

THE CHAMBER

A Novel by John Grisham

Screenplay by:
William Goldman

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FADE IN ON

A lovely house in a lovely southern town. (We are in black and white -- and will be until credits end.)

Half past seven on a sun-streaked morning.

You never know, of course, from looking at outside walls, if anyone is happy inside. But you can tell this much from the place we are seeing: whoever lives there has a helluva shot. A wonderful home, a lovely lawn, well tended.

Now, the door opens and A YOUNG MAN walks outside. He is 28, attractive and trim, carries a briefcase, has a beard which he tends to stroke. His name is MARVIN KRAMER. He starts around the house toward the garage, stops, puts two fingers in his mouth, whistles quietly and on the sound --

CUT TO

THESE TWO KIDS, exploding out the front door. They are the KRAMER TWINS, JOSH AND JOHN. They have just turned five, have more energy than a football team on steroids, and are, both of them, totally adorable.

As they come into view, they are playing leapfrog, something at which they excel. They bound along, one over the other toward their father.

MARVIN watches them, shakes his head, smiles. As they reach him he waves back at the house, something the kids do too, interrupting their game. As they all wave --

CUT TO

A second story window. We can't make out clearly who they are waving to. Except that it's A WOMAN, waving back. HOLD BRIEFLY on the window and the woman. Then --

CUT TO

THE KRAMER CAR -- it's a new '67 Buick, pulling out of the driveway -- MARVIN at the wheel, THE TWINS goofing around in the back, making silly faces, breaking each other up. As MARVIN turns from the driveway onto the street --

CREDITS START TO ROLL.

They go quickly, the credits do, and while this happens what we see are a bunch of shots of Greenville, a river town, so of course there are views of the Mississippi. And some nice houses. And here come a bunch of people who work in those nice houses, half a dozen of them walking together, all of them women, all of them black. And the center of town itself,

nothing special, coming to life on a Friday in April. Sidewalk store fronts are being swept, mostly by black men in overalls. Several other black men wait in line to drink from the water fountain with the "colored" sign above it. The neighboring "white" fountain is not being used at the moment but no one in line moves to drink from it.

What we are looking at then is an ordinary morning. In Mississippi. In the Spring of 1967.

Now we see an ordinary building. Long, not very high, three floors. Plain wood framed. No photos in Architectural Digest for this one.

The main thing of interest is a small sign in front: "Marvin B. Kramer and Associates."

MARVIN KRAMER parks the car, gets out, starts up toward the building, stops, turns, starts to put two fingers into his mouth again but before he can do it, the TWINS exit the car, pause but a moment -- then one of them is carrying the other piggyback, in staggering pursuit of their father.

They enter the building.

CREDITS COME TO AN END --

-- but we keep holding.

We keep holding on the shot.

THE CAMERA DOES NOT MOVE.

Still the same shot of the low, woodframed building.

Tick-tock. Tick-tock.

Time is passing.

But nothing is going on.

Not a damn thing.

Just that shot of the building.

And now thanks Heavens, something does happen --

-- one of the TWINS, it might be JOHN, it might be JOSH, appears in a second story window.

And now the other TWIN, it might be JOSH, it might be JOHN, appears in a neighboring window. They are clearly two very happy young men --

-- and now here it comes --

-- it comes fast and it comes sudden and it comes LOUD --

-- the whole fucking building disappears before our eyes.

This explosion just obliterates the place -- one moment we were looking at a building and now we can see nothing but dust -- dust billowing out at us -- billowing out past us --

-- and as this happens, we begin to bleed into color.

-- and we can begin to hear sounds -- at first we can't quite make it out -- but then we can. (Color is brighter now.)

Glass. Glass is what we are hearing.

The tinkling sound of glass, glass hitting concrete.

PAN DOWN SUDDENLY TO THE SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING.

Bits of glass rain down for what seems like forever. (We are in full color now.) As they fall, the shards of glass catch the sun. Hundreds of tiny rainbows. It couldn't be prettier.) HOLD.

NOW CREDITS COME TO AN END.

CUT TO

A gorgeous shot of Chicago as seen from the 61st floor of an office building. Lake Michigan is filled with sailboats -- it's early July. We are looking at the view through some open Venetian blinds --

-- which suddenly close. E. GARNER GOODMAN stands by the blinds -- a remarkable man in his remarkable office. GOODMAN, slender and small, bow-tied, has done one amazing thing in his life: he has been a practicing lawyer for fifty years and has yet to do anything illegal. He is, as we look at office, all tidy and neat. His office, on the other hand, is a zoo. Bookcases sag from the strain, the floor is a minefield of piles of legal briefs. A strong wind and total chaos. A ceiling fan provides as much breeze as is safe.

GOODMAN

(a total gent)

I do not fucking believe you.

(and on those words --)

CUT TO

ADAM HALL sitting in a chair.

ADAM is the hero of this piece. Mothers love him. They dream at night that he will marry their daughters. They think he is handsome, and he is. They think he is bright, and he is that too. And kind. Right. Decent and thoughtful, yes, again. 26 years old, prospects unlimited. Believe it.

What they don't know is this: ADAM is haunted.

ADAM

(nervous)

It's really true, Mr. Goodman.

GOODMAN

You want to handle a death penalty case?
And you want me to help set that up.

ADAM

(nods)

That sort of covers it.

GOODMAN crosses to his desk, sits. He likes ADAM, senses the kind of career he's going to have. But he knows this is madness.

GOODMAN

(carefully)

You don't feel you might be a bit
on the young side? Perhaps a tad
inexperienced?

ADAM

I'll learn on the job.

GOODMAN

Go back to your office, Adam -- we both
have better things to do.
(it's over)

CUT TO

ADAM rises, puts a piece of paper on GOODMAN's desk.

ADAM

Goodbye, Mr. Goodman.

GOODMAN

(looks at the paper)

Nine months out of law school and you
resign?

(now, sharply)

I hired you for this firm, I know your
credentials, now stop this silliness.

ADAM

(beat)

I want the Cayhall case.

(beat)

Badly.

CUT TO

E. GARNER GOODMAN. Stunned. Takes a breath, gestures for ADAM to sit back down. As ADAM does --

GOODMAN

Sam Cayhall went on death row in 1980.
I handled him ever since. For ten years
-- some of the best work I've ever done
-- and he just fired me. He hates
lawyers. Why in the world should he
hire you?

CUT TO

ADAM. CLOSE UP.

ADAM

He's my grandfather.

CUT TO

GOODMAN. He only thought he was stunned.

GOODMAN

(one word says it all)

Wow.

(now from that --)

CUT TO

A WAITER, setting a table for two. The table is covered by a large umbrella. We are outside on a terrace, sixty-one stories above the Loop. The view, obviously, is world class. Lake Michigan glistens in the summer sun. The WAITER is very skilled. He is heavy set, middle aged, and black. From the moment this shot began, we have heard voices --

GOODMAN (OVER)

You should have told us you were related
when you applied here.

ADAM (OVER)

You never asked.

GOODMAN (OVER)

That's a smartass lawyer's answer and
you know it. You should have told us.

CUT TO

ADAM AND GOODMAN, standing by the railing near the table. The terrace is large. ADAM is still tense -- this is after all, a job interview.

ADAM

You're right, I should have, I didn't, here we are.

GOODMAN

And where is that? You've already announced you'd quit. Why do you need my blessings?

(The WAITER indicates that he is ready)

Thank you, Bennett.

(They move to the table, sit)

ADAM

Kravitz and Bane has an office in Memphis, I could work out of it. You must know a lot of people at Parchman Prison -- a word from you couldn't hurt there either.

GOODMAN

The only reason I'm even considering help is because I don't believe any man should die without legal representation and Sam's pretty sure to be executed in three months -- and this is so bizarre, he might accept you, where he wouldn't take anyone else.

(looks at ADAM)

Where will you live?

ADAM

I have an Aunt Lee in Memphis. I told her I might be coming on business -- she said I could stay with her.

GOODMAN

Does she know why you're coming?

ADAM

(head shake)

I'll tell her when I get there -- we Cayhalls are big on secrets. That's my real name -- Adam Cayhall. My father changed it when we left the South.

(MORE)

ADAM (contd)

I was three. I have no memory of ever meeting my grandfather.

(beat)

Truth is, I never knew I had a grandfather until Aunt Lee told me -- my father died, we were living in California and she flew out for the funeral.

GOODMAN

This was in ... ?

ADAM

1980.

GOODMAN

Your father must have been a young man.

ADAM

Yessir.

GOODMAN

(very casually)

Was he a suicide?

CUT TO

ADAM. Rocked.

ADAM

No!

SUDDENLY NOW, A FLASHCUT -- (THAT TERM MEANS GOING TO THE PAST, FOR BRIEF FLASHES OF TIME).

ADAM is sixteen, in his tiny room -- now the startling sound of a gunshot.

CUT TO

ADAM at the table.

ADAM

Heart attack.

CUT TO

GOODMAN. He says nothing, just studies the younger man.

FLASHCUT

ADAM, sixteen, runs out of the room across a hall to another door, puts his hand on the knob. Then as he throws the door open but before we can see inside --

CUT TO

ADAM at the table.

ADAM

A very sudden heart attack.

(GOODMAN still watches)

No warning at all. One minute he was fine, the next ...

(He shrugs and --)

FLASHCUT

ADAM, sixteen, standing in the doorway. Across the room, HIS FATHER lies dead, sprawled across a bed, blood dripping from his temple.

ADAM screams, runs forward, reaches desperately out as we

CUT TO

ADAM AND GOODMAN at the table.

ADAM is in trouble.

GOODMAN

I shouldn't have done that, sorry.

ADAM

You don't understand -- it's not that I mind talking about it, it's that I've never talked about it -- my mother said it was this sin, this terrible shame, another shame for the Cayhalls and we must always keep it secret from the world.

GOODMAN

She still feels that way?

ADAM

She did 'til she died -- summer before law school.

(looks at GOODMAN now)

I never let on anything, I never have, how did you know?

GOODMAN

I remember when I recruited you, being surprised you came here -- obviously, we're a top firm but we're Chicago -- you could have stayed in California, gone to New York, D.C. Everybody wanted you.

(MORE)

GOODMAN (contd)

(beat)

It was the Cayhall case brought you.

(ADAM nods)

You would have been three around 1967, when Sam bombed the Kramer twins. 1980 was when he was found guilty. Your father was destroyed by that bomb as well.

CUT TO

ADAM. Difficult material for him.

ADAM

I knew nothing 'til the funeral. I wanted to be a pilot in those days and live in the clouds.

(beat)

But that night I swore one thing: if Sam Cayhall could just stay alive long enough for me to get there, I was going to save him.

CUT TO

GOODMAN. He takes a sip of iced tea, stares out at the glorious view.

GOODMAN

You're a crazy young man, Adam --

(beat)

And even if I were to help you it would make no difference. For one brief and terrible moment, Sam Cayhall will be the most famous person in America. Oprah and Phil will O.D. on death penalty programs, the same old arguments will be made, you will try every legal maneuver known to man, the media will descend on Mississippi, there will be candlelit vigils and tears will be shed, but that old man will die in the chamber and within a week, no one will remember his name.

ADAM

I can't worry about that now. I'm the only one that can save him, Mr. Goodman, you practically said that yourself.

GOODMAN

(simply)

And who saves you?

ADAM
I don't understand.

GOODMAN
I've worked four death penalty cases and
I was not in good shape afterwards --
and I won. It could devastate you.
You're not ready.

ADAM
(beat)
But you're ready to let him die?

CUT TO

GOODMAN. Hard for him now. Long pause. Then --

GOODMAN
Call me from Memphis --
(before ADAM can speak)
-- and don't thank me -- I have not done
you a favor.

CUT TO

ADAM, rising.

ADAM
Three months doesn't leave me much time.
(turns away, stops -- this
next comes fast)
Did he do it?

GOODMAN
Of course he did it. There's no
question he did it ...

ADAM
But?

GOODMAN
I'm not sure he did it alone.
(ADAM nods, and this time,
as he does move off --)

CUT TO

A BLACK SAAB CONVERTIBLE -- it's rented -- as ADAM finishes
loading it up. He's sipping a beer from a can. We're outside
a crummy building in a crummy part of Chicago. He takes a
moment, locks it, finishes the beer, goes back inside as we

CUT TO

ADAM entering his crummy apartment -- it's rented too -- taking a last look. It's empty now. Bean bag chairs, a nondescript sofa, nondescript bed, a TV and VCR on an aluminum table.

CUT TO

A VIDEO TAPE RESTING ON THE VCR

ADAM slaps it into the VCR, grabs the remote, points it, grabs another can of beer, pops it open and as the TV comes alive --

CUT TO

The remains of a building. We see immediately what it is: MARVIN KRAMER's office after the attack.

The place is a devastation.

A TV TALKING HEAD moves into view, gestures, starts to talk --

-- but we don't hear him -- ADAM has switched onto fast forward and

CUT TO

ADAM, sipping his beer, working the remote with practiced skill and

CUT TO

THE TAPE. We whiz past a crowded funeral -- two graves -- the twins are being put to rest and --

CUT TO

A COURTHOUSE. We're still whizzing along as some cripple we've never seen before comes into camera range, some skinny puffy-faced cripple in a chair -- there is a clicking sound --

-- we're in normal speed now and we're still looking at this wild-eyed puffy faced cripple we've never seen before --

-- another clicking sound --

ADAM has switched to slow-motion and here's what's awful, we have seen this cripple before, it's MARVIN KRAMER, or rather the remains thereof -- a click and we are in regular motion as he stops, stares --

-- the TV camera has swung and we now see what he is staring at, TWO KLAN GUYS IN WHITE ROBES carrying "Save Sam" signs as they march in front of the courthouse -- now one of them looks at the other, says something -- we can see his lips move but can't get the words --

-- but whatever they are they make MARVIN KRAMER go fucking berserk -- he starts wheeling his chair toward the TWO KLANSMEN, screaming -- and God knows what would have happened when he got up to them --

-- but he doesn't get up to them because as the wheelchair leaves the sidewalk, starts over grass, he loses balance and this next is humiliating because he falls hard, falls from chair to earth, and the quilt around his legs comes off and we see what the bombing has done to him, he is legless now --

-- and the click and rewind and --

CUT TO

ADAM moving toward the screen and we are back at the moment where the KLAN GUY says something only now as he speaks ADAM says the words --

ADAM
(with practiced skill)
Kill 'em while they're young, I always
say.
(and as MARVIN KRAMER goes
mad again --)

CUT TO

ADAM, driving his Saab through the streets of Chicago, a six pack of local beer beside him. On the left, skyscrapers; on the right, Lake Michigan, and as he signals for a turn --

CUT TO

ADAM, driving through the streets, a six pack of local beer beside him -- but we can see it's a different local beer. On the left, smaller skyscrapers; on his right this river --

-- this huge river --

-- has to be the Mississippi and that's what it is. ADAM comes to a light, stops, consults a map -- we can see now he needs a shave, has the dirt of the road on him --

-- welcome to Memphis. Late afternoon.

Memphis is not, excepting the river, such a beautiful city. As the light changes --

CUT TO

A single row of twenty condo units -- these are spacious places, red roofed, with the river nearby. A broad brick wall surrounds the place. AN ARMED GUARD works the only gate.

ADAM pulls up to the guy, stops. He leans out of the guardhouse.

ADAM

Mrs. Lee Booth please.
(and on those words --)

CUT TO

LEE CAYHALL BOOTH flying out of her front door, hugging ADAM.

LEE

This is better than winning the lottery.
(very southern now)
I swear, you're gonna turn heads when
you grow up.

LEE is a knockout. Slender blue-eyed tan, fifty years old. She is barefoot, wears jeans, an oversized man's white shirt. Her hair's in a ponytail, just starting to gray.

Probably the word "knockout" needs a qualifier. She is a knockout considering. Considering she's been battling being a drunk for twenty-five years.

ADAM

(he thinks she is
mysterious and just
wonderful)
Hello, Aunt Lee.
(as they head inside --)

CUT TO

Just a terrific bedroom -- large, with large windows overlooking the Mississippi. ADAM AND LEE move into the doorway. She looks at him for approval.

LEE

(delighted -- very
Marv Albert)
Yesss!
(now from that --)

CUT TO

THE KITCHEN. It's large, well equipped. LEE is getting out

the ingredients for cocktails. ADAM, showered and changed, watches.

LEE
It's so great they transferred you here.
Permanent, I hope.

ADAM
(uncomfortable)
Probably closer to three months.

LEE
(back to us, toiling away)
Are you allowed to talk about it or is
it one of those "privileged" things?

ADAM
(deep breath)
I'm here to save your father.
(beat. Then --)

ZOOM TO

LEE, whirling on him.

LEE
(a burst)
Whyyy?
(and as she runs past a
shocked ADAM --)

CUT TO

THE TERRACE. Evening now. Gorgeous view of the Mississippi and beyond, the city. Many tall buildings.

He is seated at a table dressed as before, sipping a beer. He rises as LEE enters, carrying a tray. She has changed clothes, less casual now. And that delighted woman who burst through the front door is not among us. She puts the tray down -- it holds a cocktail shaker and a glass for ADAM, a large glass of coffee for her.

LEE
Forgive the opera -- it was sincere, I
admit that, but didn't seem long on
family values.

ADAM
(finishes his beer, pours
himself a drink)
No sympathy for him at all?
(drinks, watches as she
sips her coffee)

LEE

(watching as he drinks his
cocktail)

If it's a lovely day and the air
conditioner is on. Forget that, I was
being smartass. Look, my father and I
have not been close since I was a kid.
He was not Ozzie Nelson.

(beat)

And obviously I was not without flaw.

(drinks coffee)

I fled home when I was eighteen, went to
Nashville, tried to sing, met Phelps,
married. When the bombing happened, I
got very drunk, told him which part of
the Cayhall family tree I came from.

ADAM

He didn't know 'til then?

LEE

You can believe that one, Sugar. No, I
did not take out ads saying my daddy was
a racist killer for the Ku Klux Klan.

(drinks)

Phelps Booth is from a leading family
here -- they have kept my secret.

ADAM

Won't be, not much longer.

CUT TO

LEE. She fiddles with her glass of coffee.

LEE

Personally, I cannot wait for the social
pages -- "Lee Booth, daughter of the
murderer, was resplendent in her blood
red Armani."

ADAM

Don't you think it best I find my own
place?

LEE

I like company, Adam -- sometimes I like
it a lot.

ADAM

You're divorced?

LEE

A civilized separation -- I attend all
the important social events.

CUT TO

ADAM. He finishes his drink, pours a second glassful.

ADAM

Big day tomorrow.

(sips)

Tell me what he looks like.

LEE

(shrugs)

Your guess.

ADAM

(surprised)

Haven't been once in ten years?

LEE

I wrote when he got there asking to
come. He wrote back saying to stay out
of his life. I wrote twice more.
"Return to sender."

ADAM

(finishes his drink,
stands)

I'm sure it hasn't been easy.

LEE

(big)

Don't weep for me, kid.

(and now she rises, points
off into the night)

ADAM

(doesn't get it)

What?

LEE

See that building?

CUT TO

A TALL BUILDING IN THE DISTANCE. Most of the lights are off.

ADAM (OVER)

So?

LEE (OVER)

Top floor?

CAMERA focuses on the top floor. The lights are on here.

LEE (OVER, contd)
She lives there.

CUT TO

ADAM, confused, looking at LEE.

LEE
The mother. Ruth Kramer. Paces, all
night long. Still.
(as ADAM turns, stares out)

CUT TO

THE LIT WINDOWS. CLOSER.

LEE (OVER)
Save her some tears.

HOLD ON RUTH KRAMER's lit window. Then --

CUT TO

THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA, the next morning. Muddy Waters singing
away.

