

THE LAST SHOT

Written by

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INT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY (DAWN)

The early-morning prairie sun peeks through the dated curtains, as an old-school, '70s-style flip-number alarm clock rolls forward to '5:30'.

Lonely silence...

IN THE BATHROOM,

CHUCK MASSEY, 76 - lean, leathery and lanky, with no semblance of a smile buried beneath his ample, walrus-like mustache - pricks his finger, expunges some blood, and checks his blood sugar.

He draws up a shot of insulin, taps the syringe, and painstakingly pierces his abdomen.

BACK IN THE BEDROOM,

A tidy, well-kept sheriff's uniform and holster rests neatly on the bed, as the pitter-patter of water droplets echoes forth from the bathroom shower.

IN THE SHOWER,

Chuck half-heartedly washes himself.

His brow furrows and his ears perk up, as the faint SCREECH of the front door reverberates up the stairwell...

CHUCK

...Hello?!

...No response.

Chuck kills the shower.

CHUCK

...Hello?!!!

Downstairs, the front door SLAMS shut.

Chuck wraps himself in a towel, grabs his gun, and heads out.

IN THE STAIRWELL,

A towel-clad Chuck skulks down the staircase - gun in hand, finger on the trigger - and tiptoes into the dated, old

LIVING ROOM

All's quiet.

CHUCK
...Who's here?!

The telltale SQUEAK of a gossipy floorboard whispers forth from the adjacent room...

Slowly, cautiously, Chuck creeps through the threshold, into the

KITCHEN

Chuck's brow furrows, as he spots a kitchen knife missing from the wooden knife block on the counter...

MULTIPLE VOICES (O.S.)
...Surpri-

BLAM!!!

Loving CHEERS morph into terrified SHRIEKS and four-letter FREAK-OUTS as chunks of drywall dust rain down from above.

A cantankerous gaze creeps across Chuck's mug as he locks gazes with DEBORAH MASSEY, 56 - an all-business woman in an all-business blazer and pencil skirt.

She's flanked by her son, REECE, 17 - a scrawny, little, apathetic schlub with poor posture.

Awkward silence, as heart rates fall...

CHUCK
...If I was a shadow of the man I used to be, your brains'd be plastered all over them curtains...

DEBORAH
Well, let's all be thankful that you ain't a 'shadow of the man you used to be'.

CHUCK
What in the hell're you doin' here?

DEBORAH
Just wanted to see you off on your last day...

Chuck peers crabbily at the pastry box on the kitchen table.

DEBORAH
 ...Brought you a cake.

The icing-scrawled message reads: "Happy Retirement, Dad!"
 The 'missing' knife looms off to the side.

CHUCK
 ...I'm diabetic.

DEBORAH
 (sourly)
 ...Just thought it would be nice.

CHUCK
 I'm an alcoholic, too...
 Y'gonna buy me a drink later?

Awkward silence...

Reece guffaws quietly.

CHUCK
 Come give your grandpa a hug.

Reluctantly, Reece shuffles over.

CHUCK
 I'm goddamn kidding...
 Let me put my damn clothes on.

A humbled Reece stops awkwardly in his tracks.

Deb and Reece watch incredulously as Chuck scuttles crabbily out of the room.

INT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY (DAWN)

Chuck stares ponderously into the bathroom mirror as he buttons his shirt, sizing up his once-glorious reflection:

Not too glorious these days.

He grabs his gun and heads out.

QUICK CUTS

-- Chuck perches an immaculate, white Stetson on top of his greyish-white locks as he slips out the front door.

-- A polished sheriff's cruiser rests in the time-ravaged driveway. Chuck ducks in, fires 'er up, and trolls off.

-- The car crawls past a sad, sad symphony of sights: boarded-up machine shops, rotted-out shacks, cracked sidewalks, thistle-plagued boulevards, rusted-out play structures, and dilapidated old Camaros perched on cinder blocks.

