

SHOTGUN STORIES

written by

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Fourth Draft

INT. SPORTING GOODS STORE - DAY

A FEW PEOPLE mingle around the front of a large, locally owned sporting goods store. Automatic doors slide open as BOY HAYES (27) walks in.

He stops at the front of the store to get his bearings. Boy is a slightly overweight, disheveled looking young man. He wears a neck brace, and his face is badly bruised.

Boy makes his way to the back of the store. He wanders through an aisle of basketballs and past racks of camouflage shirts. He comes to the Gun Counter.

Boy studies the handguns that lay in a glass cabinet in front of him. An EMPLOYEE, an older man, approaches from behind the counter.

EMPLOYEE

Can I help you?

BOY

I need to buy one of these guns.

EMPLOYEE

What are you looking for?

BOY

I can't spend more than a hundred fifty dollars.

EMPLOYEE

Well, that Hopkins and Allen Sport is a nice one. It sells for a hundred and ten. The nine millimeter's more. They're priced at two fifty, but better guns.

BOY

I'll take that Sport one.

EMPLOYEE

Okay.

The Employee begins pulling out the paperwork.

EMPLOYEE

If I can get you to fill out these forms, we can start the background check.

BOY

All right. I'm gonna need some bullets too.

EMPLOYEE

Well, you can buy the ammunition today, but there is a waiting period for the handgun.

BOY

How long?

EMPLOYEE

Three days.

BOY

What about those?

Boy points to a glass case containing the shotguns.

EMPLOYEE

Well, there's no waiting period on shotguns, but I'll still have to do the background check.

BOY

All right. Gimme one of those.

Boy digs in his front, jeans pocket and pulls out of wad of cash.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE SEQUENCE IMAGES:

-Several different carving found on wooden shotgun stocks. The carvings range from simple diamond designs to portraits of flying ducks.

-Images of Boy Hayes driving his Van around. A large, green box with the shotgun in it sits on the passenger seat next to him.

-SHOTGUN STORIES.

CUT TO:

INT. SON'S BEDROOM - DAY

SON HAYES (32) sits on the edge of his bed and stares into an empty armoire. He is a broad shouldered man wearing navy blue work pants.

His shirt is off, revealing a bare back speckled by an old shotgun wound. The grown over buckshot sprawls out in a chaotic pattern of dark blue dots.

Son snatches a T-shirt off the floor and slips it on.

He walks over to a chest of drawers by the bed. He opens the top drawer and sees there is nothing in it.

He opens the middle drawer. Nothing.

He opens the bottom drawer and finds his underwear neatly folded on the left side. The right side is empty.

Son studies the room.

EXT. SON'S BACKYARD - DAY

Son steps out the door and into a good-sized backyard bordered by a chain-length fence.

A plastic picnic table with chairs sits near the back door. At the back corner of the lot, there is a dog pen made from chicken wire. Next to the dog pen is a blue and yellow, one-man TENT.

Son walks up to the tent.

SON
Kid?

KID
(from inside the tent)
What?

SON
Come on out.

The tent shakes as KID HAYES (25) jostles around inside. The front flap zips open and Kid emerges. He is a lanky young man with several tattoos on his arms. He wears a dingy AC/DC T-shirt with jeans.

KID
What is it?

SON
Annie's gone.

Kid takes out a pack of cigarettes. He offers one up, but Son waves it off. Kid lights his.

KID
Where'd she go?

SON
Left a note. Said she was going to her mother's.

KID
What happened?

SON
I lost two hundred at Tunica last
week.

KID
What about Carter?

SON
Took him.

KID
Sorry.

SON
Yeah.

Son kicks a clod of dried dirt off his boot.

SON
I figured you might as well move
back inside for now.

KID
All right.

Kid reaches into the tent and pulls out of a pair of boots.

KID
What about when she comes back?

SON
Don't take the tent down yet. May
be time for you to get something
else anyway.

KID
I'm fine with it.

SON
Well.

Kid slips on the boots. Son walks back to his house.

KID
We gonna go tell Boy?

SON
What for?

KID
You got that front room too.

Son thinks about this.

CUT TO:

I/E. BOY'S VAN/PARKING LOT - DAY

Boy's white and maroon, Chevrolet Van sits in a vacant parking lot overlooking a lock and dam that regulates the Arkansas river.

INSIDE THE VAN,

There are clothes and trash everywhere. At the back, a mattress sits on a folded down, bench seat that has been converted for sleeping.

The floor is littered with an assortment of pornographic magazines, empty beer cans, Vienna Sausage cans, and books on basketball.

Boy lies on his stomach in-between the front, bucket seats with his head crammed under the dashboard. Various tools lie on the floorboard next to him. He picks up a flathead screwdriver and grumbles at what he sees.

BOY
Sonofabitch.

JERRY LEE, a mutt with one blue eye, sits on the passenger seat and looks out the window.

THROUGH THE WINDOW,

Son's Pick-up Truck pulls into the parking lot and stops next to the van. Kid sleeps in the passenger seat.

Son gets out and yells.

SON
Boy!

Boy doesn't take his head out from under the dashboard.

BOY
Yeah?

Son walks over and sticks his head in the two open side doors of the van.

SON
What you doin'?

BOY
My stereo's broke.

Boy scoots himself out from under the dashboard and sits up. He isn't wearing the neck brace, and his face is not bruised.

BOY
What's going on?

SON
Nothin'. I told Kid he could move
back in the house yesterday.

Boy takes note of Kid, who is still asleep in the truck.

BOY
What about Annie?

SON
She's gone to stay at her mother's
awhile. He wanted me to come by,
see if you wanted to stay in the
front room.

BOY
Why?

SON
Get you out of this van for
awhile.

BOY
Who said I needed out of it?

SON
Nobody I guess. But it's gonna get
hot in there.

BOY
Look at this.

Boy gets to his feet, but has to crouch as he moves. He tosses some clothes around and find a Window Unit Air Conditioner. He drags it to the edge of the doors.

BOY
I found this last week.

SON
Does it work?

BOY
I don't know.
(MORE)

BOY (CONT'D)

I had it plugged in through my cigarette lighter, but it shorted out before I could see if it runs. It melted something behind my dashboard and made it to where I can't control the stereo.

SON

What's it doing?

BOY

It keeps turnin' on and off whenever it wants to. It sucks 'cause my Journey tape's stuck in there.

SON

I'm no good with stereos. I gotta get to work. Let me know if you change your mind about the house.

Son walks back to his truck.

BOY

Hey, can I come by later, use your VCR?

SON

Yeah.

Son gets in his truck and pulls away. Boy goes back under the dashboard with the screwdriver.

EXT. KEO FISH FARM - DAY

The Keo Fish Farm sign stands next to a two-lane highway. The sun faded sign has a cresting, striped bass painted on it.

The Farm consists of two rows of aluminum buildings that sits at the edge of an endless series of man-made ponds.

Kid stands just inside one of the aluminum buildings and uses a high-powered hose to spray decaying fish parts off a concrete tank.

Son, working a few feet down from Kid, heaves five-foot-tall oxygen tanks onto the back of a pick-up truck. His shirt is off, making the pellet sized wounds that dot his back clearly visible.

Across a dirt path that separates the two rows of buildings, AMOS (47) and NORMAN (27) lean against a wall smoking cigarettes.

Amos, a salty man wearing chest-high waders, barely fits in a patch of shade provided by the awning. He takes note of the wounds on Son's back.

 AMOS
 (to Norman)
You see that?

 NORMAN
What?

 AMOS
On his back.

 NORMAN
Yeah. What is it?

 AMOS
Ask Kid.

 NORMAN
Hey, Kid!

Kid looks over at Amos and Norman. He shouts over the noise from his hose.

 KID
What?

 NORMAN
What happened to your brother's
back?

 KID
What?

Amos walks over to him. Norman follows.

 AMOS
He said what's wrong with your
brother's back.

Kid shuts off the hose.

 KID
He got shot.

 NORMAN
How'd he get shot?

 KID
I don't know.

AMOS
You his brother. What don't you
know?

KID
I don't know. He never would tell
me.

Kid goes back to washing off the tanks.

AMOS
I heard he got shot robbin' a
liquor store.

Kid shuts off his hose.

KID
That's not true.

Amos' face show no humor. He and Kid stare at one another.

AMOS
Forget it. Put down that hose and
get your bother. We gotta seine
the far farm today.
(to Norman)
Come on.

Amos and Norman walk off toward a flatbed truck rigged with a
giant spool of fishing net.

KID
Shit.

Kid drops his hose. Son walks over to him.

SON
We headin' out there?

KID
Yeah.

They head off in the direction Amos and Norman went.

KID
You wanna get a cheeseburger
later?

SON
No.

KID
You gotta drop me off then. I told
Cheryl I'd meet her at work.

SON

All right.

They walk toward the ponds.

EXT. BURGER STOP - AFTERNOON

SHAMPOO DOUGLAS (26) sits on the hood of his beat up Lincoln Continental. He crams a handful of fries into his mouth and studies the local section in the day's paper.

Shampoo is a lanky white kid with stringy black hair. He has a homemade eye patch fashioned out of medical gauze wrapped around his head. Also, his entire right arm and hand are bandaged with gauze.

His Lincoln is backed into a parking space next to a large, blue dumpster stationed at the end of the Burger Stop parking lot.

Shampoo looks up to see Son's truck pull in. The truck idles just long enough for Kid to jump out. Kid waves as Son drives away. Kid walks over to a red, 1987 Honda and sits on the hood.

Shampoo gathers up his paper and bag of food and tosses them into the car window. He climbs behind the wheel and cranks the engine.

Kid watches as Shampoo's Lincoln eases up in front of him. Shampoo hangs out the driver's side window.

SHAMPOO

What's up man?

KID

Hey Shampoo.

Kid motions to his eye.

KID

What happened?

SHAMPOO

My apartment blew up yesterday.

KID

Shit.

SHAMPOO

I know, man. The cops been all over it. I'm livin' in this piece of shit now. That your car?

KID

No, it's my girlfriend's. She works here?

SHAMPOO

Who's your girlfriend?

KID

You remember Cheryl Pruitt?

SHAMPOO

Yeah. She's hot right?

KID

Yeah.

