

094466

ICE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD

Mark Richard

7/28/01

FADE IN:

1 EXT. OPEN WATER - DAY

FLYING just over the tops of shimmering waves of the CHESAPEAKE BAY in mid-summer sun; through the hot, humid air a small ISLAND spreads ahead across the hazy horizon-

The widening ISLAND gains speed as it approaches just above the wavetops; centered on its shoreline a LARGE WHITE HOUSE rises up and then passes below our wings; everything dissolves up into SKY.

2 INT. LARGE WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A SONIC BOOM shakes the LIVING ROOM of the DOODLUM RESIDENCE, trembling the ornamental balls on the CHRISTMAS TREE a young woman, LISA LEE DOODLUM, mid-20's, is trimming.

UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The same SONIC BOOM jostles the careful line of tub caulking that DOODLUM matriarch LOUISE is applying with a caulk gun along a bathtub floor seam, this puts her on slow boil. She peels off her BRIGHT PINK LATEX GLOVES, collects herself.

Louise snatches a small putty knife from the breast pocket of her men's overalls, expertly FIXES the caulking glitch, and begins to SQUEEZE out another perfect line of caulk. She's a woman with a lot to do and not much time to do it.

3 LIVING ROOM - SAME

Lisa Lee fills the fireplace mantel with items from a large cardboard box marked HOLIDAYS - an EASTER RABBIT, some EASTER EGGS, a SANTA CLAUS, and a grinning ceramic JACK-O'-LANTERN.

4 UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - LATER

Louise vigorously flosses, her hair wrapped in a towel. She stares into the mirror intently, but she is not vain, she merely sees a smudge on the wall behind her that she rubs with the corner of a towel with great force.

5 MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Louise sits at her vanity and seemingly haphazardly applies her makeup; she's clearly summoning up the resolve to face whatever it is she is preparing herself for.

6 LIVING ROOM - SAME

Lisa Lee arranges some framed FAMILY PHOTOS on the piano top; she pulls her own to the forefront, a WEDDING PHOTO of Lisa Lee and HUSBAND NO.1, and alongside that another WEDDING PHOTO of Lisa Lee with HUSBAND NO.2.

7 MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Louise, now dressed in her Sunday best, looks down at her marriage bed; her bedside table is stacked with tissue boxes and ointments, a nightwatchman's flashlight nearby, as well as a leaning clutch of weapons - thick walking sticks, a GOLF CLUB, and a shotgun.

The other bedside table is empty, in fact, the other side of the bed looks so "unslept-in," there's not even a pillow there where Louise has two. Louise slides one of her pillows to the other side. She checks her watch. It is time to go.

8 EXT. NORFOLK NAVAL SHIPYARD FUEL DOCKS - DAY

Excited! NAVY WIVES and gangs of CHILDREN joyously wave placards WELCOME HOME! as HAPPY SAILORS run down the gangway of a large OIL TANKER moored at a busy dock; much passionate kissing and tearful embracing as families reunite.

A surge of families moves away from the gangway REVEALING large red signs EXPLOSIVE FUELS! NO OPEN FLAME WITHIN 500 FEET, POSITIVELY NO SMOKING!

9 INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - SAME

CAPTAIN BILL DOODLUM, late 50's, haggard, unshaven, lights a fresh cigarette from the burning butt of another. He sits on his bunk amidst clutter of 35 years at sea - PAPERBACKS, dirty uniforms, stuffed KANGAROO, tribal masks - tries to cram it all into a sea chest and a foot locker.

A KNOCK and then his cabin door opens enough for a friendly-faced black EXECUTIVE OFFICER ROBERT FERGUSON to lean in, holding out a cigarbox-sized WOODEN BOX.

CAPT BILL

My goddamn gold watch?

Ferguson smiles, lets himself in, moves a huge overflowing ashtray off a chair in disgust, sits down.

FERGUSON

I don't think the Navy gives out gold watches anymore, Bill.

(CONTINUED)

Ferguson hands the wooden box to Capt. Bill.

FERGUSON (cont'd)
Just a little something from the crew.

CAPT BILL
I hope it's something good to drink.

Capt. Bill opens the box. Inside, a huge CHROME-PLATED NAVY COLT .45 PISTOL.

FERGUSON
(excitedly)
Better than that. The pistol you pulled
on those pirates in the South China Sea.

Capt. Bill softens, then expertly checks the action on the pistol, studies the grips.

FERGUSON (cont'd)
We had our names engraved and the date.
You were one shooting fool that morning.

Capt. Bill reverently lays the pistol back into its box.

CAPT BILL
Tell you a little secret, Bobby. I was
up on the bridgewing firing with my eyes
closed.

FERGUSON
At least you were firing, the rest of us
were running for the lifeboats.

CAPT BILL
I could have blown us all to kingdom
come.

FERGUSON
(laughing)
Yeah, I think the pirates got that idea,
too.

Capt. Bill buries the box deep inside the sea chest.

CAPT BILL
Tell everybody thank you.

FERGUSON
Sure, Bill. Can I do anything to help
you go home?

(CONTINUED)

He pulls a bottle of whiskey from a wad of dirty shirts. He pours whiskey into two coffee mugs, hands one to Ferguson.

CAPT BILL

I want you to come see me, after I get home.

FERGUSON

Sure, Bill.

CAPT BILL

No, you always say you'll come over to the island when we're back but you never do.

FERGUSON

It's pretty "white" on the island, Bill.

CAPT BILL

I don't plan to leave it much, now that I'm retired. Just come visit?

It's hard for him to ask further without sounding like he's pleading...

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

All right?

FERGUSON

You got it.

They clink coffee mugs, Capt. Bill downs his in one gulp, Ferguson takes a small sip.

CAPT BILL

One other thing.

Capt. Bill pours himself another tall drink.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

Point out Louise to me on the dock. I can't seem to remember her face anymore.

Ferguson doesn't know if Capt. Bill is kidding or not; he watches him down another slug of whiskey.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

That's an order.

The two men stare at one another.

10 EXT. DOCK - LATER

The crowds have cleared leaving debris of wandering balloons and scraps of festive paper; Louise stands patiently alone at the foot of the gangway in her dress, hat and purse. She looks up.

Capt. Bill stands at the head of the gangway in his dress whites, shaved and neat, but a little unsteady on his feet. Under one arm is the large STUFFED KANGAROO.

He looks down at Louise, ignoring the sentry who salutes him.

The tide has come in and the gangway tilts down at a precarious angle; part way down, either the kangaroo's tail catches in the railing chain or he simply loses his footing a little tipsily, and he PRATFALLS.

Louise remains fixed in her spot, watching as Capt. Bill pulls himself up, dusting off the kangaroo, then himself, proceeds to the bottom of the gangway.

CAPT BILL
Hello, Louise.

LOUISE
Hi, Bill.

A beat; they're like awkward teenagers at their first dance.

LOUISE (cont'd)
You ready to go home now?

CAPT BILL
Yes, I believe I am.

Courtly, Capt. Bill offers her his arm, and she takes it, and they set off across the empty dock.

11 EXT. DOODLUM RESIDENCE - NEXT DAY

Large white two-story farmhouse on the water, home of CAPT. BILL and LOUISE DOODLUM. The picture-perfect house is flanked by huge blooming flowerbeds and blazing pink azaleas.

Off to one side of the house is a three-car garage with an added-on shop. On the water's edge sits a boathouse and a dock running a hundred feet out into Matthews Bay.

12 EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Capt. Bill asleep in the car where he has obviously spent the night with the stuffed kangaroo as a pillow.

(CONTINUED)

A KNOCK on the glass; it's Louise with a cup of coffee. Capt. Bill rolls down the window and wordlessly takes it.

As soon as Louise goes inside the house, Capt. Bill fishes a fifth of whiskey out of a duffel, pours a splash in his cup.

13 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The wildly decorated aluminum Christmas tree BLINKS beside the fireplace draped with banners HAPPY NEW YEAR! MERRY CHRISTMAS! HAPPY BIRTHDAY! Christmas stockings hang below the crowded mantel, the Easter bunnies and jack-o'-lanterns.

GIFTS are piled everywhere, most of it treasure from Capt. Bill's world travels.

14 INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Capt. Bill splashes his face in the sink, "freshens" his coffee from the whiskey bottle.

15 INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Louise sits on a sofa holding up a very small and very bright red silk KIMONO.

LOUISE
You would have to cut me in half for me
to fit into this.

LISA LEE
I'll get a knife.

SOUND of a truck horn in the driveway.

LISA LEE (cont'd)
Momma, Powell is here.

16 EXT. DOODLUM RESIDENCE DRIVEWAY - DAY

A TOW TRUCK enters the driveway gate made of two giant ship's anchors painted white.

The tow truck pulls up to the front steps. A young man, about 30, POWELL REED, gets out with a bouquet of WILDFLOWERS.

17 EXT. DOODLUM RESIDENCE FRONT STEPS - SAME

A nervous Powell raps the brass anchor doorknocker three times, steps back looking at the banner spanning the threshold - WELCOME HOME.

(CONTINUED)

Lisa Lee comes to the door with cat whiskers painted on her face, a red and white Santa hat in her hand.

LISA LEE

(annoyed)

You've come too early. Daddy's having all his holidays at once and we're only at Halloween.

Powell is a little crestfallen. Lisa Lee looks beyond him disapprovingly at the tow truck.

LISA LEE (cont'd)

Did you have to drive up in that?

POWELL

My new job. I'm going to bury that tow hook in your contrary heart and rip it right out.

Powell's smile quickly disappears as the barrel of a MUSKET slides over Lisa Lee's shoulder and points directly into his face.

CAPT BILL

(from behind Lisa Lee)

Merry Christmas, Tommy!

LISA LEE

Daddy, this is Powell Reed.

POWELL

Merry Christmas, Capt. Bill, I guess.

Capt. Bill, confused, lowers the musket.

CAPT BILL

I brought Tommy this musket for his collection. It's from the Persian Gulf.

LISA LEE

Powell's real familiar with Tommy's guns, Daddy.

POWELL

I've come to talk to you about asking for Lisa Lee's hand.

LISA LEE

That was subtle.

CAPT BILL

Lisa Lee's already got a husband, right?

(CONTINUED)

LISA LEE

Daddy, Tommy and I are divorced.

CAPT BILL

When did that happen?

LISA LEE

Last year. You were getting overhauled in Rota Spain.

CAPT BILL

Louise!

(muttering)

Nobody tells me anything.

Capt. Bill disappears from the doorway. Powell offers the wildflowers. Lisa Lee rolls her eyes.

LISA LEE

You just bought a ringside seat, you may as well stay for the fight.

Powell steps past her into the house. Lisa Lee SNIFFS the wildflowers, the TOSSES them into the shrubbery.

18 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Capt. Bill drinks from a coffee cup. A TELEPHONE RINGS, Lisa Lee abandons Powell to answer it.

LOUISE

Bill, don't you think you've had enough "coffee" this morning?

POWELL

Morning, Miss Louise.

Capt. Bill and Louise pay no attention to Powell.

CAPT BILL

How come nobody told me about Lisa Lee and Tommy?

LOUISE

I told you, Bill, I wrote you in one of the letters you never bothered to read. I found a bundle of them in your sea chest, sealed up and unread since last year.

CAPT BILL

If it was ever important, you'd have called ship-to-shore.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

Do you have any idea what that costs? If I was a different kind of woman you wouldn't have a penny.

CAPT BILL

I come home finding some stranger at the door asking for Lisa Lee's hand like he's selling Bibles.

POWELL

I drive a tow truck, Capt. Bill, but I am on the seven-year Bible-readin' plan.

LOUISE

(to Capt. Bill)

What you don't know that's important around here would fill a Bible.

19 INT. SQUALID APARTMENT - SAME

A young, strung-out-looking woman, VAMADELA DOODLUM, speaks into a cell phone.

VAMADELA

Is he drunk yet?

20 INTERCUT DOODLUM KITCHEN/SQUALID APARTMENT

LISA LEE

(false gaiety)

Vamadelal! Hi! We're just opening gifts.

VAMADELA

He's drunk by now then. Lee, Maybe I'll drive down tomorrow, or some other time.

LISA LEE

(close into phone)

You can't ~~not~~ ever come home.

VAMADELA

Daddy's made a good try at it all these years.

LISA LEE

Where are you?

VAMADELA

I got to go, Christopher's crying.

(CONTINUED)

Vamadela closes the cell phone, gives it to a similarly strung-out woman standing nearby. She digs in her purse and gives her a couple of dollars for letting her use the phone.

Lisa Lee listens to the dead air. She hangs up, takes deep breath, picks up a birthday cake.

21 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lisa Lee enters with cake and large knife, pointing it at Powell.

LISA LEE

Have a slice of cake and sit down.
Vamadela called, said she got a late
start from Bal'more.

LOUISE

That's something else - Vamadela. She's
bringing little Christopher, and Bill,
you got to brace yourself.

Capt. Bill pulls the giant KANGAROO from behind a sofa and hands it to Lisa Lee.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

This is for your collection.
(to Powell)

I always bring her animals from around
the world.

LOUISE

She's advanced to collecting husbands
now.

LISA LEE

Maybe you'd fit better in that kimono if
I cut you into thirds.

Powell, fidgeting and uncomfortable with all the talk,
suddenly stands.

POWELL

Capt. Bill, I was hoping I'd get a chance
to speak with you in private.

LISA LEE

(sternly)

Sit down and eat some cake!

(sweetly to Capt. Bill)

Thank you for the kangaroo, Daddy.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

Yes, that's something she would've really enjoyed having...twenty years ago!

CAPT BILL

(unfazed)

And I got a real nice piece of ivory for Vanadela's collection when she gets here. She's not married and divorced, too, is she?

LOUISE

I wish she had a husband instead of what she's got.

CAPT BILL

I got her two polar bears that fit together. I reckon she's old enough now to appreciate them.

Capt. Bill holds up two ivory polar bears that fit together in a obvious mating posture.

LOUISE

God, Bill.

CAPT BILL

Damn it, Louise, they're from Irkutsk. They cost fifteen hundred dollars.

POWELL

Capt. Bill, maybe you could tell me a time when we could talk.

CAPT BILL

Aren't you a little old for this formal stuff, son? What do you charge for a tow, anyway?

POWELL

Thirty-five dollars and ten cents a mile.

CAPT BILL

Well that settles it, you can't afford Lisa Lee.

LISA LEE

We can with my teaching salary.

CAPT BILL

When did you become a teacher?

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

You always wanted her to go to college.

CAPT BILL

That's right, any idiot can stay home and have children.

Louise, angry, upset, gets to her feet and leaves the room.

LISA LEE

Daddy, you should be nice to Momma.

Capt. Bill rummages in his sea chest.

CAPT BILL

I am being nice. Look what the ship gave me.

POWELL

If I could just have a word...

Capt. Bill draws the CHROME-PLATED PISTOL from his sea chest, popping in a CLIP, COCKING it.

CAPT BILL

(shoving pistol to Powell)

Tell you what, hold this gun on me and maybe I'll say yes to you marrying Lisa Lee. Go on, it's cocked, the safety's off.

Powell is unsure if he's serious or just drunk.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

Here! You'll have to do worse things if you want to join this family.

Capt. Bill puts the gun in Powell's hands.

LISA LEE

Daddy, stop it. He doesn't know you yet.

CAPT BILL

Gunpoint's a good place to get acquainted, don't you reckon?

POWELL

I suppose so, sir.

CAPT BILL

Good. Now where the hell is Vamadela?

22 INT. KITCHEN - SAME

An angry Louise caps Capt. Bill's whiskey bottle and SHOVES it into upper cabinet; she LOOKS at kitchen wall clock.

23 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Capt. Bill carefully fits Powell's fingers around the pistol as Louise enters.

LOUISE

It's eleven-thirty-five, Lisa Lee, here they come.

CAPT BILL

Here who come?

Louise points to a long crack in the living room wall.

LOUISE

Every day they come and crack my walls.

Powell stands looking out the window overlooking the bay.

HIS POV: Two NAVY JETS, snub-nosed A-6's, fast-growing specks, streak low and level over the water, heading directly for the house on their morning practice bombing run.

Louise and Lisa Lee spread themselves against the wall to hold as many framed photos of uniformed Doodlum relatives as they can.

Perplexed, Capt. Bill looks at Powell who just shrugs.

24 EXT. BACKYARD - SAME

Out beyond the end of the dock the JETS APPROACH incredibly low and fast toward the house.

Capt. Bill and Powell step outside just as the jets SCREAM overhead at treetop level, the SONIC BOOM following.

25 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MID-BOOM Louise and Lisa Lee hold the RATTLING photos.

Louise scowls as CRACK in wall lengthens, the house shakes.

Lisa Lee is nose-to-nose with a photo of a young Capt. Bill.

26 EXT. BACKYARD - SAME

Capt. Bill runs around to side of house with Powell close behind; Capt. Bill GRABS his pistol away from Powell and SIGHTS on the receding jets.

POWELL

Capt. Bill!

Capt. Bill slowly lowers the pistol, the jets have vanished over the horizon anyway.

CAPT BILL

Thirty-five years the Navy's run my life.
Don't they know I'M RETIRED!

Capt. Bill goes ASHEN, becomes visibly weak and wracked with hacking COUGHING; he almost collapses into Powell's arms, but pushes Powell away at the last minute and storms off.

27 INT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP - CONTINUOUS

An overhead track light is switched on illuminating a BLEAK ANTARCTIC LANDSCAPE of towering iceshapes on the edge of a deep blue ocean. Behind the photo is a liquor cabinet.

