

PREACHER

BY

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CASSIDY sits at the bar with a glass of beer, packet of Camels in front of him beside his change, one lit in his hand. Bar noises behind him - jukebox music, conversation. Occasional glimpse of people passing by behind him. Smoky atmosphere. We stay on him as he knocks back the beer, sets down the empty glass, smiles wryly.

CASSIDY

Piss. And not enough of it.

The BARMAN picks up the glass. Cassidy draws on his cigarette, sits back. He'll now tell us the story as if we were sitting at the bar beside him, so he won't always be looking right at us.

CASSIDY

So where was I? Oh aye, the Preacher. Well, before I get stuck into this you'd better get it straight that this is no ordinary story. Ordinary story is boy meets girl, boy gets girl up the stick, father forbids boy to see girl but true love wins through, audience pukes its ring, the end. Or maybe bad guys kill helpless innocents, head bad guy with English accent prepares to take over the world, Arnie Schwarzenegger kills everybody in sight, girl shows us her tits, everything blows up, the end...

The barman sets down a fresh beer. Cassidy is pleased.

CASSIDY

But this one's different. Just about as different as you can fucking get, to tell you the truth. Jesus, I was smack in the middle of it, and even I don't believe half the fucking things that went on. There was angels. Demons. Rednecks. Gunslingers from beyond the grave. Fucking vampires, would you believe. There was a boy with a face that looked like your arsehole, and a woman who was braver than any man I ever met, and a man who stood tall in front of Heaven itself and faced down the power of God.

He sips his beer, looks thoughtful, smiles a bit.

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1

CASSIDY

You wouldn't know to look at me, but I'm ninety-seven years old. I thought I'd seen it all. But you won't have to see too much of this one before you realize what I did: that absolutely fuckin' anything can happen anytime. That there aren't any rules to this. That you're entering the one hundred percent bugfuck maniac Geoffrey Dahmer's-running-down-Broadway-with-John Wayne Bobbitt's-dick-in-a-bucket-of-napalm-zone, and any attempt to understand it is gonna make your arse turn inside out. It's a love story. It's a horror story. It's a violent story.

He thinks for a moment, trying to find the words. Then he relaxes.

CASSIDY

It started in church.

2 EXT. ANNVILLE - NIGHT

2

Starting from out in the Texas desert, we move slowly in towards the few lights of ANNVILLE. Getting closer, we realize we're in Hicksville, the ass-end of nowhere. A main street with a few smaller ones off it. We move past a bar - just some low light, not much noise. Looking down a side street, we see two DRUNKS supporting each other for the stagger home. Further on, a quick look down an alley reveals movement, the sound of breaking glass. A sheriff's dept. cruiser passes us, going in the opposite direction. Moving across the town square we see another DRUNK passed out on a bench, with a vile-looking DOG raping his unconscious leg.

We move slowly towards the church, a simple wooden building just outside town, on the opposite side to where we came in. A light is on within, and as we get closer we hear raised voices, a man's and a woman's.

3 INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

3

The church is an old building, as simple within as without. Just rows of pews facing a lectern on a raised platform. Large black cross on the wall.

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The REVEREND JESSE CUSTER stands in front of the platform, uncomfortable. Facing him is TULIP O'HARE, angry and amazed.

TULIP

You're a Preacher? A fucking preacher? Jesse, I can't fucking believe this! It took me so long to find you, I knew you had to be mixed up in something crazy, but...

JESSE

Tulip, I know this has gotta be kind of upsetting-

TULIP

Yes, I'd say it's pretty fucking kind of upsetting. You walk out on me without a word of warning, you leave me high and dry in Phoenix with twenty-seven dollars to my name, and now after three years of searching the length and breadth of Texas I find you and what are you doing? You're worshipping fucking God!

JESSE

Aw, now don't say his name like that-

TULIP

Excuse me, I'm just a little bit pissed at him at the moment. I'll say his name any way I want. I mean what the fuck is going on here? I expected to find you running hash over the border, or running a goddamn strip joint, or that you'd just gone back to the good old G.T.A. I expected to find you banging that skinny slut from Waco, whatsername. But instead you're a Preacher, an honest to fuck man of God, and the only thing you're banging is the Bible! Now what in the name of fuck is that all about?

JESSE

Honey-

TULIP

And another thing, just exactly how does an ex-car thief qualify for the fucking Ministry anyhow? There's no way you're telling me the church has

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TULIP (CONT'D)

started embracing the kind of shit
that we used to get up to!

JESSE

It wasn't all that bad-

TULIP

It wasn't? Christ, Jesse, there are
people from New Orleans to San Diego
still wondering what happened to
their fucking Ferraris. The Jesse
Custer I remember could hot-wire the
Space Shuttle blindfold, used to put
bourbon in his coffee because
"sugar's for fags", and liked to fuck
all day and all night till the sun
came up again. Now, I don't recall
learning too much of that kind of
thing in Sunday School, but if that's
what Christians are into these days
then please, tell me: where do I sign
up?

They look at each other for a moment, Jesse unsure of what to
do, Tulip exasperated. Then she calms a little.

TULIP

Just tell me why.

JESSE

...I can't.

TULIP

What do you mean, you can't?

JESSE

I mean I can't tell you why I left
you to become a Preacher. I made a
promise to someone, someone real
important to me. I had to do right
by 'em.

TULIP

(hurt, taken aback)

But what about me, Jesse? Didn't you
care about doing right by me?

JESSE

Oh Jesus, honey. Of course I did. I
just...I thought you'd get over it,
find someone else...

(CONTINUED)

TULIP

You were my dream, Jesse. How did you think I was gonna get over you? All that time we spent, running cars into Vegas or Austin or San Antone, and I used to look at you and say, "He's really mine."

(pause)

And you used to look at me and say you'd love me until the end of the world.

JESSE

(miserable)

I know. I know. But it can't ever be that way again.

TULIP

Why not?!

JESSE

I told you. I made a promise. I never went back on my word to anyone, an' if I was to start doin' it now I figure I wouldn't be worth a good goddamn.

She stares at him, quietly stunned. He looks back at her, sad but determined. There it is. She puts a hand to her face. Jesse reaches out to her, concerned.

TULIP

(furious, recoiling)

Get off me! Goddamn it, do you have any idea how much you fucking hurt me?

JESSE

I guess not.

TULIP

Fuck you! You and your fucking macho bullshit! You throw everything we had down the toilet for some fucking promise to do a job you know is bullshit? Well the hell with you, Jesse Custer. You make such a big deal about how you never lie or go back on your word and oh, no, you never did-

(vicious)

Except to me.

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3

She turns and stomps out, furious, almost tearful. The miserable Jesse can only stand and watch her go.

The door slams behind her and Jesse is left alone. He slumps back into a pew, as low as he can go, upset and a little angry.

JESSE

Shit.

He turns towards the lectern. Below the open Bible on top of it is a little shelf, hidden from the view of the congregation. On it are a nearly full bottle of Jack Daniel's, a silver Zippo and several packets of Marlboros.

4 INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

4

Jesse sits alone, smoking a Marlboro, taking long, slow pulls on the bourbon. He's taken his jacket off, loosened his collar. About a dozen cigarette butts lie stubbed out on the pew beside him. He has a surly look about him, pissed off at the world in general and the shitty hand dealt him by fate. He stares resentfully up at the big black cross behind the lectern. He's turned all the lights out except for a little one on the lectern that illuminates the Bible. Lots of shadows. He raises the bottle again, swigs it. Only half-full now. Jesse drinks bourbon the way normal people drink water.

5 INT. BAR - NIGHT

5

Flashback. A slightly YOUNGER JESSE, wearing black T-shirt and jeans, strides confidently through a crowded bar with a pretty, if skinny, dark-haired GIRL on his arm. The place is jumping, dark and smoky, a rough crowd getting good and drunk. Light comes mostly from neon beer signs. As he passes us, a face in the background swims into focus: the YOUNGER TULIP, seeing him for the first time, liking what she sees.

Jesse leans back against the bar, sticks a cigarette in his mouth, surveys the bar with mild interest as his girlfriend searches her purse for a lighter. To Jesse's slight surprise, a woman's hand comes into view from his other side, lighting his cigarette with a silver Zippo. By the time his girlfriend has come up with her own lighter, it's too late. The girl turns, startled to see Jesse staring into Tulip's eyes as she closes the Zippo, smiling knowingly back at him. Zing. Instant connection.

6 INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

6

Jesse takes another pull on the bourbon, head leant back against the pew.

7 EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

7

A long stretch of road running through the middle of nowhere, under a vast blue sky. A bright red convertible Ferrari suddenly tears past a sheriff's dept. cruiser, easily doing 120+ m.p.h. Huge dust cloud behind it.

8 INT. FERRARI - DAY

8

The younger Jesse and Tulip. He's driving, grinning, enjoying her attention as she laughs in delight. A quick glimpse of the cruiser disappearing in the dust behind them as she leans over to him and they kiss, smiling all the while.

9 INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

9

Another swig for Jesse. We move a little closer each time.

10 EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

10

Younger Jesse and Tulip making love on the hood of the Ferrari, lying in their own discarded clothes. Beautiful night in the desert, towers of rock rising in the background, sky full of stars. As we move closer they finish, kissing each other deeply. Jesse looks down at her and they both grin, exhausted but happy.

Jesse's p.o.v.: Tulip smiling up at him, happy, loving. This is his sweetest memory of her - bathed in starlight. A long moment.

11 INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

11

Another swig. Barely any whiskey left. He looks miserable for a moment, saddened.

12 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

12

Younger Jesse comes charging down the hospital corridor, desperate, running past various curious DOCTORS and

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12 CONTINUED:

12

ORDERLIES. He rounds a corner, enters a room, freezes in alarm. Nearer us, a DOCTOR and a couple of NURSES turn to face him. The doctor has a sympathetic look.

13 INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

13

Jesse's pain takes on a bitter edge as he grits his teeth to retain control.

14 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

14

Jesse sits alone in the darkened hospital room, staring at the floor, face in shadow. Behind him, an ECG and various monitors are turned off. As we pull back we realize there's a body in the bed, sheet pulled up to cover the face. We pull back further and fade out.

15 OMITTED

15

16 OMITTED

16

17 INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

17

Jesse raises his head, and we see that anger is replacing sadness as he stares up at the cross, bitter and resentful. He gets angrier with each passing second. His lip curls into a snarl as he stands and flings the empty bottle with all his might. It shatters into a million pieces against the cross. The sound seems huge in the enclosed space - then it fades.

18 EXT. CHURCH - MORNING

18

Lovely day. A pickup truck pulls up and parks. Then a battered car pulls up alongside it. More engines can be heard too.

19 INT. CHURCH - MORNING

19

Jesse lies across one of the pews, asleep in his clothes. Bright light floods in through the windows. He slowly raises his head, bleary-eyed. Not looking too good. Hair tousled, unshaven, red eyes, clothes dishevelled. He grimaces as the hangover makes itself known. Slowly he becomes aware of the engine noises outside.

Then he freaks.

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19

JESSE

Oh, fuck!

20 EXT. CHURCH - MORNING

20

About a dozen cars and pick-ups - none in very good condition - are drawn up in front of the church, some still parking. People, family groups mostly, are making their way towards the door. Jesse's congregation has arrived.

21 INT. CHURCH - MORNING

21

Jesse rushes desperately about, attempting to kick the broken glass and cigarette butts under the pews, do up his collar, pull on his jacket, straighten his hair and slap himself awake - all in five seconds.

JESSE

Sunday! It would have to be fuckin'
Sunday!

22 EXT. CHURCH - MORNING

22

The folks head for the church door. The guy in front reaches to push it open.

23 INT. CHURCH - MORNING

23

Jesse stands in the aisle between the pews as the light from the open door falls across him. He looks a little bit cleaner, but not much. He plasters on a fake smile and fights hard to look as cheerful as possible.

JESSE

Mornin'!

24 EXT. EARTH ORBIT - DAY

24

The GENESIS entity tears past us, a flaming white comet plunging towards Earth, which lies below like a vast field of blue.

25 INT. CHURCH - MORNING

25

The congregation have taken their seats, and Jesse stands at the lectern, leaning on it as he gives his sermon.

(CONTINUED)

JESSE

...and that's what Jesus was trying to tell us when he did these things: that God, his Father in Heaven, will forgive us our sins no matter what they might be...

Jesse really isn't looking well. The hangover's kicking in but good. He's sweating. He runs a hand through his hair, blinks a lot to try to concentrate.

JESSE

But we have to ask him for that forgiveness.

His congregation is not particularly inspiring material. Maybe 20-25 people, all staring dully back at him or at the floor, bored. KIDS look out the windows. A couple of FAT GUYS, a STRINGY-LOOKING WOMAN, an OLDER GUY WITH NO CHIN, a FAT KID picking his nose.

JESSE

And we have to mean it when we ask, or his forgiveness is rendered pointless. We can't expect to sin and be forgiven all throughout our lives. God can forgive us our sins - but it's up to us to accept his forgiveness and his love, and live from that point on without sin, as best as we are able...

Jesse stifles a belch, swallows hard, sweats; tries to smile and look like a guy who's got the inside scoop.

JESSE

What we can't do is come to church every Sunday an' say a few quick prayers, and then sin as much as we darn well want for the rest of the week.

As he continues, we focus on one of the fat guys in the congregation again - he's asleep. Then a BORED TEENAGE BOY, looking down his SISTER'S cleavage. Then the nose-picking kid, and the huge booger he's hauling out of his nostril. Jesse's voice begins to falter.

JESSE

That ain't the way it works, folks. The Lord wants a commitment from us...and...

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25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

Jesse's eyes narrow as he peers down at them.

JESSE

And, uh...he wants a promise of
faith...

The nose-picking kid's booger slides out of his nose, stuck to his finger. It's a biggie, all right, all green and snattery. Jesse's face falls in weary disgust.

JESSE

Because that's how...

He clams up and we see the anger returning to his face. A moment passes.

JESSE

Aw, fuck it!

That gets their attention.

26 EXT. CHURCH - MORNING

26

The ugly leg-raping dog from the previous night meanders past the church, then looks up to the sky. High in the blue above there's a flash of bright light, a distant crack of thunder, then a faint, descending glow.

27 INT. CHURCH - MORNING

27

The congregation gapes at Jesse, transfixed. He rants at them, red-faced and furious, spitting hate. He's like some evangelist on PCP as he pours out his frustration.

JESSE

You bunch of dull-eyed fucks! You
stupid, worthless, inbred
cocksuckers! You sit there like a
bunch of fucked-to-death zombies
while I spout this fucking bullshit
at you - you think I do this for fun?
You think this is your goddamned
entertainment? I'm supposed to be
looking after your fucking shitty
spiritual welfare here, and all you
do is sit on your fat redneck asses
and stare back at me, 'til I feel
like some kinda zoo animal on
mongoloid visitin' day! Well fuck
you, you hear me? You assholes are
doin' exactly the kind of shit I was

(MORE)

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27 CONTINUED:

27

JESSE (CONT'D)
talkin' about, but you can't even
fucking see it!

He points to each particular sinner in turn, beginning with
the chinless guy.

JESSE
Harve Collins. I could feed half of
India on the grants you get for that
farm, Harve - which'd be a lot more
than you ever did, you chinless
lookin' motherfucker!

The stringy-looking girl is next, horrified. So's Harve.

JESSE
An' what about the little straight to
video release that Kate here shot in
your barn? You get consent from that
stallion, Kate, or were you just
trynna broaden his horizons?

HARVE
I've never seen this woman before in
my life -

But JESSE has moved on to a SPOTTY YOUTH in the back row.

JESSE
Mark Bannon! Ate dogshit for a dare
last Saturday night! What the fuck
is it with you, you don't eat enough
shit working in goddamned McDonald's?

Moving on to a DOZY-LOOKING GUY in the middle, with a steel
plate bolted across his nose, and then the petrified nose-
picking kid.

JESSE
But movin' on past Michael here, the
only Annville boy who ever went to
California, and you - you dirty
little fucker, you oughta keep
pullin' 'til you drag your goddamn
brains outta there too - what I wanna
know is, exactly why the fuck do you
people come here? What the fuck is
it you think I can do for you? I
been fuckin' trynna tell you, you
can't act like assholes all week an'
then wash it away with half an hour
here on Sunday mornings! That just
ain't how it works!

28 EXT. CHURCH - MORNING

28

The dog is barking now - the white glow in the sky has grown, gotten nearer, becoming the fiery white comet we saw before: Genesis. It's on a collision course with the church.

29 INT. CHURCH - MORNING

29

The congregation is muttering now as they stare at Jesse, not pleased. He seems to be building to a climax.

JESSE

I pray for you, you know that? I ask God to help you see the way you act is wrong. I ask him to help me show you what's right. But it's been two years now, and you assholes are just as fucked up as you always were. And all I can conclude is that the good Lord is using my prayers to wipe his ass...

This is too much. Most of them get to their feet. Several shouts. The fat guy snarls.

FAT GUY

Fuck you, Custer! We never asked for you!

JESSE

(to the skies)

So you tell me, God, 'cause you've got all the fuckin' answers, you tell me what I'm supposed to do here. Tell me how the good people of Annville, Texas figure in the grand design. You bust me up with a girl so perfect I could live a hundred lifetimes an' never meet another like her, an' you send me to this worthless fuckin' shithole so I can minister to all these goddamned throwbacks - so come on, Lord! Give me a sign! Give me some incontrovertible evidence that the Almighty ain't got His head shoved firmly up His ass!

A sudden explosion of light. The door flies apart. Before anyone can even turn to look, the Genesis comet charges into the church and right at Jesse. His eyes bulge in amazement.

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29

The comet comes at him in slow motion, a white hot ball of light trailing fire. A beautiful, angelic man's face appears in the light, screaming soundlessly. It changes instantly to an equally beautiful but demonic, disturbing woman's face, also screaming.

Then it hits Jesse, no longer in slow motion. Another burst of light, then he's hurled backwards against the cross. The comet disappears. Jesse falls to the ground in a heap. The congregation stares, then they turn to each other, bewildered.