CUT TO

ADAM, driving along Route 61 past a sign that informs us that
Parchman is just up ahead. He is a very nervous young man.

THE DELTA is overpoweringly flat. Cotton fields and soybean
fields on either side. Rusty tractors doing their best. Old
shacks and trailer homes.

You don't want to live here -- but -- this is the birth-place
of The Blues. Not hard to see why.

ADAM turns off the highway and we --

CUT TO

PARCHMAN PENITENTIARY. Not much visible from the entrance.
ADAM is stopped by the main gate. A woman in uniform is
pointing toward a red brick building.

CUT TO

A PHOTOGRAPH OF A HANDSOME MAN, mid-30's. This is the
Governor of the State of Mississippi, DAVID MCCALLISTER.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

LUCAS MANN in his office. The prison attorney. Good guy. Brown workshirt, chinos. As ADAM is ushered in, he holds out his hand.

LUCAS MANN

Garner Goodman called from Chicago, told me pretty much everything. Hope it works -- we never killed yet without a lawyer.

(beat)

How you going to tell Sam who you are?

ADAM

I'm sure it will come up naturally in conversation -- the important thing is that he takes me on. We have plenty of time to talk about family -- Mr. Goodman thought three months.

CUT TO

MANN. The messenger from Corinth.

LUCAS MANN

Fifth Circuit lifted his stay this morning. I took Sam a copy. I wouldn't want to face him today. Execution's set for early August. He dies in 28 days.

CUT TO

ADAM. A kick in the teeth. Jesus.

NOTE: The instant MANN says the number above, this happens. The number 28 appears in small text in the bottom left hand corner of the screen.

And stays there.

And stays there. And when it's the next day, the instant that happens, the number becomes 27. And remains until the next time shift. And when we're at the last day, the numbers become hours.

Getting smaller all the time.

The numbers will not be an intrusion once we become used to them. Only when they change will we notice them. As time grows shorter.

And shorter still.

CUT TO

A flat cotton field with an ordinary one story flat building set in the middle. As we draw closer --

CUT TO

ADAM driving slowly toward it. The place is tiny, unexpectedly so. He parks, gets out, briefcase in hand, looks around. This is the Maximum Security Unit. MSU. Death Row.

PAN TO

The one story building, surrounded by the chain link fence, barbed wire on the top. Guard towers, but not all that high. A couple of fenced in recreation areas attach to the flat building. A basketball pole with a net --

-- but nobody plays.

CUT BACK TO ADAM

And now we see why: heat.

In just the few moments it took to look around, ADAM is already wet. This is Mississippi, but it is more. This is July in the Delta, and some people might say Cairo while others could opt for the African equator.

But a lot of people feel that right here is the hottest spot in the world.

And we must never forget that.

A GUARD (OVER)

Keys!

ADAM looks up and THE GUARD in the tower is lowering a red bucket. ADAM takes out his car keys, drops them in and as the bucket starts to rise --

CUT TO

A GATE, sliding back. ADAM steps through. The gate slides shut. Only when that is accomplished does the second gate slide open. This is how it is here: always the double gates.

CUT TO

SERGEANT PACKER, moving toward ADAM as the second gate opens. PACKER is stocky and black, very powerful, with massive arms.

SERGEANT PACKER
 (puts out an enormous hand)
 Sergeant Packer.

ADAM
 (as they shake)
 Adam Hall.

SERGEANT PACKER
 (not a question)
 Here to see Sam.
 (ADAM nods)
 Spread.

ADAM spreads his legs, leans against the fence, and as PACKER starts expertly to frisk him --

CUT TO

THE TWO OF THEM by an outside door which PACKER is unlocking.

SERGEANT PACKER
 Conference room.
 (gestures for ADAM to
 enter. As ADAM does --)
 I'll get him.
 (and as he firmly shuts the
 door --)

CUT TO

ADAM in the conference room, trying not to jump at the sound of the metal door. However nervous he was in the car, well, that's squared.

THE CONFERENCE ROOM is where lawyers meet clients. It is 30 by 12 with a divider up the middle. Bright fluorescent lighting, a concrete floor. At one end, a noisy air conditioner in its death throes.

Room for several lawyers, but the place is now empty. The divider is brick the first three feet, then a wooden counter for papers and note taking. Above the brick is a bright green thick metal grating that runs to the ceiling.

There is a slit, 6 inches by 12, that allows the sliding of papers. It is through that slit that lawyer and client come face to face.

ADAM takes a chair in the center of the room, sits. Gets comfortable. Or tries to. Can't. Now he goes to the chair at the end closest to the door he has entered. Takes off his jacket. Puts it on the next chair. Now he rolls up his sleeves. Now he tries to get comfortable again. Can't.

Gets up, goes to the air-conditioner, sticks his face against it. Barely a breeze, but lots of clanking.

CUT TO

THE DOOR ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE DIVIDER, THE PRISONERS' DOOR.

It opens.

PACKER stands there.

Not alone.

He is with a man we can't see clearly yet. But he is wearing a bright red jumpsuit, and his hands are cuffed behind his back. He turns his back to PACKER. The cuffs are unlocked. PACKER leaves without a word, the door closes. A sharp sound.

THE TWO MEN are alone.

CUT TO

SAM CAYHALL in the flesh, staring dead at ADAM.

Not a lot of flesh, actually. We are seeing a very pale, thin man approaching 70. His hair is long, gray and oily, severely slicked back. He has five days' worth of salt and pepper stubble.

Two last things: the eyes are startling, bright, penetrating. And there is clearly about him the musk of violence. When he speaks, unless otherwise specified, his voice is calm.

SAM
(kind of curious)
Who the fuck are you?

CUT TO

ADAM. Not the most gracious of greetings; he hides his surprise, produces a card, slides it through the slit.

ADAM
Adam Hall, sir, from Kravitz and Bane.

CUT TO

SAM. He glances at the card, glances at ADAM. He pulls out a blue pack of Montclair cigarettes, lights one with a disposable lighter, inhales, studies ADAM again.

SAM
You don't look like a kike.

CUT TO

ADAM. It's going better and better.

ADAM
I'm not Jewish.

CUT TO

SAM
Funny, I thought that was the law.

And now he starts to do something he does constantly: marks off the size of the room he is in, pacing carefully as he moves --

SAM
What do you want, kid, milk money?

ADAM
I want to represent you.

SAM
(pacing slowly away)
I get offers every week -- famous lawyers, rich guys. Turned 'em all down. They all wanted something -- not you, though. You look pure.

ADAM
How I look isn't important, it's can I do the job? And I can. I hate the death penalty and everything about it.

CUT TO

SAM. CLOSE UP. For a moment he stops his measuring.

SAM
Me, I'm for it.
(beat)
Not in my case, of course. But other than that, kill 'em all.

CUT TO

ADAM, watching as SAM moves slowly toward him.

SAM
(one word)
Deal.

ADAM
(confused)
Meaning?

SAM
You don't know what a "deal" is? What kind of an idiot-child ambulance chasing Jew-bastard shyster are you?

ADAM
You don't have to talk like that.

SAM
You don't like how I talk? Fuck you. Anything else you don't like? Fuck you. I'm dying in 28 days, fuck you, fuck you, fuck you.

(beat, calmly)
Now, where was I? Oh, yes, I had just selected you, you out of all the barristers in the country, out of all the splendid counselors and advocates, out of all the jurisprudential pundits, because I need what you so obviously possess in abundance: experience.

(louder)
Shit, son, have you ever seen a courtroom?

ADAM
Don't insult me.

SAM
Have you ever tried a death case? --

ADAM
-- no --

SAM
-- ever tried any case? --
(as ADAM hesitates)
-- have you fucking graduated law school? --

ADAM
(starting to lose it)
-- I was fucking head of my fucking class in fucking law school, mister, and I tried a motion just last month --

SAM
-- did you win? --

ADAM

-- I came damn close --

SAM

(shaking his head)

-- the Jews are out to kill me -- I
always thought they were and you're the
final proof --

(turning, starting for the
door)

-- if you hurry, you can still make
recess --

(moving away)

CUT TO

ADAM, tracking SAM on the other side of the barrier.

ADAM

(exploding)

-- smart -- turn your back -- it's what
you're good at -- but just know that you
are running from the only person on this
earth who gives a shit if you live or
die, the only person on this earth who
will guarantee you will not die, who
will not lose you to the gas chamber.

CUT TO

SAM BY THE DOOR. Then, slowly, he faces ADAM.

CUT TO

ADAM. Waiting. Taut.

CUT TO

SAM. Voice low, dead.

SAM

You're Eddie's kid -- you talk just like
your father -- you're Eddie's kid come
to haunt me ...

CUT TO

ADAM AND SAM, wiped out. They just stare at each other. HOLD
briefly, then --

CUT TO

ADAM AND LUCAS MANN, walking quickly along a corridor in the administration building at Parchman. Up ahead is the main door. Both are taut.

LUCAS MANN

Shit --

ADAM

-- I totally agree --

LUCAS MANN

-- you're absolutely sure he knows who you are?

ADAM

(nods)

Like I said, it kind of found its way into the natural flow of conversation.

LUCAS MANN

(upset)

Then how can he not have decided?

ADAM

(so is he)

It's his call and he said he'd tell me in the morning.

CUT TO

THE DOOR as ADAM bangs it open and they move out into the blinding heat of the day. MANN suddenly calls out.

LUCAS MANN

George?

CUT TO

COLONEL GEORGE W. NUGENT getting out of his car. NUGENT is 52, in a makeshift uniform, beautifully pressed. No matter how humid it gets, he is always beautifully turned out. He has a crew cut, thin arms, and the greatest Christmas present he ever received was a lifetime subscription to "Soldier of Fortune" magazine.

LUCAS MANN

(as he and ADAM approach)

This is Adam Hall -- I told you he was coming. Adam, George is our Acting Superintendent.

(beat)

Sam hasn't decided yet.

GEORGE C. NUGENT

Ideally, we'd all like him to have a lawyer --

(to ADAM)

-- but understand something -- this is my first execution and I need for it to be perfect.

(to MANN)

What are the death odds as of now?

LUCAS MANN

(hesitates, glances at

ADAM. Then --)

I don't see an out -- Goodman did a wonderful job -- Adam can claim Sam had rotten representation but it won't wash.

(ADAM nods)

GEORGE C. NUGENT

(to ADAM)

So what'll you try?

ADAM

(shrugs)

Brilliant last minute heroics, I hope.

GEORGE C. NUGENT

Don't do too good a job.

(and he walks off)

CUT TO

ADAM AND MANN staring after him.

ADAM

"Death odds"? What language was that in?

LUCAS MANN

Asshole's so excited he might try gassing Sam tonight.

(Now, from them --)

CUT TO

DEATH ROW. Early morning. As we see it --

The number in the bottom left changes from 28 to this: 27.

We are at one end, looking down along the corridor. Less than a dozen cells line one wall, all but one taken. (We'll get to that one later.)

We hear the sounds of morning: radios carrying country music, TVs playing news, the mutter of speech. Plus this: someone is using a typewriter.

We see: arms and hands. That's all. Obviously the convicts cannot stick their heads through the bars of their cells. Except for their one hour of activity per day, they cannot see each other. So they stick their arms and hands through and talk and gesture, always to other unseen men.

There is no air-conditioning. It is humid, and always brutally hot. THE CONVICTS are all in their underwear shorts.

THE GATE SLIDES OPEN. A breakfast cart pushes into view. As trays of food are placed into the small cell openings --

CUT TO

THE BREAKFAST TRAY GUARD. As he comes near SAM's cell.

TRAY GUARD

Hey, old man?

CUT TO

SAM in his cell. He sits on his cot, a battered antique Royal portable on his knees. A Montclair between his lips. Law books are scattered all over.

SAM

(not looking up)

Don't bother me, I'm doing legal work
for these assholes --

(louder)

-- and I'm underpaid.

The cell is like the others -- six by nine. It holds a cot, it has a stainless steel combination toilet and sink unit. A black and white TV. A radio. A twelve month wall calendar and a bunch of lined up law books. A cardboard box full of legal files on the floor. Dead bugs too.

Now the TRAY GUARD stops, shoves the tray in. Quietly --

TRAY GUARD

Cook asked if you'd start thinking about
your last meal. Special requests can
take time.

SAM

Tell him not to worry, I ain't gonna
die.

(MORE)

SAM (contd)
(typing slowly away)
My grandkid's rode in on a white horse
to save me.
(as he continues to
work --)

CUT TO

SAM, carefully measuring the perimeter of the Conference Room, step by step. He is dressed in the awful red jumpsuit, chain smokes. ADAM is studying a typed sheet of paper.

SAM
I assume now you know what a deal is.
Those are my terms.

ADAM
You sure on all three? They're paying a
lot these days for movie and book
rights.

SAM
Don't shit me, kid -- what would I spend
the money on?

ADAM
Family?

SAM
There's Lee and brother Donnie and
neither one's come these ten years.
Ordered 'em not to. I trashed my own
life when I lived it. Next.

ADAM
Why do you want the right to fire me
without cause?

SAM
Because I think you might be an asshole.
Next.

ADAM
This last one's a mistake -- "no
clemency." Governor McCallister can
save you. We may need that.

CUT TO

SAM. CLOSE UP. This pours out and it's virulent.

SAM

If I could take David McCallister into the chamber with me, I would leave with a smile that would light the world. You hear me now -- those kids died in 1967 and I was tried and got a hung jury -- they retried the next year and I got another hung jury and I was free, free for twelve years. Until McCallister used me to start his political career.

ADAM

He had new evidence -- your Klan boss testified against you, he put you here, not McCallister.

SAM

(no doubt about it)
No clemency.

CUT TO

ADAM sighs, then takes his pen, signs two copies, passes one through to SAM who takes it, folds it up.

ADAM

Since we are now officially in business, how's if I start saving your life?

(SAM grunts)

I have to ask questions -- nothing new, but don't lie to me and don't lose your temper.

SAM

I don't have a temper anymore.

ADAM

(yellow pad in hand)

Did you do it?

SAM

(exploding)

What the hell kind of idiot Jew question is that? -- the jury said I did it -- the appeals courts said I did it -- that's all that matters.

ADAM

(ignoring, calm)

Fine. Let's move on. Why did you join the Klan?

SAM

(exploding even louder)

Dumber still -- why would I not join the Klan? My father was a member. My uncles. All of us.

ADAM

(going right on)

O.k., the Kramer twins were the fifth bombing -- what about the real estate office in Jackson?

SAM

Lost my virginity on that one --

ADAM

-- newspaper office? --

SAM

-- a fireball --

ADAM

-- the Hirsch Temple? --

SAM

-- best one yet --

ADAM

-- the Kramer office --

SAM

-- no doubt I did that -- never meant to kill anybody though --

ADAM

-- the Pinder home had six people sleeping -- it was four in the morning when that bomb went off --

SAM

-- and no one was hurt because I put the bomb by the garage -- I told you, we never tried to kill people --

CUT TO

ADAM. He is trying not to show it but this is devastating for him -- he had not hoped for this tone or these answers --

ADAM

Then what in the world were you trying to do?

SAM

(patiently)

Keep the Africans where they had always been and keep the Jews from giving them the money to change.

ADAM

No remorse at all?

SAM

Sure. Shitloads of remorse I got caught.

ADAM

And the twins?

SAM

Casualties of war.

ADAM

And the father? -- losing his legs and killing himself?

SAM

Probably a sick fuck to begin with.

(staring at ADAM who is drained)

Hey -- you want to pack it in? Do it! What'd you think you'd find? Grandpa Do-Good? Expect me to go all blubbery and kiss your ass and sing psalms of forgiveness?

ADAM

I don't know what I expected.

SAM

The Klan was fighting a war -- and we woulda won but we started bombing the Jews. With all their money they got the FBI and they beat us. If we'd just stuck to whipping up on niggers, world would have been a different place.

(ADAM just studies the old man)

Probably sorry you ever left Chicago.

ADAM

You got that right.

He rises, grabs is stuff, starts toward the exit door, speaks with his back almost to SAM, so the question comes as a surprise.

ADAM (contd)
Who helped you with the Kramer job?

CUT TO

SAM.

SAM
Helped me?

FLASHCUT TO

THE KRAMER OFFICE BUILDING. Night. It is 1967 and two men move quickly toward the back entrance. They carry dynamite.

SAM is one.

THE SECOND MAN is hard to make out in the darkness. Except that he is young and tall and slender and wears a cap pulled down. The cap says this on it: USA. (His name, we will find in time, is ROLLIE WEDGE.)

CUT TO

SAM in the Conference Room.

SAM
(dead honest)
Always worked alone.
(HOLD, then --)

CUT TO

DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS. ADAM hurries up to an office building in a mall designated area -- only pedestrian traffic. He checks the tenants list, hurries to the elevator as we

CUT TO

A RICHLY DECORATED SUITE OF OFFICES. This is the Kravitz & Bane Memphis branch, small and sedate. BAKER COOLEY, who is also small and sedate, is giving ADAM a brief tour. COOLEY is the branch's Managing Partner. This is all very polite.

BAKER COOLEY
We'll set you up in our conference room,
Mr. Hall -- the fact is we don't use it
all that much.

ADAM
Glad I won't be putting anybody out.

BAKER COOLEY

Garner Goodman filled me in on your needs. Happy to be of service.

(beat)

After all, this isn't permanent.

ADAM

More like a month, Mr. Cooley.

(as COOLEY opens a door --)

CUT TO

THE CONFERENCE ROOM. Half a dozen chairs set around a table in the center. Law books line walls floor to ceiling.

BAKER COOLEY

Hopefully this should prove adequate.

(ADAM nods)

Ours is a quiet office; we do mainly corporate work for banks.

ADAM

(beat)

Understood. You don't want your names in the papers -- you're not happy to be of service at all.

BAKER COOLEY

(beat)

Understood.

(as he turns, leaves --)

CUT TO

THE ROOM as ADAM takes it all in. It feels pretty big just now. He stares around at all the books.

ADAM

(a little awed)

Don't fuck up.

(Now, from that --)

CUT TO

ADAM'S VIDEO. Black and white. A POLICE CAR pulls up to a courthouse -- and freezes as we

CUT TO

ADAM AND LEE in her apartment living room, evening. She drinks coffee from a tall glass and if it's not clear yet it will be: there are a lot of things she would rather be watching. ADAM works the remote with one hand, sips from a can of beer held in the other.

ADAM
 (We're on them now --
 cannot see the screen)
 How did you hear about it?

LEE
 (sips, thinks)
 Your father called -- he was crying and
 he said, "he did it again," over and
 over -- I was always good at calming
 Eddie but not that day.

CUT TO

THE VIDEO. The police car doors open and SAM is led out.
 This was a quarter century back -- he was great looking.

CUT TO

LEE, staring at her father.

LEE
 (soft)
 When I was little, I always thought my
 Daddy was so beautiful --
 (beat)
 I'd like to stop now.

ADAM
 I need your memories -- I need to know
 all about him --

LEE
 (sharply)
 -- you don't want to know all about
 him --

ADAM
 -- come on now, you were a family, tell
 me about holidays, tell me about the 4th
 of July --

LEE
 (looks at him blankly)
 -- for what conceivable reason? --

ADAM
 (fast)
 -- because the 4th means firecrackers
 and firecrackers mean explosives and the
 State of Mississippi is about to kill
 your father because of his supposed
 skill with explosives -- and I don't
 think he had any --

CUT TO

LEE. They really like each other and they are also blood but this is no fun at all.

LEE

(each word distinct)

We had beautiful fireworks.

(rises)

There. Now shall I fake a headache or may I simply leave?

ADAM

God, you and your father, you love to cut and run.

LEE

Running away has always been my salvation, thank you very much.