-- A lifeless body on the grassway snags Chuck's gaze. Chuck investigates...Not dead. Just drunk 'n' dopesick. Chuck prods him up and shoos him away.

EXT. POPLAR COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

The big, old cruiser glides up into the concrete rampway in front of the humble sheriff's office:

A motley mosaic of faded paint and curled-up, old shingles.

Gang tags and ill-mannered graffiti litter the side walls.

Chuck kills the ignition, hobbles out of the car, and heads in.

INT. POPLAR COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CHUCK'S OFFICE - DAY

Stacks of burdensome paperwork and useless reports clutter the desk, as Chuck mumbles dispassionately into the archaic, old office phone...

CHUCK

You've reached Chuck Massey, Poplar County Sherriff, for the date of Wednesday, May 31st. Can't come to the phone right now, so please leave your name, number and a short message after the 'beep'. If you require immediate assistance, please call the main line at extension 1349. If this is an emergency, please dial 911.

Mbeep!

PHONE VOICE

To accept this greeting, please press--

Mbeep! Done.

Chuck grabs his well-worn coffee mug and heads out the door.

INT. POPLAR COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - COFFEE ROOM - DAY

Chuck enters...

TOOT! TOOT!

The last semblance of patience drains from Chuck's face...

It's SHIRLEY BENSON, 64 - the silver-haired, cardigan-clad receptionist - with a party hat, noisemaker...

...and another shitty retirement cake.

SHIRLEY

...Happy retirement, Chuck!

Chuck sighs wearily.

INT. POPLAR COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CHUCK'S OFFICE - DAY

Clutter morphs into empty space as Chuck purges old files and boxes up forty-five years of crap: a faded diploma, family pictures, plaques, newspaper clippings, and other accumulated knick-knacks.

He Lysols the desk, stands back, and surveys his work.

Satisfied, he plops into his chair and sips stoically from his tepid coffee.

TRAVIS (O.S.)

Hey, Chuck!...

Deputy TRAVIS PETERSON, 41 - smug and punchable, with the devil's wiseass smirk plastered across his face - loiters in the threshold.

He grazes on a thick slice of cake, using a file folder as a makeshift plate.

TRAVIS

...You get yourself some cake?

CHUCK

I'm diabetic, asshole.

TRAVIS

Well, that's too bad. This is just some otherworldly stuff, right here.

Awkward silence...

TRAVIS

...So, whatcha got on the docket for your last day of work, ever?

CHUCK

As little as goddamned possible. It's too damn hot out to do much of anything else.

TRAVIS

Sorry to shit all over your best-laid plans...

Travis plops a thick stack of papers onto Chuck's desk.

TRAVIS

...We've been asked to assist with a prisoner transfer from 10:45 to 11:15.

Chuck's face sours.

CHUCK

...What kind of dipshits need thirty minutes of assistance with a prisoner transfer?

TRAVIS

Unionized Department of Justice dipshits. Bargainin' agreement says they're entitled to a thirty-minute break during an 8-hour shift...They're takin' a high-profile prisoner from C 'n' R over to State. Hopin' he'll testify with regards to last month's bust. Maybe cut a deal, roll over on some key players...

Travis waits for a response. He gets none.

TRAVIS

...Y'wanna know who the prisoner is?

CHUCK

I don't give a shit if it's Pablo goddamned Escobar, or the poor bastard that smuggles it across the border in his asshole.

TRAVIS

Sorry to disappoint, but it's neither one of them guys...

Travis plops a file onto Chuck's desk, as he shoves the last morsel of cake into his mouth.

TRAVIS

You really gotta try some of this
cake, Chuck. Y'don't know what
you're missin'.

Travis buggers off.

Chuck sighs a frustrated sigh as he cracks open the file...

A meditative gaze fills his brow as he studies the low-res mugshot:

A middle-aged man with a full head of dark hair, deep lines on his face, and a calm, guarded gaze.