FAT GUY

What the fuck was that?

CHINLESS GUY

What the fuck's up with the Reverend?

Jesse is suddenly flung into the air and hangs there, limbs jerking and twitching, eyeballs rolled over white, sparks and smoke coming off him. A vast figure is glimpsed in the smoke and lights around him - first with huge wings that flicker and disappear, then with cloven hooves and long, curved horns. A distant rumbling.

The congregation stares, riveted but terrified.

Then the smoking and sparking stop, as does the noise. The figure disappears. Only Jesse is left, hanging there, apparently unconscious.

30 EXT. CHURCH - MORNING

30

A sudden blast of white light from within. Terrified screaming. A pause - then the windows shatter outwards and the roof explodes into the sky. The building shakes, boards flying loose from the wall, but the structure just about holds. The white light flares up and out, filling the screen.

31 EXT. MOTEL - DAY

31

Tulip gloomily dumps an overnight bag and her purse into the passenger seat of her pick-up truck. She takes a last look around Annville, finds nothing inspiring, gets in.

32 INT. TULIP'S PICK-UP - DAY

32

She sits there for a moment, gloomy, then examines her reflection in the rear view. Sad girl. She pulls her lipstick out of her purse, giving us a quick glimpse of the

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32 CONTINUED:

32

357 Desert Eagle concealed therein, and turns back to the mirror. She squints at it, curious. Her eyes widen as the view behind her suddenly disappears in a white flash. Tulip freaks, instinctively ducking down in her seat. The pick-up rocks back and forth. When Tulip sits up again, the whiteness has gone and the view is back to normal - except for a pall of smoke rising on the other side of the town.

Tulip is stunned almost to silence, horror building in her.

TULIP

Jesse.

She starts the pickup.

33 EXT. ANNVILLE MAIN STREET - DAY

33

Several people are stumbling into the street to stare at the rising smoke. They scatter as Tulip's pick-up charges down the street through them.

34 INT. TULIP'S PICKUP - DAY

34

Tulip guns it, scared but determined.

35 EXT. CHURCH - DAY

35

The church is a wreck. The four walls are still intact, but not much else. Black smoke pours from within. Tulip's truck screeches to a halt. She jumps out and runs into the church.

The leg-raping dog has been reduced to a blackened skeleton.

36 INT. CHURCH - DAY

36

Despite the smoke, the church isn't actually on fire. The walls are badly holed, the roof is gone, the place is a soot-stained wreck - but as Tulip discovers, picking her way carefully through the rubble, the smoke is coming from the remains of the congregation. Their scorched skeletons lie sprawled over the pews or flung back into seated positions, little fires burning inside the ribcages, flesh burnt clean off the bones. A hellish scene.

Tulip advances, shocked, fearful of what's yet to come. She coughs a bit, wafts the smoke aside. She passes the skeleton of the nose-picking kid, sitting stupidly with a bony finger jammed in its nasal cavity. She turns to us, catches sight of something, stifles a gasp. Jesse lies sprawled across the little platform at the front, burning pages from

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36

the Bible fluttering around him. His face is smeared with soot, his hair tangled, his clothes scorched and filthy. Unconscious. Tulip rushes to him, terrified.

TULIP

Aw no-!

She feels for a pulse, frantic, then smiles with infinite gratitude and relief. Jesse stirs a little, grunts. Tulip looks round at the ghastly remains of the congregation, then down at Jesse. She's thinking fast, very wary.

TULIP

Jesus Christ, Jesse. What are you into?

She gets an arm under him, hauls him up.

37 EXT. CHURCH - DAY

37

Tulip shoves the unconscious Jesse up and into the back of her pick-up, straining with all her might. She seems pretty agitated, ready to be off. She opens the passenger side door, grabs a blanket from under the seat. As she closes the door, she notices several townsfolk making their way towards the church.

TULIP

We really have to be going.

She stretches Jesse out, hurrying, and spreads the blanket over him. Then she climbs into the truck, starts her up and speeds off.

38 EXT. DESERT - DAY

38

Miles from anywhere. Ominous stormclouds hang low overhead. Rumble of thunder. A sudden duststorm blows right at us, surrounding us totally.

Way back in the swirling dust a figure can just be made out - weirdly transparent at first, dust whipping through it. It moves towards us all the while, getting more solid as it moves closer. Thus arrives the SAINT OF KILLERS.

As he gets closer we can make out details - the flapping duster coat, wide-brimmed hat hiding his face. He strides towards us, then past us, an unstoppable quality to his gait, as if he's been going forever and nothing gets in his path. He keeps his head lowered so we never see his face, but we get a glimpse of a holstered pistol, a gnarled hand. The dust howls around him as he passes - then he's gone.

39 EXT. CHURCH - SUNDOWN

39

Two sheriffs' dept. cruisers have pulled up outside the shattered church. A couple of DEPUTIES keep an eye on the small crowd watching from the edge of the town. Two more stand outside the church with a taller figure, SHERIFF HUGO ROOT. A pair of FORENSICS GUYS come and go from the church to their car, parked near the cruisers.

HUGO

Ask me, I reckon it was niggers.

Hugo stands with hands on hips, squinting meanly at the church - pretty much the way he looks at everything. He spits from time to time. With him are DEPUTY FOSTER, a fat guy, and DEPUTY KENNY, a younger guy who clearly doesn't think too much of his sheriff - and in fact has doubts about the man's sanity.

KENNY

How you figure that, Sheriff Root?

HUGO

(spitting)

Kinda thing they do.

KENNY

What, burn a church full of folks clear down to the ground? Scorch all the flesh off of them? They do that?

HUGO

Martian niggers, Kenny. Come down from space to abduct white folks. Take 'em away, make 'em do all kinds of sexual shit. Even experiment up their asses with probes.

Hugo doesn't notice Kenny's doubtful look, simply because he rarely bothers to look at whoever he's talking to. He just bangs on with the air of a man one hundred per cent certain of his subject. He rarely gets rattled or hurried; the sourness inside him curdles at its own easy pace.

HUGO

Government an' the F.B.I., they know shit they ain't tellin' us. Got an airforce hangar with a spaceship an' a dead Martian Nigger inside, 'cept they don't reckon we're ready to know about it yet.

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KENNY

That pick-up seen headin' away from here - none of our eyewitnesses said anything about coloured people...

HUGO

Don't have to be coloured if they're from Mars, Kenny. You ever read that book Communion?

KENNY

Can't say I have, Sheriff Root.

HUGO

Fella in that knew all about 'em. 'Cept he got the wrong idea.

(patting the 44 magnum in his belt holster)

Only Communion your Martian Nigger understands is the kind I got right here.

Deputy Foster shouts from one of the cruisers, where he's on the radio. We can hear it crackling.

FOSTER

Sheriff Root, Sheriff Meeker says he's got you the chopper an' marksman you requested, but he wants you to go talk to some media people -

HUGO

(unfazed)

You tell him fuck you.

(spitting)

You tell him Hugo Root says fuck you. Tell him I want that chopper up here now, an' to keep them media fucks away or I'll send 'em back in bodybags.

KENNY

Sheriff Root? You figure, maybe, the way these people been blasted to goddamn bones, we oughta wait for some real back-up before we go lookin' for 'em?

HUGO

We got air support an' snipers an' half a dozen roadblocks bein' set up right now, Kenny. You ain't goin' weak sister on me, are you?

(CONTINUED)

KENNY

(peevied)

All I'm sayin' is it could be more
than we can handle here -

HUGO

It could be I'm gonna take me a big
shit tomorrow an' find the keys to
Graceland in the bowl, but I kinda
doubt that as well.

(spitting)

Martian Niggers, Kenny.

(strolling off)

You wait an' see.

And Kenny is left fuming quietly.

40 EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

40

Run-down place beside a desert road, no other buildings
about. The night is still. Tulip's pick-up is parked at one
of the pumps, and she's filling the tank. She finishes,
leans over to look at Jesse, anxious. He doesn't look good
at all - sweating, fidgeting in his sleep, face twisting.

TULIP

What am I doing with you?

(pause)

I must need my fucking head examined.

She pulls the blanket tighter around him, takes her purse
from the driver's seat, heads off to pay.

Out on the edge of the gas station, a scruffy-looking guy
pads out of the desert night, stops to survey the station.
Tulip's pick-up catches his eye. It's Cassidy - tired, but
with a sneaky grin on his face.

CASSIDY

Fuckin' deadly.

41 INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

41

Tulip has piled a first aid kit and several bottles of water
in front of the bored looking clerk.

TULIP

And these too, please.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

The clerk grunts. Tulip looks round, curious, as an engine starts. Out the window, we see her pick-up start to move away.

TULIP

Fuck!

She races out of the office and sprints after the truck as it heads for the road, fumbling in her purse.

42 INT. TULIP'S PICK-UP - NIGHT

42

Cassidy is driving, whistling happily to himself. Just as he pulls out onto the road Tulip leaps onto the truck, grabbing the driver side door and hauling herself up. With her free hands she sticks the gun we saw earlier in Cassidy's face, furious. He's startled.

TULIP

Pull over!

Cassidy stares at her in amazement, keeps going.

TULIP

I said pull over, asshole! What the fuck do you think you're doing?

CASSIDY

(laughing in disbelief)

What the fuck does it look like I'm doin'? I'm stealin' your pick-up truck!

43 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

43

The truck picks up speed, racing past us with Tulip hanging off the side. Up ahead there's a rise in the road with some low hills beyond.

44 INT. TULIP'S PICK-UP - NIGHT

44

Cassidy can't believe this, finds it hilarious. This makes Tulip even angrier.

TULIP

You son of a bitch! Stop the truck and get out! Now!

(CONTINUED)

CASSIDY

Bollocks to that, love. I've been walkin' across that desert for three nights now. I'm not fuckin' stoppin' for anyone.

TULIP

(cocking the gun)
I fucking mean it.

In the back of the truck, Jesse is being bounced around all over the place. He wakes slowly, still woozy.

JESSE

Huh...?

Cassidy is actually looking a bit concerned now, but not for himself. Tulip is ready to shoot.

CASSIDY

Will you for fuck's sake get rid of that thing an' I'll stop an' let you off. You're only gonna hurt yourself, you know.

TULIP

What I'm gonna do is blow your head clean out the fucking windshield if you don't stop the truck in three seconds time. Three. Two.

Cassidy faces front, freaks.

CASSIDY

Jesus fuckin' Christ!

45 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

45

As the truck comes over the rise in the road it screeches to a halt in a huge broadside skid. Twenty yards ahead is Hugo Root's roadblock. Two cruisers have been parked in the road, with just enough space for a car to slip between them, and then only by turning sharply. Powerful lights flood the pick-up. Eight DEPUTIES man the roadblock, reacting immediately to the pick-up's arrival.

46 INT. TULIP'S PICK-UP - NIGHT

46

Cassidy is damn near flung through the windshield by the emergency stop, and Tulip barely keeps a grip, dropping the gun on the truck seat. Her legs are flung out behind her.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

In the back, Jesse's head bangs hard into the wall of the cab. He slams a hand to the injured area, agonized, furious.

JESSE

Goddamnit!

47 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

47

No sooner has the truck stopped moving than a sheriff's dept. helicopter roars up over the hill from behind the roadblock.

48 INT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT

48

Behind the pilot a MARKSMAN takes aim with a mean looking scope rifle at the pick-up truck below. He wears a radio headset, over which we hear the crackle of static.

MARKSMAN

Sheriff Root, I have 'em locked.
Repeat, I got a lock on them, Sir.

49 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

49

The deputies take cover behind the cars, taking aim with a variety of handguns, pump shotguns and M16s. Standing in the middle, revolver in one hand, bullhorn in the other, is Hugo Root. Kenny and Foster are at his side.

MARKSMAN (O.S.)

(over radio)

Just say the word.

HUGO

(over bullhorn)

You fucks exit the truck with your
hands in the air or you will be fired
upon. Do it now or we open fire.

50 INT. TULIP'S PICK-UP - NIGHT

50

Cassidy and Tulip stare out at the cops, stunned.

TULIP

Oh no...!

CASSIDY

Shite. You know, I could really do
without this at the minute...

51 INT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT

51

The marksman opens fire even as Hugo speaks, three quick shots.

HUGO (O.S.)
(over radio)
Wake 'em up in there.

52 INT. TULIP'S PICK-UP - NIGHT

52

Cassidy and Tulip recoil in shock as the bullets punch through the hood barely a foot in front of them.

CASSIDY
Fuckin' Jesus!

They exit the truck fast.

53 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

53

Cassidy and Tulip get out of the truck, hands high. As the helicopter passes overhead, Jesse can be seen in the back of the truck, still holding his head.

MARKSMAN (O.S.)
(over radio)
You got a third subject in the back,
Sheriff Root. One more guy.

Hugo shouts again. His deputies are squinting down their gunsights, taking no chances.

HUGO
(over bullhorn)
You in the back, we ain't gonna warn
you again. Get your ass outta there.

Jesse sits up, rubbing his head. He notices Tulip, then Cassidy, both standing with their hands raised. He frowns. Cassidy's bewildered at his sudden appearance. Tulip is at a loss...

CASSIDY
Christ!

JESSE
Who the fuck's he?

(CONTINUED)

HUGO
(over bullhorn)
Put your hands on the truck an'
spread your legs. Make any other
attempt to move an' I guarantee it:
you're fucked.

Hugo puts the bullhorn down, relaxes a bit. Kenny doesn't seem so confident. A couple of deputies move forward, the rest stay put.

HUGO
(spitting)
We got these sons of bitches.

The helicopter makes a low pass on our heroes, now leaning against the truck as per Hugo's instructions. Jesse rubs his head, grimacing angrily.

CASSIDY
This is like a night out with fuckin'
O.J....

JESSE
Tulip, what the fuck is goin' on
here?

HUGO (O.S.)
(over bullhorn)
You in the suit: both hands on the
truck, I said.

JESSE
(fuming)
FUCK THIS.

He turns towards the roadblock, grim as hell, lowering his arms. Tulip gasps.

TULIP
Jesse, stop! They'll kill you!

Hugo snarls again. Lots of clicks as his men cock their guns.

HUGO
(over bullhorn)
Hold it right there, Mister. You put
your hands on that truck or we will
lawfully blow your ass all over this
goddamned highway.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED: (2)

53

Jesse raises his head, glares at us. He looks like he really means business. When he speaks, everything else goes utterly silent. There's a weird, deep echo to his voice. This is the WORD OF GOD, the power he's gotten from Genesis.

JESSE

(word of God)

Drop the guns. All of you. And let us go.

The deputies freeze. So does Hugo. Their faces go blank. A moment passes. Then they start dropping their guns on the ground. A loud clatter as the various firearms hit the deck.

54 INT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT

54

The marksman, equally blank-faced, drops his rifle out the side of the 'copter. The sound of the rotors can be heard beating faintly, as if far away.

55 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

55

The marksman's rifle lands on deputy Foster's head, dropping him instantly. Hugo is right beside him but can only blink, confused. Jesse turns to the astonished Tulip and Cassidy, quietly determined.

JESSE

I think we oughta be leavin'.

They stare at him for a second, then snap out of it.

CASSIDY

I'm with you, mate.

TULIP

Just a fucking second! This guy was gonna steal my truck!

Jesse's eyes narrow as he turns to Cassidy, who grins disarmingly.

CASSIDY

Aye, but I can explain that. Just give us a lift down the road, will you? I'd really appreciate it.

TULIP

Like hell.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

Jesse studies Cassidy carefully. Cassidy meets his gaze without being hostile. They're sizing each other up.

JESSE
(nodding slightly)
Get in the truck.

CASSIDY
Aw, nice one!

TULIP
Have you gone out of your fucking
mind?

Jesse looks ready to speak, then freezes. His eyes narrow in intense, bewildered concentration. We close up on his face.

56 INT. JESSE'S VISION

56

A three-second flash of images - blazing flames - an angelic face, screaming - a demonic face, roaring.

57 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

57

Jesse's face twists in confusion. Then he snaps out of it, looks at Tulip.

JESSE
I ain't about to leave anyone to get
fucked up by these assholes. We can
talk about it later. Okay?

Tulip glances at the cops, fumes, wrenches open the door. Jesse gets in, she follows. Cassidy's already gotten in the passenger side.

58 EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

58

We look past someone's leg and flapping duster coat at the distant lights of the roadblock. The Saint has arrived.

59 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

59

Tulip starts the engine, moves off. Hugo and his deputies snap out of it as the truck speeds through their roadblock, narrowly missing a couple of the cruisers. They're amazed.

(CONTINUED)

HUGO

Pick up your fuckin' guns, you
assholes!

They do, but by then the truck has raced away. General confusion. Deputy Foster gets shakily to his feet, poking at his bleeding scalp. Hugo, having retrieved his pistol, is furious.

HUGO

You bunch of goddamned, by-the-Jesus,
stupid, cocksuckin' faggots - you
stood there an' let those bastards
drive away -

KENNY

(amazed)
So did you!

One of the deputies on the edge of the group turns towards us, eyes narrowing.

DEPUTY

Sheriff Root?

Hugo yanks open the door of the nearest cruiser.

HUGO

Well come on, for Jesus' sake! Get
after them! You there, you get that
chopper on the horn -

DEPUTY

(shouting)
Sheriff Root!

Everyone turns, Hugo included. The Deputy, rather shaken, points out into the desert. About thirty yards from the roadblock stands the Saint of Killers. Not too much detail visible on him yet. The deputies watch, not sure of what to make of him. Kenny's eyes narrow, cautious. He's standing slightly in front of Hugo. Hugo slams the door shut, glares at us.

HUGO

Well, well, well.

The Saint is unmoved, coat flapping a little in the breeze, head lowered slightly so the brim of his hat hides most of his face. Hugo puts a hand to his holstered pistol. His deputies bring up their weapons, not taking their eyes off the Saint.

(CONTINUED)

HUGO

Who the fuck have we got here?

No answer comes. Hugo looks annoyed.

HUGO

You look to me like you might be trouble, Mister.