(starts to go)

ADAM

(calling after her)

And what did my father mean when he told you Sam did it again? Did what again?

CUT TO

LEE in the doorway. Turning --

LEE

(moved)

It's going to be worse than I thought -- you're like a terrier -- you won't stop until you get your bloodbath.

(and she is gone)

CUT TO

ADAM staring after her. He fiddles with the remote, puts it down, chugs his beer. Now --

CUT TO

A WHITE VAN DRIVING SLOWLY UP TO A BUILDING. We're still on Parchman Prison grounds. The instant the van appears --

-- the number in the bottom left changes from 27 to this: 26.

The van stops. PACKER gets out leading SAM. SAM is wearing his red prison jumpsuit as always. And he has the cuffs on behind his back.

He is also shackled -- his legs are chained together so he can only take very small steps. As PACKER opens the door of the building --

CUT TO

THE TWIG -- it's a small branch of the law library -- two tables and ADAM already there, a bunch of books open in front of him --

ADAM

I want to go with cruel and unusual --

SAM

(scowls as PACKER unlocks
his arms, bends, unlocks
his legs)

-- you're some fucking moron if you
think that has a chance --

ADAM

(ignoring, going on)

I think I have a take that's interesting
-- in 1984 the Mississippi Legislature
passed a law which gives death row
prisoners the right to choose between
the gas chamber and lethal injection --

SAM

(rubbing where the chains
were)

-- but it only applies to people
convicted after 1984 --

(as if talking to a child)

-- and since I was sentenced in 1980, if
you could subtract, you'd see it doesn't
do me any good.

SERGEANT PACKER

Sam's sharp on the law -- pay him mind --
(as he goes --)

SAM

-- that's right -- you might learn
something -- I've got more clients than
you do -- I do legal work for some guys
on The Row --

CUT TO

ADAM AND SAM. This all goes fast now. SAM paces, smokes.

ADAM

(to SAM)

Gotten any stays yet?

(as SAM shakes his head

"no")

Then you're just as much a fucking moron
as I am and I think it might do you a
lot of good.

SAM

-- speaking as the gassee, may I
remind counsel I'm as dead one way as
the other --

ADAM

-- of course you are -- there's going to
be no miracle reversal -- no one is
suggesting you weren't involved with the
killings. But you ought to be able to
live out your days. All we're after is
this: time. If we can just get one
judge to grant a stay, we can pursue
that through the courts for years. Now
help me -- how many chamber murders
since you've been here?

SAM

(pacing away)

Four have died within twenty yards of me --

ADAM

Any mistakes made?

SAM

(for the first time, he
almost smiles)

You could say that.

ADAM

Who was first?

CUT TO

SAM, and he never stops moving and the CAMERA is in front of
him, following him around the walls.

SAM

First wouldda been ... wouldda been ...
(got it now)

Right, Teddy Meeks. This was '82, I'd
been here two years and living in a
dream world -- they weren't killing

(MORE)

SAM (contd)
 people anymore. Teddy was due to die
 but everyone figured he'd get a stay --
 people liked Teddy, he was such a sweet
 little nigger --

ADAM
 -- quit trying to bait me, all right? --

SAM
 -- I said he was a sweet nigger, didn't
 I? --

ADAM
 (it's hot now)
 -- just watch your mouth --

SAM
 -- why are you so touchy? -- what are
 you hiding? --

ADAM
 -- not a thing --

SAM
 -- when you're driving and some drunk of
 a jungle bunny cuts you off with his
 ghetto music blasting, do you think,
 "why, that dastardly African-American"?
 Bullshit. You think "the dumb nigger."
 I do and I know you do -- I especially
 know you do --

ADAM
 You don't know anything about me.

SAM
 The apple don't fall far from the tree.

ADAM
 (staring at him)
 You are really a sick old fart.

SAM
 Gotcha, didn't I?

Silence in the room -- it could either detonate or not --

ADAM
 (staring at his yellow pad
 now)
 Teddy Meeks was due to die and ... ?

SAM

Right. Sweet little Teddy.

(beat)

You seen the chamber yet?

(ADAM shakes his head)

CUT TO

SAM, pacing the perimeter, smoking away.

SAM

Well, there's a little room off to one side where the executioner mixes the solution -- the sulfuric acid's in a canister he takes to a tube that runs into the chamber itself.

(kind of amused)

Well, when everyone realized Teddy was going to die they also realized they hadn't contacted the state executioner -- so they did. But he was drunk. He was also, get this, it's true, a plumber. Anyway, this plumber mixes the first batch, puts the canister into the tube, pulls the lever -- and inside you got Teddy holding his breath and outside you got Lucas Mann and the other prison officials and the spectators waiting for Teddy to inhale. He holds his breath and he holds his breath -- but finally he has to inhale. And he does.

(beat)

The waiting goes on. Until Teddy realizes he's still here and everybody else realizes the plumber has fucked up. So he mixes a new batch and starts over again -- ten minutes have passed with Teddy still strapped tight. The second time the sulfuric acid lands where it's supposed to in a bowl under the chair, and the plumber pulls the lever dropping the cyanide tablets -- the vapors rise, Teddy is holding his breath, everybody's watching, waiting, and then he inhales --

(beat)

-- and fucking goes crazy. Starts shaking and jerking and all you can see are the whites of his eyes and there's this metal pole just behind the chair and Teddy begins to hit his head against the pole -- he's trying to kill himself by mashing his brains out before the gas

(MORE)

SAM (contd)

can get him and his skull starts to shatter and by now he's foaming at the mouth and one minute goes by and another and another and all the witnesses are sorry they had supper and when he was finally dead the medical asshole wrote that death was instantaneous but Packer who had to watch told me it was the longest ten minutes of his life.

(beat -- he studies ADAM now)

I just realized something.

ADAM

What?

SAM

You're scared of me ...

(ADAM does not reply.

HOLD)

CUT TO

ADAM in his office, the Conference Room of Kravitz & Bane, Memphis. He is working on a Mac powerbook. He is also talking on the phone, the receiver cradled by his neck. Books and papers are strewn all the hell around.

ADAM

You ready? I'm going to send it now --

CUT TO

GARNER GOODMAN in his zoo of an office in Chicago, blinds drawn. He has a large computer which he hates and is on the speakerphone back to ADAM.

GOODMAN

I'll probably screw it up --

CUT TO

ADAM. He clicks once.

GOODMAN (OVER)

Tell me when you're going to do it --

ADAM

(can't help a smile)

It's there, Mister Goodman.

CUT TO

GOODMAN'S COMPUTER SCREEN. The first pages of a brief are visible.

GOODMAN

I hate all this -- I'm a quill pen man --
(looks at the screen)
-- your opening's too general.

CUT TO

ADAM. Nodding.

ADAM

I was afraid it was, but I've got so many citations here I wasn't sure where to start -- I can write seventy-five pages easy --

GOODMAN (OVER)

(sharply)

Nossir --

CUT TO

GOODMAN at his desk.

GOODMAN

Adam, you've never done a brief when it mattered like this, so listen -- judges hate length -- they have to read these things -- thirty pages at the outside -- thirty perfectly precise pages -- and always keep one thing in mind: what is special about your case?

(beat)

Tell me.

CUT TO

ADAM. Trying to get it just right --

ADAM

I am saying it is cruel and unusual punishment for the State of Mississippi to kill the oldest man in America on death row by gassing him to death.

(beat)

Have I got a shot?

CUT TO

GOODMAN in his office.

GOODMAN

Absolutely.

(But as he says it, he is
shaking his head)

CUT TO

MEMPHIS AIRPORT. A plane has landed and a bunch of passengers are moving along toward the baggage area.

Some of the passengers seem foreign born, so perhaps the plane came from afar. But then others have southern accents so perhaps it didn't. Can't tell.

Won't ever be able to.

NOW A MAN comes walking. 50, big, a good face, attractive and kind.

He is reading a newspaper article -- we can see pictures of SAM and ADAM. And the headline: "HE'S HIS GRANDSON."

THE MAN folds the paper neatly, puts on a cap that has these letters: USA.

ROLLIE WEDGE has come to Memphis.

We lose him in the crowd.

CUT TO

THE CALICO MARINA, a not fancy place with a not fancy dock. It sits on a small river. Mid afternoon.

A MOTORBOAT is visible in the distance, rounding a bend. ADAM is in the boat and with a mountain of a man, WYN LETTNER, 60.

CUT TO

THE MOTORBOAT. Long shot. We can make out they are both drinking beer.

ADAM (OVER)

You came here in '64.

LETTNER (OVER)

Yessir -- just after the three civil rights kids were murdered. Mr. Hoover sent me in to Mississippi to bust the Klan.

ADAM (OVER)

Well, I came here to talk about Klan secrets -- because if there were any, it would have been your job to know them.

CUT TO

THE RIVER. The sun is just starting to fall. A little later in the afternoon. The boat has stopped. LETTNER is fishing. A bunch of empty beer cans are on the floor of the boat. Neither man is feeling much pain.

LETTNER

Son, I understand Sam's your grandpa, but you're crazy if you think he had an accomplice.

ADAM

I think he was the accomplice.

(LETTNER gives him a
disbelieving look)

LETTNER

-- look at it logically -- Sam is a violent man -- and the bombings stopped after his arrest --

ADAM

-- of course -- because of the deaths
-- no one got hurt in the other
explosions --

CUT TO

ADAM, opening another beer.

LETTNER

-- you're just scrambling and you know it.

ADAM

Look -- Mr. Lettner -- you've got to help me --

LETTNER

(big --)

-- what if I don't want to help you? --
(ADAM is taken aback)

CUT TO

LETTNER. He casts out.

LETTNER

I've had to kill people -- people have tried to kill me -- I've been around violent men all my life. Fuck 'em. let them taste the other end of violence. See how goddam brave they really are. Sam's got time to say goodbye. The Kramer widow was a wonderful woman -- lost three men -- she never had that chance. I feel for the victims.

(beat)

And face facts -- even if your second man did exist, it wouldn't matter. Sam's gonna die in what, twenty-three days?

ADAM

Twenty-two.

(and the instant those words are spoken --)

The number in the bottom left changes from 26 to this: 22.

LETTNER

It's too late for new evidence. It's been over twenty years. No judge on earth would believe you. Live with that.

(HOLD on ADAM briefly, very disappointed. Then --)

CUT TO

THE CONFERENCE ROOM where SAM and ADAM first met -- only now there are a couple of changes: the air conditioning has broken so the heat is unbearable, that's one. A second is this: at the other end of the small room, another death row prisoner, A BLACK KID OF 20, is meeting with his lawyer. As ADAM does his best to get comfortable --

-- the number in the bottom left changes from 22 to this: 21.

CUT TO

SAM, agitated, coming in, PACKER with him. SAM turns quickly so his cuffs can be removed, then starts across toward ADAM --

SAM

(steamed)

-- I just found out I have to take a pre-execution physical -- to see if I'm fit enough to die -- well, I won't do it! --

(MORE)

SAM (contd)

(ADAM just sits there)

-- write a brief, fix that for me.

ADAM

-- Sam, I promise you there's more pressing business -- I'm sorry, but the Mississippi Supreme Court turned down cruel and unusual -- I've appealed to Federal District --

SAM

(calm)

-- forget that one, that's Slattery --

ADAM

-- you're not even upset --

SAM

-- I've been losing for ten years -- I'm like those white guys who always lose to --

(beat -- now, a provoking smile)

-- you know, the Nigger Globetrotters.

Long pause. Then --

CUT TO

ADAM, no way to stop it, they're into it now.

ADAM

How come you didn't poison my father?

SAM

Time for our Eddie talk, that it? Well, I'd be careful.

ADAM

You destroyed him, you must feel great about that. But he wasn't a bigot.

SAM

I destroyed nothing -- he never wanted to understand. He hated the Klan, he was ashamed of me. You know how that feels?

ADAM

You could have quit.

SAM

Why would I do that? -- I believed we were right --

ADAM

-- do you still?

SAM

Look what you got now -- AIDS and drugs and bastard children --

ADAM

-- and the killer bees --

SAM

-- don't be smug with me, you spoiled rotten shit, they came from Africa, didn't they?

ADAM

South America but that's close enough for you --

(boring in)

-- ever think it was your hate drove him away? --

SAM

Why you doing this?

ADAM

Because my life would be a lot easier if I could hate you.

SAM

But you don't.

ADAM

I'm working on it. Christ, you find out at sixteen you've got a grandfather alive, and that's so wonderful, and then you find out well, there's a little more to it, he's also this racist scumbag on Death Row for killing children --

(bigger)

-- how do you think that goes over in Show and Tell?

SAM

Boo fucking hoo.

CUT TO

THE BLACK KID AND HIS LAWYER, staring as this escalates --

ADAM

Why did you have him, if all you wanted was to ruin him?

SAM

You don't know shit -- Eddie was the best kid -- his sister was tough but Eddie was just so sweet -- I never once touched him -- never got after him bad, never cared who his friends were, not any of 'em, not even Quince --
(and on that name --)

CUT TO

ADAM. Stunned.

ADAM

Who?

SAM

Quince Lincoln was a nigger kid Eddie used to play with when he was young --

ADAM

His last words to me, they were about him.

SAM

(upset)

I don't know I want to hear this.

FLASHCUT TO

ADAM in his bedroom the afternoon of the death. EDDIE is in the doorway.

EDDIE HALL

So you'll be sure and clean up everything before your mother gets home.

ADAM

Clean up what?

EDDIE HALL

(shrug)

Doesn't matter.

(starts to go, stops)

You're a good boy, Adam. Never do a thing wrong.

(beat)

Quince was like that -- he never stole a thing.

(and as he closes the door)

ADAM waits in his bedroom. We know the sound of the gunshot is about to happen but he doesn't.

The wait goes on and on.

Finally, the explosion and we

CUT TO

ADAM in the prison.

ADAM

"Quince never stole a thing," he said.
(now on that --)

CUT TO

SAM. And for a moment he looks like SAM --

-- and then he collapses -- his face just falls apart and he starts to rock and cry out --

SAM

Aw, Jesus, aw Sweet Jesus, no, no,
please --

CUT TO

THE BLACK KID AND HIS LAWYER. Both of them staring, both of them frightened at what they see and

CUT TO

ADAM, and what has he wrought, God knows, but he's stunned, stunned and terrified and there's nothing he can do but watch as we

CUT TO

SAM, on his feet now, making sounds like a wounded animal and SERGEANT PACKER rushes in the doorway --

CUT TO

A LITTLE KID ON A SWING. Four years old, maybe five, and she could enter the world's freckle championship and win going away. Right now, she is swinging very high and enjoying the late afternoon sun.

No, we've never seen her before and won't see her again.

CAMERA BEGINS TO PULL BACK

Now we can tell there are a bunch of kids using swings -- boys and girls, white and black, all of them enjoying the late afternoon sun.

CAMERA KEEPS PULLING BACK

And we still have no idea where we are or why we are here. But now we can tell we're in a small park and the place is packed with children.

And it's beginning, vaguely, to feel familiar. Because yes, we have been to this place before.

Wasn't a park then, wasn't a playground.

KEEPS PULLING BACK

And this place is just gorgeous -- oak trees and maple trees and flower beds, begonias and geraniums -- other kids whiz on bikes around the perimeter.

We're in an oasis in the center of a town. A cop wanders around, greeting people, nodding to this woman, to that child --

KEEPS PULLING BACK AND BACK

Now a bronze statue --

-- lifesize --

-- two kids playing leapfrog --

-- we've met them --

-- the KRAMER TWINS --

-- this is where they were blown to hell --

KEEP PULLING PAST THE STATUE --

A brass plate on the statue says this:

JOHN KRAMER
JOSH KRAMER
DIED HERE
MARCH 2, 1962 -
APRIL 21, 1967

CAMERA STARTS TO SLOW

ADAM sits, staring at the statue, the surrounding park.

Exhausted, dazed, he does not move. Now --

ONE FINAL PULL BACK --

-- A REPORTER AND A PHOTOGRAPHER move in, and as the PHOTOGRAPHER starts taking pictures, ADAM flinches almost as though he'd been hit -- he starts to rise.

REPORTER

Mr. Cayhall? -- pose with the twins? --
make a great shot --

ADAM

(shocked)

No.

(backing away)

No.

CUT TO

ADAM running. Now --

CUT TO

A SHOT IN A TABLOID PAPER. ADAM is backing away -- in the background is the statue. The story is headlined "HAVING A HEART TO HEART." From the still picture --

CUT TO

ADAM RUNNING. FAST.

He is being chased by half a dozen reporters now. We are in a parking lot and up ahead is the Federal Courthouse in Jackson. As Adam runs toward the Courthouse --

-- the number in the bottom left changes from 21 to this: 20.

ADAM tears up the courthouse steps, dashes inside as the REPORTERS slow and stop, clearly pissed.

CUT TO

A VERY IMPRESSIVE OFFICE as ADAM is ushered in. It belongs to JUDGE F. FLYNN SLATTERY of the Federal District Court, who sits behind his desk. SLATTERY is pudgy with slit eyes. And not dumb.

SEVERAL PEOPLE are grouped to one side surrounding the GOVERNOR, DAVID MCCALLISTER -- we saw his picture already in LUCAS MANN'S OFFICE. HALF A DOZEN YOUNG LEGAL TYPES, the ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR. ROXBURGH. Now one of the group moves to greet ADAM. This is MONA STARK.

She is a woman with a reputation for toughness, but watching her now, that seems all wrong -- MONA looks like a young June Allyson. Late 20's, just adorable.

MONA STARK

(hand out)

I'm Mona Stark, Mr. Cayhall. I kind of clean up after Governor McCallister.

ADAM

Adam, please.

MONA STARK

Adam it shall be henceforth.

(conspiratorially)

This cruel and unusual petition of yours? Did you happen to know that Texas turned down an almost identical appeal just a little while ago?

ADAM

(nods)

My view is that Texas is miles ahead of Mississippi in many things, including stupidity.

(sparks are flying)

And did you happen to know that just before execution, my client gets to have a plug inserted in his rectum and a catheter into his penis, so he won't make a mess? That's a little bit cruel, don't you think? At the very least, it is unusual.

MONA STARK

It wouldn't be fair for me to comment on that since I don't have a penis.

ADAM

Are you bragging or complaining?
(before she can reply)

JUDGE SLATTERY

Gather 'round, please.

(quiet in the room)

This is a serious business, the death of a fellow human, and time is the purest gold.

(to ADAM)

Have you filed your appeal?

ADAM

You'll have it this afternoon.

JUDGE SLATTERY
(to MCCALLISTER)
And the State's response?

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
(a brief huddle)
If the issues are the same as the State
Supreme Court --

ADAM
-- they are --

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
-- tomorrow --

JUDGE SLATTERY
You'll have my decision Monday.
(to ADAM)
Can the Court expect additional filings?

ADAM
(surprised)
Are you asking my legal strategy, your
Honor?

JUDGE SLATTERY
Not at all, sir, but I'm delighted to
know you have one.
(beat)
I just don't want to be working around
the clock toward the end -- we all do
our best thinking when our heads are
clear.

ADAM
(It just pops out)
I'll try to keep your weekends free,
your Honor.

CUT TO

SLATTERY. He looks at ADAM a moment, then flicks his eyes
toward MCCALLISTER.

JUDGE SLATTERY
The court is not pleased with the media
interest this case has already aroused.
The court is also aware that publicity
is mother's milk to certain southern
governors.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
 (these two go back a long
 way)
 I know just the culprits you mean, your
 Honor.

JUDGE SLATTERY
 You have a co-star this time, I suspect.
 (to ADAM)
 Are you in cooperation with the media?

ADAM
 (head shake)
 I'm barely in cooperation with my
 client.

