS inside.

DEBLANC (V.O.)
The Man vowed that day he would
have vengeance. Not just on the
robbers who had delayed him.

A boar-faced robber named SILAS MCCREADY has his hand
blown off. As more bullets start flying, The Man shows
no interest in self-preservation.

DEBLANC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He wanted revenge on life. On
hope. He wanted revenge on God.

He's killed nearly every man and woman in the bar when he
finally falls back, leaving a bloody smear on the wall as
he drops.

Silas McCready approaches, carrying a fire shovel. The
Man aims his guns, but he's out of bullets.

McCready slams the shovel into The Man's chest, killing
him.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. CANYONS OF HELL - PERPETUAL TWILIGHT

CLOSE ON The Man, inspecting his mortal wound.

DEBLANC (V.O.)
The Man did not die like other
men, whose hatred fades as they
leave the mortal world.

He stands, looking out over the vast canyons of Hell.
Everything is bathed in an eerie blue glow.

DEBLANC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They say the Man's heart was so
cold, it froze the fires of Hell.

Snowflakes drift past.

EXT. FORGE - PERPETUAL NIGHT

Hammers SLAM DOWN against a molten-red sword, reshaping
the steel.

A HISS as steam rises from a bucket. Tongs pull forth
the stock of a revolver.

The Man accepts two custom-forged Walker Colt revolvers.

DEBLANC (V.O.)
The Devil crowned the Man his
champion: The Saint of Killers.

A glint in the Saint's eye. We don't see the Devil
fully, just a distorted reflection.

DEBLANC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The Devil was the first to die.

TWO GUNSHOTS ring out like thunder.

MACRO IN along the Saint's left eye, the edge of white
and dark.

DEBLANC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The Saint brought war to Heaven.
He vowed to destroy all Creation,
as well he may.

MATCH CUT TO:

THE BLAZING SUN.

DEBLANC (V.O.)
The future is unwritten.

JESSE CUSTER holds up a hand, squinting in the light.
He's sweating, bleeding. Fighting for his life.

DEBLANC (CONT'D)
All we know is that the war will
end here. It will end in Texas.

TITLE OVER:

PREACHER

CUT TO:

A RUSH OF IMAGES

- A coffin sinks in murky water, weighed down by cinderblocks.
- A silver lighter FLICKS. A flame blooms.
- Jesse kisses a woman we'll later know as Tulip O'Hare. She's smiling through tears.

TITLE OVER:

1. THE REVEREND JESSE CUSTER

EXT. ROADSIDE REVIVAL - LATE AFTERNOON (PAST)

It's high summer. The sun is slowly making its way across the endless sky.

One hundred proud Texans -- RANCHERS and HOUSEWIVES and GRANDMOTHERS with fans -- sit on folding chairs, watching the fiery preacher up on a truckbed stage before them.

He's forty minutes into his sermon, and shows no sign of flagging. Every invocation lands its punch, like he's boxing the Devil himself.

This is YOUNG JESSE CUSTER. He's ten years old.

YOUNG JESSE

In Abilene, in Taylor, in Hamilton County I see new churches being built. You seen 'em. Maybe your Aunt Sally, your Uncle Ray, they are helping to build these churches. And they are proud. "God will be pleased," they say. "Houses of the Lord," they call them.

Some nods in the audience.

YOUNG JESSE (CONT'D)

The Lord God made Heaven and
Earth. He does not need a house!
He does not need a steeple or
mahogany pews. The Lord needs
nothing, nothing but our faith in
his Word!

Young Jesse raises his Bible above his head.

CUT TO:

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Young Jesse raises the Bible above his head. He's standing on a chair, rehearsing the sermon, visibly exhausted. For some reason, he is soaking wet from head to waist.

YOUNG JESSE

The Word of God is the only
salvation! The Word of God is the
trumpet at Jericho...

WOMAN'S VOICE

Hellfire!

Reveal MARIE L'ANGELLE (80s), Jesse's grandmother.

She has the withered body of a mummified witch, all too visible in a low-cut dress that barely covers the remains of her breasts. Her white hair is cut like a man's. Red lipstick is the only feminine thing about her thin and wrinkled face.

She walks with two canes, giving the effect of a four-legged creature.

MARIE

You left out hellfire.

(gesturing)

Jody.

Her right-hand man JODY approaches. He's six-foot-four and a wall of muscle, the body of a hero with the soul of a serial killer.

Resigned, Jesse steps down from the chair. Kneels in front of a trough.

Jody plunges Jesse's head into the water, holding him down. Keeps him under much longer than you think he could handle.

Marie lights a cigarette.

BACK TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

Young Jesse raises the Bible over his head.

YOUNG JESSE

The Word of God is the only
salvation! The Word of God is the
bridge over hellfire! The Word of
God is the trumpet at Jericho, and
all will fall before it.

Suddenly overcome by the heat and the spirit, Jesse
collapses. A GASP in the audience. Several townsfolk
rush to help him.

But Marie gets there first to reassure them. She's
wearing a comparatively modest dress.

MARIE

Stay back. He's receiving the
Word!

Indeed, Jesse is convulsing ecstatically on the stage.
As the tremors stop, he slowly stands. Looks out over
the crowd.

YOUNG JESSE

There is a thief among us, who
walked here in stolen shoes.

Jesse climbs down off stage. Begins moving through the
crowd, searching each face.

YOUNG JESSE (CONT'D)

He fears the Word of God. We
should all fear it, for all of us
have Sin. All of us have fallen.
It is only His hand that can lift
us back up.

Some AMENS.

He stops in front of a FAT RANCHER, who eyes him
nervously.

Jesse then turns and points straight at T.C., a balding,
pig-faced farm hand of thirty who no doubt smells worse
than he looks.

YOUNG JESSE (CONT'D)
Do you fear the Word of God?

T.C.
Uh...Yes? Yes.

YOUNG JESSE
(approaching)
Do you fear his judgment?

T.C.
Yes! I didn't...I'm sorry...

T.C. quickly sheds his shoes, handing them to the nearest
HOUSEWIFE.

HOUSEWIFE
(to the crowd)
They still got the tag in 'em!

A few LAUGHS.

YOUNG JESSE
Will you accept the Word into your
very soul?

T.C.
I will. I will!

Jesse grabs T.C.'s face. As if struck by divine
lightning, T.C. falls back in a full seizure, speaking in
tongues. The crowd can't believe what they've witnessed.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE REVIVAL - DUSK

T.C. straightens bills, counting up the money they made
from tonight's performance.

Jody is packing up the truck, including the "Jesse
Custer, Boy Preacher" sign.

Young Jesse is folding chairs. The first fireflies have
come out, tiny sparks of light.

Marie approaches, walking with DeBLANC (50), a man
Jesse's never met. DeBlanc wears a suit that looks
strangely old-fashioned, complete with fedora. A lock of
white hair peeks out the back of his hat.

MARIE
Jesse, this is Mr. DeBlanc.

Jesse offers his hand. DeBlanc just smiles.

MARIE (CONT'D)

He can't touch you. He's got some questions. Answer honest. He'll know if you don't.

With that, Marie leaves them.

Despite what Marie says, DeBlanc seems to have nothing to say. He just looks at Jesse, sizing him up.

Not sure what to do, Jesse goes back to folding chairs.

DeBlanc finally speaks. He has a voice made of wind and cellos.

DEBLANC

Do you know what morality is, Mr. Custer?

YOUNG JESSE

Right and wrong.

DEBLANC

And who decides what is right and what is wrong?

YOUNG JESSE

God.

DEBLANC

What if God weren't around? Do you think you'd still know the difference?

Jesse considers...

YOUNG JESSE

Yes.

DEBLANC

How?

YOUNG JESSE

I just would.

DeBlanc half-smiles, satisfied.

DEBLANC

The Word is a heavy burden. It can crush you. It can consume you if you're not strong enough.

YOUNG JESSE
Strong enough for what?

DEBLANC
A glorious day is coming, Mr.
Custer, for you have been chosen
by Heaven. You will be our
champion. Until then, your
grandmother will make you ready.

Jesse looks over at Marie, who is watching the two of them carefully.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Young Jesse is jostled awake by a bump in the road.

He's riding in the open back of the truck, amid stacks of chairs. He looks up at the star-filled sky.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. FARM - DAWN

The truck pulls onto a long gravel road leading to a small, rundown farm on the very eastern edge of Texas. It's been in the family for generations.

EXT. FARM - [ANOTHER] DAY

We COME UPON a seven-year old boy in overalls with straw-blond hair that radiates in a dozen dirty directions. With hands covering his face...

BILLY BOB
38! 39! 40! Ready or not, Jesse,
here I come!

BILLY BOB looks up, revealing he only has one oversized eye. Where his left eye should be is a skin-covered hollow, the result of pollution and inbreeding.

He starts by checking the obvious places -- barrels and truck beds, including some places far too small for anyone to hide.

From a NEW ANGLE, we look through dirty glass as Billy Bob crosses the barnyard.

Young Jesse is hiding in the enclosed cabin of a tractor, seven feet off the ground. Billy Bob doesn't even think to look up as he walks past, heading for the barn.

INT. BARN - DAY

Dust rises, caught in the sunlight spilling through holes in the roof. Even at mid-day, it's a spooky barn, with rusted blades hanging from beams and cobwebs so big they could catch a bird.

Billy Bob swings open stable doors and peers under troughs.

He climbs the ladder to the hay loft.

The bales are broken open, giant piles of straw. Billy Bob smiles, convinced he's found his quarry.

Flies BUZZ. Crows CAW.

Quietly poking through the hay, the boy spots a hand.

BILLY BOB

Foundja!

He grabs the hand, but it doesn't pull back. Puzzled, Billy Bob pushes back more hay. The hand belongs to a very dead Deputy Sheriff. He's been shot through the forehead.

Billy Bob stares, transfixed.

CUT TO:

BILLY BOB

climbing down the ladder in a panic. His foot misses a rung. He nearly falls, but catches himself.

Reaching the barn floor, he turns to find

T.C.

waiting for him.

T.C.

Uh uh uh.

He grabs Billy Bob by the collar, but the boy rips free.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Billy Bob emerges at full speed, but his feet can't keep pace with his panic. He slips in the dirt, landing hard.

T.C. grabs him by the hair.

IN THE TRACTOR

Young Jesse sees T.C. catch Billy Bob. He freezes, deer-in-the-headlights.

IN THE BARNYARD

T.C. takes his Bowie knife and cuts Billy Bob from ear to ear. Throws the body on the dirt.

Jesse suppresses a scream. There's nowhere to run. He can only hunker down and keep hiding.

He squeezes his eyes shut.

JOHN CUSTER (PRE-LAP)

We gettin' outta here. Tonight.

EXT. FARM / INT. PICKUP - NIGHT (YEARS AGO)

LITTLE JESSE CUSTER -- four years old -- slides behind the wheel. His father, JOHN CUSTER (30), pops the clutch, taking the truck out of gear.

He speaks in whispers, careful to be quiet.

JOHN CUSTER

Keep the wheel straight, okay?
I'll push it to the road.

John braces his shoulder against the back of the pickup truck. His feet slip, but he finally gets it moving, inches at a time.

At the wheel, Little Jesse steers them towards the main road. It's excruciatingly slow.

The night is quiet, just wind in the trees, the CRUNCH of gravel under the tires.

Straining, John tries to build up a little more speed.

In the side mirror, Little Jesse spots movement.

JODY

is coming up behind his father, silent despite his size.

LITTLE JESSE

Dad!

Too late. Jody SLAMS John's head into the back of the truck.

Jody could finish the fight now, but he seems to enjoy it. He lets John charge him, landing a few blows before knocking him back down.

Little Jesse jumps out of the truck, rushing to help his father.

With a "watch this" nod to Jesse, he head-butts John, sending him slumping back against the truck, sliding to dirt.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Enough!

Jody takes a step back to reveal Marie.

JODY

He was trying to take Jesse.

MARIE

The boy can't leave. Heaven has plans for Jesse. We have to protect him here until he is called.

JOHN CUSTER

You're all fucking crazy.

Marie comes closer. In the background, T.C. walks up.

MARIE

I kept you around because a boy needs his daddy to show him how to be a man. You think you can do that just a little longer? Teach your boy how to be brave?

Off John Custer's face, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - TWILIGHT

John Custer, Little Jesse, Jody and T.C. walk across the plowed rows. John has his hands bound behind his back.

JOHN CUSTER

Don't give 'em tears, Jesse.
That's how they got your momma.
You gotta be hard, okay?

LITTLE JESSE

Okay.

JODY

Here's good.

John stops. Jody kicks the back of his leg so he falls to his knees.

T.C. stands back with Jesse while Jody pulls a gun from his waistband.

John looks over at his son.

JOHN CUSTER

You have to be one of the good
guys, Jesse. Even if no one
teaches you how.

Jesse nods. John looks down at the dirt. Jody aims the gun at the back of his head and FIRES.

Little Jesse's eyes redden, but not a single tear falls.

BACK TO:

EXT. FARM / INT. TRACTOR - DAY

Young Jesse opens his eyes.

T.C. lifts Billy Bob's limp body, slinging it over his shoulder like a bag of feed corn. He kicks dirt over the blood in the barnyard.

T.C. heads behind the barn.

Jesse waits until the coast is clear, then reaches for the door handle.

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

Young Jesse races along animal trails. He's not entirely sure where he's going. He just has to get away.

EXT. DEEP IN THE SWAMP - DAY

A YELLOW SNAKE curls its way around a mossy branch, tasting the air with its tongue.

We COME UPON Young Jesse, hidden in the hollow at the base of a tree. He's soaked with sweat, scratched and muddy from various tumbles.

As FIREFLIES start to glow, Jesse hears a sound like distant windchimes.

He spots a man looking right at him: DeBlanc. He recognizes him, but isn't sure whether he's friend or foe. Should he run or stay hidden?

DeBlanc points to Jesse.

Then, FOOTSTEPS.

Suddenly, Jody leans into frame, grabbing Young Jesse by the shoulders.

JODY

Gotcha.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON MARIE

She leans over Young Jesse, but it's not clear where they are.

MARIE

You can't hide from Heaven, Jesse.
I was sixty years old when I had
your momma. Folks'd call that a
miracle. It ain't. It's all part
of Heaven's plan. We couldn't
hope to know it.

WIDER, we find that we are...

EXT. DOCK / SWAMP - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Young Jesse is lying in a specially-prepared coffin. It has latches and gaskets, plus two hoses connected to the top.

MARIE

That's the secret, Jesse. You
gotta learn your place in all
this.

Marie signals to Jody and T.C., who shut the lid and seal the latches.

They slide the coffin along the dock, letting it plunge off the edge into the murky water.

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY

The coffin sinks, weighed down by cinderblocks. The two hoses stretch up to the surface, the only air Jesse will get.

INT. COFFIN - DAY

A faint glow of light on Jesse's face from where the hoses connect. He listens as the water rushes past. Hears the coffin SCRAPE against rocks on the bottom of the marsh. It's like being trapped in a tiny submarine.

EXT. DOCK / SWAMP - DAY

T.C. fires up a small, gas-powered pump. Hooks one of the hoses to it.

JODY

How long we keeping him under?

MARIE

His momma lasted a week. Start
there.

TRANSITION TO:

DARKNESS.

We can hear the WATER all around us. Then, a flame.

Jesse's father lights a cigarette with a silver lighter. He shuts it with a satisfying CHING. He's sitting on a couch, watching television.

Young Jesse sits on the floor, watching the same show. It's a TV Western, black and white.

ON SCREEN

THE COWBOY kneels over a cold campfire, lecturing THE KID. The way it's framed, we never really see The Cowboy's face.

THE COWBOY

If it was the Commanch, they're
headed for the fort.

THE KID

I can ride ahead! I can warn 'em!

THE COWBOY

You'll do no such thing!

John Custer absentmindedly flicks his lighter open and shut. CHING. CHING.

THE COWBOY (CONT'D)

You head home and stay there.
I'll handle this. Now go!