The Saint doesn't move. His voice isn't much more than a slow whisper, but it sounds terribly grim, full of restrained threat.

SAINT

Yeah.

The Saint raises his head, slow and deliberate. His eyes are cold and hard, promising nothing but death. Utterly riveting, terrifying. His lip curls slightly. He speaks through his teeth, unimpressed by what he sees, a hint of disdain in his voice. To him this is just an inconvenience - not worth getting angry or peeved over. He does everything slowly, gradually. He has no need to rush.

SAINT

An' you don't look to me like the man who'll stop it.

The deputies are suddenly unaccountably scared, looking warily at one another. Hugo grimaces, annoyed.

HUGO

Is that a fact...

KENNY

Sheriff Root -

HUGO

Who the fuck does this asshole think he is? You boys get ready, now...

The Saint pushes his coat back to reveal his holstered pistols. He doesn't pose with his hands over them, or any Hollywood gunfighter bullshit. He acts like he has all the time in the world.

KENNY

(scared)

Sheriff Root, for God's sake! Look at him!

(CONTINUED)

HUGO

(snarling)

Fuck you, Kenny. The minute he goes
for them pistols, you open f-

The Saint's hands blur to his holsters and come up with two black iron Walker Colt revolvers. Two massive roaring blasts fill the air, flame shoots from the muzzles, smoke belches back.

Deputy Foster's large gut explodes in a welter of gore. Kenny barely registers this as his shoulder erupts in a spray of blood and his entire arm is blown off.

The arm cartwheels past Hugo in slow motion, still holding Kenny's pistol, blood jetting everywhere.

Hugo gasps as blood from the arm sprays into his face.

The Saint steps towards the terrified deputies, cocks his pistols, fires again. He aims casually as he moves forward at a stroll.

The others bring up their guns and open fire. Multiple shots, automatic and shotgun fire. Two of them are flung backwards by the Saint's bullets, torn bloodily open.

DEPUTY

Son of a bitch -

DEPUTY 2

Drop him!

Bullets and slugs smash into the Saint, staggering him slightly. One smashes into his face, turning his head.

He turns back, grimacing, clearly not pleased. There's a hole in his face and several more in his chest, but no blood comes out. It's like dead meat underneath. The deputies gape in amazement.

DEPUTY

Aw no.

The Saint cocks his pistols as he advances, now barely yards from the parked cruisers. One guy breaks and runs. Another sinks behind the car, cowering in terror. The other two resume firing.

(CONTINUED)

The Saint takes more hits, but isn't worried. He walks towards Kenny, who lies on the ground in deep shock, ruined shoulder pumping blood into a widening pool on the road.

The shooting continues as the Saint's shadow falls across Kenny, who opens his eyes. He dies a rather pissed-off man.

KENNY

(whispers)

Fuck you, Sheriff Root.

The Saint doesn't bother to aim, just pulls the trigger as he walks past Kenny. Another blast. He brings up the second pistol as more bullets smash into him, fires.

A deputy's head is blown completely apart.

The one cowering behind the cruiser is blubbering pathetically, back jammed against the side of the car. The last guy, still shooting, yells desperately at the cowardly guy.

SCARED DEPUTY

Oh Jesus Christ please save me now, I
fuckin' beg you! Don't let me die
here! Don't let me die!

DEPUTY

For Christ's sake shoot back at him,
you stupid son of a bitch!

The Saint takes careful aim, fires once.

The bullet punches through the side panel of the cruiser, just over the front wheel, with a metallic clang.

On the other side, the scared deputy gapes in amazement as the bullet tears out of his chest in a shower of blood and meat.

The deputy beside him ceases fire, turning to stare. Beyond him, about fifty yards down the road, we see the deputy who broke and ran earlier.

Another roaring gunshot and the nearer deputy loses the front of his head. Beyond him, about a second later, the running deputy throws up his arms and falls.

60 INT. TULIP'S PICK-UP - NIGHT

60

Jesse turns to stare out the back window, bewildered. The lights of the firefight and the roadblock can be seen reflected in the glass.

JESSE

Tulip, will you pull over for a second?

TULIP

Will I what?

61 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

61

Hugo Root kneels at the end of the carnage, furious, trying to wipe the blood out of his eyes.

HUGO

What the fuck is goin' on? Fuck!
Sons of fuckin' whores -

He clears his eyes, looks up, blinking, realizes the Saint's legs are about three feet away.

The Saint watches calmly, pistols held at his sides. He's been shot about a dozen times, but the wounds seem like nothing more than cuts or bad bruises. He's not so angry now, back to the slow-burning disdain.

Hugo stands up, slow, holding his hands up open and empty. He's not so much scared as very, very cautious. His pistol is gone from its holster.

HUGO

Now...you can see I ain't armed...

The Saint raises one of the pistols, points it right at us. The muzzle is a yawning black chasm.

SAINT

Reckon you can see I am.

Hugo closes his eyes, sweating buckets. Weary, disgusted fear shows at last on his face.

Then: multiple gunshots, and the Saint is rocked by the impact of several bullets. The sound of the helicopter rotors come back.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

The helicopter roars back into place over the shattered roadblock.

62 INT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT

62

The marksman has an automatic pistol dead-aimed with both hands, yelling into his radio headset.

MARKSMAN
(over loudspeaker)
Sheriff Root, run! Get the fuck
outta there!

63 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

63

The Saint turns to look up at the 'copter, not too impressed. Behind him, Hugo snaps out of it and runs like hell.

The 'copter hovers barely twenty yards over the cars and scattered bodies, the Saint turning towards it. The marksman can clearly be seen, locked on target.

MARKSMAN
(over loudspeaker)
You! Drop them guns an' raise your
fuckin' hands! I don't see 'em
empty, I drop you lower'n wormshit!

The Saint raises an eye, not convinced.

MARKSMAN (O.S)
(over loudspeaker)
You point that pistol an' see if I'm
jokin', motherfucker!

64 EXT. TULIP'S TRUCK - NIGHT

64

Cassidy and Jesse have exited the truck and are peering back along the road. Tulip watches from the truck, wary.

TULIP
Well?

JESSE
It's hard to see -

A sudden flash of light illuminates them as they stagger back, shielding their eyes.

65 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

65

Massive flaring explosion with a rumbling, echoing blast, right on top of the two cruisers, with the 'copter's tail sticking out of the inferno. Pieces of blazing car and 'copter fly into the air.

66 EXT. TULIP'S TRUCK - NIGHT

66

Cassidy's freaked. Jesse peers closely at us, shielding his eyes as the flames light his face.

CASSIDY
Fuck me sideways!

67 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

67

A silhouetted figure takes shape in the flames: the Saint. He strides slowly from the wreckage.

His clothes are burnt and sooty, but he seems otherwise unhurt. Slow-burning grimace on his face.

SAINT
(through gritted teeth)
You.

68 EXT. TULIP'S TRUCK - NIGHT

68

Jesse's eyes widen, amazed.

69 INT. JESSE'S VISION

69

Another three second flash. The demon and angel faces again, the angel's hand locked round the demon's throat, the demon biting bloody strips of flesh from the angel's neck - then silver clouds and bright sunlight.

70 EXT. TULIP'S TRUCK - NIGHT

70

Jesse turns to the equally freaked Cassidy, and they stare at each other.

CASSIDY
...He means you.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

Jesse stares at him, then turns to the truck. A second later, Cassidy snaps out of it too.

JESSE

Tulip, let's go! You come on if you're comin'!

CASSIDY

Fuckin' right I am!

They scramble into the truck and Tulip guns it. The truck races off.

71 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

71

Backlit by the flames, the Saint strides towards and then past us, unconcerned.

72 INT. SHERIFF'S DEPT. BUILDING, OUTER OFFICE - NIGHT

72

A weary SECRETARY starts to stand as Hugo Root marches past her, then freezes.

SECRETARY

Sheriff Root, you can't just barge in - oh!

73 INT. SHERIFF MEEKER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

73

Average sized office, desk and chairs piled high with files, overflowing filing cabinets, photos on the wall, noticeboard covered in documents.

SHERIFF MEEKER, an amiable guy in his late forties, sits behind the desk and sips his coffee, relaxed. Meeker rarely gets too agitated.

DETECTIVE DINNINGS, 30, sits opposite him reading a file, not enjoying the coffee he's drinking. He's a pretty sharp guy, probably destined for bigger things. He's hard to shock, usually just quietly amused by other people.

DINNINGS

Did somebody come in this coffee?

MEEKER

(without looking up)
I got excited when I heard you were on your way. Couldn't help it. So what d'you make of all this?

(CONTINUED)

DINNINGS

Well, judging by what he said over the radio here, I'd say your Sheriff Root is a one hundred per cent -

The door opens and in barges Hugo, fuming. He's still covered in gore and dirt, dried blood smeared across his face.

HUGO

Meeker, I want you to get right on that fuckin' phone an' call Washington. I want you to get those government sons of bitches down here to answer for what they done. Those by-the-Jesus, cocksuckin' Yankees think they can use us to test their goddamned experiments on, they can fuckin' think again.

Dinnings stands, trying not to smile. Meeker just looks pained.

MEEKER

Now just hold on a minute there, Hugo. You been to the hospital to get yourself checked out?

HUGO

Ain't nothin' wrong with me, goddamnit!

DINNINGS

Really?

HUGO

(disliking him instantly)
An' who the fuck are you supposed to be?

MEEKER

Hugo, this is Detective Dinnings.
He's -

HUGO

I don't give a good fuck who he is. Do you know what's been let loose out there? Do you know what happened to my deputies tonight?

MEEKER

Well, I heard what you radioed in.
One suspect matching the description
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: (2)

73

MEEKER (CONT'D)

of the missing Minister from Annville apparently ordered you an' your boys to drop your guns...which you did...and the second suspect was able to withstand multiple gunshot wounds while killing every single deputy in your command.

HUGO

Goddamn right.

A moment passes, Meeker watching Hugo sadly, Hugo glaring back at him, Dinnings smiling as he studies Hugo.

DINNINGS

Shit, case closed.

HUGO

(spitting)

Fuck you.

Dinnings grins. Meeker looks weary.

MEEKER

Hugo...!

HUGO

We're wastin' time here, Meeker. You call Washington, tell 'em we're onto them an' their goddamn F.B.I. genetic experiments. I know all about it, I read all the books. They been usin' Martian Nigger technology, tryin' to keep it quiet from us normal folks.

By now Dinnings is struggling not to laugh, but Hugo doesn't notice. Meeker seems genuinely sad for him.

HUGO

Them sons of bitches built a fella can make you do whatever he tells you, an' a dirty motherfucker cop killer robot, an' they've let 'em both loose on us.

(pointing to his face)

I got the proof right here. See this? Deputy Kenny. I loved that boy like he was my own, an' now I'm gonna have to go home and shampoo him outta my hair. An' I wanna know just what the fuck you're planning to do about it.

(CONTINUED)

MEEKER

(getting up)

Okay, Hugo, thanks for your report. We've got boys turnin' out all over the state, an' the border posts have been alerted. We're gonna pick these people up sooner or later, an' as soon as we do we'll let you know.

Hugo fumes. Meeker is sympathetic but firm. Dinnings looks hard at the floor.

MEEKER

Get on home an' get some rest, huh?

Hugo sneers. Then, after a last hard glare at both of them, he turns and marches out of the office, slamming the door as he goes.

Meeker slumps a little, returns to his seat. Dinnings rubs his jaw, smiles a little. A moment passes in silence.

DINNINGS

Ain't you gonna call Washington?

MEEKER

(smiling in spite of himself)
Laugh it up. I been workin' with Hugo Root for damn near twenty years now. We're agreed somebody killed his deputies, yeah?

DINNINGS

No doubt about it. I just ain't ready to call the X-Files yet, is all. Any word from the scene?

MEEKER

Tanks went up when the chopper crashed on the cars. Can't establish shit 'til they clean up a little. What you make of Annville, by the way?

DINNINGS

Well, from the looks of things, I'd say somebody waited 'til the good people had gathered to worship an' then laid in twenty gallons of napalm. Sure would like a word with this Reverend Custer about how he got out of it...

(CONTINUED)

MEEKER
(doubtful)
Well...

DINNINGS
It's just a theory, Sheriff. Hell,
gotta be better than Hugo's, right?

MEEKER
Right...oh, I know he looks like what
happened when white met trash, but...

DINNINGS
(smiling)
He looks like a man who's not afraid
to fuck his career in the ass.

MEEKER
Mm. You ever hear about what
happened to Hugo's boy?

DINNINGS
'Til tonight I never even heard of
Hugo.

MEEKER
Kid put a twelve-gauge to his head.

DINNINGS
Oh, no shit?

Meeker sits back, thoughtful, links his fingers behind his
head.

MEEKER
Not because of Hugo...let's see now,
this boy woulda been about sixteen.
You know how kids get at that age,
all surly an' rebellious an'
disrespectful. Hugo kicked his ass
twice a day. Once he even put a
cigarette out on his arm. An' all he
got for his trouble was fuck you...

Dinnings is getting interested.

MEEKER
Now, the boy's a big fan of one of
these rock star boys, one of those
modern ones sounds like a downs
syndrome fella set to music. This
gets up Hugo's ass double. How's he
s'posed to listen to Hank an' Waylon
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: (5)

73

MEEKER (CONT'D)

an' Tammy, with all that shit comin' through the wall? Well, came the day the rock star blew his damn fool head off, the way these fellas are prone to do. Boy hears the news, tucks Hugo's Remington under his chin, an' follows in his hero's footsteps.

DINNINGS

Don't suppose Hugo mourned too much, huh?

MEEKER

Didn't have to.

DINNINGS

(surprised)

The boy's alive?

Meeker starts fumbling through a desk drawer.

MEEKER

Bear with me a minute, will you? Yeah, after taking a slug through the face point blank, and after six or seven operations to fix him up, the boy is indeed alive. Ah, here we are...

He comes up with an 8x10 photo, which we never see. He looks at it, frowning thoughtfully.

MEEKER

I got a teenage boy of my own, and every time he pisses me off - every dumb thing he says to his Mom, every joint I catch him with, or just when I hear him playing that goddamn rap shit: I take a look at this...and all of a sudden he don't seem quite so bad.

He turns the photo round, holds it up. Looking past it, we see Dinnings gape in shock and horror.

74 EXT. HUGO'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

74

ARSEFACE opens the door and sticks his head out at us, filling the screen.

Arseface's dialogue is a stream of grunts and moans - and yet he never sounds anything other than completely cheerful. Try sticking your tongue hard into your lower lip, then speaking

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

74

his lines. A translation is run in subtitles along the bottom of the screen.

ARSEFACE

(Hi, Dad!)

Hugo barges past him into the house, doing his best to ignore his son completely. Arseface doesn't seem to notice.

ARSEFACE

(How was your day?)

75 INT. HUGO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

75

Hugo walks into the front room, fuming quietly as Arseface follows him, chattering away. The house is sparsely furnished, and not very clean. Worn-out furniture, old TV set. Hugo dumps his hat on the coffee table, sits down.

ARSEFACE

(Still no letter from Mom, but I bet she'll be home any day now, huh? You want to relax and I'll bring you a beer? Sound good?)

He heads for the kitchen, turns, gives the thumbs up.

ARSEFACE

(You betcha!)

Left alone, Hugo stares hatefully at the wall for a moment, pissed off at his wretched lot in life. Then he closes his eyes, puts his head in his hands, and breaks down completely.

76 EXT. ROADHOUSE BAR - NIGHT

76

The bar is a wide, one-storey building out in the desert, with several cars and pick-ups - including Tulip's - in the parking lot. Across the road from it is a small all night supermarket/mini-mall, with more cars parked outside. Seems to be closing. The bar, however, is very much open: a large neon sign over it reads THE RATTLER. People come and go. Music drifts out into the night.

77 INT. ROADHOUSE BAR - NIGHT

77

Inside, the Rattler is a fairly dead kind of place. Same mix of smoke, neon and gloom that we've seen before. Plenty of people in, but everyone seems to stay in little groups or couples - no dancing, no boisterous groups around the bar. A

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

good place to go to drink yourself into a wretched mess and cry into your whiskey.

Couple of WAITRESSES at work, not exactly rushed off their feet. One is young and pretty.

Cassidy and Tulip sit at a table near the back, Tulip trying to be inconspicuous. Cassidy glances around, naturally curious. He smokes and drinks beer, she has some kind of stupid cocktail with an umbrella in it. A glass of Bourbon and ice sits in front of an empty chair.

CASSIDY

Happenin' fuckin' place, isn't it?

TULIP

Keep it down, will you? We're meant to be blending in.

CASSIDY

(amused)

Blend in? Sure you just went on a shopping spree across the road there.

TULIP

I had to get him something to wear. I mean, he's going to stand out a mile walking around covered in burnt rags, isn't he? And by the way, would you mind telling me what the fuck you think you're doing following us in here?

CASSIDY

Well, you helped me out of a tight spot back there. I reckon one good turn deserves another.

TULIP

(leaning forward)

Look, he and I have got a lot to talk about. I mean a fuck of a lot. So you know which good turn you can do for us, don't you?

CASSIDY

(leaning forward)

What's that?

TULIP

Fuck. Off.

78 INT. BAR RESTROOM - NIGHT

78

A tiny, grimy little room.

Jesse dumps all his old clothes into the trash. Last to go is the white collar, which he hesitates on. Lowering it, he studies his reflection in the mirror intently. He looks a little bit pissed off, a sense of determination.

JESSE

What the fuck is happenin' to me?

79 INT. ROADHOUSE BAR - NIGHT

79

Cassidy leans back, laughing to himself. Tulip glares, clearly irritated.

CASSIDY

Aw, now that's cold...

TULIP

Cold. I see. You try to steal my truck, and now you're sitting here talking about helping us - which I don't believe for a second, by the way.

CASSIDY

I have to admit, I do have a wee bit of an ulterior motive.

TULIP

Really?

CASSIDY

Aye. This trick your boyfriend does, where he can make people do things like he's speakin' the word of God? Well, I can see one or two possibilities hangin' round with a fella like that.