The name on the file reads: "BELLEGARDE, John (Johnny)"

QUICK CUTS

-- The dry, crumbly corpse of a half-eaten cake rests by the coffee room sink.

-- Chuck and Travis amble out the front doors and hop into the cruiser. The brake lights glow RED as the old girl backs out of the parking ramp and chugs up the road.

-- The big, brackish cruiser rumbles down a well-worn highway, past thirsty crops and stubble-covered hills bordered by rickety twisted-wire cattle fences.

INT. CRUISER - DAY - TRAVELLING

Travis keeps 'er steady between the lines, as Chuck stares numbly at the canola crops.

A faded, red '75 Cutlass approaches quickly from the opposite direction, fishtailing and swerving slightly as it turns off onto a grid road.

OUTSIDE,

The cherries FLASH as Travis gives chase.

The Cutlass rolls to a stop on the shoulder as the cruiser pulls up behind.

BACK IN THE CRUISER,

Travis throws it into park, opens the door...

CHUCK

I got 'er.

Travis hangs back as Chuck trundles out of the vehicle.

OUTSIDE,

Gravel crunches loudly under well-maintained boots as Chuck strolls over to the Cutlass.

The window rolls down...

NATE COLEMAN, 17 - wirey, nervous-eyed, and sweaty-palmed - sits in the driver's seat, flanked by his nervous-eyed, sweaty-palmed friend.

NATE

...Hi...

Awkward silence, as Chuck sizes up what he's dealing with...

CHUCK

...Got your licence and registration?

Nate digs out his wallet and hands over his papers.

He watches with anxious eyes as Chuck peers through the details...

CHUCK

...Goin' a little fast back there?

NATE

...Uh, yeah, I s'pose we might've been...

More nervous silence, as Chuck peers through the cab...

CHUCK

...Anything in the trunk?

NATE

...Uh...A spare tire, a jack...

Chuck stares right through the scared-shitless teen.

CHUCK

...Mind if I take a look?

MOMENTS LATER

Nate stares nervously at the dashboard as Chuck peers into the trunk...

Chuck's brow furrows disgustedly as he pulls out a stack of magazines...

Playboy, Hustler, Easy Rider...

He shuffles back to the driver's side window, magazines in hand.

CHUCK

...Boys' night out?...

NATE

...Uh, those aren't mine...

Chuck shoots Nate an incredulous, judgement-soaked look.

NATE

...They're my brother's.

Slowly, Chuck breaks his gaze, saunters back to the trunk, and resumes his search...

Once more, his brow furrows.

MOMENTS LATER

Nate stares nervously at the dashboard...

CHUCK (O.S.)

...And what about these?...

Nate glances up. An 'Oh, shit' look floods his mug...

A sixer of Coors dangles precariously from Chuck's grasp.

MOMENTS LATER

Chuck watches on, straight-faced, as the boys mopishly pour every last drop of their hard-earned beer into the ditch.

CHUCK

How's about we start pourin' two at a time?...You's boys'll be old enough to drink them beers by the time we get the hell out of here.

The boys oblige.

MOMENTS LATER

The Cutlass slowly pulls away. Seconds later, the cruiser follows.

INT. CRUISER - DAY - TRAVELLING

Chuck peers out at the crops as Travis shakes his flustered head.

TRAVIS

A 'warning'?!...You fuckin' serious?!...Thought we're s'posed to be making quota.

CHUCK

I'm retired after today...I don't give a shit if we make quota.

TRAVIS

Well, do you give a shit if you're making my job more difficult for me to do after you're gone?!

CHUCK

I'm doin' you a goddamned favor. You need a cooperative relationship with these kids, so you can work with 'em on the big stuff...You think these kids'll see you as a trusted partner and tell you where the new meth labs are in town if you're givin' 'em tickets for doing fifty-five in a fifty?...

Chuck waits for a response. He gets none.

CHUCK

...Travis, what do you think our job is?

TRAVIS

...Is that a trick question?

CHUCK

It's only tricky if you don't know the fuckin' answer.