SHAMPOO

Lucky bastard. Where you stayin' now?

KID

I'm at Son's.

SHAMPOO

You think he'd let me park my car there?

KID

When?

SHAMPOO

At night.

KID

I don't know, man. He doesn't need that kind of shit, you know?

SHAMPOO

Well, just ask him for me.

KID

All right.

Shampoo holds up one finger and pulls away.

CHERYL PRUITT (25) walks out wearing a Burger Stop uniform. She is a pretty girl with dirty, blonde hair. She hands Kid a set of car keys.

CHERYL

Who was that?

KID

Shampoo Douglas.

CHERYL
Really? We had Biology together in
seventh grade.

Kid walks to the driver's side door.

 CHERYL
He used to huff the formaldehyde.

 KID
Yeah. That's him.

They climb into the Honda.

INT. SON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

IN THE KITCHEN,

Son sits at the kitchen table holding a stack of playing cards that consists of three different decks. Next to him sits an open book with a colorful chart printed on it.

Watching carefully, Son rapidly deals the cards face up in a pile on a table. Kid enters the kitchen.

 KID
What's the count?

Son doesn't stop dealing the cards out.

 SON
Plus two.

Kid opens the fridge and grabs a beer. He walks back out.

IN THE DEN,

Kid takes a seat on the couch and opens his beer. Boy is squatting behind the television wiggling a cable to the VCR.

 BOY
What about now?

 KID
Snow.

Boy shakes the cable.

 BOY
Now?

 KID
Nothin.

Boy yells to Son in the kitchen.

BOY
I think your VCR's broken.

He smacks the VCR. The television screen turns blue.

KID
It's blue.

The front doorbell RINGS.

Boy stands up and pushes a VHS tape into the VCR. A home recording of a junior high basketball game comes across the screen.

BOY
Thirteen lit us up all night.

Boy takes a seat on the couch. The doorbell RINGS again. Son yells at them from the kitchen.

SON (O.S.)
Somebody get the door.

Boy looks over at Kid.

BOY
I don't live here.

Kid shakes his head, sets his beer down, and gets up. He walks over to the front door and opens it.

EXT. SON'S FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

NICOLE HAYES (51) stands on the porch with a serious look on her face. She is a compact woman with a streak of gray running through her otherwise black hair.

Kid stands in the doorway.

NICOLE
Your brothers here?

KID
Yeah.

NICOLE
Go get 'em.

Kid, leaving the front door open, retreats into the house.

INT. SON'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Son is in the middle of another round of card counting. He stops to refer to the chart.

Kid enters the kitchen doorway.

KID
Hey.

Son looks up.

KID
Mom's here.

EXT. SON'S FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Nicole waits outside on the front porch.

Son walks up to the doorway. Boy and Kid stand behind him.

SON
What is it?

NICOLE
Your father's dead.

Son stares at her.

SON
When's the funeral?

NICOLE
You can look in the paper.

Nicole walks away. Son calls after her.

SON
Are you going?

She turns her head to answer, but doesn't stop walking.

NICOLE
No.

They watch her go. Son closes the front door.

INT. SON'S DEN - CONTINUOUS

Son walks back into the kitchen. Boy and Kid take seats back on the couch. They watch the basketball game in silence.

FADE OUT.

EXT. COUNTRY CEMETERY - DAY

A PASTOR stands next to a freshly dug hole in the middle of a small, country cemetery. He addresses an intimate CROWD OF PEOPLE.

The Men wear black dress shoes with slacks and suits. The Women are mostly in heels and Sunday dresses.

A flower covered coffin sits on the a lowering mechanism next to the grave. To the right, a tarp held down by ropes covers two rows of cushioned, folding chairs.

In the first row of chairs, MELISSA HAYES (49), a petite lady with a gentle face, sits with her four sons, CLEAMAN (25), MARK (24), STEPHEN (21), and JOHN (19).

Cleaman is a broad shouldered young man with a closely shaven crew cut. He holds his Mother's hand.

Mark is not clean cut. He shows a weeks growth on his face. He stares at the hole in front of him with an unexpressive gaze.

Stephen and John, the youngest of these brothers, could pass for twins. They are lanky, all-American looking boys.

PASTOR

Please bow your heads for a prayer and the reading of the 23rd Psalm.

Everyone bows their heads.

PASTOR

Lord, we are grateful for Cleaman, and that he was with us on this journey of life. In Jesus name, Amen.

As the Pastor reads scripture from his Bible, John tears up. Stephen hands him a ball of Kleenex.

PASTOR

The Lord is our Shepard, I shall not want...

Son, Boy, and Kid stand unnoticed in a dirt parking lot off to the side. They look like they've just come from work, wearing beat up jeans and boots.

They approach the ceremony. Son leads the way as they push through the Crowd to the graveside.

Son stops at the foot of the grave.

The Pastor stops reading the scripture. The Crowd stands silent. The Pastor walks over to Son.

PASTOR
Can I help you?

Cleaman stands up and goes over to Son. He leans in close to his ear and speaks in a hushed voice.

CLEAMAN
What do you think you're doing?

SON
I got something to say.

CLEAMAN
The hell you do.

Cleaman takes Son by the arm. Kid and Boy tense up.

PASTOR
Hold on now. If you want to speak,
that's up to the family.

The Pastor looks to Melissa. Melissa's gaze is lowered.

MELISSA
Cleaman. Let him speak.

Cleaman lets go of Son's arm. He takes a step back but doesn't sit down.

Son raises his voice as he addressed the Crowd.

SON
I couldn't let ya'll bury this man
without sayin' a few things first.
You people are here because you
think this was a good man. But he
wasn't.

Mark gets to his feet, followed by Stephen and John.

SON
Just because you stop drinkin',
call yourself Christian, get
yourself a new life, and start a
different family, that don't make
you a different man. He's the same
man that ran out on us, and left
us to be raised by a hateful
woman. He made like we were never
born. Now that's who he was.

(MORE)

SON (CONT'D)
And that's what he's answering for
today.

Son steps forward and SPITS into the grave.

Cleaman charges Son and catches him by the throat. Kid and Boy
grab Cleaman's arms. Mark, Stephen, and John rush over.

MELISSA
(yelling)
Stop!

Melissa stands up. The Pastor tries to intervene, but is
useless.

MELISSA
Stop it!

She places her hands on John's back. John steps away from the
pack. She takes Stephen's arm and pulls him away. Cleaman sees
this and lets go of Son's throat.

Son and Boy step back. Mark shoves Kid.

MELISSA
Stop. Please. Not here.

Mark thinks about this. He slowly back away.

MELISSA
Please just go.

Son straightens his shirt and stares at Cleaman.

MELISSA
Please.

Son turns and walks away. Boy and Kid follow him.

The Crowd stands silent. Cleaman, Mark, Stephen, and John watch
them leave.

INT. BOY'S VAN - MOVING - DAY

Boy drives. Son rides in the passengers seat. Kid sits in a
captain's chair in the back.

They ride in silence. Son stares out the window. Boy looks at
him, displeased.

BOY
You coulda told me that's what you
were gonna do.

SON
If I'da known, I woulda told you.

BOY
You shoulda known.

KID
Stop at that liquor store up
there.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - EVENING

The downtown city streets are comprised of vacant, decrepit building left over from a time of minor prosperity during the late 1960's. It feels like a town whose citizens have deserted.

Son, Boy, and Kid sit on the curb of one of the empty streets. They are the only people in sight.

Boy sips out of a near empty bottle of gin. Kid observes the vacant downtown street.

KID
What time is it?

Boy refers to his watch.

BOY
Eight.

KID
Damn this is an empty ass place.
It's like we own this town.

BOY
If I owned this town, I'd sell it.

SON
We don't own shit.

They work on finishing off the bottle.

INT. MELISSA HAYES' BEDROOM/HALLWAY - EVENING

Melissa Hayes sits up in her bed. Cleaman walks across the room closing the blinds. Melissa watches him closely.

MELISSA
Where's Mark?

CLEAMAN
He's downstairs.

MELISSA
Is he okay?

CLEAMAN
He's all right.

Cleaman walks over to the night stand and pick sup a glass of water and a pill bottle. He empties two pills into his hand.

MELISSA
You know he was a different man
back then?

CLEAMAN
I know. Take these, Mama.

Cleaman hands Melissa the pills. She places them in her mouth and takes a sip of water. Cleaman sets the glass on the night stand.

CLEAMAN
Try and get some rest.

MELISSA
Thank you.

Cleaman clicks off a bedside lamp. He walks out into the hallway and gently shuts the door. He walks down the stairs.

EXT. CLEAMAN HAYES' HOUSE - EVENING

Mark Hayes sits on the back porch smoking a cigarette. He stares out over the vast soybean field that runs behind the house.

Cleaman comes out the back door and takes a seat next to him.

MARK
How's she doing?

CLEAMAN
As good as can be expected.

MARK
She didn't deserve to hear what
that son of a bitch said.

CLEAMAN
She's heard it before.

MARK
But not there.

CLEAMAN
Those three. They're like a pack of dogs. You an't expect a dog to have manners.

MARK
We'll see about that.

CLEAMAN
You can't just go out startin' fights.

MARK
I didn't start this fight.

CLEAMAN
Mark, we got responsibilities now. Stephen and John, they don't need to get mixed up in anything like this.

MARK
You do what you want, but Stephen and John are old enough to make up their own minds.

Mark flicks his cigarette into the yard and walks away. Cleaman stares out over the field.

FADE OUT.

INT. SON'S HOUSE - MORNING

IN THE DEN,

Boy lies face down on the couch. He sleeps soundly , still wearing his clothes from the night before.

ANNIE (O.S.)
What the hell is this?

Boy opens his eyes to find ANNIE HAYES (30) stand over him. He closes his eyes and goes back to sleep.

Annie is an attractively hard woman with dirt brown hair. She holds a large, iron skillet.

Kid, wearing only boxers and a T-shirt, enters from the back hallway. He crosses the den and heads into the kitchen.

KID
Mornin' Annie.

Annie watches speechless. She storms down the hallway to her bedroom.

IN THE BEDROOM,

Annie knocks open the door with her foot. She animates her speech by pointing to the skillet.

ANNIE
What the hell is this?