TULIP

I'll bet you can.

CASSIDY

"Miss Crawford, Miss Turlington - smear my handsome Irish friend in Southern Comfort, an' then lick it all off an' start again. Mr. Jagger -

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

load Keith's coke into the back of that 747. Then sign this check.

TULIP

And why would Jesse want to do all that for you, exactly?

CASSIDY

Hey, I don't believe in gettin' somethin' from nothin', you know. I might be able to help you.

TULIP

How?

CASSIDY

Hidden talents, love.

Tulip raises an eye.

CASSIDY

I'm Irish, for starters. That never hurts.

(smiling)

An' there's something else you should know about me, too...

TULIP

Yeah?

CASSIDY

(looking past her, grinning)

Oh look, there's your boyfriend now. Blendin' in.

Jesse enters the bar dressed in his new clothes, the white collar setting off the black outfit. He's cleaned himself up a bit too, and cuts quite a dashing figure as he strides across the bar towards the rear table. He seems to radiate supreme self-confidence, lighting up a Marlboro as he goes, hardly aware of anyone else.

Several folks notice him, including the pretty young waitress, who likes what she sees and discreetly sets off after him.

A bunch of REDNECKS notice her noticing him, instantly disapproving. These guys are all young bucks on their fifth or sixth beer, just about ready to go looking for trouble.

Jesse notices none of this. He moseys over to the table, watched by Tulip, who can't help but smile. A hint of nostalgia here for her.

(CONTINUED)

Jesse sits down, picks up his glass. Cassidy smiles amiably.

JESSE
(to Cassidy)
You still here?

CASSIDY
Jesus, I thought Texans were supposed
to be friendly.

JESSE
(genuinely curious)
Where the hell did you hear that?

CASSIDY
I made it up. I like to believe that
best of people, you know?

Jesse thinks about that, finds himself smiling, but with a
slight edge. The waitress arrives.

WAITRESS
You ready for another drink,
Reverend?

JESSE
Yeah, same again for me an' the lady.
(to Cassidy)
You want another beer?

CASSIDY
Aye, please.

Off goes the waitress, smiling at Jesse, not seeing Tulip's
little glare.

CASSIDY
That's awful decent of you.

JESSE
Not really. You're payin'.

They smile shrewdly at each other for a moment. Then Cassidy
grins.

CASSIDY
It occurs to me we haven't been
properly introduced. My name's
Cassidy. You're Jesse an' you're
Turnip, is that right?

TULIP

(hissing)

Tulip.

CASSIDY

Aye.

TULIP

(to Jesse)

Before you arrived, Cassidy was trying to think of one good reason why he shouldn't just fuck off and die.

CASSIDY

I told you, I know things other fellas don't. When you've been around for as long as I have, you pick up all sorts of useful wee tricks.

JESSE

What d'you mean, as long as you have? What you doin' out here anyway?

CASSIDY

Aw, y'know, seein' the world. That's how I came to be borrowin' your truck, as a matter of fact. Through a series of adventures too fuckin' mental to go into now, I found myself stranded in the arse-end of nowhere. Cheers for givin' us a lift out of it.

(pause)

I notice you're still wearin' the collar, there.

JESSE

(thoughtful)

Yeah. Well, I reckon I still have business with the Lord.

(lights a cigarette, offers Cassidy one)

I'd like to know what the fuck happened to me today, for one thing. How I came to be able to do what I did to those deputies. An' who the hell that gunfighter son of a bitch is, too.

Tulip nudges him as the waitress returns with their drinks, and they all clam up. The girl pays special attention to

(CONTINUED)

Jesse as she sets down the drinks. Nobody notices, but a couple of the rednecks have sidled over to eavesdrop.

WAITRESS

I brung your change. Hey, I been wonderin': are you a real Preacher?

JESSE

Now, what would a real one be doin' in a den of sin like this? You go on an' keep it, honey.

WAITRESS

(beaming)

Thank you, Reverend.

Cassidy forks over a ten-spot, and off she goes.

CASSIDY

Don't mention it. Well, it's pretty bleedin' obvious to me that all this stuff's linked up. I mean, from what you were sayin' earlier: you get hit by this...whatever it is, you incinerate your congregation-

JESSE

Not by choice. Well, probably not.

CASSIDY

You develop this word of God, an' all of a sudden you've got the gunfighter after you.

JESSE

'Cause he doesn't want me doin' this shit, or somethin'? Yeah, that figures.

CASSIDY

I'll tell you one thing about him: he looks like a good man to avoid like the fucking plague.

JESSE

Maybe so.

TULIP

Maybe so?

JESSE

Like I say, I want some answers. If it turns out I gotta go to him to get 'em...there it is.

(CONTINUED)

CASSIDY

Did you see what he did out there tonight? The bastard can shoot down helicopters. Bullets bounce off him. He can walk through a fuckin' firestorm, for Jesus' sake.

JESSE

(leaning in, annoyed)
I don't care if he can shoot cruise missiles from his pecker. Nobody - I mean nobody - fucks with me like I been fucked with today an' walks away with their teeth still intact. An' if that motherfucker wants to get in my way he's gonna be wearin' his six-guns up his ass.

A pause. Cassidy seems rather fazed, not sure what to think.

CASSIDY

You're not much of a one for backin' down in the face of adversity, are you, Jesse?

Jesse just drinks his bourbon. Tulip looks at Cassidy, wearily shaking her head: No he isn't. Nor was he ever.

80 EXT. TRUCKSTOP BAR - NIGHT

80

A very different sort of bar, the TEN-TEN. A number of eighteen-wheelers parked outside. Loud country music blares from within, along with raised voices, shouts. Sounds good and lively. A truck roars past in the background.

81 INT. TRUCKSTOP BAR - NIGHT

81

This is indeed a much livelier place than the Rattler. The clientele is generally older - truckers in their 30s and 40s cutting loose, a jukebox pumping out C&W at full volume, waitresses getting friendly with the boys. A number of locals about too, a few couples about - basically lots of friends meeting up, enjoying their all too rare times together as they pass through. Several folks dancing.

Up at the bar, a slightly toasted trucker slaps his pals on the back, kisses the barmaid goodbye, and weaves for the door.

(CONTINUED)

TRUCKER

...I gotta go, boys. I need to sleep this off an' be halfway to Memphis by tomorrow night. I'll see you.

BARMAID

You say hi to your wife for me, Frank.

TRUCKER

(laughing)
That'll be the day.

Out he goes. The others go back to their conversation. A moment passes.

Then there's the most God-almighty bang and the trucker is flung back into the bar with half his chest blown away, frantically trying to stay on his feet. He falls backwards, smashes into the jukebox - the music stops. Then he falls on the floor and dies in a bloody heap. Everyone gapes.

A confused buzz of fear and confusion fills the air. People move to the fallen trucker. Then one guy turns towards the door, freezes.

GUY

Oh Jesus.

It's the Saint, framed in the doorway, blue smoke curling up from his pistol.

Everyone turns to stare, riveted.

He strides up to the bar, oblivious to their stares.

There's a loud clunk as he sets the revolver on the bar.

He fixes the petrified barmaid with his steely glare.

SAINT

Whiskey.

Mouth clamped shut for fear she'll scream, the barmaid sets down a glass and pours him a shot. The noise of the flowing whiskey is the only thing audible.

The Saint knocks it back, sets down the glass. For just a moment he seems thoughtful.

SAINT

First drink I've had...since Wounded Knee.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: (2)

81

The moment passes, the icy cold returns to his eyes and he reaches for the pistol. Sudden panic shows on the faces of the people around him. A sense of something terrible about to happen.

82 EXT. ROADHOUSE BAR PARKING LOT - NIGHT

82

Jesse, Tulip and Cassidy have left the Rattler. Tulip isn't too happy. Jesse grimaces a little. Cassidy follows, enjoying their argument.

TULIP

"You got a nice little ass, honey.
You go ahead an' keep Tulip's last
five bucks."

JESSE

Aw, now that wasn't it at all...

REDNECK LEADER (O.S.)

You don't like it here, drink some
other goddamned place.

They turn. Advancing slowly on them are the little band of rednecks from the bar, just drunk enough to want to get into it. The leader is a brawny thug in a baseball cap. Six of them in total.

Cassidy steps in front of Tulip so he's just behind and to the side of Jesse. Jesse remains cool, even polite.

JESSE

I like it fine.

The leader stops about a yard from Jesse.

REDNECK LEADER

That ain't what you said to Mona.
Called it a den of sin, or some shit.
I heard you.

JESSE

(weary)

Oh, Jesus...look, if she's your girl,
relax, okay? I ain't interested.
You got me all wrong.

REDNECK LEADER

(turning cap back to front)
I reckon I got you just right,
motherfucker!

(CONTINUED)

Jesse changes in an instant. His eyes narrow. He goes icy cold.

Cassidy steps up behind him, grins.

CASSIDY

You know, I think the problem is that she isn't his girl.

REDNECK LEADER

You sayin' I'm some kinda homo?!

Jesse is icy cold. Behind him, Cassidy's grin becomes positively predatory.

JESSE

I'm sayin' you'd crawl over fifty good pussies to get to a fat boy's ass.

The leader moves - too slow. Jesse slams two fingers up his nostrils, twists, and rips upwards. A terrible ripping and a gout of blood. The guy howls and falls. The others are so surprised, Jesse has time to step in and hook a right, left and another right into the second guy's face. He drops like a ton of shit.

A third guy reaches for Jesse, but Cassidy grabs his shoulder, smiles nastily, and headbutts him in the face. A massive, almost hollow-sounding impact. The guy's eyes bulge and he falls, nose spread all over his face like a burst tomato.

Jesse ducks a swing from number four, sinks a low one into the guy's stomach. The guy folds up around it, gasping.

Number five jumps on Cassidy's back. The sixth guy dances back out of trouble.

The sixth guy sneakily snaps open a switchblade, waits for his chance.

Jesse holds number four against a car and punches the shit out of him.

Cassidy flips the fifth one over his shoulder.

The guy flies at least ten yards through the air.

Tulip's eyes widen as she follows the arc of his descent.

TULIP

Jesus Christ...!

(CONTINUED)

Big crash as the guy smashes into the side of a pick-up truck like a broken rag doll, upside down.

Tulip turns back to the fight, freaks.

TULIP

Cassidy!

CASSIDY

Yeah?

Cassidy turns - right into the sixth guy's attack. He slams the switchblade clean through the plastic lens of Cassidy's shades, on into the eye beyond.

Cassidy steps back, hand going to his eye, then coming away again.

Tulip stares.

Cassidy and the guy look at each other. Cassidy is calm. The handle of the blade juts from his shades lens, blade all the way in. The guy is frozen. Beyond them, we get a glimpse of Jesse still demolishing his own victim.

Cassidy reaches up, holds the shades with one hand, tugs the blade out of his eye with no discernible pain whatsoever. Blood and jelly slide from the blade, leaking down from behind his shades as well.

CASSIDY

Hang on a second there, mate. I'll be right with you.

Pop. Out comes the blade, slathered in gore.

Tulip's eyes widen further.

CASSIDY (O.S.)

Right. C'mere.

We hear the guy scream in terror - a scream which is just as suddenly cut off.

TULIP

J...J...Jesse?

Jesse quits beating on the redneck, whose face is now pulp. Jesse holds him up with one hand and turns, then drops him. Jesse's jaw drops open in amazement as he stares.

JESSE

Jesus Fuckin' Christ.

(CONTINUED)

Cassidy holds his would-be assailant's lifeless body up by the hair, spits out a lump of bloody meat, lets the blood pour down his chin. The meat is from the guy's neck, which Cassidy has just bitten a hole in. Blood spurts out in long jets, pumping into the dirt.

CASSIDY

What?

He hauls the corpse up, sinks his mouth into the wound, and starts drinking the blood as it pours out. Loud gulping noises can be heard.

Tulip, still freaked, turns slowly to the riveted Jesse.

TULIP

Say something!

Cassidy quits drinking for a second, gasps with delight.

JESSE

What the fuck you do that for...?

CASSIDY

I was hungry.

JESSE

So you figured you'd snack on this fella's neck? What are you, some kinda fuckin' vampire?

CASSIDY

Well, I just flung a fella twenty feet through the air, I took a switchblade straight in the brain without blinkin', an' I tore a fella's throat open so I could drink his blood. I'd say I was pretty obviously some kind of fuckin' vampire, wouldn't you?

JESSE

It...can't be...

CASSIDY

(laughing in disbelief)

Oh aye, listen to Mister Normal!

Utterly thrown, Jesse stares at Tulip, trying to fit this thing into his head.

(CONTINUED)

TULIP

For Christ's sake, he's doing it again!

He is indeed, gulping away at the guy's neck.

JESSE

(angry)

Goddamnit, Cassidy! Knock it off!

But Cassidy clearly likes it too much, gulping merrily away. Blood dribbles everywhere.

CASSIDY

(between gulps)

Just - a minute -

Jesse snarls, and once again his voice echoes with his new-found power.

JESSE

(word of God)

Knock it off!

Cassidy is amazed. He flings the corpse to the ground, furious.

CASSIDY

For fuck's sake!

Jesse and Cassidy yell at each other, both furious, right in each other's faces.

CASSIDY

Don't you fuckin' dare do that shit to me! Nobody tells me what to do! An' I don't know if you noticed, but that wee shite stuck a knife in my eye!

JESSE

That don't make him a two-dollar Slurpee! An' I'd've told you to fuck yourself the minute I laid eyes on you, if I'd known you were some kinda fuckin' abomination!

Cassidy freezes, stunned. For just a second he looks hurt - then his face sets in a pissed-off grimace. Jesse faces him with narrowed eyes. Neither man will give ground.

Then Cassidy turns on his heel and stomps away.

(CONTINUED)

Tulip watches him go, then turns to Jesse, who has turned away and is angrily lighting a Marlboro.

An engine starts. Tulip turns in that direction, eyes narrowing.

TULIP

Jesse?

JESSE

Forget it, Tulip. I don't wanna talk about it.

TULIP

But Jesse-

JESSE

I said I don't wanna-

TULIP

Jesse, he's stealing my truck!
Again!

So he is. The truck pulls out of the parking lot.

JESSE

Shit!

He charges after the truck, but it's already racing off down the road.

JESSE

Come back here, you unbelievable
motherfucker! I'll kick your fucking
ass to death! Fuck!

He gives up, roaring hatefully.

JESSE

You worthless son of a bitch!

Tulip's hand comes into shot between us and Jesse, firing her gun. Jesse gapes.

Tulip snarls with hatred, blasting away until the pistol locks dry.

Jesse stares.

TULIP

Bastard...!

(CONTINUED)

The engine noise disappears into the night, along with the echo of the gunshots.

JESSE
(grabbing the gun)
What the fuck is this?

TULIP
(grabbing it back)
It's mine, is what it is!

JESSE
Tulip, what are you doing with this
fucking thing?

TULIP
I'm defending myself.

Behind them, several people are exiting the bar, drawn by the noise.

Jesse and Tulip notice them.

TULIP
Come on, let's get out of here. Once
they get a look at your little
massacre they're gonna have the cops
here in no time.

JESSE
(reluctant)
I dunno. I'm gettin' sick of runnin'
away all the goddamn time.

TULIP
I'm sure there'll be plenty more
people to beat up later. Come on,
for Christ's sake...

They melt into the night.

Cassidy's victim lies in a bodybag, face still frozen in horror. A hand zips the bag shut.

Two PARAMEDICS lift the bodybag, carrying it towards a pair of ambulances parked in the Rattler parking lot. Three sheriff's dept. cruisers are there too, blue lights slowly flashing. A small crowd watches as the paramedics load the battered rednecks into the ambulances, either on stretchers or helping them climb in.

(CONTINUED)

Several deputies are questioning people in the crowd. Others keep the main crowd back from the crime scene.

Dinnings and Meeker are questioning the one redneck still standing, the second one Jesse hit. His face has been bandaged, he's a bit woozy.

REDNECK

An' then the Reverend fella, he hit me so hard I felt like a goddamn truck went over me - an' when I wake up a minute or two later, the ugly one's bitin' into Horace's neck an' drinkin' his goddamn blood!

Dinnings turns away. Meeker eases the guy towards the ambulance, then joins Dinnings.

DINNINGS

What the fuck is this, asshole night?

MEEKER

I know, I know. Thing is, I showed him that photo of Reverend Custer we got, an' the guy swears it's the same fella kicked his ass.

DINNINGS

This is the guy swears we got Dracula on the loose...

A DEPUTY comes over.

DEPUTY

Sheriff Meeker? Sir? We just heard - nine-one-one call came in about a half-hour ago, from that truckstop out by the county line, the Ten-Ten? Somethin' about shootin', an' a guy sounds kinda like Sheriff Root's cop killer...

MEEKER

And?

DEPUTY

Got cut off.

Meeker and Dinnings look at each other.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: (2)

83

MEEKER

That's a hell of a long way from here...Okay, son. Get 'em ready to go.

Exit the deputy.

DINNINGS

You're really takin' this seriously?

MEEKER

Enough to take a look. Let's go.

84 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

84

Jesse and Tulip stand at the side of the road, watching the light of the cruisers and ambulances as they pull away from the distant Rattler and disappear into the night.

Jesse turns, notices Tulip is shivering a bit, hugging herself. She's not exactly dressed for the cool desert night. Jesse takes his coat off, wraps it round her. She's a little startled, looks up at him. They find themselves very close for a moment.

Then they move apart, both rather awkward.

TULIP

You think it'd be safe to try that motel down the road? I'm about ready to drop.

JESSE

(smiling)
I guess it has been kind of a long day.

85 EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

85

Tulip's pick-up races past us.

86 INT. TULIP'S PICK-UP - NIGHT

86

Cassidy is driving, going hell for leather, clearly not in a very good mood.

CASSIDY

You really know how to pick your moments, Cassidy. You stupid bollocks.

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED:

86

He sulks a bit. Then he looks curious, sniffing the air. He seems a bit surprised at what he smells, and pulls over.