Travis ponders briefly.

TRAVIS

Our job is to enforce the law.

CHUCK

No, it ain't. Our job is to keep folks safe. The law's just one of many tools we can use to do it. Most folks are more than capable of doing the right thing on their own. Our job is to make 'em want to.

Chuck waits for a response. He gets a smug, dismissive glance and an eye-roll.

CHUCK

I can tell by the way you're lookin' at me that you think everything I just told you is a big crock of shit.

TRAVIS

Oh, it's more than a crock...It's two or three crocks, at least.

CHUCK

Whatever, I don't fuckin' care...You'll catch more flies with honey than vinegar.

TRAVIS

You'll catch the most flies with a fuckin' bug zapper.

CHUCK

No, you'll kill the most flies with a fuckin' bug zapper.

TRAVIS

Po-tay-to, po-tah-to...

Familiar silence...

TRAVIS

...And would most of these folks that you're tryin' to 'keep safe' say you're doing a bang-up job?... When's the last time someone ratted out the new meth lab in town 'cause you let 'em off on a goddamn speeding ticket?

CHUCK

Sooner or later, you always reap what you sow.

Travis stares wearily out the window as he half-absorbs Chuck's ramblings.

TRAVIS

Y'know, for such a miserable son-of-a-bitch, you sure do have a laid-back approach to law enforcement.

CHUCK

Pull off here.

TRAVIS

Aw, Christ.

Travis PULLS OVER, as Chuck pops open the passenger's side door.

TRAVIS

(begrudgingly)

Well, if you're goin', I might as well go, too.

Travis opens the driver's side door.

CHUCK

Hey!...Don't go openin' both doors at the same time. All the cold air'll rush out and all the hot air'll rush in...
We do one, then the other.

TRAVIS

Boy, you're really makin' sure I know all the important shit, aren't you, Chuck?

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The two bulls piss by the roadside.

Travis efficiently does his business, shakes off, and zips up, and darts back into the car.

A wincing Chuck remains, as an awkward, uneven trickle of piss cuts through the silence and dribbles into the ditchweeds.

Resignedly, Chuck shakes off, zips up, and hobbles back to the cruiser.

INT. CRUISER - DAY - TRAVELLING

Travis cruises along, as Chuck stares numbly out the window.

Awkward silence...

TRAVIS

A'ight, Chuck. I don't care if it is your last day. I'm calling you on your shit.

CHUCK

What the hell're you chirpin' about, now?

TRAVIS

Back there, with those kids. All that 'trusted partner' bullshit... You just didn't want to do the fuckin' paperwork.

CHUCK

Do what I've done for forty-seven goddamn years, and then I'll talk to you about why the hell I do what I do.

More awkward silence...

Chuck turns on the radio. A long-forgotten country song from the 1950s radiates quietly through the cab...

TRAVIS

...I'm not judging...I just hate seein' you like this, Chuck...It's like seein' Muhammad Ali fightin' on the wrong side of his prime...I love you, man. But you should've retired, like, ten years ago. You stuck it out way too long...You're the David Letterman of cops...

Travis waits for a response. He gets none.

TRAVIS

You can fool yourself, but you can't pull one past me...You just didn't want to do the fuckin' paperwork.

Once again, a brooding Chuck offers no response, as he thumbs lazily through the prisoner's file.

His gaze lingers on Johnny Bellegarde's mugshot as a boarded-up café on a dormant, old service road fades into the rear-view mirror.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A shiny, black inmate transport van boulders along the blacktop.

INT. TRANSPORT VAN - DAY - TRAVELLING

CRAIG HEBERT, 29 - with a douchebag crew-cut, cross-fit physique, and loads of unearned swagger - keeps it between the lines, as TROY COLLINS, 31 - a loathsome, oafish goober that peaked in high school - grazes on a big bag of ketchup-flavored potato chips.