Reluctantly, The Kid saddles up and rides off.

A beat. The Cowboy looks to camera, his face still covered in shadow.

THE COWBOY (CONT'D)

You gotta run, Jesse.

IN THE DARKNESS

The Cowboy is talking directly to Young Jesse.

YOUNG JESSE

They'll find me again. They'll
kill me.

THE COWBOY

Maybe they will, maybe they won't.
Man so afraid of being caught
ain't free to begin with.

The lighter: CHING, CHING. CHING, CHING.

THE COWBOY (CONT'D)

Don't become what they want you to
be, Jesse. You gotta be a man.

REVEAL that John Custer is no longer sitting on the
couch.

YOUNG JESSE

Can you teach me?

The Cowboy's hand reaches out of the screen. Jesse
shakes it.

THE COWBOY

Pardner.

EXT. DOCK / SWAMP - DAY

BLINDING LIGHT as Jody opens the dripping coffin.
Inside, Young Jesse is skeletal and ghostly white.
Barely lucid.

T.C. waves a hand in front of his nose, disgusted by the
stench of shit and vomit.

JODY

You learn your lesson?

YOUNG JESSE

Yessir.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

By moonlight, Young Jesse Custer is digging. It's hard
work -- and harder still because he's trying to be quiet.

He stops, convinced he heard something. But it's just
the nightbirds in the trees.

LATER, and Jesse has made it down a few feet. Feeling a
change in the dirt, he grabs his flashlight to see what
he's hit.

Skeletal feet stick out of the black dirt.

Tears mix with the sweat on Jesse's face. He wipes away
both with a dirty hand.

He cleans the dirt away from his father's jeans, and
reaches into the pockets. That's where he finds what he
was looking for: a silver lighter.

He wipes it clean to read the inscription: FUCK
COMMUNISM.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD HOUSE - NIGHT

With a flick, a wide flame blooms atop the silver
lighter. CINDY SHUGAN (25) leans in to light her
cigarette. She's a thin girl with a thin voice and
patriotic earrings.

We COME AROUND to see the man holding the flame for her:
Jesse Custer, now fully-grown, roughly the age we saw at
the start. He's not smoking, just nursing a beer.

He flicks the lighter shut, CHING. She takes it, reading
the inscription.

CINDY

What does that even mean?

JESSE

It means, "Fuck Communism."

CINDY

Is it like, ironic?

JESSE

Wow. You don't get me at all.

It's Friday night, and everyone got paid. It'll be an
hour before the first punch is thrown.

CINDY

How am I supposed to "get you"
when I barely know you, Jesse
Custer? You're Mr. Man of
Mystery. I tell you everything
about my life. Everything.

Jesse nods, drinking his beer. You sure do.

CINDY (CONT'D)

Asshole.

JESSE

I'll answer five questions. I
promise I'll be honest.

Cindy considers her first question carefully.

CINDY

What do you really do? Is it something illegal?

JESSE

I really fix power lines for the county. And that's two questions.

CINDY

What does your lighter mean?

Jesse LAUGHS, surprised.

JESSE

It was my daddy's, but I'll try. Figure Communism is when the government tells a man what he's gotta do. What he's gotta think, gotta want. So, fuck that. Man was put here by God to make his own way.

CINDY

You believe in God?

JESSE

That's complicated.

CINDY

You said you'd answer.

JESSE

I believe in love, too, without a shred of evidence that either actually exists. I know they're both real. They're not just stories.

Kindled...

CINDY

Do you think you could love me, Jesse Custer?

A beat.

JESSE

Honestly? I don't see that, no.

Cindy SLAPS him. Jesse takes it without response, no answer as Cindy walks away.

TWO ONLOOKERS LAUGH at the quarrel.

He gives them nothing as he finishes his beer and heads inside.

INT. ROADHOUSE - NIGHT

Jesse gets the bartender's attention and signals for another beer. While he's waiting, he feels a pair of eyes on him. He looks down the bar to see a pretty blonde scoping him out.

She casually ducks back, blocked by the crowd, but a beat later she's back. This time, she holds eye contact. What happens in the next series of glances, nods and half-smiles isn't flirting, really. It's a silent negotiation.

By the time Jesse's beer comes, there's no question he's going to walk down to her. The bar might as well be empty. It's just the two of them.

Her name is TULIP O'HARE. Hard luck and good genes have given her a deep-grained beauty. She might not be the first girl you notice, but she's the last girl you'll forget.

TULIP
I'm meeting a friend.

JESSE
Okay.

She looks at his eyes. His lips.

TULIP
She can get her own beer.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

On a second floor walkway, Tulip is trying to get the key in the lock while kissing Jesse.

We INTERCUT with moments leading up to their arrival at the apartment.

INT. ROADHOUSE - NIGHT

Jesse and Tulip dance.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tulip raises her arms so Jesse can pull her shirt over her head. She pushes him against the wall, unsnapping his shirt down to the waist.

INT. ROADHOUSE - NIGHT

Tulip leads Jesse to the door. She likes the way his hands feel.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jesse sits on the bed, pulling off his boots while she kisses his back. With one move he's on top of her, one hand guiding her hips while she unbuckles his jeans.

We stay in the moment, not focusing on the act but rather the flow. There's nothing exaggerated or awkward. They just fit each other perfectly.

CROSSFADE TO:

LATER

Tulip and Jesse lie in post-coital stillness.

TULIP

I'm Tulip.

JESSE

Jesse.

They like each other's names.

TULIP

There might be food. I dunno.
It's my friend's place. I'm just
passing through.

JESSE

That's good.
(off her reaction)
That poster was kinda freaking me
out.

The poster in question features both a unicorn and a rainbow.

TULIP

Have you ever eaten unicorn?

JESSE
How do you cook it?

TULIP
Microwave. Three minutes on high.

A smile. A beat.

TULIP (CONT'D)
What is there to do for fun around here?

JESSE
This.

TULIP
We could do this anywhere.

JESSE
You're right. Fuck this town.
Let's ride.

She looks at him. He's serious.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE - DURANGO, COLORADO - DAY

A 'FOR RENT' sign in the front yard. We slowly PUSH IN as Tulip pulls the sign out of the ground, hands it to Jesse, who's not sure where to put it.

A second Jesse enters frame, mowing the lawn, while a second Tulip opens the front door, beer in hand, watching him work.

Through this, we maintain the illusion of a continuous shot, though we're actually covering months of Tulip and Jesse's relationship.

Carrying cans of paint, Jesse leads us...

INT. SMALL HOUSE - DAY

...where he and Tulip are painting the living room. They're also having sex on the floor.

Rounding the corner, we find Tulip sitting on the dining room table kissing Jesse, while behind them they're eating dinner, neither wanting to acknowledge how bad the food turned out.

In the kitchen, Tulip and Jesse argue:

JESSE

You're so convinced I'm going to abandon you, just like your old man.

TULIP

This isn't about my father.

JESSE

Everything is about your father! It's like I'm having a three-way with a ghost.

Meanwhile, they're also having sex against the refrigerator.

Tulip holds a cupcake with one lit candle. Jesse blows it out.

Jesse chases Tulip down a short hallway to the bedroom. In bed, we find them making love, kissing, and finally nestled together, looking out the window into the winter night.

TULIP

What do you want, Jesse Custer?

JESSE

To eat?

TULIP

To be. When you grow up. If you grow up.

JESSE

Cowboy.

TULIP

I've never seen you on a horse.

JESSE

I can't ride. I'm also a terrible shot.

TULIP

Then why be a cowboy? Why not a knight, or an astronaut?

JESSE

Knights have kings. Astronauts have NASA. Cowboy only answers to himself.

A beat. Sensing her silence...

JESSE (CONT'D)
And his ladyfriend.

TULIP
Better. Besides, you're gonna
need me. I'm a damn good shot.

One more kiss.

EXT. DURANGO - NIGHT

Snow clings to the peaks of the Sangre de Cristos, winds
swaying the tops of the giant pines. The night sleeps
well.

FADE OUT.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE - DAY

Jesse SCRAPES the ice and snow off the windshield of his
truck. As he finishes, he notices the sound of
WINDCHIMES.

Huh.

He doesn't spot the tiny flickers of light around him.
They couldn't be fireflies. It's too cold; we can see
his breath.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Jesse puts his thermos on the seat. Starts the IGNITION.

In the rear-view mirror, we see a man watching him.

It's DeBlanc. Jesse doesn't see him as he pulls out of
the driveway.

EXT. COLORADO COUNTY ROAD - DAY

Lazy flakes of snow drift down from the heavens.

Sixty feet up, Jesse is working in a harness, replacing
ceramic insulators on a power pole. It's dangerous, pain-
staking work, particularly given the cold.

He sees a pickup truck pull up next to the powerline
repair truck at the base of the pole.

Two men get out of the pickup. Jesse can't see their faces from this angle.

Jesse's CREWMAN walks over to talk with the men. Suddenly, the Crewman is down in the snow, dead or unconscious.

The smaller of the two men aims a rifle up at Jesse.

It's T.C. The bigger one is Jody.

JODY

Jesse! Your grandma has a job for you.

HOLD ON Jesse. There's no conceivable way to run.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTY ROAD - DAY

Jesse unclips from his harness, keeping his eyes locked on T.C. and Jody. Both have aged, but not as much as you'd think. Jody could still beat a gorilla to death.

JESSE

How'd you find me?

JODY

Your grandma Marie has connections in very high places.

JESSE

Shouldn't she be dead? She's a hundred years old.

JODY

Like I said. High places.

Jesse takes a look at his Crewman, still splayed on the asphalt.

T.C.

Friend of yours?

JESSE

Nah.

JODY

Get in the truck.

JESSE

Never.

Jody walks up, towering over him. Jesse stands his ground.

JODY
I can still break you in half.

JESSE
We'll see.

CUT TO:

EXT. DINER / INT. PICKUP - DAY

Through a snowy smear, we see a cozy diner serving lunch to TRUCKERS and SHOPKEEPERS. This is Jesse's POV.

REVERSE to find Jesse leaning against the pickup truck window. He's taken a fierce beating. His right eye is nearly swollen shut.

T.C.
You hungry, Jesse? Hell, I could
sure use a piece of pie.
(pointing)
That one looks good.

Through the diner window, REVEAL Tulip. She's a waitress. She chats with an ELDERLY COUPLE at a window booth.

T.C. (CONT'D)
Whaddyou say, Jody? Want to split
it?

JODY
Her name's Tulip, right? Bet she
smells good.

JESSE
Fuck you.

JODY
Do what Marie says and we won't
lay a finger on her. But you say
one word to her or anybody and
T.C. cuts her tits off. And
that's just starters. You know
how he likes...

Stopping him:

JESSE
What does she want?

T.C.

You're goin' back to Texas!

JODY

There's a church in Annville.
Brand new. You're gonna be the
preacher.

JESSE

Why?

T.C.

'Cos Marie says so. Fucking
ingrate. That woman raised you!
You were an orphan.

Jesse just glares. He won't give them the pleasure of
recounting how he became an orphan.

JODY

You're gonna go to Annville. And
you're gonna preach the word of
the Lord.

JESSE

For how long?

JODY

As long as it takes.

EXT. CHURCH AT ANNVILLE - DAY

A key slides into a lock. Jesse opens the door to the
chapel. He's wearing a black shirt with a clerical
collar, his iconic outfit. His face is still badly
bruised.

As he walks inside, we CRANE UP, getting a better view.

The church itself is unremarkable -- a simple white
steeple. But from this HIGH ANGLE, we notice something
unusual about the land around it. The ground has been
raised in concentric berms, forming

A GIANT CIRCLE

with the church at the center.

It's nothing you'd notice on the ground, but looking down
from the clouds, it's very distinct. Almost a bullseye.

JESSE (PRE-LAP)
I don't know what I'm supposed to
say, exactly.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. CHURCH AT ANNVILLE - DAY

Jesse is up at the lectern, giving his sermon. There are
only THREE PEOPLE in the whole church.

JESSE
I can tell you what's in the
Bible. I know every word of it.
Got beaten into me when I was a
kid. But knowing the Word ain't
the same as knowing the answers.
Half the time, you're not even
sure of the questions.

CLOSE ON one of the audience members, a LONE WOMAN with a
head scarf. Probably cancer.

JESSE (CONT'D)
But if I'm gonna stand here
talking at you, guess we might as
well ask. Why does the world seem
so perfect, yet so broken?

She nods in recognition.

As we COME AROUND on her, we reveal a NEW FAMILY sitting
behind her. We're compressing seven months of Sundays
into a single sermon. Each week, the church is a little
more full.

Jesse's wounds heal. His strength returns.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Why would a God that loves us
treat us so bad? And why would he
care so much what we think of him?
Shouldn't he be bigger than that?

Jesse's questions get a good reaction from the audience.
He's not giving false hope. He's speaking the truth.

JESSE (CONT'D)
He keeps asking us to prove our
love. But the only time I felt
love it was just there. It just
happened.

(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)

The only people who demanded love were psychopaths, trying to scare me into obedience. Is that the kind of God we want?

The church is now nearly full. It's a crowd of misfits and outcasts who don't fit in at other churches: BIKERS and TWELVE-STEPPERS, STRIPPERS and SPINSTERS.

JESSE (CONT'D)

And what kind of boss is he, anyway? One of his lieutenants betrays him and he gives him the kingdom of Hell. He has this celestial bureaucracy, saints and angels to hear our prayers, but we never get to know why, exactly.

EXT. CHURCH AT ANNVILLE - DAY [STORMING]

Dark clouds cover the sky, riled by strong winds.

JESSE (V.O.)

It's all top secret. Heaven is one giant CIA. We're supposed to have faith in faith. Do as we're told.

The clouds part in a circle above the church.

INT. CHURCH AT ANNVILLE - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

BACK ON JESSE, fully in his moment.

JESSE

Then why give us free will in the first place? If we're just puppets, show us the strings. Or cut us loose, if you're even there.

Suddenly, the doors BLOW OPEN.

A sphere of glowing, prismatic radiance swooshes down the center aisle. As it moves, it emits a PIERCING DRONE, a swirl of bizarre chords.

The sphere hits Reverend Jesse Custer square in the chest, throwing him back like a rag doll.

Tendrils of liquid light force their way into Jesse through his ears, mouth, nose and eyes until every glowing bit is gone. The sound DISSIPATES, each note resolving.

In the stunned audience, ONE MAN speaks up first...

MAN

Reverend!? You okay?

Jesse climbs to his feet. Grabs the lectern, woozy.

His eyes open, GLOWING RED.

JESSE

I AM.

His voice is a thousand notes at once, like nails on the chalkboard of your soul.

He grips the lectern as a dark light envelops him. His feet lift off the ground. SHADOWY WINGS unfurl -- angelic, yet sinister.

A light erupts from Jesse's chest, radiating outward. Consuming him. He fights it, but it keeps growing brighter.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

The light inside the church flares so bright that the stained glass windows work in reverse, sending shafts of colored radiance out into the stormy sky.

And just as suddenly, it stops.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

We find Jesse Custer at the podium. He opens his eyes, no longer glowing red.

He looks at his hands. He has pressed impossibly deep welts into the wood with his fingers.

He looks out to his congregation.

ONE HUNDRED SMOKING CORPSES

sit in the pews, ignited from within by the event. Their bodies are cinders and ash. Their clothes have only been mildly singed by the conflagration of the flesh.

Dumbfounded, Jesse stumbles off the stage, walking down the aisle. He gags from the smoke and stench.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Jesse falls to his knees in front of the church. Looks up at the roiling sky for answers.

The hole in the clouds fills in. A curtain drawing shut.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. ROADSIDE MOTEL - DAY

One story of painted cinderblock and aluminum windows, built a decade before big highways left this town an island.

TWO MEN IN THEIR 50's sit in front of the manager's office, listening to a football game on the radio. The WHIRR of insects is almost as loud.