87 EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

87

The truck stops at the side of the road. Cassidy cuts the engine and sticks his head out the window. He takes a long, deep breath - and freezes, amazed.

CASSIDY

Jesus!

He starts her up again, and the truck pulls away and races off down the road.

Way, way out in the distance, far from the speeding truck, a curious blood-red glow lines the horizon. It's much too red to be dawn, almost like a line of lava spilling from a fault.

88 EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

88

A crummy little collection of cabins, a neon MOTEL sign, and a central office. Few cars parked.

89 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

89

Jesse and Tulip enter. She has the key. It's a shitty room, everything old and worn. A bed, a TV set, a phone, a door to the bathroom. Jesse slips his collar back into place.

TULIP

"Mr. and Mrs. Smith?" Jesus Christ, Jesse...

JESSE

Fooled him, didn't it? That boy looked dumb enough to jerk off with a fistful of barbed wire. He ain't gonna be callin' any law.

Tulip shrugs, sits, takes out her pistol. She ejects the clip, bangs in a new one. Then she notices Jesse watching.

JESSE

Why the hell you packin' that goddamn thing, anyhow?

TULIP

Well, you remember - hey, wait a minute!

(CONTINUED)

JESSE

What?

TULIP

It's none of your business what I've been doing. You wouldn't say jackshit about becoming a Preacher, or why you dumped me, or who it is that's so fucking important you promise you'll throw your life away for them...

JESSE

I was just worried for you, is all.

TULIP

(interested)

You were?

He just looks at her. Of course he was.

TULIP

Okay. How about we both 'fess up, then? You tell me your sorry tale, I'll tell you mine.

Jesse is caught off guard. He watches her, curious. She just smiles back, interested, challenging him. Then he lowers his gaze, resigned.

JESSE

Hell, why not. With all this other shit down on our heads, I guess it don't make a goddamn bit of difference anyway.

Tulip smiles, pleased. Then Jesse looks up.

JESSE

But you go first.

That catches her for a moment. She hesitates, then takes a deep breath.

TULIP

I ought to say right up front that you're not going to like this bit. Okay...after I realized you weren't coming back, I kind of got myself into some trouble. I was drinking quite a bit, except I was borrowing the money to do it, and, well, ha-ha,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TULIP (CONT'D)

you can sometimes forget just how much you're putting away...

JESSE

Who were you borrowin' from?

TULIP

Macavoy.

JESSE

Macavoy?! That son of a bitch in Houston? That's the motherfucker tried to rip us off on that Lamborghini thing an' I swore I was gonna-

TULIP

(cutting him off)

Yes, but I had no-one else to go to, did I?

(calmer)

So what with the drinking and then looking for you in the occasional moments of sobriety, I let the whole thing get out of control and Macavoy called a halt to the proceedings. Wanted his money back. I couldn't pay. So he said I had to do something for him in exchange...

Jesse is watching her very carefully now.

TULIP

Christ, I don't know. I didn't have any choice. You swear there's things you would never do - you could never do - and all of a sudden circumstances change and you find yourself doing stuff, no matter how awful it is.

JESSE

(quietly appalled)

You...you were a hooker?

TULIP

(exploding)

No I was not a fucking hooker! Jesus Christ, Custer! I can't believe you fucking said that! What the fuck do you think I am?

But Jesse is too busy getting his heartrate back to normal to answer, relieved beyond measure.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (3)

89

TULIP

(peevied)

but I suppose in a way it was worse than that. It happened about a month ago. In Houston.

90 EXT. HOUSTON STREET - NIGHT

90

Flashback to Tulip standing on a street corner in a shitty part of town, purse over her shoulder, nervous. She just can't relax. She turns towards us, notices something that sets her even more on edge.

A black Mercedes is parked just outside a bar, which seems to have just closed. Two scruffily-suited THUGS wait at the car while a THIRD locks the door of the bar, pulls down the shutters. Also at the bar is a FAT GUY in a slightly better suit, clearly their boss.

Tulip watches, now downright scared.

TULIP

Oh my God. I can't believe I'm gonna do this.

She glances down at her purse.

The third guy finishes locking up and gets in the back of the car, with the fat guy between him and another thug. The last one gets in front to drive.

Tulip, staring, terrified, takes a step forward. Then another. And another.

91 INT. CAR - NIGHT

91

The driver is just about to start up when he notices Tulip coming slowly towards them. He frowns, then smiles, and turns to the guys in the back.

92 EXT. HOUSTON STREET - NIGHT

92

Tulip advances like a nervous mouse, not really looking at the car.

93 INT. CAR - NIGHT

93

Everyone in the car busts up laughing.

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED:

93

FAT GUY

What the fuck is that supposed to be?

THUG

Looks to me like too much fuckin' Prozac. Hey, watch this-

94 EXT. HOUSTON STREET - NIGHT

94

The thug in the rear seat - on the side facing Tulip - leans out the window and grins at her. We can just see the thug on the other side of the fat guy leaning round to watch.

THUG

Pardon me, Ma'am!

Tulip jumps, startled out of her daze.

TULIP

Wahh!!

The thug makes a two-inch diameter circle with his thumb and forefinger, smiles innocently.

THUG

You reckon you could get your mouth around something this wide? 'Cause if you could, I'd like to marry you.

Tulip freezes, stunned. We hear the carload of jerks crack up laughing. Then Tulip's face changes to a look of total fury and she pulls the Desert Eagle from her purse.

THUG (O.S.)

Holy shit!!

And we freeze frame right there.

95 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

95

Jesse is staring wide-eyed at Tulip, mouth shut, but she doesn't notice. She seems really irritated.

TULIP

See, what had me so terrified was the thought of using a gun on someone. I mean my Dad was a cop, he taught me all about guns and defending myself and everything, and now here was this guy, this rival of Macavoy's I was supposed to blow away...I mean just

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

95

TULIP (CONT'D)

kill him, put an end to him there in the street...I knew I couldn't do it. I froze. And then that asshole went and gave me whatever it is you need to pull a trigger. Or so I thought.

96 EXT. HOUSTON STREET - NIGHT

96

We hold on the freeze frame for an instant, then Tulip completes the draw and fires.

97 INT. CAR - NIGHT

97

The second thug - not the one who spoke to Tulip, but the one who leant over to see better, gets his jaw blown off. Blood flies. Panic in the back of the car.

FAT GUY

Jesus fuckin' Christ!

UNHURT THUG

Oh my God!

The wounded guy fumbles in his lap, picks up the severed lower jaw, stares at it. It's a ghastly mess of bone, meat and teeth.

His pals stare at him. He stares at them.

98 EXT. HOUSTON STREET - NIGHT

98

Tulip is frozen, smoking gun in hand, eyes bulging from her skull. She claps a hand to her mouth, looking for all the world as if she'd sworn in church.

TULIP

(squeaking)

Oh!

Her p.o.v.: all four of the guys in the car, staring out at her, frozen to their seats, stunned.

Tulip bolts and runs down the street.

99 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

99

Tulip looks up, anxious to change the subject.

TULIP

So anyway, your turn.

(CONTINUED)

JESSE

(fazed)

I don't think so...

TULIP

Okay, okay, I know. It was a horrible thing to do. I know that. But just for that instant, after being so terrified, I was sure I could really do it. I think that's what scares me the most.

JESSE

I'm glad to hear that.

Tulip looks up, curious.

JESSE

'Cause the Tulip I remember, the thought of takin' someone's life - even an asshole's life - woulda scared the livin' hell outta her.

She smiles a little. So does he. A warm moment between them. Tulip even laughs a little, then more.

TULIP

Yours is gonna have to be a pretty wild fucking story to beat that.

Jesse smiles sadly.

JESSE

Yeah. Well. My Daddy died.

Tulip stops short, looks up at him.

JESSE

I got word that time we were in Phoenix. Nurse said on the phone he didn't have long. You were shopping, remember? I couldn't wait 'til when we agreed to meet - had to just head straight for home. Got there just in time, way it turned out. He was hurtin' real bad. You never met my Daddy, but I swear he was the strongest man I ever knew.

He pauses. Tulip watches, concerned. This is clearly difficult for him.

(CONTINUED)

JESSE

But that day, lyin' there with that goddamned cancer eatin' him up...coughin' an' sweatin', all the muscles gone from his arms, so thin this little bitty nurse could pick him up an' turn him over...hair all gone, skin like chalk...that day I looked at him, an' I saw that strong man had been cut down to nothin'. I sat down at his bedside an' took his hand, an' he looked at me...an' all of a sudden I could see he hadn't changed a bit. That strength of his was still right there.

He raises his head now, fiercely proud for just that moment.

JESSE

Still right there in my Daddy's eyes.

Tulip is genuinely affected by this, sorry for him. His voice softens again.

JESSE

It was him, Tulip. He got me to become a minister. Just like he'd been, and his daddy before him. An' I looked in those eyes of his an' I knew I had no choice but to do just like he wanted.

TULIP

Couldn't you have told me?

JESSE

Oh, I thought about it. I was gonna do it. An' then I thought - an' say what? Sorry, honey, I gotta leave you for the church. Too bad about your broken heart. I figured the best thing was to disappear outta your life. I knew it'd be hard on you, an' I regret it more'n anything I ever did in my life, but...aw, Jesus.

TULIP

You know...if you could've told me this last night, I think I would have understood.

(CONTINUED)

JESSE

I didn't want you to understand. I wanted you to go on hating me. To leave me outta your life an' go away an' have a chance of being happy. An' then, I dunno, I'd be able to carry on doin' what I had to do, no matter how shitty it was.

(pause)

See, I knew I caused my Daddy pain with the life I was leadin'. He told me, he said, "If you make one promise in your life that means anything, son - please let it be this one." He brought me into this world. He fed an' clothed me an' raised me the way he thought was just an' proper. An' seein' him in that bed I knew I had one final chance to do right by him, the way he always did for me. I became a Preacher for my Daddy, Tulip...because it was just the right goddamned thing to do.

He looks at her, smiles sadly.

JESSE

An' now look. I did the right thing. I fucked up my life, an' I fucked up yours even worse, an' what I achieved by it don't amount to a bucket of horseshit.

He slumps a bit. Tulip looks up, struck by a thought.

TULIP

Jesse, why don't we just get the hell out of this madness, right now? Just run for it - you use that power you've got to order anyone who messes with us out of our way, and we keep going and don't stop 'til we're far away from Texas.

JESSE

(smiling sadly)

Tulip...I like Texas. An' I'm through runnin'.

Her face falls a bit.

(CONTINUED)

JESSE

It sure is temptin' to do what you're sayin', but I can't. A thing like I got, bein' able to make people do stuff against their will - that ain't the kind of thing you can take lightly. I mean, you see what I just did to Cassidy? That was wrong. What right have I got to tell him what to do? You got the power of God, you got to use it right.

TULIP

But he fucking killed the guy...

JESSE

Guy tried to kill him. You tellin' me if some son of a bitch tried that with you, you wouldn't blow 'em away with that cannon you got in your purse?

TULIP

Yeah, I know, but - Jesus, you saw what he did! He's a fucking monster, Jesse!

JESSE

Oh hell, I'm already regrettin' sayin' that to him.
"Abomination"...I never stood in judgement like that on a fella before...

TULIP

I think you had an excuse!

JESSE

Maybe so. But I can't just walk away from this now. An' I'd like to think I can still face down the bad guys an' find out what's been done to me without becomin' some kinda all-out shitheel.

A moment passes as she sadly studies him.

TULIP

Oh, Jesse. You and your goddamn pride.

(pause)

And that's just it, isn't it? Maybe I'm the biggest idiot in the world,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED: (5)

99

TULIP (CONT'D)
or maybe I'm just a sucker for
punishment...but guys who back down
when trouble comes along, who eat
shit all the time and learn to like
it - you can find them anytime you
want. But a crazy, hard-headed John
Wayne son of a bitch like you - you
only come along once in a lifetime.

That surprises him a little. She moves closer, smiles,
obviously about to kiss him.

TULIP
You know what I think?

JESSE
(taken aback)
After everything I did to you-

She puts a finger to his lips.

TULIP
I think we're stuck with each other,
tough guy.

They kiss for a long time, then break off to look at each
other, both smiling. Then they kiss again and slowly descend
towards the bed.

100 INT. HUGO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

100

The TV screen - which isn't turned on.

We move slowly behind it, looking over it to see Hugo and
Arseface sitting on the couch, watching the TV. Both have
bottles of bud. Hugo fumes quietly, bitter as hell.

ARSEFACE
(Sure wish we could afford to get the
TV fixed, Dad!)

No response from Hugo. Arseface bangs on, oblivious to his
dad's silent hatred.

ARSEFACE
(Must be real exciting being Sheriff!
Boy, I wish I could come along on one
of your cases! You think I could be
your deputy one day, Dad?)

Hugo's so uptight he looks like he could crack nuts with his
asshole. The bottle starts to shake in his hand.

(CONTINUED)

ARSEFACE

(Father and son lawmen! Me watching
your back! What a team we'd be,
huh?)

The phone rings - barely a squeak comes from it before Hugo
snatches it up.

HUGO

Hugo Root here!

101 INT. MEEKER'S CAR - NIGHT

101

Meeker is driving, talking on the radio. Dinnings sits
beside him.

MEEKER

It's Meeker, Hugo. I ain't
interruptin' anything, am I?

Dinnings cracks up. Meeker just smiles.

HUGO (O.S.)

(over radio)

Meeker, you ain't interruptin'
fuckin' shit. You make that call to
Washington like I told you?

MEEKER

Top of my list, Hugo, top of my list.
Listen, we had word of a shooting out
at the Ten-Ten. From the sound of
things, your perp from the roadblock
just might be involved.

HUGO (O.S.)

(over radio)

The Preacher?

MEEKER

Uh-uh, the other one. The, uh,
gunfighter, I think you described
him. But we did get a positive I.D.
on Reverend Custer earlier on
tonight. Anyhow, me an' Detective
Dinnings are on our way out to the
Ten-Ten right now. Thought you might
wanna join us.

102 INT. HUGO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

102

Hugo is still on the phone, grim. Over his shoulder we can see Arseface watching and listening, fascinated.

HUGO

Damn right I do, but what about the Preacher? He's the son of a bitch disarmed us an' left us at that other bastard's mercy in the first place!

(pause)

Oh, you don't? Well, you go ahead an' rush right on over to the Ten-Ten: I'm gonna stop by the Rattler an' do some real investigatin'. I keep tellin' you there's more to this shit than you think, an' that Custer's the key to all of it.

(pause)

Because it's fuckin' obvious, is why. An' you'd know it too if you weren't sittin' there sneerin' at me with that faggot Dinnings. I can hear him there, laughin' at me. You tell him fuck you.

(pause)

Then fuck you too, Meeker. I'm gonna find Custer an' blow this whole fuckin' thing wide open. I'm gonna have them fucks up in Washington good an' tight by their John Thursdays, an' you know what you're gonna have? Dick.

He slams down the phone. Arseface creeps out towards us, unnoticed by Hugo.

103 EXT. HUGO ROOT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

103

Hugo exits the house, slamming the door behind him. He shoves his hat on, buckles on his gunbelt, stomps angrily towards his car.

104 INT. HUGO'S CAR - NIGHT

104

Hugo gets in.

HUGO

Fuck you, Meeker.

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

104

He starts her up.

HUGO

I'll show you some goddamned law enforcement.

105 EXT. HUGO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

105

The car speeds away. The rear lights fade into the night.

Then, from the gloom at the side of the house, Arseface pedals out on a BMX bicycle that's really far too small for him. Legs pumping furiously, he races off after Hugo as fast as he can.

106 INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

106

Jesse and Tulip lie in bed, both apparently asleep. Their clothes lie all over the place. Just a sheet over them.

Jesse opens his eyes, dozy for a second. Then he turns to Tulip, studies her for a long moment. He gets out of bed and creeps to the bathroom.

107 INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

107

A small, cramped room with a dim light. Letting the sink fill with water, Jesse dozily watches himself in the little mirror above the sink.

JESSE

Nice goin', Custer. You think of anything else you can do to complicate things even more, you be sure an' let me know.

He leans down, splashes water on his face.

He stands straight again, freezes. The image in the mirror is now one of roaring, blazing flames. Weird thing is, the light from them is trapped within the mirror, doesn't illuminate the bathroom at all.

108 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

108

Tulip wakes up, dozy, then registers Jesse's not beside her. She sits up, wary.

(CONTINUED)

108 CONTINUED:

108

TULIP

Jesse?

109 INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

109

Jesse stares, face twisted, completely bewildered.

110 INT. MIRROR/VISION

110

The flames blaze away. They seem to go on forever. Nothing else is visible.

Then, centred in shot, we see a small, black object silhouetted against the fire.

Moving closer, we realize that it's two figures locked together, having very violent sex. One is an ANGELIC MALE, just like the one whose face we glimpsed when Jesse was possessed by Genesis. He has vast white wings, golden hair, big muscles, and no clothes. He holds his partner by the throat, roaring in agony and anger. The other is the same DEMON FEMALE we saw during Jesse's possession - huge curved horns, cloven hooves, shiny, jet-black body, clawed hands and big fangs. She has her legs wrapped around the Angel's waist as they hump away like crazy. She tears her claws down his back, spraying blood across his wings, and bites chunks of flesh from his chest.

111 INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

111

Jesse continues to stare, jaw suddenly dropping at what he sees.

112 INT. MIRROR/VISION

112

The two figures, still locked together, soar upwards until they're high over the flames, both screaming in ecstasy now. The fires are far below them, and then disappear from view as they emerge into a beautiful skyscape of rolling white and silver clouds and sparkling sunlight.

The Angel and Demon become more gentle, holding each other, looking into each other's eyes.

113 INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

113

The door opens and Tulip comes in, puzzled, holding a sheet around her. Jesse continues to stare into the mirror, riveted.

TULIP

Jesse?

She moves beside him, looks past him.

All she sees are their reflections.

She looks curiously at Jesse, who's still gaping into the mirror in disbelief, face twisted.