CRAIG

...So we're down in Vegas - I told 'er Vegas ain't no place for a pregnant woman, she told me to go straight to hell - But anyways, we're down in Vegas, and she starts havin' problems with her female parts, so we go find ourselves a hospital, and they check out her hormones, and all that, and it turns out, she lost the baby. So afterwards, we're sittin' outside the hospital, waitin' for a taxi to come get us, and it's deathly quiet, and I turn to her, and I says, "Well...Apparently, what happens in North Texas also stays in Vegas."

Craig cackles like a hyena as Troy shakes his head, grinning like a retard.

TROY

You're goin' straight to Hell,
Craiger...I love it.

Craig glances at the grainy monitor: A dark-haired inmate sits in the back.

CRAIG

(into the intercom)
Hey, Squaw-fucker!...
How's it goin' back there?!

JOHNNY (V.O.)

(through the intercom)
Cuffs are a little tight...Wouldn't mind something to eat 'n' drink...
Maybe a bathroom break, whenever it's convenient.

CRAIG
 (into the intercom)
 Y'know what I want?...I want a
 threesome with my wife and her
much-hotter sister. I also want you
 to shut the hell up...Though, I
 would be more than satisfied with
 just one of those things.

JOHNNY (V.O.)
 (through the intercom)
 Well, I guess I can keep talkin',
 then...I've met your wife, Craig...
 I don't think there's a hell of a
 lot she'd say 'no' to.

SCREEEEEECHHH!!!!...

Craig SLAMS on the brakes, throws it into park and storms out
 - with Troy in tow, still clutching his potato chips...

He unsheathes his billy club as he stomps over to the rear
 door and WHIPS it open...

He steps into the

PRISONERS' ENCLOSURE

It's dark, with shadows cast everywhere.

He locks gazes with a seated, calm-faced JOHNNY BELLEGARDE,
 53 - clad in orange prison scrubs, with his arms and legs
 shackled.

Tense silence...

CRAIG
 ...What was that you were sayin'
 about my wife?...

Craig waits for a response. He gets none...

...CRACK!!! Right across the face.

Johnny doesn't offer the satisfaction of a reaction.

He wipes his mouth. It's blood. He spits into the corner.

...CRACK!!!

Craig gives him one more.

CRAIG

...You don't spit on my floors.

Craig waits for a response. He gets none.

CRAIG

...You mind yourself, inmate.

Slowly, Craig breaks his gaze and slithers away.

Troy remains, shooting Johnny a half-sympathetic gaze as he grazes on chips.

JOHNNY

...Mmmm, ketchup...

Troy offers no response...

JOHNNY

...Haven't had ketchup chips in years. They sell the plain ones at commissary, but you can't get the ketchup ones, for some reason or another. Apparently, they make too much of a mess, or something, I don't know...

Troy pauses...

TROY

...Y'want one?

He offers Johnny a single chip. Johnny reaches...

...as Troy drops it on the floor.

TROY

... 'Oops'.

Troy smirks like a jackass as Johnny stomachs his disappointment...

A tense moment later, Troy watches incredulously as Johnny rescues the chip from the floor and eats it.

Slowly, Troy's jest morphs into sympathy-laced guilt.

TROY

Here, I'm sorry...
(offers a chip)
...Y'want another one?

Johnny doesn't bite.

TROY
(insists)
C'mon...

Hesitantly, Johnny reaches for the chip...

...as Troy drops it and STOMPS on it.

Slowly, Troy breaks his smug gaze and saunters away...

...BOOF!

Johnny JUMPS on his back and CHOKES him with his shackles.

Coughing, choking, sputtering, lirting...

Johnny crushes Troy's windpipe as he tightens his grip, leaning hard for extra leverage...

...CRACK!!!

Johnny CRUMPLES to the floor, as Craig hovers above, with billy club in hand.

Slowly, Craig re-sheathes his club, as a still-coughing Troy grabs his ever-present bag of chips.

Shadows fall across Johnny's battered face as the door SLAMS shut, with the faint sound of muffled footsteps and shithead banter slowly displaced by silence.

