

THE BRIDGE

Written by

Dominic Morgan & Matt Cameron Harvey

Jewel Keats Ross
SILENT R MANAGEMENT
8060 Melrose Avenue
Suite 205
Los Angeles, CA 90046
323-852-6830 Office
310-415-1380 Cell
jgross@silentrilit.com

APA
405 South Beverly Drive
Beverly Hills
CA 90212
310.888.4200

FADE IN:

EXT. MISSISSIPPI STATE PENITENTIARY -- DUSK

A pumpkin-sun sinks over Mississippi State Pen. GUARDS patrolling on horseback, a WORKGANG returning from a day out in the cotton fields. Same as it ever was...

As the rest of the prisoners are locked up for the night --

One man is led out into the exercise yard, his chains clanking.

DESTIN RYDER

White male Caucasian, 28 years old, every muscle and sinew battle-hardened.

Escorting Destin toward a PRISON BUS -- correctional officer HAROLD STAMPER, 40s, eyes that have seen it all.

DESTIN

You think they'll give me a chance?

HAROLD STAMPER

Depends how you carry yourself.

DESTIN

What if I act like I'm talking to you right now?

They approach a DUTY OFFICER standing by the bus.

DUTY OFFICER

Uncuff him.

As Harold acts on the order --

HAROLD STAMPER

You're almost there, Destin. Just prove you can be trusted.

Which only adds to Destin's sense of apprehension.

INT. THE PRISON BUS -- DUSK

Destin moves up the aisle, noting the faces of each and every one of the CONVICTS.

Like him, they're all still wearing their orange prison overalls -- but no handcuffs; no security measures of any kind. These short timers are all out on trust.

Destin spots TIBERIUS, a scrawny, African American convict.

Destin tentatively nods -- and to his surprise, the dude nods back. This isn't a respect thing and it sure ain't about friendship. Neither man wants to blow his big chance.

EXT. COTTON FIELDS -- DUSK

The bus throws up dust, cutting a swathe through the cotton fields.

INT. THE PRISON BUS -- DUSK

Destin looks out of the window, marveling as the sun sinks over the free world.

In swift succession:

-- two of the Convicts get dropped off at a factory plant.

-- another man gets out by a 24 hour supermarket.

-- Tiberius disembarks by a park, where a black bag is duly thrust into his hands. He's on litter duty.

As the bus pulls away, Destin looks longingly at a family scene: a MUM and DAD playing softball with their SON under floodlights.

INT. THE PRISON BUS -- NIGHT

The bus engine REVS UP an octave, protesting as they ascend a steep hill.

BUS DRIVER

Your stop.

Destin is up on his feet, craning to get a better look as the bus summits the hill.

Laid out in the river valley below -- a gargantuan, CANTILEVER-TRUSS BRIDGE lit up like Disneyland.

This 140 year old steel colossus spans a half mile section of the Mississippi River.

EXT. SOUTH END OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Destin hops down the bus steps, albeit it with one final warning ringing in his ears.

BUS DRIVER
6 A.M. sharp. Or the SORT team comes
looking for your ass.

DESTIN
I'll be here.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY, THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

TRAFFIC whizzes over the half mile-long bridge. 6 lanes in total, 3 in either direction.

Destin paces along the pedestrian walkway, taking in every detail of this vast bridge structure.

The overall feeling is like walking beneath a steel forest.

Unlike a suspension bridge, the bridge's weight is carried by two huge "camel humps", or cantilever-arches, which rise up to a peak of 300 feet and then arc down to meet each other in the middle.

Over the safety railing -- A LONG DROP TO NOWHERE, the choppy waters of the Mississippi.

Destin cautiously approaches his destination, the middle section of the bridge, where the 6 lanes of traffic funnel down to 2 lanes, traffic cones marking out --

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE, MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

A 200 yard long construction site, spread over the four lanes of closed traffic. PICK-UP TRUCKS and heavy equipment are scattered over the site, along with a MOBILE OFFICE that serves as HQ for -
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The BRIDGE CREW. Seven men who are busy at work on their various jobs.

These guys are a breed apart. Specialist construction workers, who pass on their skills from father to son, and have the kinship of a close-knit family.

A heavy duty CRANE lifts steel girders from the back of a FLATBED TRUCK...

...dropping them to "the Cutting Crew", who unhook them, cut the long girders to smaller sizes....

...and place the girders in a pulley system, sending them skyward...

...to the daredevil "Skywalkers" on the top of the bridge. Their job is to fit the replacement girders with rivet guns and sheer brute force.

As Destin walks up to the site office, a whoop comes down from one of the Skywalkers.

WORKER'S VOICE

Watch your back, fellas. Badass on the bridge.

The man rapels down from the heights on a low-inertia harness, his boots CLUMPING DOWN on terra firma.

STEVE KNAPPS, 38 years old, the man who is the heart, soul and balls of this bridge crew.

Knapps casts an eye over Destin's prison overalls.

KNAPPS

Little early for Halloween, ain't it?

Destin continues walking to the site office. Knapps watching him every step of the way.

EXT. THE SITE OFFICE -- NIGHT

Crew Boss CLINT COLEMAN strides out of the mobile office, wielding his clipboard. He's in his 50s. Takes pride in his appearance. Spit shined boots. Ironed work shirt.

DESTIN

Mr. Coleman?

CLINT

It's Chief or Boss. You got your release form?

Destin hands Clint an official-looking sheaf of paper.

Clint folds the page precisely and slips it inside his top pocket.

CLINT (CONT'D)

No alcohol or drugs on the bridge. You do what I say, when I say it. Any back chat, you're back in the slammer. Are we clear?

DESTIN

I'm here to work.

CLINT

There's a chance you and I might get along.

Destin gestures at the two-man Cutting Crew working nearby.

DESTIN

I'm a qualified, grade three metal worker --

CLINT

You ain't qualified to do shit on my bridge, unless I say so.

Clint scrutinizes Destin for any signs of dissension.

DESTIN

Whatever you say, boss.

EXT. THE BRIDGE -- DAY

HEAVY METAL MUSIC cranks out from a paint-spattered ghetto blaster, competing with the GRINDING of tools on metal, the DRONE of passing traffic.

Destin's sweeping the pedestrian walkway, coughing on a cloud of "rust-dust", which is raining down from above.

The cloud is coming from the "Hose Man", who's up on a 'spider lift' crane platform, using a SANDBLASTER HOSE to strip paint off the bridge.

For all Destin's efforts, his sweeping work seems to be in vain - - the moment he's swept one section of the walkway, a new cloud of rust-dust descends, and he has to sweep it up all over again.

Destin takes a breather, enviously looking at the Cutting Crew, who are slicing through girder after girder, sparks flying around their ghetto blaster.

These guys have got a rhythm to them. A beat. And it's clear they love their job.

One of the cutting crew catches Destin's eye. HECTOR is the youngest member of the team -- an effervescent, African American kid in his late teens.

HECTOR

It sucks being a punk, huh?

Destin stares at him. Is the boy looking for trouble?

HECTOR (CONT'D)

I remember when I was a punk.

ROD, his partner quips --

ROD

When?

Rod's twice Hector's age and has the look of a hobo. They make an odd pair, the young buck and the bashed-up, country hick.

HECTOR

(to Destin)

Pay your dues, you'll work your way up.

DESTIN

I'm only here for the week.

Knapps watches Destin from above, unhappy that Hector's fraternizing with him.

KNAPPS

We got a bridge to fix. Get me some steel up here.

Destin keeps his head down and goes back to sweeping duties.

EXT. REST AREA, THE CONSTRUCTION SITE -- NIGHT

The Bridge Crew are taking their midnight break.

Destin looks awkward, not knowing where to sit -- it's like his first day in the prison canteen. He approaches a barrel chested older guy sitting on his own, reading a book. Voltaire's *Candide*.

MERRYWEATHER

(to Destin; without looking up)

Don't even think about it.

With his white beard and rosy cheeks, MERRYWEATHER looks like Santa Claus. But up close, Destin can see the veteran's face and arms are crisscrossed with scars from a lifetime of hard manual labor.

He moves on to another spot by PRUITT, the rangy Hoseman.

PRUITT

Seat's taken.

To everyone's surprise --

KNAPPS
Space here.

Destin sits down, opens up his lunchbox.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)
What you got?

DESTIN
Cheese sandwich.
(looking at it)
I guess.

KNAPPS
Gorm, let him have some of that
sausage.

DESTIN
I'm okay.

GORM
He's okay.

GORM doesn't part easily with his food. He's a good ol' country
boy giant -- six foot six and 310 pounds.

KNAPPS
The man's been in jail, for who knows
how long, and you're gulping down that
shit right in his face?

DESTIN
I said I was okay.

Gorm relents and passes over one of his gourmet sausages.

GORM
Don't even try arguing with him.

Destin shrugs. Takes the sausage. All eyes are on him as he
bites into it.

KNAPPS
Now when was the last time you had
something that big in your mouth?

Knapps grins. Howls of laughter from the rest of the Crew. But
how's the convict going to react?

Destin keeps chewing, savoring the flavor.

DESTIN
Your mama's cock?

Knapps keeps smiling. Eyes granite hard.

KNAPPS

Praise be. He's got a sense of humor.
What they put you away for?

DESTIN

This and that.

KNAPPS

Do we have to watch our backs, give
you *respect*?

DESTIN

Nah, I'm just a punk.

KNAPPS

So long as you don't create any aggro
for my crew --

CLINT

YOUR crew?!

Clint's standing at the door of the site office.

KNAPPS

Figure of speech, Chief.
(to Destin)
Now you got me in trouble.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE, MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

The Bridge Crew are still on their break, messing around with a football, seemingly oblivious to the TRAFFIC passing by on the other side of the cones.

Gorm's the star of the show, the big man surprisingly light on his feet, throwing the ball 70, 80 yards, with deadly accuracy.

Destin watches on in amazement as Gorm launches another wire guided missile.

DESTIN

Holy shit.

MERRYWEATHER

Damn shame is what it is. Boy could
have made the draft if he wasn't such
a hog.

Knapps calls out to Destin --

KNAPPS
Wanna play ball?

MERRYWEATHER
Stay your ass down.

Knapps spins the ball in his hand.

KNAPPS
Not scared of us, are you?

DESTIN
I'm a little rusty.

But Destin takes the bait, striding over. If this asshole wants a game of football --

SLAM CUT TO:

'THE PLAYING FIELD', CONSTRUCTION SITE

FLASHFRAMES of a hard-contact football game, played between the parked trucks and equipment:

-- Hector hikes the ball to Destin...who's being covered by Knapps. Knapps hits the convict, taking him out.

HECTOR
I though we were playing touch?

Not any more.

-- Knapps and Destin line up in a scrimmage with the other crew. Destin blocks Knapps, but the Skywalker PILEDIVES THROUGH HIM.

BY THE SITE OFFICE

Clint and Merryweather watch on.

MERRYWEATHER
You know what's going on here, chief?

CLINT
Let's see if he can keep his powder dry.

BACK ON 'THE PLAYING FIELD'

Destin takes another hit, Knapps smacking his head on the sidewalk for good measure.

A gash opens up his head, blood trickling out.

Destin laughs it off.

DESTIN

Now I got a little scratch on my head.

Knapps is totally frustrated, unable to get a rise out of the convict.

DESTIN (CONT'D)

Great game, fellas.

He cracks knuckles with Hector.

BY THE SITE OFFICE

Clint watches on, pleasantly surprised.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BRIDGE -- DAWN

Destin's on the walkway, watching the first rays of sun break over the Mississippi River. The wind BLOWS UP, fanning his face.

CLINT

Beautiful, isn't it?

Destin acts as though he's been caught shirking.

CLINT (CONT'D)

Relax. Shift's over.

Destin still isn't sure. What's his angle?

CLINT (CONT'D)

This bridge has been here since 1870. We do our job right, she'll still be here in another hundred years. You see what I'm saying, Destin? We're building something here. You're part of it.

Destin concludes the guy's screwing with him.

DESTIN

You got my form? I got a bus to catch.

Chief Clint shakes his head, signing the form. He tried.

CUT TO:

EXT. PUBLIC PARK -- DAY

The Prison bus stops to pick up Tiberius.

INT. THE PRISON BUS -- DAY

Tiberius slopes up the bus. Head bowed. He's got a black eye.

DESTIN

What happened, man?

TIBERIUS

Fuck do you care?

Destin's guard goes right back up.

TIBERIUS (CONT'D)

Stay away from me. I know who you are.

INT. JAIL CELL -- DAY

Destin is bunking with three other guys...who are bullying a WEAKER INMATE. The Inmate catches Destin's eyes, pleading with him.

CONVICT BULLY

(to Destin)

What are you looking at?

Destin rolls over, turning his back.

Reaching into his shirt pocket, he takes out a small photograph, focussing on it, keeping his eye on the prize. (We don't see the picture yet).

CUT TO:

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER -- NIGHT

Moon on the water. The chirp of bullfrogs, the call of night birds.

EXT. THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Destin is back to sweeping rust-dust, lungs being slowly strangled.

Then he remembers something. Kicking himself.

EXT. CUTTING STATION, MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Destin hustles over to Rod & Hector, who are measuring up a girder for cutting.

DESTIN
I need to make a call.

ROD
No cellphones on the bridge. Chief's rules.

Destin figures Hector might lend him a more sympathetic ear.

DESTIN
It's my kid's birthday tomorrow. If I play nice with my girlfriend, she'll give him something, tell him it's from me.

HECTOR
Sorry, man.

KNAPPS
(shouting down from above)
Use the payphone.
(pointing at it)
Yellow box on the northside.

Hector frowns at Knapps, about to interject --

KNAPPS (CONT'D)
We'll cover for you, big guy.

DESTIN
...Thanks.

Destin heads up the walkway to the phone booth.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH, NORTHSIDE WALKWAY -- NIGHT

Destin ducks his head beneath the grubby, Perspex dome.

Strange. The phone doesn't have a number pad -- no buttons to press.

Destin picks up the handset...and is automatically connected to a softly-spoken "Operator".

OPERATOR (O.S.)
(filter)
Hello, I'm so glad you called. Would you like to give me your name?