TULIP

Yeah...well...you certainly are hideous. I'm surprised your Mom didn't sell you to the circus, Jesse!

JESSE

(snapping out of it)
Huh?

TULIP

Are you okay? What the hell are you staring in the mirror for?

JESSE

(after a long pause)
Looked to me kinda like an angel of the Lord an' a demon from Hell.
Fucking.

There's an even longer pause while Tulip takes a hard look in the mirror.

TULIP

(doubtful)
I see...

JESSE

No, wait a minute, goddamnit. I saw them already tonight. Both of 'em. An' I saw 'em when that fuckin' thing hit me in the church, just before everybody got fried. I'm tellin' you, Tulip: I saw their faces.

(CONTINUED)

TULIP

But what does that have to do with
angels and demons?

JESSE

I dunno, but it's showin' them to me.
It wants me to know what they did.
It gave me this power, the
gunfighter's after me because of it,
an' now this...

TULIP

And they were really...doing it?

JESSE

They were fuckin' each other's brains
out.

TULIP

Well, look...this thing that, I
dunno, possessed you, for want of a
better word - if it's showing you
them doing that, and you saw them
when it hit you in church...well,
what if the thing in your head is-

JESSE

(incredulous)
Their child?

They stare at each other for a moment, amazed. Then Jesse
turns away, wary, thinking hard.

114 EXT. TRUCKSTOP BAR - NIGHT

114

Cassidy exits Tulip's truck and walks quickly towards the
door of the Ten-Ten. He sniffs the air again. His face
lights up and he heads on in. Dim light from within, but no
noise or sign of movement.

115 INT. TRUCKSTOP BAR - NIGHT

115

Cassidy freezes as he enters, face suddenly twisting in
disbelief.

The scene that greets him in the low light of the bar is a
nightmare. Two dozen bodies lie on the floor of the bar in a
vast lake of dark red blood. All bear the massive, gaping
wounds that the Saint's guns deliver. Severed arms lie here
and there. A couple of bodies are actually headless. Gore
is splattered across the walls. Tables have been knocked

(CONTINUED)

over - a sense of panicked rush towards the rear of the room, which no-one quite managed to reach.

SAINT (O.S.)

I knew what you were the first time I
laid eyes on you, boy.

Cassidy turns, sees the Saint standing in the gloom by the bar, looking grimly back at him. Cassidy is instantly scared, can't help but show it.

SAINT

An' I knew a bloodsucker like you
would come runnin', if I was to set
the table for you.

(pause)

That thing inside the Preacher -
that'll draw scum like you from miles
around. That urge you got to take a
look at Texas - weren't you wonderin'
where that came from?

Cassidy is startled, realizing the Saint is right.

SAINT

Now: I reckon we can make it work the
other way around. I reckon you can
give that Preacher a call an' he'll
come runnin'.

Cassidy's eyes narrow slowly. He gets angry. He points
slowly to the carnage on the floor further back.

CASSIDY

You killed them to get me here?

The Saint just looks back at him.

CASSIDY

You fuckin' dirty bastard...! D'you
think I want any part of this? D'you
think I'd sell out Jesse Custer to a
piece of shite like you?

(angrier)

Do you think I'm some kind of
worthless fuckin' animal or
somethin'?

SAINT

That's exactly what I think.

Cassidy loses it, strides towards the Saint, drawing a fist
back to strike - but the Saint pulls his pistol, fast as

(CONTINUED)

lightning, and shoves it in Cassidy's face. Cassidy freezes, gritting his teeth.

CASSIDY

Is...that supposed to scare me or somethin'? 'Cause believe me, it wouldn't be the first time I got shot through the head.

SAINT

It'd be the first time you didn't get up again.

(pause)

Saint of Killers is what they call me, boy. That name mean anything to you?

Cassidy is sweating now, really scared. Clearly, he's heard the name.

SAINT

I thought it might. Fella don't get as old as you have without hearin' my name whispered. I left this world in eighteen eighty-six an' went to Hell for all the lives I'd taken, an' when I got there I just went right on killin'. Hell's supposed to knock the hate from a sinner's soul, but all it did for mine was burn it blacker. I butchered my way across Perdition an' damn near emptied it of souls, except the Lord Himself came down an' begged for me to stop. Even offered me a job. Wanted me to take over from the goddamned Angel of Death, who it turned out had no stomach for an eternity of killin'.

He presses the gun into Cassidy's chin, tilts his head back. Cassidy is shitting himself, too terrified to move.

SAINT

But I did. So the Angel of Death gave up his sword, an' forged me this pair of Colt revolvers from the steel. You know who I am, boy. You want to take the risk this gun won't work on you?

He cocks the pistol. Cassidy freezes. A long moment passes. Then Cassidy crumples, breaking down.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED: (3)

115

CASSIDY

No...

The Saint keeps the pistol on him, nods at a phone on the bar. Cassidy shakily backs towards it, never taking his eyes off the pistol. He picks it up, sweats.

CASSIDY

There was a motel just down the road from where I left him. He didn't have any transport, okay? So if I can get the number for the motel-

Another shove from the Saint, pistol to the nose.

Cassidy is utterly miserable, wretched.

116 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

116

Jesse and Tulip are halfway through getting dressed when the phone rings. They look at it, then at each other, nonplussed.

Jesse picks up the phone, wary.

JESSE

Yeah...?

117 INT. TRUCKSTOP BAR - NIGHT

117

Cassidy on the phone, terrified, with the Saint's pistol stuck in his face.

CASSIDY

Jesse! Thank fuck! Jesse, it's me-

JESSE (O.S.)

(over phone)

Cassidy?!

118 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

118

Neither Jesse nor Tulip can believe it.

JESSE

What the fuck are you-

CASSIDY (O.S.)

(over phone)

Jesse, listen: I've got a message I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED:

118

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
have to give to you. I - I haven't
got any choice-

119 INT. TRUCKSTOP BAR - NIGHT

119

The Saint pushes his gun right into Cassidy's face, twisting it weirdly. He freezes, then goes on.

CASSIDY
You have to go back to Annville.
You'll get all the answers you're
lookin' for there.

The Saint relaxes, takes his gun off Cassidy - who freaks a little and seizes his chance.

CASSIDY
Jesse, it's a trap! Don't fuckin'
go! It's that guy, it's the fuckin'
Saint of Killers-

120 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

120

Jesse grimaces as a massive bang sounds on the line. He turns to look at Tulip, both of them pretty freaked out.

121 INT. TRUCKSTOP BAR - NIGHT

121

Cassidy lies on the floor, staring up at the ceiling, amazed. Slowly he raises his head, looks down at his body.

A massive hole has been blasted in his gut, blood pouring from it to pool around him.

A shadow falls over him.

It's the Saint, of course, holding his smoking pistol.

CASSIDY
(weak)
He won't come now, you bastard.
You're fucked.

SAINT
He'll come. He's burnin' up, wantin'
to know what it is that's happened to
him. Don't you get any high ideas
about havin' him saved, boy.
(pause)
You sold him out.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

121

Cassidy's face falls, miserable.

The Saint cocks his pistol, points it right down at us.

SAINT

You're just an animal thinks it's a man.

CASSIDY

(yelling)

No!

The pistol roars and the screen goes black.

122 EXT. MOTEL CABIN - NIGHT

122

Jesse exits, tucking his shirt in. Grim sense of resolve. Tulip hurries after him, wary.

TULIP

"Saint of Killers"? There's only one guy that can be...

JESSE

Uh-huh.

TULIP

And you're still going to Annville?

JESSE

Uh-huh.

He stops at a battered pick-up, reaches through the half-open window to unlock the door, flips down the sunshade, catches the keys as they fall.

JESSE

Nice to see folks ain't gettin' any smarter.

TULIP

I'm coming with you.

JESSE

What? Now hold on there, honey-

TULIP

Hold on hell. I held on for three fucking years, wondering where you'd gone and why you didn't love me anymore. Now I know you never stopped I'm not gonna waste a single

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

122

TULIP (CONT'D)
second I've got with you. I'm with
you all the way, Custer.
(pause)
Until the end of the world.

JESSE
(impressed)
Goddamn, girl. That just might be
where we're headed.

123 EXT. ROADHOUSE BAR - NIGHT

123

The Rattler has long since closed up, all lights off. Hugo Root prowls the parking lot, scowling at the bar, the ground, the desert - as if by giving the world a dirty look he'll get the answers he wants. His cruiser is parked nearby. He rubs at some dried blood on the ground with the toe of his boot, then glares offshot, attention caught. Looking past him we see the MOTEL sign, way off down the road.

HUGO
Well, well. Game's a-fuckin'-foot.

124 INT. MOTEL OFFICE - NIGHT

124

A dingy little office, with a dumb-looking night clerk immersed in a porno mag; the latest issue of ANAL RAMPAGE. Judging by his intense concentration, the big words are giving him trouble. He looks slowly up as Hugo strides in.

HUGO
You there, nosepick. You seen anyone
lookin' kinda unusual comin' in here?

CLERK
(after a pause)
Well, what would you mean by unusual?

HUGO
I mean not normal, you asshole.
Different.

CLERK
(another pause)
Well, could you maybe be more
specific?

HUGO
What is it with you? You got so many
colourful folks stayin' here, you
need me to narrow it down?

(CONTINUED)

CLERK

If you could.

HUGO

I swear, you musta leaked out of a hole in a goddamn prophylactic. Specifically: I'm lookin' for an ugly fella wearin' sunglasses, a stringy beanpole sort've a bitch an' an asshole dressed up like a Preacher. Ring any fuckin' bells?

CLERK

(pause)

As a matter of fact, it does. A Mr. an' Mrs. Smith checked in here about two hours back. 'Cept when they left, Mr. Smith had a Reverend's collar on. An' I guess Mrs. Smith was kinda on the skinny side.

HUGO

Fucked if it ain't them. When'd they check out? They say where they were headed?

CLERK

(after a good think)

You just missed 'em...uh...what was the other question?

HUGO

(pained)

Did they say where they were goin'?

CLERK

Heard something about Annville. You know, that's been on TV all day? They in a lot of trouble, then? The Smiths?

HUGO

Well Smith ain't their real name, you fuckin' mongoloid!

CLERK

Hey, I know who you are! You're Sheriff Root, with the son's got a face like a puckered-up asshole! Jesus, livin' with a freak like that must be one long endless fuckin' nightmare-

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: (2)

124

Hugo turns and smashes him across the face, K.O.ing him instantly. He goes down like a heap.

HUGO

(fuming)

I am Sheriff Hugo Root, the man who took down a renegade Preacher and shot a worthless by-the-Jesus cop killer full of fuckin' holes and blew open a goddamned Washington conspiracy so big it makes Watergate look like a damp bloodfart. You will hear my name again, you worthless son of a bitch.

He turns and stomps out.

125 INT. MEEKER'S CAR - NIGHT

125

Meeker and Dinnings freeze as they hear...

HUGO (O.S.)

(over radio)

This here is Hugo Root. All units in the vicinity to converge on Annville. I repeat, all units make your way to Annville immediately. This thing is goin' down an' that's the town it's gonna happen in. Get me tactical. Abandon the roadblocks. Get everybody out an' get 'em over there: now.

MEEKER

Shit!

126 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

126

The cruiser skids through a 180, then roars off in the direction it came from.

127 INT. HUGO'S CAR - NIGHT

127

Hugo hangs up the radio, glares out over the wheel at the night beyond. Full of curdling, evil hatred, a man anticipating his chance to wreak cruel, violent revenge on the world.

128 INT. STOLEN TRUCK - NIGHT

128

Tulip checks her pistol, then puts it back on her purse. She turns to look warily at Jesse. He sits well back, eyes locked on the road. Whatever else he's feeling, he isn't scared.

129 EXT. STOLEN TRUCK - NIGHT

129

The truck races on down the road 'til all we see are its tail lights.

130 EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

130

At first all we see is pitch black night - then the Saint strides out of it, cold as ice. He passes us without a glance, and we're left with nothing but night again.

131 EXT. TRUCKSTOP BAR - NIGHT

131

Silence. The TEN-TEN sign flickers, then goes out.

132 INT. TRUCKSTOP BAR - NIGHT

132

Cassidy lies on the floor, shattered, apparently dead. The hole in his guts has been matched by another in his chest - a meaty crater with blood, gore and bits of rib hanging out, right where his heart used to be. Mouth wide open.

We move closer until his face fills the shot. No movement. Then, very slowly, his jaw shifts a little.

CASSIDY

Uh...?

He grits his teeth as he realizes what's up.

CASSIDY

(weak)

Aw no.

(pause)

I'm sorry, Jesse. I just didn't have the balls. An' there's nothing I can do...

His head slumps to the side, beaten.

(CONTINUED)

We look at him past the edge of the vast lake of blood from the Saint's earlier victims. It's gotten pretty dark and gooey now.

He notices it, face slowly twisting as he thinks.

CASSIDY

Oh fuck. Oh fuckin' Jesus.

He stares at the ceiling again, miserable, a little revolted.

CASSIDY

Why me?

Steeling himself for the effort, he grits his teeth and rolls slowly over to his belly, grabbing for purchase with a very weak arm. He yells in agony.

Then, gasping and sweating with the pain and exertion, he raises his head to look at the lake of gore and shattered bodies...and we fade to black.

We fade back in on a smear of ribs, guts and blood on the floor of the bar. We move along it as it becomes a trail, ending in Cassidy - he's hauled himself along the floor and is now lapping hungrily at the lake of blood on the floor. He raises his head, dribbles gooey blood everywhere, looks weakly at the various bodies. He's gasping.

CASSIDY

Sorry, folks.

Cassidy goes back to slurping up the blood, panting as he tries to breath and drink at the same time. He gets more and more frenzied, guzzling the stuff faster and faster, until he throws his head back and gasps out a long sigh of satisfaction. Smeared with dark red blood, hair matted with it, he looks like hell.

He gets slowly to his feet, staggers a bit, catches himself on the bar. He wipes his mouth, still out of breath.

CASSIDY

Better'n' fuckin' spinach.

Then he turns and staggers towards the door, shaky, nowhere near at full strength.

A flurry of activity. Cruisers are arriving from all over, lights flashing. Cops, deputies, state troopers, even SWAT

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

133

guys run to and fro, taking cover behind cars, houses, anywhere they can find. Citizens are bundled from their homes, escorted to safety behind the various buildings. Much prepping of weapons. Annville is being turned into a giant trap.

SHERIFF (O.S.)

(over bullhorn)

All civilians are to be evacuated, I repeat, evacuated to a place of safety. Please go with the officers, folks. We're expectin' some bad guys here tonight, an' we don't want you people gettin' hurt in the shootin'.

A harassed looking sheriff stands behind a cruiser that's been parked across the middle of the street. Deputies aim M16s across the hood and trunk. A third deputy confers with the sheriff. All around them, the preparations continue.

SHERIFF

(over bullhorn)

Come on now, shake the lead out! I don't know how much time we got, but let's make sure we're ready for these sons of bitches!

(aside, to deputy)

What?!

DEPUTY

Still can't raise Hugo Root, boss.

SHERIFF

Goddamn it, where the hell is he? He started this damn thing - least he could do is show up to tell us who the hell to shoot at!

134 INT. MEEKER'S CAR - NIGHT

134

Meeker is on the radio, pissed off. Dinnings looks sceptical.

MEEKER

Well where the hell is he, then?

DISPATCHER (O.S.)

(over radio)

Sheriff Root's not responding, Sheriff Meeker. We think he's gone off the air.

Meeker angrily dumps the radio on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

MEEKER

Gone off the air, that crazy fucker's gone off the goddamned planet. This is exactly the bloodbath he's been waitin' for - this is his revenge on the rest of us for havin' normal lives...

DINNINGS

What d'you mean?

MEEKER

That fuckin' Hugo. I swear, just 'cause he's got a son looks like Frankenstein an' a two-inch pecker, he's gotta take it out on the whole goddamned world.

DINNINGS

A two-inch-

MEEKER

(regretting it)
I used to fuck his wife.

135 EXT. ANNVILLE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

135

Quieter now. The lawmen have taken up positions behind their cars, in the storefronts, along the tops of the building. Nearly fifty guys, lots of firepower.

The sheriff and three deputies still wait behind the car in the middle of the street. The sheriff has a pistol in one hand, the bullhorn in the other.

SHERIFF

Nothin'. An' still no sign of Hugo,

Looking past them, we can see right down the main street and out into the desert night beyond. Pretty quiet, but very tense.

SHERIFF

(turning)
Shit. Hand me out that goddamned radio-

DEPUTY (O.S.)

(over radio)
I think we got somethin'!

136 EXT. ANNVILLE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

136

Sudden agitation among the cops as they cock their guns, get ready to open up. All very tense.

The sheriff's eyes narrow, amazed.

SHERIFF
Jesus Christ...

The Saint enters town, walking up the middle of the main street. He doesn't bother to even look at the cops.

The sheriff snaps out of it, grabs the bullhorn. The deputy beside him is shaky as hell.

DEPUTY
Who the fuck is that?

SHERIFF
That's the son of a bitch off the
A.P.B. The fuckin' cop killer.
(over bullhorn)
You hold it right there, you asshole.
We're gonna give you one chance to
give yourself up-

The Saint draws and fires once, fast as lightning, still moving coolly ahead. No emotion.

The bullet smashes into the side of the Sheriff's car, blowing a hole in the pan just above the gas tank.

SHERIFF
Fuck-

Barely an instant later the car explodes in a flaring blast, the bodywork separating and flying high into the air, the wheels shooting out to the side. The lawmen disappear in the explosion.

Then there's a dull thud as half the Sheriff's blackened torso and head land in the dirt.

That does it. All the cops in town open fire at once.

137 EXT. ANNVILLE - NIGHT

137

Hugo's cruiser skids to a stop, the fireball from the exploding car in town reflected in its windscreen. Multiple

(CONTINUED)

137 CONTINUED:

137

gunshots are heard. Hugo exits the car, staring at us, freaked.