Son slowly raises up from the bed. He rubs his eyes.

ANNIE
I'm gone a week and you move them
in?

Son gets to his feet and walks past her.

SON
I thought you left.

He exits. Annie follows him.

IN THE DEN,

Son walks through to the kitchen. Annie follows, pointing the skillet at Boy, who is still asleep on the couch.

ANNIE
So this is how you've been missin'
me?

SON
I have been missin' you.

They enter the kitchen.

IN THE KITCHEN,

Kid pours a cup of coffee. He exits to the den, slipping past Son and Annie.

ANNIE
Have you made up your mind yet?

Son pours a cup of coffee.

SON
Yeah.

ANNIE
Well?

SON
I'm not stoppin'.

ANNIE
Dammit, Son.

Annie walks into the den.

SON
What you got that skillet for?

IN THE DEN,

Annie stops in the middle of the room. Kid is sitting in a chair watching television and drinking his coffee. Boy is still asleep.

ANNIE
Look, I'm gonna make it real simple for you.

Son enters, sipping his coffee.

ANNIE
The longer you gamble the longer I stay gone.

SON
It's not gamblin'. It's a system.

ANNIE
I'm takin' this skillet.

Annie walks out the front door. Son follows.

EXT. SON'S FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Annie walks to her car in the driveway.

SON
How's Carter?

ANNIE
He's fine.

SON
You hear about my father?

Annie stops. She turns to face him.

SON
He died this past weekend. We went
to the funeral.

ANNIE
What happened?

SON
I said a few things.

ANNIE
You think that was wise?

SON
Don't matter. I want to take
Carter out. Take him fishin'.

ANNIE
Where?

SON
What the hell's it matter where?

ANNIE
I'll drop him off for you.

Son takes a sip of coffee and thinks about this.

SON
All right. How 'bout Saturday,
'round two? Near the lock and dam.

ANNIE
Okay.

Annie leaves. Son smiles as he watches her walk away.

INT. SON'S DEN - CONTINUOUS

Kid watches television with his feet up. Boy sleeps.

Son walks in and heads for his bedroom. As he passes, he slaps
Kid's feet off the coffee table.

SON
We gotta get to work.

Son exits. Kid finishes off his coffee.

Boy's eyes open and he sits up on the couch. He gathers
together a collection of ink scribbled notebook paper off the
coffee table.

Boy stands up and puts on his shoes.

KID
Where you goin'?

BOY
Work.

Boy walks out the front door.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - AFTERNOON

Boy stands in the middle of an outdoor basketball court located near an elementary school. His dog, Jerry Lee, sits next to him tethered by a leash.

Boy has an ink pen and notebook in his hands. He stares at the empty court.

ROGER (O.S.)
Coach Hayes.

Boy turns to see ROGER (13), a young black boy holding a basketball, and his little brother BUCKNER (11) approaching him.

BOY
Hey, Roger.

ROGER
What you doin' out here?

BOY
Nothin'. Just thinkin'.

ROGER
This is my little brother Buckner.

Buckner waves.

BOY
Hey.

ROGER
That your van over there?

BOY
Yeah.

ROGER
Somebody wrote "suck it" on the back.

BOY

Yeah?

ROGER

You should wash that off.

BOY

Yeah. I'll have to do that. You been playin' any this summer?

ROGER

Yeah. You wanna play?

BOY

Naw.

ROGER

You mind if we play?

BOY

Naw, I'll get out your way.

Boy grabs Jerry Lee's leash. He walks off the court.

Roger dribbles the ball to the goal and does a finger roll lay-up. It goes in. Boy sees this and stops.

BOY

That's good. Finger roll's a good shot, but you should practice something else.

Boy drops the leash and walks over to him. He sets down his clipboard and motions for the ball. Roger tosses it to him. He holds the ball up as if to shoot an overhand lay-up.

BOY

You wanna practice overhand layups. It's less likely to get blocked, and it's a stronger move to the basket.

Boy tosses the ball back to him and picks up his notebook.

BOY

Fundamentals, Roger.

ROGER

All right.

Boy walks off from the court and takes a seat on a nearby bench. He watches Roger shoot an overhand lay-up.

EXT. KEO FISH FARM - DAY

SERIES OF IMAGES:

- A cigarette dangles from Kid's mouth as he stands in the middle of a pond with water up to his chest. He lifts the edge of a large net out of the water.

-Son stands on the back of a flat-bed truck tugging a giant net into place on a large spool.

-A MAN reaches into a net at the corner of a pond and grabs a snake by its tail. The Man snaps the snake like a whip, making its head pop off.

-A Crew of FIVE MEN, including Son and Kid, stand on both sides of a pond. They guide a net that is being pulled from the water by a flat-bed truck. Behind the crew, a series of ponds reaches out to the horizon.

CUT TO:

EXT. FAR FARM POND - AFTERNOON

Norman scrapes mud off his boot on the tailgate of a pick-up truck that is parked next to a series of ponds. J.J. (28) and RED (37) stand in the bed of the truck arranging a fishing net.

Norman looks over and sees Son sitting across from one of the ponds drinking a Coke. Kid stands next to him smoking a cigarette.

NORMAN

Ya'll hear he got shot robbin' a liquor store?

Red takes note of Son across the pond, but continues his work.

RED

Naw, he got shot cheatin' on his wife.

NORMAN

Really? That's not what I heard.

J.J.

Don't matter how he got shot, 'cause he's 'bout to get a 'nother one. My cousin works for Mark Hayes. Said Son showed up to Mark's daddy's funeral talkin' shit. Now Mark Hayes'll fuck you up.

(MORE)

J.J. (CONT'D)

I once saw him bite the head off a duck.

RED

Shut up.

ACROSS THE POND,

Kid finishes his cigarette and puts it out under his boot.

KID

You ready?

SON

Yeah. You wanna get some supper?

KID

I can't. I'm takin' Cheryl out.

Son gets to his feet. They walk to a pick-up truck.

SON

Where you takin' her?

KID

I don't know yet.

SON

You need any money?

KID

I'm all right. You gonna do anything?

SON

I don't know. Me and Boy may get into something.

They walk toward the main buildings. The sun sets behind the ponds.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - EVENING

Boy sits Indian Style with the clipboard in his lap. Elbows on his knees, he rests his chin on his palms and stares at the notebook paper in front of him.

On the paper, Boy has scrawled out in ink a basketball court and a variety of X's and O's.

He has an ink pen behind one ear and a large chunk of white chalk in his right hand.

He sits on the center of the half-court line in the middle of the outdoor basketball court. Jerry Lee lays next to him. There is no one else around.

From baseline to baseline, the entire court is covered in similar X's and O's drawn out in white chalk. The Sun has vanished from the sky. A blue hue hangs over him.

FADE OUT.

I/E. CHERY'S CAR/SON'S HOUSE - MORNING

The neighborhood is quiet. Cheryl's red Honda is parked in front of Son's house.

IN THE CAR,

Kid sits in the passenger seat. Cheryl is behind the wheel.

 CHERYL
You promise?

 KID
Yeah. I wanna talk to my brothers
about it, but yeah.

Cheryl smiles. She leans over the stick shift and kisses Kid.

 CHERYL
I love you.

 KID
I love you too.

EXT. SON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Boy sits in a chair on the front porch. There are empty beer cans everywhere.

He watches as Kid gets out of Cheryl's car. Kid leans down and sticks his head back into the car window. He kisses her.

 KID
I'll call you later.

Cheryl drives off. Kid watches her go before walking to the porch.

 BOY
What's up?

KID
What you doin'?

BOY
Watchin' you be a stud.

KID
You sleep out here?

BOY
I never got to sleep. You wanna
get some breakfast?

KID
Yeah. Where's Jerry Lee?

Boy stands up, knocking over several empty cans.

BOY
I put him out back. I need a taco.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Boy and Kid walk down the sidewalk in their neighborhood.

KID
What about full court man to man?

BOY
No. Man to man's how you size up
against the other team. I'm
talking about a zone. A full court
press that can be practiced and
run, no matter who the other team
is.

KID
I thought ya'll ran one last year.

BOY
We tried one I copied off Nolan
Richardson. I didn't have enough
depth to run it right. It's gotta
be something easier.

KID
I don't know.

BOY
Look at this.

Boy pulls a scrap piece of folded notebook paper out of his back pocket and hands it to Kid. Kid unfolds it and sees hand drawn scribbles in ink.

The SOUND of a car with a defunct muffler approaches.

BOY

That's my latest idea. I've got the traps working in the back corners. Most eight graders have rouble throwing the length of the court, so I bring up my five man. See there?

In the middle of the explanation, Kid and Boy notice Shampoo Douglas' beat up Lincoln pull up next to them.

SHAMPOO

Kid. Hey, Kid.

Shampoo leans over and talks out of the passenger-side window while continuing to drive. He trails alongside Kid and Boy as they continue walking.

KID

Hey, Shampoo.

SHAMPOO

Hey, Boy.

BOY

Hey, man.

SHAMPOO

Kid. You ever ask Son 'bout parkin' my car over there?

Shampoo looks over his shoulder and checks the rearview mirror. He appears nervous.

KID

Not yet.

SHAMPOO

Let me know?

KID

All right.

SHAMPOO

I heard 'bout ya'll showing up to that funeral.

KID

Yeah?

SHAMPOO

Mark Hayes was going on about it.
He said a lot of shit about ya'll.

KID

What'd he say?

SHAMPOO

Said he was gonna kick some ass.

Shampoo catches an image in his rearview mirror. He sinks in his seat.

KID

He knows where to find me. You see him, you tell him to come find me.

SHAMPOO

I gotta go.

Shampoo yanks the steering wheel and speeds away. Boy and Kid watch him go. They walk toward the corner gas station.

EXT. SON'S BACKYARD - DAY

Kid unwraps a gas station taco. He sits in a lawn chair at the plastic picnic table in the backyard. The blue and yellow one-man tent sits, still set up, behind him.

Boy hefts his window unit air conditioner onto the table.

KID

I don't know. I start thinkin' about houses and kids. Hell, I see a nice piece of ass I'm still gonna look at it.

BOY

You're always gonna look at it.

Boy walks to the back door of the house and rags an orange extension cord over to the table.