INT. MOTEL ROOM / BATHROOM - DAY

Fresh from the shower with a towel around his waist, Jesse stares into the pitted mirror over the sink, desperately trying to see beyond his face to whatever force is swirling inside him.

WIDER, we see the Cowboy leaning back against the doorway. As always, the details of his face are lost within the shadow of his hat.

THE COWBOY

What happened today, there ain't
two things like it. Folks'll
wonder how you walked away.

JESSE

I don't know.

THE COWBOY

They're gonna come askin'. Got
'til sun-up 'fore the mornin'
paper has your face. 'Fore the
clerk sees it and wonders what
kind of man he put in room 106.

JESSE

(looking over)
What kind of man am I?

THE COWBOY

Best find someone to remind you.

A beat, then Jesse heads to the main room. As he passes
where the Cowboy was standing, the phantom gunman is
gone. Jesse is alone, as he always was.

Jesse sits on the bed. Picks up the phone and dials from
memory.

CUT TO:

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

A cellphone BUZZES on the dashboard. A woman's hand
lifts the phone, checking the caller ID:

UNKNOWN CALLER

WIDER

We see it's Tulip.

She considers answering, but ultimately clicks to send
the call to voicemail.

She flips down the visor mirror. Checks her makeup:
overdone, borderline trashy. Just right.

Breathes twice, psyching herself up. Grabs her bag and
gets out of the car.

TITLE OVER:

2. THE GIRL HE LEFT BEHIND

EXT. THE RHINO - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

Tulip cuts across the parking lot of Houston's most
infamous strip club.

Except for the sign, there's nothing to distinguish it from the warehouses and industrial plants around it.

Tulip's outfit matches her makeup, with a skirt so short that her jacket nearly covers it.

INT. THE RHINO / ENTRANCE - DAY

Tulip enters from the blindingly bright parking lot. It takes a beat for her eyes to adjust to the darkness.

The Samoan bouncer (BIG JIMMY) is wiping down his booth with Windex. He eyes Tulip.

TULIP
Here to see Wallace.

BIG JIMMY
He expecting you?

TULIP
It's a titty bar. Didn't think I needed an appointment.

INT. THE RHINO / MAIN CLUB - DAY

Big Jimmy leads Tulip along the back of the club, where the MUSIC is pounding and thumpy.

No matter what the time on the clock, it's permanent night inside. The dozen or so PATRONS are the truly sad or devoted. The DANCER on stage is ten years and three overdoses beyond her prime.

One tall, effete man (JESUS DE SADE) moves to intercept them. He's been waiting for an hour.

He has to YELL over the music...

DE SADE
I flew from San Francisco for this. Do you know how much a private jet costs?

Big Jimmy unlocks a private door.

BIG JIMMY
They know you're here, Mr. De Sade.

Big Jimmy gets the door open. Waves Tulip through. De Sade tries to follow, but Big Jimmy blocks him.

DE SADE

I want to know if he's worth it.
Have you seen him, with your own
eyes?

BIG JIMMY

I don't work the basement.

Exasperated, De Sade turns his attention to Tulip.

DE SADE

You. Do you eat shit? Could I
have a bear fuck you? A real
bear, not a fat man.

Big Jimmy holds out a warning finger -- cool it. He
shuts the door, keeping De Sade on the far side.

Big Jimmmmy locks the door again with a key. Tulip notes
this.

VIETNAMESE SISTER (PRE-LAP)

Everything is locked. You can't
get in or out without keys.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL APARTMENT / HOUSTON - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Tulip sits at the Tran family's kitchen table, talking
with the FATHER, MOTHER and twenty-one year old SISTER.
They've been in the country four years.

VIETNAMESE FATHER

<Like a prison.>

The mother never speaks, just keeps wiping away tears.

VIETNAMESE SISTER

Upstairs is just for show. The
basement is where they make the
money.

TULIP

You ever go down there?

VIETNAMESE SISTER

You don't go down there and come
back.

Tulip looks at the high school graduation photo of ALICE TRAN, a younger sister noticeably absent from the table.

BACK TO:

INT. THE RHINO / WALLACE'S OFFICE - DAY

Tulip buttons her shirt, audition over. Club owner WENDALL WALLACE, a chubby man with a walrus mustache, waves Big Jimmy out the door. Fetches an application and tax form from his desk.

Tulip watches as Jimmy locks the door behind him. It's a keyed deadbolt on both sides.

WALLACE

Where else have you danced?

TULIP

What, you check references?

WALLACE

I need girls who will show up and shut up.

TULIP

That's me.

WALLACE

That's you. Are you a smart girl?

TULIP

Sure.

WALLACE

Smart girls are trouble. Are you trouble?

TULIP

I'm not trouble. Mr. Wallace, I'm just here to make some money. I'm not in it for the art.

That almost gets Wallace to smile. He hands her a clipboard.

As Tulip starts working on the forms, Wallace's eyes drift over to a bank of three video monitors, which rotate between surveillance cameras throughout the club.

Something he sees in one monitor sets him off. He grabs his walkie.

WALLACE
(on walkie)
Jimmy, boot the guy in three.

BIG JIMMY (WALKIE)
On it.

WALLACE
Afternooners are the worst.
Drunks and weirdos.

Wallace turns back to Tulip, surprised to find himself staring at a 9mm.

TULIP
Drop the radio. Now.

A beat, then Wallace tosses the walkie aside in disbelief.

WALLACE
What's this? Stickup job?
Vendetta?

TULIP
Alice Tran. Eighteen years old.

WALLACE
Fuck.

TULIP
You cut her to pieces and set her car on fire.

WALLACE
Bullshit. She clocked out!

TULIP
What's in the basement?

Wallace tries to read her, gauging how much she knows.

TULIP (CONT'D)
That's where you took her, isn't it? That's where you make all your money.

WALLACE
Her sister, right? She got you into this. Fucking gooks. You think you're gonna get a gunpoint confession? It'll never hold up.

TULIP

I know.

She FIRES. The first bullet hits right between Wallace's eyes. The next two eliminate any doubt. He's very dead.

Tulip reacts more than she expected to. She's a great shot, but not a natural killer. Actual death is still unsettling.

VIETNAMESE SISTER (PRE-LAP)

We could only get seven thousand.
I know you said ten.

TULIP (PRE-LAP)

It's enough.

INT. SMALL APARTMENT / HOUSTON - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Tulip points to a rough sketch of The Rhino's floorplan.

TULIP

How do I get out?

VIETNAMESE SISTER

The office has an emergency exit.
It goes right to the alley. But
there's an alarm.

TULIP

That's fine. I'll be quick.

BACK TO:

INT. THE RHINO / WALLACE'S OFFICE - DAY

Tulip slides the heavy desk across the room, blocking the hallway door.

Takes four discs from the surveillance system. There will be no trace she was ever here.

Gathering her bag, she heads for the emergency exit at the back of the room. Pushes the bar, setting off a
PIERCING ALARM.

The door only swings open three inches.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

The door is blocked by the bumper of a 2006 Toyota Corolla, despite a sign saying "ABSOLUTELY NO PARKING."

INT. THE RHINO / WALLACE'S OFFICE - DAY

Tulip tries to SLAM the door open. She can't see what's blocking it, but it's clearly not budging.

She spots Big Jimmy and three other BOUNCER types on the security monitors. They are all rushing to check on the alarm.

With no apparent options, Tulip reloads. She'll shoot her way out if she has to.

She drops a clip on the ground. Picking it up, she notices a brass keyhole in the floor. It was underneath Wallace's desk. A trapdoor.

Tulip searches Wallace's body for keys. Finds the ring -- ten keys, no labels.

POUNDING at the door. On the monitor, we see it's Big Jimmy.

BIG JIMMY

Wallace?

Forcing herself to remain calm, she looks through each key on the ring, picking the most likely candidate.

The hallway door SLAMS against the desk.

Tries it. She was right.

She opens the trapdoor to reveal a ladder leading down into darkness: the basement.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Low ceiling and cinderblocks. Bare light bulbs scarcely push back the dark.

Down here, we can hear the distant ALARM still blaring above, along with the heartbeat-like THUMPING of the music in the club.

Tulip reaches the bottom of the ladder. She immediately trains her gun on the open trapdoor above.

She moves back along a wall, brushing up against leather straps and hand tools. She doesn't notice that

A HUMAN ARM

is dangling behind her, wrist still bound in shackles.

She sees movement at the top of the ladder. Prepares to take her shot.

Suddenly, the trapdoor SHUTS.

They're not coming down. They're locking her in.

Tulip wipes back her sweaty hair and tries not to panic.

MALE VOICE

You're new.

Tulip looks around, startled. She doesn't know where the voice is coming from.

MALE VOICE (CONT'D)

You're a girl. And scared, right?

Fear's an easy one to smell.

(beat)

Name's Cassidy.

With more words, his Irish accent comes through strongly.

TULIP

Where are you?

CASSIDY (O.S.)

Shelf, I think. I can see a light bulb.

He must be lying. The only shelf is in the far corner of the room, and holds a single cardboard file box. A bloodstain is soaking through the edge.

Still, Tulip cautiously approaches, gun drawn. Indeed, the voice does seem to be coming from the box.

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

I'm thinking, being you're afraid,
we might be in a similar
predicament. Not identical,
granted, but...

Tulip looks into the box, where she sees

THE HEAD OF PROINSIUS CASSIDY.

It speaks, seemingly unimpaired by its impossibility.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
...we might could help each other.

Tulip aims the gun at the head, unnerved to the core.

CASSIDY'S POV: Tulip is backlit, her blonde hair glowing in the light. You can't blame Cassidy for thinking...

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
Ay, you're an angel.

TULIP
What the fuck are you?

CASSIDY
Irish Catholic. But I'm open-minded.

He's been saying that for a century.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
Them fuckers up there, what say we
Bonnie and Clyde 'em?

Off Tulip's disbelief...

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

- Tulip unshackles the arm from the wall.
- And a leg.
- Retrieves a torso wrapped in plastic.

Suppressing her squeamishness, Tulip lifts Cassidy's head from the cardboard box. Presses it to the neck of the torso, where veiny tendrils grab tight.

With arms attached, Cassidy works on his legs. He's filthy and naked, with a junkie's thin body. But there's something fascinating about the way he moves, like a unstrung puppet assembling himself.

He stretches his arms. Cracks his neck.

He retrieves a pair of sunglasses from the shelf. That's all he's wearing.

Answering her unasked question...

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
 My dick'll grow back. Just gotta
 feed.
 (off her reaction)
 Not on you, love. You're aces.

He heads for the ladder.

CUT TO:

INT. THE RHINO / WALLACE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Blood drips off the edge of a counter.

REVEAL Cassidy, getting dressed in clothes he's taken off
 one of the four bodies on the floor.

He WIPES THE BLOOD off his mouth. Cleans something stuck
 in his sharp teeth.

Tulip retrieves her bag. Digs out her cell phone.

INSERT: NEW VOICEMAIL.

While she's checking the message, Cassidy tries the
 emergency exit. It's still blocked.

He leans his shoulder against the door, pushing the
 parked car out of the way. That's how strong he is.

CLOSE ON Tulip, listening to the message. She half-
 smiles in disbelief.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Tulip drives. Cassidy rides shotgun.

CASSIDY
 So this Jesse up and ditches you.
 No note, no seeya. Gone.

TULIP
 Yeah.

CASSIDY
 Didn't know if he was alive or
 dead.

TULIP
 Yeah.

CASSIDY
One voicemail, no explanation, and
you're driving halfway across
Texas to see him.

TULIP
Yeah.

CASSIDY
And this makes sense to ya?

TULIP
You'd like him.

CASSIDY
Fuck, I envy him.

Tulip lets herself smile.

Cassidy watches the edge of her mouth. He's smitten.

A KNOCK.

EXT. ROADSIDE MOTEL - NIGHT

Tulip stands at the door to room 106. Sees movement in
the peephole as someone looks out.

The door opens to reveal Jesse.

They stand for a beat, just looking at each other. Then
Jesse reaches a hand behind her neck to kiss her. She
stops him.

TULIP
I thought you were dead.

JESSE
I know. Every day I wanted to...

TULIP
(interrupting him)
Leave me again and I will kill you
myself.

JESSE
Understood.

He pulls her in for the kiss. Lifts her up.

EXT. ROADSIDE MOTEL / INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Still sitting in the truck, Cassidy watches Tulip disappear into room 106. Jesse gives a quick look around the parking lot, then shuts the door.

Cassidy sighs. Gets out of the truck.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE - NIGHT

Cassidy takes a room key from the NIGHT CLERK, a heavysset Mexican woman who blinks at a rate that approaches slow motion.

CASSIDY

This's got shades, right? On the windows? 'Cos I could see myself sleeping late.

The Clerk just blinks. She does speak English, but Cassidy's accent is impenetrable to her.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

The windows.
(points to office
window)
Ventanas. Drapes?

CLERK

Windows.

CASSIDY

Yes!

CLERK

Yes. Windows.

CASSIDY

That's fantastic! Windows!

CLERK

Windows.

CASSIDY

You're saying your rooms have windows in them? That's fucking incredible. You've revolutionized the motel industry. Now the thing is, and I'm just speculating here, some people might not want the sunlight to burn them to ashes.

(MORE)

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
So if we could block the sunlight
somehow, that might help with
repeat customers.

Confused, the Clerk takes a different key from the rack.
Reluctantly offers it to Cassidy.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
So this one has drapes and the
other doesn't? That's why we're
exchanging keys. No?

She shakes her head.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
Just find a priest so I can marry
you tonight. I can't imagine not
having you in my life every single
moment forward.

A car pulls up outside. A door opens. Cassidy stiffens.
Sniffs the air. Without looking...

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
And hello, Mr. Lawman.

Indeed, he's right. SHERIFF ROOT (50) enters the small
office. Root is a self-described sonofabitch.

Careful to never face him, Cassidy takes the first key
and nods to the Clerk.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
Gracias.

He do-si-does with Root, who evidently has questions for
the Clerk.

EXT. MOTEL OFFICE / PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Cassidy risks a look back. Sheriff Root is indeed asking
the Clerk something. She nods.

Cassidy notices someone sitting in the back of the
Sheriff's SUV. The windows are down.

CASSIDY
Heya. Know what this is about?

As the figure leans into the light, we see his face is a grotesque distortion of normal human features: swollen, melted and waxy. A steady leak of saliva drips from his sunken mouth.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
Jaysus. You got a face like an
arse.

Indeed, we'll call him ARSEFACE. He's 19, but you really couldn't tell.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
No offense. It's true.

Arseface points to Root, who is still talking with the Clerk.

ARSEFACE
He muh Dah.

CASSIDY
And is your Dah looking for a girl
by chance? Maybe a girl and a
roguish Irishman?

ARSEFACE
Preachuh. Veh dan jer ruh. He
gill a ho chutch. Burn um alive.

Relieved...

CASSIDY
Good hunting, then. Hope ya fry
the bastard.

He takes a few steps forward, then doubles back.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
You know where there's a store?
Food?

ARSEFACE
(pointing)
Hav blah dow.

CASSIDY
Obliged.

Arseface smiles, in his way.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Carrying a bag of groceries, Cassidy sets his room key down on the desk. Listens. Rhythmic BUMPING, along with MOANS and SQUEALS. It's Tulip and Jesse next door.

CASSIDY

Tulip. Fuckin' hell.

He turns on the TV -- an infomercial for a kitchen gadget -- to drown out the noise.

He retrieves four packages of ground beef from the grocery bag. Sitting on the edge of the bed, he eats large clumps of raw beef with his fingers. Slurps the blood off the foam.

INT. MOTEL ROOM BATHROOM - NIGHT

Cassidy checks the shower curtain liner -- heavy white plastic. Light proof.

He carefully unclips it from the rod.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Cassidy hangs the shower curtain liner under the thin drapes. He's halfway done when he notices movement in the parking lot.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT [CASSIDY'S POV]

GUESTS in pajamas and underwear are leaving the other wing of the motel, crouching low. Some have their suitcases, but most are leaving everything behind.