Destin stares at the banner-sticker fixed above the phone:

"There is HOPE. Make the call. Crisis Counselling."

This 'payphone' is a suicide crisis hotline.

Destin slams down the phone...

EXT. THE PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY -- NIGHT

...And thunders back up the pedestrian walkway, face lit up in the headlights of PASSING TRAFFIC.

ON THE NORTH APPROACH ROAD OF THE BRIDGE

The driver of a CHEVROLET IMPALA is driving like a bat out hell. Behind the wheel --

INT. CHEVROLET IMPALA

MARLIE STEWART, 23. Pretty as punch in jeans shorts and a halter-neck top.

Marlie STAMPS her foot to the accelerator, getting WAY TOO CLOSE to the car in front.

INTERCUT:

EXT. THE CUTTING STATION

Destin bulldozers his way up to Knapps, who is standing beside Rod, still in fits of laughter.

KNAPPS

I thought Hec' was gullible. But you take the cake.

Destin steps right up to Knapps, getting in his face.

DESTIN

What's your problem?

KNAPPS

Whoah...

The rest of the Bridge Crew close in, backing up their guy, Knapps.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)

45 cents an hour. That's my problem.

INT. CHEVROLET IMPALA

Marlie PULLS OUT, desperate to overtake the car ahead, before the traffic goes into a single lane bottleneck.

EXT. THE CUTTING STATION

Knapps stabs his finger into Destin.

KNAPPS

Got a brother-in-law in Grand Isle.
Worked the same job, twenty years --
till the bosses brought in cheap
convict labor.

DESTIN

I don't want your job. All I'm saying:
you don't mess with another man's
family.

KNAPPS

Bet you've fucked over plenty in your
time.

That hits the spot.

Something changes in Destin's eyes. His pupils DILATE, a switch flicking from riled to READY TO GO.

Knapps registers it. Feels FEAR. Then rallies, muscles tensing.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)

Bring it.

INT. CHEVROLET IMPALA

Marlie nervously checks her rear view mirror, heart pumping.

The Impala edges out of its lane, perilously close to the barrier of cones marking out --

EXT. THE CONSTRUCTION SITE

Knapps swings a PUNCH at Destin -- who sidesteps, inadvertently knocking over a FLOODLIGHT TRIPOD TOWER.

The 10 foot high tripod topples...AND FALLS RIGHT INTO THE PATH OF --

INT. CHEVROLET IMPALA

Marlie sees the falling floodlight tower, instinctively SWERVES, careening through the traffic cones, spinning out of control...

EXT. THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

DRIVERS take EVASIVE ACTION, hitting brakes, swerving to avoid the Impala as it MOUNTS the pedestrian walkway...

Destin and the Bridge Crew DIVE OUT of the way...

The Impala SMASHES through THE SAFETY RAIL.

...and is now half on and half off the bridge, SEE-SAWING over a 100 foot drop.

ON THE ROAD

The accident is the catalyst for a bone-wrenching pile up as:

-- A FORD ESCAPE SUV swerves to avoid a collision and tips over, screeching on its side, SLIDING STRAIGHT at...

-- A SILVERADO, which slams on its brakes and is immediately rear-ended by...

-- A NISSAN ALTIMA which CRUMPLES on impact, and is immediately hit in turn by...

-- A LEXUS RX which can't stop in time, nor can the car behind...

-- A TOYOTA CAMRY, which lurches out of the way and BOUNCES across the central reservation straight into the path of...

-- A DODGE RAM pickup, which hits the Camry full on, MASHING it straight into...

-- A HONDA CIVIC which is spun through 360, COLLIDING with...

-- AN 18 WHEELER TRUCK which BRAKES, TIPS, JACKKNIFES...

SLAMCUT INSERTS OF:

A windshield SHATTERING, a shoulder bone POPPING...

Fender BUCKLING, skin flap TEARING...

Safety belt SNAPPING...skull CRACKING...

Side panel CRUMPLING...rib cage CRUNCHING...

EXT. TOP OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

A bird's eye view of the carnage in the middle of the bridge, as crushed and wrecked cars continue to pile up across all six lanes.

Over thirty vehicles in total -- including the 18 wheeler: a McDONALDS DELIVERY TRUCK, which is now blocking the entire north end of the bridge, stretched out on its side across all six lanes.

The noise of metal-on-metal slows...and then dies...replaced by SCREAMS and CRIES of panic.

EXT. CRASHED CAR/SAFETY RAIL OVERLOOKING THE RIVER -- NIGHT

The vehicle which started this epic pileup -- the Chevrolet Impala -- is still teetering on the brink, Marlie trapped inside.

Knapps and Destin sprint across, slamming their weight on the trunk, stopping the car from tipping over the edge.

Knapps hollers at Destin --

KNAPPS
Keep your weight on it!

Both of the rear doors are buckled in.

So Knapps climbs up onto the trunk and PUNCHES OUT the remains of the shattered rear windshield.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)
Don't let go.

DESTIN
Wait --

But Knapps is already clambering through the hole where the windshield used to be...

Destin pushes down on the trunk, muscles straining.

All the other Bridge Crew guys are out on the road, helping other motorists...

INT. CRASHED IMPALA -- NIGHT

Knapps crawls over the rear seats.

As his body-weight shifts to the front of the vehicle --

EXT. CRASHED IMPALA/BRIDGE RAIL -- NIGHT

-- Destin struggles to counteract the downward pull.

INT. CRASHED IMPALA -- NIGHT

Marlie is badly shaken but only seems to have suffered a few cuts and bruises. But her attempts to free herself are making the car roll about all the more.

WOMAN

I can't get the belt off!

KNAPPS

Stay still, I got it.

Knapps pulls out a clasp knife and attempts to saw through the seat belt. But the woven material proves difficult to cut through...

Getting anxious now, Knapps steals a glance back up THE VEHICLE at Destin...

EXT. CRASHED IMPALA -- NIGHT

...Who is losing his battle to hold the vehicle down. Sweat's pouring off his face, his muscles burning up with lactic acid.

DESTIN

Gorm! Somebody!

But chaos still reigns in the aftermath of the pileup -- no one hears his distress call.

Destin's eyes go WIDE as the back end of the Impala starts to lift up...

INT. CRASHED IMPALA -- NIGHT

Knapps and Marlie feel the vehicle reaching tipping point.

For a second, he thinks about leaving the girl...but continues to cut through the seat belt, thread by thread.

KNAPPS
Son of a bitch.

EXT. CRASHED IMPALA -- NIGHT

Destin hangs onto the trunk, his feet almost off the ground, clawing on, desperate to prevent the car from tipping over.

INT. CRASHED IMPALA -- NIGHT

Knapps *finally* cuts through the safety belt.

He hooks his hands under Marlie's arms and manhandles her out of her seat, dragging her up and over the headrest.

But they're out of time.

EXT. CRASHED IMPALA -- NIGHT

Destin's losing his grip on the vehicle when...

-- STRONG HANDS grab onto the rear fender and the trunk, pulling it back down -- Gorm and the rest of the Bridge Crew, in the nick of time.

The Crew put their backs into it, bringing the Impala back down onto the horizontal until it's out of danger.

Then and only then, does Destin let go, collapsing on the walkway.

And that's where Knapps sees him, when he clambers out of the windshield holding onto the girl, the big hero.

KNAPPS
Just as well you boys showed up.

Destin is too exhausted to retaliate.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOT OF THE SOUTH HILL -- NIGHT

A POLICE ROADBLOCK has been set up on the foot of the south hill.

A DEPUTY SHERIFF signals for APPROACHING DRIVERS to make U-turns, all vehicles headed away from the bridge.

Over on the other side of the hill --

EXT. PILEUP SITE, MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

The FLASHING LIGHTS of an ambulance cast a blue glow --

FIVE DEAD BODIES lined by the roadside.

MEDICS are on the scene, working with the Bridge Crew to extract the last of the injured out of crashed vehicles -- Hector and the rest of the boys putting their cutting tools to good effect.

Some of the injured are categorized walking wounded, others need to be wheeled out on gurneys.

The incessant drone of a CAR ALARM sounds out across the wreckage.

MERRYWEATHER

Will somebody shut that goddamn thing
off?

Destin yanks open the door of a BMW Z4, punching in a panel hidden beneath the dash. He locates the 'brain' that controls the alarm and disarms it in seconds.

Destin looks over to the construction site, where the young woman he saved is giving a statement to a MOTORBIKE COP.

Marlie's got a blanket around her shoulders.

EXT. PILEUP SITE, MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE -- LATER

Now loaded up, the AMBULANCES are ready to drive off, departing by the only passable exit -- the south end of the bridge.

Marlie's hanging back close to the Bridge Crew.

KNAPPS

You sure you don't wanna go?

MARLIE

The medic checked me out.

She's on edge, eyes looking around.

KNAPPS

I could give you a ride home.

MARLIE

I can walk. It ain't far.

Chuckles from the rest of the Bridge Crew. Knapps is crashing and burning.

KNAPPS

I dunno, honey. You've been involved
in a pretty serious accident --

MARLIE

Always hated that car.

But there's something about this girl that's bothering Destin.

The Motorbike Cop drives up.

MOTORBIKE COP

(To Clint)

I called in some trailers and heavy
lifting gear. But they won't get here
'til morning.

CLINT

My boys will get started now, clear
what we can.

MOTORBIKE COP

Appreciate it. We got a roadblock set
up on the other side of that hill. I'm
going to put one on the northbound,
about a mile out. I owe you guys a
beer!

He roars away on his motorbike. While everyone's attention is on
the Cop, Marlie vanishes.

KNAPPS

Where did she go?

40 YARDS AWAY, CONSTRUCTION SITE

Marlie's trying the handles of the parked cars, the undamaged
vehicles that belong to the Bridge Crew. For some reason she's
desperate to get off the bridge.

She stops, sensing danger.

And sure enough, three figures emerge from the shadows. Where
they've been biding their time.

WADE JUNIOR -- 24, one degree off handsome -- advances on
Marlie. Followed by:

SKEETER -- a string of gristle.

And

FLECK -- all razor-rash and flaming red hair.

Marlie retreats back to the center of the bridge.

WADE JUNIOR

Marlie!

The men pursue her...

EXT. THE PILEUP -- NIGHT

Destin's antennae prick up as the three men approach. Sees the panicked look on Marlie's face.

KNAPPS

There you are.

Marlie put herself right back in the Bridge Crew's camp, getting close to Knapps.

Wade Junior steps up.

WADE JUNIOR

Thank god you're okay.

MARLIE

Stay away from me.

WADE JUNIOR

Let's get you home.

MARLIE

Fuck you, Wade.

Wade Junior shrugs apologetically at Knapps.

WADE JUNIOR

Wife. We got some issues.

Wade stretches out his hand, heavy gold chain dangling on his wrist.

WADE JUNIOR (CONT'D)

Come on, baby. Don't be like that.

SKEETER

Just get her out of here.

Wade grabs Marlie, dragging her away -- when Knapps gets in his face.

KNAPPS

Ain't you got the message? She don't wanna go with you.

WADE JUNIOR

Butt out, cowboy.

Destin senses that this could get very ugly, very fast.

Then he sees Wade's belt buckle -- a Dixie battle flag with a death's-head skull. Skeeter and Fleck are wearing identical belt buckles.

DESTIN

(to Knapps)

Man's right. This is none of our business.

KNAPPS

Maybe not yours. But where I come from, we don't allow shitbirds to treat a lady like that.

SKEETER

You ain't hearing us.

Skeeter pulls a Smith and Wesson from his waistband, pointing it between Knapps' eyes.

Wade Junior and Fleck pull identical S&W handguns, zeroing them on the startled Bridge Crew.

Clint comes out of the office to see what the commotion is -- takes one look at the gunmen and dives back in.

FLECK

I got him.

Fleck charges through into the site office --

INT. SITE OFFICE -- NIGHT

-- Where Clint is frantically dialling 911 on his cellphone.

Fleck shakes his head, cocking the hammer.

EXT. THE PILEUP

Wade grabs Marlie --

WADE JUNIOR

We need a little talk.

-- And takes her out of earshot.

Fleck marches Clint out of the site office at gunpoint.

FLECK
(to Skeeter)
He was going for his phone.

SKEETER
Chuck it in the river.

Fleck tosses the phone over the safety rail.

SKEETER (CONT'D)
(to the Bridge Crew)
You guys too. Give 'em up.

DESTIN
They don't have phones. Against the
rules.

Skeeter clocks Destin's prison uniform.

SKEETER
Fuck you come from?

Destin plays subservient, averting his eyes.

DESTIN
Work release.

SKEETER
I ain't got no beef with you. Just
stay outta my way.

DESTIN
I intend to.

Knapps shakes his head at Destin in disgust. Seeing him as a
collaborator.

They all hear Wade Junior raising his voice at Marlie.

He's roughly shaking her. She suddenly shouts out --

MARLIE
My name's Marlie Stewart!

Wade tries -- and fails -- to clamp his hand over her mouth --

MARLIE (CONT'D)
I'm a dancer at the Ocean Club in
Biloxi!

SKEETER
Now why did she have to go and do
that?

DESTIN
They didn't hear dick.

SKEETER
Wish I could believe you.

Skeeter signals to Fleck to get himself ready.

It dawns on Hector what's about to go down.

HECTOR
...They're going to kill us.

Skeeter and Fleck take up firing positions...

The Bridge Crew stand shoulder to shoulder, facing the threat.

Destin reacts very differently, apparently pleading for his life with Fleck, the youngest gunman.

DESTIN
Please, don't do this, I got a four
year old kid.

FLECK
Stand with the others.

DESTIN
I won't say nothing.

FLECK
Get back!

Destin shuffles another foot closer.

FLECK (CONT'D)
I said --

Destin launches a DEVASTATING ATTACK.

-- he SMACKS the ball of his left palm under Fleck's chin,
SNAPPING BACK the guy's head.

As Fleck staggers, Destin follows up with two rapid RIGHT HOOKS
to his kidneys.

The Smith & Wesson goes flying...

...Destin keeps moving and is on Skeeter in a flash, DRIVING his
steel-capped boot into Skeeter's knee, unbalancing him.

Before the weasel can shoot him, Destin TWISTS Skeeter's arm,
wrenching the gun from his hand.