KID

Yeah, but what if I end up cheatin' on her?

BOY

In a situation like that, you just gotta ask yourself, does this make things better or does it make things worse?

KID

What?

INT. SON'S HOUSE - DAY

IN THE DEN,

Son opens the front door and walks into his house. He carries a small fishing pole still wrapped in packaging in his left hand. In his right, he balances two Styrofoam containers of bait.

He sets the fishing pole down on the couch and walks into the kitchen with the bait.

IN THE KITCHEN,

Son sets the containers of bait on the kitchen counter. He opens the fridge and grabs a Coke.

He notices the orange extension cord plugged into the wall. It runs across the floor and out the back door.

He follows the extension cord outside.

EXT. SON'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Son sees Boy and Kid standing next to the air conditioner. He goes over to them.

SON

What ya'll doing?

BOY

Gonna see if this works.

Boy plugs the air conditioner into the extension cord. He cranks one of the knobs on the front.

The air conditioner rattles as it starts to spit out cool air.

KID

Well it runs.

Son drags a lawn chair around the table and takes a seat next to Kid.

SON
You just found this?

BOY
Yeah.

Son holds his hand in front of the vent.

SON
That's cold.

Boy takes a seat in the third lawn chair. They sit in silence and enjoy the cool air blasting out of the window unit.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Mark, Stephen, and John hover next to the hood of an old Tractor that is parked next to a soybean field. Mark explains the engine to them.

MARK
When you see the ignition plugs
lookin' like that you gotta change
'em out. You know how to do that?

STEPHEN
No.

MARK
What are they teachin' you at that
college?

STEPHEN
Nothin' good.

MARK
You hear that John? You'd be
better off stick' round here in
the Fall.

John smiles. Mark hands Stephen a flathead screwdriver.

MARK
Take that.

Mark backs out from under the hood as Stephen takes over.

MARK
That's it. Watch that pan.

Stephen works on the plugs. He pulls his hands out covered soot.

MARK

You got it. That deserves a cold beer.

Mark slaps Stephen on the back. Stephen and John smile.

MARK

Hey. I wanted ya'll to know, with all the shit happened at the funeral, dad was proud of you. Both of you. All right?

John and Stephen nod.

MARK

Come on get that beer.

EXT. ARKANSAS RIVER/LOCK AND DAM - DAY

Boy's van sits in the parking lot with one of the back doors open. Boy lifts a red cooler out of the back. He kicks the door shut. The words "SUCK IT" are scrawled across the dirty, back window.

Boy carries the cooler down a hill that runs into the banks of the Arkansas River where Son and Kid sit hunched over a small tackle box. Jerry Lee lies next to them.

Son rigs the small fishing ole with a worm.

KID

You gotta tie a bobber on that.

A car horn HONKS behind them.

Son turns to see Annie standing next to her car. She is wearing big, black sunglasses. CARTER (9), a boy with blonde hair, walks down the hill holding a brown, paper sack.

Son waves to Annie. Annie waves back. Carter reaches Son.

SON

Hey bud. You wanna catch some fish?

CARTER

Yeah.

Carter is greeted by his two Uncles.

Son looks over his shoulder to see Annie climb in her car and leave.

EXT. ARKANSAS RIVER/LOCK AND DAM - LATER - DAY

A fishing hook plunks into the river.

Kid sits next to Carter on a large tree trunk that has washed up on the bank. Carter reels in the line on the fishing pole.

KID
You can just let it set out there.

CARTER
Okay.

KID
You ever caught a fish?

CARTER
One time.

Boy and Son stand next to the cooler. Jerry Lee sniffs around their feet. Son opens the cooler and yells over to Carter.

SON
Carter, you get a sandwich?

CARTER
No.

Son digs in the cooler. Boy stares at his van at the top of the hill.

BOY
I really gotta wash my van.

SON
What do they charge you to keep it out here?

BOY
They don't. I know somebody.

SON
I still can't figure why you'd sleep in there.

BOY
If I keep my apartment all year, then I'd have rent all year. That means a summer job. This way's like early retirement.

SON
It's like being a bum.

Son opens the brown, paper sack that Carter brought with him. He pulls out two sandwiches and a note. The note read, "FOR MY BOYS." Son shows the note to Boy.

SON
Look at that.

BOY
Are there only two sandwiches in there?

SON
Shit, man. I gotta get her back in the house.

BOY
Stop countin' cards.

SON
It's not about counting cards. She says that, but that's not it. She just wants me to stop fuckin' around. Bring that paycheck home and be happy makin' 20 grand a year. I can do better than that. Better for me and better for her.

BOY
Yeah.

SON
You know there was a time I could divide up to four decimal points in my head. I'm serious.

Son walks over and gives Carter his sandwich.

INT. BOY'S VAN - MOVING - DAY

Boy drives and Kid rides in the passenger seat of the van.

Son sits in one of the rear captain's chairs with Carter. Their fishing gear is stacked on the floorboard. Jerry Lee lies next to it.

KID
Two greatest players to ever come out of Arkansas?

BOY
Sidney Moncrief. Corliss Williamson.

KID
What about Joe Johnson?

BOY
He only played a year and a half.

KID
Who's Corliss with?

BOY
Pistons. I got this kid right now,
8th grade, almost 6 foot. He could
be another Corliss.

KID
He'll have to get over six foot.

BOY
Corliss' only 6 foot 3.

KID
Yeah, but there's a...

The van jostles over a pothole. The stereo pops on. Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'" blasts out of the speakers. Kid tries to talk over the music.

KID
(shouting)
I can...

Boy holds up his hand to keep Kid from talking. They ride for a moment, listening to the loud music.

The stereo stops as abruptly as it started.

KID
I can take that out for you?

BOY
What would I listen to?

Kid doesn't have an answer for this. They continue down the road.

EXT. SPRAY N' WASH - AFTERNOON

The do-it-yourself "SPRAY N' WASH" sits in a large, asphalt parking lot.

Boy's van is parked in one of the four Car Wash stalls. Carter sits on the ground in front of the van and pets Jerry Lee.

Boy puts quarters in the machine that hangs on the wall. He sets the knob to "FOAMING BRUSH."

Kid takes the foaming brush off the hooks. Suds begin to seep out of it.

KID
Jesus, Boy, when's the last time
you cleaned this thing?

BOY
It's been awhile.

Kid points to the fender as he hands Boy the foaming brush.

KID
you need to get under there.

AT A PAY PHONE ACROSS THE STREET,

Son picks up the receiver. He drops some coin in and dials.

SON
(into the phone)
Hey. It's me. What're you doin'?
(pause)
Washin' Boy's van. I figure I'd
just drop him off to you.
(pause)
'Bout an hour.
(pause)
Okay.

Son hangs up the phone. He heads across the street back to the Spray N' Wash.

I/E. MARK'S TRUCK/SPRAY N' WASH ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Mark drives his pick-up with John in the passenger seat. Stephen rides in the bed of the truck.

Mark slows as he sees Son across the street in front of them. He taps on the rear glass of his truck and points Son out to Stephen.

EXT. SPRAY N' WASH - CONTINUOUS

Carter and Jerry Lee watch as Kid points out more places for Boy to scrub.

KID
You missed that spot.

Son walks up to them.

Mark Hayes' truck pulls in and parks in the Spray N' Wash entrance, blocking it. Stephen jumps out of the back as Mark and John climb from the truck's cab.

Son sees this and speaks to Carter.

SON
Stay here, bud.

Son walks over to Mark. Kid follows him. Boy stays next to Carter and Jerry Lee, not moving.

Son and Mark square off. Stephen and John stand behind Mark. Kid stands next to Son.

MARK
That your boy?

Son looks back at Carter.

SON
Yeah.

MARK
I wonder how he's gonna take it
when I give a speech at your
funeral?

Son stares at him. Jerry Lee begins barking in the background.

Boy sets down the foaming brush and heads for the others. Jerry Lee barks more and bucks against Carter holding his collar.

CARTER
Uncle Boy?

Boy sees Carter struggling to hold Jerry Lee. He takes the leash from him and continues over to the others.

MARK
We didn't get a chance to talk
after the funeral the other day.
We tried to catch up with you, but
you ran out of there too fast.
Like you mighta been scared of
something.

SON
I said what I needed to. Are we
gonna have a problem 'bout that?

MARK

Yeah. I think we have a problem
with it.

Jerry Lee barks continuously as Boy approaches. Mark takes note
of the dog.

MARK

You best keep that dog on its
leash.

BOY

Come on, man. Just settle down.

Mark kicks at the dog's face. Boy pulls Jerry Lee back.

Mark turns back around as Son lands a punch across his face. As
Son grabs Mark in a headlock, Stephen and John pile onto him.
Kid joins in.

KID

Boy. Come on.

Boy takes a step back from them.

The five men wrestle awkwardly. Carter watches from behind the
van.

Suddenly, there is a loud SIREN BLAST.

Everyone immediately stops. A POLICE CAR sits parked across the
street.

Kid lets go of Stephen. Stephen and John back away. Son lets
Mark out of the headlock.

Mark stands up, rubbing his neck. He looks over his shoulder at
the police car and then back at son.

MARK

We'll see you.

Mark leads his brothers back to the truck. He waves to the
Police Car. The POLICEMAN inside waves back.

Son, Boy, and Kid walk back to Carter at the Spray N' Wash
stall. Kid watches Mark drive away.

AT THE VAN,

Son opens the door for Carter to climb in the backseat. Boy
wipes off the back window. Kid walks up to him.

KID
So what's your problem?

BOY
What?

KID
Why the hell didn't you join in
back there?

Son interrupts.

SON
Get in the car, Kid.

Kid hesitates. Son nods toward Carter. Kid walks over and gets in the van. Boy walks around to the driver's side.

I/E. BOY'S VAN/ANNIE'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

The van pulls into Annie's Mother's driveway.

INSIDE THE VAN,

Boy puts the van in park. Son gets out the passenger door.

SON
Let's go buddy.

Son shuts his door. Carter gathers his things and climbs out.

CARTER
See ya'll.

Kid, sitting in one of the back captain's chairs next to Jerry lee, holds his hand up and waves.

KID
See you, Carter.

Carter closes the side door. Kid watches through the window as Son walks Carter to the front door.