At the dark edge of the parking lot, a sheriff's DEPUTY is herding them to safety.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

CASSIDY

Fuck.

He switches off the TV. Listens. More MOANS and BANGING -- Jesse and Tulip are still going at it.

He POUNDS on the wall.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

Tulip! Quit your ruttin' and look outside.

They evidently don't hear him.

Cassidy considers his next move. Decides on bold action.

He makes a fist, curses the forthcoming pain, and punches THROUGH THE WALL.

INT. JESSE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jesse and Tulip, both naked and sweating, look up to see Cassidy's bloody hand reaching through the drywall like a Romero zombie.

JESSE

What the fuck?!

Cassidy pulls his hand back, looking through the hole he smashed. He can only see Jesse as he climbs off the bed.

CASSIDY

Tulip with ya? Thought I heard her.

She sits up, pulling sheets around herself.

TULIP

Cassidy!

CASSIDY

Yer gonna wanna get dressed.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

A HELICOPTER flies over, its searchlight sweeping across a half-dozen law enforcement vehicles, ranging from STATE TROOPERS to FBI to HOMELAND SECURITY.

SHARPSHOOTERS have three good angles.

We settle on Sheriff Root, who leans back against his cruiser, frustrated to see Feds running the show. Arseface, on the other hand, is excited to see commotion.

ARSEFACE

You ugh gih him Dah?

ROOT

You'd think we'd got Osama bin
Gandhi in there. Any nigger can
blow up a church.

His DEPUTY looks over...

DEPUTY

You see the pictures from
Annville? People were incinerated
from the inside out.

ROOT

Fine. Martian niggers.

FBI field director STOCKWELL has the megaphone:

STOCKWELL

This is the FBI. For your safety,
move away from windows and lie on
the floor.

INT. MOTEL ROOMS - NIGHT

Jesse and Tulip are halfway dressed. Cassidy has his
face pressed to the hole he's punched.

TULIP

Jesse, I'm sorry. We should have
ditched the truck.

JESSE

(confused)
Why would they be after you?

CASSIDY

You didn't tell him, eh? Went
straight to the bouncy-bounce.

JESSE

Who are you?

CASSIDY

Cassidy. Your girl saved me. I
was in pieces.

On the megaphone outside:

STOCKWELL (O.S.)

Jesse Custer. We have the
building surrounded. Come out
with your hands held high.

CASSIDY

Jesse Custer?

(realizing)

Wait, they're after you? You're the preacher.

JESSE

(to Tulip)

Something happened this morning. I'm not sure what.

CASSIDY

Killed a church full of people is what Arseface says.

TULIP

Jesse, are you okay?

JESSE

I dunno. There's something in me. I can feel it. I shouldn't have called you.

TULIP

What are you talking about?

A beat.

CASSIDY

Right, I'm gonna have to run for it. Special needs an' all.

JESSE

No one's running! They're right to come after me. I'm dangerous.

Jesse kisses Tulip, then heads for the door.

EXT. ROADSIDE MOTEL - NIGHT

Jesse exits with his hands held high. SQUINTS in the helicopter's spotlight. Keeps walking. As BODY-ARMORED AGENTS surround him, he drops to his knees, then lies on the ground.

They cuff him, then pull him up to his feet.

Jesse looks back at the door to 106, where Tulip watches with disbelief. AGENTS grab her, pushing her to the ground.

JESSE

She's not part of this!

No one's listening. He bucks against the men holding him. Fights to get another look at Tulip. They keep dragging him away.

JESSE'S EYES GLOW RED.

JESSE (CONT'D)

LET HER GO!

His voice THUNDERS, the same soul-chilling quality we heard at the church. But this time, there's more control.

Without any conscious decision, the agents holding Tulip back away from her. She stands, bewildered.

JESSE (CONT'D)

DROP YOUR GUNS! EVERYONE!

Each and every lawman drops his weapon. No debate, no discussion. A rifle falls from the helicopter.

Sheriff Root pulls his pistol out of the holster, throwing it on the ground. He has no idea why.

ROOT

The fuck are we doing? Shoot him!

DEPUTY

You shoot him.

But they can't. They see their guns lying on the ground, and are powerless to pick them up.

In the car, Arseface is fascinated.

Cassidy steps out of Room 107.

CASSIDY

Fuck.

ROOT

Tackle him!

JESSE

NOBODY MOVE.

And just like that, even the idea of moving against Jesse is impossible. Tulip makes her way to Jesse. Everyone clears a path.

Jesse gestures with his cuffs. Tulip takes the keys off an agent, who puts up no resistance.

Tulip unlocks Jesse's cuffs. He won't face her. Won't look her in the eye.

TULIP

Jesse?

Through gritted teeth...

JESSE

It's not me. There's something else. It's...

He suppresses a scream as a shard of swirling light erupts through his back. He fights to keep something inside of him contained.

Suddenly, a BLAST of bright light radiates from Jesse. Everyone shields their eyes as it flares, then suddenly dims.

This time, no one is burned.

Except Cassidy.

The hand he shielded himself with is now aflame. He beats it against his body, wrapping it in his jacket to snuff it out.

CASSIDY

Jaysus.

Jesse collapses against Tulip. His eyes are normal, but all the strength has left him.

JESSE

We have to go.

TULIP

Okay. Okay.

She half-carries him to the truck.

TULIP (CONT'D)

Cassidy! C'mon!

Cassidy reluctantly joins them. Helps load Jesse in the passenger seat. But then he shuts the door. He's staying behind.

CASSIDY

Don't think it's safe to be near him. Given my condition.

He holds up his scorched hand as proof.

TULIP

What are you going to...

CASSIDY

I'll be aces. Go. 'Fore these
Smokeys figure out who's the
Bandit.

She starts the truck. With a nod, she backs up and pulls out of the parking lot.

Cassidy waves away the dust. And immediately regrets not getting in that truck.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

Fuck.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

As she drives, Tulip rests a hand on Jesse's face. He's asleep or unconscious.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Cassidy checks STOCKWELL's watch. The FBI field director isn't happy about this, but can't really put up any resistance.

CASSIDY

Right. What time is sunrise
around here?

STOCKWELL

Six thirty-seven.

CASSIDY

(impressed)
Points for accuracy there.

Cassidy keeps walking, trying to decide which vehicle to take. The various cops, sheriffs and FBI agents aren't quite mannequins, but seem incapable of taking any action.

The helicopter is still hovering overhead.

A strong wind suddenly picks up, scattering trash across the parking lot.

A dust devil swirls near the building. Lights FLICKER and POP.

CLOSE ON STOCKWELL, his breath now visible in the night air. The temperature has suddenly dropped thirty degrees.

A dark shape steps out of the shadows. A gunfighter in a beaten duster. He wears two gun belts, each with a Walker Colt Revolver.

If Jesse's internal Cowboy is the prototypical Western hero, this is the mirror image:

THE SAINT OF KILLERS.

Cassidy drops down behind Sheriff Root's cruiser, genuinely freaked out. He's seen the Saint before. Has some idea what's coming.

In the cruiser, Arseface tries to get a better look at the Saint. Cassidy HISSES...

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

Arseface! Get down! Down!

Arseface hunkers down lower.

SAINT OF KILLERS

Where is it? Where's Genesis?

A sea of empty faces.

ROOT

If you're talking about the preacher, he headed West with a girl. They're all yours.

SAINT OF KILLERS

Reckon so.

With no haste, the Saint of Killers draws both revolvers. Takes aim and FIRES, killing every man he sees.

On his fourth shot, we move into EXTREME SLOW MOTION, tracking one of his bullets. As it leaves the barrel, it is composed of nothing but smoke and flame. Distinct SCREAMS and CRIES swirl within it.

This bullet hits Stockwell. As it passes through his chest, it unmakes him, flesh and bone dissolving into basic elements.

Back to REAL TIME, the Saint keeps firing. He never has to reload.

Without even looking, he fires up into the helicopter. A beat later, the bird drops out of the sky. It lands on two vehicles, ERUPTING in flame.

Sheriff Root stares down the bullet that blows his head apart.

ARSEFACE

Dah!

Cassidy HUSHES him. Keeps him hidden.

With just a few more shots, the Saint has killed every man in sight.

He holsters his gun. Starts walking west. As a wind picks up, the gunslinger disappears into dust.

The night is quiet except for the crackling flames of the fallen helicopter.

Arseface stumbles out of the SUV. Crouches over the headless body of his father.

Cassidy surveys the wreckage. Arseface seems to be the only other person left alive.

CASSIDY

Sorry about your Dah, there. You can drive, right?

Arseface nods.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

We gotta find Tulip and the preacher before he does.

ARSEFACE

Whuh?

CLOSE ON CASSIDY.

CASSIDY

'Cos that there was the Saint of Killers. Which means whatever the preacher's got in 'im, it's worse.

CUT TO BLACK.

FLASHES:

- A TEENAGE BOY in camouflage poses with two guns, gangsta-style.

- Jody looks in a dirty hallway mirror, determined.
- Jesse holds up his bloody hand, squinting at the sun.

TITLE OVER:

3. SONS OF TEXAS

FADE IN:

EXT. THE GREAT PLAINS - DAY

In a shot as wide as the West itself, we see the endless prairie divided by a single track of railroad. Beside it, two men climb off their horses.

CLOSE ON THE RAIL

Jesse puts his ear to iron, listening for the train.

JESSE

I can hear it. It's comin'.
Can't tell from where.

COWBOY

Tracks only go two ways...

The Cowboy stands beside him. Points along the rails to the East and the West.

COWBOY (CONT'D)

...where you come from, and where
you're goin'.

Jesse stands, looking East. Where the rails disappear at the horizon, we can just make out a farm.

JESSE

I'm never going back there.

He turns to face the Cowboy.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Why would I?

COWBOY

'Cuz if you're not careful, the
past can sneak up on you.

The Cowboy nods his head. Jesse looks back to see

A LOCOMOTIVE

bearing down on him. The WHISTLE and ENGINE are deafening. As it hits him...

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

Jesse awakens with a jolt, disoriented.

Just beyond a thin patch of trees, a FREIGHT TRAIN roars past. Only when the CLACK CLACK CLACK of the last car fades does Jesse realize he's not dreaming anymore.

He's sitting in the passenger seat. By the kink in his neck, he's evidently been asleep for hours.

He opens the door to find Tulip sitting against the truck, finding some shade while she reads a well-worn Louis L'Amour paperback.

TULIP

You okay?

JESSE

(not really)

Yeah.

She stands up, hands him a water bottle. He didn't realize how thirsty he was.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Where are we?

TULIP

About five miles out of St. Anne's. Figured it was better to get off the roads.

JESSE

The guy you were with...

TULIP

Cassidy. He went his own way.

JESSE

He punched through a wall.

TULIP

Yeah.

She's not exactly sure how to explain it. Whether to explain it.

JESSE

Are you and him... Were you..?

TULIP

God, no. But he saved my life.
I'd be dead without him.

JESSE

Then I like him already.

She fixes his hair. Kisses him. He stops her.

JESSE (CONT'D)

I can't... Something's got in me.
Something bad.

TULIP

I saw. I was there.

JESSE

I need to know what it is.

(beat)

The place I grew up, the people
there, they did this.

TULIP

What do you mean?

JESSE

They put me in that church like
they knew what was going to
happen. If there's answers,
they'll have 'em.

TULIP

Then let's go ask.

JESSE

("you can't come")
It's not safe.

TULIP

Then you're gonna need me. I'm a
damn good shot. So where are we
headed?

Jesse knows he'll never win this argument.

JESSE

East. Salvation. It's a long
drive.

TULIP

Saddle up.

Some good TRAVELLING MUSIC lets us begin a series of scenes, taking us across half of Texas.

INT. PICKUP / EXT. TEXAS HIGHWAY - DAY

Jesse is at the wheel. It feels good to be back in the driver's seat, even if he's not quite sure where this road is taking him.

MUSIC CONTINUES...

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

CORONERS load bodies into bags. It's hot and dusty. The flies are starting to become a nuisance.

We catch up with the new FBI DIVISION CHIEF as he walks with a FORENSIC TECH towards the motel office.

CHIEF

You have 18 bodies and not one bullet. People heard gunfire.

FORENSIC TECH

Not from our guys. Their guns were loaded. Not one round fired.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE - DAY

As the Chief enters, another OFFICER flags him.

OFFICER

Chief, we got a new guy. Doesn't match any victim or survivor.

Chief steps around to see the surveillance camera footage.

ON THE MONITOR, we see Cassidy from when he checked in. He grits his teeth, annoyed by the desk clerk.

CHIEF

Add him to the list.

CUT TO:

A STILL OF CASSIDY

is added to a bulletin board with shots of Jesse and Tulip.

MUSIC CONTINUES...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Sheriff Root's SUV heads south.

INT. SHERIFF ROOT'S SUV / COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Arseface is at the wheel, trying to figure out where he is on a fold-out map.

Looking over the seat, we see a blanket-covered lump lying in back. A pale hand pokes out, slipping into a shaft of filtered sunlight. It starts to smolder.

Cassidy GRUNTS and pulls his hand back under the blanket.

MUSIC CONCLUDES as we...

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Tulip's pickup truck pulls off into a small gas station and convenience store.

EXT. HIGHWAY GAS STATION - DAY

Jesse pulls his hat low, heading into the store.

INT. GAS STATION BATHROOM - DAY

Jesse washes his hands. Runs some water through his hair. Looks at himself in the scratched mirror.

The door swings open behind him. A BURLY MAN in a bolo tie enters. Catches Jesse's eye in the mirror. A beat.

BURLY MAN

'Scuse me.

Jesse tenses, certain he's been identified.

BURLY MAN (CONT'D)

Gotta wash mah hooks.

He means his hands. Jesse steps aside, letting him use the sink.

EXT. HIGHWAY GAS STATION - DAY

Tulip finishes putting gas in the truck. We hear a WINDCHIME, nothing particularly distinct over the ROAD NOISE.

MAN'S VOICE

Excuse me. Miss?

Tulip looks up to see DeBlanc. He's wearing the same vintage suit and fedora we saw earlier when he met Young Jesse. He hasn't aged.

He approaches...

DEBLANC

Are you good with directions?

TULIP

Sorry. Not from around here.

DEBLANC

Of course not. You're from Bar Harbor. Your father Jake was a hunter. Taught you how to shoot.

Tulip tenses. Takes a quick look around. They're evidently alone -- no police, no SWAT team.

She mentally calculates how fast she could get her gun.

TULIP

What do you want?

DEBLANC

It is imperative that Jesse Custer live.

TULIP

I'll make sure that happens.

DEBLANC

Then you are good with directions. Keep Jesse Custer out of sight and away from danger. Keep him quiet and calm.

TULIP

Why are you telling me this? Why not Jesse?

DEBLANC

Because Jesse Custer does not trust authority. But he trusts you. That is by design.

DeBlanc turns and starts to walk away.

TULIP

Uh-uh. You don't get to say cryptic shit and walk away.

DeBlanc doesn't stop. She pursues him, grabbing his shoulder.

HER HAND GOES RIGHT THROUGH HIM,

leaving a trail of tiny points of light -- the "fireflies" we've seen. He's not physically there, but rather some kind of projection.

She takes a step back, reeling...

DEBLANC

The night you met Jesse Custer, you got a phone call to meet your friend at a bar. But later, she said she never called you. So who did you speak with on the phone, Miss O'Hare?

(closer)

Why did you decide to come Texas in the first place? You are here because we led you here. Just as we brought you to the Irishman. We all serve a greater plan. We must protect Jesse Custer.

TULIP

Protect him from what?

DEBLANC

Temptation. Arrogance. He cannot control these powers. If he were to be corrupted...

A VOICE from behind Tulip...

JESSE

Good news. They had your chips.

Tulip turns to see Jesse walking back from the store with a bag of junk food.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Barbecue with ridges, right?

Tulip turns back to DeBlanc. He's still there, though Jesse doesn't seem to see or hear him.

TULIP
(re: potato chips)
Right.