Capt. Bill selects a bottle. On the back wall of the cabinet hangs an old BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO of a younger Capt. Bill, though this one includes his OLDER BROTHER HOMER, JUNIOR.

Capt. Bill pours a drink, toasts the photo of himself and his brother and throws back the shot of whiskey.

28 EXT. RURAL ROAD - NEXT DAY

Vamadela, behind the wheel of beat-up VW convertible, tips up a half-pint bottle of whiskey with one hand, cigarette burning in the other, hair crazy-blown in the wind.

Fumbling with a jazz cassette, she lets the VW drift onto double yellow lines on a curve; an ONCOMING SHERIFF'S CAR is forced to the shoulder.

Vamadela checks her rearview mirror.

HER POV: Sheriff's brakelights, then a quick U-turn.

VAMADELA

Shit.

VOICE FROM BACKSEAT

That's a potty word, Mommy.

(CONTINUED)

VAMADELA

Sorry.

(beat)

"Merciful heavens," then.

29 EXT. DOODLUM GARAGE - SAME

Louise deep under the hood of an old but well-maintained pick-up truck. Her wrench slips busting a knuckle, and she echoes-

LOUISE

Merciful heavens.

Capt. Bill sits behind the wheel of the truck, Lisa Lee leans on the door.

CAPT BILL

I just need to run some errands, is all.

LISA LEE

We can go to the liquor store for you.

Capt. Bill gives her a dirty look. Lisa Lee says quietly-

LISA LEE (cont'd)

Say something to Momma about the kitchen.

CAPT BILL

(loud enough for Louise to hear)

Kitchen looks different.

Louise looks around the hood, pleased, humble.

LOUISE

I laid all new tile!

CAPT BILL

I just thought a light was burned out.

Louise's smile fades, she SLAMS down the hood.

LOUISE

I also put new clutch in your truck so be careful, it's still real tight.

Capt. Bill cranks up the truck, seems at first confused with the column shift.

LOUISE (cont'd)

Reverse is down and back.

(CONTINUED)

CAPT BILL

Louise, I can steer a 30,000 ton tanker,
I think I can handle a two-ton truck.

He puts his arm on the back of the seat to BACK out, lets off the clutch, and the truck suddenly LURCHES FORWARD into the garage door, breaking it off its hinges, the engine dies.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

(furious)

Who put that goddamn door down?

Capt. Bill glares at Louise, she glares back. He restarts engine, carefully puts the gear shift DOWN and BACK.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

(evenly)

The kitchen looks real fine, Louise. And
I see you did the bathroom, too. It all
looks real good.

He looks at her tenderly, she looks surprised at this. He's off down the driveway; Louise and Lisa Lee watch him go.

LOUISE

Something's bothering your father, and
for once I don't think it's me.

30 INT. MATTHEWS ISLAND PHARMACY - DAY

Capt. Bill at counter with pharmacist DALE TUTTLE, early 50's. Tuttle reads label on prescription bottle.

TUTTLE

These are from a pharmacy in Perth,
Australia.

CAPT BILL

I know where Perth is, Dale. Can you
just give me some refills?

TUTTLE

I'm afraid I'm going to need to get a
script from a doctor here stateside.

(hands bottles back)

Go see David Hudgins, he can probably
help you out.

CAPT BILL

He's a bigger quack than Donald Duck.

(CONTINUED)

TUTTLE

Sorry, Bill, it's the law. You got a couple left to tide you over. Shouldn't drink with it though.

Gives Capt. Bill serious look.

31 EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

On a lonely stretch of open highway, an old IMPALA, LAWNMOWER in the trunk, is at a dead stop in the middle of the road.

Close on old woman, GRANDMUMMA CLARICE DOODLUM, slumped over the wheel, looking "knocked out, or worse."

A SECOND CAR pulls up behind Grandmumma Doodlum, it's Louise and Lisa Lee coming back from the market, groceries in the backseat.

They get out and approach the Impala, look in.

LOUISE

Great, my groceries are going to melt now dealing with this.

LISA LEE

You go on ahead and put them away, I'll wait for help.

LOUISE

With all the rapists and white trash running up and down the road? No way. Speak of the devil.

A THIRD VEHICLE pulls up behind them, it's Powell in his tow truck. He climbs down and runs up, sees Grandmumma.

POWELL

Christ alive, want me to call 911?

LOUISE

Shhhh! Keep your voice down, you might wake her up.

POWELL

She's just asleep?

LISA LEE

This sort of happens a lot.

POWELL

Maybe she should see a doctor about it.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

Why would we do that? We know what causes it, she's old.

LISA LEE

If we wake her up too fast, she might have another heart attack.

All three stand watching Grandmamma sleep; she's beginning to really snore now.

In the distance, a POLICE SIREN wails as a FOURTH and FIFTH vehicle approach; it's Vamadela's VW and the Sheriff's car.

Louise, Lisa Lee and Powell watch Grandmamma JUMP in her sleep at the sound of the siren; Louise RUNS back to the approaching cars wildly waving her arms. Vamadela and the Sheriff's car pull in behind the rest of the cars.

LOUISE

(to deputy)

Tommy, turn off that golldarn siren.

DEPUTY TOMMY

I been trying to pull Vamadela over for a half hour.

LOUISE

Well, she's pulled over, so turn that thing off before you wake up Clarice.

Deputy Tommy turns off the siren, gets out of his car.

Louise strides back past Vamadela not even looking in the car.

VAMADELA

Hello, Momma.

LOUISE

(coldly over her shoulder)

Hello Vamadela.

VAMADELA

Nice to see you, too.

Deputy Tommy sidles up to the VW.

DEPUTY TOMMY

I swear, Vamadela, if you weren't my ex-sister-in-law, I'd take you to jail.

(CONTINUED)

VAMADELA

No, Tommy, the reason you're not going to take me to jail is because even though I didn't bang you in high school or that night we all went skinny-dipping even when we ~~were~~ in-laws, you still think that because I'm considered loose and I'll even stoop to kissing niggers you somehow think there's a chance one night you'll pull me over and I'll bang you out of some misplaced gratitude or lost father fixation, but Tommy, it ain't going to happen, so arrest me now or go on down to the bus station and try to pick up teenage runaways with video tokens, okay? Isn't that what you do? Isn't that why Lisa Lee dumped you?

A fuming Tommy bites his tongue, goes back to his car. Vamadela takes a deep breath, lights a cigarette after this outburst to calm her jaggly meth nerves.

VOICE FROM BACKSEAT

Is "bang" a potty word, Momma?

VAMADELA

No, but "nigger" is and I'm sorry I said it.

VOICE FROM BACKSEAT

That's all right.

At the front of the line of five vehicles, Grandmumma is awake, alive, talking to Louise.

GRANDMUMMA DOODLUM

I was hoping Bill would at least call me before he started drinking.

LOUISE

He's retired, Clarice, there's plenty of time to see him.

GRANDMUMMA DOODLUM

All he wants to do is drink liquor and read paperbacks. That's all he's ever done when he's home.

LOUISE

It'll be different now that he's home for good. Maybe he won't drink so much.

(CONTINUED)

GRANDMUMMA DOODLUM

Don't be such a fool, Louise. Has he
seen his grandson? He'll take a drink
when he sees little what's its name.

CLOSE ON: "Little What's Its Name" CHRISTOPHER, a MULATTO
four-year-old as he accepts a paper cup of ice cream from
Lisa Lee she's dished from the back seat of Louise's car.

Vamadela resists Powell's help as she steps a little wobbly
from her car.

VAMADELA

(aggressively)

So. You're the tow truck driver. I
thought all tow truck drivers had one big
eyeball in the middle of their forehead.

POWELL

(not missing a beat)

That's funny, I thought all junkies had
vomit on their sleeve.

VAMADELA

I'm not a junkie.

WIDE: the surreal caravan of all the Doodlum-related vehicles
stretched along this lonely length of highway.

32 INT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP - DAY

A procession of MODEL SHIPS - sailing ships, warships,
tankers, fishing boats and a ROW of SHIPS IN BOTTLES; these
line the walls of Capt. Bill's shop.

Capt. Bill shakes out a couple of prescription pills, pours a
glass of whiskey to wash them down. He takes his glass
outside.

33 INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Capt. Bill, drink in hand, tours his own home, reacquaints
himself with it, notices its old personality, its new
touches;

34 KITCHEN

Capt. Bill squats and eyeballs the floor-

HIS POV: Gleaming, newly-laid tile.

35 HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

He wanders past the bedroom doors looking in-

36 LISA LEE'S BEDROOM

She's moved back home, living on top of her childhood things, dozens of kangaroos, old CHEERLEADER POM-POMS, popular girl memorabilia taped and stuck behind a mirror.

37 VAMADELA'S BEDROOM

A stark contrast, BOOKSHELVES stuffed with paperbacks, a few late '80's punk posters; a large MILES DAVIS poster, framed.

38 SEWING ROOM

A tiny room with a sewing machine and single bed; a Navy duffel bag on the floor, his uniform draped over a chair, this is where Capt. Bill traditionally sleeps when he's home.

39 MASTER BEDROOM

Capt. Bill walks into this alien place, respectfully, sadly. He sits on Louise's side of the bed, smells one of her ointments, looks at the bed as if wanting to just lie down and sleep.

NOISE of car doors slamming outside.

Capt. Bill jumps up, smooths bed cover so as not to betray his presence.

40 EXT. DOODLUM RESIDENCE DRIVEWAY -- DAY

It's Powell and his tow truck, Louise with her groceries, and Lisa Lee driving Vamadela's VW, Christopher in the back.

Vamadela is in agony, partly from being a little wired, mainly from facing her father with his new grandson.

LISA LEE

(to Vamadela)

I'll help you if he's drinking, but if he's sober, you've got to face this yourself.

Vamadela looks worriedly at Lisa Lee, then at her son in the back seat: happily covered in chocolate ice cream.

VAMADELA

Is Shaklee's Pier still standing?

(CONTINUED)

LISA LEE

Yeah...(brightening)...want to go crabbing off the end of it?

VAMADELA

I want to drive this car off the end of it.

LISA LEE

Don't start that now. Go splash your face. Daddy's probably out in his shop.

They all get out, Lisa Lee helps Louise bring in the groceries, Vamadela licks a thumb, wipes Christopher's mouth with it.

VAMADELA

It's nice here, honey, don't you think?
Couldn't this be your house?

CHRISTOPHER

(unsure, looking around)
Yes ma'am.

He runs to go play, Vamadela looks after him, a little trembly, then goes inside.

41 INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

42 FRONT HALL

Vamadela bounds up the stairs. Lisa Lee and Louise in b.g. sorting groceries in kitchen.

43 KITCHEN

Louise hands Lisa Lee the perishables to put in refrigerator.

LOUISE

Maybe "your friend" ought to visit later.

LISA LEE

His name is "Powell", Mother. Not "your friend," not "that man," not "that bird-dogger."

LOUISE

There's enough on me right now without him skulking around underfoot pestering Bill about marrying you.

LISA LEE

Sorry I'm a "pest."

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

You're worse than that. You're a tease.
You're making him ask your father his
permission because you know he won't give
it.

LISA LEE

How do you know?

LOUISE

I pulled the same stunt once myself. Now
round up Vanadela and let's let your
father meet his grandson.

LISA LEE

It's going to be all right, Momma.

LOUISE

You are such an ignoramus sometimes, Lisa
Lee. It's all going to end in tears.

44 EXT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP SIDEYARD - CONTINUOUS

Powell watches Capt. Bill break the locks of his sea chest
with a bolt cutter; he's obviously lost the keys.

POWELL

I want this to be a different thing than
Lisa Lee and I have ever done before.

CAPT BILL

You been married before? You got kids?

One of the chests pops open, it's full of paperbacks.

POWELL

No, sir, but I'd like to.

CAPT BILL

Just between me and you, children are
over-rated. They'll come, mostly when
you're not married and not ready. I got
two daughters I barely know and a rumor
of a grandson I've never seen.

45 EXT. MUD FLATS - DAY

Christopher happily exploring the shoreline, throwing mud at
seagulls, wading out into deeper water to fetch sticks.

46 INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vamadela claws through an oversized purse, finds a little plastic pill box, pops a couple of pills, then pops a couple more. She avoids looking at herself in the mirror.

LISA LEE
(outside the door)
Vamadela! Is Christopher in there with you?

Vamadela hurries to close up her pill stash, panics.

VAMADELA
I thought you had him!

47 EXT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP SIDEYARD - CONTINUOUS

Capt. Bill BEATS on one of the sea chests with a HAMMER, takes a break to sip his drink.

Powell sees Lisa Lee motioning to him from the corner of the house. He goes around to the front yard.

48 EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

LISA LEE
I can't find Christopher.

POWELL
I'll look along the shore, you go along the road.

49 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Louise looks up from sink, does a DOUBLE-TAKE on the clock; almost JET time. She shakes off water from her hands.

50 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Louise turns photos face down on the mantel so they won't fall; she tries to hold as many against the wall in preparation for the jet's return, there are so many.

LOUISE
Lisa Lee! I could use some help in here!
Hello! Anybody?

51 INT. VAMADELA'S BEDROOM - SAME

Vamadela at her desk beneath the MILES DAVIS poster, HEARS her mother, but continues writing hasty note.

52 EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Lisa Lee looks up and down highway, bends to look in the drain pipe at the end of the driveway. No Christopher.

53 EXT. MUD FLATS - DAY

Christopher's T-shirt in the mud.

Powell picks it up, looks around. He SEES tiny footprints in the black low tide mud that lead out INTO DEEPER WATER!

Powell starts jogging along the water, calling out Christopher's name, looking for him in the waves.

Powell looks shoreward and sees something O.S. that makes him smile, he's obviously relieved.

54 EXT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP SIDEYARD - CONTINUOUS

Capt. Bill, cigarette in corner of his mouth, drink in one hand, holds a dribbling water hose in the other.

CAPT BILL

Turn...turn...turn...

WIDE: A very MUDDY naked Christopher turns under the dribbling trickle of water, pacifier working away.

Powell squats just outside the splattering, smiling.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

Reckon he wandered off from somebody down at the crab house.

(to Christopher)

Kind of old for a pacifier, aren't you sport?

Capt. Bill lights a fresh cigarette from a butt.

POWELL

(enjoying this)

Looks like he's got an oral fixation like his grandfather.

CAPT BILL

You know this boy's family?

POWELL

This is Vamadela's son, your grandson.

Capt. Bill, in SHOCK, stares at Christopher, the water still pouring on Christopher's head.

(CONTINUED)

POWELL (cont'd)

I reckon some of that's going to wash off
and some of it's there for good.

Capt. Bill takes the hose off Christopher, dumbfounded.
Christopher wipes his eyes, looks out over the water.

CHRISTOPHER

Airplane!

55 EXT. SKY OVER MATTHEWS BAY - DAY

In the distance a Navy jet approaches, its exhaust trailing
behind it like a sidewinder.

56 INT. VAMADELA'S BEDROOM - SAME

Vamadela has been watching this first encounter; what she
sees next firms her resolve to leave the house immediately-

HER POV: Capt. Bill THROWS DOWN the hose, he is obviously
angry, pushes past Christopher and Powell, storms off.

57 EXT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP SIDEYARD - CONTINUOUS

Capt. Bill comes out of his shop carrying an old green
military box marked EMERGENCY. He drops it and opens it.

Powell grabs Christopher's hand, watches Capt. Bill quickly
assemble a HUGE PIECE OF HAND-HELD ARTILLERY that resembles a
cross between a bazooka and an elephant gun.

CAPT BILL

You boys don't stand behind me in case
this thing blows up, it's old.

Capt. Bill takes aim at the jet, calmly adjusts the sight.

POWELL

Capt. Bill! Are you crazy?

Capt. Bill flicks off the safety--

CAPT BILL

It's just a flare gun off the
ship...should scare those bastards off.

58 EXT. DOODLUM RESIDENCE FRONT STEPS - SAME

Vamadela, upset, STICKS a NOTE in the mailbox.

DRIVEWAY

(CONTINUED)

She gets in her VW, pumps the gas to get the engine sparked, the car BACKFIRES -

59 EXT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP SIDEYARD - CONTINUOUS

Capt. Bill scrunches his eyes, turns his face, and pulls the trigger on the flare gun; it BLASTS out a smoking projectile, the recoil sends Capt. Bill sprawling backwards.

Powell and Christopher watch wide-eyed following the rocket flare's trajectory into the sky.

The ROAR of the low-flying jet changes PITCH, still DEAFENING and still EARTH-SHAKING.

60 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The ROARING finds Louise spread-eagled backwards against the rattling wall photos, a sprinkling of plaster dust in air.

LOUISE
(weakly)
Help!

61 EXT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP SIDEYARD - CONTINUOUS

The ROARING overhead is of a MALFUNCTIONING JET ENGINE. Powell picks up some binoculars from Capt. Bill's sea chest, watches the receding plane.

POWELL
Unbelievable. I think you hit it.

Capt. Bill squints but can't see that far.

POWELL (cont'd)
Yeah, I think I see a parachute!

CAPT BILL
(concerned)
Just one? There should be two, IF I hit it...

62 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

In the aftermath of the jet's visit, Louise holds photo of herself, her high school graduation portrait, the glass fragmented but still held in the frame, sort of like her.

63 EXT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP SIDEYARD - CONTINUOUS

Capt. Bill tries to hand the flare gun to Christopher.

(CONTINUED)

CAPT BILL

Here, child, hold this for your
granddaddy, good boy.