JUDGE SLATTERY
 See it stays that way.
 (brisk gesture -- the
 meeting is over)

CUT TO

ADAM, out the door and into the corridor and --

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER (OVER)
 I need a minute --

CUT TO

GOVERNOR DAVID MCCALLISTER moving alongside ADAM, MONA STARK,
 as always, close by.

DAVID MCCALLISTER is the youngest Governor in America. Lean
 and well dressed, he has a tousled quality that people take
 to. He is at the start of what is clearly going to be a major
 political career. This is a very bright man.

ADAM
 Sam can fire me if I even breath in your
 direction.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
 He's still that angry?

ADAM
 (almost has to laugh)
 Jesus, Governor, you prosecuted him, you
 went after the death penalty and you got
 it. Now what do you want?
 (MCCALLISTER opens a near
 door. ADAM glances at
 MONA STARK)
 (MORE)

ADAM (contd)
off the record, private, and alone.
(MCCALLISTER nods as we --)

CUT TO

A SMALL COURTROOM with the lights off. They enter.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
This is about clemency.

ADAM
I'm forbidden to ever ask.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
Fine, but you will. Because I can save
him --

ADAM
-- but you won't --

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
-- most likely not. But ...
(hard for him. ADAM waits)

CUT TO

MCCALLISTER. Close up.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
I'm not sure he should die.

CUT TO

ADAM watching.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
He's always admitted the bombings -- but
I was never sure he meant to kill those
children.

ADAM
I am sure -- someone else possessed the
intent to murder.
(beat)
You could always pardon him now, I'll
bet Sam wouldn't mind.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
(it's unexpected, but these
two like each other)
Make our lives a lot easier. But I need
new evidence, you know that. I hope you
find some.

CUT TO

MCCALLISTER. Dead honest now.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER

I could not live with myself if I failed
to pardon a man who did not deserve to
die.

(HOLD briefly, then --)

CUT TO

ADAM'S BEDROOM IN LEE'S APARTMENT. Afternoon.

We're looking at it from an angle so we can't see the whole
room, but we can hear ADAM moving stuff around --

-- HOLD --

-- only it isn't ADAM, it's WEDGE who moves into view. He is
very well dressed, wears gloves. His moves are quick, quiet,
experienced. As he exits the room --

CUT TO

LEE'S BEDROOM. Large and lovely and elegant and expensive.

There is, taking up one entire corner, a cascade of dolls and
stuffed animals -- and somehow they make the place sad.

WEDGE is stalking around. He opens a large leather
photography album, flips some pages -- takes out a photo which
we don't see --

-- and is gone.

CUT TO

A LITTLE BROWN HOUSE. Totally nondescript, shabby. We are in
a small town.

The number in the bottom left changes from 20 to this: 19.

LEE (OVER)

No memories at all?

ADAM (OVER)

None.

LEE (OVER)

You were born there, Adam -- that was
your home 'til Daddy was arrested and
your father took you away.

CUT TO

ADAM AND LEE. They sit in the driveway in her car, a burgundy Jaguar. A lot of ghosts in the air. ADAM finally gestures for her to drive on.

CUT TO

FARMLAND now. Poor. Few houses. It is a blinding afternoon, LEE AND ADAM are driving along. She is more upset than before.

LEE

Now we'll see where Aunt Lee grew up.

ADAM

You don't have to do this --

LEE

(sharp)

-- don't give me that. You've been panting to know about the family.

(ADAM nods)

CUT TO

THE JAGUAR, parked off a muddy two lane road. We are a long way from civilization now. The air is stifling.

CUT TO

AN ABANDONED WHITE FRAME HOUSE. Sagging. Weeds. But there are beautiful trees. ADAM AND LEE make their way around toward the back.

LEE

I bought this -- correction -- I had Phelps buy it for me after Mother died and Daddy went to jail.

ADAM

Why?

LEE

The truth? To burn it to the ground. Purge the Cayhalls and be done with it.

(beat)

Never had the guts.

(points)

There's my pecan tree -- what do you think?

CUT TO

A BEAUTIFUL PECAN TREE. It would be easy to climb.

CUT TO

ADAM AND LEE, at the trunk.

ADAM
(not sure)
It's ... nice.

LEE
So much more than that -- it was my
second home, my safe home, we spent
years together.
(now, silence ...)

CUT TO

ADAM. Nothing is going on but a lot is going on. Tension and
pain and --

LEE (OVER)
(suddenly a burst)
A fight, yes, they had a fight, Eddie
did, Eddie and Quince did, and I saw it
all, they were eight --

CUT TO

LEE back against her pecan tree as if for support -- she
points to the yard --

LEE
-- maybe they were nine, but they were
good friends and then they had this
fight --

FLASHCUT TO

THE SAME YARD, a third of a century past. The house does not
sag and there are no weeds and the tree is in full bloom. LEE
is hidden, ten feet up in the pecan tree and we see all
FLASHCUTS from that angle.

FLASHCUT TO

TWO BOYS rolling around, shouting and kicking and one of them
is white and the other black and

CUT TO

LEE, ADAM WATCHING. And this is no slow reminiscence we are into here, this is fast and sharp like a terrible dream you want ended and --

LEE

-- and they made so much noise and Daddy heard and --

FLASHCUT TO

SAM CAYHALL, a farmer then, beating the BLACK KID, slapping him hard and --

LEE (OVER)

-- and he beat him and beat him and Quince ran home --

CUT TO

LEE, and now there's no stopping her --

LEE

-- and they lived on our property, all the Lincolns and then Joe was here with his boy and Eddie was on our porch watching and I was in my tree watching and they fought, yes, they fought so hard.

FLASHCUT TO

SAM AND JOE, rolling around like the children were, and then SAM has a tree branch, and is beating JOE, beating him until he falls and

FLASHCUT TO

JOE, bloody on the ground. He gestures wildly toward QUINCE, says something.

CUT TO

LEE, and she doesn't know how to tell this, she's never told it before and it's as if she's been trying to run a marathon because as we watch we can see that she is tired, so tired and --

LEE

He told Quince to run and get his gun.
Sam told Eddie to run get his.

FLASHCUT TO

SAM on the porch, his shotgun in his hands. EDDIE is behind him.

CUT TO

LEE. Moving now, and then she stops.

LEE
(pointing)
Joe was here --
(pointing again)
-- Daddy was here --

FLASHCUT TO

JOE. Unarmed. Standing shakily, bloody and dazed.

FLASHCUT TO

SAM. As before. Now he gestures sharply for EDDIE to go inside. EDDIE obeys.

CUT TO

LEE. She has moved to the spot on the porch where her father stood. She sits.

LEE
Then they waited.

FLASHCUT TO

JOE. He glances back the way his boy had run.

FLASHCUT TO

SAM with the shotgun. He looks this way, that way.

FLASHCUT TO

JOE as his heart explodes.

CUT TO

LEE. Energy going now.

LEE
Daddy was a great shot.

FLASHCUT TO

JOE again as his heart explodes. This time he falls.

FLASHCUT TO

SAM. The gun in his hands. Watching. Thoughtful.

FLASHCUT TO

QUINCE, running wildly, a shotgun in his hands -- behind him now comes the rest of his family, his mother and maybe six other boys and girls, all of them smaller than QUINCE, all of them terrified and as they fall around the dead man --

FLASHCUT TO

SAM AND THE SHERIFF, on the porch while the LINCOLNS mourn JOE, all grouped around him where he fell.

CUT TO

LEE AND ADAM.

LEE

This was Mississippi in the early 50's
-- Daddy said self-defense, he never so
much as was arrested.

(voice trails off)

ADAM

What were Eddie and Quince fighting
about?

FLASHCUT TO

LEE and EDDIE in his bedroom. He finds a small metal soldier in a corner under his bed.

CUT TO

LEE. CLOSE UP.

LEE

(wry smile)

A toy soldier. Eddie thought Quince stole it but that night he found it. I was with him when he did and he took the weight of the world on his shoulders and then he turned on me and said I did it too -- said if I had cried out for Daddy to stop no way in this world he would have fired with his little baby girl looking on.

(beat)

Eddie was right. So now we had our

(MORE)

LEE (contd)
Cayhall secret, Eddie and I, we were as
shameful as the rest.

(looks at ADAM)
I don't believe your father ever got
over what happened here.

CUT TO

ADAM. Just totally wiped out.

ADAM
Not 'til the day he died ...
(HOLD ON ADAM AND LEE for
awhile. Then --)

CUT TO

ADAM in his office, the door open. Morning. He is either
dazed or lost in thought.

WYN LETTNER, the retired FBI man, is in the doorway, gesturing
to see if it's o.k. to enter. ADAM makes a nod, in he comes.

The number in the bottom left changes from 19 to this: 17.

LETTNER
Sorry about Slattery -- I heard it on
the radio.

ADAM
That's where I heard it too -- really
swell of Slattery to handle it like
that. I'll get the new appeal in
tomorrow.
(shakes his head)
With all the appeals and overtime and
last minute running around, the death
penalty costs six times as much as life
without parole. Public could save a
fortune if they'd just stop killing
people.
(gets up)
I'm punchy already.
(as they head out --)

CUT TO

ADAM AND LETTNER, walking across the promenade area in front
of the building. A lot of pedestrian traffic.

And a lot of the pedestrians are glancing at ADAM.

ADAM

You ever been looked at? I hate being looked at.

LETTNER

(he holds a folded paper)
You're news.

ADAM

Haven't had a chance to read it yet.
(he reaches for LETTNER'S
paper. LETTNER hesitates,
then hands it over)

CUT TO

THE FRONT PAGE AS ADAM unfolds it. The usual picture of SAM, the usual picture of ADAM --

-- but between them is a large photo of EDDIE, ADAM'S FATHER. And this headline:

KILLS SELF WHEN DAD GUILTY

CUT TO

ADAM. Humiliated. People won't stop looking at him. For a moment he almost seems as if he might sink to his knees.

But he manages to hold together, walks on.

Right about now we realize something: WEDGE is behind him, sauntering along.

CUT TO

ADAM AND LETTNER as they make it to the other side of the promenade, stop, buy some peanuts from a vendor. Up ahead is a little fountain with pigeons flapping around.

CUT TO

A BENCH and the pigeons. ADAM AND LETTNER sit, feeding them. ADAM is pale.

LETTNER

You want to hear this?

(ADAM nods)

O.k. I got to talking with my wife after you left and she reminded me of something -- in the middle of the bombings back in '67, we found an old drunken black man -- worked doing

(MORE)

LETTNER (contd)

dishes when he could hold a job -- well, he said he thought he saw Sam one night in a diner talking with another guy -- this was just before the synagogue got bombed --

ADAM

-- who was it? --

LETTNER

-- never knew -- wore a cap, our guy couldn't really see much except he was real young --

WEDGE sits on a bench beside them, opening peanuts, feeds the birds near him.

LETTNER (contd)

-- well, see, my wife was always the worrier in the family and she believed that dishwasher's story and she said we don't know that second guy is dead. All he'd be is 50 years old right now. Once Sam's gone, well, he can breathe free at last. Sam never has talked yet but he might say things to his grandson. You be careful.

ADAM

Thanks.

LETTNER

Nothing's happened so far?

CUT TO

ADAM AND LETTNER rise, start walking away.

ADAM

Not really. My aunt thought her place was burgled but we couldn't find anything that was taken.

(beat)

These aren't the best days for her anyway ...

They move back toward the office building. WEDGE sits as before, happily surrounded ... HOLD.

CUT TO

ADAM, entering the apartment, early evening.

ADAM
(calling out)
Me.
(no reply. He shrugs)

CUT TO

ADAM'S BEDROOM. He drops his briefcase.

ADAM
Aunt Lee?
(no reply. He makes a face
as we --)

CUT TO

LEE'S BEDROOM. All the sad dolls and stuffed animals.
Newspapers are spread in disarray across her bed.

And a small tape recorder is set in the middle.

ADAM hurries to the tape, turns it on.

LEE (OVER)
Adam, I've gone away. I'm drinking
again, never the best thing for me.

ADAM looks at the papers now -- some are open to the social
pages, some to the front pages. The front pages contain the
EDDIE story we saw already.

The social pages center on this information: Lee Booth, the
Memphis socialite wife of banker Phelps Booth is also the
daughter of Ku Klux Klan murderer Sam Cayhall.

Pictures of LEE, glamorous, at various social occasions.
Pictures of her husband -- they make a very handsome pair.
Pictures of Sam, prison mug shots. Pictures of the Kramer
Office after the bombing. Pictures of LEE and EDDIE as
children.

ADAM, guilty and sad, stares at the photos as the tape goes
on.

LEE (OVER)
I've done this before, so don't worry.
I'll try and visit Sam -- but no
promises. You're a nice young man and
it's too bad you had to be born a
Cayhall.
(end of tape)

CUT TO

ADAM. He drops the tape to the mattress.

ADAM
Let's hear it for me --
(softly)
-- yayyyyy ...

CUT TO

NIGHT AND A SHOT WE'VE SEEN BEFORE -- it's the long one of RUTH KRAMER'S apartment building. All the surrounding lights are off.

RUTH KRAMER'S are on.

From this distance it's hard to tell -- but maybe, just maybe, a figure walked by the window.

CUT TO

ADAM on the terrace, staring off at the window. He looks dishevelled. From now on, the strain of the experience only accelerates.

He holds a vodka bottle by the neck, sips, stares, sips, stares. In this silence we hear --

SAM (OVER)
You saying I'm crazy?

ADAM (OVER)
No. But I want you to see a
psychiatrist.
(and on that --)

CUT TO

THE TWIG, the little library room. ADAM sits, surrounded by law books while SAM makes his usual journey.

SAM
(not amused)
You think he can cure me in fourteen
days?
(as he says the word
"fourteen" --)

The number in the bottom left changes from 17 to this: 14.

ADAM

(big)

Look -- cruel and unusual isn't working. Time to switch horses. I want to bring in someone who'll testify your powers are diminishing. We might get a stay.

SAM

Suppose we can't find someone?

ADAM

Don't worry.

SAM

Why not? -- what have you done right so far? -- what if it takes too long?

CUT TO

ADAM. He doesn't like this part.

ADAM

I've talked to someone who already thinks your powers are diminishing.

SAM

(stops pacing)

How can a doctor testify under oath about someone he's never met?

ADAM

(embarrassed)

I've got a guy who'll lie.

CUT TO

SAM, studying him for a moment.

SAM

Boy, how proud your father would be -- mister law school poster boy -- a whore at 26.

ADAM

(flaring)

Anyone did what you did has to be crazy -- you're being murdered for it and I'll do what I can to stop that.

SAM

The South was being murdered and I did whatever I could to stop that.

(MORE)

SAM (contd)
(lights a cigarette)
I'm a killer and you're a crusader --
explain that to me sometime ...
(HOLD ON THE TWO OF THEM)

CUT TO

A CAR, driving towards Parchman.

CUT TO

THE DRIVER. Not particularly well dressed. He wears a work shirt, jeans.

It is WEDGE. As he turns in toward the main gate --

CUT TO

THE RED BUCKET as WEDGE puts the keys in. The first gate begins to slide open as we

CUT TO

SERGEANT PACKER frisking him. Then --

CUT TO

A SIGN-IN BOOK. WEDGE is writing his name, PACKER alongside.

WEDGE
It would be great if you'd keep it a surprise.

SERGEANT PACKER
(nods)
No problem, Mister Cayhall.
(beat)
You look just like your brother.

WEDGE
(nods)
Everybody says that.
(Now from them --)

CUT TO

SAM -- and he's outside --

-- we're in the small exercise area and a bunch of the death row guys are there. Fenced in and guarded.

There are weights and there is a basketball and a basket.

No one exercises.

What they do is this: absolutely nothing. Just stand apart from each other by the fence, staring out.

This is the first time we have seen them like this and certain things are immediately visible.

They are mostly black, mostly thin, with greasy hair. They do not smile much.

And they are all, all of them, young.

Except SAM.

Now, SERGEANT PACKER appears, gestures for SAM.

SERGEANT PACKER

Visitor.

SAM

The kid?

(PACKER shakes his head.

SAM's tone turns petulant)

Then why now? I got half an hour more coming to me and I wanna stay here.

SERGEANT PACKER

Give it a rest, old man.

SAM

(shuffling toward him,
grumbling all the way)

I'm on to you, Packer, trying to cheat me --

(PACKER just shakes his
head as we --)

CUT TO

THE CONFERENCE ROOM. WEDGE stands at the far end of the empty room as the door opens and SAM turns automatically for PACKER to unlock him.

CUT TO

PACKER, doing the job with practiced skill, leaving, closing the door.

CUT TO

WEDGE. Diagonally across the room from SAM now, waiting.

CUT TO

SAM. Looking through the grating at the other man.

No reaction.

CUT TO

WEDGE. Moving forward now, with a genuine smile of greeting on his face.

CUT TO

SAM. Glass.

CUT TO

WEDGE, and he is happy to see SAM, no question about it.

CUT TO

THE TWO OF THEM staring at each other. SAM lights a cigarette. Silence.

The number in the bottom left changes from 14 to this: 11.

SAM

Why you smiling at me?

WEDGE

Happy.

SAM

(inhales)

I know you?

WEDGE

Yes, Sam, you do.

SAM

(takes a step closer)

Where from?

WEDGE

From Greenville, from Jackson and Vicksburg, from the synagogue and the real estate office and the radical Jew lawyer with the twins --

CUT TO

SAM. He stands there. Nothing shows on his face. Silence in the room.

CUT TO

WEDGE, trying to hold his smile, but it's not easy.

CUT TO

SAM. CLOSE UP. His voice a deep rumble --

SAM

I have killed you a thousand ways. I
have gutted you. I have nailed you to
boulders and set you on fire.

(and suddenly he whirls,
going toward the door)

-- Packer, you know who this is? --

Packer --

CUT TO

WEDGE, huge --

WEDGE

You -- are -- killing -- them --

(and in his hand now is a
photograph)

SAM

(turning)

What is that?

WEDGE

Look for yourself, old man --

(as SAM slowly moves
forward)

-- I am Donnie and you are simply
overjoyed --

CUT TO

WHAT THE PHOTO SHOWS: It is from the album in LEE's
apartment. LEE is a little kid and SAM holds her in his arms.
A happy father and a happy child.

CUT TO

SAM, staring at it. Dazed.

CUT TO

WEDGE. Calm.

WEDGE

I'll blow your daughter and the boy to
hell, now smile.
(and on that --)

CUT TO

PACKER opening the door.

SERGEANT PACKER

What?

CUT TO

SAM, with WEDGE watching close -- SAM manages a smile.

SAM

Shouldda told me it was Donnie.

SERGEANT PACKER

Surprise work?

WEDGE

(nods)

Thanks, Sarge.

(PACKER waves, smiles back,
leaves)

SAM

(beat)

Why'd you come?

WEDGE

To make sure.

SAM

I never once spoke your name, never
would, I took a Klan oath.

(studies WEDGE)

You still Klan?

WEDGE

It's sad, Sam, but there's not much Klan
-- just a bunch of redneck farmers with
NRA stickers on their pickup trucks,
that's all the Klan is today. I'm neo-
Nazi now.

SAM

That better?

WEDGE

It's international, Sam, of course it's better. I've had the most fabulous life -- I've fought in Northern Ireland and Libya and Munich and Lebanon. I've got three passports, speak four languages,

(beat)

Hate's been good to me.

(SAM says nothing)

Why didn't you leave the country with me? -- none of this would have happened. You were the best partner -- you had no fear.

SAM

How did we fuck up with the twins?

WEDGE

Don't think of it that way -- two less Jews, Sam. Probably would have been troublemakers. The war goes on -- the Communist-Jewish conspiracy keeps getting stronger.

SAM

My heart wasn't in it after the twins.

WEDGE

(sharp)

Don't go soft.