138 EXT. ANNVILLE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

138

The cops are giving it maximum: revolvers, automatics, M16s, scope rifles, shotguns, even a few SMGs the SWAT boys brought along. We move along the street from group to group - deputies behind cars, marksmen on the rooftops. Dozens upon dozens of shell casings rattle down on the street.

Most of this actually misses the Saint, ploughing up the ground around him, kicking dust high into the air. Enough is hitting him to stagger him, knock him back. At one point he almost disappears in gunsmoke. Then he brings both pistols up and fires.

One of the SWAT marksmen is hit, his head exploding all over his startled comrades.

The second bullet ploughs into a shotgun held by a deputy and the weapon's shells detonate, blowing the gun apart in his hands. He and the four guys around him are shredded by buckshot, very messy.

The cops pause for a second, staring.

The Saint, of course, is still standing. He waits a second, then fires again.

One cop is flung backwards off a rooftop, great arc of blood flying up.

Another is smashed through a storefront window in a spray of shattered glass.

Several cops resume firing, but most can only stare.

The Saint is hit repeatedly, even as he returns fire.

More cops fire back at him, but several more break and run like hell.

One deputy cowers in a cruiser, squealing into the radio. He winces as another guy's bloody corpse is smashed against the car.

DEPUTY

Jesus Christ! Sheriff Root, please respond! Sheriff Root, we have your suspect in sight!

(screaming)

He's fucking killing every one of us!

(CONTINUED)

A gunshot - then the window beside him shatters and the windows nearer us are instantly painted dark red with blood. The car rocks on its suspension.

The Saint continues his advance, now a bit ragged - missing chunks of meat from his chest, holes in his hat and clothes, but still just grim, unworried. He ceases fire, then points one gun off to the side without bothering to look.

He's level with the town gas station, level with one of the pumps.

He fires.

The bullet smacks into one of the pumps.

Several cops stare in amazement, riveted.

He cocks the gun, fires again, still not stopping, still not aiming, walking right at us.

The bullet sparks against the pump, igniting the rushing gasoline.

He cocks the gun again.

The cops gape. A couple run, but most are transfixed.

The Saint's eyes are full of hate, total commitment, not wavering for an instant.

The gun in his hand, firing.

The pump explodes.

Pull way back as, seconds later, the whole gas station goes up too. A vast, flaring explosion of burning fuel. The Saint is glimpsed for a second, then the explosion reaches out and he disappears in the flames.

The cops stare, faces lit by the flames.

They they start to break and run. Behind them, the fireball rises higher, white and orange, flaring. Blazing fire begins to rain down on the running cops. Shouts and screams. The buildings are hit too, catching fire.

Several cops run around on fire, screaming in horror, dying in agony.

The Saint appears out of the fire, a silhouette at first. He's one fire himself, back and shoulders burning. He resumes firing, cutting down cops as they run.

(CONTINUED)

138 CONTINUED: (2)

138

He walks right towards us, and we can see his expression is still unchanged, as if nothing has happened.

139 EXT. ANNVILLE - NIGHT

139

The battered pick-up pulls out and Jesse and Tulip exit, gaping at the burning town. Distant screams and gunshots can be made out.

TULIP

You think it's him?

JESSE

It's his M.O.

View from behind them, with Annville burning away.

Then we move in fast on Jesse. At the last second he starts to turn - and is smashed in the head with a 45 automatic. He grunts and drops like a stone.

It's Hugo.

HUGO

Say hello to justice, you godfearin' fuck.

Tulip freaks and goes for her pistol, but only has it half-way out of her purse when Hugo leans across the top of the truck and points his gun in her face.

HUGO

Go on an' take it outta there, whore.
Put it on the truck an' back away.
Slowly.

She complies, very wary, totally aware of the delicacy of her situation.

HUGO

That's a good little beave.

He knocks her pistol off the truck - on his side. His face twists, mean.

HUGO

Looks like I got me one of these
weird fuckin' by-the-Jesus F.B.I.
cocksuckers. Reckon I'll take a walk
into town an' fetch out the other
one.

(taking out handcuffs)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

139 CONTINUED:

139

HUGO (CONT'D)

But first I want you in irons, you
scrawny little bitch.

TULIP

(scared but determined)

Fuck you!

Hugo is about to move for her when Jesse raises his head,
gritting his teeth, the cut on his temple bleeding nastily.
Hugo notices.

JESSE

Son of a bitch-

HUGO

Goddamn.

He puts his boot on Jesse's head and stomps him face first
into the dirt. Jesse grunts, lies still.

HUGO

You just lay there, boy. Don't want
you givin' any more crazy fuckin'
orders.

He turns back to Tulip, only to find she's gone.

HUGO

Shit!

He searches the area, peering into the night - then relaxes.

Tulip is running hell for leather towards Annville,
unfortunately silhouetted against the flames:

Hugo smiles nastily, takes careful aim.

HUGO

Shoulda done like Daddy told you,
cunt-

He suddenly screams in agony, a high-pitched shriek, and the
gun goes off into the sky with a huge bang. Then he drops
it.

Jesse, still on the ground, is grimacing hatefully and
clutching Hugo by the balls, squeezing for all he's worth.
Hugo keeps screaming.

140 EXT. ANNVILLE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

140

Tulip reaches the outskirts of town, still a bit freaked out, trying to catch her breath after her mad dash to get away from Hugo.

She turns the corner into the main street, to be greeted by a scene of blazing destruction. The buildings are on fire, the street is littered with corpses.

Her eyes narrow as she peers into the distance.

Down at the other end of the street, we can just make out the Saint finishing off the last of the cops. One guy falls to his knees. The Saint puts his pistol to the guy's head.

Tulip's eyes widen.

The gun roars and the guy falls back dead, all in silhouette.

Tulip dodges back round the corner, flattens herself against the wall, freaked.

TULIP

Oh Christ.

141 EXT. ANNVILLE - NIGHT

141

Hugo is flipped right round on the end of Jesse's right hook, grunts with pain.

A bad beating follows. Jesse punches Hugo five times in the face to knock him back, once in the gut to bend him over, knees him in the face to snap his head back and then hooks a hard left into his chin to send him flying back against the truck. All this in slightly over ten seconds.

142 EXT. ANNVILLE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

142

Tulip grimaces as more gunshots sound from offshot. She risks a peek round the corner again.

No sign of the Saint. Just the fire and the scattered bodies.

Her eyes narrow.

Lots of guns on the street too, holstered or otherwise.

(CONTINUED)

142 CONTINUED:

142

Tulip hesitates, then steels herself and scurries out onto the street.

143 EXT. ANNVILLE - NIGHT

143

Hugo's pulped face comes through the truck window at us in a spray of broken glass. Jesse hauls him back out again, snarls hatefully into his face. Hugo barely knows what planet he's on.

JESSE

You watch your goddamned mouth when you talk about her.

144 EXT. ANNVILLE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

144

Lit by the flickering flames, Tulip moves from body to body, collecting guns. She stuffs two automatics down the back of her jeans, shoves a revolver into her jacket, another automatic in the front of her jeans.

She's just picking up a gleaming silver 357 magnum when she stops, realizing the shooting and screaming have stopped. All she can hear are the flames. She looks up.

The Saint stands watching her, pistols holstered, emotionless. Maybe twenty feet away.

145 EXT. ANNVILLE - NIGHT

145

Hugo is still conscious, just about, spitting blood, gasping hate. Jesse holds him up by the collar.

HUGO

I know what you are, you son of a bitch...You're a goddamned Washington secret fuckin' weapon...they grew you in some kinda genetic by-the-Jesus laboratory...

JESSE

What the fuck are you talkin' about?

Behind his back, Hugo's hand fumbles in his belt, pulls something out.

His face twists, hateful.

HUGO

You little bastard.

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED:

145

A switchblade snaps open in Hugo's hand.

HUGO
I got your ass.

Jesse's face goes dangerously cold. His eyes slowly narrow.

JESSE
(word of God)
Fuck yourself.

Hugo's eyes bulge in horror and terror.

146 EXT. ANNVILLE - STREET

146

Tulip stands facing the Saint. He hasn't moved yet. The last gun she picked up is not immediately visible.

The Saint watches her, calm.

Tulip's eyes are wide. She clamps her mouth shut, fights panic.

SAINT
You're the Preacher's woman, ain't you? I guess that means he made the party. You call him on in here an' we'll have an end to this.

TULIP
What...what are you going to do to him...?

SAINT
What I do.

Tulip freezes - then the fear leaves her face. Cold fury takes over. She brings the 357 up at us, fires.

The bullet smashes into the Saint's eyeball, which bursts in a spray of blood and jelly. He clamps a hand to it, staggers round - and roars a hateful yell of fury and pain.

147 EXT. ANNVILLE - NIGHT

147

Jesse runs like hell for Annville, anxious.

JESSE
Tulip! Jesus fuckin' Christ! Tulip!

(CONTINUED)

147 CONTINUED:

147

Then more gunshots sound from the town. Jesse doubles his pace.

148 EXT. ANNVILLE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

148

Tulip advances on the Saint, blasting away with revolver and automatic, the 357 now discarded. He's bent over, staggering along the street, hands to his face. Blood pours out between the fingers. Each bullet knocks him a step further, and Tulip is really pouring it on. A wild scene - lit by the fires, the diminutive girl shooting the hell out of the giant gunfighter.

The guns in her hands click as they run out. She drops them and smoothly pulls the two automatics from the back of her jeans, resumes firing.

The Saint's hat flies off. Bullets smack into his head and shoulders.

Tulip's face is set - scared, but refusing to panic. Total determination. She keeps firing.

The Saint goes down on one knee, struck repeatedly in the head. He holds one hand up as if to stop her. A bullet punches through it. One hand still over his eye he roars again.

Tulip keeps firing, grits her teeth.

The Saint is holding himself up with his ruined hand.

Tulip keeps firing. There's a click as one of the guns locks dry. She drops it, takes careful aim with the other, fires.

The Saint starts to crumple.

Tulip fires again.

The Saint falls.

The gun locks dry with a loud click.

The Saint catches himself.

Horried, Tulip lowers the useless gun.

The Saint takes a moment, breathes deep. Then he slowly rises from the half crouch she forced him into, turns to face her.

Tulip can only stare, petrified.

(CONTINUED)

The Saint takes the hand away from his face, revealing the butchered, dripping, empty eye socket.

Tulip is ready to faint.

The Saint grimaces, then roars again.

SAINT
Preacher!!!

Jesse charges round the corner into the main street and stops dead, staring in horror.

The Saint has one of his pistols pressed against Tulip's head. His lip curls, surly. Tulip is frozen. Both are looking at Jesse.

He freaks.

JESSE
Tulip-!

SAINT
(cocking the gun)
Not one more word or she goes to meet
her maker. You're a dead man, but
she can still get out of this alive.

Jesse clamps his mouth shut.

SAINT
Now you come on in here, Preacher.

TULIP
Jesse, don't! Get out of here! Run!

Jesse walks forward 'til he's about ten feet from the Saint.

JESSE
(quiet)
Never again, baby.

She stares at him, horrified.

The Saint turns the gun on Jesse, takes aim. Tulip freaks.

TULIP
You can't just kill him! You said he
could find the answers here! He's
got a right to know what the hell it
is that happened to him!

(CONTINUED)

The Saint looks at her, thoughtful. Then his expression hardens. And he looks at Jesse again. Jesse returns his glare, unafraid.

SAINT

I ain't got no answers. I don't know why he's the one that's got to die. I don't know why that damn thing chose him out of all the millions that it could've. The ones who sent me, they're the ones who know. You want answers, Preacher? Ask the Angels.

(indicating the gun)

All I got is this.

TULIP

(breaking down)

It isn't fair! I love him, and you're just gonna shoot him in the street! You rotten son of a bitch, you've got a fucking gun!

The Saint's eyes narrow, mildly irritated.

SAINT

...Come to that, he has his goddamned power. He coulda told me to blow my own head off, or just keep walkin' 'til I reached the moon, or anything he damn well pleased. Just so happened I was quicker.

Jesse thinks hard.

The Saint glares back at him, a challenging look, like: Well?

Jesse comes to a decision, nods slowly. Then, keeping his eyes locked on the Saint's, he takes his jacket off, loosens his collar.

Tulip's eyes pop.

The Saint nods, grim.

SAINT

Makes no odds to me how you die, boy. But you got some sand, I will say that.

TULIP

For Christ's sake!

(CONTINUED)

148 CONTINUED: (3)

148

Jesse glances sadly at her, then rolls up his sleeves.

SAINT

Know this, Preacher: I see your lips twitch - I hear one single syllable of a single word - we're gonna find out if you can talk faster'n I can pull the pistol.

The Saint nods to Tulip.

SAINT

An' I guarantee you'll go to Hell knowin' she's left here with me.

Jesse nods again, spits on his hands, grimaces angrily and wades right in

149 INT. MEEKER'S CAR - NIGHT

149

Meeker peers into the rear view, squinting.

DINNINGS

How far to Annville?

MEEKER

Five minutes at most...who the hell is that?

A pair of headlights fill the rear-view with flaring light.

150 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

150

Tulip's pick-up comes roaring up behind the cruiser, weaving to overtake.

151 INT. TULIP'S PICK-UP - NIGHT

151

Cassidy spits blood, snarls angrily as he drives. He drips blood everywhere. Very pale.

CASSIDY

Get out've the fuckin' way, you bollocks!

152 INT. MEEKER'S CRUISER - NIGHT

152

Meeker snarls as the pick-up draws alongside. He weaves to block its path.

(CONTINUED)

152 CONTINUED:

152

MEEKER

Crazy son of a bitch!

They get a glimpse of Cassidy, yelling angrily at them,
gesturing for them to clear the way.

DINNINGS

Wants us to let him through!

MEEKER

Fuck him.

(pointing to side of the road)
Pull over, you asshole! Pull over
now!

153 INT. TULIP'S PICK-UP - NIGHT

153

Cassidy sneers, jerks the wheel hard over.

154 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

154

The pick-up smashes hard into the cruiser, knocking it clean
off the road. It spins a couple of times, careers onwards.

155 INT. MEEKER'S CRUISER - NIGHT

155

Dinnings hangs on for dear life as Meeker struggles
desperately to regain control of the cruiser.

156 EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

156

The cruiser crashes into a creek bed, turning on its side as
it slides along, then smashing into a rocky outcrop and
stopping. The wheels spin, the engine howls. Then silence.

DINNINGS (O.S.)

Guess this one's all Hugo's...

MEEKER (O.S.)

He fuckin' deserves it.

157 INT. TULIP'S PICK-UP - NIGHT

157

CASSIDY

Hold on, Jesse! The Cavalry's
comin'!

158 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

158

The pick-up races on down the road.

159 EXT. ANNVILLE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

159

Jesse crashes to the ground with sickening force. The Saint, who just hit him, is standing a good twenty feet away.

Tulip watches, horrified.

Jesse gets to his feet as his opponent advances, just in time to punch the Saint in the jaw. No effect. Another one. No effect. A fast combination: right, left, right, left, right to the guts, left to the guts, haymaker across the face. No effect. The Saint backhands him across the face, smashes him against a burning police cruiser. Jesse staggers, spits blood, stays on his feet.

They face each other for a moment, Jesse hateful and defiant, the Saint just grim.

The Saint comes at him again. Jesse gets in a couple of (useless) punches, then dodges just in time and the Saint punches his fist through the cruiser's roof.

Jesse karate chops him in the throat, rolls backwards across the car's hood, kicking the Saint in the face as he goes. The Saint is actually staggered a bit. Jesse lands on is feet, weaves in again.

He runs right into the Saint's hand, which clamps down on his hair, yanking his head back. The Saint then hauls him right rough and sends him flying through a picket fence, shattering the boards.

Jesse crawls in the wreckage of the fence, trying to get it together. The Saint is coming up behind.

TULIP

Jesse!

Just as the Saint bends down to seize hold of him, Jesse whips round and bashes the bastard across the face with a length of two-by-four from the fence.

The Saint stands upright.

Jesse squints up at him.

(CONTINUED)

The Saint stands with the board hanging bizarrely from his cheek with no visible means of support for it. It's just there. Totally unperturbed, he takes hold of the board with no more effort than if he were brushing off a fly. He looks right at us.

Jesse stares, grimacing.

The Saint pulls the board away from his face and we see what was holding it there: two four-inch nails, now oozing red blood as they leave the wounds. Still cool as you like, the Saint drops the board to the side.

SAINT
Kinda different.

Then his face darkens and he seizes Jesse, hauls him up, and starts slapping the shit out of him. Jesse takes about six backhanders, spits blood all over the place.

The Saint flings him backwards and he crashes to the ground, a wreck.

He lies still for a moment.

Tulip's face falls, distraught. This looks like it.

The Saint sneers a little, pulls his coat back from his holster, prepares to draw.

Then Jesse gets up. Very slowly. Spits out a tooth. Faces the Saint. Smiles darkly.

Even the Saint is a bit surprised, but only for a second. Then his face darkens again, and they close for more.

Tulip is amazed, then remembers -

TULIP
Go for his eyes!

Jesse ducks a huge haymaker, then stabs upwards with middle and index fingers, jams them right into the Saint's gory, ruined eye socket. The Saint roars in agony, thrashes wildly, but Jesse keeps the fingers in there and twists and grinds like mad, putting all the strength he's got into it.

The Saint, furious, grabs Jesse's arm and slowly pulls the fingers from his eye. Jesse strains like mad, but the Saint is too strong.

Then the Saint decks him with a horribly hard right and Jesse hits the ground unconscious.

(CONTINUED)

159 CONTINUED: (2)

159

Silence for a minute. Tulip is so appalled she looks ready to be sick. The Saint looks down at Jesse. Then he begins drawing his gun.

SAINT

Wasn't worth it, boy. Never woulda made a goddamn bit of difference.

Suddenly the little tableau is flooded with light.

The Saint turns to see a pair of headlights bearing down on him. It turns out to be a rapidly closing pick-up truck, engine roaring.

The Saint's eyes narrow.

Tulip stares.

Jesse raises his head to look, bewildered.

160 INT. TULIP'S PICK-UP TRUCK - NIGHT

160

Cassidy braces himself, grits his teeth, furious.