UP FRONT,

Craig kills the rear-compartment air conditioning.

BACK IN THE PRISONER'S ENCLOSURE

Johnny perks up as the faint hum of the air conditioner is displaced by stuffy silence.

Seconds later, the engine rumbles and gravel crunches as the van trolls away from its resting point.

EXT. SMALL-TOWN SERVICE ROAD - DAY

A boarded-up café sits on a dormant, old service road flanking the highway.

The cracked and faded stand-alone sign reads: "STELLA'S CHICKEN AND PIE".

INT. STELLA'S CHICKEN AND PIE - DAY

It's dark.

An enigmatic man simply known as SNIPES, 63 - with drugstore sunglasses, corrugated face, sparse beard, shaved head, and no semblance of a smile - half-snoozes in a corner booth.

KYLE KEEWATIN, 23 - smooth-faced and slightly pudgy, with kind, empathetic eyes and a perpetually-bewildered, naïve stare - sits on a diner stool, hunched forward, nervously wringing his hands.

RYAN "BIG PABI" LONGBOAT, 34 - big and barrel-chested, with arms and legs like tree trunks, calves the size of coffee cans, and a wild, untamed mane of long, black hair - leans against the wall.

JEREMY "J-LO" LONECHILD, 36 - with slicked-back greaser locks, homemade tattoos, and an empty, unfeeling stare - peers through a knothole in one of the boarded-up windows...

Awkward, tedious silence...

Kyle's uneasiness snags Snipes' attention.

SNIPES

...I like your shirt.

KYLE

...Huh?...Oh, um...Thanks.

SNIPES

...Where'd you get it?

KYLE

Was my dad's.

SNIPES

...Y'miss him?

KYLE

It's all we got in the house that fits.

More mind-numbing silence...

PABI

(to J-Lo)

...Hey, how much we gettin' paid?

J-LO

...It's more of a long-term play.

PABI
 ...So we ain't gettin' paid shit.

J-LO
 No...I said it's more of a long-term play.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The transport van chugs up the road.

INT. TRANSPORT VAN - PRISONERS' ENCLOSURE - DAY - TRAVELLING

A sweat-soaked, bloodied Johnny foggily comes to, all alone.

He spots the crunched-up potato chip inches away from his face...

Slowly, somewhat hesitantly, Johnny humbly reaches over and eats the crunched-up crumbs right off the floor.

BACK AT STELLA'S,

J-Lo peers

THROUGH THE KNOTHOLE.

The faint rumble of an engine grows, then fades, as the black transport van rumbles down the highway.

BACK AT STELLA'S,

J-Lo hops up, gathers his shit.

J-LO
 ...There it is.

J-Lo darts out. The rest of the guys follow suit.

EXT. STELLA'S CHICKEN AND PIE - REAR LOT - DAY

Kyle and Snipes pile into a big, beat-up '76 Pontiac Parisienne, as Pabi pops open the trunk - lined with thick, clear plastic sheets - and deposits a rather large, rather heavy hockey bag.

A small, black duffel bag catches Pabi's gaze.

His brow furrows as he peeks into the mystery bag, as J-Lo strolls up to the driver's side door.

PABI
 (to J-Lo)
 ...Y'seriously pack all this shit?

J-Lo half-glances over, while lighting a cigarette.

J-LO
 ...Yep.

PABI
 ...'The fuck for?

J-Lo looks squarely at Pabi...

J-LO
 ...'Cause the best screwjobs are
 the ones that don't look like
 screwjobs.

MOMENTS LATER

Doors SLAM, the engine ROARS, and brake lights glow RED as the boys turn off of the SERVICE ROAD and rumble onto the HIGHWAY.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The big, old cruiser glides down the blacktop.

Dust rises and gravel flies as Travis hangs a hard right, onto the

TURN-OFF ROAD.