DEBLANC
If you tell him of this conversation, he won't trust you. He must trust you.

Unsure why she's hesitating...

JESSE
You want me to drive?

TULIP
No. No, I'm good.

A WIDER SHOT reveals DeBlanc has disappeared.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. TRUCK / EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY [DRIVING]

Tulip has the wheel, grateful for the distraction of driving. Jesse smudges the orange barbecue seasoning on his fingertips.

JESSE
What if I'm evil? What if this thing inside me is the Devil? Or the Antichrist?

TULIP
You're not the Antichrist.

JESSE
But would you know if you were? I mean, what if you were put here to destroy the world. Wouldn't they want you to think you're saving it?

TULIP
Who is "they?"

JESSE

I don't know. But the worst guys in history -- the tyrants, the dictators -- they all thought they were the good guys. I mean, fuck, Hitler.

TULIP

You're not Hitler. You're Jesse Custer. You're a cowboy.

JESSE

I'm a preacher. I was a preacher before I met you, and I was a preacher when this happened. I killed a hundred people in a church.

TULIP

Something did. That wasn't you.

JESSE

How can you be so sure?

TULIP

Because I know you.

JESSE

You don't. Not really.

Tulip brakes hard, pulling over to the side of the highway. Jesse's not sure what he said to set her off, but she's visibly furious.

She takes a beat to consider what to say. She almost says everything.

TULIP

You still think this is the Jesse Custer story. It's not. It's not all about you. I'm part of it. I have been part of it since the day we met. So you don't get to shove me to the side.

JESSE

I'm not trying to...

TULIP

(cutting him off)
I'm talking. I have put up with all your evasions and non-answers about your past because that's yours.

(MORE)

TULIP (CONT'D)

But you don't get to cut me out of
Now. You don't get to decide
what's best for me. I am here
because I want to be. Because
whatever's happening to you, I am
gonna fix it, or I'm gonna die
trying. These are my terms. So
you can either accept them, or you
can get the fuck out of my truck.

A long beat.

JESSE

I accept your proposal.

TULIP

Thank you.

With a half-smile, Tulip pulls back onto the highway. A series of glances and small movements. They're both stirred up, and frankly, horny. Finally...

JESSE

Do you wanna..?

TULIP

We should get there, though.
Right?

JESSE

Right.

Another smile. Their resolve may not last.

INT. SHERIFFS SUV / EXT. FAST FOOD PARKING LOT - DAY

Arseface hands a bag of food back to Cassidy, who pulls it beneath his blanket.

ARSEFACE

(apologetic)
Dey said dey hadda cook ih.

CASSIDY

You tell 'em I'm a bloodatarian?

ARSEFACE

Dey said da not real thinn.

UNDER THE BLANKET

Cassidy inspects one of his hamburgers. It's not what he wanted, but fuck it, he's hungry.

INTERCUT ARSEFACE

He got himself a chocolate shake. Given his deformities, he's a messy eater.

ARSEFACE (CONT'D)

Ca duh dee?

CASSIDY

Yeah?

ARSEFACE

Whew we goin?

CASSIDY

To find Tulip. We gotta get her before the Saint of Killers does.

ARSEFACE

Buh how we gon find huh?

CASSIDY

I know a guy who's got a guy. Magic man. Could find a Tic-Tac in an avalanche. We get to him, he can take us right to her.

ARSEFACE

She yuh guhlfren?

CASSIDY

Tulip? Nah, she's...nah.

He stops to really think about it: why is he doing this, exactly?

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

Arseface, you ever play Donkey Kong?

ARSEFACE

Shuh.

CASSIDY

I got a thing about the princess.

EXT. PIZZA PLACE ON CANAL STREET, NEW YORK - NIGHT [1981]

Cassidy, the same age but even more punk rock, eyes a stand-up Donkey Kong arcade game with contempt. Which becomes reluctant curiosity. He drops a quarter in. Starts playing.

CASSIDY (V.O.)
 So you're this plumber, right, and she's a princess. They don't belong together. She should have a prince, and he should have, what, like a washerwoman or something. But then this ape comes and takes her, and he's gotta save her.

In a SERIES OF SHOTS, we see Cassidy playing the game all night for three weeks. He scares off kids who want to play. He's going to finish this.

CASSIDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 He'll die a hundred times, a thousand times. Doesn't matter. He's got a mission. He finally fucking feels something.

On the arcade screen, a pink heart swells as Mario finally reaches the Princess.

Cassidy wipes away tears.

BACK TO:

INT. SHERIFFS SUV / EXT. FAST FOOD PARKING LOT - DAY

CASSIDY
 So that's why I gotta save her.

ARSEFACE
 Wit my hep.

CASSIDY
 That's right. We're Butch Cassidy and the Arseface Kid.

Arseface starts up the car.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
 Just gotta hope Tulip and the preacher are keeping out of trouble until we get there.

EXT. ROAD / EDGE OF SWAMP - DAY

Parked beneath a tree BUZZING with insect life, Tulip unlocks a gun box in the back of the truck. Jesse -- buttoning his shirt -- is surprised by the arsenal she's carrying.

JESSE
Some guys would be intimidated by
this.

She picks a gun for him. Demonstrates...

TULIP
Clip. Safety.

JESSE
I point the hole at the thing I
want to die, right?

She SHUTS the case.

TULIP
You sure about this?

JESSE
No.
(off her reaction)
Honesty is why you love me.

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

Jesse leads Tulip down the twisting paths. (It's the same area seen earlier in the story when Young Jesse was hiding from T.C. and Jody.)

The BIRDS and INSECTS feel particularly oppressive. Tulip pushes back her sweaty hair as Jesse stops for a moment, evidently trying to remember which fork will take him to the farm.

He looks at the bark of one tree, expecting to find something. Has to look higher -- the tree has grown. Finds initials, J.C.

TULIP
You were a little tagger.

JESSE
Those are my father's initials:
John Custer. I cut it after they
killed him. He doesn't have a
tombstone or anything.

A beat. Tulip checks his eyes.

TULIP
You're serious. You never went to
the police? Never came back to...

JESSE
(cutting her off)
I never came back. I swore I
wouldn't. And now I'm here.

He keeps walking. Tulip gives him a little space,
staying back a bit.

EXT. THE FARM - DAY

Jesse and Tulip come upon the farm from the edge of the
swamp. Everything is in considerably worse shape than
when we left it: rusted metal, broken fences and weeds
choking the fields.

The swamp seems determined to take it back, and no one's
fighting.

Jesse and Tulip make their way across the yard to the
barn, where one of the walls has started to collapse.

Peering inside...

INT. BARN - DAY

...Jesse spots a familiar pickup.

JESSE
Someone's here. That's Jody's
truck.

A POP and a WHISTLE.

Jesse's eyes go wide. He SCREAMS in pain.

TULIP
Jesse?!

Jesse grabs at his back, where a TRANQUILIZER DART sticks
beneath his shoulder blade. Tulip pulls it out, but it's
already delivered its dose.

A second dart hits Jesse in the leg. He collapses,
writhing.

TULIP (CONT'D)
Move! Move!

She half-drags Jesse behind a broken fence, though she's
not sure where the darts are coming from.

Jesse pulls the second dart out himself, a bloom of blood on his jeans. He's already pale. Eyes glassy.

A third dart hits the hay bale. Tulip spots where they're coming from -- a second-story window of the farmhouse. She RETURNS FIRE.

TULIP (CONT'D)

Can you walk?!

Jesse nods, though he's not convinced he can.

INT. FARMHOUSE BEDROOM - DAY

Jody ducks down, reloading darts into the air rifle. Bullets SHATTER the upper window.

He tries to retake his perch, but Tulip is right on him. True to her word, she's a damn good shot.

EXT. FARM - DAY

JESSE'S POV: Everything is intense and blurry -- both too fast and too slow. Each of Tulip's gunshots BOOMS like a cannon.

CLOSE ON HIS LIPS

He's trying to speak, to use the Word, but nothing will come out.

JESSE

St...st...Too...

Tulip FIRES three more shots, driving Jody back from the window. She uses the break to lead Jesse to better cover. He has to move on all fours, dizzy.

Tulip takes Jesse's gun, SHOOTING it empty before popping and reloading both clips.

Jesse spots something moving behind Tulip. Tries to warn her, but no words will come. He can barely lift his hand.

It's T.C. He has a strange-looking plastic gun. It fires silently.

Wired spikes shoot into Tulip's back. She SCREAMS and SPASMS as electricity hits her.

She instinctively FIRES, but can't aim. After the first jolt, T.C. keeps pulling the trigger, watching her convulse.

Jesse can only watch as T.C. takes her guns away. Uses one to CLOCK Jesse, knocking him out.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH - NIGHT

Marie sits in her wheelchair, smoking. She's unbelievably old, just bones and skin. A plastic oxygen tube flares up the edges of her nostrils.

She uses a long cigarette holder, perhaps believing it will make it safe to use the oxygen.

HEADLIGHTS sweep past. It's Tulip's pickup truck. Jody and T.C. climb out.

JODY

Found it a half mile up.

MARIE

Good boys.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

The barn is lit by a single lantern.

Jesse slowly comes to. He's sitting on the floor of the barn, both arms bound behind him to one of the main posts.

He has a ball gag in his mouth to keep him from using the Word.

He hears Tulip's voice coming from behind him:

TULIP (O.S.)

How did you..?

Jesse tries to call out to her, but the most he can manage is a muffled GRUNT.

He cranes his neck, trying to see her.

HIS POV: She's tied to another post, facing away from him. He can't see who she's talking to.

TULIP (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Jesse's family. I think he's
here. He's hurt...

Jesse GRUNTS again. Can't get her attention.

TULIP (O.S.) (CONT'D)
It's a farm outside of Salvation.
North, I think. Hurry.

Suddenly, the barn door SWINGS open. It's T.C. He looks
around, confused.

T.C.
Who the fuck were you talking to?

REVEAL TULIP. She's clearly been beaten hard.

TULIP
Nobody. Myself.

T.C.
No no no no no no.

T.C. leaves the barn.

We stay behind with Jesse, who grows even more panicked
for not knowing where he went. Listens.

TULIP
Jesse! Jesse, are you awake?

Jesse SCRAPES his boots on the dirt as loud as he can.
She hears him.

TULIP (CONT'D)
Help's coming, alright baby?

Very faintly, we hear Marie and Jody talking in the yard.
We can't make out what they say.

Then FOOTSTEPS. Heavier.

Jody appears at the door, headed for Tulip. Jesse
strains futilely against his ropes.

Jody cuts through her ropes, pulls her up. For the first
time, Jesse can see her face. See that she's been hurt.

T.C. wheels Marie through the door. Anticipating her
question...

TULIP (CONT'D)

I was just talking to myself. I swear.

T.C.

I heard her say Salvation. She was giving directions how to get here.

MARIE

(to Jesse)

What did you tell her about us?

Marie has to take mid-sentence pauses to catch her breath.

TULIP

Nothing. I didn't ask.

MARIE

What kinda woman doesn't ask about a man's family?

T.C.

A whore.

MARIE

A whore. If you'd asked, you'd know we got rules here. You tell the truth, or you face consequences.

Marie nods to Jody. He pulls his gun from the holster. Aims it at her head.

Jesse bucks so hard he nearly dislocates his shoulder. But he can't break free.

MARIE (CONT'D)

So what's it gonna be? Who were you talking to?

Tulip knows she's doomed either way.

TULIP

Jesse, I love you. I will always love you!

Marie waves her hand.

Jody FIRES.

The bullet blows through Tulip's head. Blood sprays on the lantern.

Jesse SCREAMS into the gag, bucking and kicking like an ox.

Jody tosses Tulip's limp body on the floor.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOCK / SWAMP - DAY

Marie leans into frame. Smiles.

MARIE

That whore could never make you happy, Jesse. Remember your lessons: happiness comes through righteousness. And the righteous must suffer.

REVERSE to find Jesse. His hands are bound to his chest. The ball gag is still in his mouth.

T.C. and Jody grab Jesse, lifting him into the coffin.

MARIE (CONT'D)

No one's gonna find you, Jesse.
You're safe with us.

Jesse fights and kicks. There's no way he'll get free -- but there's also no way they'll get him in.

Jody leans on Jesse's chest, covering his mouth and nose with his giant hands. Jesse flails, desperate for a breath. He finally relents, going limp.

QUICK SHOTS:

- The lid SHUTS.

- Latches SNAP.

- Weighed down by cinderblocks, the coffin sinks into the murky water, two air tubes snaking up to the surface.

TRANSITION TO:

ENGINE NOISES.

GRAVEL.

ARSEFACE (O.S.)

Heh? Cad uh dee? We heuh.

INT. SHERIFF'S SUV / EXT. DIRT ROAD - DUSK [DRIVING]

Cassidy pokes a hand out from under his blanket, trying to gauge the light. It's evidently close enough to night that he won't burst into flames.

He sits up in the backseat, the blanket wrapped around him like a shawl. Keeps his eyes closed until he finds his sunglasses.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

we see at least 20 cars and trucks parked along the side of the road.

Arseface slows way down, so as not to hit the DRUNKEN BIKERS spilling over from a tailgater.

ARSEFACE

Weh uh we?

CASSIDY

Boot Hill. It's where the Saint of Killers is buried.

They pass a collection of DANGEROUS LOOKING MEN walking along the side of the road. Everyone is headed one way. It's like distant parking for a backwoods festival.

As they pass, the SUV gets a noticeable reaction. It's not positive.

ARSEFACE

Who uh dey?

CASSIDY

The faithful. Killers and psychopaths, every one of 'em. With the Saint up walking, this place is Mecca.

ARSEFACE

Wat dey wan?

CASSIDY

A front row seat to the end of the world.

Arseface stops the truck. Up ahead, a burning car blocks the road. It's a State Trooper vehicle, its red-and-blues somehow still going. The bodies of the dead troopers are also aflame.

BANGING on the side of the SUV. The Drunken Bikers and Dangerous Men have caught up with them.

Cassidy realizes:

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
Ah, fuck. They think we're pigs.

Suddenly, a dozen men are grabbing one side of the SUV and lifting. With hardly any effort, they have the truck

FLIPPING OVER

on its back. Arseface SCREAMS.

Cassidy falls to the ceiling in a lump. Arseface dangles from his seatbelt.

Steel-toe boots SMASH the windows.

Cassidy scrambles through the glass, reaching a window. Hands grab him, pulling him out.

Cassidy is strong enough to break their grip. He's not much of a fighter, though.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
Do I look like bacon? We killed Johnny Law and took his horse, got it? Fuck's sake, think it through.

BEAR MULLEN (40) pushes through the crowd.

That's not a nickname; by the look of him, someone in his family tree must be a grizzly. His voice is so deep it has its own echo.

BEAR
Cassidy. Got some balls showing your face here.

Cassidy isn't surprised to see him. Isn't delighted, either.

CASSIDY
Hell, I'll put my balls on your face, Bear. Just easy with the tongue. I'm sensitive.

BEAR
You got a bounty. Ten million dollars.

CASSIDY

It's a holiday. And besides, I
got a bodyguard.

Arseface finally climbs out of the flipped-over SUV.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

This man's a gorgon, bastard son
of Medusa herself. One look will
turn you to stone.

A beat. No one really reacts.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

Gorgon? Fuck. Doesn't anyone
read anymore?

Some SHRUGS as the group breaks apart. A BOOKISH
PSYCHOPATH raises a hand.

BOOKISH PSYCHOPATH

I got it.

CASSIDY

Kiss-ass.

EXT. TRAIL TO BOOT HILL - NIGHT

A line of torches lights a narrow path from the road into
the low foothills. A dozen KILLERS walk the trail,
including the Bookish Psychopath, one CLOWN and a pair of
TATTOOED TWINS, their faces covered with tribal designs.

Arseface hangs back, not sure he should be coming -- but
not wanting to wait at the road. Tries to make sure
Cassidy's always in sight.

Cassidy and Bear lead the pack.