CASSIDY

You!

161 EXT. ANNVILLE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

161

Harshly lit by the headlights, the Saint grimaces angrily, plants his feet hard on the ground, throws his shoulders back and braces himself for the impact (Jesse should not be lying in the truck's path, of course).

The Saint fumes and hates, totally unafraid.

162 INT. TULIP'S PICK-UP TRUCK - NIGHT

162

CASSIDY

(screaming like a madman)
Yer Ma's a Hooer!!!

163 EXT. ANNVILLE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

163

Massive impact, huge crunch as the pick-up ploughs into the Saint of Killers, stops dead as it hits him, and Cassidy is flung through the windscreen and past the Saint in a spray of flying glass.

(CONTINUED)

He sails through the air.

A moment's silence. Tulip's gaze follows the arc of his fall.

He crashes to the ground in a horribly hard impact, ploughing up the dirt. Yells in agony, then goes silent.

Jesse turns painfully towards him.

Cassidy raises his head, turns towards Jesse with a face full of broken glass. Smiles weakly.

CASSIDY

You're rescued.

Jesse's eyes widen. Then he slowly turns back to the Saint. Tulip turns to look that way too.

The truck has rolled back a couple of feet, a wreck. Both wheels have come off at the front. The engine block and panels are bent up off the chassis. The hood is gone. The windscreen is shattered. Steam hisses from the engine. A large, foot-deep dent is dug into the fender and grille - the engine itself has bent around the impact.

The Saint stands unmoved, rock solid, staring at us with a pissed-off glare. The hood of the truck is embedded in his stomach. He takes a couple of deep breaths, yanks the hood from his guts and flings it away.

His face sets hard in a grimace of pure hatred.

SAINT

Right.

He starts to draw his pistol.

Jesse's hand whips past the Saint's coat from behind, drawing the second pistol.

The Saint turns, furious and amazed, and freezes. The battered Jesse stands glaring at him, presses the second pistol into the Saint's throat, pushes his head back.

The Saint has drawn the first gun, but it's obvious he'll never bring it up in time. He can't believe this is happening, furious at Jesse and himself.

JESSE

You drew first.

(CONTINUED)

Pissed off, battered, but full of savage triumph, Jesse cocks the pistol with a loud click. The Saint's eyes widen, furious.

JESSE

I didn't say a goddamned word.

He fires and blows the Saint's brains clean out through the top of his head.

The Saint staggers back.

Jesse watches, eyes narrowed, grim.

The Saint glares back, top of his head gone. We can see through the empty eye socket and out the back of his head. He's as grim and mean as ever.

SAINT

The hell with you.

Then he drops to his knees and falls dead at Jesse's feet.

Jesse turns away, drops the pistol, starts walking towards us.

Tulip grabs him and the two embrace, holding each other as tight as they can for a long moment. They kiss. Eventually Tulip breaks it, stares up at him in amazement. Jesse grins back.

TULIP

You're crazy. You're totally fucking crazy. He could have ripped you in half.

JESSE

Well...there were a couple of times, I gotta admit, he maybe had me a little worried.

TULIP

(grinning)
Come here!

They kiss again, against the blazing inferno that used to be Annville.

Cassidy is trying to get up, but is so weak he's only managed to get as far as his hands and knees. He struggles, but seems beaten. Then he realizes that someone is holding a hand out to him.

(CONTINUED)

It's Jesse. He stands with his hand out, serious. Tulip stands behind him, watching Cassidy warily.

Cassidy looks at the hand, not sure what to make of it. Then he tentatively takes the hand and Jesse pulls him to his feet.

He stands, rather unsteady. Jesse glances over Cassidy's hideous wounds. The two men face each other.

JESSE

What I said to you, back at the bar.
I was wrong. I apologize.

CASSIDY

Jesse...I'm the one should be
apologizin'. I sold you out. I
nearly got you killed.

JESSE

But you set things right.

Cassidy is quietly stunned. Then he reaches out his hand. Jesse takes it and they shake.

Tulip is leaning on Jesse's shoulder.

TULIP

I still think you're a prick.

They both turn to her.

TULIP

(smiling)
But a nice prick.

They both grin.

All three turn to survey the destruction. Annville is on fire from one end to the other, and the street is littered with dead cops.

CASSIDY

Jesus. Quite a party, eh?

JESSE

Quite a party.

TULIP

At least you got that bastard.

The Saint's body lies in the street.

(CONTINUED)

Jesse's eyes narrow.

JESSE

No...

Tulip is curious.

JESSE

No I didn't.

They're both curious as Jesse thinks to himself.

JESSE

It wasn't him that caused this. He was just a goddamned errand boy.

TULIP

What are you talking about?

JESSE

He said it was the ones who sent him, remember? He said if you want answers...ask the Angels.

He turns and yells angrily into the night sky.

JESSE

You bunch of assholes! You get your asses down here now! You got a lot of shit to answer for!

Tulip and Cassidy look at each other, bewildered.

JESSE

It was you did this to me! You let that murderin' son of a bitch loose to hunt me down! You're the ones caused all this fuckin' slaughter!

(quieter, fuming)

You know what I can do with this goddamned power I got. You motherfuckers start talkin' to me now - or you won't believe the shit that I'll do next.

Sudden silence. The flames die away. Then the whole place is bathed in incredible, otherworldly white light.

Tulip and Cassidy cover their eyes, but Jesse stares right into the light.

(CONTINUED)

A huge figure forms above the town, a beautiful angel that glows with golden light, wings spread wide. It spreads out its arms, raises its face to the sky.

Tulip and Cassidy are freaked.

Jesse just looks suspicious.

ANGEL (O.S.)

Then behold, O mortals: the glory of
the heavenly host.

Jesse is not remotely impressed. He lights a cigarette, flips the Zippo shut, looks up again.

JESSE

Cut the shit.

The radiance fades. The angel figure disappears. Standing in front of Jesse is a slim-featured guy in a white suit - a real-life ANGEL. He looks a bit uncomfortable, like a P.R. guy who hasn't done his homework.

ANGEL

Er...

Tulip and Cassidy are totally freaked. Jesse sneers a bit.

JESSE

What the fuck are you supposed to be?

ANGEL

I am an Angel of the Lord.

JESSE

Then you got a lot of explainin' to do. May as well get started.

(word of God)

An' don't you leave out a fuckin' word.

(back to normal)

Now what the hell is it that's happened to me?

ANGEL

It's something that should never have existed. It was born when an angel, a brother of mine, fell in love with a demon-bitch from Hell...

JESSE

I saw that part.

(CONTINUED)

ANGEL

Nothing like it has ever happened before. There is a war raging in the realms beyond your world. One side Heaven - on the other, Hell.

JESSE

Which ain't necessarily the same as good an' evil, right?

ANGEL

(awkward)

...That war must never end. Angels and demons should never meet in anything but battle. And yet it happened anyway. We caught the lovers not long after the birth, and had the Saint of Killers gun them down - but their offspring proved quite indestructible.

He keeps talking, face now melted into a shot of the rolling silver clouds of Heaven as seen in Jesse's mirror vision.

ANGEL

We shut it away in a corner of Heaven. It was neither good nor evil. It was something new, a combination of them both. We called it Genesis.

Now he's melted into a series of previous scenes - Genesis ripping through Earth's atmosphere, hitting the Annville church, possessing Jesse, destroying the congregation.

ANGEL

It had no intelligence beyond a basic sentience. It escaped from Heaven, seeking a host - someone who could act on its behalf, who could use its power...someone who could speak for it.

He looks pointedly at Jesse, who's deep in thought.

JESSE

What does it want?

ANGEL

It does not want. It is what happens when good meets evil. It is an idea. It is a power for you to decide what to do with.

(CONTINUED)

163 CONTINUED: (7)

163

JESSE

An' why me, exactly?

ANGEL

That I don't know. Had you done
anything that might attract it?

Jesse thinks about it...

164 INT. ANNVILLE CHURCH - DAY

164

Flashback to Jesse screaming at his congregation.

JESSE

Give me a sign! Give me some
incontrovertible proof that the
Almighty ain't got His head shoved
firmly up His ass!

165 EXT. ANNVILLE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

165

Jesse considers.

JESSE

Might have done.

ANGEL

It needed a home, that was all. But
now, listen to me. And understand.
We cannot let a power as strong as
this run loose on Earth. We must
return the entity to Heaven, and lock
it in the dark forever. Submit to us
- let us sever its bond with your
soul - and you may go in peace.

JESSE

The fuck I will.

ANGEL

(panicky)

You don't know what you're saying! I
promise you that you'll go free! I
give you my word!

JESSE

Your word ain't worth dogshit on a
hot afternoon. You set the Saint of
Killers on me, an' now he's fucked up
you think I'm just gonna give myself
up like nothin' happened? Fuck

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JESSE (CONT'D)

you...No, I think there's more to this that you ain't sayin'. Like how come God allowed this to happen, a thing bein' born that never shoulda? How come he didn't stop it himself?

ANGEL

(on his knees, terrified)
Oh no! Oh please don't make me tell!
I'll be destroyed for this! In
Jesus's name, have mercy!

JESSE

Every. Last. Word.

ANGEL

(breaking down)
The Lord God is gone.

Jesse, Tulip and Cassidy freeze. A moment passes.

JESSE

Ain't quite the answer I expected.
What the fuck do you mean, he's gone?

ANGEL

I mean he quit. When Genesis was
born he left his throne in Heaven.
He said he would go and live among
the mortals. Here on earth.

JESSE

How can God quit? How can the world
keep goin'?

CASSIDY

I dunno, I haven't noticed that much
difference. Maybe we just don't need
the fucker.

Jesse thinks about that, turns back to the shaky-looking
angel, shrewdly raises an eye - Well?

ANGEL

Humanity was not supposed to know...

JESSE

Well they're gonna find out pretty
fucking quickly, believe me. I'm
gonna see to it.

ANGEL

(perking up)
But how will you tell them? Why
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANGEL (CONT'D)

should his flock believe he has
deserted them? Why should the
atheists believe he is gone, when
they never believed he was there in
the first place? How do you convince
people that you're telling the truth?
(pressing his advantage)
Remember the good folk of
Annville...Reverend Custer...?

Jesse is stumped for a minute. Then his eyes narrow again
and a nasty smile appears on his face.

JESSE

Why would he leave just when Genesis
was born?

ANGEL

(suddenly wary)
What?

JESSE

Unless he was scared of it?

ANGEL

Ah - now-

JESSE

It's as strong as he is, ain't it?
Or maybe stronger? You said it
yourself - it was somethin' new. It
gave me the power to be obeyed. If I
found the Lord God Almighty, I could
make him face the people of the world
an' own up to runnin' out on them.
Right?

ANGEL

(appalled)
No! You can't! Think about what
you're saying! You can't give orders
to God! You haven't got the right!

JESSE

I haven't got the what?

Sudden silence. Jesse glares at the angel with steadily
mounting anger.

JESSE

I haven't got the right? Fuck you!
I gave my life to God, just like my
Daddy did before me. We never quit
on him. We stuck by him an' his Holy
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JESSE (CONT'D)

Bible through thick an' thin, no matter how shitty a hand we got dealt - an' now you're tellin' me I ain't got the right to face him down an' ask him what the fuck he thinks he's doin'?

(furious, losing it)

Seems to me, asshole, that I got all the right in the goddamned world! Seems to me that every man an' woman on this planet has the right to say - Hey, Lord! You been fuckin' with us from day one! You been playin' roulette with our fuckin' lives through ten thousand years of war, famine, death an' fucked-up shit! So maybe you'd like to tell us, when you're finished movin' in mysterious fuckin' ways:

(screaming)

What the fuck do you mean by fuckin' quittin' on us?!!

Silence for a moment. Tulip and Cassidy are very wary, waiting for whatever comes next. Jesse fumes, red-faced. The angel is shitting himself.

ANGEL

The creation cannot make demands of the creator...

JESSE

Then the creator shouldn't shit on his creation. You wanna know how I got the right to make demands of the Lord? It's 'cause I got given the power of God. I know what it's like. But all I did with it was the right fuckin' thing.

ANGEL

But...

JESSE

I have had enough of you, ballsweat. You an' your asshole pals in Heaven, you're responsible for this whole fuckin' bloodbath. Well, I been thinkin': if there's a heaven, there has to be the other place as well, right?

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED: (4)

165

ANGEL
(incredibly edgy)
Y...Y...Yes...

JESSE
(word of God)
Then you can go there.

The angel's eyes bulge in unbelievable horror. He opens his mouth to scream, then bursts into bright red, blazing flame. A terrible, unearthly scream echoes around the place, so loud that our heroes have to clamp their hands to their ears - then it fades into the distance, as the if the screamer has fallen down a deep, deep hole until he's out of earshot. The angel is reduced to ash, scattered on the breeze.

Jesse looks grimly at it, then turns away. Cassidy looks at him, impressed.

CASSIDY
Nice bit've preachin'.
(smiles)
Preacher.

166 EXT. ANNVILLE - NIGHT

166

The three of them walk towards the battered pick-up Jesse and Tulip arrived in. Jesse and Cassidy move slowly, favouring their various wounds. No sign of Hugo Root.

CASSIDY
Not long 'til dawn. I'd really need
to be gettin' me arse undercover.

TULIP
Can't take the sun, huh?

CASSIDY
I'm á fuckin' vampire, Turnip...

TULIP
Tulip.

CASSIDY
One inch of tan an' I'll go up like
the bleedin' fourth of July. You
give us a lift down the road, aye?

JESSE
Least I can do, partner.

They get into the truck.

167 INT. STOLEN PICK-UP - NIGHT

167

Jesse's at the wheel, Tulip's in the middle. Jesse starts the engine.

CASSIDY

You're really goin' lookin' for God?

We close up on Jesse, who looks grim and determined.

JESSE

If it takes me a goddamned lifetime.

168 EXT. ANNVILLE - NIGHT

168

The pick-up drives off.

169 INT. STOLEN PICK-UP - NIGHT

169

TULIP

(smiling wearily)

Generally, if he says he's gonna do something? He does it.

CASSIDY

Just as a matter of interest, Jesse - is there anything that does scare you?

Jesse smiles.

JESSE

Well, I ain't run into anything yet-

Suddenly he freezes, stares, stamps on the brakes.

170 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

170

The pick-up screeches to a halt, rocking back on its chassis.

171 INT. STOLEN PICK-UP - NIGHT

171

Tulip and Cassidy are flung back in their seats. Then they turn to gape at Jesse.

TULIP

What the fuck was that?

(CONTINUED)

171 CONTINUED:

171

But Jesse can only stare ahead, horrified.

172 EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

172

Illuminated in the headlights, still astride his BMX, is Arseface. He's looking curiously back at the truck.

Our heroes peer out at him, freaked beyond belief.

The he pedals awkwardly up to Jesse's side of the pick-up truck and sticks his head in the window.

173 INT. STOLEN PICK-UP - NIGHT

173

All three stare at Arseface, incredibly nervous. He's cheery as ever.

ARSEFACE

(Hullo!)

Jesse recoils at the voice.

ARSEFACE

(Sorry to trouble you folks, but I was wondering if you'd seen my Dad around here anywhere?)

The three of them look at each other, bewildered.

ARSEFACE

(His name's Hugo Root - he's the Sheriff around these parts. Tall, dignified kind of a guy. I've been looking for him all night.)

JESSE

(whisper, to Cassidy)
What 'the fuck is he sayin'?

CASSIDY

(starting to laugh,
incredulous)
Well what the fuck are you askin' me for?

Cassidy puts a hand to his mouth to hide his laughter. That gets Tulip going. She leans back to try to hide behind Jesse, struggling not to howl with laughter. When Jesse turns back to Arseface he can barely contain himself, teeth gritted, coughing over the occasional snigger.

(CONTINUED)

JESSE

Uh...come again?

That almost puts Tulip and Cassidy over the edge. A herculean effort to stop themselves from laughing. Arseface is oblivious.

ARSEFACE

(I'm looking for my Dad, Hugo Root. He's a member of the law enforcement community. He looks a bit like Jimmy Stewart.)

JESSE

I'm sorry, buddy. I can't understand a goddamned word you said.

Arseface pulls a photo from his pocket, hands it in.

ARSEFACE

(My Dad, see? I'm looking for my Dad. That's him there, with me.)

The photo shows Arseface and Hugo together - Arseface with an arm round his Dad, giving the thumbs up. Hugo looks impossibly bitter, fuming with hatred for the whole world.

ARSEFACE

(See?)

Jesse looks at the photo, and all becomes clear.

JESSE

Aaaaaah...!

He hands the photo to Tulip, raises an eye. Tulip and Cassidy stare at it, eyes popping.

Jesse leans out the window, hands the photo to Arseface, smiles reassuringly.

JESSE

Got you now, buddy. Yeah, I know who your Daddy is. Saw him tonight as a matter of fact.

ARSEFACE

(You did?)

174 CONTINUED:

174

JESSE
(very friendly, jerking thumb
back)
Sure I did. He's lyin' back there
with his dick up his ass.

Jesse floors it, and the pick-up races off down the road in a
cloud of dust, leaving Arseface staring after it.

175 INT. BAR - NIGHT

175

Cassidy, back in the bar we met him in, right at the very
start. Nothing has changed.

He frowns as he picks a rather obvious pubic hair out of his
beer. Then he snaps out of it, grins at us.

CASSIDY
Told you, didn't I? Anything that
could happen, fuckin' well did
happen.
(looking down, thoughtful
smile)
It's been a wee while now since I
last saw Jesse an' Tulip. But
y'know, I wouldn't be surprised if
one of these days all that weird
fuckin' shite started up again. An'
then maybe we'll run into each other
again...I don't know whether or not I
believe that God ran out on us. I
don't know if he really is loose
somewhere in the world. But I'll
tell you this: if Jesse Custer ever
does get his hands on the good
Lord...
(smiling darkly at us)
The bastard better have a fuckin'
good excuse.
(raising his beer to us before
turning away)
Cheers.

And fade to black.