KID
So what's your fuckin' problem?

AT THE FRONT DOOR,

DESS, Annie's mother, opens the door. She puts her hand on Carter's back and lets him in the house.

SON
Is Annie here?

DESS
No, she's out.

SON
Oh, okay.

DESS
Bye, Son.

SON
Bye.

Son nods. Dess closes the door, and Son walks back to the van.

INSIDE THE VAN,

Son climbs into the passenger's seat. He stares out the window at Annie's Mother's House.

KID
What are we gonna do?

SON
Nothin'.

KID
That's not gonna be the end of it.

SON
I know.

KID
So just say it. I'll go to his house and beat him on the front lawn.

BOY
Calm down.

KID
What?

BOY
Just calm down.

KID
Calm down? I guess you were bein' calm back there. That wasn't you being scared.

BOY
Fuck you.

KID
Pussy.

SON
Stop it.

Son addresses Kid.

SON
I don't want you messin' with Mark
Hayes. He's bad news. If you see
him, stay away from him. Hear me?

Son looks back at him. Kid, biting his tongue, nods. Son turns his attention to Boy.

SON
But that's the last time I ever
see you stay out of a fight.

Boy doesn't respond.

SON
Let's go.

Boy cranks the van.

As the van pulls away, the sun slips behind the horizon.

FADE OUT.

INT. ANNIE'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - MORNING

Carter eats a bowl of cereal at the kitchen table. Annie walk sin holding a magazine. She pours herself a cup of coffee.

ANNIE
Did you have fun fishing?

CARTER
Yeah.

ANNIE
Did you catch any fish?

CARTER
No.

Annie takes a seat at the kitchen table and flips through her magazine.

ANNIE
You help your dad wash Uncle Boy's
car?

CARTER
Yeah.

ANNIE
Was that fun?

CARTER
Dad started fighting.

Annie looks up from her magazine.

ANNIE
With your Uncles?

CARTER
No. With someone else.

ANNIE
What?

CARTER
Someone else.

Carter continues eating. Annie gets up and walks over to the phone. She picks it up and dials.

EXT. SON'S HOUSE - DAY

Son closes the front door. He walks to his truck parked in the driveway.

The phone begins to RING from inside. Son turns back to the house, but he stops when he sees a newer model pick-up truck pull in the driveway.

The truck blocks Son's truck in. Cleaman Hayes gets out. The phone continues to RING.

CLEAMAN
We need to talk.

SON
You'd do well to get off my
property.

The phone stops RINGING.

CLEAMAN
This fight I heard about.
(MORE)

CLEAMAN (CONT'D)

I don't want to see anymore of that.

SON

Tell that to your brother.

CLEAMAN

I have. Now I'm tellin' you. 'Fore too long, somebody's gonna get hurt, and it might just be one of yours.

SON

Listen here. I don't like you, and I don't like your family. And you should know, if anything happens to one of my brothers, I'll come after all of you.

Cleaman stares at Son.

CLEAMAN

So that's it?

SON

that's it.

Cleaman nods. He turns and gets back in his truck. Son watches him leave.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Boy sits on a bench at the edge of the basketball court. He watches as Roger and Buckner play one on one.

Kid walks across the playground. He comes over and takes a seat on the bench.

KID

Hey.

BOY

Hey.

KID

You know them?

BOY

The big one's Roger. He played for us last year. That's his little brother Buckner.

Kid nods. They sit in silence.

KID
We all right?

BOY
Yeah.

Kid nods.

BOY
You wanna help me with something?

KID
What?

CUT TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Roger and Buckner stand shoulder to shoulder under the basketball goal.

Boy stand sin the corner of the court holding a basketball. He slaps the ball between his hands.

BOY
Break.

Roger and Buckner separate. Roger goes to the corner to guard Boy as Buckner falls back to the free throw line.

BOY
Good. Wait. You're not rotating.

Kid stands under the goal at the opposite end of the court.

BOY
You're not rotating, Kid.

Kid reluctantly moves to the center of the half-court line.

BOY
Forget it.

Boy hands the ball to Roger, who immediately dribbles it in for a lay-up. Roger and Buckner begin playing one on one. Boy walks down to Kid.

BOY
It's not that hard.

KID
Sorry.

They walk over to the bench and take a seat.

KID
Where's Jerry lee?

BOY
I put him at Son's.

KID
You know they got a betting pool
going on at work 'bout how he got
shot?

Boy takes note of this with a nod, but his attention is focused
on the two boys playing basketball.

KID
One guy said he got it from
cheatin' on Annie.

BOY
That's not true.

KID
Yeah.

Boy notices Cheryl's car pull up and park at the curb. She gets
out holding a bag of fast food.

BOY
Cheryl's here. She brought you a
burger.

Kid looks over and waves to her. Cheryl waves back.

EXT. CASINO PARKING LOT - DAY

Son walks through the parking lot away from the Diamond Boat
Casino.

The casino, an enormous building made to resemble a riverboat,
towers behind Son. Vast cotton fields lie on either side of it.

Son weaves his way through the parked cars until he gets to his
truck. His face is pale. He puts his hands out and leans
against the bed of his truck.

Son kicks the hubcap of the back tire. He takes a deep breath
and stares at the giant Casino.

SON
Sonofabitch.

Son gets on his knees next to the passenger door. He reaches
under his truck.

His face presses against the dirt covered door as his hand fumble for something on the underside of the truck.

He yanks down and pulls out a metal box with a large magnet attached to it. He opens the box and removes a wad of twenty dollar bills.

Son crams the money in his pocket and slaps the magnetic box onto the side of the door. He walks back to the casino.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Kid takes a bite of his cheeseburger. Cheryl sits next to him on the bench. They look out at Boy coaching Roger and Buckner on the basketball court.

CHERYL

Did you talk to your brothers yet?

KID

I talked to Boy some. I haven't mentioned it to Son yet. I find out Monday 'bout the raise.

CHERYL

I don't care about that.

KID

I know. We'll just see.

Kid smiles at her. She smiles back.

INT. CATFISH RESTAURANT - DAY

Annie, wearing her waitress uniform, stands behind the register with a phone receiver to her ear. The restaurant is packed.

INT. CLEAMAN HAYES' HOUSE - DAY

Stephen sits in a recliner watching television. Cleaman's son, PAUL (9), walks past him. Paul comes back and stands in front of him.

PAUL

Can I get that .22?

STEPHEN

What for?

PAUL

John found a snake in the ditch.

STEPHEN
I'll bring it out.

Paul goes outside. Stephen gets out of the recliner.

EXT. CLEAMAN HAYES' HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

John stands over a ditch that runs through the backyard. Cleaman's two sons, Paul and KEVIN (6), peek around him at the water moccasin resting in a puddle of mud.

Stephen walks up holding the .22 rifle.

STEPHEN
I took out the ratshot you had in there.

He hands the rifle to John. John snaps the bolt and aims the rifle. The snake doesn't move.

MARK (O.S.)
Hold it!

John lowers the rifle. They turn to see Mark walk out from behind a vinyl-sided shed in the backyard. He puts a cigarette out under the toe of his boot. He smiles and playfully holds up his hands.

MARK
Don't shoot.

Mark walks over to them. He taps Paul on the head.

MARK
Run to my truck and get one of the sacks I got back there.

Paul runs away.

STEPHEN
What are you doin'?

MARK
I'm gonna catch that snake.

STEPHEN
What you want that snake for?

EXT. SON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Son's truck pulls in the driveway. He gets out and walks up to the front porch. Kid is there drinking a beer.

Jerry Lee barks from the backyard.

SON
Boy here?

KID
He just left. He stuck Jerry Lee
in that back pen. He said the van
was gettin' too hot for him.

SON
Too hot for the dog, but he's
still sleepin' in it.

KID
Yeah. He couldn't get the window
unit to run off his battery.

Son takes a seat on the steps next to Kid.

KID
What you been up to?

SON
Spent the day in Tunica.

KID
How'd it go?

SON
Ended up breakin' even. I'm
gettin' closer to workin' it out
though.

KID
You'll get it.

SON
Yeah.

KID
You still love Annie?

SON
Yeah. More than ever.

KID
Even with her stay' at her
mother's?

SON
Yeah.

KID

I think I'm gonna ask Cheryl to marry me.

Son's eyebrows raise.

SON

All right.

KID

I worry about takin' care of her though. I told her if I get that raise out at Keo, I'd put a ring on her finger.

SON

That sounds good.

KID

I don't know. I don't feel any more responsible than I did in high school. I don't even know if I could stay faithful to her.

SON

You just gotta decide that she's the one you're gonna love, and love her. Everything else'll take care of itself.

KID

Yeah.

Son smiles at him.

SON

You're gonna be all right.

Kid nods. Son stands up and goes into the house. Kid continues drinking his beer.

EXT. ARKANSAS RIVER/LOCK AND DAM - NIGHT

Boy's van sits with the engine running at the edge of the parking lot. A fifty foot extension cord hangs out of the driver's side window and runs down the hill toward the river.

Boy sits in a lawn chair on the side of the grass covered hill overlooking the river. A bottle of cheap Tequila and Margarita mix sit on a cooler next to him.

Boy operates a small blender that is plugged into the extension cord. He pours a freshly blended Margarita into a Styrofoam cup. He sips at it.

In the background, the van's stereo comes on. Journey's "When the Lights Go Down in the City" plays. At this distance, the volume is appropriate.

Boy sips his Margarita and enjoys the view of the river.

FADE OUT.

EXT. SON'S BACKYARD - DAY

Kid walks into the backyard holding a bag of dog food. He goes over to Jerry Lee's chicken-wire pen and stands there at the gate.

KID
Jerry Lee.

There is no answer. Kid shakes the bag of food.

KID
Jerry Lee.

INT. SON'S KITCHEN - DAY

Son sits at the kitchen table. His deck of cards and book on blackjack sit in front of him. He flips through the charts in the book's appendix.

There is a BEEP signaling a fresh pot of coffee. He gets up and walks over to the coffee pot. He steps over a half-empty pizza box and kicks around several empty beer cans.

SON
Jesus.

Kid walks in the back door.

SON
We gotta clean this place up.

KID
We've got a problem.

SON
What's that?

KID
It's Jerry Lee.