SAM

(sharp)

I told you you were safe.

WEDGE

I like that edge.

(beat)

Is the boy strong? Is he one of us?

SAM

(studies WEDGE)

What business is that of yours?

WEDGE

It's our business, Sam -- yours and mine -- don't make me kill him ...

(HOLD ON THE TWO OF THEM.

Then --)

CUT TO

PACKER, walking quietly along the Death Row tier -- it is dark.

He comes to SAM'S CELL. SAM is up and waiting.

PACKER puts his finger to his lips. SAM nods.

PACKER opens the cell.

SAM turns, waiting to be cuffed.

PACKER shakes his head, gestures for SAM to follow. And as they creep silently past the sleeping prisoners --

CUT TO

PACKER unlocking a door. He holds a steaming mug of coffee. He turns, looks back --

-- SAM is behind him, counting steps.

PACKER gestures for SAM to hurry and as he opens the door --

CUT TO

SAM AND PACKER, outside now, in the darkness. SAM glances around.

We are in a different area -- fenced in, of course, a larger recreation area than we have seen.

SERGEANT PACKER

(He gives SAM the coffee.

SAM nods thanks)

Take your time ...

(he starts back toward the door --)

CUT TO

SAM watching him go. The door closes. SAM is alone. He sips the coffee, turns around.

The number in the bottom left changes from 11 to this: 10.

CUT TO

THE PRISON. Windows mostly dark. Off to one side is a tower with a GUARD in the tower, watching him.

SAM goes to the nearest chain link fence, starts to pace off the perimeter. He lights a cigarette, looks out.

CUT TO

What he sees: darkness. Nothing.

CUT TO

SAM, pacing on. Now --

CUT TO

A different part of the chain link fence.

SAM paces along. It's a little later.

CUT TO

The third side of the fenced rectangle.

SAM is finishing his coffee, looks out.

CUT TO

What he sees: nothing. Darkness.

SAM shoves his hands into the pockets of his awful red jumpsuit, continues his silent way.

CUT TO

SAM sitting on a bench, lighting another cigarette. Now something else can be noted: he's getting excited. He inhales, rises, goes to the fence and we

CUT TO

What he sees: shadowy cotton fields, a hint of orange --
-- he is looking at the start of a sunrise.

CUT TO

THE HORIZON. A faint glow, but getting stronger.

CUT TO

SAM, staring.

CUT TO

THE HORIZON. Clouds are backlit now. It's going to be a stunner.

TIME LAPSE PHOTOGRAPHY. Brighter. Brighter.

CUT TO

SAM, holding his breath over what he sees --

-- and now he starts to well up and --

SAM
(muttered, sharp)
Don't start that.

He wipes his eyes dry.

CUT TO

THE HORIZON. Getting gorgeous now.

CUT TO

SAM. He takes a deep breath. It's too perfect.

CUT TO

SAM AND HIS SUNRISE, watching each other. HOLD.

And the number in the bottom left changes from 10 to this: 8.

And the instant that happens --

CUT TO

We are in JUDGE SLATTERY'S COURT AND DR. ANSON SWINN is on the stand.

ANSON SWINN is 50 years old, in black, brilliant, humorless.

DOCTOR SWINN
Insanity, of course, is not a medical
term. It is a legal term.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

JUDGE SLATTERY'S COURTROOM. FULL. ADAM is questioning SWINN. GARNER GOODMAN sits assisting at a table. At another table is ATTORNEY GENERAL ROXBURGH. MCCALLISTER sits in the spectators section, alongside MONA STARK. All kinds of reporters. ADAM, tense, carries typed up notes.

JUDGE SLATTERY runs things and seems to be enjoying the show.

DOCTOR SWINN
And having spent but two hours with
Samuel Cayhall, one can only make
presumptions.

ADAM
Presume for us.

DOCTOR SWINN

In my opinion -- and it is only that -- it would be almost impossible for him to be anything but severely damaged mentally.

ATTORNEY GENERAL ROXBURGH starts to object. Doesn't. Instead he scribbles this on a yellow pad -- "hired gun."

JUDGE SLATTERY

On what do you base your assumption?

DOCTOR SWINN

The man is going to be seventy, your Honor. He has been on Death Row since he was sixty. Normal deterioration.

JUDGE SLATTERY

Surely men of his age have survived more.

DOCTOR SWINN

We don't know that -- the average Death Row inmate is thirty-one. To my knowledge, no one this age has ever been executed.

(SLATTERY nods)

ATTORNEY GENERAL ROXBURGH has written more questions. "Employed by?" "At how much per hour?" "Who are other patients?"

And now the CAMERA takes in the reactions of the people in the room -- this is not, after all, a trial; there is no jury that needs convincing. So what we hear is DOCTOR SWINN'S VOICE making proclamations. Time is clearly passing.

DOCTOR SWINN (OVER)

I found Mr. Cayhall to be confused on many topics, not fully aware of his future, or rather, of his lack of one.

ADAM, having a bit of trouble swallowing all this, looks at GOODMAN who is scribbling something. This is what he has written: "Remember he's our liar." ADAM nods, turns back.

DOCTOR SWINN (OVER)

The man lives in a cell 6 by 9, 23 hours a day. He has been deprived of companionship, of sex, decent food, fresh air -- all this with the chamber itself but a few feet away. That he has no idea what he is doing in a way makes perfect sense.

MCCALLISTER is bored spitless. MONA STARK makes a "bullshit" gesture, shoveling imaginary manure. THE GOVERNOR nods.

ATTORNEY GENERAL underlining his questions, putting in large dramatic exclamation points.

THE REPORTERS take notes. LAW STUDENTS sit transfixed, many of them looking older than ADAM. ROLLIE WEDGE is fascinated too -- yes, he's there, taking it all in from a seat in the rear, nicely dressed in a jacket and tie.

ADAM moves to GOODMAN, whispers.

ADAM
I'm gonna do it.
(GOODMAN nods)

ADAM goes to the podium in the center of the courtroom.

ADAM
Doctor Swinn --
(interrupting himself)
-- I'm sorry, I should have asked this
sooner, are you an M.D. or a Ph.D.?

DOCTOR SWINN
I hold both degrees.

ADAM
I assume from qualified institutions.

DOCTOR SWINN
Yale and Yale.

ADAM
You must have many patients then.

DOCTOR SWINN
I have none.

ADAM
You mean you devote yourself to pure
research.

JUDGE SLATTERY senses where ADAM is going and isn't unhappy at all.

ATTORNEY GENERAL ROXBURGH senses it too -- and is starting to get very pissed.

DOCTOR SWINN
I have done research, of course, and I
have had many patients -- but I chose to
(MORE)

DOCTOR SWINN (contd)
do this for a living now: I'm an expert witness.

ADAM
Would that be what some might refer to as a gun for hire?

DOCTOR SWINN
(nods)
Of course.

ADAM
But that doesn't mean you're wrong, does it, Doctor?
(now, quickly)
And you are employed by?

DOCTOR SWINN
Kravitz and Bane.

ATTORNEY GENERAL ROXBURGH is making angry X's through his questions.

ADAM
At how much per hour?

DOCTOR SWINN
Two hundred dollars.

ADAM
But none of that -- what you do, who you do it for or for how much -- none of that means you're wrong.
(turning quickly to ROXBURGH)
Your witness.

ROXBURGH rises, angry -- X's cover the questions on his note pad.

ADAM sits, makes a question mark sign to GOODMAN who makes an explanation point in reply.

ADAM nods, relieved. He wipes the palms of his hands across his jacket trousers -- his palms were soaking. HOLD. Then --

CUT TO

GEORGE NUGENT, the Warden is on the stand now. He is talking boringly as the CAMERA roams --

ADAM AND GOODMAN are watching. GOODMAN writes this: "Doesn't hurt us."

CUT TO

THE REPORTERS AND LAW STUDENTS. One of them yawns. Even WEDGE seems to be losing interest. Then --

ATTORNEY GENERAL
Sergeant Packer.

CUT TO

ADAM turning as PACKER moves to the witness stand. He glances at ADAM as he passes by -- clearly, he is not happy to be here.

CUT TO

PACKER ON THE STAND. We are going to do a series of shots now as he moves through his testimony. And this much is clear: the man is a great witness. Honest, direct -- you have to believe every word because every word is clearly true.

SERGEANT PACKER
(in mid-sentence)
-- been running the Row twenty years,
sir, Sam's been with me half that time --

CUT TO

PACKER ON THE STAND. Another angle.

SERGEANT PACKER
(in mid-sentence)
-- got a small library of law books in
his cell -- does work for the other men
if they ask --
(beat)
-- good work, yessir --

CUT TO

PACKER ON THE STAND. Another angle.

SERGEANT PACKER
(in mid-sentence)
-- know what he's doing? Sam?
(beat)
Couple days back, night it was, I was
going past and he said, "Clyde?"
Brought me up short -- he never called
me that before so I knew it was
important.

(MORE)

SERGEANT PACKER (contd)

(beat)

Could I help? With what, Sam? Then he said I wanna die alone and I wanna die in decent clothes and I wanna eat an Eskimo Pie and could I somehow see a sunrise.

(beat)

I said, "the last one's mine, Sam."

CUT TO

ATTORNEY GENERAL ROXBURGH, THE GOVERNOR AND MONA STARK behind him. They seem content now.

CUT TO

WEDGE. So does he. And more than that he seems almost moved.

CUT TO

ADAM AND GOODMAN AND DOCTOR SWINN. Riveted. GOODMAN begins to write something on a yellow pad.

CUT TO

PACKER ON THE STAND. CLOSE UP.

SERGEANT PACKER

(in mid sentence)

-- snuck him out, gave him coffee and an hour alone. Watched from inside -- thought he might lose it when the sun started coming --

(beat)

-- see, it'd been ten years since he last saw a sunrise -- but he's tough, he held together just fine.

(beat)

Does he know what he's doing? Does Sam Cayhall know what's going to happen to him?

(long pause)

You betcha.

CUT TO

ADAM AND GOODMAN. GOODMAN has written these words on his legal pad: "dead in the water."

ADAM rises. Speaks. Voice dry.

ADAM
No further questions.
(and on that --)

CUT TO

AN EXPLOSION OF LIGHT AND NOISE --

-- we are on the Courthouse steps as MCCALLISTER AND MONA STARK make their way down AND A MASS OF REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS chase after them, calling questions --

-- NOW ADAM AND GOODMAN AND SWINN come into the sunlight and all attention shifts to them --

TALL REPORTER
(calling out to the
GOVERNOR)
Will you be attending the execution,
sir?

MCCALLISTER turns, seeks out ADAM, looks at him a moment, then goes --

-- WEDGE, standing on the Courthouse steps between the two watches one, then the other. He seems to be enjoying the day.

Now THE MEDIA swarms around ADAM, shooting, shouting, and he keeps his head down, mutters "excuse me," "excuse me," "pardon me," as he tries to make his way.

THEY will not give him room to move.

Finally he glances at GOODMAN, then just bursts loose, starts to run down the steps --

-- there is a chase after him --

-- someone stumbles, falls into a bunch of others, and as they all totter and go down there is cursing and crying out.

ADAM never looks back, just runs and runs.

GOODMAN, worried, on the top of the steps, stares after him
... HOLD.

PAN TO

A QUARTET OF YOUNG BRIGHT FACES -- no, we have not seen them before. They are mid 20's, two white women, one white man, one black. And they are all tense.

We are in a dingy office -- worn carpeting, torn wallboard -- in some part of Memphis.

The number in the bottom left changes from 8 to this: 7.

Now the CAMERA moves past GARNER GOODMAN, who is standing with a distinguished looking fellow his own age -- this is PROFESSOR GLASS.

THE CRUMMY OFFICE, we will have noted by now, is studded with metal office chairs and card tables and cellular phones.

All during this shot, ADAM has been talking. He's doing fine, he always does fine, but we have seen him better. There is something a little different. Maybe a lack of energy. Maybe a slight puffiness about the eyes.

ADAM (OVER)

Thank you all for helping.

(beat)

Since we don't know each other, let me try and summarize --

CUT TO

ADAM, moving across the room. On the walls are taped the same front page of a Memphis paper with one article circled in red. The article contains a phone number. On the tables are spread Xerox copies of what look to be and are, pages from phone books.

ADAM

This is my idea and to set your minds at rest: it is not illegal. The whole set up is being paid for by Kravitz and Bane. Professor Glass --

(and here he nods to the man with GOODMAN)

-- wants me to tell you that even though you're all his law students, you will not be given course credit for your labors.

(THE STUDENTS hiss)

Questions?

(there are none)

I'll go first.

(as he picks up a cellular phone --)

CUT TO

THE CIRCLED NEWSPAPER ARTICLE. Headlined: "Let Mac Know." It lists a phone number and asks you to call and give your opinion of the coming Cayhall death.

CUT TO

ADAM. He looks at a phone listing, starts to talk. His accent is suddenly thick Mississippi and not at all bad.

ADAM

Yes ma'am, I'm Ned Lancaster calling from Biloxi.

(beat)

Thank you, I love it too. An' I'm calling on this Cayhall mess.

(beat)

My opinion is this: let the old fool die in bed. Don't gas him and waste the state's money, that's my feeling, bye ...

(hangs up. To the LAW

STUDENTS)

Go be creative.

CUT TO

THE LAW STUDENTS, dialing, speaking. This all overlaps but we get the sense: "I'm Lester Crosby and I'm calling from Bude, Mississippi -- ", "I'm Susan Bransford from Decatur -- ", "My name is Esther May Goodson and I live in Franklin -- "

CUT TO

ADAM, GOODMAN AND PROFESSOR GLASS.

ADAM

Thomas Jefferson would have been proud, right?

GLASS

I have no problem with this -- McCallister loves grandstand stuff like this hotline. You didn't make the rules, you're just playing by them.

ADAM

(to GOODMAN)

You'll handle this end?

GOODMAN

(nods happily -- to GLASS)

Be right back.

(as he follows ADAM

out --)

CUT TO

THE HALLWAY. GOODMAN follows ADAM and the minute they're alone --

GOODMAN

What was that smartass Jefferson crack? --

(and his smile is gone)

ADAM

(really surprised)

What are you talking about?

GOODMAN

You don't like what you have to do? Join the club. Scared you're going to lose? Join the club. You look like hell, are you drinking?

ADAM

A nightcap is all.

GOODMAN

(moving in)

You weren't ready for this and I knew it and I still let you come -- my mistake --

ADAM

-- I'm O.k., Mister Goodman, I'm just frustrated. There's gotta be a way to save him and I just can't come up with it.

GOODMAN

That Perry Mason stuff we all know and love? It's fun, but it's not the reality. Here's the reality --

CUT TO

GOODMAN. CLOSE UP.

GOODMAN

Shit hasn't started coming down.

(Now --)

CUT TO

A WOODED PART OF THE GROUNDS OF PARCHMAN PENITENTIARY

TWO SKINNY GUARDS come running along.

Chasing something?

That's the logical assumption; that we're watching some reaction to a jailbreak.

Can't be.

Why?

Because the TWO SKINNY GUARDS are laughing, enjoying the hell out of whatever it is they're doing. As they chug along --

CUT TO

THE SUN. Lower in the sky.

But the laughing sound continues. And still does as we --

CUT TO

THE LAW STUDENTS. Six of them now, some the same, some different, all of them enjoying the hell out of what it is they're doing.

They are watching GOODMAN make a phone call.

GOODMAN

(his accent just terrible)

That's right, I absolutely do believe that old man -- what was his name again? --

(listens)

-- Cayhall, thank ya kindly -- he should live happily ever after in that swanky cell us poor taxpayers are stuck with. Much obliged.

(He hangs up, looks around)

Well?

THE LAW STUDENTS unanimously give a thumbs down. From them --

CUT TO

PARCHMAN. A shot of the Maximum Security Unit -- the sun is falling out of the sky -- shadows are very long. Even eerie.

Now, motor sounds. Coming closer. HOLD briefly --

-- then a bunch of prison vans and pickups come into view.

The gates slide back.

The convoy enters.

Sun is about to die now.

THE CONVOY rumbles slowly along, circling the area. COLONEL NUGENT is now visible, standing in the lead truck, gesturing for the other cars to pull in and as they do --

CUT TO

A SQUARE, RED BRICK BUILDING. It is attached to a corner of MSU.

We don't know quite where we are yet but we do know this: it is not a nice place. A DOZEN MEN get out of the cars and trucks. NUGENT, of course, we recognize.

Plus two more: THE SKINNY GUARDS we saw running in the woods.

A DOOR is thrown open. NUGENT enters as we

CUT TO

THE DEATH ROOM. (That's what it's called.) 15 X 12. Spotless.

We are in the belly of the beast.

THE GAS CHAMBER itself sits precisely in the middle. It is octagonal in shape, and it has been given a fresh coat of silver enamel varnish.

NUGENT, in his glory, gestures.

THE TWO SKINNY GUARDS approach the Chamber. Between them is another GUARD, SAM's height, SAM's weight.

The Chamber door is opened.

THE TWO GUARDS escort the center one into the Chamber itself, turn him, set him into the chair, kneel and with practiced skill begin to strap his feet to the chair. As they work, they perspire -- there is tension, of course, but the night is very hot and from them --

CUT TO

THE CHAMBER.

The strapping in has been completed. Hands, feet and head. NUGENT is pulling at the straps, checking it out.

GEORGE C. NUGENT

Can you move?

GUARD IN CHAIR

Nossir.

(beat)

Hurts.

GEORGE C. NUGENT

He won't feel it long.

He steps back out of the Chamber, and as the unstrapping starts --

CUT TO

DEATH ROW. A shot along the Row -- hands are visible from every cell.

They can hear everything from the adjoining Death Room. Not clearly, no. It's muffled.

But it's there. Now --

CUT TO

THE DEATH ROOM. The unstrapping is done.

GEORGE C. NUGENT

At this point, Lucas Mann will read the death warrant to Mr. Cayhall.

(beat)

After which I will ask if he has any last words.

(looks around)

Clear so far?

(nods all around)

Then get the rabbit.

(and on those words --)

CUT TO

OUTSIDE THE CHAMBER. An open flatbed.

A RABBIT in a cage waits there.

THE TWO SKINNY GUARDS who captured it in the woods earlier.

FIRST GUARD

(babytalk)

... c'mon, baby, c'mon, Sam --

(and as they pick up the cage --)

CUT TO

THE GAS CHAMBER with the rabbit sitting on the chair inside.

THE TWO SKINNY GUARDS are miming the same gestures as before, as if it was a man they were strapping in the chair.

CUT TO

NUGENT, pacing outside the Chamber. THE SKINNY GUARDS exit. TWO OTHER GUARDS lock the Chamber tightly shut.

GEORGE C. NUGENT
(very directorial)
Let's roll 'em; action.
(and on that --)

CUT TO

A TINY MAN in a room off the Chamber. This is EXECUTIONER MONDAY. He holds a canister of sulfuric acid.

EXECUTIONER MONDAY
(nervous)
Fingers crossed.

GEORGE C. NUGENT
(sharp)
You better not fuck up.

EXECUTIONER MONDAY
(flaring)
It's not like we mass produce this shit,
we ain't McDonald's.

Now he places the acid into a tube --

-- the tube runs into the Chamber itself, to right underneath the chair where the RABBIT is.

EXECUTIONER MONDAY pulls a lever.

There is a clicking sound.

CUT TO

DEATH ROW. Arms sticking through bars as before. The clicking sound is very faint.

CUT TO

THE RABBIT IN THE CAGE.

Gas is beginning to rise.

THE RABBIT seems oblivious.

More fumes are visible.

No reaction.

NUGENT, watching intently through one of the windows into the Chamber, turns toward EXECUTIONER MONDAY, starting to get pissed --

-- no reason, though, not really because now --

CUT TO

THE RABBIT. CLOSE UP.