Powell snatches the flare gun away.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

We could just say the little man was
playing with it and it went off, it being
near the fourth of July and all...

POWELL

We've got to call somebody, don't you
think?

CAPT BILL

You want to send me to prison? You want
to be in this family or not?

Powell, fuming, stands torn between doing what is right and
being able to join the family.

POWELL

So what do you suggest we do?

64 EXT. OPEN WATER - DAY

CLOSE: A wire cage of WRIGGLING CRABS tipped onto a wide
wooden plank. Heavy gloved hands sweep the crabs into a
barrel already half-filled with scuttling, pinching crabs.

WIDE: An old fisherman, ANGUS TILLET, strong, sunburnt,
rebais the wire cage and FLINGS it over the side of his
FISHING BOAT.

DISTRESSED VOICE (O.S.)

Hey! HEY!

Angus, alone on the water, looks around him.

DISTRESSED VOICE (cont'd)

Up here!

ANGUS POW: Aviator descending from the heavens on a parachute
almost on top of him.

WIDE: BOMBARDIER DARNELL "DAGWOOD" WOODS unfastens himself
from the chute just before he splashes into the water; the
chute falls and curls lazily alongside Angus' boat.

Angus patiently stares at Woods thrashing around. Angus is a
man who has spent his life on the water and he has seen
everything.

(CONTINUED)

Angus picks up a long boat hook and reaches over the side of his boat. But instead of offering it to Woods, he begins to fish out the parachute.

WOODS

Hey! My boots are filling with water!

ANGUS

I got myself a nice parachute here. To hell with you.

Woods splashes frantically trying to reach the boat as his soaked gear pulls him under. In his panic he can't blow up his inflatable vest fast enough. Gasping for breath, he slips under the water.

65 EXT. BURRELL'S BEACH - DAY

Vamadela, dazed but determined begins to peel off all her clothes as she wades into the water toward her fate.

Her VW is run into the sand behind her on the deserted beach.

Waves of the incoming tide are starting to float her clothes as she strips them off.

ON VAMADELA as she swims nude out to deeper and deeper water. She draws in her first mouthful of water to drown herself. She coughs, but draws in a larger mouthful, then another.

66 INT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP - SAME

Capt. Bill has a violent coughing fit from a freshly-lit cigarette.

Powell dresses Christopher in one of Capt. Bill's khaki uniform shirts with the sleeves rolled up. Christopher is fascinated by the model fleet, especially the ships in the bottles.

CAPT BILL

(wheezing)

All right, we got to get out story straight for when the Navy comes.

POWELL

Maybe they'll think it was an engine problem.

CAPT BILL

You obviously don't know shit about the Navy, son. They'll fish out that plane and find my flare, you can bet on that.

(CONTINUED)

POWELL

Maybe we should tell them the truth.
What do you think, Christopher?

CHRISTOPHER

Momma says to always tell the truth. She
says it's like the dark, it can't really
hurt you.

Capt. Bill and Powell look at each other; from the mouths of
babes...

CAPT BILL

Where is your daddy, Christopher?

CHRISTOPHER

He plays music for God and all the
angels.

Capt. Bill takes in this information and pours himself
another drink.

POWELL

(hopefully)

Maybe the Navy won't come at all.

67 EXT. NORFOLK NAVAL AIR STATION - DAY

Busy ground crews pull the chocks away from the wheels of two
giant Navy Sea King Search and Rescue helicopters.

The helicopters wind up their jet engines and clatter quickly
up into the sky.

68 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The whine of jet engines is what it sounds like as Louise
runs a large butcher knife back and forth through an electric
sharpener. Beside her on the counter two large chickens soak
in bowls.

Lisa Lee enters, anxious.

LISA LEE

I can't find Christopher.

LOUISE

Didn't you hear me calling for help?

LISA LEE

I was out looking for Christopher.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

He's out in the shop with your father and your...friend.

LISA LEE

Daddy saw Christopher? How did it go?
Is Vamadela in there too?

LOUISE

I don't know.

LISA LEE

I thought you knew everything.

LOUISE

I regret the day I ever bought you contact lens. You used to be a nice girl who respected her mother and the day those glasses came off...Yahoo! You went wild, marrying every boy on the island.

LISA LEE

It's only been three.

LOUISE

Go ask Bachelor Number Four if he wants to stay for dinner. I don't reckon Bill will make a fuss over Christopher with company at the table.

LISA LEE

Oh, I see. You want Powell as a punching bag for daddy.

LOUISE

I just hope your father isn't getting stinking drunk and upsets Vamadela. She looks awful.

LISA LEE

Momma, Vamadela is strung out.

LOUISE

We're all a little stressed out, with your father home. It's normal.

69 EXT. BURRELL'S BEACH - DAY

Vamadela breaks to the surface of the water, gasping, unsuccessful so far at drowning herself. She coughs and spits up water.

(CONTINUED)

VAMADELA

This is ridiculous.

She clears her nose, spits and relaxes, seems to decide to enjoy a swim. She floats on her back and starts moving through the water executing a fine backstroke.

She swims along nicely, picking up a little speed until A LARGE HAND seems to REACH down over her forehead and COVERS her face.

Vanadela screams and fights, pushing away whoever it is.

WIDER: The outstretched hand belongs to the unconscious pilot LT. CMDR. J.J. "SKULLHEAD" SCULLY, floating Christ-like on his back, held up by his inflatable vest, parachute floating like a cloud around him.

70 INT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Capt. Bill pours another drink, Christopher pushes a couple of model ships around on the floor.

CAPT BILL

Maybe it didn't crash, maybe the pilot was able to fly it in. I didn't hear it crash, did you hear it crash?

POWELL

It sounded like the world's largest vacuum cleaner sucked up the world's largest bottlecap. Then there was that boom.

CAPT BILL

Funny thing about sound. When I was courting Louise she used to work nights figuring the books for the sawmill her daddy left her. Prettiest girl at her daddy's funeral. Anyway, sometimes the drunks on the night shift would run a log through the saw that had a nail or a rock in it. At that time I used to work some on oyster boats, work like you people don't know anything about. Tired as I was I'd be laying in my bed miles from that sawmill and I could hear when that saw blade hit that spike or rock, and I just knew it was those drunks going after Louise and her calling out my name.

Capt. Bill lights another cigarette, takes a drink.

(CONTINUED)

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

I think I married her because I couldn't stand that sound anymore. The drunks finally burnt the sawmill down, the Navy sent me to Viet Nam, I been gone ever since.

POWELL

Miss Louise says she's seen you less than half your married life.

CAPT BILL

She goes around saying that? Well, I suppose that's true, it does feel like we've been half-married. I wish it'd been different.

POWELL

I don't think she likes me much.

CAPT BILL

She's got good judgement. Louise is a wonderful wife, a wife like all men should have, the kind who will either make you or break you.

POWELL

Capt. Bill, if you give me your permission to marry Lisa Lee, I want you to know I intend for us to be full-married.

Capt. Bill shakes his head, either at his refusal to grant permission or at the incredibility of Powell's promise. They are startled by a loud POUNDING on the door.

Capt. Bill leaps up a little drunkenly, drains his glass, pulls his PISTOL out of the cabinet.

CAPT BILL

It's the Navy! I told you they'd come.

71 EXT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Lisa Lee stands with her fist poised to pound on the door again.

LISA LEE

Daddy? Powell? Is Christopher in there?

POWELL

(through door)
He's in here.

(CONTINUED)

Lisa Lee jiggles the two-handed, but it's locked.

72 INT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP - DAY

Capt. Bill loads a round in his pistol.

CAPT BILL

Don't open the door, this could be a trap.

Powell looks at Capt. Bill like he's more than drunk, like he's lost his mind, but he's wary of the gun and he still hasn't gotten Capt. Bill's permission to marry.

LISA LEE

(through door)

Powell, is everything okay? Momma wants to know if you can stay for dinner.

POWELL

(sarcastically to Capt. Bill)

Definitely a trap.

(to Lisa Lee)

Tell your mother I'll stay for dinner.

LISA LEE

You want me to take Christopher?

ON Christopher, happily playing with fishing boat models on the floor; he shakes his head No.

ON Capt. Bill, a little wild-eyed, bewildered, drink in one hand, pistol in the other.

POWELL

Everything's fine.

73 EXT. ABOARD ANGUS TILLET'S FISHING BOAT - DAY

ON Angus: Holding very alive crabs, one in each hand.

ANGUS

(showing one crab)

The male crab we call the jimmy, you can tell by the long-shaped piece of his undershell. You put him in this basket.

Angus chucks the jimmy crab into a tall plastic basket.

(CONTINUED)

ANGUS (cont'd)

The female crab we call the sook. If she's loaded with eggs like this one, we throw her back so we'll have crabs next year. Any questions?

ON Woods: Wringing out his socks over the side of the boat.

WOODS

Yeah, don't you have a radio on this boat?

ANGUS

You act like you're the first fella ever bailed out of an airplane. The Navy'll come looking for you soon enough, and you better have some good answers. The Navy likes its aircraft, they cost a lot of money. You're young, you're replaceable.

Angus pulls two lively crabs out of a plastic barrel.

ANGUS (cont'd)

Now which one's the jimmy and which one's the sook?

74 EXT. BURRELL'S BEACH - DAY

Naked and exhausted, Vamadela DRAGS the unconscious Scully mostly out of the water onto the beach. She sits to catch her breath, then YANKS off his helmet, disengages his parachute harness.

She feels for a pulse in his neck, checks his breathing. She straddles him and begin CPR, then mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. This is a girl who knows what to do to save everyone but herself.

She puts her ear to his chest, hears gurgling. She has to turn him over to empty his lungs, but he's a big man and he's heavy. She grabs one of his arms and tries to pull him over, but he's dead weight.

Vamadela summons all of her strength and yanks on his arm only to HEAR IT LOUDLY POP. Horrified, she realizes she has probably BROKEN his arm.

But the PAIN seems to rouse Scully and he rolls on his side and a LOT of water runs out of his mouth and nose. He flops back over, face-up, passes out.

Vamadela resumes CPR and mouth-to-mouth.

75 INT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP - DAY

CAPT BILL
You don't drink?

POWELL
(trying to explain)
I haven't always been a tow truck driver.
I used to be in the school system.
That's how I met Lisa Lee.

CAPT BILL
You a teacher?

POWELL
I used to be a principal.

CAPT BILL
Boy, you must have really fucked up.

POWELL
I'm a sober tow truck driver.

Capt. Bill shoves the PISTOL across the table to Powell. His look to Powell is menacing, challenging.

CAPT BILL
Know how to handle a pistol?

CHRISTOPHER
Can I have this?

Christopher holds up a tiny ship in a bottle.

CAPT BILL
(without breaking eye contact
with Powell)
Break it, little boy, and your ass is
mine.

76 EXT. SKY OVER MATTHEWS BAY - DAY

The two Sea King helicopters retrace the missing jet's path over the water approaching the Doodlum residence.

RADIO CHATTER
Roger, two one three Charley, no visual
yet, nothing in the water, nothing on the
beaches.

77 EXT. BURRELL'S BEACH - DAY

Vamadela continues to resuscitate Scully. Scully's eyes open into slits.

HIS POV: Naked Vamadela straddling him and pumping his chest in motions very similar to lovemaking.

ON HER: Vamadela stops, looks less frantic now, more relieved. She dismounts and kneels somewhat modestly.

VAMADELA

You catch a trout in your pocket or you glad to be alive?

Scully smiles, opens his eyes a little wider, then winces, grabs his shoulder of the arm Vamadela yanked.

SCULLY

Must of broken my shoulder when I ejected.

VAMADELA

Let's get you to a doctor. Can you walk?

SCULLY

I'd rather you carry me.

Now very modest, Vamadela reaches down and unsheathes the survival knife strapped to Scully's ankle.

SCULLY (cont'd)

I was just kidding!

78 EXT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Capt. Bill cracks the door, looks one way, then another, motions for Powell and Christopher to follow him out.

79 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Louise hacks the chickens apart with the butcher knife.

CHRISTOPHER

(O.S.)

Look what the man gave me.

He holds up a ship-in-a-bottle for Louise to see. Capt. Bill follows him in the kitchen.

CAPT BILL

How did we get to be grandparents to this?

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE
The usual way, I guess.

CAPT BILL
Are we sure he's ours?

LOUISE
He at least belongs to Vamadela, the
husband's gone.

CAPT BILL
That figures.

LOUISE
I mean gone, as in Vamadela would be a
widow. I tried to write you all about it.

CAPT BILL
Would be a widow?

LOUISE
They almost got married. I think widowed
sounds better, I like widowed, all right?

CAPT BILL
I understand widowed, Louise.

Capt. Bill looks down at Christopher. Then at Louise.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)
You doing anything with those chicken
necks?

LOUISE
I was going to make...no, you can have
them.

CAPT BILL
Come on, Christopher, let's find some
string and put you to work.

80 EXT. DOODLUM RESIDENCE FRONT STEPS - SAME

POWELL
Something you need to know about your
daddy. Lisa Lee?

Lisa Lee isn't listening, she sees Vamadela's note in the
mailbox, takes it out and reads it.

POWELL (cont'd)
Love letter?

(CONTINUED)

LISA LEE

Sort of. Suicide note from Vamadela.
What were you saying about Daddy?

81 EXT. BURRELL'S BEACH - DAY

Vamadela, wrapped in a parachute toga, guns her little VW backward and forward trying to get it unstuck from the deep sand. Scully, in the passenger seat, is tossed painfully against his sore arm.

SCULLY

Ow! Jeez, how'd you ever figure on getting this car out after your swim?

VAMADELA

I didn't. I came here to drown myself.

SCULLY

Ouch! Sorry to intrude.

VAMADELA

It wasn't you. I'm just too good a swimmer to drown.

Just as Vamadela almost gets the car unstuck, it dies, out of gas.

VAMADELA (cont'd)

I guess we'll have to walk.

SCULLY

You're not going to try to kill yourself along the way, are you?

VAMADELA

Bring your knife just in case.

SCULLY

In case you want to kill yourself?

VAMADELA

In case your company makes me want to.

Vamadela grabs her purse and they set off.

82 EXT. ABOARD ANGUS TILLET'S FISHING BOAT - DAY

Woods tries to shake off a large crab pinching him painfully on a finger. The crab rips free and goes sailing over the side of the boat into the water.

(CONTINUED)

Angus watches from the winch he uses to hoist the crab traps to the surface.

ANGUS

I'll have to dock your pay thirty-five cents for that nice jimmy you just threw away.

WOODS

(angrily)

You pay your prisoners?

ANGUS

You're just earning your ride in, is all.

WOODS

There's my ride in!

INSERT: In the distance, the two Sea King search and rescue helicopters sweep the water.

Angus, unconcerned, continues to draw up the crab traps, empty them, toss them rebaited over the side.

Woods' enthusiasm wanes as he watches the helicopters move farther out over the water.

WOODS (cont'd)

They're going away.

ANGUS

Catch up there, we've got another couple hundred traps to pull before we go in.

Woods sulkily returns to sorting the crabs Angus catches.

83 EXT. DOCDLUM DOCK - DAY

CLOSE ON: A piece of string being drawn carefully up from the water with a chicken neck tied to the end of it, a large crab following, then swimming back down.

WIDE ON: Capt. Bill parceling out the string and drawing it in as Christopher watches intently, waiting to use the long-handled net.

Capt. Bill HEARS the dull thump of helicopters over the bay.

CAPT BILL

You got to be wily to catch old Mr. Crab.

84 EXT. DOODLUM RESIDENCE DRIVEWAY - DAY

IN THE TOW TRUCK: Powell and Lisa Lee head for the road.

LISA LEE

This is totally unnecessary. Vamadela is always going off to drown herself rather than face Daddy over something she's done.

POWELL

Vamadela isn't the only person in your family with a death wish. Your father won't talk to me about us unless I literally put a gun to his head.

LISA LEE

I'm sorry my family is so crazy.

She moves closer to Powell on the seat, touches him.

LISA LEE (cont'd)

Daddy doesn't have a death wish, he's going to outlive us all. He's like a stewed owl, a tough old bird, my dad.

POWELL

He wants me to keep his gun, for a rainy day, he said.

LISA LEE

That's just him messing with you.

She playfully reaches her hand into Powell's waistband, FEELS something, her face changes.

She LIFTS up Powell's shirt, tucked in his belt, the PISTOL.

85 EXT. ROAD FROM BURRELL'S BEACH - DAY

Scully and Vamadela make slow progress along a tree-shaded country road. Scully's a little banged up, his arm's in a makeshift sling. Vamadela's a little clammy and irritable, coming down off her pills.

VAMADELA

Go on ahead, I need to do something.

Scully's looks confused, but he's a gentleman, walks on.

Vamadela scrounges in her purse, finds a little corner of a cellophane bag with indeterminate substance. She shakes it out on the back of her hand, SNIFFS it.

(CONTINUED)

SCULLY
Nasty little habit.

He ambles up closer as she licks the bag and drops it.

VAMADELA
Not a habit. I don't even remember what
it was.

Scully grabs her arm, looking for tracks, there aren't any.
She wrenches free, they walk on, Scully leading.

SCULLY
I've got some morphine tabs in my flight
kit if you're in a bad way.

Vamadela catches up with him, matching his stride. She's
interested. Scully keeps walking like it's no big deal.

SCULLY (cont'd)
I'm about ready to take a half of one for
this shoulder.

VAMADELA
Let's do it.

SCULLY
First you tell me why you wanted to drown
yourself.

Vamadela lags a little in the walk, then catches up.

VAMADELA
You like jazz?