A weathered, old plywood sign nailed to a lone fencepost greets the customers:

THE LAST SHOT
 GAS & GRILL
 BREAKFAST SERVED ALL DAY

A smaller, rope-hung "OPEN" plank dangles from the larger sign.

EXT. THE LAST SHOT - DAY

A pair of rusted-out gas pumps and a swath of rebellious dandelions stab through a sun-baked sea of dusty gravel beneath a big empty sky.

Just beyond the gas pumps, a roughshod, tin-roofed roadhouse diner with big-ass shop front windows interrupts the vast horizon like an ill-tempered mother-in-law.

A woefully-dated '90s country tune crackles forth from a loudspeaker bolted to the façade.

The cruiser pulls up to the diner's flank. Chuck and Travis hop out and stroll toward the entrance.

KEITH KOHLER, 37 - a portly, round farmboy with a raucous mane of sandy, sweat-soaked curls jutting out from beneath his faded ballcap - mans the gas pumps.

TRAVIS

Keith!

KEITH

H'Trav!

TRAVIS

You workin' hard, or you hardly workin'?!

KEITH

Guess I'll try to squeeze in a little of both at some point!

TRAVIS

Well, don't you go workin' too hard! You'll catch your death out in this heat!

INT. THE LAST SHOT - DINING AREA - DAY

Chuck and Travis saunter through the threshold:

Amongst the chrome napkin holders and swivel stools, a very sparse smattering of old regulars bitch about the weather.

MATEO CORTEZ, 27 - a blank-faced, grease-stained, apron-clad prep cook - plops a plate of bacon and eggs onto the hot chute.

DING!...

MATEO
...Order's up.

Seconds later, no response...

DING!!!...

MATEO
...Order's up!!!

ALMA, 72 - A fire-eyed, square-jowelled waitress with the patience of a chopping block - bulldogs over and GLARES through the cubby hole.

ALMA
You ring that bell again, and it'll be 'order up' every time you take a shit!

Mateo offers no retort as Alma grabs the plate and buggers off.

MOMENTS LATER

Chuck spots withered, old ELMER MACK, 97, across the way - a cantankerous old coot with more hair in his ears than on his head - all alone, angrily sipping his coffee.

CHUCK
Elmer.

ELMER
Chuck.

CHUCK
Stayin' out of the damn heat today?

ELMER
Nope. Out sprayin'...
Gonna get back at 'er soon.

CHUCK
You're goddamned crazy, Elmer...
What're you pushin' these days?...
Ninety?

ELMER
Ninety-seven in April.

CHUCK
Christ, pretty soon, you'll be a
hundred years old, drivin' combine.

ELMER

God, I fuckin' hope not.

CHUCK

Why don't you retire...Go 'n' spend
some more time with that wife of
yours?

ELMER

...You met my wife?

MOMENTS LATER

Chuck and Travis grab a booth, as PRIYANKA, 24 - slender,
with dark olive skin, long, dark hair, and innocent, doe-like
eyes - wanders over, pours some coffees, and wanders off.

Awkward silence...

TRAVIS

(raises his coffee mug)

Well, 'cheers' to you, Chuck...You
done some pretty cool shit, back in
your day.

CHUCK

...What the hell would you know
about what I did 'back in my day'?

TRAVIS

I know you took down Johnny
Bellegarde...

Chuck shoots Travis a guarded glare...

TRAVIS

...Shirley told me.

CHUCK

...Of course, she did.

Silence...

TRAVIS

...So, how'd it go down?

CHUCK

Nothin' worth writin' home about.

TRAVIS

...So, how'd it go down?

CHUCK
Picked him up at a pancake shack.

TRAVIS
...So, how'd it go down?

Chuck unleashes a terse, frustrated sigh...

CHUCK
He was sittin' on the toilet, and I
busted in.

TRAVIS
So, then what?...You slam his head
into the toilet seat?...Cuff him so
hard, his wrists started to
bleed?...Drag him through the
dining room with his pants around
his ankles?