It stiffens.

Hops a little bit.

Then the convulsions begin --

-- jumping --

-- jerking --

-- twisting frantically --

-- banging against the walls of the cage --

CUT TO

NUGENT, watching, pleased. Because it's perfect as we --

CUT TO

THE RABBIT, as now the serious convulsions begin --

-- it is going nuts as we watch --

-- eyes so wide --

-- all soundless --

-- bucking against the cage --

-- writhing --

-- frantic out of its mind --

-- on and on it goes --

HOLD ON THE RABBIT AS IT STARTS TO DIE. Then --

CUT TO

SAM IN HIS CELL -- listening. Terrified.

CUT TO

MCCALLISTER, moving quickly down a hall in the Capitol Building. This entire scene is shot on the move and goes fast.

ATTORNEY GENERAL ROXBURGH comes out of a crossing corridor, falls into step.

The number in the bottom left changes from 7 to this: 6.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER

Are we winning? -- spread it out for me.

ATTORNEY GENERAL ROXBURGH

Cruel and Unusual's dead in the water.
Supreme Court shot it down yesterday evening.

(beat)

And the insanity motion?

(MCCALLISTER nods)

My contact tells me Fifth Circuit will
thumbs down it today.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER

Keep in touch.

ROXBURGH nods, peels off toward another crossing corridor.

MCCALLISTER, whistling now, picks up his pace as MONA STARK buzzes into view from around a corner.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER

(his phrase)

Are we winning? -- spread it out for
me.

MONA STARK

That hotline thing?

(rattling it off)

Last call, 9:07 P.M. Number of calls
logged, 486.

(long pause)

90 percent say let him live.

CUT TO

MCCALLISTER. Stunned. He stops dead, grabs the papers.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
 (hard to speak)
 ... omigod ...

MONA STARK
 From all over the State.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
 Holy shit --
 (stares at her)
 -- could I have misjudged my constituency?

MONA STARK
 Shall I close the hotline?

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
 Goddam reporters would come snooping to
 find out why. What's with Hall and new
 evidence?

MONA STARK
 -- don't know --

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
 (exploding)
 Well, find out, lady.
 (as he turns, storms
 away --)

CUT TO

ADAM, hurrying up the steps of the Capitol, going in and --

CUT TO

MONA STARK'S OFFICE. A clutter. She's on the phone as ADAM
 moves into the doorway.

ADAM
 (hands up)
 I come in peace.
 (she gestures for him to
 enter)

MONA STARK
 (into phone)
 I'll be sure and tell the Governor,
 Mister Hurt.
 (hangs up)
 The world will be thrilled to know that
 Mr. Gilbert Hurt of Dumas, Mississippi
 is against the execution. Shit --
 (The phone has rung again)

ADAM
You're obviously real busy, sorry.

MONA STARK
(into phone)
One sec'.
(hand over receiver now)
These goddam hotline calls are killing me -- everybody's getting them. Listen, he wasn't kidding about new evidence. He needs it.

ADAM
I need it too, but sorry, nothing yet.
Lot of calls, huh?

MONA STARK
-- damn--
(Her second line is ringing
-- into the phone)
One sec'.
(to ADAM)
Please -- he really really really wants your help.

ADAM
(starts to go)
The minute anything breaks.

CUT TO

MONA. She stares at him.

ADAM
What?

MONA STARK
I just realized -- in a different world, we'd be having an affair.

ADAM
I know.
(beat)
Wouldn't last.

MONA STARK
I know.
(beat)
But we'd remember.
(as he turns to go, she still watches)

ADAM
 (looking back)
 I'm kind of curious -- how they running?

MONA STARK
 Haven't had a real chance to tabulate
 them yet --
 (shrugs)
 -- I'd say fifty-fifty.

ADAM
 Wow.
 (beat)
 Hard to believe ...
 (now from them --)

CUT TO

THE ROAD OUTSIDE PARCHMAN. Bright sun.

More precisely, we are concerned with a fifty yard smooth stretch of grass set between Highway 49 and the front lawn of the Administration buildings. Nothing much going on at all.

Now, A PICKUP TRUCK pulls off the road, stops.

A GUY gets out of the back. Jeans, T shirt, early twenties. He carries tent poles.

Beat.

ANOTHER GUY gets out, carrying a large beer cooler. TWO MORE GUYS now, with the makings of a canvas tent.

Now THE LAST GUY gets out. He is wearing a white sheet. He stretches, gets comfortable.

Then he puts the white head covering on, the one with holes cut in for eyes and nose and mouth.

THE OTHER GUYS look at him.

Aw-riiight.

THE KLAN has come.

The number in the bottom left changes from 6 to this: 5.

CUT TO

ADAM, leaving his office at KRAVITZ AND BANE, starting into the pedestrian mall -- he carries his briefcase plus a large cooler --

-- up ahead he sees REPORTERS, spins, turns, goes swiftly around the corner and as he starts to run --

CUT TO

ADAM, driving into Parchman. Off to the left is a small white building --

-- a couple of TV crews and some reporters. No big deal.

ADAM looks to the right.

CUT TO

The area we saw off the main highway. The KLAN GUYS are still there, some of them carrying "Save Sam" signs --

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

The number of Klan members has doubled. And next to them, a NUN under an umbrella. And next to the NUN, A BUNCH OF SKINHEADS.

CUT TO

ADAM, shaking his head.

ADAM

(muttering to himself)

Lady, you're right in the middle of a hatred sandwich.

(as he drives on --)

CUT TO

ADAM, with PACKER, signing in at PARCHMAN.

SERGEANT PACKER

Sam's in a different room -- little better -- we relax things these last days --

(ADAM staring at the sign-
in book, hasn't been
listening)

CUT TO

SAM, in a room with a window. Beyond, flat Deltaland. The room is small. He stands staring out until the door opens.

ADAM hands him the cooler, which SAM opens eagerly.

ADAM

Klan's here -- set up shop by the highway.

CUT TO

SAM. He's got the cooler open now. It's full of Eskimo pies. He reaches in, takes out one, looks at it for a moment as if it were buried treasure.

SAM

In France? I heard they eat a lot of weird shit -- tongue, feet, eyes for all I know. Never did like fancy.

(and he starts to devour the Eskimo pie)

ADAM

Only reason I mentioned it is, well, I wondered if maybe they were old friends or something?

(SAM shrugs, finishes the Eskimo pie, pulls out another)

I think it's nice, friends coming to pay respects. Friends ...

(beat)

... and family ...

SAM shrugs again, moves to the window, stares out at the flat Delta.

ADAM

Who was it, Sam? I know it sure as shit wasn't Brother Donnie signed in to see you a week back.

(SAM still stares out, back turned. No reply)

CUT TO

ADAM, slowly moving up behind.

ADAM

Packer said the guy was maybe fifty. Donnie would be what, sixty-five?

SAM

(still not turning)
Donnie always looked young.

ADAM

Sure he did. Donnie always looked young
and you always worked alone.

(beat)

He's here, isn't he?

(nothing from SAM -- ADAM

grabs up his briefcase)

Doesn't matter if you won't help me --

I'll find him anyway.

(as he leaves --)

CUT TO

SAM. Alone. He turns. Scared. There are tears in his eyes.
HOLD briefly, then --

CUT TO

THE REPORTERS waiting in front of the KRAVITZ AND BANE office
as ADAM moves toward the entrance.

ADAM

Listen, I'm sorry I ducked you guys
earlier but something kind of important
came up --

FAT REPORTER

-- which, naturally, you can tell us
absolutely nothing about.

ADAM

(casually)

Nothing to tell, really. You know a lot
of us have suspected there was a second
man involved.

(they do)

Well, he's in town and I have every
reason to believe he's going to contact
me --

(and on that --)

CUT TO

ADAM. Night now. Driving toward LEE'S CONDO. Listening to
the car radio.

ANNOUNCER (OVER)

The opinion here is that young Adam
Cayhall's afternoon pronouncement about
the so called "second man" is but the
first of many desperation ploys defense
may try these final desperate days.

(as ADAM flicks it off --)

CUT TO

LEE'S MAILBOX, outside her condo, as ADAM takes out a bunch of mail, women's magazines, etc., unlocks the front door. Evening.

CUT TO

LEE'S BEDROOM as ADAM crosses it, kneels by her bed table. He has piled her mail there, the letters on top, the magazines in a clump underneath. Beneath the magazines are books --

-- ADAM makes sure the magazines are straight, starts to rise, stops --

-- something in the clump of books has caught his eye. He half reaches out, decides against it, stands, stops, listening. Did he hear something? A door closing? He shrugs, moves on and we

CUT TO

ADAM in bed -- the bedside clock reads eleven and he's watching the tube. We can't see it but we can hear.

ANNOUNCER (OVER)

The Supreme Court's denial of the insanity appeal marks what is undoubtedly the end of the road for Sam Cay --

(-- click -- ADAM kills the TV, kills the light, tries to sleep)

The number in the bottom left changes from 5 to this: 4.

CUT TO

THE BEDSIDE CLOCK. Two in the morning now. ADAM is wide awake.

CUT TO

LEE'S BEDROOM. ADAM flicks the lights on, goes to the bed table, kneels.

CUT TO

THE BOOKS BENEATH THE MAGAZINES. One title stands out:

Southern Negroes and the Great Depression.

ADAM flicks it open.

A photo of a ramshackle shed --

-- he stops again -- listening -- a footstep? He shakes his head, turns the page --

-- a photo of fifteen little kids on a ramshackle porch, posing with their mother and father --

-- ADAM turns another page --

-- farm workers stooped low in cotton fields.

ADAM turns another page and

ZOOM TO

ADAM -- AND HE IS ROCKED.

We don't know by what, because we haven't seen the photo yet, but now we do and

CUT TO

A photo with this title: Lynching in Rural Mississippi, 1930.

We are looking at the lifeless body of a black male. He can be seen only from the neck down.

A group is gathered just inches below his dangling feet. The group is white, young and old, male and female. Seventeen of them. Many of them hold whiskey bottles. Everyone smiles.

It's party time.

One boy of ten holds a pistol, aimed at the camera.

It's SAM.

And circled around his young face in red crayon someone has written this word: DADDY.

And now we hear this:

SAM (OVER)
That's Eddie's handwriting.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

THE TWIG. Day. ADAM AND SAM. Law books scattered all over. SAM is tentative, ADAM is on fire.

ADAM

And?

(SAM shrugs)

Don't go quiet on me now -- I've been up all night working on your last appeal, Mr. Goodman too -- this is our winning horse -- I'm riding Man o' War and I'm bringing him on home.

(SAM blinks)

Don't you get it? Mitigating circumstances. I'll bet this wasn't even your first lynching. Talk to me.

CUT TO

SAM. CLOSE UP.

SAM

(voice low)

No. I don't want to.

(beat)

I'm tired, Adam; I'm tired of the hogslop and the cell that's six by nine and the shitty cigarettes I only smoke because I pray I'll die of lung cancer before the State can kill me -- all I want now is to rest.

CUT TO

ADAM. He considers this. Puts down his pad and pen.

ADAM

(voice soft)

That was very moving. I feel proud you could speak to me like that.

(big)

And fuck you. You don't like what I have to say? Fuck you. Keep your self-pity to yourself. The State of Mississippi isn't killing anybody. I'm your grandson and I just found you. Talk to me!

CUT TO

SAM, considering.

CUT TO

ADAM. EXTREME CLOSE UP --

-- the number in the bottom left changes from 4 to this: 2.

ADAM

Here are some synonyms for "mitigating":
"glossing over," "sugarcoating,"
"prettifying."

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

SLATTERY'S COURTROOM. Jammed. The gang's all here -- MCCALLISTER, ATTORNEY GENERAL ROXBURGH, MONA STARK, ALL THE VARIOUS ASSISTANTS, AND GOODMAN AND LUCAS MANN AND A BUNCH OF THE KIDS WHO'VE BEEN WORKING THE PHONES AND REPORTERS AND TV GUYS and of course, stuck off in a corner, ROLLIE WEDGE.

SLATTERY, intently watching and listening is obviously there.

And ADAM is the center of it all. He speaks without notes this time. Nothing he has said thus far prepares us for the confidence, the eloquence, with which he speaks.

ADAM

But there is nothing "pretty" about twin boys blown to bits, no way to "gloss over" the ensuing suicide of their father, no "sugarcoating" this fact: Sam Cayhall is guilty.

(beat)

He did what he had to do.

Now he begins to move, walking slowly, always looking at SLATTERY.

ADAM (contd)

And that is what you must come to believe: that he had no recourse but violence. Mississippi in his early years was a universe from here. His father was a Klansman. True. His uncles were Klansmen. True. So was his grandfather.

(beat)

His great grandfather was one of the co-founders of that hateful organization. I have a photograph of him at a lynching -- he was ten and it was already his second such affair.

(beat)

Of course, this was awful. It was evil. But blood and violence came with Sunday breakfast. His father was murdered at a funeral -- my client saw it happen.

CUT TO

SLATTERY. Intrigued, impressed, even jotting down something.

ADAM

As the Court is no doubt aware, Sam Cayhall is my grandfather. And I would love to tell some warm and wonderful family stories.

(beat)

Except I don't know any.

(beat)

I don't know if my grandfather is remotely wonderful.

CUT TO

THE COURTROOM. Not one sound.

CUT TO

ADAM. A step toward the JUDGE now.

ADAM

I do know one thing: the man who did the bombings is not the man in the cell, the man who did the bombings is dead, as dead as the man in the cell will be if you find this appeal inadmissible ...

(long pause)

But nothing, nothing can be inadmissible when it is in support of mercy.

(HOLD ON ADAM. Then --)

CUT TO

THE TELEPHONE OFFICE. Later. Again, the overlapping of voices -- they are all getting very tired and hoarse now -- jars of honey and packets of lozenges dot the tables as we --

CUT TO

MCCALLISTER'S OFFICE. Later. MCCALLISTER, showing the strain of events, sits at his desk staring at papers. MONA stands alongside.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER

(softly)

-- fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck, 85 percent --

(to MONA)

-- I hate this -- can I cancel my next appointment? --

MONA STARK

(no way)

-- it's the prayer luncheon --

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER

(in pain)

I just want to pull the sheets over my
head and suck my thumb, fuck fuck fuck
fuck fuck ...

(as he buries his head in
his hands --)

CUT TO

NUGENT, waiting impatiently for the metal door to the Row to
slide open --

-- as it does, he gestures back, in a very military way --

GEORGE C. NUGENT

Death team, forward --

Now he hurries along the tier of cells --

-- and eight spotlessly uniformed men follow in quickstep
behind.

CUT TO

SAM, in his cell; as the sounds draw nearer, he moves to the
rear wall.

CUT TO

A SHOT OF THE CORRIDOR -- arms become visible through all the
bars -- everyone is listening.

CUT TO

NUGENT, staring through the bars at SAM.

GEORGE C. NUGENT

Moving day.

SAM

I been in this cell ten years, I don't
wanna move, why do you have to move me?

GEORGE C. NUGENT

Procedure -- you might attempt suicide,
we're putting you in the Observation
Cell --

(SAM's cell door slides
open)

-- turn around.

SAM

What about my things?

GEORGE C. NUGENT
Don't make me use force --

CUT TO

SAM. He turns, slowly, and slowly puts his arms behind his back. NUGENT moves in, slaps the handcuffs on.

CUT TO

THE CORRIDOR as NUGENT emerges, holding SAM by one arm and leads him past the other cells -- we only catch glimpses of the men inside but a couple of them are in tears --

-- all this for forty feet --

-- for that is where the Observation Cell is -- it's just an empty cell at the end of the tier -- beyond is a barred metal gate and more GUARDS are bunched there, seeing that nothing goes wrong --

-- the NUGENT'S GUARDS stay in lockstep behind as they lead the old man down --

CUT TO

THE OBSERVATION CELL. Empty.

CUT TO

SAM. Hanging back.

GEORGE C. NUGENT
You're only here one night.
(to his GUARDS)
Death team; proceed.

HALF THE GUARDS stay with NUGENT AND SAM. THE OTHERS race back to SAM'S CELL.

CUT TO

SAM'S CELL as they strip it -- they load up the mattress and the typewriter and the pillow and the TV and the books and --

CUT TO

THE OBSERVATION CELL as they put SAM's belongings inside. With no particular interest in what goes where.

SAM watches this, mute, furious.

When all his stuff is inside, NUGENT leads him in, turns, walks away as the cell door slides shut.

CUT TO

SAM, surrounded by the mess in his new cell.

SAM

(timid)

Mr. Nugent, sir?

GEORGE C. NUGENT

(keeps walking)

What is it now?

SAM

I'm still handcuffed, asshole.

CUT TO

NUGENT. Fuck. He turns, tries not to show embarrassment. As he walks back to SAM --

SAM

Barney Fife --

(There is a roar of
laughter from the
residents of the Row)

NUGENT keeps on walking, with everyone calling out "Barney Fife, Barney Fife" every step of the way ... HOLD ON NUGENT.

CUT TO

A CHERUBIC LOOKING MAN WE'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE. (We'll call him THE CHERUB.) Right now he seems a bit concerned --

THE CHERUB

How can I do my job if you don't know
the waistline?

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

ADAM in a downtown clothing store -- he's buying SAM clothes for the execution -- THE CHERUB is a well meaning salesman. This, right now, is the hardest thing for ADAM so far.

ADAM

He's lost weight -- he's ... my friend
hasn't got much interest in food these
days.

THE CHERUB
 (understanding)
 I've been going through a bad patch
 myself -- tell him it ends.

ADAM
 (makes a nod)
 I'll be sure to do that -- I just want a
 nice pair of slacks and a really great
 looking shirt -- and those shoes in the
 window, I liked those.

THE CHERUB
 (conspiratorially)
 All style, no quality, they don't last --
 (worried)
 -- a glass of water? -- the heat can do
 terrible things.
 (ADAM manages to shake his
 head -- he's fine)

CUT TO

THE CHERUB -- and now it hits him.

THE CHERUB
 -- omigod --
 (beat)
 -- I just realized -- I see your picture
 on the TV --
 (beat)
 -- these are for him ...
 (close to awe)
 ... what a wonderful thing for my store ...
 (embarrassed)
 ... sorry to go on about it but, well,
 you don't get many honors like this when
 you're in retail ...
 (ADAM is just trying to
 hold on now as we)

CUT TO

A LONG SHOT OF ADAM'S BLACK SAAB driving along Route 49. We
 hear the car radio -- Delta blues stuff -- then --

-- "This just in: The Honorable F. Flynn Slattery has denied
 the appeal of lawyers for -- "

-- now a click -- the radio is turned off --

-- now the car pulls off the highway and stops.

CUT TO

ADAM inside the car. Trying to hold his shit together. He could go at any time.

But now he manages a deep breath.

Now he manages another.

It's all going to be fine.

HOLD ON ADAM.

Only it isn't going to be fine --

-- and here it comes --

-- his face is suddenly contorting as the tears flood down. His hands go across his body and he rocks, helpless with his tears --

-- tears of pain and sadness --

-- and saddest of all, failure ...

HOLD ON THE YOUNG MAN. THEN --

CUT TO

THE LITTLE VISITING ROOM they were in the last time. SAM with his Eskimo Pie in one hand, a cigarette in the other, a paper bag alongside. ADAM is upbeat as hell.

ADAM

I am some lawyer -- took fucking Honorable Slattery all of three hours to deny.

(shrugs)

Of course, I had zero hopes of him doing anything else.

(hands over the clothing box)

You won't need these but what the hell.

SAM

(taking them)

Better safe than sorry.

(reaches into bag)

These are some letters I want you to mail after.