86 EXT. DOOMLUM DOCK - DAY

Capt. Bill carefully draws the chicken neck on the string up
to the surface of the water, a LARGE CRAB attached.
Christopher stands ready with the scoop net.

CAPT BILL
Okay, get the net under him, carefully.

Christopher tries to swing the unwieldy long-handled scoop
net but the crab scuttles off, and as Christopher goes after
it he knocks Capt. Bill's DRINK off the dock into the water.

Shit. CAPT BILL (cont'd)

CHRISTOPHER
Shit's a potty word!

(CONTINUED)

CAPT BILL

I don't give a good goddamn!

Christopher's face clouds up. He drops the scoop net.

LOUISE

(O.S.)

Bill! Your language.

CAPT BILL

I'm sorry, Louise, Christopher. We'll get some more chicken necks.

CHRISTOPHER

I don't want to catch any more crabs.

LOUISE

Christopher, come in the house with me.

CAPT BILL

He's all right out here.

CHRISTOPHER

I want to go in.

Christopher goes to Louise, takes her hand. She leads him up to the house.

CAPT BILL

Damn it.

87 EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

WIDE: Powell's tow truck gently rocking, the sounds of muffled lovemaking from the front seat.

LISA LEE (O.C.)

...this is so wicked...

POWELL (O.C.)

Careful with the gun, Lisa...

LISA LEE (O.C.)

I just want to hold it while you DO me you wicked boy...

POWELL (O.C.)

Don't point the goddamn thing...

There is a loud GUNSHOT and the back glass of the truck window explodes in a million pieces.

(CONTINUED)

Powell's astonished, red and sweaty face appears in the window frame momentarily to survey the damage.

POWELL (cont'd)
Christ, Lisa Lee, I told you to be careful! You could have blown my head off. God, I think I'm DEAF!

Powell is pulled back down and the lovemaking continues.

LISA LEE
I'm so sorry my wicked boy, so sorry...

POWELL
What!?

LISA LEE
(shouting into his deafness)
Just DO me! YOU WICKED BOY!

88 EXT. ROAD FROM BURRELL'S BEACH - DAY

Vamadela and Scully trudge along, him slightly in the lead with the still-painful arm, Vamadela following a little stoned.

VAMADELA
Grandamma's probably mowing our graves up ahead, she can give us a ride.

Scully looks quizzically at Vamadela.

SCULLY
Mowing your graves?

VAMADELA
It's like a monument to our relatives lost at sea, Granddaddy in the Atlantic, Uncle Homer in the Pacific. We're all supposed to be buried there.

SCULLY
You'd rather lose yourself at sea, though.

VAMADELA
It's not a what you'd call a "color-friendly" cemetery. My fiance, my son's father, was black.

SCULLY
Was, as in deceased.

(CONTINUED)

VAMADELA

Yeah, he was a semi-famous trumpet player. Russ OD'ed right after he found out he caught something with a needle.

Scully unconsciously wipes his mouth, Vamadela sees him.

VAMADELA (cont'd)

Don't worry, I don't think people can catch it from mouth-to-mouth.

Vamadela, feelings hurt, picks up the pace.

IMPALA parked ahead.

89 EXT. RURAL CEMETERY - DAY

Vamadela and Scully walk past the Impala parked on the shoulder, trunk lid open, gas can nearby.

Neat plots of OLD TOMBSTONES surrounded by forest. In the middle of one neatly cut plot is a tall, pedestaled monument engraved DOODLUM. On one side is a marker IN MEMORY OF HOMER MATTHEWS DOODLUM, SR. and on the other is IN MEMORY OF HOMER MATTHEWS DOODLUM, JR. - Lost At Sea.

Old lawn mower, but no sign of Grandmamma Doodlum.

VAMADELA

Grandmamma! Grandmamma Doodlum!

No response, but in a new angle on monument Grandmamma Doodlum sleeps in the shade, eyelids flickering.

VAMADELA (cont'd)

She's probably in the woods gathering poison ivy.

SCULLY

That's nice.

VAMADELA

She's never liked me even before I married Russ. She thinks I'm too much like Daddy, and she hates Daddy because he came home from Viet Nam and Homer Junior didn't.

ON GRANDMAMMA DOODLUM: She's awake now and listening.

(CONTINUED)

VAMADELA (cont'd)

Homer Junior was Grandmumma's favorite. When the man walked up the sidewalk with the telegram, Grandmumma said "Please don't let it be Homer Junior." When Daddy came home somebody told him what she'd said.

Grandmumma Doodlum WINCES at the story being told.

VAMADELA (cont'd)

Come on, she usually leaves the car keys under the floormat.

Grandmumma Doodlum struggles to get up in time to stop Vamadela and Scully, but they are already starting the car, driving off.

GRANDMUMMA DOODLUM

(whispering hoarsely)

My water jug!

90 EXT. DOODLUM RESIDENCE DRIVEWAY - DAY

CLOSE: on polished fender of official-looking dark sedan slowly pulling into Doodlum driveway heading for house.

The car stops at front steps, KHAKI UNIFORM PANTS and SPIT-POLISHED SHOES get out of car, door closes revealing U.S. NAVY emblazoned over OFFICIAL SEAL.

91 EXT. BACKYARD - SAME

Capt. Bill sits under a tree watching Christopher sulk on the dock, occasionally casting wary looks at one another.

Capt. Bill has a bottle and a fresh glass in his lap.

LOUISE (O.C.)

Bill, there's somebody here from the Navy to see you.

Capt. Bill tries to remain calm, doesn't turn around.

CAPT BILL

Tell them to go to hell.

LOUISE

Pardon him, Bobby, you can see he's obviously been in his "hobby shop."

Capt. Bill spins around; it's BOBBY FERGUSON from the ship.

(CONTINUED)

CAPT BILL
Bobby!

FERGUSON
That's CAPTAIN Ferguson to you,
shorehugger.

Ferguson leans in, showing CAPTAIN'S BARS on shoulders.

CAPT BILL
I thought you were here to arrest me.

Ferguson looks confused, Louise makes drinking motions behind
Capt. Bill's back.

FERGUSON
I'm here to thank you, Bill. Your
recommendation letter was embarrassing.

CAPT BILL
You weren't supposed to see that.

FERGUSON
You left a rough copy in your quarters.
You spent a lot of time on it.

Capt. Bill looks admiringly at Ferguson's new bars, Louise
brings up another lawn chair.

CAPT BILL
I'm glad the Navy finally did something
right for change.

FERGUSON
It's a change all right. I'm the first
"man of color" ever to captain a tanker.

CAPT BILL
Have a drink, you're going to need one.

92 EXT. MOON'S SEAFOOD HOUSE - DAY

Corrugated tin sheds line concrete fish-packing docks. Two
rough-looking islanders in yellow rubber overalls and rubber
boots crate fresh crabs, ice down boxes of fish. They stop
to watch Angus' boat slide up to the pier.

ISLANDER ONE
Didn't Angus leave here by himself this
morning?

On the bow of Angus' boat stands Woods, angry, impatient, his
flight overalls COVERED with fish slime.

(CONTINUED)

ISLANDER TWO

What's your catch today, Angus?

Angus shuts his engine, throws the islander a line.

ANGUS

Thirteen bushels and one Navy flyboy wet behind the ears!

Woods leaps onto the dock and storms off.

ISLANDER ONE

(to Islander Two)

Poor fella, I druther have two turds in my pocket than have to spend a day on Angus' boat.

93 EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Powell tucks in his shirt surveying the window Lisa Lee shot out during their lovemaking. He's angry and she's draped over the front seat, unsatisfied-looking, idly playing with the pistol.

POWELL

You're the only woman I know wants gunplay in her foreplay.

LISA LEE

I guess Tommy ruined me.

POWELL

Maybe Tommy just needed some props, you ever think of that?

LISA LEE

Maybe if you just told me what your props are we wouldn't have this problem.

POWELL

Hey, I don't need props. I'd like to see the man who can keep it up with a gun to his head. And I don't mean Tommy.

Powell squats in the back of the tow truck talking to Lisa Lee through the shattered window. He gathers up the larger pieces of glass.

LISA LEE

This do anything for you?

She holds the gun to her own throat. She's serious.

94 EXT. MATTHEWS MEDICAL CLINIC - DAY

A small, rural single-story clinic. Uncut grass over broken walkway. The roster board of doctors posted out front conspicuously has only one name, DAVID HUDGINS, M.D.

DR. DAVID HUDGINS, mid-50's well-groomed, a little gin-lined, gets out of his Mercedes convertible, pulling off a painter's smock and beret, tossing them into back seat.

95 INT. MATTHEWS MEDICAL CLINIC RECEPTION - DAY

Wizened nurse at desk watches soap operas on Watchman with earphones. She doesn't even look up as Hudgins enters the empty waiting room. She nods toward the rear.

NURSE

Something a Doodlum drug in.

96 INT. EXAMINING ROOM - SAME

Vamadela, stretched out on the table in her parachute toga like Sleeping Beauty, watches Scully. Red-faced, sweating profusely, he leans into the corner of the room with a towel balled up in his armpit.

DR. HUDGINS

Who's the patient here?

SCULLY

Me, I guess. My shoulder was dislocated, but I think I just put it back in.

DR. HUDGINS

Let me see that.

VAMADELA

Hi, Doc. Remember that time when Momma broke her arm and she set it herself? I remember, because you still charged her to look at it.

Dr. Hudgins scowls at Vamadela, approaches Scully.

DR. HUDGINS

I only charged her for the plaster cast. She was using some paint sticks wrapped in duct tape.

VAMADELA

That's not the way Momma tells it.

(CONTINUED)

Vamadela sits up, her toga opens down the front, distracting Dr. Hudgins as he probes Scully's arm.

SCULLY

Easy, Doc, it's tender.

DR. HUDGINS

You've got pupils like walk-in closets, Vamadela.

SCULLY

It's my fault, Doc, I gave her a morphine tab. She, uh, had cramps.

DR. HUDGINS

(unconvinced)

Un huh.

He turns Scully around and checks the droop of his shoulder, keepin' an eye on Vamadela as he does this.

DR. HUDGINS (cont'd)

My guess is you two have been out joy-riding, hopped up on drugs and wrecked a car somewhere.

Scully starts to protest, Vamadela is amused.

DR. HUDGINS (cont'd)

Your shenanigans used to be funny, Vamadela, but your daddy was in here this morning, and he doesn't need this kind of foolishness.

SCULLY

You think I'd be out joy-riding in a flightsuit?

DR. HUDGINS

Son, I read the paper, the camouflage look is in this year.

VAMADELA

(concerned)

What was Daddy here for?

DR. HUDGINS

He needed me to call in some prescriptions for him.

VAMADELA

Like what?

(CONTINUED)

DR. HUDGINS

Like a lot of things I can't tell you,
including Viagra.

VAMADELA

Viagra!

DR. HUDGINS

Viagra is his way of telling me to stay
away from Louise.

VAMADELA

Did you give it to him?

DR. HUDGINS

I can't tell you that. Of course I did,
and everything else he asked for.
Listen, you need to talk to your daddy.

VAMADELA

I don't think he wants to talk to me.

DR. HUDGINS

You're such a fool, you know you're his
favorite. Go talk to him.

SCULLY

Doc?

DR. HUDGINS

What do YOU want?

Dr. Hudgins opens a cabinet and takes out an arm sling.

SCULLY

Can you give blood tests?

DR. HUDGINS

Sure, what will I be looking for? VD?

SCULLY

(looking at Vamadela)

It's not for me.

Dr. Hudgins fits the sling over Scully, pulls it TIGHT.

97 EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON: A withered hand turns a rusty outdoor faucet.
Nothing. It's bone dry.

WIDE ON: Grandmamma Doodlum, thirsty, overheated, weak,
ambles out of the weedy yard and into desolate road.

98 EXT. BACKYARD - SAME

CLOSE ON: Frosty pitcher of lemonade choked with ice.

WIDER: Louise bringing lemonade on tray with glasses out to Capt. Bill and Ferguson as they watch Christopher sulk out on dock.

FERGUSON

(laughing)

So Bill Doodlum's only grandchild is,
what would people on Matthews Bay call
him? High yellow? Mixed colored?

CAPT BILL

Stop it, Bobby. He's only half...

FERGUSON

Say it, Bill. "Negro" will do.

Ferguson laughs again, Capt. Bill becomes agitated. Louise sets the tray down, pointedly TAKES BILL'S EMPTY WHISKEY GLASS and BOTTLE. She pours them both tall lemonades.

LOUISE

It's good to see you two off that ship,
enjoying yourselves.

CAPT BILL

Bobby's having a ball.

LOUISE

Bobby, I hope you'll stay for an early
supper. Fried chicken, dressing, maybe
some small crab cakes if Bill and
Christopher get lucky.

Behind Capt. Bill's back she motions to Ferguson to GET BILL BACK TOGETHER CRABBING WITH CHRISTOPHER.

FERGUSON

He's a fine-looking boy, Louise.

LOUISE

I'll set a place for you.

She leaves. Ferguson sees Capt. Bill is upset.

CAPT BILL

(looking at Christopher)
He's mad at me for yelling at him.

(CONTINUED)

FERGUSON
You yell at everybody.

CAPT BILL
He hasn't learned that yet.

Ferguson becomes thoughtful, softens toward Capt. Bill.

FERGUSON
I was only fooling with the "Negro" business, Bill. A racist wouldn't have given me that recommendation.

CAPT BILL
But I am a racist, Bobby. I've said "nigger" almost all my life. That there...
(pointing to Christopher)
is God's reward to me for it.

FERGUSON
Bill, you're just human. You're a racist in general but not in particular.

CAPT BILL
What the hell does that mean?

FERGUSON
Am I a nigger to you, Bill?

Capt. Bill glares at Ferguson.

CAPT BILL
I'd whup the man who'd call you that.

LOUISE
(hollering from kitchen window)
Bobby! Sweet tea or regular with supper?

FERGUSON
(to Louise)
Sweet!
(to Capt. Bill)
And am I a nigger to Louise?

CAPT BILL
To Louise all men are created equal,
Bobby, we're all equally unsatisfactory.

They smile together for the first time. Capt. Bill is wracked by coughing again. He lights a new cigarette.

(CONTINUED)

FERGUSON

Have you told her yet, about your condition?

CAPT BILL

I don't want a whole hullabaloo about it. I want everything to go on like normal.

FERGUSON

Louise needs to know, Bill. The rest of them, too.

CAPT BILL

I keep thinking in six months I'll be back at sea, not goddamn dead in the ground.

Ferguson doesn't know what to say, he lets Bill talk.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

And I can't believe that little boy is the last of my blood I'll ever see.

FERGUSON

Let's help him catch some crabs.

Ferguson stands, offers Capt. Bill a hand up. They walk toward Christopher on the dock.

Ferguson desperately wants to change the subject.

FERGUSON (cont'd)

By the way, we lost a jet somewhere around here today. The base was scrambling when I left.

This stops Capt. Bill in his tracks; he pours out his lemonade.

CAPT BILL

I'm fixing a real drink. Watch my grandson, will you?

99 INT. CAPT. BILL'S SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Vamadela holds Capt. Bill's prescription bottles, reads the labels. Capt. Bill appears in the doorway.

CAPT BILL

Vamadela.

VAMADELA

What's this?

(CONTINUED)

CAPT BILL
Nothing, pills.

VAMADELA
Pretty strong stuff.

CAPT BILL
You a doctor?

VAMADELA
I know pills. What's going on with you?

CAPT BILL
I could ask you the same thing. My
grandson, your almost husband.

VAMADELA
Looks like we have some catching up to
do.

Vamadela puts the pills down.

VAMADELA
(small voice)
Hi, Daddy.

CAPT BILL
(tenderly)
Hi, baby. Come hug your old man.

They embrace, Capt. Bill with his favorite daughter; they
hold on to each other for dear life.

100 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Capt. Bill sits glassy-eyed and smoking at the head of the
table, his food untouched, he fairly dotes on-

Vamadela sitting to his left, her hair still wet from a
shower. Next to her is-

Scully, in a borrowed shirt and arm sling, next to him is-

Lisa Lee, sitting a little close to him.

Louise sits at the other end of the table checking everyone's
plate. To her left is-

Ferguson helping Christopher with his food, then-

Powell, leaning in to Capt. Bill's right.

(CONTINUED)

The table is laden with fried chicken, corn, fresh tomatoes, fried crab cakes, green beans, biscuits, gravy, bowls of potatoes, salad, pitchers of tea and ice water.

FERGUSON

(to Scully)

I can give you a lift to base right after dinner.

SCULLY

Thanks but the wing commander is sending a chopper for me and my bombardier. He washed up near a fishhouse, I think. We'll probably spend the night in a debrief.

LOUISE

Have you got enough to eat, son?

Scully's plate is heaped with food, he eats one-armed.

SCULLY

Oh yes, ma'am, just a little awkward, is all.

Lisa Lee DROPS her fork to help him cut his food. Powell glares at her. Capt. Bill smokes.

LISA LEE

You're certainly the hero of the day, keeping your airplane from hitting any houses. It could have crashed right in our front yard!

LOUISE

Maybe now you won't fly so close to the houses. You should see the crack I have in the living room.

CAPT BILL

Louise's been trying to get somebody to look at her crack all day.

Ferguson snickers, Powell and Scully's eyebrows go up. Louise narrows her eyes at Capt. Bill, sees he's teasing her. She pretends to be annoyed, but she's pleased at this little thaw between her and Capt. Bill.

SCULLY

It was the damndest thing. We were locked on the target, I mean, your house, and then, BOOM, we had a flame-out.