BEAR

Last I heard the Yakuza got ya.

CASSIDY

Half-true.

(re: his body)

This is the half they didn't get.
So what woke up the Saint from the
big dirt nap?

BEAR

He's got quarry. A preacher.
Lotta talk this might be the big R.

CASSIDY

If it's the Reckoning, what's the preacher's angle?

BEAR

Hell if I know. I'm just a gun.

CASSIDY

You got a Coyote with you?

BEAR

Always. Who's your mark?

CASSIDY

Just a girl I need to find.

They reach a gate. Whatever fence used to be connected has long since disintegrated, but this sad wooden portal remains.

Three bodies lie at the edge of the gate, no visible wounds. They simply died at the spot.

Bear and Cassidy step through without comment. The Clown turns to Arseface, a gloved hand on his chest.

CLOWN

(sing-songy)

Graveyard gate. Killers only.

Cassidy calls back to Arseface.

CASSIDY

He's right. I'll come back for you.

ARSEFACE

Uh wan come.

CASSIDY

Look, if you ain't killed a man, you can't pass. Simple as that.

The Bookish Psychopath tries to explain...

BOOKISH PSYCHOPATH

Boot Hill lies in a shadow realm between the living and the dead. This gate is made from a hangman's tree, it...

Arseface pushes Bookish Psychopath aside and walks through unharmed.

Cassidy is surprised and impressed.

We STAY WITH Arseface as he trudges along.

PUBE (PRE-LAP)
Gimme the other one. Check it
out.

CUT TO:

EXT. PORCH - MORNING [FLASHBACK]

A teenage boy (PUBE) poses with two guns crossed in front of his chest, gangsta-style.

His only friend, DICKHEAD, takes his picture with a digital camera.

PUBE
Lemme see.

Dickhead shows him the shot.

PUBE (CONT'D)
Fuckin' A. That's the one they're
gonna use.

DICKHEAD
It's awesome.

PUBE
Let me get you. You do the
shotgun.

Dickhead picks up a shotgun. Smiles for the camera.

PUBE (CONT'D)
It's not a class photo. You have
to look badass.

DICKHEAD
I'm trying.

PUBE
Think about McMurtrie. Now think
about his brains all over Katie
Weaver.

Pube takes the picture. But Dickhead is still not particularly badass. If anything, he's less confident than before.

PUBE (CONT'D)

We gotta get going.

Pube starts loading up a black duffle bag with the two guns, some rope, several bike locks and a lot of ammunition.

DICKHEAD

Katie Weaver has Spanish first period.

PUBE

So?

DICKHEAD

McMurtrie has gym. They wouldn't be in the same room.

PUBE

People are going to be running all over the place, Dickhead. That's why we gotta block the doors.

DICKHEAD

Right.

Pube adds two box-cutters to the bag.

DICKHEAD (CONT'D)

What are those for?

PUBE

I was thinking, you know those movies where you have to do what the killer says? So like, people are cutting off their fingers and shit? How awesome would that be?

DICKHEAD

Yeah.

Dickhead closes his eyes.

PUBE

I mean, you get guys cutting their balls off? Girls gouging out their eyes? That's what makes it a legend.

Dickhead raises the shotgun, braces, then pulls the trigger. The BLAST is enough to reduce Pube to meat.

JUMP CUTS: Dickhead is SHAKING. He wipes away tears. He looks into his living room, where a framed photo of his father, Sheriff Root, glares accusingly.

Dickhead props the shotgun under his chin. SOBS.

Just as he pulls the trigger, he flinches. The blast catches only the front of his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIL TO BOOT HILL - NIGHT

Arseface -- a.k.a. Dickhead -- keeps walking. It's hard to read the expression on his deformed face.

Reaching the top of a low rise, we look down into a shallow valley, where a bonfire is burning.

At least 50 ASSASSINS and SERIAL KILLERS are gathered below. The whole event is like Burning Man for psychopaths.

BEAR (PRE-LAP)

Who guides the knife?

CROWD (PRE-LAP)

All praise The Saint!

EXT. THE BONFIRE - NIGHT

Bear is the unofficial reverend for this impromptu gathering. He has a bottle of whiskey in one hand.

BEAR

Who makes the bullet fly true?

CROWD

All praise The Saint!

BEAR

Nineteen ninety-three, Manila.
Take a contract to kill some local politico. End up in a fire fight.
Six men on me and I'm out of bullets. So I say a prayer.
"Saint of Killers," I say. "Fill my clip and I will empty it in your name. I will steal life. I will extinguish hope." And I feel a chill.

Some nods in the crowd. The Tattooed Twins share a look, remembering their own experience.

BEAR (CONT'D)

The gun in my hand grows frosty.
And I know my prayer has been
heard.

Cassidy spots a strange man at the edge of the crowd -- hunched, cowering, as if afraid to approach the fire. Leans over to Arseface.

CASSIDY

Sit tight and look pretty. I
gotta have a conversation.

Arseface nods, nonchalant.

BEAR

Who answers the call to kill?

CROWD

All praise the Saint!

Cassidy makes his way to the squatting man -- COYOTE.

With his grubby face and tattered clothes, he looks to be a standard-issue crazy homeless guy. But there's something unsettling about his eyes. They're too big. Set too close on his face. Predatory.

CASSIDY

Bear says you're the man to see.
I need to take a Long Walk.

Coyote rubs his fingers together, indicating money. He then puts them to his mouth: food.

Cassidy knows what he wants.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

You see the kid with the sour
face?

(points to Arseface)

Give me the walk and you can have
him.

Coyote looks at Arseface. Considers, then nods. Half-stands as he turns, leading Cassidy off into the night.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - NIGHT

CELEBRATORY GUNSHOTS ring throughout the canyon as we COME UPON Cassidy and Coyote. We can see the bonfire far in the distance.

Coyote smears ash on Cassidy's eyelids.

CASSIDY

I see her in my head, right?
That's how you find her.

Not acknowledging the question, Coyote places a wriggling insect on Cassidy's tongue. The Irishman reluctantly swallows.

Cassidy holds a tube that looks like a native instrument, some kind of flute or recorder. It's made of bone. Something inside it is burning.

Coyote sits facing him. Moves his fingers to cover the right holes. Nods.

Cassidy put his lips to the instrument and inhales. As smoke rises through it, it plays an unsettling CHORD, like an otherworldly bagpipe.

His lungs full, he closes his eyes.

QUICK CUTS:

- Tulip, backlit, peers into the box with Cassidy's head.
- Tulip drives the pickup, looking over at Cassidy with a smile.

BACK TO:

EXT. FOOTHILLS - NIGHT

Cassidy smiles. Nods.

Coyote scoops up a handful of sandy dirt.

As Cassidy exhales the smoke, Coyote sucks it in. It's not a kiss, but it's uncomfortably intimate. Coyote presses his forehead against Cassidy's.

Coyote slowly releases the dirt from his fist, letting it fall in a thin stream.

For a long moment, we hold. The night is still.

CUT TO:

HIGH ABOVE

The bonfire is just a small spark at the edge of frame.
We TILT UP to the thousands of stars in the night sky.

When we LOOK DOWN again, we're high above a familiar farm
with a broken-down barn. A pickup truck pulls up to the
farmhouse.

Two men get out.

We DROP DOWN, passing straight through the roof of the
barn to find ourselves...

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Tulip is tied securely to a post. (We're repeating an
earlier scene, but from Tulip's perspective.)

Cassidy and Coyote appear in front of her. They're both
spectral -- the light passes through them.

CASSIDY

Tulip!

TULIP

(confused)

How did you..?

Coyote keeps his eyes closed. He's concentrating on
maintaining this projection.

CASSIDY

Nevermind. What the fuck
happened? Who's got you? Why are
you tied up?

TULIP

Jesse's family. I think he's
here. He's hurt...

EXT. FOOTHILLS - NIGHT

The dirt slips through Coyote's hand like an hourglass.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

CASSIDY

Where are you? Where are we right now?

TULIP

It's a farm outside of Salvation. North, I think.

CASSIDY

(rushing)

Listen, there's an assassin after you, the Saint of Killers.

Coyote's eyes flick open with surprise.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

I'll come for you, okay? I'll save you.

TULIP

Hurry.

The door SLAMS open. It's T.C. He looks around, confused. Cassidy and Coyote are gone.

T.C.

Who the fuck were you talking to?

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTHILLS - NIGHT

Cassidy opens his eyes. He's sitting across from Coyote, whose eyes narrow.

CASSIDY

You heard that part about the Saint of Killers, right?

A LOW GROWL.

Suddenly, Coyote POUNCES. True to his name, there's something lupine about him -- he has massive teeth, spikes of yellowed bone. He lands a bite to Cassidy's shoulder.

With all his strength, Cassidy just manages to throw him off.

Coyote rolls onto hands and feet. Cassidy tries to get up, but he's still unbelievably stoned.

Coyote eyes the bonfire in the distance. Knows he needs to get help. Starts to HOWL.

Cassidy focuses, trying to get his shit together. With a sudden burst, he lunges after the dog-man. Tackles him, pulling him to the ground.

Coyote claws at him. His fingernails are like razors, slashing his face.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

Fuck!

Coyote almost breaks free, but Cassidy manages to get a new grip. He pins him, an arm at his throat. Finds a suitable rock and

SMASHES IT

into Coyote's head. Repeatedly.

Cassidy rolls off, staring at the giant sky. The stars move in slow circles.

His eyes close.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - PRE-DAWN

Cassidy's eyes open to find Arseface staring down at him in the blue half-light.

Coyote's body is still where he left it. Given the blood, rock and scratches, it's pretty clear what happened.

ARSEFACE

You kid im.

CASSIDY

If it makes you feel better, he was going to eat you.

He sticks out a hand. Arseface helps him up.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

You know where Salvation is?

ARSEFACE

Yuh.

CASSIDY

Get me there quick.

As Arseface and Cassidy head off, we STAY BEHIND with Coyote's body. Suddenly, it spasms.

His broken head struggles to lift. His fingers scratch at the dirt.

Only as we COME AROUND do we realize he's actually writing letters:

S A L V A T I O N

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. DOCK / SWAMP - DAWN

Waterbugs skate along the water.

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAWN

The coffin holding Jesse Custer rests ten feet below the surface, cinderblocks chained to the handles. Two air hoses snake up to the surface.

INT. A DARK PLACE - DAWN

Jesse's eyes are closed. All around him, we hear the muffled THUNKS and SCRAPES of things floating past his watery coffin.

FLASH CUTS:

- Tulip struggling against Jody.
- The gunshot ripping through Tulip's head.
- Tulip's lifeless face at Jesse's feet.

Jesse scrunches his eyes, trying to shut the images out.

As he opens his eyes, he finds himself sitting on a couch, the same spot his father did last time we were here.

He has the lighter in his hand, which he unconsciously flicks open and shut: CHING, CHING. CHING, CHING.

Young Jesse sits on the floor in front of him, but instead of staring at a TV Western, he's staring back at Jesse. It's unsettling.

JESSE

What are you looking at?

Young Jesse doesn't respond.

COWBOY (O.S.)

Seen a boy like that once.

REVEAL The Cowboy, one foot up on the arm of the couch.

COWBOY (CONT'D)

Rescued him from a tribe of
Apaches. Never spoke a word
again.

JESSE

He's me. That's me.

COWBOY

You sure about that?

Indeed, as Jesse watches, the boy transforms into the
swirling sphere of light: Genesis.

COWBOY (CONT'D)

Looking to you like you're its Pa.

JESSE

It can fuck off. I didn't ask for
this. Tulip would still be alive
if it hadn't come.

COWBOY

Or if you hadn't come back here.
Coulda laid low...

JESSE

I needed answers.

COWBOY

Bullshit. You got that voice.
You got power. Saw a chance to
put things right.

JESSE

Fine. I wanted justice. I
deserve it.

COWBOY

Call it what it is. Revenge.

Suddenly, the lighter burns Jesse's hand. He CURSES,
staring at it. An idea.

INT. COFFIN - DAY

Jesse turns over onto his side. After much struggle, his fingers dip in his jeans pocket, very carefully extracting his father's silver lighter.

Given the angle, he can't really see what he's doing. It's all by feel as he opens it -- CHING! -- and strikes the flint. The flame curls along the steel.

He maneuvers the flame to the rope at his wrist. He's burning skin and hair in the process. He can't let that stop him.

The dry hemp rope finally catches fire. He SCREAMS, biting down into the gag.

Smoke rises to the top of the coffin, sucked out of one of the hoses.

We FOLLOW THE SMOKE, up through the hose to the surface.

EXT. DOCK / SWAMP - DAY

The return hose is tied to the edge of the dock. Nearby, the pump keeps chugging, sending fresh air through the other hose.

T.C. walks up with a gas can and funnel. Time to refuel.

He sniffs the air. Smells something. Sees smoke curling out of the return hose.

Not good.

INT. COFFIN - DAY

With all his strength, Jesse tries to break through the burning ropes. He COUGHS in the smoky air.

With one last GRUNT, he finally succeeds. The moment he has a hand free, he starts working on his gag.

EXT. DOCK / SWAMP - DAY

T.C. peers into the smoky hose.

T.C.

Jesse?

INT. COFFIN - DAY

Jesse tears the gag out. With his booming VOICE:

JESSE
LET ME OUT.

EXT. DOCK / SWAMP - DAY

Without a second thought, T.C. dives headfirst into the water.

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY

T.C. follows the hoses down to coffin. Pulls the pins on the latches, flipping them open.

INTERCUT COFFIN

Water rushes in so fast that Jesse may drown before he gets out. His arms are still partially bound.

Jesse takes one last desperate breath and struggles to get out of the box, a backwoods Houdini. He finally finds enough slack in the chain to get through.

He kicks his way to the surface...

EXT. DOCK / SWAMP - DAY

...GASPING for breath.

T.C. surfaces a beat later, also half-drowned.

JESSE
CUT THE ROPES.

T.C. clings to the dock, using his Bowie knife to cut through the remainder of Jesse's bonds.

Jesse pulls himself up onto the dock.

His wrists are burned and raw, but he's otherwise intact. He stares at the farmhouse in the distance.

But first, he has to decide what to do with T.C. With a devilish grin:

JESSE (CONT'D)
NOW COUNT EVERY TREE IN TEXAS.

With the look of a wounded deer, T.C. turns his eyes to the nearest tree.

T.C.
One. Two. Three...

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Soaked and exhausted, Jesse reaches the farmhouse. A screen door CREAKS open: Jody.

With his voice BOOMING...

JESSE
DIE!

Jody steps off the porch, approaching.

JESSE (CONT'D)
STOP.
(he doesn't)
FREEZE!

Only when Jody gets quite close does Jesse see why the Voice isn't working. Blood trickles out of both of Jody's ears.

FLASH CUT:

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - DAY [MINUTES AGO]

Looking out the window, Jody sees Jesse climbing up onto the dock. Sees T.C. counting trees.

Jody pulls open a drawer, grabbing a corkscrew.

He stands in front of a dirty hallway mirror. With the determination of the truly deranged, he twists the corkscrew into each ear.

BACK TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Jesse puts up his fists. He'll fight to the death.

Jody lands three good blows unanswered.

JODY
Beat your daddy, too.

Jesse charges, with some success. But then Jody gets the advantage once again, throwing Jesse back against the truck.

When Jesse's eyes open, they're glowing red.

He catches Jody's next punch in one hand, then lands a blow of his own. It's a just-barely-supernatural strength that lets him throw Jody towards the barn.

From a new angle, we catch a glimpse of Jesse's shadow on the ground. In silhouette, he has wings.

And horns.

INT. BARN - DAY

Jesse throws Jody through a wall, bringing down a section of the barn. As he steps in to follow, Jesse seems to float for a moment, held aloft by non-existent wings.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Marie wheels herself out to the porch, rifle in hand.

A sudden wind. As DUST RISES in the farmyard, she adjusts the oxygen tube beneath her nose.

The dust settles, revealing The Saint of Killers. She's never seen him before, but is smart enough to know he's trouble.