(holds them out)

ADAM
You're borrowing trouble.
(But SAM still holds them
out. ADAM shrugs takes
them)
Better safe than sorry.

SAM
(He means this)
Has to be after so no one thinks I'm
playing for sympathy. I don't know the
addresses.

CUT TO

SAM, moving to the walls, pacing now.

ADAM
What are they?

SAM
Apologies. I never was good at them.
Quince Lincoln. Tell him I hated what I
did for forty years. Ruth Kramer -- she
may still be in Memphis. The same.

(beat)
I don't want you watching me die, Adam,
but I would surely appreciate it if you
could spare me some time tomorrow.

ADAM
I'll check my calendar.

CUT TO

THE BOX OF CLOTHES. SAM picks it up, shakes it like a kid.

SAM
Always loved presents.
(HOLD on the two of them
smiling ...)

CUT TO

LEE, lit by firelight -- and it's a strange shot because we
don't know where we are --

-- and because of this terrible noise --

-- LEE looks pretty terrible herself. A lot older than when
she welcomed her nephew into her arms only 28 days before.
She is very pale, her movements not steady --

-- she is walking, a measured walk. All kinds of emotions play across her good face --

-- now she passes in front of someone --

-- who is chanting loudly but the words are lost in the overall noise --

-- the "someone" she has just passed, by the way, is a KLANSMAN who is not alone -- we are where we first saw the truck unload the initial bunch, by the highway in front of the prison, but things have changed startlingly --

-- because as LEE walks we see TWENTY OF THEM. In their white robes and they have megaphones --

-- and my God, here are thirty more, fifty in all, and they are scary --

-- but not as scary as the SKINHEADS, dozens of them now, tattooed and screaming --

-- LEE keeps walking --

-- and now: a party. It is a bunch of fraternity kids, sitting on a flatbed truck with a keg of beer -- and they have set up their boom-boxes -- country blares and rock blares -- competing boom-boxes if you will --

-- almost drowning out a clump of folkies, one of who is singing a song, "Cayhall's Call: the Ballad of Sam," and he has a mike set up and is strumming away --

-- and the media, close to a hundred of them, TV crews with their equipment and TV trucks and reporters with their notebooks and radio guys with their mikes --

-- children too, dozens of them, dancing and spinning in the hot Mississippi night --

-- and LEE, trying to ignore it all, trying to hang together, keeps walking through it all --

-- behind her is the highway and cops trying to keep things moving but the rubbernecking has caused a horrendous traffic jam and the CAR HONKING goes on and on --

-- and let's not forget the neo-Nazis. Because they wouldn't miss it for the world, and they are passionate and dangerous --

-- LEE stops walking.

She is standing by the entrance to PARCHMAN -- several guards are there -- all of them exhausted and harried. One of them is a woman and LEE seeks her out.

LEE
Sam Cayhall, please.

FEMALE GUARD
(didn't catch it)
Sorry.

LEE
I want to see Sam Cayhall.

FEMALE GUARD
(gesturing around)
You and a thousand others.
(very nicely)
No more visitors, Miss -- it's too late --
(LEE just stands there)
-- he's going to die tomorrow night,
rest in peace, o.k.?
(LEE manages a nod)
Are you all right?

LEE
(beat)
I don't think so.
(HOLD ON LEE)

CUT TO

THE OBSERVATION CELL. Night. SAM is still tidying, trying to make it like his other cell. He stops, takes a breath, goes to the bars, puts his arms through, stares out.

HOLD ON SAM.

The number in the bottom left changes from 2 to this: 24 hours.

CUT TO

ADAM, parking his car in front of an apartment building. He gets out, runs his hand through his hair, tugs at his clothes to make himself more presentable.

It's all nervous energy for ADAM now. The great looking kid we met back in GORMAN'S OFFICE is long gone. This version is weary down to bone.

He takes a deep breath, gathers himself, and as he starts toward the building --

CUT TO

ADAM, silently riding up in an elevator. THE ELEVATOR MAN, ancient, has a fine uniform on. Clearly, we are in a good building. As the door opens --

CUT TO

A WOMAN, standing in an open doorway down the hall from the elevator. Hers is the only apartment on the floor.

This is RUTH KRAMER, the mother of the twins. Grey and gracious, beautifully dressed. Seventy years old.

ADAM

(getting off the elevator)

I hope I didn't surprise you, calling at this hour.

RUTH KRAMER

Not at all, I've been expecting you.

(She gestures him inside)

How proud your grandfather must be.

ADAM

He'll be a lot prouder when I get a stay.

RUTH KRAMER

You're still confident, then?

ADAM

Oh. Absolutely.

CUT TO

THE APARTMENT as they move into the living room. It's like the lady, tasteful and grand. ADAM is more taut now. They sit at opposite ends of a couch.

ADAM

Thank you for seeing me like this --
I knew you never slept, but still.

RUTH KRAMER

My bedtime habits are common knowledge?

ADAM

(gesturing outside)

My aunt used to watch your window.

RUTH KRAMER

I read about her in the papers -- public suffering is never pleasant.

ADAM

Suffering's why I'm here -- there's been enough, don't you think? Help me -- your word carries weight on this -- tell the Governor to show clemency -- tell him you don't want my client to die.

RUTH KRAMER

I don't want him to die.

CUT TO

ADAM. A gleam of hope now.

RUTH KRAMER

I don't want him to --

(beat)

-- but I fear he must.

ADAM

That's not true, it really isn't, if you'll just help me, we can work miracles.

CUT TO

RUTH KRAMER. She stares silently at ADAM for the longest time. And when she speaks, there is a tone of reverie.

RUTH KRAMER

I could listen to you for hours, Adam -- because, the simple fact is ...

(beat)

... they were your age then, they would have been your age now.

(beat)

I had the flu that morning, you see; I waved goodbye from the bedroom window and let them leapfrog off to die.

FLASHCUT TO

A reverse of the shot we saw back in the credits -- now we are up in the second story window, looking down at the TWINS AND THEIR FATHER, as they wave up --

-- the waving goes into slow motion -- it's almost as if she didn't ever want them to stop.

Now they do stop, and as the TWINS leapfrog away after their father --

CUT TO

ADAM, caught up, listening.

RUTH KRAMER

I didn't take them to nursery school
because I wanted to protect them. So my
husband took them, but he stopped first
at his office.

(beat)

Of course the whole disaster was my
fault.

(beat)

I didn't take it well.

CUT TO

RUTH KRAMER, soft.

RUTH KRAMER

I couldn't cope, you see, I wasn't
ready, I was practically a child bride,
twenty-five years old then, not fifty
now.

CUT TO

ADAM, shocked, trying not to show it.

RUTH KRAMER

Adam?

ADAM

Ma'am?

RUTH KRAMER

Why are you here?

ADAM

To save my grandfather.

RUTH KRAMER

You don't even know your grandfather --
I read every word in the papers -- you
didn't even know you had a grandfather
-- so why in the world are you here?

ADAM

(long pause. Then --)
I guess I really don't know.

CUT TO

RUTH KRAMER. She looks at him. Keeps looking at him. Now out it comes.

ADAM

They were these two lost people -- these two Mississippi Delta people trying to survive in California.

CUT TO

ADAM. His eyes look toward the window now, his voice soft.

ADAM

But he couldn't seem to hold a job and she couldn't seem to get one, and we were moving all the time, town to town, school to school, and all they ever said was, "it's all riding on you, Adam, it's gotta be you, kid, you've gotta do it for us all," and I was going to be valedictorian in high school but that didn't stop him from shooting himself, and I graduated honors in college, but she was too weak to come watch, but still, there was never any question, I was the one, I had to be the one, there was no one else so it had to be me ...

CUT TO

ADAM AND RUTH. Finally --

RUTH KRAMER

I would love to help you. But I'm afraid he has to die.

(beat)

He has to die because I had the flu. He has to die because a story needs an ending. He has to die because I don't care if he's a different person now, I'm a different person now. That bomb destroyed both our families, mine just died first.

ADAM

(getting up to go)

But mine's catching up fast ...

(HOLD briefly, then --)

CUT TO

ADAM, leaving the building. He gets into his car. His movements are mechanical. He starts to drive.

-- suddenly the radio is blasting --

-- ADAM gasps -- because the radio isn't turned on.

WEDGE is in the back seat. A radio blaring in one hand. A gun pointing at ADAM in the other. HOLD ON WEDGE. Then --

CUT TO

A QUIET ROAD. ADAM is driving, WEDGE still behind him. WEDGE gestures and ADAM turns off the road, starts into a wooded area. From the look of things, we are miles from anywhere.

CUT TO

ANOTHER CAR parked in the woods. WEDGE gestures for ADAM to stop.

WEDGE

Pull up behind my car.

(ADAM obeys. They get out)

The number in the bottom left changes from 24 to this: 23.

CUT TO

THE LICENSE PLATE of WEDGE'S car.

ADAM glances at it, quickly looks away. WEDGE fiddling with the radio, hasn't noticed.

Now it's quieter and he gestures with the gun for ADAM to move. ADAM obeys, starts deeper into the woods and we

CUT TO

A QUIET STREAM. There is moonlight.

WEDGE

(stopping)

Pretty here, don't you think?

ADAM

(anxious to please)

Oh very. Yes. In every way.

WEDGE

You scared?

ADAM

Same answer -- yes, very, in every way.

WEDGE smiles, sits on a tree stump, indicates for ADAM to sit on the ground.

WEDGE

You had me worried, Adam -- when I first read you were here. Thought Sam might fold.

ADAM

I guess you didn't know him well.

WEDGE

On the contrary, I know him very well, I just don't know him very recently.

(looks at ADAM)

Aren't you curious about me?

(ADAM nods)

Go ahead.

ADAM

(like a shot)

You going to kill me?

WEDGE

I think it would be best, don't you?

ADAM

(like a shot)

Oh no, I think it's a terrible idea.

WEDGE

(beat)

You remind me of Sam. You've got that same look about you. You're not going to fold, are you, Adam?

ADAM

I hope not.

WEDGE

Don't you want to know my name?

(ADAM nods)

Rollie Wedge. It's not my name now.

(smiles)

Wasn't my real name then, I have no name, Adam, I just have a job to do.

ADAM

You were the bomber, right?

WEDGE

(nods)

Best of breed. You probably don't think that -- because of the twins. I'd never used a timing device before. Haven't had any trouble since. Now let me ask you something: do you still remember?

ADAM

Remember what?

WEDGE

My license plate number. Repeat it.

ADAM

RT 81124.

WEDGE

(smiles)

I don't know it -- only had the car a few hours, getting rid of it in a few hours more.

(beat)

Scared worse?

(ADAM manages a nod)

CUT TO

WEDGE. And now he rises. And his voice gets louder.

WEDGE

I want that. I want you to know who the enemy is -- I heard you talk in court about the old days; you called us evil.

(now he turns the
radio on --)

They were the best days any of us ever had -- it was pure in those days, it was a great battle for a great cause and we were warriors.

CUT TO

ADAM; he knows it's coming and he knows there's nothing he can do but face it down -- now comes another sound, a metallic sound --

CUT TO

WEDGE. He has cocked the gun.

WEDGE
Close your eyes!
(As ADAM does, WEDGE turns
the radio full blast,
points the gun, fires --)

CUT TO

ADAM. Terrified. He opens his eyes.

CUT TO

WEDGE. He brings his gun down.

WEDGE
You're only alive because of Sam.
(beat)
But when he's dead, well, that's
different.
(he turns)
Always look behind you.
(beat)
You didn't fold -- see, you are like him
after all ...
(as he walks away --)

CUT TO

THE WOODS

The land dips down. WEDGE is gone. Only the sound of the
music growing faint as we

CUT TO

THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION. A light is on in the library. ADAM's
Saab is parked in front.

The number in the bottom left changes from 23 to this: 21.

ADAM (OVER)
He was the driver. Period.

CUT TO

THE LIBRARY. ADAM is dressed as before; MCCALLISTER wears a
robe over his pajamas.

ADAM
He drove the car.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
Can you prove it?

ADAM

You mean "prove" like it will stand up in court? No. But I just talked to the bomber -- he tried to scare me to death and for all I know, he may have.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER

Can I talk to him?

ADAM

Believe me, you don't want to -- anyway, he's gone -- but what matters is this: we know now that Sam was there, of course he should have stopped it, sure he's guilty. But a timing device he didn't set didn't work properly.

(beat)

You kill him for that, you're as guilty as he is.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER

You could be lying.

ADAM

Of course I could.

(beat)

But I'm not.

(beat)

And you know I'm not, don't you?

CUT TO

MCCALLISTER. He stares at ADAM. Then he nods.

There is no way this man is going to let SAM CAYHALL die ...

HOLD ON MCCALLISTER.

CUT TO

ADAM, lying in bed, early morning. His eyes are wide, the radio on --

RADIO (OVER)

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals this morning --

The number in the bottom left changes from 21 to this: 14.

RADIO (OVER, contd)

-- denied Sam Cayhall's last appeal --

ADAM blinks, stares --

CUT TO

MCCALLISTER in his robe -- it's the same time -- he is very tense, sipping coffee and reading the papers in his bedroom, watching the tube.

TV (OVER)

The United States Supreme Court will rule later today on Cayhall's fate. If they deny, Governor David McCallister will be his last chance -- the execution is set for 12:01 tomorrow morning --

CUT TO

THE ROW. SAM'S CELL. Same time. He turns the TV off.

He is sitting on his cot. His body seems heavy. He takes a long and very deep breath.

Then he stands, shakily. SAM needs a miracle now.

HOLD ON SAM.

CUT TO

THE TELEPHONE OFFICE. Mountains of coffee cups and lozenges and everyone is tired, their voices hoarse.

The number in the bottom left changes from 14 to this: 13.

ADAM is talking with GOODMAN, then turns to the others.

ADAM

I saw McCallister a few hours ago. I think he's terrified by the hotline numbers and that's your doing. Thank you. This is our day.

CUT TO

GOODMAN, watching. He's exhausted too, but he's been through this before.

GOODMAN

I'll stay in touch.

ADAM

Good. We're going to win; you know that. I saw it, on McCallister's face.

GOODMAN

I'll buy the champagne. Adam?

(ADAM looks at him)

There's hope until the steam rises.

(They shake, ADAM goes and
we --)

CUT TO

MCCALLISTER in his office. Pale. Upset. Pacing. MONA sits at his desk, watching.

The number in the bottom left changes from 13 is this: 12.

MONA STARK

I've got it, I've got it -- let's flip a coin.

(getting excited)

On live TV --

(imitating him)

-- "my beloved voters, being such a total wuss, I have decided not to decide -- "

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER

-- I'm liable to have to kill a guy --

MONA STARK

-- the Courts are killing him -- you're just doing your job --

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER

-- what would you do? --

MONA STARK

-- seriously? --

(He nods)

-- I'd grant clemency -- the guy is 70.
He's gonna eat gruel on Death Row 'til
he kicks -- isn't that enough vengeance?

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER

(soft)

... I don't know ... I don't know ...

CUT TO

NUGENT, staring unhappily through a window.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

He is in the back half of the Chamber area -- the visitors part. He is looking through a window of the Chamber itself.

What he sees, of course, is the rear of the chair. He raps on the window.

The number in the bottom left changes from 12 to this: 11.

CUT TO

EXECUTIONER MONDAY in the front part of the Chamber, near his little gas mixing cubicle. He holds a canister.

EXECUTIONER MONDAY

Them windows are clear enough, quit worrying.

CUT TO

NUGENT. He scowls, turns, hurries out the visitors door --

-- follow him outside as he moves to the Chamber door itself, just a few feet away.

GEORGE C. NUGENT

Celebrities might be looking through them. They should be spotless.

EXECUTIONER MONDAY

George, I've got trouble of my own, all right?

GEORGE C. NUGENT

(worried)

Nothing serious?

EXECUTIONER MONDAY

I just don't have a good feeling about this canister.

GEORGE C. NUGENT

It won't malfunction?

(MONDAY shakes his head. NUGENT works the heavy metal Chamber door, closing it)

It makes a very loud reverberation.

EXECUTIONER MONDAY

You have to do that? I hate that sound.

GEORGE C. NUGENT

The door's stiffer than it should be --
 (There's no end to it)
 -- that's all I need, the door gets
 stuck --
 (He opens and shuts it
 again)

Again, the terrible noise.

GEORGE C. NUGENT (contd)

I just want a great execution, is that
 so much to ask?

As he continues to bang away at the door --

CUT TO

SAM as the sound goes on and on. For the first time he is in his death clothes. He tries not to shake, puts his fingers in his ears, keeps them there as we

CUT TO

HIGHWAY 49. We are looking along the road. A lot of cops are working to keep things moving --

-- now they're really agitated -- their gestures bigger -- something important is about to happen --

And the number in the bottom left changes from 11 to this: 10.

CUT TO

A BUNCH OF TRAFFIC COPS, clearing the highway -- and now we hear a rumble --

-- a bunch of powerful motors are coming our way.

CUT TO

SOME OF THE PROTESTORS. (Not a full shot -- we don't get the size 'til dark.) They are gazing off toward the sound, curious.

CUT TO

THE SHOT ALONG THE HIGHWAY.

HOLD A MOMENT --

-- then here they come.

We are looking at a bunch of big, four door cars -- of varying colors -- but all of them have elaborate seals and emblems on their doors and fenders.

And they have racks of emergency lights on the roofs -- and tall antennas waving in the wind.

It's the Sheriffs! Every Sheriff from every county in the State of Mississippi.

CUT TO

THE MAIN GATE OF PARCHMAN as the lead cars slow down --
THE FEMALE GUARD who talked to LEE the night before moves forward --

LEAD SHERIFF

It's the Sheriffs, ma'am -- we're here
for the execution dinner.

FEMALE GUARD

(excited)

Just park by the cafeteria.

(THE LEAD SHERIFF nods)

We're so proud you're all here.

LEAD SHERIFF

Yes, ma'am -- it's a great day for law
enforcement.

And now he drives past the gate --

-- followed by the others, antennas waving. HOLD. Then --

CUT TO

ADAM, carrying a couple of Eskimo Pie coolers and his briefcase, enters the visiting room -- and stops dead -- he gives a wolf whistle as we

CUT TO

SAM IN HIS DEATH CLOTHES; he models them, turns around.

SAM

Haven't had shoes on in ten years, makes
for a nice change.

(takes the cooler from

ADAM, hands him a letter)

ADAM

You want me to deliver this?

SAM
Not this baby. I want you to read it.
To them.

(ADAM glances at it)

ADAM
You sure?

CUT TO

SAM. He holds an Eskimo pie, takes a bite.

SAM
I was up all night wrestling with this
thing. But now I am sure.
(beat)
When I was a little kid, I thought,
well, when I get older I'll get smart.
(shakes his head)
Well, I got the older part down ... but
smart just passed me by.
(shrugs)
Maybe it's not too late.
(now, from SAM --)

CUT TO

ADAM, PACKER alongside, walking away from the main gate
outside. TWO OTHER GUARDS are close behind.

The number in the bottom left changes from 10 to this: 9.

ADAM continues his walk -- surrounded by a huge media pack.

CUT TO

THE KLAN ENCLAVE. A hundred guys in white sheets now.
Watching ADAM approach. They put down their beers and their
signs, grow silent.

CUT TO

ADAM. Stopping in front of them.

ADAM
(loud)
I have a letter from my client, Sam
Cayhall, written today ...

THE MEDIA CRUSH is getting stronger now -- microphones shoved
in and TV guys pushing print guys out of their way and --

ADAM

(starting to read)

"Hate consumed my body and my mind and set me on the path to where I am. You are using my execution to further your own interests that have nothing to do with me and I want you gone."

THE KLAN GUYS shove in closer. They are pissed, anger building.