(CONTINUED)

VAMADELA

You use our house as a target?

SCULLY

On practice runs it's a toxic dump.

LOUISE

I resent that.

SCULLY

Sorry, ma'am. I swear I think I saw something hit us.

CHRISTOPHER

A big firework!

SCULLY

That's right, little man, like a firework, something hot red and low. My bombardier bailed out but we're trained to take the aircraft out to sea if we can. I must have rapped my head and messed up my shoulder ejecting. Next thing I know I'm in a lip-lock with Vamadela here.

VAMADELA

Yes... I was swimming at Burrells beach.

LISA LEE

(pointedly)

Lucky for us I found your note so we weren't worried.

LOUISE

I've told you a hundred times about swimming alone, Vamadela. Something could happen and where would little Christopher be without his momma?

LISA LEE

She thought you and Daddy might want to raise him. It's all in the note.

LOUISE

I didn't see the note.

CAPT BILL

I think it would be great to have you and Christopher here at the house, for as long as you like.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE
It would?

CAPT BILL
Unless you need to get back somewheres.

VAMADELA
No, Daddy. We don't really have any
place to be. Do you?

CAPT BILL
Not that I'm saying in front of company.

LOUISE
Ha! I've wanted to crawl under this
table from what you've said in front of
company.

The "company", Ferguson, Powell, and Scully, look down at
their plates, feeling uncomfortable. Lisa Lee sees their
unease, decides to change the subject.

LISA LEE
(to Scully)
So what did it feel like, the...what did
you call it, the ejaculation?

LOUISE
He didn't use that word!

SCULLY
The ejection? Well, in the A-6 the
ejection mechanism is really just a
dynamite charge, so you're really just
sitting on something about ready to go
off.

VAMADELA
YOU must know how THAT feels, don't you,
Lisa Lee?

LISA LEE
And then...whoosh?

LOUISE
Eat your dinner, Lisa Lee.

POWELL
Yes, have some ice water and cool down.

SCULLY
Sorry, I didn't mean to monopolize the
conversation.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

That's quite all right, usually we don't have any.

Everyone eats in silence as Capt. Bill smokes.

101 EXT. DOODLUM FRONT YARD - NIGHT

A Navy Huey helicopter stirs up the trees in the front yard as it lowers onto the lawn. The gunner's door slides open, WOODS HOPS out running low under the rotors, the engines...

102 INT. DINING ROOM - SAME

...begin their low WHINE as they gear down.

SCULLY

Sounds like my ride is here.

POWELL

Maybe they're coming for you, Capt. Bill.

Capt. Bill sips his drink and cuts Powell a dirty look. DOORBELL RINGS. Louise gets up, Ferguson looks at his watch, wipes his mouth. Scully gets up, looks down at Vamadela.

SCULLY

(to Vamadela)

You really saved my life today. I think your mother's right about not swimming alone anymore.

Vamadela is suddenly contemplative.

FERGUSON

(getting up)

I'll race you back to base in the car.

SCULLY

Thank you, Capt. Bill for the hospitality and it was a pleasure to meet you all.

Capt. Bill, drunk and lost in thought, idly waves everyone good-bye.

LISA LEE

I'll see you out.

Powell reads her body language, grabs her wrist.

POWELL

Let him find his own way out, okay?

(CONTINUED)

He holds her wrist HARD; she seems to LIKE it, then snatches her arm away, gives him a flirting look.

Christopher puts the ship-in-a-bottle under Capt. Bill's nose.

CHRISTOPHER

Show me how you got it in there.

CAPT BILL

(absently)

Maybe later.

Capt. Bill fails to see the disappointment in Christopher's face, but it's not lost on Vamadela who swoops Christopher up in her arms to take him upstairs.

103 INT. FRONT FOYER - NIGHT

Scully shakes Louise's hand at the front door, Woods on the other side of the screen. Lisa Lee stands behind Louise.

SCULLY

Thank you, Miss Louise. I promise not to bust your walls anymore.

LOUISE

We're patriotic Americans, just don't fly so low.

SCULLY

Next time it'll be in a little seaplane I just restored. I'll wave my wings.

LISA LEE

I'd love to see the bay from the air.

LOUISE

Maybe we could all go up!

Scully regrets the way this sounds as soon as he says it:

SCULLY

It's only a two seater...

WOODS (O.S.)

Come on, Scully, we're in deep enough shit as it is. Sorry ma'am.

Louise sends Scully out the door with a fondness.

104 EXT. DOODLUM FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Scully and Woods SCRAMBLE into the helicopter.

105 INT. HELICOPTER - SAME

Scully and Woods buckle into the jump seats, Scully sniffs.

SCULLY

Christ, Woodrow, you smell like fish.

106 EXT. DOODLUM FRONT YARD -NIGHT

The helicopter lifts off as Ferguson kisses Louise and gets into his car, honking on the way out the driveway.

107 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Louise clears the plates, knocks over a water glass.

CAPT BILL

Louise, you'd get a lot more done if you didn't work so hard.

LOUISE

You were rude to our company, you hardly said two words to that young man.

POWELL

I thought Lisa Lee made up for everybody.

LISA LEE

I was just being polite, showing interest.

VAMADELA

Just because I found him doesn't mean I want to keep him, Lisa.

Louise suddenly STOPS, her hands clutching the silverware.

LISA LEE

Momma, are you all right?

LOUISE

I just felt a cold chill come over me.

The window curtains stir; there's a NOISE, a CLUMPING noise coming from the front of the house.

(CONTINUED)

VAMADELA
(whispering)
Somebody came in the house!

They wait and watch silently as the noise comes closer down the hall - clump, clump, clump.

Grandmumma Doodlum appears in the doorway. She's beet-red from sun and walking like a ragged zombie.

VAMADELA (cont'd)
Oh my god, I forgot Grandmumma!

Vamadela gets up to go to Grandmumma Doodlum.

VAMADELA (cont'd)
Grandmumma, I'm so sorry...

Grandmumma Doodlum's hand comes up quick as a snake and strikes Vamadela with a surprising sharpness across her face.

LOUISE
Now wait just a golldarned minute!

VAMADELA
It's okay, Momma, I deserved that.

Grandmumma Doodlum zombie-walks to Vamadela's chair next to Capt. Bill, sits down. Vamadela pours her a glass of water.

GRANDMUMMA DOODLUM
(voice cracked with heat and fatigue)
Hello, Billy.

CAPT BILL
Hello, Mother.

GRANDMUMMA DOODLUM
How was Antarctica?

CAPT BILL
Hot.

Beat.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)
Would you like to see some pictures?

108 INT. CAPT BILL'S SHOP - NIGHT

ON ANTARCTIC PHOTO on back wall as overhead lights flicker on. Capt.

(CONTINUED)

Bill, childlike, leads Grandmumma Doodlum to a photo album. He opens the pages of himself and his ship and crew.

CAPT BILL

We go in summer when the ice breaks up.
There's a desert there, brown sand, it's
really beautiful.

They turn the pages together.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

And they got the quizzical penguins, you
lean over the ship rail and watch them
diving and flapping around the ice until
a killer whale rushes up from underneath
and flips the ice cake over.

INSERT: Photos of the described carnage.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

The penguins go sliding down the fish's
big open throat. It's all real comical.

Grandmumma slowly closes the photo album. She sees the photo
of her two young sons on the wall, then looks at Capt. Bill.

GRANDMUMMA DOODLUM

I'm glad you finally decided to come
home, Billy.

Capt. Bill is flustered, shy. This is the most he's spoken
to his mother in over thirty years.

CAPT BILL

Me too, Momma.

109 EXT. DOCK - NIGHT

Vamadela and Lisa Lee sit on the end of the dock looking at
the stars and distant lights on the water.

LISA LEE

Were you serious about not wanting
Scully, at supper?

VAMADELA

God, Lisa Lee, what about your fiance? He
seems all right.

LISA LEE

Ever since he's a poster boy for
sobriety, he's different. He used to be
all over me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LISA LEE (cont'd)

Now he's counting the hours until every day is over. You know, "one day at a time."

VAMADELA

It's tough to sober up. I've never been able to do it completely.

LISA LEE

I bet Scully doesn't count the hours in a day.

VAMADELA

Take him then.

LISA LEE

You could go to meetings with Powell.

VAMADELA

You've thought this all out, in like, five minutes.

LISA LEE

If that Navy boy comes around recruiting, I'll serve, by God.

Lisa Lee snaps a salute. Vamadela gets up to go into the house, she's disgusted with her sister.

VAMADELA

Something about saving his life scared me today, don't make it feel cheap.

She heads to the house, Lisa Lee calls out, but nothing.

110 EXT. DOOLUM RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Late, the house is dark except of one window downstairs. Crickets chirp, all is peaceful until we hear a CRASH from inside the house. An upstairs light comes on.

111 INT. LOUISE'S BEDROOM -- SAME

Louise turns on the bedside lamp. She's wearing men's pajamas, her hair wrapped in plastic. She swings out of bed, picks up a heavy-duty NIGHTWATCHMAN'S FLASHLIGHT and a GOLF CLUB from beside the bed. A woman used to living alone.

112 INT. SEWING ROOM - SAME

Louise turns on the light - the unslept-in single bed, Capt. Bill's shirt draped on a chair, his duffel bags on the floor; this is where Capt. Bill sleeps when he's home.

113 INT. FAMILY ROOM - SAME

Capt. Bill in an old-fashioned white t-shirt sits leaning at a stiff angle in a brown leather Lazy-Boy recliner. White curtains and curtain rods, RIPPED from the nearby bare bay window, are heaped in his lap. Capt. Bill's breathing is labored, he's pale.

Louise enters.

LOUISE

Bill, what in the world?

Capt. Bill opens his eyes and tries to slow his panting.

CAPT BILL

Sorry, Louise, I coughed on your curtains.

Louise sits on an ottoman at his feet.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

I was standing by the window having a last cigarette, thinking, and I- coughed.

Capt. Bill opens the wad of white curtains and it's BLOOD-SPLATTERED.

LOUISE

Oh Bill!

CAPT BILL

I was going to take them down and wash them but I got faint and pulled the whole shebang off the wall.

Louise takes the curtains from Capt. Bill, reclines him back in the chair, pets his head.

LOUISE

Do you want to go to the hospital?

Capt. Bill shakes his head No.

CAPT BILL

Louise, I've come home because, I'm not going to live much longer. And I want you to know that I want to go quick, I don't want to linger.

LOUISE

No, Bill.

(CONTINUED)

CAPT BILL

I know the hell you went through with your mother and then your father, and I'm not going to put you through that again.

LOUISE

There must be something we can do, can we take you to a specialist? Have you...

CAPT BILL

It's in my guts and my lungs, and I feel like something pressing in on my spine. And on top of all that, I did something foolish today and I'm worried about your widow's pension, for when I'm gone.

LOUISE

I did what you said with the money you've sent home. I've bought every piece of land that David Hudgins didn't get to first. We can sell it, I suppose.

CAPT BILL

He'll be sniffing around when I'm gone, believe me.

LOUISE

I've fended him and all his offers off all these years, I reckon I can keep on. He's hot after my Cobb's Creek property, says the smartest thing I could do would be go in with him and build condos together.

CAPT BILL

What did you tell him?

LOUISE

I told him "Blood's thicker than brains, I reckon."

Capt. Bill looks at her a couple of beats, a smile beginning to form on his face.

CAPT BILL

Good girl.

He takes her hand, then is racked by a coughing fit, his mouth filling with blood. He looks for a place to spit it out.

Louise offers up the wadded white curtains, he pushes them away, but she forces them up to his face.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

I wanted to put up new ones for your
homecoming anyway.

114 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Louise at the stove, cooking; Vamadela and Christopher at the
kitchen table. Christopher wolfing down eggs and bacon, his
ship-in-a-bottle on the table. Vamadela's food is untouched,
her hands wrapped around a coffee mug.

Capt. Bill enters, a duffel bag on one shoulder, a cardboard
box under one arm.

CAPT BILL

Morning everybody.

He startles Louise by pecking her on the neck, she looks at
him like he's crazy. She eyeballs the duffel.

LOUISE

Want me to do your laundry?

CAPT BILL

Nope. It's my ship clothes. They need
to be burnt.

Capt. Bill stops by Vamadela and Christopher, neither look
up. Capt. Bill nudges the ship-in-a-bottle.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

(to Christopher)

You find us an empty bottle, and I'll
show you something.

Christopher, delighted, jumps out of his chair.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

(sternly)

Finish your breakfast first. Vamadela,
can I talk to you a minute?

115 EXT. SIDNEYARD - DAY

Capt. Bill opens the duffel and starts throwing old khaki
work clothes into a trash barrel, proceeds to get the whole
thing going with a splash of gas from a can and a match.

Vamadela enters.

CAPT BILL

What was Russ like?

(CONTINUED)

VAMADELA

Don't you mean "why" Russ?

No, he doesn't mean "why," he knows her better than she thinks, they're whittled from the same branch.

CAPT BILL

Was he a good man?

VAMADELA

Russ was a selfish momma's boy who cared about playing music more than anybody or anything else.

CAPT BILL

Louise says he was into drugs.

VAMADELA laughs.

VAMADELA

He OD'ed, you can't be more into drugs than that.

CAPT BILL

I reckon it some ways you're better off then.

VAMADELA

You think? He was never around, and when he was he was either high or asleep or with his nose stuck in some book.

Capt. Bill is in the middle of feeding a handful of PAPERBACK BOOKS from SEA CHEST onto the fire. Vamadela has just described him for the last thirty-five years.

CAPT BILL

You could have come home. Why did you stay with him?

VAMADELA

I know this sounds crazy, but I stayed because he left me alone. He didn't bother me. Now he's gone for good, and I'm really pissed.

CAPT BILL

That why you went swimming in Burrell's Bay again?

VAMADELA

Historically, I am unable to drown myself.

(CONTINUED)

Capt. Bill throws another handful of books on the fire.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)
I've got cancer, Vamadela. I might make
it to Christmas, I hope so.

Vamadela half-suspected this, but still, she's in shock and
is speechless.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)
We're all crossways, you and me. I don't
want my life to end, but I don't have any
choice. You don't want to live, but you
have a choice.

VAMADELA
I promise not to swim in Burrell's Bay
ever again.

CAPT BILL
Good, you make your mother and me feel
foolish every time you do it.

The trash fire is ROARING now, Capt. Bill adds the duffel bag
and the cardboard box for good measure. Capt. Bill pokes at
the flames with a stick, sees something O.C.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)
Hey, boy! What the hell are you doing?

116 EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Christopher has a nearly full bottle of Capt. Bill's whiskey
and he's starting to pour it out into Louise's flowerbed.

CHRISTOPHER
I found us a bottle!

Capt. Bill looks at Vamadela, she looks at him like this is
an amusing moment of truth for all of them.

CAPT BILL
(reluctantly)
Well, pour it off the dock, let's don't
kill the goddamn flowers, okay?
(to Vamadela)
I was thinking of giving the booze a
break anyway.

117 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Louise looks out the window and sees a miraculous sight she
would have never imagined-

(CONTINUED)

HER POV: Bill stands at the end of their dock pouring out a nearly full bottle of whiskey into the bay, Vamadela standing beside him, a happy Christopher chattering on.

Lisa Lee enters the kitchen with an agenda.

LISA LEE

Momma, you know how you always say you just want me to be happy, but when I tell you I just want to be happy, you say "That's stupid"?

LOUISE

What have you done now?

LISA LEE

Nothing, I just want to be happy.

LOUISE

That's stupid. Lisa Lee, your father is real sick, that's what's important right now.

LISA LEE

What's wrong with Daddy?

LOUISE

He has cancer.

LISA LEE

Is he going to tell me himself?

LOUISE

What difference does that make?

LISA LEE

I bet he's told Vamadela. I just want to be ready when he tells me, I like to have things planned, I don't like surprises.

An exasperated Louise takes her daughter by the shoulders.

LOUISE

Listen to me; your father is dying, your father is dying, your father, is going to die, okay? Happy now?

LISA LEE

Yes.

LOUISE

Good.

(CONTINUED)

Louise messily SLAPS together peanut butter and fig sandwiches and THROWS them into a picnic basket.

LISA LEE

Where are you going?

LOUISE

On a fucking picnic.

Lisa Lee's ears are pinned back by the force of Louise and this unheard vulgarity coming from her mouth.

118 EXT. POWELL'S MOBILE HOME - DAY

Powell on his run-down front porch watches his boss Sonny start up the tow truck with the shot-out rear window. Sonny, a big, beefy redneck, sweeps glass shards into the driveway.

POWELL

Come on, Sonny, I really need this job. It was an accident. I'll pay for the window.

SONNY

Goddamn right you will. It's always a mistake to help people out.

Sonny guns the truck out of the sandy driveway ALMOST COLLIDING with Capt. Bill's truck coming the other way. Louise is his passenger, picnic basket between them.

Powell steps behind the screen door watching them pull up to his trailer. It takes Capt. Bill a moment to collect his strength to pull himself out of the truck. Louise remains in the truck, eyes fixed straight ahead, away from a known site of Lisa Lee's debaucheries.

119 INT. POWELL'S MOBILE HOME - DAY

Powell bangs around in a dirty-dish cluttered sink rinsing out a coffee pot. The trailer is laundry-strewn, messy-newspapers, self-help books, overalls, dirty white shirts, work gloves, clutter of a man going through a lot of changes.

Capt. Bill surveys the place-

CAPT BILL

And they say the Vietnamese are filthy people...