SKEETER
 (to Wade Junior)
 Shoot him --

Destin smacks the gun barrel into Skeeter's teeth, flooring him.

Only Wade Junior left now. His one gun against the seven- strong Bridge Crew. And Destin, whose lethal display of violence has scared the hell out of everyone.

Destin aims Skeeter's Smith & Wesson at Wade Junior.

DESTIN
 DROP IT.

Wade vacillates...and Knapps jumps on him, disarming him.

Clint retrieves Fleck's gun, leaving Destin and the Bridge Crew three guns to the good.

MARLIE
 (to Destin)
 I owe you twice.

DESTIN
 I didn't do it for you.

WADE JUNIOR
 You're making a big mistake.

KNAPPS
 Shut up.

Marlie flashes Wade Junior a humorless smile.

MARLIE
 Yeah. Shut up, *baby*.

She turns on her heels, intent on leaving. But Clint grabs her.

CLINT
 Sit your ass down. You got some explaining to do.

PRUITT
 When that cop say he was coming back?

CLINT
 He didn't.

Destin's got other things on his mind.

DESTIN
 (to Wade Junior)
 You guys on your own? Any more buddies
 on the way?

SKEETER
 Screw you.

Knapps kicks his boot into Skeeter's leg.

KNAPPS
 Man asked you a question.

CLINT
 Easy does it.
 (to Merryweather)
 There's a police roadblock on the
 other side of that hill. Can you get
 your truck out, bring over the cop?

MERRYWEATHER
 No problem.

Merryweather's pulling out his key fob when --

HECTOR
 Chill your wheels, Merry. Cavalry's
 here.

EXT. NORTH SIDE OF THE RIVER -- NIGHT

A MISSISSIPPI HIGHWAY PATROL CAR arrives on the north side of
 the bridge.

EXT. THE PILEUP -- NIGHT

Relief on the faces of the Bridge Crew.

Knapps and Clint keep their guns trained on the prisoners.

Destin wipes his prints off Skeeter's gun and drops it like it
 was a disease.

Unseen by the others, Marlie picks up the discarded gun and
 shoves it down the back of her shorts.

EXT. NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

The Patrol Car comes to a stop, halting at the barrier of the
 jackknifed McDonalds truck.

The police driver (TRAVIS) stays at the wheel, letting his partner (LENNOX) jump out.

Lennox treks across the empty expanse of bridge towards the middle...

Destin is relieved as anyone. He takes a couple of steps forward.

DESTIN
We got a situation here --

LENNOX
STAY WHERE YOU ARE!

Lennox aims a shotgun, stopping Destin in his tracks.

LENNOX (CONT'D)
Don't you move, boy!

Marlie suddenly pulls the gun from her shorts and OPENS FIRE at the cop.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

Destin tackles Marlie, pulling her behind a JEEP CHEROKEE.

EXT. BEHIND THE JEEP CHEROKEE -- NIGHT

Destin grabs the gun off Marlie, screams into her face --

DESTIN
What are you doing?!

MARLIE
He's on the Dixie payroll!

Destin twigs.

Then -- BOOM!

A shotgun BLAST tears through the Jeep's windshield, peppering Destin and Marlie with flying glass.

EXT. THE PILEUP, BRIDGE -- NIGHT

The Bridge Workers dive for cover. Neither Knapps nor Clint willing to trade lead with a cop.

But the prisoners use the distraction to escape -- Ward, Fleck and Skeeter scuttling away through the maze of crashed cars.

EXT. BEHIND THE JEEP CHEROKEE -- NIGHT

BOOM! Another shotgun blast hits the Jeep.

Destin hears Lennox chamber another round. Can see his boots approaching on the other side of the vehicle.

Destin has got the Smith & Wesson in his hands. But if he shoots this cop...

Destin pockets the handgun, scrambles under the Jeep...

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE JEEP

...And comes up on the other side, smashing into the burly cop, wrestling the shotgun from his hands.

Lennox kicks free -- but Destin has got the drop on him.

Lennox's face screws up in terror.

...Destin lifts the shotgun --

DESTIN
Get outta here.

Lennox flees, running back down the bridge.

MARLIE
You should have killed him.

Destin eyeballs her...she feels a shiver of fear, as if she'd just seen a glimpse of the devil himself.

He grabs her hand, marches her back toward the others.

EXT. SITE OFFICE -- NIGHT

The Bridge Crew can't believe what they've witnessed.

CLINT
What the hell just happened?

DESTIN
Cops are in on it. They're working with the Dixies.

KNAPPS
Who?

Destin is still pissed Marlie held out on him.

DESTIN

Tell them.

MARLIE

...Wade and his guys. They're Dixie Mob.

The name means nothing to the law-abiding citizens.

DESTIN

Run out of Biloxi. Own most of the clubs and casinos on the Gulf Coast. Seems they got a sweet interest in Marlie, here.

Destin checks the shotgun. No shells, damnit.

KNAPPS

I thought that asshole was your husband?

MARLIE

Asshole is my husband. I'm trying to leave him. But he don't want me gone.

Marlie gives the guys her most earnest look.

MARLIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry you guys got caught up in all this.

She's not feeling the love from Knapps any more.

EXT. SOUTH END OF THE PILEUP -- NIGHT

Ward Junior and his fellow gangsters get back to their car, a top of the range TOYOTA HIGHLANDER. They waste no time in rearming themselves with Remington pump action shotguns and extra ammo.

Wade Junior's loading shells into a Glock handgun when his cellphone buzzes.

The caller I.D says: 'POP'.

WADE JUNIOR

We'd better un-fuck this situation real fast.

He dare not answer it.

EXT. SITE OFFICE -- NIGHT

With the north end blocked by the two cops, Destin turns to the south approach road, looking for signs of the enemy.

PRUITT

Maybe we should just...let them talk to her.

KNAPPS

Pru'!

PRUITT

This ain't our fight!

DESTIN

We've seen their faces, we're witnesses. Handing her over buys us nothing.

KNAPPS

Fucking noble of you.

DESTIN

You guys do what you want. I'm outta here.

EXT. SOUTH END OF THE PILEUP -- NIGHT

Wade, Skeeter and Fleck are creeping their way through the maze of crashed cars, moving from one vehicle to the next...

EXT. CRASHED CARS, MIDDLE OF THE PILEUP -- NIGHT

Destin and the Crew are getting ready to haul ass down the south walkway...when Destin spots movement by one of the crashed cars.

BOOM! The first shotgun salvo comes flying in.

The Bridge Crew hit the deck.

More shotgun blasts echo out, impacting around them.

Destin feels the cold steel of the Smith & Wesson revolver in his hands -- tempted to use it -- but, for whatever reason, Destin continues to keep his powder dry.

Unlike Clint and Knapps, who blast away with their respective handguns. Wildly off target.

EXT. OVER HEAD SHOT DOWN ONTO THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

GUN FLASHES light up the sky as the two sides trade volleys.

It's like a western shoot-out; staccato blasts punctuated with silence as the combatants duck and move.

But unlike the Bridge Crew, Wade Junior and his boys are experienced. They gain ground, advancing from car to car, blasting with their shotguns, rapidly reloading.

EXT. CRASHED CARS, MIDDLE OF THE PILEUP -- NIGHT

Knapps is using up way too much ammunition, firing blindly.

DESTIN

You're not gonna hit 'em like that.

KNAPPS

I don't see you taking any shots.

True enough.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)

If you're too chicken to use it, give
it to someone --

Another SALVO takes off a wing mirror above Knapps' head.

A few yards to his left, Rod and Clint are hemmed in behind another car.

Rod -- powerless with no gun -- scoots back from his position just as a bullet hits the exact spot he was sheltering in.

He clocks Clint, and they exchange a crazed look of 'that was close'.

ROD

Luck be a lady tonight.

The next instant, another bullet ricochets right past Rod and strikes Clint high in the chest.

ROD (CONT'D)

CLINT!

Clint crumples, blood mushrooming through his shirt.

Knapps sees his boss is down.

KNAPPS

Get in the office!

Hector rushes to help Rod, the two men scooping Clint up in their arms.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)
EVERYONE BACK!

DESTIN
-- We'll get boxed in!

Nobody's listening. They all flee into the site office. Leaving Destin out on his own.

He's desperate to get out of here, looking to make a solo run down the walkway -- but here comes Skeeter, blasting away with his Remington.

Destin retreats to the site office. Shotgun pellets ripping around him...

INT. SITE OFFICE -- NIGHT

Destin slams the door. Takes stock of a worsening situation.

Everyone's on the deck, staying low as the Dixie gunmen go for the windows, BLOWING IN the glass and woodwork.

Knapps and Gorm have taken up positions under the windows, but dare not pop up to take a shot.

Destin goes over to check on Clint, who is in a critical condition.

Rod's trying to stem the flow of blood that's bubbling out of his chest, applying pressure on the wound.

ROD
(to Destin)
We gotta get him to hospital.

Destin avoids eye contact.

Clint groans in pain, more blood pumping out of his chest.

ROD (CONT'D)
Hang on, boss.

Rod's eyes scan the office --

ROD (CONT'D)
Medikit. In here somewhere...
(to Destin)
Just keep the pressure on!

By default, Destin finds himself at Clint's side, keeping pressure on his chest wound.

ANOTHER BARRAGE OF SHOTGUN FIRE hits the office.

Everyone is shit-scared, although Knapps hides his fear with bravado.

KNAPPS

We can do these bastards, Gorm!

Knapps summons the courage to stand and fire his handgun out of the window, Gorm inspired to do the same.

GORM

You hit anyone?

No chance.

Clint, now lying in a pool of blood, lifts his hand to Destin's face, pulling him in close.

CLINT

Get my crew off the bridge. You hear me?

DESTIN

Take it easy, chief.

Clint's fingers grip onto Destin's arm.

CLINT

Knapps has got a big heart. Balls, too.

He smiles through the pain.

CLINT (CONT'D)

But they need you.

He's becoming delirious, the pain taking him away.

CLINT (CONT'D)

I seen your record. Destin...Ryder...

Clint's fingers open up, loosening around Destin's arm.

Rod crawls over, having successfully located a basic first aid kit.

But his optimism fades on seeing the Chief's glassy eyes.
Clint's dead.

INT. THE SITE OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

SHOTGUN BLASTS continue to pepper the windows of the site office. Glass breaks. Frames splinter.

Destin scans the faces of the people trapped in here with him. The Bridge Crew may be a tough outfit, but this situation is way beyond their skillset.

Destin slows his breathing, focussing on the problem at hand.

Finally, he raises his voice, addressing them *as if he were their leader*.

DESTIN

Ammo check. What'cha got?

Nobody answers.

DESTIN (CONT'D)

Are you paying attention yet? If you don't start listening, you're all gonna die.

Knapps bristles at Destin's tone but checks his gun --

KNAPPS

Three rounds.

GORM

I got two.

DESTIN

Only shoot what you can kill.

If Knapps feels chastened for not listening earlier, he's not about to admit it.

DESTIN (CONT'D)

We stay in here, we're gonna get slaughtered.

All eyes on Destin. Knapps is watching *very closely*.

DESTIN (CONT'D)

We bust out. Shoot our way off the bridge while we still can.

KNAPPS

The moment we step out of that door...

DESTIN

Who said anything about the door?

Destin crawls over to --

THE TOOL STORE, REAR OF THE OFFICE

Racked up: welding gear, cutting saws, ropes and harnesses.
Destin fires up an OXYACETYLENE TORCH and goes to work --

Burning a hole in the corrugated iron wall at the back of the site office.

Knapps hustles over and fires up a second torch, helping Destin to complete the exit hatch.

EXT. SITE OFFICE -- NIGHT

Destin's boot kicks out the completed exit hatch.

INT. SITE OFFICE -- NIGHT

Destin calls out to Gorm --

DESTIN

When I tap on the side, shoot off both your rounds.

GORM

I thought you said --

KNAPPS

Just do it.

Destin and Knapps crawl out through the hole they've made.

EXT. BACK OF THE SITE OFFICE -- NIGHT

Destin picks up the rectangle of metal, offering it to Knapps.

DESTIN

Use it as a shield.

KNAPPS

I don't need it.

DESTIN

You're on point.

KNAPPS

And how do I hold my gun?

DESTIN
I'll do the shooting. Gimme your gun.

KNAPPS
No way.

DESTIN
Will you just trust me a minute?

Well that's the problem.

DESTIN (CONT'D)
Once they bring in backup, your crew
ain't walking off this bridge.
(beat)
And I've seen your shooting.

It takes a cosmic level of self-control for Knapps to hand over his weapon.

KNAPPS
Fuck this up, I'll kill you.

Destin grins, dangerously calm.

DESTIN
You?

EXT. SIDE OF THE SITE OFFICE -- NIGHT

Destin and Knapps edge forward, their backs against the wall.

Knapps is on point with the corrugated iron shield, Destin right behind him, a Smith & Wesson 625 in either hand.

As they advance, they get a glimpse of the men besieging them: Wade Junior, Skeeter and Fleck -- who have all taken up positions behind the crashed cars, their guns trained on the front of the site office.

Destin taps Knapps on the shoulder, putting him on standby.

Knapps nods back, mouth dry. *This is it.*

Destin knocks his fist twice on the wall of the site office.

INT. SITE OFFICE -- NIGHT

Marlie screams at Gorm --

MARLIE
GO!

Gorm stands up and fires his two rounds through the side window.

EXT. SMASHED UP CARS, MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

The Dixies turn their shotguns on Gorm's window, blasting away with all they've got.

But as they stop to reload --

DESTIN

NOW!

Knapps and Destin charge the Dixies, using the iron shield as body armor.

The Dixies are caught napping.

Seeing the two maniacs coming at them, Wade fumbles his reload, dropping shells.

Skeeter turns and fires...KERPOOM!

A storm of leadshot scatters out. Hitting Knapps' shield.

A SYMPHONY OF PINGS.

But Destin and Knapps keep charging.

Fleck aims his shotgun at the attackers' feet, which are not covered by the improvised shield.

His finger is squeezing on the trigger when --

BAM! Destin pops out and shoots Fleck, center body mass.

ONE SHOT. ONE KILL.

Destin wheels his guns on Wade Junior -- and the guy ducks and runs.