THE MEDIA CRUSH is dangerous now. So is the mood --

ADAM

(shouting it out)

"I am no longer a member of the Ku Klux Klan -- I repudiate you and everything you stand for -- now leave me to die!"

Now THE FRONT KLAN GUYS move forward, grabbing at the letter and ADAM protects it as PACKER protects him and MORE GUARDS come running up and there is pushing and shouting and cursing, now HERE COME MORE GUARDS and it's getting ugly and punches are thrown and cameras are smashed and someone swings at ADAM but he ducks, swings back, connects, feels great about it, wants more, and then the GUARDS have him, surround him, race him through the crowd and

CUT TO

THE VISITORS' CENTER. As NUGENT asks for silence --

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

A SMALL ARMY OF MEDIA.

The number in the bottom left changes from 9 to this: 8.

Next to NUGENT is a tin bucket. Each member of the media wears a large orange button.

GEORGE C. NUGENT

I am now going to conduct the witness lottery. I'm going to pull numbers from the bucket here and whoever matches, he gets to watch the gassing. At precisely 11:00 two vans will appear here to escort the winners to the Maximum Security Unit. No cameras or recorders will be allowed.

(looking around)

We will take your names and only the lucky eight will enter the vans --

(MORE)

GEORGE C. NUGENT (contd)
so don't anybody try buying a winning
number.

(reaching in -- like a
bingo caller)
Four-eight-four-three, come on down.

Everyone checks their orange buttons -- some moan, all are
tense with excitement --

KID REPORTER
(hopping up and down)
Here you go --
(and as he plunges forward
through the crowd --)

CUT TO

ADAM AND SAM in the visitors' room. Both silently munch away
at Eskimo Pies. They seem surprisingly contented.

The number in the bottom left changes from 8 to this: 7.

SAM
Uh-oh.

ADAM
What?

SAM
You got that look on your face. You're
thinking again --

ADAM can't help it, starts to laugh.

SAM
Tell me.

ADAM
I have a great idea for a lawsuit for
after you're gone -- I'm gonna sue those
mothers for --
(makes a headline with one
hand)
-- "Wrongful Death."

CUT TO

SAM. He starts laughing too --

ADAM
Nugent, McCallister, the whole State of
Mississippi -- it's gonna be great.

CUT TO

PACKER in the doorway.

SERGEANT PACKER

Adam? -- phone.

(on that last word --)

CUT TO

ADAM, dashing out of the room -- outside is a clerical area, files and desks --

-- and a phone. ADAM grabs for it.

SAM, half hidden in the doorway, watches. PACKER too.

ADAM

Adam Hall.

(listens)

I can hear you, yessir.

CUT TO

GOODMAN in the telephone office. He speaks into the phone --

-- we hear no words -- don't have to --

-- what we do hear is static --

CUT TO

ADAM. He listens, hangs up --

-- still, the static sound.

CUT TO

SAM IN THE DOORWAY. No words are necessary. HOLD ON ADAM AND SAM and as the static sound gets louder --

CUT TO

IN FRONT OF THE CAFETERIA. THE SHERIFFS sit on the hoods of their cars, stuffed. Dinner is over.

They listen to their staticky car radios --

RADIO (OVER)

The Supreme Court has denied the appeal
of Sam Cayhall --

THE SHERIFFS are not unhappy with the news.

FAT SHERIFF
 (to the LEAD SHERIFF)
 Hot shit.

LEAD SHERIFF
 (nods, removes his toothpick)
 Gas his ass.
 (and on that --)

CUT TO

THE SUN, beginning to set. We hear those words exchanged by a lot of people -- "Gas His Ass, Gas His Ass."

PAN DOWN TO REVEAL

A SECTION OF HIGHWAY 49. A bunch of college kids are sitting on flatbed trucks with kegs of beer, shouting the "Gas His Ass" slogan.

The NUNS stare at the collegians with disbelief. A bunch of other people stand with them.

LEE is among them. In agony. HOLD ON LEE, then --

CUT TO

A BEAUTIFULLY PRESSED BLUE SUIT.

The number in the bottom left changes from 7 to this: 4.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

MCCALLISTER is in a changing room that connects with his office -- a small bathroom completes the set up. McCallister's tie is handed to him. It's all very casual now.

MONA STARK
 Gonna wing it?

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
 Don't you think?

MONA STARK
 (nods)
 You're best off the cuff.
 (shakes her head)
 Some rough day.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
 That's what this job is all about.
 (tying his tie now)
 Run those numbers by me again.

MONA STARK
(grabbing a piece of note paper)
Arkansas hopes to have three on the same
day -- maybe next year.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
Arkansas doesn't matter -- give me
Texas.

MONA STARK
Texas has only killed two the last three
years -- but they have real hopes about
eight more.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
(shakes his head)
Can't fall behind Texas.

CUT TO

MONA. She picks up the beautifully pressed jacket in her
hands, holds it out and we

CUT TO

THE ROTUNDA OF THE CAPITOL BUILDING. Throngs of press, TV.
MCCALLISTER addresses the cameras.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
It's on days like this I thank God I'm
from Mississippi. There is a need for
truth through toughness that's in the
soil here.
(He is wonderful on TV)
I could have taken the easy way. But my
Mississippi heritage would not let me.

And now, as HE GOES ON SPEAKING --

CUT TO

ADAM AND SAM, watching the black and white TV in SAM's
Observation Cell --

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER (OVER)
And so, after ten years of appeals --

-- and GOODMAN in the telephone office -- he looks at the
young people, shakes his head -- they put down their phones --

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER (OVER)
-- after the case having been reviewed
by no less than forty-seven judges --

-- and the SHERIFFS by the cafeteria throw their hats in the air --

-- and the NUNS by the highway close their eyes --

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER (OVER)
-- justice has arrived for Sam Cayhall --

-- and NUGENT AND EXECUTIONER MONDAY give each other high fives --

-- and the COLLEGE KIDS love it and the KLAN GUYS hate it and --

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER (OVER)
-- he will meet his Maker at one minute past midnight --

-- and the NEO-NAZIS wave their "Save Sam" signs --

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER (OVER)
-- Justice wants to be both swift and sure -- it is not always swift -- but it is always sure --

-- and MONA STARK looks at MCCALLISTER the way Nancy Reagan looked at Ron --

-- and SERGEANT PACKER, hidden off by the visitors' room, fights to control his emotions --

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER (OVER)
-- will the world be a better place tomorrow? --

-- and RUTH KRAMER cannot stop her tears ...

CUT TO

THE GOVERNOR. Soaring to climax.

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
-- who could argue otherwise ... ?

THE SPEECH is over -- as the barrage of flashbulbs starts --

CUT TO

NUGENT. He moves to the Observation Cell, looks in at SAM AND ADAM.

The number in the bottom left changes from 4 to this: 1.

GEORGE C. NUGENT
Time for the Isolation Room.

THE CELL DOOR OPENS. ADAM follows SAM out. SAM looks along the tier.

CUT TO

THE TIER. All the cells have arms sticking through. There is the sound of muffled sobs.

CUT TO

SAM, taking it all in one last time.

CUT TO

NUGENT. He is flanked by half a dozen UNIFORMED GUARDS. There is no space in the corridor as NUGENT LEADS SAM to the Isolation Room -- which is only a few feet away. It is very slow going, baby steps, and the heat is murderous.

SAM
Why do you need so many people?

GEORGE C. NUGENT
Protocol.

SAM
(as it dawns)
No -- it's in case I try my jailbreak,
isn't it?
(NUGENT says nothing -- but
it's true. Now --)

CUT TO

THE ISOLATION ROOM -- it is very small with one sagging cot. It was visible from SAM'S CELL. The heat is brutal inside.

NUGENT leads SAM AND ADAM in. The door they came through closes. There is a second door which we will see, leads to the Chamber.

GEORGE C. NUGENT
It is now precisely 11:04. I'll leave
you. At precisely 11:45 the doctor will
visit --

SAM
(cutting in -- to ADAM)
-- for my death physical --

GEORGE C. NUGENT

I shall return at precisely 11:55. At that time, we will go into the Chamber room.

SAM

Nugent -- it is now precisely 11:05 -- get the fuck out of my face.

ADAM

(nodding in approval)

Poetry.

(as NUGENT leaves --)

The number in the bottom left changes from 1 to this: :55.

CUT TO

THE VISITORS' CENTER as two identical prison vans stand waiting --

-- a lot of flashbulbs and hissing and booing as the WINNING REPORTERS get into their vehicles --

-- the vans drive off and we

CUT TO

THE NIGHT SKY -- far far in the distance now: the sound of a helicopter.

CUT TO

THE MAXIMUM SECURITY UNIT as the vans stop, the reporters get out. They look wildly around, trying to take it all in.

NUGENT stands in the doorway of the visitors' part of the Chamber, gesturing for the reporters to go in. As they approach --

CUT TO

THE WITNESS ROOM as they enter, looking around --

-- it is truly an awful place. Small and steaming and there are mosquitoes immediately starting to dive bomb the newcomers -- a dozen folding chairs are set up in two rows. There are curtains at the front.

The number in the bottom left changes from :55 to this: :45.

GEORGE C. NUGENT

Take seats.

(indicates a couple at the front)
Keep these empty. It is now precisely 11:15. You may not leave this room. At precisely midnight, the curtains will open -- you will only be able to see the back of the head and I'm sorry about that, but I didn't design this place.

He talks louder as the helicopter sound is more pronounced.

GEORGE C. NUGENT (contd)

It should take ten minutes before death can be pronounced. Sorry about the heat. But once the curtains open, it should get real interesting real fast.

CUT TO

ADAM AND SAM in the Isolation Room.

SAM smokes.

The number in the bottom left changes from :45 to this: :40.

ADAM

What's going through your mind?

SAM

(so hard to say)
Will you stay and be my witness? -- will you watch?

ADAM

(so hard to say)
I'd like that.

SAM

I mean, I know it's not gonna happen -- I know there's no way it's actually gonna happen -- but if somehow it does happen ...
(beat)
... I'll get through it better if I know you're there ...

And now the muffled helicopter sounds grow and we

CUT TO

NUGENT, staring up. He is no longer in the area by the Maximum Security Unit. In the distance, the muted singing of hymns.

The number in the bottom left changes from :40 to this: :35.

CUT TO

THE NIGHT SKY as a helicopter starts to descend, the noise DEAFENING and

CUT TO

NUGENT moving out of the way as the plane comes down, down, touches earth and

CUT TO

NUGENT gesturing, and HALF A DOZEN GUARDS approach the plane and

CUT TO

THE HELICOPTER DOOR OPENING -- MCCALLISTER AND MONA STARK hop out. THE GUARDS hurry to them, flank them protectively --

CUT TO

WHERE WE ARE and it's near the highway.

And suddenly we can see the CROWD and it is gigantic -- and the crowd realizes what is going on and we can hear voices going "it's him, it's the Governor" --

-- and a great mass of people break and run toward the helicopter and

CUT TO

NUGENT. He stands by a large prison van as MCCALLISTER AND MONA STARK hurry up -- the crowd noise is loud and getting louder and as they get in --

GEORGE C. NUGENT
Can I get you anything, sir?

GOVERNOR MCCALLISTER
(as he boards --)
Popcorn.
(and now the doors slam
shut and we --)

CUT TO

THE ISOLATION ROOM. ADAM AND SAM.

The number in the bottom left changes from :35 to this: :20.

SAM

I'm working on my last words. Best I can remember is this guy, when the Governor didn't pardon him at the end, he said, "Well, that bastard loses my vote."

(ADAM manages to smile)

Your turn --

ADAM

-- don't want to --

SAM

(suddenly big)

-- well, I need something 'cause I don't like thinking about what I'm thinking about -- Lee's on the booze again, isn't she? --

ADAM

-- she is --

SAM

-- she'll probably beat herself up something terrible she didn't come visit -- it's best she didn't -- tell her that, tell her I understand --

(beat)

-- she was in her pecan tree, wasn't she? --

ADAM

-- she was --

SAM

-- I guess I always knew that, just afraid to find out.

ADAM

(quickly)

Oscar Wilde, he was in this awful hotel room in Paris and he said, "Either that wallpaper goes or I go."

CUT TO

SAM, and he can't help it, starts to laugh. ADAM gets up, starts measuring the room, step by step.

SAM watches.

ADAM measures slowly.

Silence.

SAM

Kid?

(ADAM looks at him)

Don't.

ADAM

Hmm?

SAM

Don't try and save me anymore -- I know
somewhere inside you're still trying to
whip up some miracle --

(ADAM keeps pacing)

Look at me, Adam --

CUT TO

ADAM. For a moment he stops his measuring.

ADAM

What?

SAM

(very simple)

I'm ready.

CUT TO

ADAM AND SAM. Looking at each other.

SAM

Last night? I was thinking about
writing that letter and I realized that
of all the things I hated, the thing I
hated most was me. How I'd been given
free entry into this world to make of
myself what I could and I pissed it all
away.

(does not give in to his
emotions -- never has,
never will)

Then I thought how you came here and
broke your bones trying to somehow
wriggle me free and I thought, "wait a
minute, Sam, you didn't fail at
everything, the kid's here, how terrible
can you be?" I guess what I'm saying is
now I've met you, it's o.k. Shit.

ADAM

What?

SAM

I'm out of cigarettes.

ADAM

Sorry.

SAM

Probably a good time to quit.

Now it's ADAM'S turn to laugh. It goes quickly.

SAM

Are you ready, Adam?

ADAM

Funny, but I did some thinking last night too. Now don't fly off, nothing bad happened, but Wedge paid me a visit --

SAM

(big)

-- he hurt you? --

ADAM

-- no, nothing like that, I'm fine, but the thing is, he said how I reminded him of you, how we were like each other.

CUT TO

ADAM. He leans against the wall now.

ADAM

You remember early on when you said I was afraid of you?

(SAM nods)

The truth was this: I was afraid I was you. I was afraid I was all the Cayhalls, crazy and helpless and lost.

(beat)

And when Wedge was gone, I thought, "no, mister, you're wrong, I am not like them. I only sprang from them, I was haunted by them" --

(soft)

See, I thought I was going to be the last of the Cayhalls.

(beat)

But now I know different, now I know I'm going to be the first. No matter what happened before ... from here on, the tree starts with me ...

A TERRIBLE SUDDEN BANGING comes from the Chamber -- they both jump involuntarily.

CUT TO

THE CHAMBER DOOR suddenly opening --

The number in the bottom left changes from :20 to this: :13.

A YOUNG DOCTOR we have not seen stands there, stethoscope in hand. Trembling.

SAM

Come on in, son, we were waiting for you ...

(HOLD. Then --)

CUT TO

THE HIGHWAY OUTSIDE. And now we see it all, the whole sweep of the circus. God knows how many people. A thousand? More?

The number in the bottom left changes from :13 to this: :10.

And now a strange thing happens: a noise starts. It has no meaning, no point, it's just that for no logical reason, everybody starts to scream. It could be the climax of a World Cup Match. It could be the last scoring drive at a Super Bowl. This is at a killing. And all the people, whether they have been there for days or just stopped by for a quick memory, all of them, every one, really lets go. Now --

CUT TO

THE GAS CHAMBER ITSELF. Door open wide. The chair is ready.

The number in the bottom left changes from :10 to this: :05.

NUGENT leads ADAM AND SAM out of the Isolation Room.

It's packed with GUARDS, OFFICIALS.

And it all goes very fast now.

ADAM AND SAM are doing their best. They smile -- shake hands -- break -- ADAM half turns --

-- then he spins back and for the first time they embrace each other, hold tight, separate.

SAM

(to NUGENT)

I'm ready.

(NUGENT nods)

SAM steps toward the open door of the Chamber.

THE GUARDS we saw practicing strapping with the rabbit flank him.

ADAM hurries out.

SAM sits in the chair.

They strap his ankles.

EXECUTIONER MONDAY gets his canister ready.

ADAM, outside, hurries the few steps to the WITNESS ROOM.

THE GUARDS strap SAM's wrists.

NUGENT clears his throat.

LUCAS MANN, the lawyer holds a paper.

Now THE GUARDS struggle to get the hideous head brace on.

THE YOUNG DOCTOR cannot stop trembling.

LUCAS MANN

Sam, this is your death warrant, I'm
required by law to read it to you.

SAM

Just hurry.

ADAM outside by the WITNESS ROOM pauses, listens --

-- the sound from the crowd fills the night --

-- he hesitates outside the WITNESS ROOM. It is the last
place in the world he wants to be.

ADAM goes in.

LUCAS MANN steps away from SAM, the death warrant done.

The number in the bottom left does this: it disappears.

LUCAS MANN

(to NUGENT)

No stays.

GEORGE C. NUGENT

Any reason why this execution should not
proceed?

LUCAS MANN

None.

GEORGE C. NUGENT
(to SAM)
Any last words?

CUT TO

SAM. He just stares at NUGENT, stares through NUGENT. An all but imperceptible shake of his head.

NUGENT shuts the heavy door.

Tight.

EXECUTIONER MONDAY places the canister in position, pulls the lever.

In the WITNESS ROOM, the curtains are sharply pulled back. The back of SAM's head is visible. His body is strapped in the chair.

In the CHAMBER, the steaming fumes are starting to rise.

SAM
(suddenly -- trying to turn
his head)
Adam?

In the WITNESS ROOM, ADAM stares at the back of his grandfather's head -- did he just hear something? Was the old man trying to move?

ADAM
What?

In the CHAMBER with the fumes, SAM is louder:

SAM
Adam?

In the WITNESS ROOM, ADAM shouts back:

ADAM
What, Sam?

CUT TO

THE CHAMBER AND SAM. One final bewildered cry --

SAM
They're really gonna do it ... !

And now he inhales deeply, takes the poison down --

CUT TO

THE WITNESS ROOM. ADAM stares through the window -- SAM's head is still upright.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

MCCALLISTER in the chair alongside ADAM. MONA STARK beside him. MCCALLISTER checks his watch.

ADAM stares through the window, bearing the pain of the world.

CUT TO

SAM. Gasping.

CUT TO

ADAM. He shuts his eyes.

CUT TO

SAM. He shuts his too.

The fumes cover him, hide him, take him away ...

HOLD ...

CUT TO

THE CROWD BY THE HIGHWAY. It's done. They sense it. They are silent now.

CUT TO

ADAM outside by his Saab. LUCAS MANN is with him. They say goodbye. ADAM gets in, starts the motor --

CUT TO

THE MAIN GATE AT PARCHMAN. ADAM slows. He peers out.

LEE is standing there waiting.

He gestures for her to get in.

CUT TO

LEE, opening the car door. She is very fragile, very pale, almost inaudible.

LEE

I tried to come. They said I was too late.

ADAM
It's best, it really is --
(looks at her)
-- Sam said to tell you that, and that
he understood.
(beat)
Lee?
(She looks at him)
Let's finish it.
(and on that --)

CUT TO

FLAMES IN THE NIGHT.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

ADAM AND LEE standing by the pecan tree, torches in their hands, watching as the isolated Cayhall home burns like tinder.

There are crackling sounds.

ADAM moves closer to the decrepit home --

-- throws his torch onto the porch.

The flames go even higher.

CUT TO

ADAM, as suddenly he starts to climb --

-- he's climbing the pecan tree.

He does it easily, gets to LEE'S spot, stands there, staring at the flames.

ADAM is ten feet up in the air now.

CUT TO

ADAM standing there, still holding the torch.

Now he fires the torch at the house.

CUT TO

THE TORCH, arcing through the night toward the house.

The house accepts the gift.

Flames shoot higher still.

CUT TO

ADAM in the pecan tree, above it all, watching it all.

HOLD ON ADAM.

KEEP HOLDING.

FINAL FADE OUT.