POWELL

(tarsely)

I wasn't expecting company, Bill.

(CONTINUED)

Something pinned to a wall catches Capt. Bill's eye, a National Geographic MAP OF THE WORLD, magic marker lines.

CAPT BILL

This map charts where I been the last eighteen months, Taiwan, Tel Aviv, Perth, back and forth to Antarctica.

Powell gets the coffee going.

POWELL

That's right, Bill, I've been waiting a long time for you to come home, since Bombay, when Lisa Lee's divorce was final.

Capt. Bill studies a smear on the map.

CAPT BILL

I don't remember being in Saudi this trip.

POWELL

That's a smushed mosquito.

Capt. Bill knocks some clothes off a chair, sits down. He puts BOX of .45 AMMUNITION on the table, then ignores it.

CAPT BILL

I had a rough night last night, my end time might be closer than I thought. Louise and I are driving around today looking at our property. Thought I'd drop by and see if we still understand each other.

POWELL

What you want me to do is murder.

CAPT BILL

It's not like that. Just make sure I don't hang on, be a burden for Louise. She's been through that with her parents already. Do this for me and you have my blessing to marry Lisa Lee.

POWELL

Last night Lisa Lee, my fiance, threw herself at another man. This morning, I lost my job. I'm think about hitchhiking into town for a bottle.

(CONTINUED)

CAPT BILL

Take a drink if you want a drink, Christ,
I don't understand all this sobriety
bullshit these days. You sober up just
to be what, somebody who reminds me of
warm wax, all ready to be impressed.

POWELL

Get out of here.

CAPT BILL

Look kid, I'm sorry, I just don't get it.
I'm offering my daughter and half of all
I've got, and I've got a lot.

Powell grows more and more angry. He sets a cup of coffee in
front of Capt. Bill and opens a closet. From a top shelf he
pulls down the PISTOL.

POWELL

Oh, a dowry! You didn't mention that
before. Well, I'm certainly sold, Bill,
how about to conclude our deal I send you
on your way with a flesh wound? A little
nick in the shoulder, like in the movies?

Powell COCKS the PISTOL and POINTS it at Capt. Bill.

CAPT BILL

Now you're talking.

Capt. Bill gets up, goes to the door, Powell still sights on
him with the pistol.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)

You're going to thank me for this one
day, Paul.

(a whispered taunt)

Be a man!

120 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Capt. Bill drives through a mostly empty countryside, old
fields gone to weeds cut by creeks and glimpses of the bay
beyond.

LOUISE

All this land, we own, on both sides of
the road, from here to the county line.

CAPT BILL

We going to subdivide it, build houses?

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE
Not exactly, it doesn't perk.

CAPT BILL
What's that mean?

LOUISE
Can't put in septic to develope.

CAPT BILL
Can we plant it?

LOUISE
No. It's fertilizer burned.

CAPT BILL
Can we graze it?

LOUISE
No.

CAPT BILL
What the hell good is it then?

LOUISE
Bill, I only did what you told me to do,
buy up all the land I could and I did.

CAPT BILL
You spent thirty-five years worth of my
paychecks on worthless land?

Louise nods her head on the verge of tears.

LOUISE
(weakly)
I got a good price on it.

121 EXT. COUNTRY FIELD - DAY

CLOSE ON: Dozens of METAL DETECTORS weaving through high
weeds.

WIDER: Platoons of sailors spread out for acres scouring the
fields and creeks, occasionally picking up metal shards.

122 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - SAME

Capt. Bill rounds a curve in the truck, braking down.

HIS POV: Navy roadblock, white Navy vans line the highway, a
couple of sedans nearby with officers consulting maps spread
on the hoods, a sentry flags Capt. Bill down, officer nearby.

(CONTINUED)

LIEUTENANT

Sorry, sir, just be a minute while my men cross the road.

CAPT BILL

What's going on?

LIEUTENANT

We lost a jet yesterday, the pilot thinks something fell out of the engine around here, a rocket or a flare.

CAPT BILL

Somebody was shooting at him?

LIEUTENANT

Yeah, can you believe it? But if it was a flare or a rocket, we'll catch the rat bastard. Couple years ago we tracked down a hunter just by the bullet hole he put in a chopper.

CAPT BILL

What happened to him?

LIEUTENANT

It's about as serious as you can get. He's in prison trying an appeal from death row. You know, firing on military aircraft is a treasonous crime, the last thing you can hang for in this country.

SENTRY

All clear, sir.

LIEUTENANT

You folks have a nice day.

The sentry waves Capt. Bill and Louise past the roadblock and through the sounds of men talking, military radios chattering, and above them, the DRONE of a small airplane.

123 EXT. BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF FIELDS - SAME

Looking down from a small plane, the roadblock below, the cars, the men in the fields, Capt. Bill's truck.

124 INT. SMALL PLANE - DAY

Scully at the controls of a small seaplane, looking down.

HIS POV: High turns over the DOODLUM RESIDENCE

125 EXT. SIDEYARD - DAY

ON Christopher, in bathing suit, and clutching water pistol, looking up at circling plane.

Vamadela and Lisa Lee connect a water sprinkler to a hose for Christopher to jump through.

VAMADELA

Have you talked to Momma, or has Daddy talked to you?

LISA LEE

I think they're okay with you and Christopher staying with us for a while.

That's not what Vamadela meant.

VAMADELA

Us? It's their house.

LISA LEE

You know what I mean.

VAMADELA

I know ever since you were a little girl you've figured on living here.

LISA LEE

I have not.

VAMADELA

Don't bullshit me, Lisa, I'm your sister. You figure I'd go off, you'd bide your time, and marry some guy in a uniform and make this all dollhouse perfect.

LISA LEE

I can't believe you're saying this. When Tommy and I got married we had our own house in town.

VAMADELA

You're just waiting for Momma and Daddy to pass on. Don't worry, I don't want the place, I don't think I could live here after Daddy dies anyway,

She's losing it.

LISA LEE

Daddy told you he is dying.

(CONTINUED)

VAMADELA

You were acting like you didn't know.

In the BACKGROUND, Scully's seaplane is taxiing up to the Doodlum dock.

126 EXT. DOCK - DAY

Scully's seaplane glides up, Scully leaps out, onto a pontoon and throws a line to Christopher who is delighted to catch it.

127 INT. DOODLUM SUNPORCH - DAY

Vamadela and Lisa Lee stare despondently at their sandwiches, unable to eat, though Scully, arm in a sling is in the middle of recounting his latest tall tale; Christopher sits rapt while chowing down his food.

SCULLY

(eating ravenously)

So I thought I'd retrace my flight and try to figure out just what went wrong. If it's not a mechanical failure, me and Dagwood have our asses in a sling, sorry ladies...

Vamadela and Lisa Lee ignore him, continue their fight.

LISA LEE

When was somebody supposed to tell me?

VAMADELA

I don't know. YOU live here, I don't, remember?

LISA LEE

And I'm NOT trying to build a dollhouse.

SCULLY

What did I miss?

VAMADELA

(to Scully pointedly)

Sorry Scully. Let's talk about you now, Momma said we were rude last night. Pretty macho, flying with one arm in a sling, isn't it, Lisa Lee?

LISA LEE

Don't.

(CONTINUED)

VAMADELA

Who helped you get dress this morning,
your girlfriend, your wife?

LISA LEE

You don't have to answer. You're being
rude, Vamadela.

SCULLY

Well, I, actually, I'm not married.

VAMADELA

He's not married, Lisa Lee. Girlfriend?

SCULLY

Not that...not really...

VAMADELA

He bangs around a little, but with nobody
in particular so it's okay.

LISA LEE

I hate you.

VAMADELA

Tell me, Scully, would you ever consider
settling down with a girl like Lisa Lee
and living in a house like this? Like,
literally, this house.

LISA LEE

I am really really sorry about my sister.

Scully's still trying to fend all of this off good-naturedly,
but it's getting uncomfortable. He tries this:

SCULLY

(jokingly)

I'm sure your mother warned you about
Navy men.

VAMADELA

Oh, yeah, but that's the funny thing
Scully, the more she warns us about
anything, the worse we want to try it,
isn't that right, Lisa Lee?

LISA LEE

Momma says when you marry a Navy man the
only things that happen when they're gone
to sea is that babies are born, barns
burn down, cars wreck, machines break,
houses need paint...

(CONTINUED)

VAMADELA

Don't forget the part about the women growing old waiting for the men to come home.

LISA LEE

Right, I don't know why that would put off anybody from marrying a Navy man.

Scully has no idea how he has become the unwitting object of this scorn, but he'll sit through it if it draws the sisters' fire from each other to another target, even if it's him. He tries a weak smile.

128 EXT. CREEKBANK - DAY

Our Navy man, Capt. Bill Doodlum, exhausted, discouraged, dying, sits in the shade of a large water oak on the bank of Cobb's Creek. Louise opens the picnic basket for them.

LOUISE

All that across the water is David Hudgins. This side is ours, and it perks, Bill, it's good land. Bill?

CAPT BILL

I'm sorry for what I've done.

LOUISE

You're tired. You want a fig sandwich?

CAPT BILL

I spent 35 years on a ship staring at an empty ocean, thinking one day I'd come home and pick up where we left off a long time ago. Now I come home and it's too late. Worst than wasting my life, I've wasted yours, too.

LOUISE

Don't say that, Bill. I've never minded being alone. Some people like to be left alone.

CAPT BILL

Funny, that's what Vamadela said this morning.

Louise unfolds a sandwich and lays it on Bill's lap.

(CONTINUED)

CAPT BILL

I remember where you got that golf club you had last night, you disarmed one of those country club boys I got in a fight with.

LOUISE

You were trying to fight three at once, the golf club wasn't fair.

CAPT BILL

We were just dating then, weren't we? I don't even think we'd done it yet, had we?

LOUISE

That night, in the bottom of that boat you had on a trailer, right in front of my house.

CAPT BILL

That's right, I remember. Boy I sure loved you.

LOUISE

I reckon that's why I have a weakness for the smell of old boat cushions and gasoline.

CAPT BILL

I might have some good times left in me still.

LOUISE

Of course you do. Is there anything in particular, in the coming months...?

CAPT BILL

I'd like for us to take a jacuzzi together.

LOUISE

I look awful in a bathing suit. I don't even HAVE a bathing suit.

CAPT BILL

Wasn't thinking we'd wear bathing suits.

LOUISE

Well, I don't know where we'd do that.

Capt. Bill looks a little crestfallen.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE (cont'd)
But I'm sure we can figure something out.
You want some potato chips?

CAPT BILL
I just want to live, just even a little longer.

LOUISE
You will, I'll make you.

CAPT BILL
And when it's time to go, promise me you'll you make me go.

LOUISE
I promise. Now let's eat and look at our property.

They sit back under the shade of the green tree eating their fig sandwiches and taking in the sparkling view of the bay.

129 EXT. DOODLUM RESIDENCE FRONT STEPS - DAY

A shaky Vamadela sits in her VW, lights a cigarette; Lisa Lee, Scully, and Christopher stand by the car.

VAMADELA
I promise I'll be back, no drama.

LISA LEE
Because the last time you left on an errand you drug HIM home.

She motions toward Scully.

Vamadela leaves, Lisa Lee and Scully go back toward the house, swinging Christopher holding hands between them.

130 EXT. POWELL'S MOBILE HOME - DAY

Powell, agitated, stalks the room like a tiger in a cage; he's angry at Capt. Bill, Lisa Lee, himself, the world.

He's a man who needs a DRINK but only has a gun and a fifteen mile walk into town. He's making decisions, he decides--

To clear off his kitchen table, RINSE a SHOT GLASS in the sink, and set out CLEAN ASHTRAY in preparation of bender.

(CONTINUED)

On his way out to the door, pulling on a shirt, he takes the PISTOL off the table, and FIRES at the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAP, hitting Capt. Bill's ports-o-call marked in tape, saving the last round for THE SOUTH POLE.

131 EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

Vamadela sees Powell marching alongside the road ahead; she pulls alongside.

POWELL
I need a ride into town.

Vamadela looks disappointed, that's not the destination she had in mind, but she reaches over and opens the door.

132 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Vamadela and Powell drive along.

VAMADELA
Maybe you could tell me where the meetings are. I'd like to go after I drop you off at the liquor store.

Powell looks disgustedly at the passing scenery.

POWELL
First Church of the Holy Mystery.

VAMADELA
That's a black church.

Powell looks at her smugly, has her liberalism vanished?

POWELL
Aren't they your people?

Vamadela steels herself, won't rise to the bait.

VAMADELA
Russell was black. He was my people.
Christopher is my people. My family is my people, just like your family is your people.

POWELL
I don't have people. I was raised an orphan by a religious prophet.

VAMADELA
A palm reader.

(CONTINUED)

Now Powell is on the defensive. He shifts to face Vamadela.

POWELL

My father gave people scripture according to their needs. They were supposed to study it til it caught fire. I wanted to be just like him, I wanted his heat.

VAMADELA

He's your people, then.

POWELL

He's long dead. I guess that's why I've wanted into a family so badly.

VAMADELA

Mine in particular?

POWELL

Even yours.

They smile, a truce.

The VW approaches a fork in the road, Vamadela guns it left against the rightward-pointing Powell; they're not going into town.

133 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Scully, alone, lingers along the photos on the living room wall, mostly portraits of young naval officers and wives from the '40's and '50's. He scrutinizes a photo of YOUNG CAPT BILL ANE FRIEND and moves down the wall, reaching LISA LEE'S wedding photos; HUSBAND #1, HUSBAND #2, and HUSBAND #3.

At the end of the photos, one frame is turned face to the wall. He turns it around; it's a cheap studio print of VAMADELA, a very black RUSSELL BROWN, and infant CHRISTOPHER.

He turns it back to the wall when Lisa Lee enters.

SCULLY

This flyer with your dad, he looks familiar to me.

Lisa Lee stands VERY CLOSE to Scully to look.

LISA LEE

Daddy and Angus Tillet. Right after the war when they got their medals.

(CONTINUED)

SCULLY

Rear ADMIRAL Angus Tillett? One of the biggest aces of the Korean War? He shot down five Chinese Migs in two days. "Angry Angus" they called him.

LISA LEE

He's still an old crank, piddling around on a crab boat.

She leads Scully to the sofa, pushes him down.

LISA LEE (cont'd)

Can't we just sit nicely and forget about history for while?

CLOSE ON: Lisa Lee's gallery of wedding photos.

134 EXT. SUPERMARKET ENTRANCE - DAY

Capt. Bill lets Louise off in front of the market, then decides to drive through the little town of Matthews.

135 EXT. MATTHEWS - DAY

LIQUOR STORE - he slows but doesn't stop;

FUNERAL HOME - he barely glances;

BAY POOL AND SPA - he pulls his truck in and stops.

136 EXT. FIRST CHURCH OF THE HOLY MYSTERY - DAY

CLOSE ON: Church marquee - "Today's Lesson: 'FORGIVE AND YE SHALL BE FORGIVEN' - LUKE 6:37"

Old weathered white clapboard church with modern cinderblock wing for classrooms. A few scattered cars in the parking lot for the afternoon AA meeting.

Vamadela and Powell sit in her car, looking at the church.

POWELL

(taking deep breath)

Okay, let's go in.

Vamadela remains motionless. She's a little clammy.

VAMADELA

I need a couple minutes, you go.

Powell gets out, looks back with uncertainty.

137 INT. CHURCH SOCIAL ROOM - DAY

Assortment of about twenty recovering alcoholics, white and black, farmers, businessmen, fishermen, housewives, a few destitute, all sitting in rickety folding chairs.

The room is cheaply furnished but clean; white painted cinderblock walls, large fans pushing hot air in corners.

Powell stands, sitting behind him is ANGUS TILLET.

POWELL

My name is Powell, and I'm an alcoholic.

The room says Hello, Powell.

POWELL (cont'd)

I lost my job this morning and I was on my way to the liquor store when an angel stopped by my house.

138 INT. FIRST CHURCH OF THE HOLY MYSTERY - DAY

Midway up the aisle of pews a figure is lit by soft reds and blues of stained glass light; it's Vamadela, praying hard.

139 EXT. DOODLUM YARD - DAY

Cut to a sun-dappled heaven, the urban Christopher discovering the outdoors; he's aiming his new TOY, Capt., Bill's flare gun up in the sky and shoots invisible planes.

140 EXT. DOCK - DAY

Christopher goes out to check out Scully's seaplane. He tugs on the lines to draw the plane in closer.

141 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ON: Back of sofa, seemingly empty until PHONE RINGS, and Lisa Lee's head appears leading Scully's both engaged in LIP LOCK.

They disentangle themselves, Lisa Lee unwinding her arm from Scully's sling, they're both disheveled.

Lisa Lee runs out to answer RINGING PHONE, Scully looks out bay window and is alarmed to see-

SCULLY POV: An anxious Christopher holds the seaplane from drifting away by one line.

142 EXT. DOCK - DAY

Scully re-ties the lines and gives Christopher an admonishing but friendly look.

CHRISTOPHER

They came undone by themselves.

SCULLY

It's all right.

Christopher, happy again, picks up his FLARE GUN TOY to resume his play. Scully looks, then is VERY INTERESTED in the flare gun.

SCULLY (cont'd)

Where'd you get that, little man?

Christopher hands it over to Scully, Scully checks it out, SNIFFS the barrel, looks out over the water.

CHRISTOPHER

It's Capt. Bill's but I can play with it.

143 INT. SUNPORCH - DAY

Lisa Lee on the phone while she watches Scully and Christopher through the glass.