She raises the rifle and FIRES.

The bullet bounces off the Saint, who is neither amused nor annoyed. He ignores her.

INT. / EXT. BARN - DAY

Jesse and Jody continue to trade blows.

Jesse is not just stronger than usual, but tougher. He's able to shrug off hits that should knock him down.

With a satisfied grin, Jesse lands one final punch. It lifts Jody off his feet, crashing back into the wall. And he stays there.

He tries to move, but can't. His feet aren't touching the ground.

He's become impaled on a piece of the barn itself, the splintered timber poking all the way through his chest. Blood spurts with each heartbeat, until the heartbeats stop.

Jesse falls to his knees, spent. But smiling.

The Saint of Killers walks up, guns holstered. He doesn't seem interested in killing Jesse. At least not yet.

SAINT OF KILLERS

(re: Jody)

Who was he to you?

Jesse's never seen the Saint of Killers before -- is he just an illusion, like the Cowboy? In the rush of adrenaline, Jesse doesn't much care.

JESSE

Fucker ruined my life. Killed my Dad. Killed my girl.

SAINT OF KILLERS

He do it alone?

JESSE

No.

The Saint of Killers moves, revealing Marie on the farmhouse porch.

She's trying to reload the rifle, but the box of bullets has slipped to the ground. She can't quite reach it from the wheelchair.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Everything he did, he did for her.

MARIE

Don't listen to him, Jesse. Mr. DeBlanc warned that someone might come...

JESSE

...and what? Save me?

MARIE

...corrupt you. Turn you to darkness. You're weak, Jesse. Always have been.

His voice BOOMING...

JESSE

SHUT UP.

Just like that, Marie can't say a word.

And in the silence, it starts to click for Jesse.

JESSE (CONT'D)

DeBlanc. That man. He was real.

FLASH CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE REVIVAL - DUSK [FLASHBACK]

Young Jesse looks up at DeBlanc.

DEBLANC

The Word is a heavy burden. It can crush you. It can consume you if you're not strong enough.

YOUNG JESSE

Strong enough for what?

DEBLANC

A glorious day is coming, Mr. Custer, for you have been chosen by Heaven. You will be our champion. Until then, your grandmother will make you ready.

Young Jesse looks over at Marie, who is watching the two of them carefully.

BACK TO:

EXT. FARM - DAY

ANGLE ON Jesse.

JESSE

My whole life, everything you done to me, it was a plan, wasn't it? Toughen me up so I could survive this thing you put in me. You ruined me. You killed everything I loved. There ain't a hell deep enough for you.

The Saint of Killers takes one of his revolvers out of its holster. Places it in Jesse's hand.

SAINT OF KILLERS

Finish it.

CLOSE ON Jesse, feeling the weight of the gun. It's solid. It's real.

CLOSE ON the cylinder. The chambers are empty.

JESSE

Not loaded.

SAINT OF KILLERS

Is if you want it to be.

Marie stares down Jesse, silently daring him.

Jesse FIRES.

The bullet glows red as it spins out of the barrel. It catches Marie's oxygen tank, which EXPLODES in a fireball.

The blast launches Marie skyward, SHRIEKING as the flames engulf her.

She finally crashes back to the ground, a crumpled, burning body.

The farmhouse catches fire, flames spreading from the porch roof to the main building. Jesse is happy to watch it burn.

SAINT OF KILLERS (CONT'D)

How'd that feel?

JESSE

Good.

SAINT OF KILLERS

Things this woman done -- who let her?

JESSE

What do you mean?

SAINT OF KILLERS

Someone told her to. Someone put you here on this farm, in this swamp, this world of shit to suffer.

JESSE

God.

SAINT OF KILLERS

God, Heaven, the angels. They all gotta pay.

(closer)

If I could climb up to Heaven, I'd kill every one of 'em. But I can't. You can, though. That thing inside you, it's part of their world. Can walk right through the gates. You can get justice.

Realizing...

JESSE

You want me to kill God.

SAINT OF KILLERS

You're either with me or you're against me, Preacher. You got a choice.

MOVE TO REVEAL the Cowboy behind him. The white-hatted gunslinger says nothing, but Jesse feels him there. Looks back.

COWBOY

He's right. You got a choice. Helluva thing.

A long beat. Jesse looks back to the Saint. He's made up his mind.

JESSE

I'm done doing people's shitwork.
(voice booming)
GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE.

The Saint is knocked back, a dust cloud swirling around him. He can't really fight it, so instead he just locks eyes with Jesse as the cloud dissipates.

Both The Saint and the Cowboy are gone.

Jesse stands bloodstained and filthy in the ruins of the burning farm. He looks down at his hand.

He's still holding one of the Saint's revolvers.

TRANSITION TO:

THE FARMHOUSE ROOF COLLAPSES,
sending off fiery embers.

INT/EXT. BARN - DAY

We COME UPON Jesse, kneeling next to Tulip's body. It's lying where Jody tossed it, face down in the dirt.

Steeling himself, Jesse turns the body over.

Tulip is dead in a way you never see movie heroines. Dirt clings to her waxy face, her lifeless eyes half-open. Dried blood stiffens the fabric of her shirt from where it pooled.

Jesse sits back, overwhelmed, brushing off exhausted tears.

He spots Young Jesse -- actually Genesis -- watching him.

Young Jesse approaches. Squats down next to Tulip's body, curious.

JESSE

Don't you fucking touch her.

He obeys. Suddenly, Young Jesse reaches his hand up to the sky, as if holding a book.

YOUNG JESSE

The Word of God is the only salvation! The Word of God is the bridge over hellfire! The Word of God is the trumpet at Jericho, and all will fall before it.

Jesse recognizes his old sermon.

Young Jesse leans to his ear. CLOSE as he WHISPERS:

YOUNG JESSE (CONT'D)

The Word is life.

As we go WIDER, the boy is gone. But Jesse understands what he was implying.

He gets on his knees. And though he doesn't dare hope it could work, he speaks directly to Tulip's dead body:

JESSE
Come back. Come back. Live.
(the Voice)
LIVE!

There's no change in Tulip, but Jesse feels a light glowing through his shirt. It suddenly flares BRIGHTER, an agonizing heat.

Wing-like fields of energy erupt from his shoulder blades. His fingertips SMOKE. His eyes glow.

He's half-transformed into another being -- neither angel nor devil, but with aspects of both. Glorious and monstrous simultaneously.

He leans over Tulip. His lips part to speak.

But what comes out is not a word, but rather a NOTE. Impossibly deep, the note feels like it's summoned from within mountains and under oceans.

The ground RUMBLES.

The timbers of the barn CREAK.

Nearby trees shimmer, each leaf standing at attention, quivering.

Tulip's body suddenly JOLTS, as if hit by shock paddles. Her hands curl.

The skin of her face suddenly flushes. Moistens. Her eyelids snap shut. Her wet teeth brush her lips.

She sits bolt upright, kissing Jesse. Her hands touch his shoulder. Slide into his shirt.

As they kiss, she draws the energy off him. The glow arcs across her skin. We can hear her HEARTBEAT. The rush of blood.

Their lips part. Her eyes open with tears.

Jesse wobbles back, spent. Dazed. Fully human again.

TULIP
Tell me this is real.

JESSE
I think it's real.

He holds her face in his dirty hands, looking into her eyes.

TULIP

I feel like me. I don't feel like
a dead person.

JESSE

That's good. Really good.

They kiss again, framed in the ruins of the barn, the
farmhouse still burning behind them.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. FARM / TULIP'S PICKUP - DAY

They climb in. Jesse teeters a bit, woozy.

JESSE

(off Tulip's look)
Battery's low. I'll be alright.

He starts up the truck. Watches the burning farm in the
rear-view mirror. Happy to put it all behind him.

INT/EXT. TRUCK / COUNTY ROAD - DAY

Two lanes of asphalt heading west.

JESSE

I'm thinking Mexico. Maybe not
right away, but ultimately that's
where we want to be.

TULIP

I'm in. But I'm going to need new
clothes. I can't start a new life
covered in old blood.

JESSE

Let's get you a shirt.

Jesse makes a left, bringing them to...

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

The pickup leads us into the heart of a prototypical
small Texas town: two blocks of stores facing the
street, with a healthy number of flags -- both American
and Texan.

TITLE OVER:

4. SALVATION

The pickup parks in front of Flo's Fashions and Western Wear. If you need shirts with metal collar tips, this is your place.

A few dozen TOWNSFOLK wander about, running errands or socializing with neighbors.

Jesse climbs out, walking around to Tulip's side of the truck. She zips up a jacket to cover the blood on her shirt.

Making sure no one's watching, she tucks a 9mm into her waistband. Hands him the Saint of Killers' gun.

TULIP

It's still Texas.

He reluctantly takes it. Tucks it behind his shirt.

JESSE

I'll get us some food. Meet back here in five?

TULIP

Done.

A quick kiss and they're off in separate directions. We STAY WITH Jesse as he walks, establishing some geography.

Flo's Fashions is at the southern end of the street. As he walks north, Jesse passes a Barber Shop, a Beauty Salon, a Video Store, a Check Cashing place, and a Hardware/Fishing Store.

He crosses the street, bringing him past the Town Hall and Library, The First Bank of Salvation, and a small Diner. Throughout the walk, we also encounter various plywood-window shells of failed stores.

Jesse heads into Gully's Drug.

INT. GULLY'S DRUG - DAY

Almost an old-fashioned general store, Gully's has ice cream and sundries in addition to the pharmacy counter.

Jesse takes a basket and starts loading it with protein bars and jerky.

He doesn't notice a BEER-BELLIED FARMER watching him, a look of nervous recognition.

The farmer heads for the door, pulling out his cell phone.

INT. FLO'S FASHION - DAY

Tulip takes the first three shirts that might fit. But a sundress also catches her eye, so she adds it to the stack.

Catching the CLERK's attention:

TULIP
Can I try these on?

INT. FITTING ROOM / FLO'S FASHIONS - DAY

Tulip strips off her shirt and bra, stuffing them into the small trash can.

She decides on the sundress, slipping out of her boots and jeans.

Checking herself in the mirror, Tulip finds herself staring at her face. She pulls back her hair, trying to look for a scar where the bullet went through her head. Nothing.

INT. GULLY'S DRUG - DAY

Jesse is paying at the counter. He double-takes upon realizing that cashier LORIE BOBBS only has one oversized eye, just like his childhood playmate.

JESSE
You're Lorie, aren't you? Your brother was Billy Bob.

LORIE
You knew him?

JESSE
Years ago.

LORIE
Would have to be.

Jesse pays her. As she makes change...

LORIE (CONT'D)
He always liked you. I know you couldn'ta done what they say.

Jesse nods. Takes his bag. As he steps away, we reveal the next customer in line.

It's Arseface. He needs directions.

ARSEFACE

Uh lookih for uh fah. Some fah
whuh a preachuh lih.

Jesse doesn't hear him, already headed outside.

EXT. FLO'S FASHION - DAY

Through the window, we see Tulip paying.

The Pot-Bellied Farmer walks by at a nervous clip, talking on his cellphone.

POT-BELLIED FARMER

One hundred percent. Seen him
with my own eyes.

Tulip exits after he passes. She's wearing the sundress with her boots. Her gun is bundled up in her jacket.

She's almost at the truck she hears...

MALE VOICE

Tulip!

She looks around, spooked. Can't tell where it's coming from.

The BEEP of a horn. Her eyes land on a battered Sheriff's SUV, where Cassidy is waving at her from under a blanket shawl.

Checking that no one's watching, she quickly closes the distance.

EXT. GULLY'S DRUG - DAY

Standing at the news rack, Jesse reads the headline in a local paper:

LAWMEN DEAD IN MOTEL MASSACRE

This is all news to him. He scans the story.

Jesse feels eyes on him. A YOUNG BOY squeezes past him to climb on the kiddie horse ride. The boy sits there, half-satisfied on his stationary mount.

Jesse hands him a quarter. The boy puts it in and the horse starts slowly rocking back and forth.

Bear walks past. The burly killer doesn't seem to spot Jesse, but is instead checking the street.

A beat later...

ARSEFACE (O.S.)

You Jedde Cudduh, ry?

Jesse turns to find Arseface coming out of the drugstore. Jesse can't understand what Arseface is saying.

JESSE

Sorry. Can't help you.

He starts walking, trying to get away from him.

ARSEFACE

I'm wih Ca duh dee. We heuh to safe you.

INT. SHERIFF'S SUV - DAY

Tulip climbs in back. Cassidy stretches his blanket over both of them, tent-like.

CASSIDY

Jaysus, I see you tied up, and I'm fearin' I get here and you'll be dead.

TULIP

I was. I was dead.

CASSIDY

Dead dead?

TULIP

Right after you left, they shot me. Right through the head. I died.

CASSIDY

Fuck. I wanted to save you.

She smiles.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

You're the only other person I know who's died. Something we got in common.

The moment is pregnant, awkward. He really wants to kiss her.

Suddenly, windows BLOWS OUT. A spray of glass as bullets RIP PAST.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

Fuck!

During a pause in the barrage, Cassidy risks a look.

It's the Tattooed Twins. They're walking with AK-47s, squeezing off rounds as they approach from behind.

Pure instinct, Tulip scrambles into the front seat. Finds keys in the ignition.

Cassidy rips the shotgun from its lock. PUMPS it.

Tulip revs the engine and floors it, driving up onto the sidewalk.

Cassidy FIRES BACK with the shotgun, forcing the twins to cover.

Dodging TERRIFIED PEDESTRIANS, Tulip makes it back onto the street, gunning it north.

She checks her rear-view mirror.

The twins keep SHOOTING. The back tires BLOW OUT.

EXT. GULLY'S DRUG - DAY

Jesse and Arseface both watch the SUV roar past.

JESSE

Tulip!

ARSEFACE

Cad duh dee!

Further down the sidewalk, Bear turns.

Spots Arseface. They lock eyes. Arseface emits a panicked GRUNT, grabbing Jesse as Bear draws his gun.

At the last moment, Jesse realizes that Arseface is trying to protect him. They both dive for the drugstore door. Bear doesn't waste his shot.

EXT. END OF MAIN STREET - DAY

Two STATE TROOPER CRUISERS move in to block the far end of the street.

INT. SHERIFF'S SUV - DAY

Tulip hangs a hard left on rims, turning into...

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Spotting the empty service garage, Tulip aims for it.

EXT. GULLY'S DRUG - DAY

As Bear heads inside, the little boy continues to ride the mechanical horse.

INT. GULLY'S DRUG - DAY

At first, the store seems empty. In fact, everyone has already hit the ground. In addition to Jesse, Arseface and Lorie, there are several terrified TOWNSFOLK, all trying to hide.

An OLD WOMAN cowers by the ice machine, WHISPERING a prayer.

BEAR

Louder.

The Old Woman stops, terrified.

BEAR (CONT'D)

I said pray louder. How's the good lord supposed to hear ya?

Trembling, she tries to find her voice.

OLD WOMAN

Our Father who art in Heaven...

BEAR

WRONG! He ain't up there anymore.
But shhh! It's a secret.

CROUCHED NEAR THE GREETING CARDS

Jesse is listening, trying to figure out his next move. He readies the Saint of Killer's gun.

BEHIND THE COUNTER

Lorie quietly slides a hunting rifle from its hiding place. Arseface commando-crawls toward her. Gestures for her to give to him.

BACK TO BEAR

BEAR (CONT'D)
Me, I don't have a God. But I
have a Saint. And he is looking
for a preacher. You seen a
preacher, Grandma?

She shakes her head. Bear shakes his head. Then he nods his head, confusing her.

BEAR (CONT'D)
I'm just fucking with you.

He suddenly SHOTS her in the leg. She SCREAMS.

JESSE

gives the Voice a try:

JESSE
DROP YOUR GUN!

But it's just his normal voice.

BEAR
Fuck you.

He BLASTS at the greeting card display.

Jesse rolls to new cover.