EXT. LOCK AND DAM PARKING LOT - DAY

Boy's van sits in the quiet parking lot.

Son's truck pulls in and parks. Son gets out and knocks on the side of the van.

After a moment, Boy opens the side doors in his underwear.

BOY
What's up?

SON
Hey. We need to talk. It's about
Jerry Lee.

BOY
All right.

Boy takes a seat on the edge of the van. Son sits next to him.

SON
Jerry Lee's dead.

BOY
What?

SON
Kid found him this morning. Snake
bit. He said it had curled up in
his water bowl and bit him on the
nose.

BOY
Aw shit, man.

SON
Kid found it and cut its head off
with a shovel.

Boy shakes his head and rubs at his temple.

SON
I'm sorry.

EXT. SON'S HOUSE - DAY

IN THE BACKYARD,

Kid digs a hole next to the dog pen with a rusted shovel. He wipes sweat off his forehead.

A Car horn HONKS at the front of the house. Kid, taking the shovel, walks around to the front yard.

IN THE FRONT YARD,

Shampoo's car idles in the driveway. Kid goes over to it.

KID

What?

Shampoo shuts the car and climbs out.

SHAMPOO

Hey, man, you think I can park my car here tonight?

KID

No.

SHAMPOO

I got this tarp I been putting over it. Nobody can see it's mine.

KID

Look, man. You just have to ask Son.

SHAMPOO

Aw, okay.

Shampoo reaches back into his car and pulls out a folded blue tarp. He begins spreading it over the car.

KID

What are you doing?

SHAMPOO

I'm gonna wait for Son. Help me with this tarp.

KID

Naw. Come back later. Son had to go tell Boy his dog is dead.

SHAMPOO

I heard about that.

KID

What?

SHAMPOO

It got snake bit, right?

KID

Yeah. How'd you know that?

SHAMPOO
Stephen Hayes was talkin' about
it.

KID
What did he say?

SHAMPOO
Said his brother Mark was the one
put the snake back there.

KID
What?

SHAMPOO
I thought you knew that.

Kid holds the shovel against the ground and places his foot in
the middle of it.

KID
You say Mark Hayes killed Boy's
dog?

SHAMPOO
Yeah. That's what I'm saying.

Kid pulls up the end of the shovel and snaps the rotted, wooden
handle in two.

KID
You know where Mark is?

SHAMPOO
He was at Whitewater earlier.

KID
Let's go.

Kid takes the broken piece of handle and climbs in Shampoo's
car. Shampoo snags the tarp off the hood and gets behind the
wheel. They drive away.

I/E. SHAMPOO'S LINCOLN/NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Kid rides with the broken, shovel handle across his lap.

EXT. GIN'S BAR PARKING LOT - DAY

Mark Hayes stands next to his truck talking to a MAN.

Shampoo's car pulls into the parking lot behind them.

Shampoo sits with the car idling. Kid gets out, leaving the car door open. He holds the broken piece of handle in his right hand.

Kid walks up behind Mark. The Man Mark is talking to notices Kid. Mark turns.

KID

Hey.

Kid smashes Mark in the side of the face with the shovel handle. Kid looks at the other Man and points the handle to the bar.

KID

Get outta here.

The Man walks into the bar. Mark crawls in the dirt parking lot holding his head.

KID

You like snakes, Mark?

Kid kicks him in the stomach. Mark slips a serrated pocket knife out of his jeans. He clicks it open.

Shampoo watches from his car as Stephen and John Hayes rush out of the bar. Stephen, at a full run, blind-sides Kid, tackling him to the ground. John hangs back.

CUT TO:

EXT. SON'S HOUSE - DAY

Boy and Son walk up to the front of the house. The phone RINGS from inside.

BOY

What should we do with him?

SON

I was guessin' we'd just bury him out back. I told Kid to start diggin' a hole.

They walk into the house.

INT. SON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Son walks into the den and answers the phone.

SON
Hello.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - EVENING

Son and Boy sit on a padded bench in the hospital waiting room. They stare at the large, automatic doors that lead to the emergency room.

SON
The cop over there said Mark Hayes
is dead.

Boy listens.

SON
Said Kid broke his skull. After he
gets through this, he'll have to
answer for it.

Boy shakes his head.

BOY
Shit.

The automatic doors swing open. An older DOCTOR dressed in scrubs walks over to them.

DOCTOR
Are you Son Hayes?

SON
Yeah.

DOCTOR
I'm sorry. Your brother's dead.

Boy lowers his head. Son looks up at him and nods.

DOCTOR
We did everything we could for
him. I'm sorry. Someone's coming
down to help you make arrangements
for the body.

The Doctor leaves. Boy and Son sit in silence.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Son and Boy stand under a bright, street lamp at the Hospital entrance.

SON
I gotta get back inside, talk to
this person.

BOY
Okay.

SON
Will you go over to Annie's mom's,
let them know?

BOY
Yeah.

SON
Somebody's gonna need to tell his
girlfriend.

Boy nods. They stand in silence.

SON
I'll see you at home.

Son walks back into the Hospital. After a moment, Boy walks to the parking lot.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Son walks past the front desk. He looks down a hallway to the left.

Cleaman, Stephen, and John Hayes stand next to a water fountain.

They exchange stares. Son walks to the waiting area.

I/E. BOY'S VAN/HIGHWAY - MOVING - NIGHT

Boy drives down the highway in silence.

His stereo blasts on playing another Journey song.

Boy shuts off the power. He pulls the van over to the side of the road and rests his head on the steering wheel.

INT. SON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The only light in the bedroom comes from a street lamp out front. Son lies awake in the middle of the bed.

Annie walks quietly into the room. She slips off her shoes and climbs in bed. She rests her head on his chest. He puts his arm around her.

FADE OUT.

EXT. SON'S BACKYARD - DAY

Son stands alone in his backyard. He stares at the blue and yellow, one-man tent.

He walks over and yanks the tent poles out of the ground. The tent collapses. Son dismantles the tent and rolls it into a blue nylon bag.

Holding the bag, Son stares at the place where the tent had been.

EXT. KEO FISH FARM - DAY

SERIES OF IMAGES:

-Son seines a pond with a crew of other WORKERS. The Workers talk and laugh as Son works quietly alongside them.

-Son sits alone next to one of the ponds. Behind him, TWO MEN wrap a net onto the back of a truck.

EXT. KEO FISH FARM - DAY

Son eats a bologna sandwich from a brown, paper bag. He sits alone on the bank of one of the small ponds.

GALEN HARPER (51), a man wearing dark jeans and a polo shirt walks up to Son. He stands over him.

GALEN

Son?

SON

Yes sir?

GALEN

I wanted to let you know you can take some time off if you need it. We'd all understand.

SON
No, sir.

GALEN
You sure?

SON
Yeah. It's my job, right?

GALEN
That doesn't mean you don't
deserve some time off.

Son thinks about this.

SON
I'll be here.

GALEN
Well, you let me know any
different.

SON
Thank you.

Galen walks away. Son looks out over the ponds.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Boy sits in the middle of the outdoor basketball court. He doesn't have his notebook or chalk. He lowers his head into his arms.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

AT THE REGISTER,

Annie pulls her wallet out and sets aside a stack of coupons. She takes out a checkbook and picks up a pen.

She notices Cheryl walk up holding a small basket of groceries. Cheryl, who is two people back in line, sees Annie and smiles.

ANNIE
Hey.

CHERYL
Hey.

ANNIE
You okay?

Cheryl nods.

CHECK OUT LADY
Twenty one thirty.

ANNIE
How much?

CHECK OUT LADY
Twenty one thirty.

Annie fills in the amount and rips out the check. She steps out of line and goes back to Cheryl.

ANNIE
You call if you need anything.

CHERYL
Okay.

Annie smiles at her. She picks up her bag of groceries and leaves the store.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

The front doors slide open as Annie emerges from the store. She sees Son in the parking lot. Stephen and John Hayes stand in front of him.

Stephen talks at Son with a finger pointed. Annie walks over to them.

STEPHEN
You should've never come to that funeral.

SON
Take that finger out of my face.

Annie walks up with her groceries and stands next to Son. She puts her hand on his arm.

SON
(to Annie)
It's okay.

John attempts to get Stephen away by pulling on his shoulder, but Stephen shrugs him off.

STEPHEN
You started all of this.

SON
This started a long time ago.

Son takes Annie's hand and leads her away to their truck. Stephen starts to follow him, but John stops him. Stephen calls after them.

STEPHEN

Well someone's gonna finish it.

Son doesn't turn around.

EXT. SON'S HOUSE - EVENING

Boy walks out onto the front porch holding a six pack of beer. He takes a seat in a lawn chair and opens one.

Shampoo's Lincoln Continental rumbles into the driveway and parks. The engine shuts off, and Shampoo gets out holding a brown, paper bag. He approaches the porch.

SHAMPOO

Hey.

BOY

Hey.

SHAMPOO

I got ya'll this bottle.

Shampoo hands the paper bag over to Boy.

SHAMPOO

I'm sorry I didn't come to the funeral.

BOY

You want a beer?

SHAMPOO

Yeah, I'll take one.

Boy hands Shampoo a can of beer. He opens it and takes a long drink. His focus shifts to the sound of an approaching vehicle. Son's truck enters the driveway.

The truck maneuvers alongside the Lincoln and parks. Son and Annie both get out. Annie grabs the sack of groceries from the bed of the truck and walks to the house. She passes Boy and Shampoo.

BOY

Hey, Annie.

ANNIE

Hey, ya'll.

Annie enters the house. Son walks up to the porch.

SHAMPOO
Hey, Son.

SON
Hey.

Son passes Shampoo and takes a seat in another lawn chair.

SHAMPOO
I was just tellin' Boy, I was
sorry for not makin' it to the
funeral.

SON
Yeah. Thanks.

SHAMPOO
What did the cops end up sayin'?

BOY
Mark and Kid killed each other.
That was it.

SHAMPOO
They didn't say anything about
Stephen?

SON
Why would they?

SHAMPOO
He was there. John too.

Boy looks at Son.

SON
Who says?

SHAMPOO
I say. I was there.

SON
What happened?

SHAMPOO
They came out of the bar just
before Kid got stabbed. He never
had a chance.