LISA LEE

(into phone)

She's not here, Mr. Shumate, but I'll tell her you called.

144 INT. STOCKBROKER'S OFFICE - DAY

Busy brokerage house, harried, middle-aged Harvey Shumate surrounded by trading screens and telephones, sweating bullets, other brokers trading furiously around him.

SHUMATE

Tell her it's urgent she call me, I need her okay to let go of the sow bellies.

145 INT. SUNPORCH - DAY

LISA LEE

Sow bellies, I will, thank you.

She hangs up and smiles at the scene outside.

HER POV: Christopher animatedly telling Scully a story involving his GRANDFATHER'S FLARE GUN and an AIRPLANE.

146 INT. CAPT. BILL'S TRUCK - DAY

Capt. Bill and Louise driving home with the groceries.

LOUISE

I saw David Hudgins at the meat counter.
He wanted to know how the Viagra was
working out.

CAPT BILL

That bastard.

LOUISE

I told him you didn't use it.
(beat)
Do you?

Capt. Bill pulls some brochures from the visor, hands them to Louise.

CLOSE ON: Brochure offering "In Home Spa and Jacuzzi!"

Capt. Bill smiles at Louise.

147 EXT. FIRST CHURCH OF THE HOLY MYSTERY - DAY

AA meeting is letting out, people lighting up cigarettes,
going to their cars. Powell comes out and looks around.
Vamadela's car is in the lot, EMPTY.

A HUGE HAND claps onto Powell's shoulder, startling him. The
hand belongs to ANGUS TILLET.

ANGUS

You know the difference between a jimmy
and a sook?

POWELL

Yes, sir, the sook has...

ANGUS

(interrupting)
Be at Moon's Fishhouse dock tomorrow
morning at five A.M.

Before Powell can answer or even speak, Angus walks off.

148 INT. FIRST CHURCH OF THE HOLY MYSTERY - DAY

Powell slides in beside Vamadela, she's cried, prayed out.

VAMADELA

Ever pray to God and get a busy signal?

(CONTINUED)

POWELL

Try Jesus, he's got call waiting.

She looks at him, he's grinning from ear to ear.

VAMADELA

What are you so happy about?

POWELL

You like crab meat?

149 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Capt. Bill and Louise are home, Capt. Bill's tired. He passes Vamadela's room, sees Christopher sitting on the canopy bed, among the frilly pillows and the piles of stuffed dolls. Christopher absently holds an old Barbie.

CAPT BILL

What are you doing?

CHRISTOPHER

Taking my nap.

CAPT BILL

You're not playing with those dolls are you?

Christopher drops the doll.

CAPT BILL

Good, I got something for you.

150 INT. SEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Capt. Bill gathers up his stuff from the sewing room where's he's been camped out. Christopher points to the sewing machine.

CHRISTOPHER

What's that?

CAPT BILL

Miss Louise's sewing machine, about which you never need to know squat.

Capt. Bill moves the sewing machine off the table, sets a paper sack there he has brought from town.

CHRISTOPHER

Miss Louise doesn't like me.

(CONTINUED)

CAPT BILL
Of course she likes you.

CHRISTOPHER
Last night I dreamed she was a crab
trying to get me.

CAPT BILL
Ever seen a crab shed it's shell?
Underneath it's soft and sweet.

Capt. Bill unloads the paper sack: plaster of Paris, some
model paint, strands of balsa wood, ship-in-a-bottle things.

CHRISTOPHER
How does that happen?

CAPT BILL
I don't know, the moon shines, the water
warms up. Things change.

CHRISTOPHER
I like you, Capt. Bill.

CAPT BILL
I like you too, Christopher. Call me
Granddad, okay?

CHRISTOPHER
Okay.

Louise enters.

LOUISE
What's going on here?

CAPT BILL
Christopher's getting his own room.

LOUISE
And where are you going to sleep?

Capt. Bill looks at her. His look is "I'm going to sleep
with you."

LOUISE (cont'd)
Come downstairs, I want to show you
something.

151 INT. STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Louise sits Capt. Bill down at her desk. She takes down
large bound ledgers.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

After I bought up all that cheap land, I had plenty of money left over, so I took an investing course at the community college.

Capt. Bill opens ledger after ledger, is MORE and MORE surprised at the obviously large figures he sees in each.

After several, he doesn't need to see anymore. He closes the last one and with grateful eyes, pulls Louise onto his lap and kisses her. They're rich.

152 EXT. MOON'S SEAFOOD HOUSE - DAY

Angus Tillett gets out of his truck in the middle of an empty seafood packing house parking lot. Work boats float quietly at the docks, the sun is still just a hint of pink in the sky, there's no one around.

Angus pulls on his yellow rubber overalls, stuffs work gloves in his pockets, takes his lunch from the truck. He locks the door, looks around for Powell, sees no one and shakes his head grumpily, heads for his boat.

153 EXT. BOAT DOCK - SAME

Angus throws the bow line off his boat, then jumps aboard.

POWELL (O.C.)

I made the coffee the way I like it.

Angus turns. Powell sits in the stern in the growing light, offering a STEAMING MUG of coffee from a THERMOS.

POWELL (cont'd)

Black as night, hot as hell, sweet as an angel, and strong as the devil. Isn't that the way it goes?

Angus smiles taking the cup, then becomes all-business.

ANGUS

Soon as the engine kicks, throw off the stern line.

The two men set to work getting the boat going.

154 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Louise flips another pancake onto Christopher's plate, the child is a bottomless pit. Capt. Bill comes in and hugs Louise affectionately from behind. She's shy.

(CONTINUED)

She shrugs him off as he pours himself a mug of coffee.

CAPT BILL
Good morning, Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER
Hi, Granddad.

LOUISE
Vanadela got a job picking crabs at
Moon's, she'll be back at three.

CAPT BILL
Picking crabs? That's work for nig--

Louise GLARES at him, daring him to use the "N" word.

LOUISE
You have first shift watching
Christopher.

CAPT BILL
Good, he can help me with the swimming
pool.

Louise looks at him. Swimming pool?

155 EXT. SIDEYARD - DAY

Capt. Bill and Christopher mark off the perimeter of swimming
pool in the sideyard. Capt. Bill lets Christopher hold the
wooden stakes as he hammers them in, marking the corners.

CAPT BILL
Should this be the deep end or shallow
end?

CHRISTOPHER
Deep.

CAPT BILL
Ever been in a swimming pool?

CHRISTOPHER
Nope.

CAPT BILL
Let's make it big then. And we'll put
the jacuzzi in right here.

Christopher holds a wooden stake, Capt. Bill hammers.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTOPHER
What's a kakuzzi?

CAPT BILL
Something we're going to boil Miss Louise
in to make her soft and sweet.

CHRISTOPHER
Good.

LISA LEE (O.C.)
You remember what you told me when I
asked you for a swimming pool?

Lisa Lee enters, Capt. Bill straightens up.

LISA LEE (cont'd)
(pointing to bay)
You said "There's your pool, that's the
only pool you're going to get."

CAPT BILL
I don't remember you ever asking.

LISA LEE
Remember when we got the piano and you
came home and I told you how much I
practiced? You said you didn't give a
good goddamn how long I practiced my
piano.

CAPT BILL
I'm sorry if I said that, I don't
remember.

LISA LEE
I always thought you left us because it
was something we had done, like we were
bad children and you hated us.

CAPT BILL
It wasn't like that.

LISA LEE
Oh, I know NOW. I just wanted to tell
you that before you tell me what it is
you have to tell me.

(CONTINUED)

CAPT BILL

You're a prissy little tease who should have gotten off this island a long time ago so the world could kick your butt around and make you grow up, because you're just a little girl playing with men like they're toys. I blame myself for that. I hope it's not too late for you. Now me and Christopher are going to figure out the diving board. Come on, son.

Capt. Bill and Christopher march past the shocked Lisa Lee.

156 INT. NAVY WING COMMANDER'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON: Scully, sitting ramrod straight in front of Wing Commander William Bright's desk.

Bright's office is basic navy grey, government furniture, BLUE ANGELS poster on wall. Desk-jockey Bright has his feet up on desk STACKED HIGH with paperwork; a PLASTIC BAGGIE containing METAL SHARDS dangles from one hand.

BRIGHT

I would think you would have remembered hitting a flock of birds. It's not in your report.

SCULLY

We came in low and hot, commander.

BRIGHT

Must have hit an iron turkey the way these turbine blades were shredded.

Bright aggressively tosses the baggie of metal pieces at Scully's head, Scully does a perfect one handed catch. He obviously despises Bright.

SCULLY

Turkey's can't fly. Sir.

Bright fumes, swings his feet to the floor, pulls a sheet of paper, STAMPS it, shoves it across the desk to Scully.

BRIGHT

Neither will you. Dismissed.

Bright and Scully stare each other down.

157 INT. MOON'S SEAFOOD HOUSE - DAY

The fishhouse bustles with workers carrying bushel baskets of steaming crabs which they DUMP onto long tables. About two dozen middle-aged black women stand at the tables dressed in old clothes and plastic aprons, wearing gloves as they perform the tedious work of PICKING CRAB meat out of the steaming shells. A tinny radio is tuned to Classic R&B.

A lanky red-faced dockworker DUMPS another basket on the heap of steaming crabs already on the table in front of VAMADELA. She looks OVERWHELMED by the task, and the black women purposefully avoid helping her learn.

158 EXT. MOON'S DOCK - DAY

Later, while the women smoke on break out on the dock, Vamadela still stands at her station trying to get the hang of picking the meat. One of the older black women, LILLIAN, comes to her rescue.

LILLIAN

Girl, all you done so far is mash up a lot of perfectly good crabs. It's like this, and like this and like this.

Lillian shows her how to extract the meat quickly. Vamadela, tired, wrung out, is grateful, smiles.

LILLIAN (cont'd)

White folk only work here when they life is busted up complete. Come on outside and tell the hens all about it.

Lillian leads Vamadela out onto the dock into the hot sun.

159 EXT. SIDEYARD - DAY

CLOSE: Peaceful face of Capt. Bill, his eyes closed against the blazing sun.

CHRISTOPHER

Granddad?

WIDER: Capt. Bill, hammer in hand, UNCONSCIOUS in the grass.

160 INT. STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Louise on the phone to her broker, WALL ST. JOURNAL open, computer screen running market tape.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

I know but sell them short, I've got a swimming pool to put in.

Christopher bursts in, frightened.

CHRISTOPHER

Miss Louise!

161 EXT. MOON'S SEAFOOD HOUSE -- DAY

Afternoon, Angus steers his boat along the docks, a weary Powell stands ready to throw a line. They pass the place where the CRAB PICKERS scrub down after work; Vamadela's bright white face gleams in the midst of all the other faces. She smiles and waves at Powell, he waves back.

POWELL

(under his breath to Angus)

Ever go out with one sister and later on find out maybe you got the wrong one?

Angus cuts the engine, steers up to the dock.

ANGUS

My wife was an only child.

Then Angus smiles a rare Angus smile at Powell. Powell smiles back, begins hauling baskets of crabs off the boat, wincing; his hands are raw, his back aches.

162 EXT. MOON'S DOCK - SAME

Vamadela walks over to watch Powell finish emptying the barrels of PINCHING, ACTIVE crabs.

Powell holds a couple of monster crabs up that wave wildly.

POWELL

Crustaceans are my people!

Vamadela is amused. They like each other more.

163 INT. MATTHEWS ISLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Lisa Lee pins up autumn leaves on a Welcome Back to School bulletin board in the closed school; Scully, in uniform, sits at a tiny desk.

(CONTINUED)

163 CONTINUED:

LISA LEE
If Christopher did it, they wouldn't
prosecute a child, would they?

SCULLY
I'm not sure it was Christopher, and the
Navy does what the Navy wants to do.

Her cell phone rings.

LISA LEE
Hello, Momma...

Bad news.

164 EXT. MOON'S SEAFOOD HOUSE - DAY

Powell and Angus leave the parking lot in Angus' truck. On
the road, Vamadela has her thumb out.

VAMADELA
Out of gas.

Powell gets out, Vamadela climbs in between him and Angus.

Where the parking lot meets the main road, they SEE an ORANGE
CORVETTE CONVERTIBLE zoom past, Scully at the wheel, Lisa Lee
beside him, hair flying.

Angus and Vamadela look at Powell. Powell shrugs. Angus
follows them.

165 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Capt. Bill is propped up in bed in his pajamas, waving off
the ministrations of Louise.

CAPT BILL
I'm fine, I'm fine.

Dr. David Hudgins enters, Capt. Bill sputters.

CAPT BILL (cont'd)
If YOU'RE here, Death must be out in the
hall.

DR. HUDGINS
I saw the paramedics leaving. Hi, Louise.

LOUISE
Bill got a little too much sun today.

(CONTINUED)

DR. HUDGINS

I'm his doctor, I know what he's got, and I can give him something for the pain.

CAPT BILL

What about for the pain in my ass every time I see you? And you're NOT my doctor.

DR. HUDGINS

(to Louise)

Truth is, I came by to see Vamadela, is she here?

LOUISE

She's not home from work yet.

CAPT BILL

I won't be cold in my grave and you'll be changing channels in my chair!

DR. HUDGINS

She asked me to do some blood work and the results came back today.

CAPT BILL

What's wrong with Vamadela?

DR. HUDGINS

I can't discuss it with you, Bill, patient confidentiality and all that.

CAPT BILL

Bullshit, you're the biggest gossip on the island.

DR. HUDGINS

Can I have a minute with the patient?

Louise nods and leaves. Hudgins sits on the bed.

DR. HUDGINS (cont'd)

I know you don't like me, Bill, even though we're cousins, but you're going to face some trying times in the next few months. I can ease your discomfort, and when the time comes, "intercede." I've helped more than a few people along to the Great Reward...

CAPT BILL

Probably whether they were ready to go or not.

(CONTINUED)

DR. HUDGINS
I'm just offering...

CAPT BILL
I got it all worked out.

166 EXT. DOODLUM RESIDENCE - DAY

In the driveway, Dr. Hudgin's white Mercedes, Scully's orange Corvette, Angus's big white truck.

Angus has "a little talk" with Scully.

ANGUS
You going to see that other flyboy, the
one I fished out of the bay?

SCULLY
(deferentially)
Yes, sir, I'll see him tomorrow.

Angus opens a huge wallet, takes out some bills.

ANGUS
I want you to give him this, it's his
wages for the other day.

He hands the money dismissively to Scully, as if "take it and
be gone." There is an awkward beat, then-

ANGUS (cont'd)
That's my friend Powell's fiancée you
have riding around in your car.

Scully shifts uncomfortably, he stutters, Angus stops him.

ANGUS (cont'd)
People like you don't come to the island
unless they're serious about something.

SCULLY
Yes, sir, I mean, no sir. Actually, sir,
this is a serious matter.

ANGUS
Good then. Carry on.

167 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Lisa Lee sits beside Capt. Bill on the bed, Christopher plays
with the new toy airplane she and Scully brought him.

(CONTINUED)

LISA LEE

Scully has put his career on the line to help us. Did you shoot down his plane?

CHRISTOPHER

Granddad's a good shot.

CAPT BILL

The Navy took my father, my uncle and my brother. They've taken my whole life, and now they crack the walls in my house.

LISA LEE

What do you want me to do?

CAPT BILL

Send your boyfriend up.

LISA LEE

Which one?

A KNOCK on the door, Angus stands in the doorway. Capt. Bill's face lights up. Lisa Lee goes out.

CAPT BILL

How are you, Angus?

ANGUS

Keeping out of trouble, Bill. I got my horses and a little boat to run. How about you?

CAPT BILL

I'm dying, Angus.

ANGUS

That's what I hear. How's that going for you?

CAPT BILL

When I came home, I was ready to go. Now, I'm not so sure.

ANGUS

That's all right, even Jesus was all over the map in the final days.

CAPT BILL

Angus, I need you to take care of Louise for me, after I'm gone.

(CONTINUED)

ANGUS

She's a pretty independent girl, always has been.

CAPT BILL

Will you look after her?

168 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Louise sets a large STEAMING bowl of water on the kitchen table between Powell and Vamadela. Dr. Hudgins pours in a large box of EPSOM SALTS.

DR. HUDGINS

Soak your hands in this, clear up the crab bites and fish poison.

Powell and Vamadela tentatively dip their raw sore fingers in the water, it's HOT.

LOUISE

Give her the envelope.

Dr. Hudgins shoots a scornful look at Louise.

DR. HUDGINS

Your test results came in today, Vamadela.

Powell looks around quizzically at the faces.

POWELL

(joking)

Hey, if you're contagious...

He playfully lifts his fingers out of the water. Vamadela reaches up and PULLS his fingers back under the water.

VAMADELA

Read it, Doc.

DR. HUDGINS

I can't, by law.

Louise snatches the envelope, tears it open.

LOUISE

I'm the law here, by God.

This is serious. Vamadela holds Powell's stare. Lisa Lee comes in, tensions in the kitchen run high.

(CONTINUED)

LISA LEE
Daddy wants to see Powell.

169 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Powell stands by the window looking down into the front yard.

POWELL
It all depends on Scully keeping his
mouth shut.

HIS POV: Lisa Lee and Scully FRENCH KISSING goodbye.

CAPT BILL
It would be typical Navy to drag me off
my deathbed just to hang me. Won't give
them that satisfaction.

Powell stands over Capt. Bill.

POWELL
Bill, Lisa Lee and me, it's not working
out...

CAPT BILL
But I'm giving you my blessing,
goddamnit. Just be sure when you do it,
you don't hit this goddamn oxygen tank
and blow up the whole house, all right?
Kill me quick and I'll forgive you.