Arseface stands up from behind the counter. Aims and FIRES. He hits Bear square in the chest, knocking him back into a rack of postcards.

But he stands right back up, BLASTING. We quickly see why: He has body armor in addition to his bulk.

Arseface and Lorie duck behind the ice cream cooler. The giant containers do a good job catching bullets.

Jesse stands. Pulls the trigger. CLICK. Nothing.

He dives back down before Bear SHOTS.

INT. GAS STATION GARAGE - DAY

Tulip pulls a chain, bringing the garage door down.
Cassidy climbs out once the daylight's gone.

CASSIDY

Christ, I hate fanatics. Once met
a guy who was one hundred percent
certain he'd found God. But they
locked him up for fucking spastics
in their eye sockets.

(beat)

Remember he wore this big top hat.

TULIP

And your eye at the end of his
dick?

CASSIDY

Hey!

Finished with the door, Tulip checks her clip.

TULIP

How many are out there?

CASSIDY

A dozen? More?

TULIP

We have seven bullets. Let's make
'em count.

EXT. ROOF OF THE BANK - DAY

The Bookish Psychopath sets up a sniper's tripod.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Lesser-seen assassins from the desert have made it out as
well: MOTORCYCLE GANGBANGERS, PYROS, and various DEATH
CULTISTS.

EXT. BEAUTY SHOP - DAY

The Clown scrapes a butcher's knife along the window,
enjoying the panic he's causing.

INT. BEAUTY SHOP - DAY

A HOUSEWIFE pulls a small revolver from her purse.

The Clown taps disapprovingly with the knife.

With a sudden burst of confidence, the woman stands and aims.

The Clown quickly draws a gun from his sleeve and FIRES, blowing out the window as he puts three bullets in her.

EXT. GAS STATION GARAGE - DAY

Tulip peeks out a side door, only to be met with a hail of bullets from the Twins.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

From the bank roof, the Bookish Psychopath starts taking out random pedestrians.

Pyros strike flares, tossing them through windows. Others kick on flamethrowers.

The Clown shoots until he's out of bullets. There's one patron left, hunkered by the back door.

CLOWN

Lucky.

He then throws his knife at her.

INT. GULLY'S DRUG - DAY

Arseface tries to get another shot, but Bear BLASTS BACK before he can aim.

BEAR

Preacher, I can wait. These other folks, tick tick tick.

He grabs a YOUNG MAN, who SCREAMS.

Jesse concentrates on the gun in his hand, trying to will it to work.

REVEAL The Cowboy is hunkered down beside him.

COWBOY

You can't think it, Jesse. It is
or it isn't.

BEAR

Got 'til five. Four. Three.

Ready to die, Jesse stands. Aims and FIRES.

The bullet, a glint of gleaming light, BLASTS Bear back
with the impact of a cannon, straight through the wall.
All the body armor in the world won't save him.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

The side door opens again, but this time it's a draped
figure that emerges, the heavy blanket draped over it
like a grade school ghost costume.

The twins empty at least 20 round into it, aiming for the
head.

Then each twin drops, felled by a gunshot.

The bullets came from Tulip, who is crouched at the
bottom of the door. She really is a great shot.

REVEAL that Cassidy wasn't even under the blanket. He
was holding a coat rack.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

STATE TROOPERS begin arriving en masse, barricading both
ends of the street.

Up on the bank roof, the Bookish Psychopath turns his
attention to the cops, who FIRE BACK.

The Pyros start lobbing grenades. Three police vehicles
BLAST UP in flames.

From here on, there is no letup in the constant barrage
of bullets and blasts. It's the end of a fireworks
extravaganza, with everything going off at once.

INT. GULLY'S DRUG - DAY

Jesse peeks out, checking the action on the street. He
can spot Tulip's truck, but there are lots of bullets
flying around it.

Suddenly, DeBlanc is standing beside him. It's a beat before Jesse recognizes him. Disbelief.

DEBLANC

You have to run. The Saint of Killers will answer that shot and he will kill you.

JESSE

I'm just supposed to leave these people here?

Arseface and Lorie get up from behind the counter. They can't see DeBlanc, so it appears that Jesse is talking to himself.

DEBLANC

You are essential. These people are not.

Jesse spots the little boy who was riding the horse, crouched down beside the machine.

JESSE

Get inside. Now!

He watches until the boy is safely inside.

Turning on DeBlanc, Jesse tries to push him against the wall. His hand goes right through him, a swirl of tiny lights.

JESSE (CONT'D)

What the hell are you?

DEBLANC

An angel. I speak for the high council of Heaven.

JESSE

Bullshit.

Jesse heads out to find Tulip.

EXT. GULLY'S DRUG / MAIN STREET - DAY

With each shot, Jesse takes down another killer. The gun is strong enough to blast through barriers and cover. He's enough of a target to draw every killer's aim.

JESSE

(yelling, searching)
Tulip?! Tulip?!

DeBlanc moves with him, an unseen and unwelcome sidekick. Jesse can't escape him -- he's everywhere, without even moving.

DEBLANC

You were chosen for a holy
purpose, Jesse Custer -- to lead
the armies of Heaven! But to do
that, you must survive.

Jesse dives for cover as shotgun-toting Bikers come after him.

The blasts pass right through DeBlanc, barely causing a ripple.

Jesse FIRES back, felling two Bikers with one shot.

DEBLANC (CONT'D)

You must become what you will be.

JESSE

Right. It's my destiny.

DEBLANC

Destiny is what Heaven decides for
you. This is what Heaven's
decided.

Jesse blasts a Pyro, whose fuel tank EXPLODES. The flaming man staggers forward a few steps before falling.

VARIOUS SHOTS

Tulip and Cassidy make their way through a boarded-up store. Bullets RIP through the plywood, shafts of smoky sunlight.

Lorie shields the young boy while Arseface stands guard with the rifle.

Townspeople bunker down, trying to find cover. The Pot-Bellied Farmer hides between two parked cars.

A DEPUTY falls, taken down by the rooftop sniper.

Flaming cars roll down the street.

BACK ON JESSE

Suddenly, it all clicks. He understands it on his own terms:

JESSE

When I was a boy, you asked me if
I knew what morality was. It's
right and wrong. It's a choice.
No one can decide for you.

(closer)

So I choose no. I ain't your
savior. I ain't your sheriff.

DEBLANC

You would see Heaven destroyed.

JESSE

No. But I'm putting Texas first.
God has a problem with that, he
can find me.

He walks away.

As we go WIDER, DeBlanc is gone.

JESSE (CONT'D)

(calling out)

Tulip! Tulip! Where are you?

TULIP

Jesse!

He finally spots Tulip, working her way south. Cassidy
is with her, covered with the blanket.

The Bookish Psychopath's sniper rifle has them pinned
down behind a parked van.

Jesse steps out into the street. He can't really get a
shot at the Bookish Psychopath, so he aims a little
lower. The shot BLASTS off the top edge of the
building, sending the sniper falling two stories to the
sidewalk below.

AT THE NORTH END OF THE STREET

State Troopers and SWAT teams prepare to move in. Few
notice the sudden wind and swirl of dust behind them.

Few notice the first snowflakes falling, or the frost
etching on the windows.

Few see the arrival of the Saint of Killers.

He has a single gun, but it will be enough.

TULIP AND CASSIDY

make their way to the pickup. Out of nowhere, the Clown suddenly rushes at them with the butcher knife.

Cassidy throws himself in front of Tulip, taking the knife in the gut. He headbutts the clown, tackling him. As they wrestle, the blanket comes off and Cassidy starts to smolder.

Tulip gets a clean shot on the Clown -- her last. She's out of bullets.

Cassidy rolls under a car for shade, snuffing his flames.

The only GUNSHOTS being fired are at the north end of the street, where the troopers are futilely trying to take down the invulnerable Saint of Killers. He simply keeps walking, methodically killing each man in his way.

Jesse meets up with Tulip near the pickup.

JESSE
You hurt?

TULIP
I'm fine.

JESSE
Get the truck.

TULIP
Jesse...

JESSE
I gotta finish this.

He starts walking north.

Cassidy is still under the car, hiding from the sun. The blanket he was using for cover is out of reach, and a bit singed to boot.

Arseface leans under the car.

ARSEFACE
Cad duh dee!

CASSIDY
Get me something to cover up with.

AT THE NORTH END,

silence. There's only one man left standing: the Saint of Killers. He walks through the rubble of burning cars.

The sky darkens. The snow begins to fall in earnest.

Jesse walks in the center of the road. It's setting up to be a classic showdown. Both men keep their pistols down as they approach, stopping with about thirty feet between them.

It's oddly quiet, just the lap of flames and distant SIRENS. Flags still blow in the snowy, smoky wind.

SAINT OF KILLERS

I'll take that gun back, Preacher.

JESSE

You'll try.

A series of shots extends the moment:

Snowflakes fall.

Eyes focus.

Lips wet.

Elbows bend.

Boots scrape.

Fingers twitch.

The Saint of Killers aims and FIRES. Jesse does the same.

The bullets meet in mid-air, exploding into cinders and sparks.

Both men FIRE REPEATEDLY. Each time, the bullets collide. It's like shooting at a mirror.

The Saint gives a faint grimace of frustration. Jesse almost smiles.

Suddenly, ANOTHER SHOT rings out. A bullet grazes Jesse's shoulder.

It's one of the Tattooed Twins, less dead than expected.

Jesse takes him down with one fiery shot. But it's enough of an opening for the Saint. He blasts the gun out of Jesse's hand.

It falls on the snow-dusted street.

Knowing he's dead without the gun, Jesse risks a dive for it. The Saint BLASTS it further away.

Tulip instinctively heads for Jesse. He waves her off.

The Saint approaches, standing over Jesse.

JESSE (CONT'D)
You think you're the only one
that's ever suffered. That you're
different. Unique. You ain't
shit.

Jesse looks up at him, eyes glowing red.

JESSE (CONT'D)
YOU'RE JUST A MAN.

The Saint of Killers puts the gun to Jesse's head. Pulls the trigger.

CLICK.

There's no bullet.

Jesse's words have stripped the Saint of his supernatural aspect. He is now simply the weathered gunfighter we met at the start of the story. In every way, mortal.

The snow stops falling.

Jesse stands. Clocks him. The Saint drops his gun and punches back. He's still a tough son of a bitch, able to trade blows.

What started as a gunfight ends as a fist fight in the snow: bloody noses and bloody knuckles.

Tulip watches.

So does Cassidy from his perch under the truck. He's impressed.

Finally, Jesse knocks the Saint to the ground. The mighty killer can only rise up to his knees.

Without his trademark hat, long strands of dirty hair fall in front of his eyes.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - DAY

The Saint stands at the door to his homestead, watching crows pick at the bones of his wife and daughter.

BACK TO:

EXT. SALVATION - DAY

Experiencing the moment, the Saint lets out a gasp -- a pained cry that RATTLES in his chest. It's his last breath.

His eyes go pale. His fingers clench.

He collapses to the side. As he hits the road, his body crumbles inside his clothes, leaving nothing but dust.

WIDER, we survey the wreckage. The burning buildings. The demolished cars. The fallen killers.

Jesse takes both guns.

All eyes are on him as he walks back down the street. There are more survivors than you'd think, townspeople smart enough to keep low.

The young boy watches Jesse with an awe usually reserved for football champions.

Jesse kisses Tulip. They don't rush it.

Swaddled with a Texas flag for cover, Cassidy can only watch. Arseface misreads his reaction.

ARSEFACE

We dih ih. We safe duh princess.

CASSIDY

Yeah. Good job, Arseface.

ARSEFACE

Guh jah muahfuckuh.

Cassidy LAUGHS. Calls out to Lorie...

CASSIDY

Keep your eye on this one. He'll break your heart with that smile.

Arseface blushes. And kind of smiles.

Tulip tries to check Jesse's shoulder, but he waves her off.

JESSE
It's fine. Let's ride.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Jesse starts the engine. Tulip scoots over to make room for Cassidy as he climbs in the passenger side. She's literally stuck between them.

TULIP
Jesse, Cassidy. Cassidy, Jesse.

CASSIDY
We kinda met. You were naked.

TULIP
That's right.

CASSIDY
(to Jesse)
Thanks for taking care of my girl.
Fuckin' obliged.

A beat.

JESSE
Yeah.

He puts it in reverse.

They head south, weaving past the wreckage of police vehicles.

Jesse takes one last look at the destroyed town of Salvation.

As the pickup drives off, the sun breaks through the clouds, a shaft of light like a Dutch master painting.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. MEXICAN BEACH TOWN - NIGHT

FOUR GUITARS begin the dramatic introduction to "The Old Spanish Trail," part of a small band performing for the village.

It's Saturday night, and the boardwalk is crowded with families: MOTHERS and CHILDREN, UNCLES MISSING FINGERS, GRANDMOTHERS dancing with their SISTERS' HUSBANDS.

Pennants flap in the ocean breeze. Fluorescent lights buzz. Beer is plentiful.

Moving through the crowd, we spot the only blonde:
Tulip.

She's dancing with Jesse in a newly-bought dress. For the first time in a long time, she's fully and unabashedly happy.

Cassidy cuts his way through the crowd. Tulip pulls him in dance with them. Neither Jesse nor Cassidy is particularly delighted with this idea.

CASSIDY
Found us some lodging.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The moon hangs over the deep blue water. A light wind stirs the tree. It's the perfect night, a postcard come to life.

Jesse, Cassidy and Tulip walk with HECTOR, a man in his 50's with a gentle face and a bit of a paunch. He's immediately likable, a Mexican Santa Claus.

Based on his English, he's likely spent quite a few years in the States.

TULIP
So, Hector. How long you been
down here?

HECTOR
Many years. So many I forget.

TULIP
You like it.

HECTOR
Oh. Every day, I wake up, I see
the ocean. I hear children play.
Before, I was so busy I never
enjoyed these things. I would see
others doing it, and I think, "One
day. One day I will leave all this
and be happy." I'm happy now.

He points to a bungalow that backs up to the water.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
This is the house.

TULIP
It's perfect.

CASSIDY
And you said it's got drapes,
right? Heavy ones. 'Cuz I might
need to sleep in what with these
two ruttin' all night.

TULIP
You can sleep in a hammock.

JESSE
You can sleep in a cave.

Hector hands Cassidy keys.

HECTOR
You stay here tonight. If you
like it, you pay me tomorrow.
Stay as long as you want.

TULIP
Gracias, Hector.

She squeezes his hand. He's charmed.

HECTOR
Buenas noches, señorita.

Cassidy and Tulip head for the house. Jesse calls after
them:

JESSE
I'll catch up.

He stays behind with Hector. We trail Tulip and Cassidy
for a few moment, until they pass out of earshot.

TULIP
Don't I need to invite you in,
anyway?

CASSIDY
That's fucking mythology. Racist,
too.

TULIP
How is that racist?

CASSIDY

Fuckin' class system, slaves and
servants around back, yessir, no
sir...

BACK WITH JESSE AND HECTOR

They stand watching the ocean. Listening to the waves
crash.

JESSE

Doesn't anyone ever come looking
for you?

HECTOR

No. It's a big world.

JESSE

And a pretty fucked-up one. Isn't
it selfish to just be hiding out
in Mexico when there is so much
you could do? Don't you owe the
world more?

Hector shrugs.

HECTOR

I've done a lot. Let someone else
have a shot.

JESSE

Met one guy who really wanted a
shot at you.

HECTOR

The Saint of Killers, yes.
There's worse than him out there.
You'll see.

JESSE

You could stop 'em. You could fix
everything.

HECTOR

Then how would the world grow up?
(a shrug)
There is a plan, Jesse Custer.
You're part of it. But who's to
say what's best for everyone,
right? Fuck Communism.

Jesse smiles despite himself.

Hector heads back across the sand to the distant lights of the town.

Jesse looks down, noticing Hector's footprints.

The SAND FILLS IN by itself, smoothing over every step. Hector leaves no trace.

He walks alone, confident. He is, after all, God.

JESSE

Amen.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END