Destin readjusts, sighting on Skeeter.

BAM! Destin's second bullet shreds Skeeter's ear.

Destin moves closer, forcing Skeeter to abandon his position and retreat back to the north end of the bridge -- JUST AS DESTIN PLANNED.

Knapps drops the shield, scoops up Fleck's shotgun.

EXT. MCDONALDS TRUCK, NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE

Skeeter and Wade shelter behind the jackknifed McDonalds Truck.

Skeeter's in agony, using the Truck's side mirror to check out his bullet-shredded ear.

LENNOX

Impressive, fellas. You might have run
the other way.

Wade and Skeeter realize their mistake -- the south end of the bridge is now *wide open*.

EXT. SITE OFFICE -- NIGHT

Destin rallies the troops.

DESTIN

Everybody out!

The site office door bursts open, Gorm storming out, swiftly followed by Marlie, Pruitt, Rod and Merryweather.

Hector's lingering by the door.

HECTOR

What about the Chief? We can't just
leave him.

KNAPPS

He's dead, Hec'. We gotta go. RIGHT
NOW.

EXT. THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Destin, Marlie and the Bridge Crew make their break for the south end of the bridge; arms and legs pumping, chests heaving.

KNAPPS

Come on Merry, you can do it.

Knapps and Destin grab an arm each, pushing old man Merryweather on.

MERRYWEATHER

I got it.

They're about 100 yards from the end of the bridge, when --

HEADLIGHTS explode into view, a convoy of vehicles coming down the south approach road. *Fast*.

DESTIN

Hold it!

...FLATBED TRUCKS, six of them, carrying more than two dozen gun-toting DIXIE GANGSTERS.

Marlie stares at the vehicles, face lit up with dread. There's only one direction to go now.

DESTIN (CONT'D)

Everyone back to the site.

Now it's a race to get back to the middle of the bridge.

EXT. SOUTH END OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

The Dixie Gunslingers pile out of the trucks, ready for war.

They're armed with an assortment of weapons -- battlefield M4A fully-auto carbines, short stock AR-15s, "spray and pray" UZIs...

EXT. PILEUP SITE, MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Destin and the Crew take cover by the pileup of cars in front of the site office.

HECTOR

Maybe we could swim for it.

ROD

Hec' -- there's a reason this bridge is a suicide hotspot.

Lungs burning, they all to look Destin. *Now what?*

Destin's desperately trying to plot a solution, turning to the north end of the bridge -- which is blocked by the crippled McDonalds delivery truck and manned by Wade Junior, Skeeter and the two dirty Cops.

KNAPPS

We take my pickup, ram our way through them...

DESTIN

Not through that truck.

ROD

McFucked.

Worse than that: more Dixie vehicles are now arriving at the north end of the bridge. The jaws of the trap are slamming shut at both ends.

Hector starts to scramble back towards the site office.

DESTIN

Here's where we hold the line.

The voice of authority stops the teenager in his tracks.

DESTIN (CONT'D)

There's a bus coming at six A.M. If I'm not on it, the driver's gonna alert the SORT team. They'll storm this bridge. And whatever these Dixie boys *think* they got -- SORT will tear them apart.

Hector checks his watch. It's 2 A.M.

HECTOR

Six O'clock? We ain't gonna last six minutes.

Destin casts his eyes over the pileup of crashed vehicles.

DESTIN

We got a coupla minutes to dig in. Put up some barricades with these vehicles. Defend them.

Knapps reasserts his authority.

KNAPPS

Circle wagons. Let's do it!

Knapps gets behind the wheel of one of the crashed cars. Gorm pushes it into position -- the first section of a barricade on the south side...

Destin pops the hood of another vehicle.

HECTOR

We ain't got the guns, we ain't got the ammo...

Destin yanks out the hose from the engine coolant reservoir.

DESTIN

Plenty of ways to hurt a man, Hector; you just gotta get creative. There's a bunch of coke bottles in the kitchen. Go get 'em.

Destin moves round the side of the car, unscrews the fuel cap and feeds the length of hose into the gas tank.

Hector gets it, grins, SPRINTS toward the site office.

EXT. NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

A CADILLAC ESCALADE arrives. The Dixie Gang boss steps out, Cuban Heel Boots tapping tarmac.

WADE SENIOR. A small man with a rattlesnake temperament that adds inches. His most prominent feature -- remorseless, coal-gray eyes.

Wade Senior inspires fear in his men. Even his son.

WADE JUNIOR

We got it all under control, pa.

WADE SENIOR

You should have waited, like I said. Officers, we need some working room. Make sure none of your brethren come within a mile of this bridge.

Travis bridles at the way this criminal is giving them orders. Lennox has to steer him away from the Dixie head honcho.

LENNOX

Let's just get it done.

Wade Senior addresses his men.

WADE SENIOR

I want that bitch alive. No witnesses.

About a quarter of a mile away --

EXT. MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

The Bridge Crew rush to complete the barricade of crashed cars -- an impromptu defensive wall which encircles the site office. Their last redoubt.

Hector runs out of the office with a crate of coke bottles, taking them to the north barricade --

EXT. NORTH BARRICADE -- NIGHT

-- where Destin is sucking on his makeshift siphoning hose, liberating fuel...which he feeds into the coke bottles...and hands to --

MARLIE

Who rips up a shirt into strips, making 'fuses'.

Factory line. Bottle. Fuel. Fuse.

INTERCUT:

EXT. NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

The Dixie soldiers come ON FOOT round the sides of the crashed 18-wheeler, trooping up the road towards the Bridge Crew's position.

Safeties FLICK OFF. Ammo clips SNAP IN.

WADE SENIOR
(into his cell phone)
Move up.

EXT. SOUTH END OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

-- The DIXIE LIEUTENANT on the receiving end of Wade's call gives the nod to his men -- who start to advance, CREEPING up the roadway towards the south barricade.

EXT. NORTH BARRICADE -- NIGHT

Destin rapidly distributes MOLOTOV COCKTAILS to Pruitt and Gorm, giving the lion's share to the big man.

DESTIN
Stick that in your golden arm.

Gorm grips a Molotov in his meaty fist, testing the weight.

Destin hands Marlie a Zippo.

DESTIN (CONT'D)
Keep them lit.
(to Rod & Hector)
You guys feed.

Destin scoots off, joining Knapps and Merryweather on the south barricade.

EXT. SOUTH BARRICADE -- NIGHT

Merryweather's armed himself with a monkey wrench. Knapps is counting out the shells from Fleck's captured shotgun.

KNAPPS
(to Destin)
I got eight.

Destin still has four rounds in his two Smith & Wessons. *And that's it.*

DESTIN
Stay down until the last minute.
They're gonna presume we scared.

MERRYWEATHER
They're gonna be right.

Knapps RACKS his captured shotgun.

KNAPPS
Let 'em come.

Clint was right about Knapps -- he does have balls of steel. Just as well...

The Dixie Mafia open up on both sides, firing HUNDREDS of rounds into the Bridge Crew's position behind the cars.

Mayhem.

Bullets RATTLE into the barricade of vehicles, PUNCTURING windows and doors, POCKMARKING both the exteriors and --

INTERIORS OF THE CARS

Bullets SHRED HEADRESTS, a STEERING WHEEL gets it, a CHILDREN'S CAR SEAT, a set of DVD entertainment SCREENS...

EXT. SOUTH APPROACH ROAD, BRIDGE -- NIGHT

The Dixies continue to hose down the Bridge's Crew position, moving in. They're only 10 yards from the south barricade now, led by a DUDE WITH A STETSON, who's got his weapon on fully auto --

EXT. SOUTH BARRICADE -- NIGHT

The deafening SOUND of incoming bullets, HITTING metal.

DESTIN
(shouting to Knapps)
Dude with the Stetson. Cover me.

On that, Destin hurls himself OVER the trunk of a car and shoots the Dude with the Stetson...and the DIXIE SHOOTER next to him.

Collective SHOCK on the faces of the Dixies turns to FEAR as Knapps pops up and lets fly with the Remington twelve gauge.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The Dixies finally show some respect, hitting the deck.

...and Knapps finally hits the target, blasting the nearest Dixie full in the chest, killing him.

Destin quickly harvests his targets' automatic weapons: an M-4 carbine, an AR-15 and two extra ammo clips -- then dives back over the barricade, pursued by a STORM OF RETURN FIRE.

EXT. SOUTH BARRICADE -- NIGHT

Destin gets snug with the dead dude's M-4 carbine, switching the selector on his pilfered weapon to single shot.

DESTIN
Now we got some skin in the game.

Destin lets rip.

EXT. SOUTH APPROACH ROAD -- NIGHT

The Dixies sheltering on the tarmac get decimated -- Destin lethally accurate, scoring hits on the heads and shoulders of the prone men.

The tally for his first five shots: three kills, one wounded.

Only one round misses and that carves a hole in the tarmac, a bare inch from the face of the lucky Dixie...who scrambles back.

The return fire from the Dixies is a lot less enthusiastic now -- they're lying flat, firing wildly, some of them not even looking up as they pull the trigger.

EXT. SOUTH BARRICADE -- NIGHT

Destin plugs another two Dixie Shooters, causing panic to break out in their ranks.

Knapps and Merryweather stare at Destin. *Who is this guy?*

Merryweather makes a grab for the AR-15 rifle that Destin brought in.

MERRYWEATHER

I'll back up Gorm.

But Destin's not sharing these assault rifles with anyone.

DESTIN

Boy's doing just fine.

EXT. NORTH BARRICADE -- NIGHT

That's an understatement.

Gorm is *tormenting* the Dixies on the northern approach road, unleashing the Molotov cocktails with unerring accuracy, driving the enemy back.

EXT. ON THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

The gasoline-filled bottles EXPLODE on impact, SPEWING burning hot liquid over the attackers, turning the Dixie Gunmen into HUMAN FIREBALLS.

EXT. SOUTH BARRICADE -- NIGHT

Rod, Hector and Marlie are running a slick operation, lighting and supplying the Molotovs, keeping Gorm's golden arm in business.

EXT. NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Wade Senior watches impassively as his men retreat on both sides of the bridge.

Officer Lennox summons up the balls to approach him.

LENNOX

I'm not sure this situation is containable.

WADE SENIOR

You taken care of the cops on the roadblock?

LENNOX

Yeah. We sent them home.

TRAVIS

What if someone turns up who won't go home?

WADE SENIOR

Make sure you persuade them, or I will.

Lennox puts his hands up, backing off.

TRAVIS

(in a low voice)
Sonofabitch.

LENNOX

Tell him how you feel. Be my guest.

TRAVIS

Maybe I will.

LENNOX

We've taken his money, fucked his whores. That don't come for free.

End of discussion.

AHEAD OF THEM

Wade Senior trains his eyes on the bridge, premeditating his next move. He turns to Skeeter.

WADE SENIOR

Bring in the Swampman.

EXT. SOUTH BARRICADE -- NIGHT

Destin scuttles over to congratulate the defenders on the south barricade, pressing knuckles with big Gorm.

GORM

We kicked their Dixie asses.

DESTIN

You done good.

MARLIE

They're not giving up.

Destin observes Marlie, watching her fear.

DESTIN

They must want you real bad.

MARLIE

Me and Wade Senior...we had some problems.

DESTIN

Like what?

Marlie flushes, turning her eyes away from Destin.

MARLIE

...He beat me, okay?

DESTIN

Did Junior know?

MARLIE

I never told him.

She shakes her head.

MARLIE (CONT'D)

Him and his daddy..they got a messed up relationship. It would have killed Wade Junior.

DESTIN

So you didn't tell Junior, because you were worried about his feelings?

MARLIE

I got payback. That's why I had to run.

Destin can sense there's a lot more to this. But lets it drop.
For now.

EXT. SOUTH RIDGE, OVERLOOKING THE RIVER VALLEY -- NIGHT

A battered GMC PICKUP grinds to a halt on a hill overlooking the south bank of the Mississippi.

A hunter disembarks. A man-mountain in hunting bib overalls.

"THE SWAMPMAN"

Of French Creole descent, it's impossible to tell his age -- a heavy beard and streaks of camouflage cream conceal his features. Somewhere in there, a pair of eyes. Maybe a soul.

SOUTH RIDGE

The Swampman lies down, zeroing his weapon -- an X-BOLT BROWNING; a rifle with enough stopping power to bring down a bear.

From his elevated position, The Swampman can see down into the defenders' encampment. There's plenty of activity down there...

EXT. INSIDE THE BARRICADES, MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE

Destin and the Crew MOVE FAST, shoring up their defenses, working in pairs to carry steel girders to the barricades, plugging gaps in the automobile 'walls'.

Destin and Gorm are partnered up, dragging an eight-foot steel girder over to the north barricade.

DESTIN

I hear you nearly made the NFL draft.
Tough break.

GORM

Near miss. All that money, pretty ladies -- would have corrupted my soul.

SWAMPMAN'S POV, VIA NIGHTSCOPE

The Swampman has a clear line of sight on the north barricade and the area around it. Anybody in that zone is totally exposed.

Who to kill first? Rod or Pruitt, Gorm or Destin?

The crosshairs hover.

EXT. NORTH BARRICADE

Gorm and Destin slide the girder into position.

DESTIN

You could have earned millions.

GORM

Fuck money, man. I got everything I need on this bridge.

EXT. ON THE SOUTH RIDGE

The sniper's gloved finger squeezes on the trigger.

EXT. RIVER VALLEY

THE RIFLE SHOT echoes out over the river valley. The bullet traveling the half mile distance to the bridge in just under a second.

EXT. BY THE NORTH BARRICADE

Destin and Gorm are on their way back to the girder stack when --

The bullet HITS Pruitt in the right eye, CORKSCREWING through his head...and BLASTING an exit hole out of the back of his skull.

Rod gawps, stooping to catch his fallen comrade.

CRACK! A second shot passes straight through a fold in Rod's jacket, missing his vital organs by millimeters. Bang goes another of his nine lives.

DESTIN

Get down!

The Bridge Crew instinctively dive down behind the nearest barricade...unaware that the threat is coming FROM ABOVE.

EXT. NORTH BARRICADE/SOUTH BARRICADE

Destin and Gorm shelter behind the north barricade. Also exposed here: Merryweather and Hector.