BOY
You're saying they were involved?

SHAMPOO

Everything happened pretty fast.
Kid and Stephen got tangled up.
Next thing I know, Kid's stabbed
and Stephen and John are takin'
Mark off in his truck. The cops
showed up pretty soon after that,
so I had to get outta there.

Son and Boy process this information.

SHAMPOO

I'm sorry about all this. Kid was
a good guy.

Son nods to him.

SHAMPOO

I'll see ya'll.

Shampoo walks back to his car. He gets in and cranks the
engine. Son and Boy watch his car pull away.

BOY

I didn't know they were there.

Son doesn't answer.

INT. SON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Son and Annie lie sleeping in their bed.

EXT. SON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mark Hayes' truck sits parked on the street in front of Son's
house. Stephen and John sit on the edge of the truck bed
drinking beer. They stare at the house.

Stephen finishes off his bottle of beer. He tosses it at the
house. The bottle SMASHES on the front porch.

INT. SON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Son's head pops up. Annie slowly opens her eyes.

ANNIE

What was that?

Son gets out of bed. He looks out the window and sees
TAILLIGHTS speeding off.

FADE OUT.

INT. SON'S HOUSE - MORNING

Son is the only one in the house. He stands in the doorway to Kid's room. No lights are on.

A duffel bag and Kid's boots sit next to the bed. Son picks up the boots and the duffel bag and sets them in the closet.

IN THE KITCHEN,

Son walks in and goes to the kitchen table. His book on blackjack and his three decks of playing cards sit there.

He gathers up the book and cards and dumps them in the trash.

Son leaves out the back door.

EXT. NICOLE'S HOUSE - DAY

The house is a modest one-story house in a row of modest houses. Nicole stands at the edge of her yard and prunes a fence full of jasmine.

Son's truck pulls up in front of the house. Nicole notices him get out of the truck, but she turns her head and continues her yard work. He walks up behind her.

SON

I guess you heard by now.

Nicole stops pruning, but she still doesn't turn to face him.

SON

You raised us to hate those other boys, and we do. And now it's come to this.

Nicole finally faces him. She takes off her gardening gloves.

Son stares at her. She doesn't say anything.

He walks back to his truck. Nicole watches him drive away. She puts back on her gloves and returns to pruning the jasmine.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Stephen stands next to a field with his head under the side panel of the tractor. John looks over his shoulder.

Cleaman walks out to them from his truck parked on a dirt, side road.

CLEAMAN

Hey.

Stephen pulls his head out from under the front hood.

STEPHEN

Hey.

Cleaman points to John.

CLEAMAN

I need you at the shop.

JOHN

Okay.

John hops off the tractor and walks to Cleaman's truck.

CLEAMAN

Give me a minute.

Cleaman turns his focus to Stephen.

STEPHEN

This damn thing. We changed the
plugs on it, but it's still
stallin' out. I don't know what to
do with it.

CLEAMAN

Let me take a look.

Cleaman puts his head under the hood. He studies the engine.

CLEAMAN

It may be the gas line. I'm takin'
John and the guys out to lot A.
We'll swing by and have one of
them take a look at it.

Stephen nods.

CLEAMAN

John told me you ran into Son
Hayes yesterday.

Stephen nods.

STEPHEN

Yeah.

CLEAMAN

You exchanged words with him?

STEPHEN

Yeah.

CLEAMAN

I don't want to hear anymore about that.

Stephen lowers his head.

CLEAMAN

I'm not willing to lose anymore of my family to this fight.

Stephen nods.

CLEAMAN

I'll see you in a bit.

Cleaman returns to his truck. Stephen goes back to work on the engine.

I/E. BOY'S VAN/PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

INSIDE THE VAN,

Boy kneels in front of his stereo. He pries a flathead screwdriver into the tape deck.

He puts all of his weight into it. The screwdriver slips, and Boy slams against the dashboard.

BOY

Goddammit.

Boy stands up and kicks the stereo console several times. Out of breath, he takes a seat on the floorboard.

SON (O.S.)

(from outside)

Boy!

Boy walks, bent over, to the open side doors. He climbs out.

OUTSIDE THE VAN,

Son stands next to his truck. Boy takes a seat opposite of Son on the edge of his van.

BOY

Hey.

SON

Hey. You okay?

BOY
It's my damn stereo.

SON
Still not working?

BOY
No.

SON
I can't stop thinking 'bout what
Shampoo said, 'bout those other
two.

BOY
Me either.

SON
Used to be, when I'd see those
other Hayes boys, I'd just see
that old man. But now, with Kid.

BOY
What do you think we should do?

SON
I don't know. I'm going after 'em.
I'm ready to be done with it.

BOY
What about Annie? What's she gonna
say?

SON
This is about Kid.

Boy pauses as he considers the repercussions of this.

SON
You don't have to come with me.

BOY
I don't want you going alone.

SON
I'm going now.

BOY
All right.

Son nods. He walks over and gets in his truck. Boy takes a deep
breath and climbs in the passenger seat.

EXT. FARM SHOP - DAY

Cleaman's truck is parked in between a collection of aluminum sheds. The sheds house tractors and other farm implements.

Cleaman walks out of one of the sheds followed by John and FOUR FARMHANDS, all dressed in work clothes.

CLEAMAN

John. Ride up front here.

Cleaman climbs behind the wheel. The Farmhands spread out and hop into the back of the truck. John climbs in the passenger seat.

I/E. SON'S TRUCK/FIELD - DAY

Son and Boy sit in the truck. They watch as Stephen works on the tractor next to the field.

They get out.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Stephen works on the engine of the stalled tractor.

Son and Boy walk toward him in the distance.

Stephen sees them. He steps out from behind the Tractor.

STEPHEN

What do you want?

Son and Boy don't answer.

STEPHEN

You're on our property.

CUT TO:

I/E. CLEAMAN'S TRUCK/GRAVEL ROAD - DAY

Cleaman drives down a gravel road. John is in the passenger seat. He turns the truck down a dirt, side road.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD,

Cleaman sees Son pinning Stephen down in front of the tractor. Boy tries to pull Son off as he punches Stephen repeatedly in the face.

Cleaman leans on the gas.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Cleaman's truck skids to a stop. Cleaman flies out, followed by John and the Four Farmhands.

Boy steps toward Cleaman, who shoves Boy out of the way. Cleaman kicks Son off of Stephen. Boy grabs for Cleaman, but John jumps on his back. Stephen rolls out of the way.

Cleaman and three of the Farmhands collapse on Son. The other Farmhand helps John bring down Boy.

A cloud of dust is stirred up around the scuffle.

FADE OUT.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The hospital bed is made. Boy sits in a chair next to it. A NURSE (34) fastens a neck brace on him. His left eye is badly bruised.

NURSE
Does that feel okay?

BOY
Yes. Where's my brother?

NURSE
He's on the third floor. He's
still unconscious.

Boy closes his eyes and rubs at the neck brace.

NURSE
I was told they want to talk with
you downstairs about your
insurance.

BOY
Okay.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY/ROOM - DAY

Boy stands in the doorway of Son's hospital room. He doesn't go in.

Annie sits in a chair next to the hospital bed. Son lies unconscious. Annie looks up at Boy.

ANNIE
Why is this happening?

Boy doesn't answer.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - DAY

Boy folds a stack of paperwork and crams it in his back pocket. He walks out of the hospital.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Boy walks to his van. He gets in and drives away.

INT. BOY'S VAN - MOVING - DAY

Boy drives his van in silence. He steers into a shopping center parking lot.

EXT. SPORTING GOOD STORE - DAY

Boy's van parks in a space in front of a large, locally owned Sporting Good Store.

Boy gets out and walks toward the store.

INT. SPORTING GOOD STORE - DAY

A FEW PEOPLE mingle around the front of the store. Automatic doors slide open as Boy walks in.

He stops to get his bearings. He makes his way toward the back.

He wanders through an aisle of basketballs and past racks of camouflage shirts. He comes to the Gun Counter.

Boy studies the handguns that lay in a glass cabinet in front of him. An Employee, an older man, approaches from behind the counter.

EMPLOYEE

Can I help you?

BOY

I need to buy one of these guns.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPORTING GOOD STORE - DAY

Boy walks to his van with a long, green box tucked under his arm. He also carries a small, plastic bag.

He opens the passenger door to his van and sets the green box and plastic bag on the seat.

He opens the box. The shotgun sits disassembled in a block of Styrofoam.

BOY
What the hell?

Boy closes the box. He goes over to the driver's side, gets in, and drives away.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Shampoo sits inside his car idling in the parking lot.

Boy's van pulls in and parks next to the Lincoln. Boy gets out and walks over to Shampoo's car. Shampoo rolls down the window.

BOY
I need your help.

EXT. FIELD WITH TREE - DAY

Shampoo's car sits parked next to Boy's van in the middle of a deserted field.

Boy and Shampoo stand over the green box at the edge of the van. Shampoo opens the box.

SHAMPOO
You've never shot a gun before?

BOY
No. Son never would let us own guns.

SHAMPOO
Didn't anybody ever take you hunting?

BOY
No.

Shampoo picks up the pieces of the shotgun and assembles them.

SHAMPOO

You slide the barrel into the stock. Then you take and screw this down. That locks it in place. You got the shells?

Boy dumps the plastic bag containing the box of shells onto the floorboard. Shampoo opens the box and grabs a handful of shells.

SHAMPOO

These load into the bottom. Here. Load four and cock it.

Shampoo loads four shells and cocks the shotgun.

SHAMPOO

That puts a shell in the chamber. Then you can load the fifth shell. The game and fish commission puts plugs in there so you can only hold fives. I can try and take it out if you want.

BOY

That's all right.

SHAMPOO

Here. Go shoot that tree.

Boy takes the shotgun from him. He walks into the field and aims at the tree.

SHAMPOO

Just brace it in your shoulder and squeeze the trigger. It's gonna kick.

Boy fires at the tree. The shotgun bucks. Boy lowers the gun. He rubs his shoulder.

INT. BOY'S VAN - MOVING - DAY

Boy drives his van down the highway. The shotgun sits on the floorboard next to him.

I/E. BOY'S VAN/TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - DAY

Boy's van sits parked on the side of a two-lane highway. A gravel road turns off the highway and leads down to Cleaman Hayes' house.