POWELL
Forgive me?

CAPT BILL
For doing it. But if I live, well, we'll
see about THAT.

170 EXT. DOCK - NIGHT

Vamadela sits under the stars.

LOUISE (O.C.)
Congratulations, you're going to live.

Vamadela turns and looks sadly at Louise.

VAMADELA
That's the scary part, isn't it?

Louise sits beside her.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

Your father worries his passing is going to set you off on a bender.

VAMADELA

Tell him not to die, then.

171 INT. BEDROOM - SAME

ON CAPT. BILL sleeping, as Christopher loads his bed with his favorite toys, the toy airplane, stuffed dog, and drawings.

Christopher leans on the bed, keeping close vigil on his grandfather.

MONTAGE OF PASSING TIME - WEEKS LATER

172 EXT. MATTHEWS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

LISA LEE welcomes the returning students, including a very downcast little CHRISTOPHER.

173 EXT. MOON'S SEAFOOD HOUSE - DAY

A diligent, hard-working VAMADELA shares cigarettes with her fellow crab-pickers, having become a member of their group.

174 EXT. OPEN WATER - DAY

ANGUS takes a break on the stern of his boat that is now steered with confidence by POWELL; Angus looks on proudly.

175 EXT. SIDEYARD - DAY

LOUISE is out cutting the grass, she pushes the mower around the GRASS-GROWN WOODEN STAKES Capt. Bill used to mark off the swimming pool and jacuzzi. Sadly, she PULLS up the stakes, throws them in the weed cart, mows the grown-up grass.

176 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

ON Capt. Bill, propped on pillows, oxygen mask across his face, labored breathing, he's in agony, pale, dying.

WIDER: He's not alone; sitting next to him in a chair is GRANDMUMMA DOODLUM. She's reading to him from a large, oversized book, TRAGIC TALES OF ANTARCTICA.

GRANDMUMMA DOODLUM

Chapter Fourteen. Madness haunts the crew of the ship Belisarius.

(CONTINUED)

Louise in the doorway looks in, closes the door for them.

177 INT. SEWING ROOM - NIGHT

Louise, now in her pajamas, bathrobe, and hair wrapped in plastic, adjusts the sleeping Christopher's covers, kisses him on the temple. On his bedside table, the EMPTY BOTTLE that Capt. Bill never showed him how to fit a ship into.

178 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Louise stands over the sleeping Capt. Bill.

LOUISE

(prayerfully)

I wish I could send you right now to the only place I've ever heard you say you loved, that little strip of desert sand down there in the ice at the bottom of the world. I'd send you if I could.

Louise climbs gently into bed with Capt. Bill, too exhausted to cry even though she would like to.

Capt. Bill's HAND rises trembling with all his strength to stroke her head, she closes her eyes.

179 INT. POWELL'S MOBILE HOME - DAY

Powell's place is NOTICEABLY cleaner, as he gets dressed in his SUNDAY BEST, white shirt, tie, a DARK suit that almost makes him look like an UNDERTAKER.

He chugs coffee, looks at his watch. A VW HORN BLOWS outside. He summons up his courage, opens his closet, takes down CAPT. BILL'S PISTOL, checks the CLIP, his face SET.

180 EXT. POWELL'S MOBILE HOME - DAY

Vamadela waits in her car with Christopher. Both are also dressed in SUNDAY BEST. Powell comes out.

VAMADELA

Hurry up if you want to do it while he's still sleeping.

Powell gets in her car with the PISTOL, they drive off.

181 EXT. DOODLUM RESIDENCE DRIVEWAY - DAY

Powell gets out of VW carefully, QUIETLY goes up front steps, looks back at Vamadela. She URGES him on. He goes inside.

182 INT. DOODLUM HOUSE - DAY

LIVING ROOM: Powell peaks in, empty.

KITCHEN: No one is up.

STAIRCASE: Powell stealthily CREEPS up, pistol in hand.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY: He peaks down, is empty, he proceeds.

183 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Powell slowly opens the door, HEARS the OXYGEN HISSING, the room is darkened by shades, it's hard to see.

Powell has to creep so closely to Capt. Bill that he is only inches from him when he discovers that Capt. Bill is AWAKE.

Behind the oxygen mask, Capt. Bill's ghostly face is happy to see Powell, especially Powell holding the PISTOL.

Unable to speak more than a high rasp, Capt. Bill's weak hands motion for Powell to DO IT, to SHOOT him.

Powell lowers the pistol to Capt. Bill's head and continues to lower it as he TUCKS it under Capt. Bill's pillow.

Powell withdraws, Capt. Bill shaking his head No, no.

ON: Louise's face in a little opening of covers; she is awake, her fingers under her chin hold a golf club shaft.

184 EXT. DOODLUM RESIDENCE FRONT STEPS - SAME

Powell, almost giddy, QUIETLY prances out the front that he closes softly behind him. He climbs into Vamadela's car.

VAMADELA

Did you do it?

POWELL

Yes, free at last.

VAMADELA

Onward?

POWELL

On to that mysterious place.

They drive off.

185 EXT. FIRST CHURCH OF THE HOLY MYSTERY - DAY

Early church is letting out, the mostly black congregation greeting the preacher on the steps. Powell and Vamadela come out just as Christopher runs up from Sunday school, carrying a sheaf of fresh watercolored paintings.

PREACHER

(to Powell)

Glad to have you this morning.

Powell shakes the preacher's hand while trying to scoop up Christopher and his paintings.

POWELL

I sometimes come during the week...

PREACHER

(graciously)

I know you do, son.

POWELL

This is my, friend, Vamadela.

PREACHER

I know Vamadela. Sorry to hear about your husband. You both come back.

They go out into the yard where the congregation is mingling and they spot Angus.

POWELL

I didn't know you were a regular member?

ANGUS

I like this church. The light is different here. How's your daddy, Vamadela?

VAMADELA

The same. Worse. Thanks for asking.

ANGUS

(to Powell)

Have you thought about what I said about the boat?

POWELL

I always heard a boat is a hole in the water you pour money into.

(CONTINUED)

ANGUS

Take all the time you need to think about it, but I'm heading back to the farm tomorrow, so I'll expect an answer then. See ya!

Angus walks off, Vamadela looks questioningly at Powell.

POWELL

I don't know if I'm cut out to be a fisherman.

VAMADELA

You weren't listening to the sermon, neither did Simon or Peter.

They all get in the VW, take off until-

186 EXT. RURAL ROAD -- DAY

ON: Powell and Vamadela slowing down to look at something roadside.

VAMADELA

I guess she didn't come home last night. Are you upset?

POWELL

Actually, grateful, and relieved.

THEIR POV: The BAY MOTEL, with Scully's orange Corvette parked in front of one of the Honeymoon cabins.

VAMADELA

Think they were there all night? Maybe...

POWELL

There's dew all over the windshield. It's all right, believe me.

VAMADELA

Momma'll be up by now, let's let her fix us breakfast and complain about it.

187 EXT. VAMADELA'S CAR IN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

They drive along the bay, Powell turns to Vamadela.

POWELL

If I'm going to ever say "I love you, Vamadela," I need to know where that name came from.

(CONTINUED)

VAMADELA

If you would be saying it to get back at Lisa Lee, I wouldn't want to hear it.

She looks over at Powell, he's smiling and serious.

VAMADELA (cont'd)

V-A for Virginia, M-A for Maryland, D-E-L-A for Delaware, all the states of the Chesapeake. Momma made it up, said it would look good on the bow of a boat one day. I always thought it sounded like a dairy.

Christopher leans over the seat.

CHRISTOPHER

Say about me, Momma!

VAMADELA

Christopher is named for his grandfather, Columbus Floyd, a great piano player.

CHRISTOPHER

But I'm gonna play drums!

188 EXT. DOODLUM RESIDENCE DRIVEWAY - DAY

They continue chatting all the while pulling up in front of the Doodlum house. None of the three notice the STARK WHITE FIGURE standing in the front doorway.

Vamadela turns off the car, turns toward the house.

VAMADELA

Momma!

Powell and Christopher turn and see LOUISE standing in the front doorway in her bathrobe. She's grey-looking, vacant-eyed, and holds CAPT. BILL'S PISTOL.

CHRISTOPHER

Look Miss Louise at my pictures!

Louise has a thousand-mile stare.

LOUISE

Your father is dead.

Powell and Vamadela are stunned, only Christopher oblivious.

Powell RUNS INSIDE, Christopher shows Louise a very African-American Jesus on a cross DRIPPING COPIOUS BLOOD.

189 INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Powell leaps the stairs three at a time.

190 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Powell slowly opens the door.

Capt. Bill, still propped by pillows, leans a bit to one side of the bed. The front of his pajama shirt is punctuated by SEVERAL BLOODY BULLET HOLES. It almost looks like he is about to reach over the side of the bed for his slippers.

Powell feels Capt. Bill's neck for a pulse, looking away from the open eyes. There is no pulse. He turns off the HISsing oxygen tank. Intense silence, something of a strange smile on Capt. Bill's face.

191 INT. DEN. - DAY

Vamadela sits beside Louise on the couch. Louise stares straight ahead, still holds PISTOL. Gently, Powell approaches her and takes the gun away from her hand.

Vamadela looks at Powell, he gently shakes his head.

POWELL
I better call somebody.

192 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Powell, gun in hand, rips through phone book. He DOESN'T KNOW who to call. He decides on a number on the wall, dials.

193 EXT. WOLFTRAP LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

Senior ladies, "Sunday painters" in sun bonnets, EASELS holding CANVASSES, all painting the same lighthouse scene.

In the foreground is Dr. Hudgins, BLACK BERET and HUGE EASEL, sidles up to an attractive elderly woman, "admires" her work.

DR. HUDGINS
Aren't you Gloria Daniels Carter?

GLORIA
Forget it, Doc, the crash of '87 wiped me out.

Rebuffed, the doctor returns to to DABBLING BLUE SKY onto his painting when his cell phone RINGS.

(CONTINUED)

DR. HUDGINS

(self-importantly)

Dr. Hudgins. Yes...what type of circumstances? I see...

(quietly into phone)

Don't touch anything, and don't call the police. I'll be over as soon as my sky dries.

He hangs up SMILING, dabbles a little more BLUE SKY, then begins to throw his art crap into the trunk of his car.

194 INT. DEN -- DAY

Louise stands up from the couch, takes a deep breath.

LOUISE

I suppose there'll be people coming, come help me get the big coffeemaker started.

VAMADELA

Want me to sweep or vacuum?

Vamadelá looks at Powell to "play along."

195 INT. BEDROOM -- DAY

Dr. Hudgins sits on the bed finishing his cursory exam of the very dead Capt. Bill. Powell stands by.

DR. HUDGINS

(clinically)

It appears Bill Doodlum, facing a painful death, decided to take his own life.

Dr. Hudgins gets up off the bed, Capt. Bill almost tips over, Dr. Hudgins ROUGHLY SHOVES him upright, Powell winces.

DR. HUDGINS (cont'd)

Death by self-inflicted gunshot wounds mainly to the upper torso and upper extremities.

Powell is incredulous at this explanation.

POWELL

You're going to say Bill shot himself nine times with a .45 at a distance of about ten feet?

(exasperated)

Are you sure he didn't stop once or twice to RELOAD?

(CONTINUED)

Dr. Hudgins shakes a HANDKERCHIEF from his pocket, gently TAKES the PISTOL from Powell, carefully wipes FINGERPRINTS.

DR. HUDGINS

(calmly)

As county coroner, that will be my report. Suicide is what I'm going to tell the Sheriff after you get YOUR story straight and call him.

Dr. Hudgins carefully places PISTOL in Capt. Bill's dead hand. He puts his arm around Powell's shoulders in a fatherly way and begins to walk him out.

DR. HUDGINS (cont'd)

You won't have anything to say that would dispute my findings, will you?

Powell stops, doesn't answer: Dr. Hudgins waits, then-

DR. HUDGINS (cont'd)

Good. Welcome to the family.

ON Powell as he lets Dr. Hudgins pump his hand.

196 EXT. DOCK - DAY

Louise in her pajamas and Vamadela in her Sunday clothes stand on the end of the dock.

LOUISE

I stopped him from leaving and sent him on his way all at the same time.

Vamadela takes her mother's arm.

The SOUND of Scully's orange Corvette dropping off Lisa Lee, then leaving and honking.

Lisa Lee comes out to the dock, a little downcast, not knowing yet what has happened in the house.

LISA LEE

Scully wants to get married but I don't know.

Vamadela takes her sister's hands in preparation to tell her that their father is dead.

VAMADELA

Lisa Lee...

(CONTINUED)

LISA LEE (cont'd)
Don't worry, I told him he has to ask
Daddy first.

197 INT. DEN. - DAY

Just as Capt. Bill had fearfully predicted, Dr. Hudgins makes himself at home in Capt. Bill's recliner in front of the BIG SCREEN TV; he channel-surfs through Sunday morning preachers until he finds a GOLF TOURNAMENT.

Powell sits on the couch comforting Christopher in his lap.

Suddenly Dr. Hudgins is CATAPULTED out of the recliner by Louise behind him.

LOUISE
Make yourself useful, Lisa Lee's fainted
out in the yard.

Dr. Hudgins scrambles to collect his bag.

DR. HUDGINS
What I want to know, is why you gave Bill
the whole clip, Louise. Any one of those
shots would have done it.

Louise sets about straightening the den as if nothing exceptional has happened, as if she's preparing for Sunday afternoon visitors. She opens closet and starts taking out CLEANING SUPPLIES.

LOUISE
I'll tell you, David. The first one was
for love, and the other eight were for
something Bill said to me in front of
company over dinner in nineteen sixty-
six.

Dr. Hudgins fishes out the smelling salts from his bag, looks earnestly at Louise.

DR. HUDGINS
I believe you, Louise.

She looks at him briefly, as if "Why shouldn't you?" She dons her BRIGHT PINK LATEX GLOVES and takes Ajax and scrub brush from cleaning bucket.

LOUISE
Go on, get out of my house, I have things
to do.

(CONTINUED)

Powell, Christopher, and Dr. Hudgins all go outside.

198 INT. BATHROOM OFF DEN - CONTINUOUS

Louise enters with Ajax, scrub brush, and cleaning bucket, sets it in the sink, closes the door behind her.

She sits on the closed toilet and cries into the gloves.

199 EXT. MATTHEWS ISLAND, CHESAPEAKE BAY - MONTHS LATER

WINTER has settled on Matthews Island; the trees are dark and leafless, the bay water grey and choppy, the wind blows cold.

200 EXT. DOODLUM RESIDENCE - DAY

The lawn furniture is stacked against the house, flowering shrubs wrapped against the frost, garden hoses drawn.

But the Doodlum residence is even more braced for winter; in fact, the window shutters are closed, latched, and locked. The house is being CLOSED for a long time.

201 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lisa Lee sits on the edge of a bed speaking to someone out of frame; her tone is slightly strident, perhaps mocking.

LISA LEE

People are already talking. They said the least you could do for appearances would be set some sort of wedding date.

No response from the person packing, she hands them an article of clothing.

LISA LEE (cont'd)

You'll be living in sin, you know.

REVEAL Louise packing a LARGE MOVING CHEST.

LOUISE

Yes, and it feels wonderfully wicked.

LISA LEE

You don't even like horses.

LOUISE

It's the cowboys I'm anxious to ride.

(CONTINUED)

LISA LEE
(mock shock)
Mother!

LOUISE
Well, just one cowboy.

Angus Millett enters, wearing Western duds, denim jacket.

ANGUS
You about ready, Louise?

LOUISE
If this'll fit in the trailer.
(to Lisa Lee)
Are you staying to close up the house?

LISA LEE
Let's all leave together. I have to make
that flight.

Angus hefts Louise's chest and carts it out the door.

LOUISE
Your father would be proud of you letting
your sister have the house.

Beat. Lisa Lee needs a little reassurance.

LISA LEE
You loved him, didn't you?

LOUISE
Something fierce.

They give the room a last look, then leave.

202 EXT. BROWN SAND AND PEBBLE BEACH - DAY

CLOSE ON: Heavy duty, waterproof hiking boots as they step
along the water lapping the ice-crusty brown sandy beach.

A LITTLE GREY POWDERY ASH trickles down alongside the boots
into the water.

REVEAL: Powell in Antarctic coat spreading more of the grey
ash from a large envelope.

WIDER: Powell's figure walks against the starkly beautiful
and desolate icescape; soaring snowpack ridges and alluvial
brown boulders pushed by glaciers to the waters edge.

ON Powell as he finishes shaking the dust into the water.

(CONTINUED)

POWELL

Ashes to ashes, Bill.

Powell takes in this slice of the Antarctic shelf, a gorgeous and lonely place in the ice at the bottom of the world that Capt. Bill loved so much.

Powell's reverie is SHATTERED by the SPLAT of a watery snowball that SMACKS him in the back of the head.

HIS POV: No thing, no person, stirs in the ruggedness behind him until he spots a LITTLE MOVEMENT-

It's CHRISTOPHER, his head, at least, popping up behind a distant boulder in a fur trimmed hood, and he's laughing.

POWELL (cont'd)

Hey, that was a slush ball, man.

It's a brilliantly bright astral summer day on the beach in Antarctica, and out of the icy glare shimmering on the sand emerges VAMADELA; Christopher jumps out of hiding to join her.

VAMADELA

Time to go back, guys.

Powell folds the envelope, stuffs it deep in a coat pocket, and joins his family to begin their long journey home.

FADE OUT.