DESTIN

Anyone see the shooter?

Knapps signals "no". He's behind the "safe" south barricade, shielding Marlie's body.

Everyone's looking for the sniper...

CRACK! Shot three almost rips off Gorm's shoulder, spinning him round.

This time Destin sees a MUZZLE FLASH.

DESTIN (CONT'D)

(shouting to Hector and
Merryweather)

Up on the hill. MOVE.

Hector and Merryweather are still hunkering down behind the north barricade, unaware their backs are totally exposed...

EXT. THE SOUTH RIDGE

QUICK FINGERS release the catch on the X-bolt's magazine.

The three-round mag drops out, the Swampman deftly clicking another into place. The whole change in two seconds.

EXT. NORTH BARRICADE

Destin yanks Hector and Merryweather to their feet.

DESTIN

We're dead meat here! Behind the other wall.

Now they get it, pell-melling it across to the south barricade, where the sniper can't see them.

Destin's going back for Gorm when --

The big man gets hit again, the bullet RIPPING through his thigh muscle.

Gorm cries out, his lungs releasing a blood-curdling SCREAM.

EXT. NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE

Wade Senior and his mob listen in.

WADE SENIOR

You hear that, gentlemen? *The sound of
payback.*

That lifts the Dixies, who cheer on every SHOT.

SWAMPMAN'S P.O.V, THROUGH SNIPER SCOPE

The Swampman continues to track his rifle across the killzone.

He can see the agony on Gorm's face, his mouth caught in a rictus of pain. It would be so easy to put the big man out of his misery.

But the Swampman aims his crosshairs a few inches to the right of the target --

NORTH BARRICADE

CRACK! The bullet impacts near Gorm's head. A deliberate miss.

SOUTH BARRICADE

Knapps is going crazy, desperate to bring Gorm in.

Destin bodychecks him, stopping him from going out and getting himself killed.

DESTIN

They're using him as bait!

Knapps seems to relent. But then scrambles out again -- only to get jumped on by Merryweather and Hector, who pin him down.

SWAMPMAN'S P.O.V, VIA HIS RIFLE SCOPE

The Swampman tracks his rifle over the killzone, lying in wait for the rescue team.

When no one comes...he shoots another bullet into Gorm's upper torso.

The Swampman speaks via a bluetooth headset.

THE SWAMPMAN

The door's open.

There isn't a single defender on the north barricade now.

DOWN ON THE BRIDGE, SOUTH BARRICADE

Knapps and the others are being eaten up with guilt and rage.

KNAPPS

(to Destin)

When this is over, I swear I'm gonna kill you.

It might be over a lot sooner than he thinks.

MARLIE

Destin.

-- Through the shattered car windows of the north barricade, they can see the Dixies advancing up the bridge.

And as long as that north barricade remains undefended --

DESTIN

They're gonna overrun us.

Panic.

EXT. NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE

The Dixies are cautious at first -- sticking to the shadows at the sides of the road, ducking behind the cover of abandoned vehicles.

But with the Bridge Crew's guns failing to open up, they grow more and more confident...

EXT. SOUTH BARRICADE

Gorm's still screaming, left out to die. Knapps is going mental.

MERRYWEATHER

(to Destin)

If we tease him out, can you hit him?

DESTIN

Not from this range. He's dug in, we're blind...

Destin has a crazy idea, his eyes zeroing in on a busted up SHOGUN 4x4. There's a spare tire hanging off the back.

Destin rips the spare tire down and grabs a Molotov, dousing the tire in gasoline...

DESTIN (CONT'D)

Zippo!

Marlie throws it.

Destin FLIPS OPEN the Zippo and LIGHTS the tire.

Flames burst up, hungrily eating the rubber, creating a PLUME OF BLACK SMOKE...

Destin's already opening the tailgate of a STATION WAGON, looking for a second spare tire.

The smoke BILLOWS UP, galvanizing Knapps, who quickly cottons on.

KNAPPS

C'mon!

He follows Destin's lead, ransacking car trunks for their spare tires.

With the Dixie mobsters now advancing in earnest on the north barricade, the Bridge Crew have to act fast, salvaging tires, lining them up, setting them alight, creating...

...A CURTAIN OF SMOKE, rising above the south barricade.

EXT. SOUTH RIDGE

The Swampman struggles to zero his weapon.

The smokescreen is completely obscuring his view of the targets.

EXT. SOUTH BARRICADE

Knapps collars Destin.

KNAPPS

I'll get Gorm. You deal with the
Dixies.

(shouting out)

Hang in there, bud. I'm coming!

Knapps darts out under the smokescreen.

Destin shoves his Ar-15 into Merryweather's hands.

DESTIN

You know how this works?

MERRYWEATHER

Son, I was born in Mississippi.

Destin and Merryweather charge back to the north barricade.

EXT. NORTH APPROACH ROAD, THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

The Dixies start opening fire with all weapons, danger-close.

...They're fifteen feet from the north barricade --

When Destin and Merryweather pop up behind it -- and OPEN FIRE,
cutting them down with a wall of lead.

100 YARDS FURTHER BACK, WALKWAY

Wade Senior and Skeeter are forced to take cover behind a
stanchion post.

WADE SENIOR

How the fuck...?

SKEETER

It's the convict. He's got 'em
organized.

WADE SENIOR
What convict?

SKEETER
 Some guy out on work release.

WADE SENIOR
*You didn't think to mention this
 before?*

Skeeter finds himself on the wrong end of those coal black eyes.

Wade dials a number on his cellphone.

WADE SENIOR (CONT'D)
 (into the phone)
 Lennox, I got a job for you.

EXT. BEHIND THE NORTH BARRICADE

The Bridge Crew breathe a collective sigh of relief as the last Dixies pull back.

MERRYWEATHER
 Close call.

Destin checks his magazine, counting out the remaining bullets -- only three rounds left. Then his face drops.

A FEW FEET AWAY

Knapps is cradling his friend's body. Big Gorm's dead.

Knapps looks up at Destin, eyes burning.

MERRYWEATHER
 (to Knapps)
 There's nothin' any of us could have
 done. Con called right. You wanna get
 mad? The enemy's out there.

Merryweather nods his head at Destin. Grudging respect.

They're all red-eyed from the smoke, smeared with dirt, keyed-up with adrenalin.

Six left now: Merryweather and Knapps, Hector and Rod, Destin...and the woman who caused all the trouble. Marlie.

Rod is pulling at the bullet hole in his jacket, jumpy as hell.

ROD
 Pru' took the bullet with my name on
 it. Just like Clint.

HECTOR
 Easy, man. Ain't your fault.

ROD
 Stay away from me, Hec'.

Rod looks wild-eyed, crazy.

ROD (CONT'D)
 I'm a jinx.

Rod capitulates to his fear, climbing into a parked vehicle.

Hector is going to console him, when --

DESTIN
 Leave him be.

INT. VEHICLE -- NIGHT

Rod curls up on the back seat, weeping for his fallen friends.

EXT. BEHIND THE BARRICADES -- NIGHT

Marlie is on watch, nervously peering through the smoke on the south barricade.

Hector has got hold of a lug wrench and is removing the wheels from the nearest car...

Merryweather lights up another tire.

Knapps spots Destin at work inside an abandoned car -- the BMW Z4 with the hair-trigger alarm.

INSIDE THE BMW Z4

Destin levers up the center console by the driver's seat, locating a small, wired-up plastic box.

Knapps sticks his head through the window.

KNAPPS
 What are you doing?

Destin slots a screwdriver into a fitting on the box.

DESTIN
 Figured we could use an extra pair of
 eyes.

Knapps doesn't get it.

DESTIN (CONT'D)
 (turning the blade)
 Alarm sensor. Up to max. Anybody
 sneaks up, we'll know about it.

EXT. BY THE WALKWAY, BARRICADES -- NIGHT

Destin and Knapps push the BMW Z4 into place.

Knapps scrutinizes Destin, regarding him fully for the first
 time.

KNAPPS
 We're in this shitfight together. But
 I need to know who's on my team.

Destin stonewalls him.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)
 What are you, man? Some kind of car
 thief, gangbanger...?

Silence.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)
 How many men you killed?

DESTIN
 You mean today?

Knapps gives up, shaking his head.

But then something strange happens. Both men suppress a little
 smile.

CUT TO:

INT. PATROL CAR, NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Lennox is hunched in the Patrol Car, scanning through an email
 on his blackberry: Destin's rap sheet.

Ward Senior's next to him, Travis relegated to the back seat
 with Skeeter.

LENNOX

Teenage misdemeanors: fights, drug charges. Graduated to prison on Grand Theft Auto. Then he got *really* busy -- threw in his lot with the N.L.R.

That name causes a frisson amongst the conspirators. Lennox whistles, continue to read.

LENNOX (CONT'D)

(astonished)

Can you believe this? He's up for parole in four weeks.

WARD SENIOR

If he's such a badass, how come they're letting him out?

Lennox scrolls down the blackberry screen.

LENNOX

Here it is: he got a female guard pregnant.

SKEETER

You take it where you can get it.

LENNOX

Only his gang didn't like it. Tried to whack her. Ryder put three of them in the infirmary. Transferred to ADSEG. Been going straight ever since.

WADE SENIOR

He fucked over The Ride for a female hack?

LENNOX

You seen her picture?

Lennox shows it them. WE DON'T SEE THE PICTURE but it all makes sense to the men in the car.

SKEETER

Man's got a deathwish.

WARD SENIOR

Got an address on this woman?

LENNOX

(reading)

She got fired. She's down in Texas now.

WARD SENIOR
With Destin's little bastard.

Wade Senior's twisted mind goes into overdrive.

WADE SENIOR
(to Skeeter)
Who do we know down there?

CUT TO:

EXT. NORTH BARRICADE -- NIGHT

Destin's fashioning a homemade weapon, wrapping duct tape around the handle of a hacksaw blade.

A voice echoes out over the bridge.

WADE SENIOR (O.S.)
Mr. Ryder. We need to talk.

Destin looks over the barricade --

ON THE BRIDGE

Bold as brass, Wade Senior is standing in no man's land, calling him out. Unarmed.

EXT. NORTH BARRICADE -- NIGHT

Merryweather raises his AR-15.

DESTIN
Wait.

KNAPPS
No way you're goin' out there.

DESTIN
Why, you gonna miss me?

MARLIE
You can't trust him.

DESTIN
I want to hear what's on his mind.

He shoots Marlie a look.

DESTIN (CONT'D)
Maybe I'll learn something.

Before anyone can stop him, Destin clambers over the barricade.

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND, NORTH SIDE OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Destin walks out to meet the enemy...until the two men are standing ten feet apart.

DESTIN

You're going to a lot of trouble over your daughter-in-law. We got three men dead.

WADE SENIOR

She's that kind of girl. Leaves bodies in her wake.

DESTIN

She said you beat her.

WADE SENIOR

Did she now?

Pauses.

WADE SENIOR (CONT'D)

Some women need beating. Just like some men need killing.

Wade Senior smiles, a slit of mouth opening up to reveal a row of small square teeth.

WADE SENIOR (CONT'D)

What are you doing with these people? This ain't your fight.

DESTIN

You made it what it is.

WADE SENIOR

You're either gonna blow your parole or die. And for what? A thieving skank.

DESTIN

I'm listening.

WADE SENIOR

Marlie brought this on herself. She stole something from me -- it's probably still on her. I'll make you a deal; get back what's mine, I'll give you a pass. You can go back to jail.

(MORE)

WADE SENIOR (CONT'D)

Make parole. See that son of yours again. What was his name? Jake?

DESTIN

You dare --

WARD SENIOR

Steady, boy. I already made a call to the N.L.R. Right now, they're sending a crew over to your old lady's house. They're pissed at you. And unless I call them off, they're gonna waste your family.

DESTIN

You're dead.

WARD SENIOR

No, Destin. You're not in control of this situation. I am. And I'm giving you five minutes to get this thing done.

Destin would like to rip this guy's head off.

...But he has no option to turn tail, marching back to his own lines.

EXT. INSIDE THE BARRICADES -- NIGHT

Destin storms back and confronts Marlie.

DESTIN

Where is it?

MARLIE

What are you talking about?

Destin grabs her --

DESTIN

I got no time for games.

KNAPPS

Whoah! What are you doing?

DESTIN

She ripped off the Dixies. That's why they're after her.

KNAPPS

That true?

MARLIE
GET OFF ME.

She tries to wriggle from Destin's grasp. He's too strong.

DESTIN
She's been lying to us all along. This ain't about some marital dispute. It's about what she stole from them.

MARLIE
Can't you see -- this is exactly what Senior does!
(to Knapps)
He's promised him something.

DESTIN
Give it to me.

MERRYWEATHER
What's she supposed to have taken?

MARLIE
I didn't steal anything.

Destin attempts to search her -- but Knapps blocks him.

DESTIN
Stay out of this.

He grabs Marlie back, RIPPING THE SHIRT OFF HER BACK, revealing...angry red welts, purple bruises along the line of her ribs...

Destin is momentarily thrown.

MARLIE
Happy, now? That bastard did this.

...But Destin HAS to keep going.

DESTIN
Marlie, PLEASE. I don't care what you did. Just hand it over.

MARLIE
You're no better than him.

Knapps swings Destin round by his shoulder.

KNAPPS
Leave her alone.

DESTIN
I TOLD YOU TO BUTT OUT!

Now back on Marlie --

DESTIN (CONT'D)
Give it up, or you're taking off the
rest.

Knapps SLAMS INTO HIM. It's like a dam has burst for Knapps. He unleashes kicks and punches at Destin, laying into him.

But whatever Knapps brings, Destin returns with interest. Lethal punches, DRIVING FISTS...

Knapps won't back down, taking two, three punches in order to land one himself.

Knapps connects with an arcing swing, KNUCKLES RIPPING Destin's lip.

Destin hooks Knapps in the gut, then follows with a massive right hook that crunches into Knapps' face, splitting open his nose, splashing blood in his eyes...

They're going to kill each other.

MARLIE
STOP IT!

She pushes between them, throwing her body in harm's way.

THEN THROWS DOWN A WHITE POUCH ON THE GROUND BETWEEN THEM.