INSIDE THE VAN,

Boy sits behind the steering wheel. He stares down the gravel road at the house.

He looks back at the shotgun sitting on the floorboard and then back at Cleaman's house.

EXT. CLEAMAN HAYES' HOUSE - DAY

Cleaman Hayes sleeps in a chair on the front porch. His head is cocked back, mouth open, snoring slightly. The Sunday newspaper sits on his lap.

Boy comes up the front walkway holding the shotgun. He walks up to Cleaman and places the tip of the shotgun into his chest.

Cleaman's eyes open. He slowly raises his head up, staring at Boy. Cleaman doesn't move.

Boy's finger tenses on the trigger.

They exchange stares.

The sound of LAUGHTER comes from the side of the house. Boy turns his head and sees Paul and Kevin Hayes run around the corner into the front yard.

The two children stop in their tracks when they see Boy pointing the gun at their father.

Boy and Cleaman look at the children. Cleaman slowly raises his hand and motions to them.

CLEAMAN
Ya'll get back.

Paul and Kevin don't move. Boy looks at the children and then at Cleaman.

CLEAMAN
Paul, take your brother to the
back.

Paul steps in front of Kevin. He slowly back them both away.

Seeing this, Boy takes a step back from Cleaman. Cleaman watches him carefully.

Paul back his little brother around the corner of the house and out of sight.

Boy looks at Cleaman. Cleaman sits still.

Boy backs off the front porch, keeping the shotgun aimed. Boy turns and walks away. Cleaman stays seated, watching him leave.

Cleaman slowly stands up. He watches Boy's van drive past the house.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Annie walks out of the hospital. She is followed by her mother, Dess, who leads Carter by the hand.

DESS
You'll call if anything changes.

ANNIE
Of course. Go home and get some rest.

Annie looks across the street at the parking lot and sees Boy's Van parked there.

ANNIE
Mom will you stay here and watch Carter for a minute.

DESS
Sure.

Dess takes a seat on a bench nearby. Carter goes to play in a patch of grass next to her.

Annie walks across the street toward Boy's Van.

I/E. BOY'S VAN/HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Boy sits alone in his van. The green box for the shotgun sits open on the floorboard next to him. The disassembled shotgun parts rest in the Styrofoam block.

Annie's face appears in the passenger window.

ANNIE
Hey.

Boy looks up.

BOY
Hey.

ANNIE
What are you doing?

BOY
Nothin'.

Annie opens the door, but hesitates before getting in.

ANNIE
You mind?

BOY
Go ahead.

Annie climbs in and closes the door.

ANNIE
You come to see Son?

BOY
I don't know.

Annie's eyes drift to the disassembled shotgun sitting on the back seat. Her face stiffens.

ANNIE
Why do you have that?

BOY
I was gonna kill Cleaman Hayes
with it.

ANNIE
Nothin' good could come from you
killing him.

BOY
I wanted to do it. 'Cause if Son
wakes up, and this thing isn't
over, he'll die finishin' it.

ANNIE
You don't know that.

BOY
He's gotten shot before tryin' to
protect me and Kid. He'd do it
again if he has to.

ANNIE
I know. So what are you gonna do?

Boy looks out the windshield. Dess watches over Carter, playing in the grass.

BOY
I'm gonna try and stop it.

INT. CLEAMAN HAYES' HOUSE - DAY

Cleaman, Stephen, and John sit around the dining room table.

The table is covered with guns and bullets.

Cleaman and John both load deer rifles. Stephen loads a shotgun.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Son lies unconscious in the hospital bed.

Boy walks in and sits in a chair next to the bed. He sits there silently for awhile.

BOY

I saw Carter outside there. He's
lookin' good.

Boy lowers his head and takes a long pause.

BOY

I went to try and kill Cleaman
Hayes. I couldn't do it. It's not
the right thing to do.

Boy sits at Son's bedside.

BOY

I'm gonna try and put an end to
all this fightin'. I need you t
understand.

After a moment, he gets up and leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. CLEAMAN HAYES' HOUSE - DAY

John Hayes sits in a chair in the front hallway with a rifle across his lap. He gently rocks back and forth and watches the front yard.

THROUGH THE WINDOW,

He sees Boy walk up the front path.

John slowly raises out of the chair. He walks into the kitchen, watching Boy through the windows. He sees Boy walk around the house.

John backs away and runs to the den.

EXT. CLEAMAN HAYES' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Boy walks to the side yard unarmed.

The side door of the house bursts open. Cleaman rushes out with his rifle aimed at Boy.

Boy's hands fly up.

BOY

Wait!

CLEAMAN

What are you doing? What the hell are you doing?

Cleaman walks closer, still aiming the rifle.

BOY

Wait!

Boy flinches away from the tip of the gun.

BOY

Please. Just wait.

Cleaman takes a step back.

Boy sees Stephen walk around the other side of the house pointing a shotgun at him.

STEPHEN

Get down you sonofabitch! Get down!

Boy lowers his head and raises his hands higher.

John, pointing his rifle, emerges from a hedgerow on the other side of the yard. All three circle Boy.

Stephen walks up and puts his shotgun to the back of Boy's head.

JOHN

He's not armed!

Stephen's finger tenses on the trigger.

CLEAMAN

Stop!

Stephen takes his finger off the trigger. He backs up.

The three brothers aim their weapons. Boy keeps his hands in the air.

BOY
I came to talk.

CLEAMAN
Give me one reason I don't kill
you right now.

BOY
I'm done with this.

CLEAMAN
What?

BOY
I want to stop this.

STEPHEN
It's gonna stop.

Boy looks back at Stephen, who stares down the sights of his
shotgun.

BOY
(to Cleaman)
You got two boys, right?

CLEAMAN
What about it?

BOY
Son has his boy, Carter. One day,
I'll have my own. We've all lost
family here. And if we're not
careful, those boys are gonna grow
up fightin' this thing. I just
want to protect my family.

Cleaman looks at John, then at Stephen. They continue pointing
their guns.

CLEAMAN
Why should we trust you?

BOY
You can shoot me now if you want,
but I'm done fightin'.

Boy lowers his hands.

After a moment, Cleaman and John lower their rifles. Stephen
does not.

CLEAMAN
Back off Stephen.

STEPHEN
This isn't right.

Cleaman walks over to him.

CLEAMAN
Put the gun down. He's unarmed.

Stephen hesitates.

CLEAMAN
If you shoot him here, like this,
they'll put you away. We've got a
chance to stop all this. Now come
on.

Stephen takes a step back and slowly lowers his rifle.

Boy looks at Cleaman.

CLEAMAN
I don't ever want to see you here
again.

Boy nods. He turns away.

STEPHEN
Wait!

Boy stops.

STEPHEN
What if Son wakes up, and he don't
see things this way?

BOY
We'll have to hope he does.

STEPHEN
Or we'll be fighting.

Boy nods. Stephen nods back. Boy walks away.

Cleaman, Stephen, and John gather at the foot of the front porch and watch him leave.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Annie sits in a chair next to Son's hospital bed. She rests her arms and head on the bedside rails. Son lies unconscious.

Carter stands behind her looking out the window.

Boy walks in. Annie sees him. She goes over to him.

BOY
It's gonna be okay.

Annie smiles and drops her head. Carter takes a seat in the chair next to Son's bed.

FADE OUT.

I/E. SHAMPOO'S LINCOLN/DOWNTOWN - DAY

Shampoo's Lincoln pulls up to a stop light in downtown Pine Bluff. He checks his mirrors. There are no other cars in sight.

The light turns green. Shampoo turns his car left and drives toward the Interstate on-ramp.

His car sails onto the on-ramp and heads out of town.

INT. JUNIOR HIGH GYM - DAY

TEN EIGHTH GRADE BOYS, all wearing practice jerseys, are dispersed across the court.

Boy, wearing tight coaching shorts and holding a whistle, watches from a row of chairs on the sideline. He no longer wears the neck brace, and the bruises on his face have healed.

Boy blows the whistle. The ball is thrown in, and the Players begin to run a full court press.

BOY
That's it.

Boy rises out of his chair as the Players move into positions all over the court.

BOY
That's it.

Boy rails the sidelines watching the play. His players execute the trap beautifully with a steal at half court.

BOY
That's it! That's what I'm talkin'
about!

Boy claps and blows his whistle.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Son, still unconscious, lies in the hospital bed.

The bruises on his face have healed.

His eyes slowly open. He sits up in bed. It takes him a moment to get his bearings.

He pulls the covers back and hangs his feet off the side of the bed. He eases himself out of the bed. Unsure of his footing, he uses the bedside table for support.

He gets to his feet. He shuffles to the window. Son looks outside.

Annie walks into the room holding a cup of coffee. She freezes, staring at Son standing by the window.

EXT. CLEAMAN HAYES' HOUSE - DAY

John heaves a duffel bag into the bed of Mark's truck.

Cleaman and his two sons, Paul and Kevin, walk over to the truck. Cleaman takes out his wallet. He removes some cash and holds it out to John.

CLEAMAN

Take this.

JOHN

I'm covered.

CLEAMAN

Just take it. You'll need some
travelin' money.

John takes the money and crams it in his front pocket. Cleaman gives him a hug.

John climbs into Mark's truck and cranks the engine. He hangs out the window and speaks to Kevin and Paul.

JOHN

Ya'll take care of him. Hear me?

They nod. John pulls away in the truck. Cleaman heads back to the house with his sons.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Stephen stands with his head under the hood of the tractor. He emerges covered in grease. He shuts the hood.

He walks around and climbs up onto the seat of the tractor. He turns the key. The engine cranks up with a rattle.

Stephen steers the tractor through the field.

EXT. SON'S FRONT PORCH - DAY

Son and Boy sit sipping beer on Son's front porch.

Annie walks out of the house wearing a uniform. Carter follows behind her.

ANNIE

I'll be back by nine. Just make
sure Carter showers before bed.

SON

Okay.

Annie leans over and kisses Son on the top of his head. She walks to her car, gets in, and pulls away.

Carter takes a seat on the front steps in-between Son and Boy's chairs. Boy and Son continue to sip their beer. The three sit in silence, enjoying the afternoon.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.