The two men stop fighting. Staring at the pouch.

Hector picks it up, opens it.

Inside -- a mass of diamond gems. Worth millions.

Destin spits blood, eyeballing Knapps. 100% vindicated.

Knapps looks crestfallen, sad eyes accusing Marlie.

MARLIE (CONT'D)
(defiant)
It's what I'm owed. Compensation for
what he did to me.

The Bridge Crew stare back at her.

MARLIE (CONT'D)
There's enough for all of us. Six way
split. Just get me off this bridge.

HECTOR
My friends died 'cos of these?

MARLIE
I never meant any of this to happen. I
tried to walk away. Remember?

That much is true.

MARLIE (CONT'D)
I'm real sorry about your friends...

KNAPPS
Sorry?

MERRYWEATHER
We got leverage now. We can...

His voice trails off. Destin's pointing his assault weapon at Hector.

DESTIN
Hand 'em over.

Hector can't believe it's come to this.

DESTIN (CONT'D)
Don't test me.

Hector throws the diamond pouch to Destin.

KNAPPS
Showing your true colors.

Right now, Destin couldn't care less what they think.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)
Scum.

He discards the rifle and vaults over the barricade, taking the diamonds to the enemy.

EXT. SKIES ABOVE THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Storm clouds move in and it starts to rain.

EXT. WALKWAY, NORTH SIDE OF THE BRIDGE

Destin marches up the pedestrian walkway, in full view of the Dixie Gunmen dug in around the northern end of the bridge.

EXT. NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE

Skeeter gets a bead on Destin with his rifle, zeroing in with his scope. He can see that Destin's got the diamond pouch in his right hand and is holding it over the side of the bridge.

SKEETER

Clever boy.

Skeeter lowers the rifle, reporting in to Wade Senior.

SKEETER (CONT'D)

Can't risk the shot. He'll ditch them.

WADE SENIOR

Wait till the handover. Then ventilate him.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY

But Destin stops short of the end of the bridge, calling out to Wade Senior --

DESTIN

I want to speak to my family. I want to know they're okay.

EXT. NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE

Wade Senior remains poker-faced. The rain's coming down in sheets now.

DESTIN'S VOICE (O.S.)

I'm unarmed. Send Junior out here with a phone. Then we make the trade.

WADE JUNIOR

I got this covered, pa.

Skeeter wouldn't trust the boy to tie his own shoelaces.

WADE JUNIOR (CONT'D)

This is my fault. Let me make it right.

SKEETER

Can't risk giving him a phone.

WADE JUNIOR

I know how to fix this asshole.

Without taking his eyes off Destin, Wade Senior nods.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY

Destin holds his ground as Wade Junior strolls out to meet him. For once, the heir to the Dixie crown seems strangely calm and in control.

Destin, now soaked through, continues to hold out the diamond pouch over the Mississippi.

WADE JUNIOR

You gotta hand me that first. I got my orders.

DESTIN

You think I'm stupid?

Junior pulls out a cellphone.

WADE JUNIOR

I'm not gonna get punked again. We switch at the same time.

Junior shrugs.

WADE JUNIOR (CONT'D)

I got no truck with you. Play ball, I'll put in a good word with the old man. Here's the phone...

With one hand Junior holds out the phone, with the other he demands the diamonds.

...Slowly Destin offers out the diamonds, at the same time as reaching for the phone.

Both men's eyes blaze at each other, mutual suspicion going into overdrive...

...as they both grab what they want.

Junior opens the pouch, eyes lighting up at the sight of all the glittering stones.

WADE JUNIOR (CONT'D)

A man of his word. I respect that.

Junior moves a step back, opening up a clear line of sight for the Dixie hitmen.

But he hasn't counted on phase two of Destin's plan.

In one fluid movement, Destin grabs Junior, wheeling him round and hooking his forearm around his neck.

As Junior squirms, Destin pulls the HACKSAW BLADE out of his sleeve and puts it to his throat.

DESTIN
Walk with me.

When Junior continues to struggle, Destin drags the blade across his cheek --

DESTIN (CONT'D)
Walk with me.

Blood wells up in the shallow cut. The terrified gangster complies, allowing Destin to back him up the bridge.

EXT. NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE

A frenzied reaction from the Dixies on the north side.

But Destin's using Junior as a human shield, making sure that none of them can get a clear shot at him.

SKEETER
Just shoot him!

WADE SENIOR
You'll hit Junior!

SKEETER
We need those stones.

Skeeter raises his rifle...

Senior smacks the weapon out of his hands. The boss is pissed and now he's got a .44 Colt Anaconda in his hands. That barrel's got to be seven inches long.

Skeeter backs down. Albeit raging.

EXT. NORTH BARRICADE, THE BRIDGE

Destin drags his hostage back to base, pulling him over the trunk of one of the perimeter cars.

Time for the Bridge Crew to eat humble pie.

HECTOR
We thought you'd bailed.

Destin shoves Wade in the direction of the site office.

INT. SITE OFFICE -- NIGHT

Destin smacks Wade Junior down in the corner.

DESTIN
Cable ties?

KNAPPS
(pointing)
In the electrical box.

HECTOR
I'll get them.

Destin and Knapps stare down the prisoner, their combined hostility enough to terrify anyone.

As Hector binds Junior's hands, Destin dials a number on his newly-acquired cellphone...

KNAPPS
(exhilarated)
You got a phone?!

One problem. The touchscreen reads "Insert Simcard".

DESTIN
(to Wade Junior)
Where's the sim?

WADE JUNIOR
You think I'm stupid?

DESTIN
I'm not gonna ask a second time.

WADE JUNIOR
In case you do, here's three answers
in advance: fuck you, fuck you and
fuck you.

Something inside Destin clicks...

AN EXPLOSION OF VIOLENCE as he attacks the prisoner with his fists and boots, smashing Junior's face against the wall, stamping on the man's chest...

KNAPPS
He's had enough!

Knapps and Merryweather have to pull Destin away before he kills the guy.

EXT. NORTH BARRICADE -- NIGHT

Destin storms forward to the barricade, roaring through the cascade of rain --

DESTIN

Anything happens to my family, he dies. You hear me? I'll slit his fucking throat! I'll kill him. I'll kill all of you!

Marlie and the Bridge Crew reel at the sight of Destin, who looks possessed, mouth foaming, eyes lit up with demonic rage.

Marlie ventures forward, putting her hand on Destin's shoulder.

MARLIE

Destin --

Destin turns, his whole focus now directed at Marlie, the rage replaced by something colder, something that chills Marlie to the core.

DESTIN

You brought this on my family. *Your greed.*

KNAPPS

Calm the fuck down.

Destin's eyes swivel on the Skywalker, locking on to him.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)

Talk to me, man.

There's no aggression coming back from Knapps. But neither is he backing down.

Knapps holds eye contact with his adversary, rock steady...

...until Destin's crazy rage dissipates, his shoulders slumping. He's gonna have to tell them.

EXT. NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Wade Senior's trying to think his way out of his own family dilemma. And he's got a demon advocate on his shoulder.

SKEETER

Even if we make the call, The Ride won't back off now. They're gonna gut his wife and kid.

Wade Senior can hear raised voices, the two cops, Lennox and Travis arguing furiously.

SKEETER (CONT'D)

If we was in Iraq, we'd send in the tanks.

Wade Senior continues to watch the cops arguing it out on his periphery.

WADE SENIOR

We don't have any tanks.

SKEETER

No, we got a bulldozer. Mckinley's yard is twenty minutes away. I can have it down here in less than an hour. We go in behind the dozer, all guns blazing. Chances are, we'll be able to get Junior out.

WADE SENIOR

Chances are?

SKEETER

If that was anyone else in there, we wouldn't be pussyng around. Look at the cops. They got the jitters. Our own people --

WADE SENIOR

What about them?

SKEETER

They're not stupid. Without those diamonds, we're screwed. Can't pay the cops, can't pay the judges; can't even pay our own men. Why risk your nuts, if you're not gonna land a paycheck? And if it wasn't for that dipshit, Junior -- no disrespect -- we wouldn't be in this position.

Travis finally breaks free from Lennox and comes storming over to Wade Senior.

TRAVIS

Enough's enough. Pack up your shit and leave.

WADE SENIOR

Excuse me?

TRAVIS

I said: get your ass off this bridge.

WADE SENIOR

I'm afraid that won't be possible, officer.

TRAVIS

I gave you fair warning. Now I'm calling this in.

INT. PATROL CAR -- NIGHT

Travis climbs into his Patrol Car, reaches for the radio.

BOOM! The windshield EXPLODES -- a .44 Magnum slug making potato mash of Travis' brain.

Tracking back through the fist-sized hole in the windshield...

EXT. PATROL CAR -- NIGHT

Wade Senior stands, the hot barrel of his Colt Anaconda .44 still smoking.

Lennox runs over and sees his dead partner slumped in the car, face mangled beyond recognition.

WADE SENIOR

Have a good look, officer. The
rest of you hicks, too.

Wade wields his pistol, eyeballing his crew.

WADE SENIOR (CONT'D)

I won't tolerate cowardice.

He scans their faces, intimidating them, one by one. Before narrowing in on Skeeter.

WADE SENIOR (CONT'D)

Bring me that dozer.

Skeeter jumps to it, relieved. He thought he was going to get whacked.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SITE OFFICE, MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Destin is rehydrating, gulping down the best part of a liter of water.

KNAPPS

Why didn't you tell us about your family?

Destin wipes his lips.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)

It's not just you out here. Between us, we could have come up with a better play than *that*.

Destin's barely holding it together, tortured by his fears for his loved ones.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)

We just gotta think this through. Whoever the Dixies have called, they're gonna have to get themselves organized, get tooled up, stake out the house...

DESTIN

Fuck are you talking about?

KNAPPS

We might still have time to get word to your family.

DESTIN

Is that all? You got a phone on you, boss?

KNAPPS

No, but --

DESTIN

Because if you had, we wouldn't be sitting here, surrounded, getting shot to shit, by ten thousand Dixie motherfuckers.

HECTOR

What about the jumper phone?

Destin slams Hector up against the wall, choking him.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

(gasping)

I'm serious.

(MORE)

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Call the hotline, get them to ring
your wife; get her out of the house.

Destin eyeballs Hector...

KNAPPS
And while we're at it, we call in your
prison governor.

...slowly releasing his throathold.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)
Bring down some of those badass guards
you were talking about.

Destin edges to one of the shattered windows, looking out over
the northern approach road.

The jumper phone seems MILES away: on the pedestrian walkway
deep in enemy territory, BEHIND a haphazard line of Dixie
vehicles and a gang of the southern mobsters.

DESTIN
We step out there, they'll cut us to
pieces.

KNAPPS
Who said anything about stepping?

Knapps goes into the tool store, helping himself to a pair of
low inertia harnesses.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)
You ain't scared of heights, are ya?

Marlie casts an eye over Destin's bright orange prison overalls.

MARLIE
He can't go up like that.

KNAPPS
Give him yours, Hec'.

...Hector takes off his gray work overalls, tossing them to
Destin.

But for some reason, Destin is reluctant to strip down.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)
Come on, don't be shy.

Destin unbuttons his overalls, pulls them down, steps out of
them...

Marlie and the Bridge Crew stare -- Destin's muscled frame is like a canvas, covered from neck to ankle in tattoos:

SS Blood Bolts, Celtic Runes, Elbow Webs, swastikas..

Across his chest is a huge eagle and the initials of his former gang: N.L.R.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)
...Nazi Low Riders.

Hector is staring at Destin with utter loathing.

HECTOR
You racist motherfucker...

KNAPPS
Back off, Hec'. We got no time for this shit.

Destin pulls on Hector's overalls, covering up the shame of his past.

DESTIN
Hec --

HECTOR
Go to hell.

Knapps slaps a harness into Destin's chest.

KNAPPS
On our way.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY, MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Destin straps the M-4 rifle to his back. Clips his harness onto a rope that leads to the top of the bridge arch.

This is a desperate, hare-brained mission and they both know it.

KNAPPS
Follow my lead. Same footholds, same fingerholds.

Knapps is revelling in his return to power.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)
Are you paying attention yet?

Destin cedes pole position to Knapps, who begins to climb up the trusses and girders, leaving Destin to follow...

EXT. HIGHER UP THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Knapps is in his element, quick hands and feet, incredibly lithe and flexible.

Destin's struggling to keep up with the Skywalker, who's now assailing the summit of the north side girder arch.

The metal surfaces are still wet, perilously slippery...

EXT. NORTH SIDE GIRDER ARCH -- NIGHT

Destin's up against it now, struggling to make it up to the top of the arch: clinging on with his fingertips and the toes of his boots, clawing his way to the top when --

He loses his footing AND SLIPS.

Destin's falling when --

Knapp grabs him, pulling him to the top of the arch.

As Destin catches his breath...

KNAPPS

Don't you dare look down.

Then the bridge lights start to die, snapping off in a daisy chain, plunging the bridge into darkness.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)

That works for us.

But it wasn't done for their benefit...

EXT. WALKWAY, NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Quick hands pull out a row of fuses from the Bridge's MASTER CONTROL BOX, until all the bridge lights snap out.

The saboteur?

The Swampman. He's swapped his sniper's rifle for a giant BOWIE KNIFE, the hilt of which protrudes from a sheath strapped round his thigh.

The Swampman turns, signalling to Wade Senior that he's ready to spring into action.

Then he climbs over the side of the bridge...

EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Clinging on like a human spider, The Swampman climbs along on the underside of the bridge, moving from girder to girder towards the enemy's position.

We turn through 180 degrees --

EXT. GIRDER ARCH, NORTH SIDE OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

-- As Destin and Knapps climb along in the opposite direction.

INT. SITE OFFICE -- NIGHT

Wade Junior is lying on his side, arms trussed behind his back, still in agony from the beating he took from Destin.

Despite everything, Marlie can't help but feel a twinge of sympathy for her husband. She moves him into an upright position, leaning him up against the back wall.

The married couple look at each other, both in fear of their lives.

WADE JUNIOR

What happened to us, Marlie?

MARLIE

Your pa happened.

WADE JUNIOR

I didn't know he was beating on you.
You should have come to me.

MARLIE

And what would you have done, Wade?
Sided with me against him?

Wade looks away.

MARLIE (CONT'D)

I had to run. I had no choice.

WADE JUNIOR

We got a choice. Even now. It's not
too late.

EXT. BRIDGE ARCH, NORTH SIDE OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Knapps & Destin begin their descent on the harnesses, rapeling down.

They are forced to take it slow, fearful that if they make any noise, they'll draw the attention of --

BRIDGE BELOW

The Dixie Gangsters who are hanging behind their cars on the bridge below, passing round a bottle of Wild Turkey.

EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE

Swampman is a climbing machine, twisting and crawling his way through the support struts...

INT. SITE OFFICE

Marlie whispers to Wade Junior, her face close to him in the half light.

MARLIE

You think I'd sell these people out?

WADE JUNIOR

You're family, Marlie. I won't let pa hurt you.

MARLIE

...He raped me.

Wade just stares.

MARLIE (CONT'D)

Your father, raped me.

WADE JUNIOR

You're confused --

MARLIE

You know what happens when Wade Senior casts his showgirls? He 'roadtests' them. That's what he actually calls it -- a roadtest. Reminds them that they're his property.

Marlie takes Wade's hands in her own.

MARLIE (CONT'D)

After we got married, he wanted to remind me too. Lest I go falling in love with his retard son.

In his heart, he knows it's the truth.

EXT. NORTH BARRICADE -- NIGHT

Merryweather and Hector are on watch duty, with the AR-15 and the shotgun.

HECTOR

I can't believe I fell for that Nazi's bullshit.

MERRYWEATHER

When you're in the joint, sometimes you gotta do things to survive.

HECTOR

'Hell you know about it?

MERRYWEATHER

...Did some time back in the eighties. Got busted running weed over the border.

HECTOR

You kidding me?

MERRYWEATHER

Could do with some now. Shit was so good, gave you night vision.

HUGE scepticism from Hector.

MERRYWEATHER (CONT'D)

Jamaican fisherman swear by it. They don't need scopes, they got the ganja eyes. Only problem is they can't stand up.

Hector laughs. Merryweather having achieved his objective of cheering the kid up.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY, MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE

The Swampman materializes, climbing up onto the rail and sliding down onto the pedestrian walkway.

He's got himself into a position on the back wall of the barricade, close to his target -- Wade Junior's prison, the site office.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY, NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE

Destin and Knapps drop down BEHIND ENEMY LINES, their boots touching down on the pedestrian walkway.

Destin unhooks his M-4 and pads over to the suicide crisis hotline booth.

Knapps uses hand signals, pointing out the positions of the nearest Dixie Gunmen, who are spread out behind their vehicles.

'JUMPER' PHONE BOOTH/PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY

Destin picks up the phone, puts it to his ear...and has an excruciating wait, as it rings three times on the other end.

COUNSELLOR (O.S.)

(filter)

Hello, I'm so glad you called. Do you want to give me your name?

DESTIN

(in hushed whispers)

Destin Ryder, I'm an inmate at Mississippi State Pen.

COUNSELLOR (O.S.)

Destin, no matter how bad things seem -
-

DESTIN

I'm not trying to kill myself. But I do need your help.

COUNSELLOR (O.S.)

This is a counselling line.

DESTIN

My family are in danger.

COUNSELLOR (O.S.)

Sir, you need to call the police.

Destin's desperately trying to remain calm. AND QUIET.

DESTIN

I don't have time to get into this. I just need you to listen and do what I tell you.

COUNSELLOR (O.S.)

I'm going to hang up now, sir.

DESTIN

Don't hang up, please...OR I WILL KILL MYSELF.

Knapps daggers a look at Destin: "keep it down!"

DESTIN (CONT'D)

Write down this number. 602-864-9766.
You tell my wife to get her and the
boy out of the house. You tell her the
N.L.R. are coming. You got that, lady?
The N.L.R.

Knapps is making frantic signals. SOMEONE'S COMING.

Lennox.

He's only 4 yards away.

Destin tries to hang up the phone, but in his panic he fumbles it, the handset CLATTERING against the hotline box.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY

Lennox hears it...draws his service revolver, advancing toward Destin's position --

BEHIND A GIRDER SUPPORT STRUT

Destin tries to flatten his body profile behind a girder support strut. He's got slim to zero cover...

LENNOX (O.S.)

Who's there?

The blood's PUMPING through Destin's brain.

He readies his M-4 rifle. But if he uses it on Lennox, he's going to bring down every swinging Dixie on this side of the bridge.

Destin decides on another course, unhooking the rifle strap...

'JUMPER' PHONE BOOTH/PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY

Lennox discovers the hotline is off the hook.

He picks up the phone.

LENNOX

Hello?

COUNSELLOR (O.S.)

(filter)

Who is this?

LENNOX

Who's --

The rifle strap is yanked TIGHT around his throat.

Destin garrots the policeman, choking the life out of him... lowering him to the floor.

As soon as he's sure the cop is dead, Destin grabs up the phone - but now all he can hear is an engaged tone.

DESTIN

Hello? Hello? *Damnit!*

Knapps runs over, panicking at the sight of the cop's body.

KNAPPS

They find his body, they'll know we're here.

DESTIN

Line's engaged. Can't get through.

KNAPPS

We gotta move him --

A look of dread on Knapps' face.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)

Oh shit.

Destin turns to see what Knapps has just spotted -- Wade Senior and an entourage of Dixie Bodyguards are coming up the pedestrian walkway towards them...

They shelter behind a girder stanchion.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)

(meaning Lennox's body)

The river.

DESTIN

They'll see us.

EXT. FURTHER ALONG THE WALKWAY, NORTH END

Wade Senior and his Bodyguards are getting closer...

EXT. 'JUMPER' PHONE BOOTH/PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY

Destin and Knapps have got seconds before they're discovered.

Destin points Knapps to one of the Dixie's vehicles, a small TRUCK parked in the lane next to the walkway.

DESTIN

In there.

The two of them heave the dead cop's body towards the Truck...

EXT. THE TRUCK, NORTHERN APPROACH ROAD

Destin opens the back, climbs inside.

Knapps passes up Lennox's body for Destin to haul in.

Wade Senior is turning to look in their direction...

Lennox is in, but Knapps is totally exposed, still out on the road...

A CAR ALARM goes off in the center of the bridge, echoing from the barricades, drawing the Dixies' attention...

...And giving Destin the vital seconds he needs to haul Knapps up inside the truck.

EXT. NORTH BARRICADE, MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE

The car alarm has got the Bridge Crew spooked, all the lights of the BMW Z4 flashing like crazy.

The lookout on the south barricade -- Marlie -- is coming over to investigate.

MERRYWEATHER

We'll deal with this.

HECTOR

I'll deal with it.

Hector's stepping up, shotgun in hand.

BY THE BMW Z4

Hector warily approaches the Z4. Desperate not to lose his nerve. Desperate not to fail his crew.

Leaning over the Z4, he trains his shotgun down both approaches of the pedestrian walkway.

HECTOR
(calling out)
No one here.

That's because the assassin is *inside* the barricades.

Too late, Hector sees Swampman coming at him out of the darkness -- a hellish vision slashing with a BOWIE KNIFE.

Hector attempts to ward off the blow with his shotgun...

The blade skitters off the stock, SLICING DEEP into Hector's forearm. Hector screams, staggering back, blood spurting from the wound.

Merryweather pulls the trigger on his Armalite -- but the weapon jams.

The light glints off Swampman's massive blade, which is coming down on Hector...

Until Merryweather thunders in, putting his body on the line, protecting the teenager.

The Swampman doesn't hesitate, turning his knife on the old man, driving it deep into his gut. Merryweather grunts -- *and holds on to the knife hilt*.

The Swampman tries to pull the blade out, but Merryweather clings on to the guy's hands, binding himself to the Swampman, swinging him away from Hector.

The two men tussle -- but the old veteran's strength is fading, blood seeping out of him.

Merryweather spots something over Swampman's shoulder.

With one last effort he pulls Swampman in to him, staring right into his eyes.

MERRYWEATHER
That all you got?

The goading does the trick. ALL Swampman's focus is on Merryweather.

The killer pushes the Bowie knife in deeper, ignoring his peripheral vision -- allowing Rod to emerge out of the parked car and bring a lug wrench to the battle...CRUNCHING IT DOWN on the Swampman's skull.

Swampman staggers back, pulling out the Bowie knife.

Merryweather groans in agony.

Rod unleashes another hit with the wrench, striking The Swampman in the temple, sending him to his knees.

The huge Bowie knife clatters to the ground.

Somehow The Swampman is still alive. He manages to pull a concealed .38 Special from an ankle strap.

Marlie picks up the Bowie knife.

MERRYWEATHER (CONT'D)

Attagirl.

She LANCES The Swampman with his own weapon, straight through the heart.

Not even he can survive that.

...Marlie rushes to Hector, whose arm is bleeding heavily.

She rips back his sleeve, using it as a tourniquet to stem the blood pumping from his arm.

HECTOR

Not me. Merry.

Hector's trying to block out the pain, staring across at Merryweather.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Merry.

Merryweather just nods back, his eyes fluttering.

Rod cradles him.

MERRYWEATHER

(to Rod)

Be lucky.

ROD

Always.

Rod holds the old man tighter as the sparkle finally goes out of Merryweather's eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK OF THE TRUCK -- NIGHT

Destin and Knapps are peering through a gap in the truck's rear doors, keeping an eye on the Dixies and the jumper line.

DESTIN
 (totally wired)
 I gotta get back on that phone.

KNAPPS
 Not till those Dixies move off.

DESTIN
 ...What if she didn't make the call?

KNAPPS
 She made the call.

DESTIN
We don't know that.

He turns away from the doors, pacing the truck like a caged animal.

DESTIN (CONT'D)
 Nah. She thought I was a crank.
 Didn't believe me. Alice and Jake are
 still in the house...The Ride are on
 their way...

Destin is starting to lose it.

DESTIN (CONT'D)
 ...maybe they're there already.

He screws up his face, grinds his fists into his temples.

Destin's eyes drift to Lennox's body. Lashes a boot into the corpse.

DESTIN (CONT'D)
 All I needed was to keep my nose
 clean. One week. Five fucking days. I
 couldn't even do that.

Knapps gets up in his face, hissing at him --

KNAPPS
 Get that out of your head. We're all
 gonna make it. Alice, Jake, you, me,
 the crew --

DESTIN
 You dumb sonofabitch, you still don't
 get it.

Destin reaches into his overall, pulling out his cherished family photograph --

ALICE is a beautiful African American Woman.

She's holding on to Destin's four year old son, Jake.

DESTIN (CONT'D)
They're gonna kill them.

A CELLPHONE rings *inside* the truck, the ringtone amplified, ricocheting off the metal walls.

Loud enough to be heard outside?

Destin and Knapps panic. Where the hell is it?

On LENNOX's body.

Destin pulls the cellphone out of the cop's jacket, pressing the green ANSWER button just to shut it up.

Only then does he see the caller ID -- "Wade Senior".

Destin puts the phone to his ear, listening.

WADE SENIOR (O.S.)
(filter)
Lennox. You'd better still be here.

Destin fights the urge to scream at the Dixie boss.

WADE SENIOR (CONT'D) (O.S.)
Lennox?

Destin hangs up and quickly dials another number.

DESTIN
Come on, pick up...

With every ring, Destin's fears multiply. Is he too late?

A sleep deprived woman finally answers.

ALICE. Destin's ex-wife.

ALICE (O.S.)
(filter)
Who is this?

DESTIN
Alice, it's me. You gotta get out of the house.

ALICE (O.S.)
Destin? What's going on? I got some crazy bitch calling me up at four --

DESTIN

Tell me you're not in the house.

ALICE (O.S.)

She said something about the N.L.R.

DESTIN

Are you out of the fucking house?

ALICE (O.S.)

Yes, I'm out of the house. We're at my sister's.

Destin shuts his eyes.

DESTIN

You're safe. You're gonna be okay...Is Jake there? Can I talk to him?

ALICE (O.S.)

He's asleep, Destin.

DESTIN

Can you put the phone by his head? I just wanna whisper something to him. Please.

A pause...then Destin hears the boy BREATHING on the other end of the phone.

DESTIN (CONT'D)

Happy birthday, Jake.

(beat)

Alice. I need you to call the Governor. Tell him I've taken hostages. Tell him I'm going to start killing them.

ALICE (O.S.)

Destin!

DESTIN

I know it sounds crazy. But I need you to make that call.

ALICE (O.S.)

What the hell are you doing?

DESTIN

Just make that call. I'm sorry.

ALICE

Wait --

Destin hangs up.

KNAPPS

You wanna run that hostage thing by me?

DESTIN

Soon as the Governor hears that; he'll send the SORT team. Thirty minutes, they'll be here.

KNAPPS

And then you're gone. With the diamonds.

No answer.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)

You'll be running all your life.

DESTIN

Beats living in a cage. Cop killers don't make parole.

KNAPPS

You had no choice.

DESTIN

I'm already on two strikes. Even If I plead it down to manslaughter it's life.

KNAPPS

You'll never see your kid again.

DESTIN

You don't talk about him.

KNAPPS

You don't care if he thinks you're a thief?

DESTIN

I'm a lot worse than that.

Knapps recoils, unnerved by the sheer menace coming off the convict. In this dim light, the tatoos on Destin's body seem to come alive...

DESTIN (CONT'D)

Sort Team are coming. Sit down. Don't say another word.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK OF THE TRUCK -- LATER

Destin and Knapps are facing each other, leaning back against opposite sides of the truck, Lennox's body lying in between them.

Neither man prepared to look the other in the eye.

From outside, there's the guttural ROAR of a heavy engine vehicle. Something BIG is coming up onto the bridge.

Destin sneaks a peak through the back doors --

EXT. NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

-- To see a CATERPILLAR D9 BULLDOZER rumbling on to the bridge, Skeeter inside the yellow cab.

Skeeter aims the Bulldozer right at the 18-wheeler McDONALDS TRUCK, shunting the cab out of the way, driving on...

The Dixie footsoldiers mass behind the machine, advancing up the bridge toward the north barricade.

When the last man passes the Truck --

EXT. THE TRUCK -- NIGHT

Destin and Knapps jump down.

Knapps checks the chamber of Lennox's service revolver. Six bullets.

KNAPPS

You can leave.

He releases a bitter laugh.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)

Maybe SORT will get here in time.

Destin is staring ahead as --

EXT. NORTH BARRICADE, MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

The bulldozer rolls over the north barricade, BATTERING cars aside, CRUSHING them like tin cans.

BEHIND THE NORTH BARRICADE

Hector and Rod fire their last bullets at the bulldozer...

But the machine breaks through, bearing down on them.

-- Rod grabs Marlie and sprints back towards the site office.

-- Wade Senior waves Skeeter on, urging him to kill.

And if all of this wasn't bad enough,

-- the Dixie Soldiers on the south approach road are joining the attack, breaching the south barricade.

EXT. NORTH END OF THE BRIDGE

Destin closes his eyes.

He hands his M-4 to Knapps. Takes out the hacksaw blade. Picks up a discarded rebar pole...

Knapps clocks the menace in his partner's eyes. It's the two of them. To the death.

EXT. THE MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE

The Dixies are swarming behind the dozer when --

...Destin moves like a shadow of death into their backs, delivering a rapid series of lethal blows with his twin weapons -
- slashing throats, gut-stabbing, breaking bones, opening up veins and arteries.

He doesn't stop, moving through the pack, ever forward, from one man to the next, slicing and thrusting the shank, swinging the metal bar...

Knapps struggles to stay with him, firing Lennox's revolver into skulls, point blank range.

Six, seven, eight men are down before the Dixies even know what's hit them.

As the Gunmen begin to turn, Knapps opens up with the M-4, blasting a swathe through them.

Still Destin advances, covering himself in the Dixies' blood as he fights his way through to get to the bulldozer --

INT. DRIVER'S CAB, THE BULLDOZER

Skeeter manipulates the bulldozer controls, bashing any remaining cars out of the way, headed for the site office...

...and powering the scoop STRAIGHT THROUGH THE FRONT WALL.

INT. SITE OFFICE

Marlie screams as the walls buckle and collapse.

The Dozer reverses...and then charges again, PULVERIZING more of the structure.

Wade Junior seizes his chance and escapes, diving out through a hole that's opened up.

As the walls come tumbling down, Rod curls up next to Marlie.

They hold onto to each other tightly, awaiting the end...

EXT. SITE OFFICE/THE BULLDOZER

Skeeter raises the scoop, intent on crashing it down on Marlie and Rod when --

-- a HIGH PRESSURE BLAST of cleaning compound hits the bulldozer's windshield, coating it.

20 foot up on the --

SPIDER LIFT PLATFORM

Hector is getting creative with the SANDBLASTER HOSE, firing it at the bulldozer...

EXT. RUINS OF THE SITE OFFICE

The 150 p.s.i. high pressure mix blasts into the windshield -- making it impossible for Skeeter to see.

He's forced to open the cab door and lean out --

-- which is when Destin climbs up onto the machine and SLASHES HIS THROAT WITH THE HACKSAW BLADE.

Skeeter screeches, blood gushing from his neck.

Destin yanks him out of the cab, hurling the Dixie over his shoulder.

Then he jumps inside the vehicle.

INT. THE BULLDOZER

Destin hits the brakes, stopping the machine inches from Marlie and Rod.

He SLAMS the behemoth into reverse, leaning out of the cab as --

EXT. BULLDOZER

-- the caterpillar tracks make mincemeat of Skeeter, PULPING HIM.

Destin turns the bulldozer on the rest of the Dixies, using the machine as a mechanical guard dog -- biting anybody who comes within shooting distance of Marlie and Rod...

THE SPIDER LIFT PLATFORM

Hector keeps the pressure on with the hose, turning it on the Dixies, sandblasting men to the ground, tearing any exposed skin...

EXT. ON THE BRIDGE

Not to be outdone, Knapps picks off Dixie stragglers, arming himself with their weapons and ammunition, shooting them dead...

BY THE NORTH BARRICADE

Wade Senior can see the battle turning before his eyes. His Dixie Crew are getting their asses kicked.

But he's damned if he's going down with a whimper.

Wade Senior grips his Colt Anaconda .44 and advances on the bulldozer, BLASTING OFF rounds at Destin...who ignores the heavy caliber slugs that SPIDERWEB the windshield.

Destin lowers the scoop, driving at the Dixie boss...who is forced to retreat behind the nearest car -- the vehicle that started this whole pileup: Marlie's Chevrolet Impala.

Destin urges on the vehicle, intent on backing it AND WADE SENIOR onto the safety rail...

EXT. RUINS OF THE SITE OFFICE

Marlie watches on, willing Destin to crush her tormentor to death.

EXT. THE CHEVROLET IMPALA/BRIDGE RAIL

Wade Senior screams as the bulldozer BATTERS into the Impala, trapping him between the mashed car and the bridge rail.

INT. THE BULLDOZER

One more push and Destin is going to crush the Dixie boss to death...or break the safety rail and push him into the river.

WHEN --

Two Lenco Bearcat Armored Trucks screech onto both ends of the bridge, sirens blaring.

The SORT team have finally arrived.

SORT TEAM COMMANDER(O.S.)
(over PA system)
PUT DOWN YOUR WEAPONS.

EXT. THE BARRICADES, MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE

A few reckless Dixies try to stand and fight.

But the SORT TEAM's response is ferocious. They pile out of the Bearcats, taking up tactical positions, killing anyone who is still packing a weapon.

Outnumbered, outgunned and out played, the last remaining Dixies surrender.

INT. THE BULLDOZER

Destin can't quite believe it.

He shuts down the bulldozer and jumps down from the cab, ignoring the screams of Wade Senior, who is still trapped between the wrecked Impala and the bridge rail.

EXT. INSIDE THE BARRICADES -- NIGHT

Knapps drops his M-4 and makes his way through the debris to Destin.

The convict looks like an ancient warrior; clothes shredded, gang tatoos picked out against his diesel-blackened torso and blood-splashed limbs.

Knapps eyes their perimeter -- the SORT guys are mopping up the Dixies. Soon they'll be closing in.

KNAPPS
(to Destin)
Time you were gone.

Knapps steers him toward one of the climbing ropes leading up to the cantilever arch.

KNAPPS (CONT'D)
Up and away.

Then Destin spots Marlie.

She's standing by the crushed wreck of her Chevrolet Impala.

Aiming a Smith & Wesson handgun at Wade Senior.

DESTIN
No...

The SORT TEAM are advancing, seconds away.

Destin doesn't hesitate. He runs over to her --

BY THE WRECK OF THE IMPALA

Marlie's hands are shaking...

DESTIN
Don't do it.

...But her eyes are focused, lit up with vengeance.

DESTIN (CONT'D)
Kill him and you'll be taking your own
life. That's what they give you for
murder.

She grips the gun, straightening her arm as if to fire.

DESTIN (CONT'D)
Doesn't matter what he did, it's what
you do that counts. You wanna hurt
him? Testify. He'll be in a cage for
the rest of his life. But don't kill
him. Don't let him off the hook.

Wade Senior starts sobbing. Crushed between the car and the safety rail, he doesn't look like a mob boss, just a scared, old man.

The SORT TEAM take up firing positions behind the cars.

SORT TEAM COMMANDER
PUT THE WEAPON DOWN.

DESTIN
I'm begging you, Marlie. He's not worth it.

Tears fall down Marlie's face.

DESTIN (CONT'D)
You've got your whole life ahead of you. Don't throw it away like I did.

...She drops the gun.

Knapps goes to her, puts his arms around her.

Destin breathes out, his nerves shredded.

SUDDENLY:

Wade Junior arises from the wreckage of vehicles -- he's cut through his bonds and armed himself with a shotgun.

He's right behind --

DESTIN (CONT'D)
Marlie!

Wade Senior has a flicker of HOPE.

WADE SENIOR
Wade. Son...

But Junior has nothing but contempt in his eyes for his old man.

WADE JUNIOR
You ain't my pa. You sick fuck.

Junior shoots him, obliterating Senior's face at point blank range.

Before the SORT TEAM can shoot Junior --

WADE JUNIOR (CONT'D)
(to Marlie)
Take care of yourself, baby.

-- He puts the gun into his mouth and pulls the trigger.

EXT. THE BRIDGE -- DAWN

The shot echoes out over the bridge, bouncing off the metal lattice work.

Dawn is starting to break, the sun's first rays illuminating a scene of total and utter carnage -- burnt out cars, dead bodies, smouldering piles of rubble...

EXT. BY THE WRECK OF THE IMPALA -- DAWN

As the SORT TEAM rush in to capture Destin --

-- he surreptitiously hands Marlie the diamond pouch.

DESTIN

They're yours.

SORT TEAM COMMANDER

Put your hands up. Get on the floor.

Destin kneels down, hands above his head.

The SORT Team rush in, bodies piling on top of him.

Knapps and the others witness the brutality of the SORT TEAM...who wrap Destin up in hand and leg restraints and carry him off, Guantanamo-style.

Knapps stares after Destin, who is going back to jail.

For the rest of his life.

CUT TO:

INT. SOLITARY CELL, MISSISSIPPI STATE PENITENTIARY -- DAY

Destin is back inside a cell, now in chains. His wounds are on the mend, but his spirit is broken.

Officer Harold Stamper enters, flanked by a detail of CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS.

HAROLD STAMPER

You ready?

Destin shrugs. Disinterested.

INT. CORRIDOR, OUTSIDE PAROLE HEARING ROOM -- DAY

Destin is led up to the parole hearing, his chains CLINKING.

HAROLD STAMPER
This is your lawyer.

DESTIN
I don't have a lawyer.

Even so, this LAWYER is wearing a \$2000 suit.

LAWYER
Only speak when you're spoken to.

INT. PAROLE HEARING ROOM -- DAY

JUDGE WASHINGTON addresses Destin from behind the bench.

JUDGE WASHINGTON
Over the course of one night, you committed multiple firearms offences, maiming and killing fourteen people including a police officer. All of this you did with deadly intent.

Destin stares straight ahead, dead-eyed.

JUDGE WASHINGTON (CONT'D)
On the other side of the coin, it is the understanding of this hearing, that much of your actions can be regarded as self-defense or in the defense of others; although I have to say, that in over forty years of public office, I have never before seen such violence committed by any one individual.

Washington pauses, studying Destin.

JUDGE WASHINGTON (CONT'D)
Mr. Ryder, you demonstrated great bravery and selflessness. I have no doubt that you helped save the lives of Mr. Steven Knapps, Mr. Hector Aberline and Mr. Rodney Blagg. As well as the life of Miss Marlie Stewart, who is now in witness protection.

Destin stares at the Judge. Is the dude actually praising him?

JUDGE WASHINGTON (CONT'D)
 I have before me a sworn deposition
 from Mr. Steven Knapps. His testimony
 sheds considerable light on the events
 of the night, July 26th.

Washington picks up the deposition document.

JUDGE WASHINGTON (CONT'D)
 Mr. Knapps states how you gave Miss
 Stewart a quantity of diamonds;
 instructing her to turn them over to
 the authorities.

DESTIN
She actually did that?

JUDGE WASHINGTON
 (with a smile)
 We're not all criminals, Mr. Ryder.

CUT TO:

EXT. GATES OF MISSISSIPPI STATE PENITENTIARY -- DAY

Destin walks out of the prison gates.

Waiting for him by a beaten up NISSAN -- ALICE, apprehensive but
 smiling. She's travelled hundred of miles to witness this
 moment.

She's holding the hand of their excitable son JAKE. Wild horses
 couldn't stop the kid from running to his daddy...

CUT TO:

EXT. HILL ROAD, MISSISSIPPI -- DAY

The Nissan trundles down the highway, windows open.

INT. NISSAN -- DAY

Alice is at the wheel, Destin and Jake her happy passengers.

DESTIN
 ...under my parole conditions, I'm not
 allowed to leave the state.

ALICE
 We'll move back here. Texas was never
 really my scene.

Her beautiful brown eyes twinkle.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Too many damn rednecks.

They summit the hill and drive down to the Mississippi River.

The bridge is laid out before them, the steel struts glistening in the sunlight.

Alice parks up beside the south end of the bridge.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Go on, do some work.

He kisses her softly on the lips.

EXT. THE BRIDGE -- DAY

Destin strolls up the pedestrian walkway, breathing in the air of a free man.

His mood darkens on seeing bullet holes in the road and other scars of the battle, his thoughts with the men who died here -- Clint, Pruitt, Gorm, Merryweather...

The clouds lift on seeing the living.

HECTOR

Lifts his visor, turning to look at Destin.

ROD

Comes out of the site office, wearing a hard hat, and carrying Clint's clipboard.

A familiar voice echoes down from the heights --

KNAPPS (O.S.)
Watch your back, fellas. Badass on the bridge.

Steve Knapps abseils down on his low inertia harness, boots touching right in front of Destin.

This guy...

DESTIN
Hi, Steve.

KNAPPS
Hello, Destin.

There's something glittering in his ear. *A diamond earring.*

The truth dawns on Destin -- Knapps' old pickup has been replaced by a brand new MERCEDES BENZ GL. Hector's retired the 80s ghetto blaster for a state of the art ipod Bose sound system.

DESTIN
Exactly how many diamonds did she hand
in?

Knapps gives him that shit-eating grin.

...Then he turns to the NEW FACES on the Bridge Crew, who have been checking out the new arrival.

KNAPPS
What are you humps looking at? We got
a bridge to fix.

Site boss Rod directs Destin over to his former position by --

THE CUTTING STATION

Hector grins at Destin.

HECTOR
Welcome to the crew, punk.

Hector jacks up the volume on the ipod beatbox, MOTORHEAD'S anthem kicking in --

LEMMY FROM MOTORHEAD
...Another beer is what I need,
Another gig my ears bleed,
We are the Road Crew...

Destin fires up an oxyacetylene torch, pulls down his visor. And goes to work.

Pulling back we see --

A CROSS SECTION OF THE BRIDGE

Destin working with Hector on the cutting crew...above him: a
Hoseman blasting paint off the girders...higher still: the
daredevil himself, Steve Knapps skywalking his way to the
summit...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END