CHUCK
No. His wife and kid were in the
restaurant with him. I let him say
'good-bye' to his family, then once
we were out of plain sight, I
cuffed him, and he crawled into the
back of the cruiser without
incident.

Travis seems genuinely moved by the story.

TRAVIS
...Wow...Charles...That is the...
(switches gears)
...lamest fuckin' takedown story
I've ever heard!

Travis cackles like a smug hyena, as a calloused Chuck
simmers under the collar.

Priyanka saunters over to top up Chuck's coffee...

CHUCK
For Christ's sakes, you just topped
'er up five seconds ago!...We're
good, here!

Priyanka freezes up like a deer in the headlights.

TRAVIS
I'm sorry, dear. Chuck, here, takes
his coffee like he takes his
divorce papers...Served to him by a
white woman.

Flustered, Priyanka leaves.

Chuck glares at Travis as he nonchalantly checks his phone.

CHUCK
You're an asshole.

TRAVIS
I might be an asshole, but I ain't racist.

CHUCK
Yeah, well, I might be a racist, but I ain't an asshole.

TRAVIS
They're the same fuckin' thing, Chuck.

Travis rises from his seat.

CHUCK
Where the hell're you runnin' off to?

TRAVIS
Gotta go take a piss. Is that okay?

CHUCK
You just went, like, ten minutes ago.

TRAVIS
Well, howdy, there, 'Pot'...
(playfully extends a handshake)
...I'm 'Kettle', nice to meet you.

Chuck offers no response as Travis buggers off.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Gravel crunches under well-treaded tires as the transport van turns off the blacktop, onto the

TURN-OFF ROAD,

past the weathered, old plywood sign.

INT. THE LAST SHOT - DINING AREA - DAY

Chuck, still sitting alone, sips tepid coffee.

The ominous, unfamiliar RUMBLE of the transport van - perched a stone's throw past the fuel pumps, visible through the front window - snags his attention.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The Parisienne rumbles onto the

TURN-OFF ROAD,

then stops, as Snipes hops out of the car, flips the "OPEN" sign to "CLOSED", and closes the simple fence-wire gate behind them.

Snipes hops back in as the big beast chugs up the road.

INT. THE LAST SHOT - DINING AREA - DAY

Craig and Troy strut authoritatively through the threshold.

They spot Chuck, who wearily meanders over to the greenhorns.

CRAIG

Prisoner's in the truck.
Need you to stamp our timecards.

CHUCK

...What's the status of your
inmate?

CRAIG

He's an Indian. Don't know which
kind.

Chuck rolls his eyes.

CHUCK

Food 'n' bathroom?...
Any medications?

CRAIG

He just ate a couple miles back,
had a bit of a stretch. He'll be
more than fine back there.

Slowly, Chuck breaks his wary gaze.

He scribbles his initials on the timecards and shuffles out.

EXT. THE LAST SHOT - DAY

Chuck surveys the big, black transport van.

A few feet away, the motley crew of hardened strangers piling out of the beat-up, old Parisienne, lighting cigarettes, snags his attention.

Slowly, he breaks his gaze and returns his attention to the van.

He peers through the driver's side window, gazing wistfully at the busy dashboard.

Shadows dance faintly in the darkened window of the rear compartment. Chuck strolls curiously up to the glass, peers in...

INSIDE THE VAN

A bloodied, sweat-soaked Johnny lilts in the corner.

BACK OUTSIDE,

Chuck beelines back into

THE LAST SHOT

and stomps over to Craig and Troy's table.

CHUCK

You's boys need to go tend to your inmate.

CRAIG

We don't need to do shit. We're on break. If you need us to do somethin', you ask us again in twenty-five minutes.

Chuck grabs the coffee out of Craig's hand, dumps it into a nearby houseplant, and tosses the cup back onto the table.

He plucks the phone from Troy's hand and lobs it onto the floor.

Stunned silence...

CHUCK

...Wasn't askin'. Get to it.

Craig and Troy wander out like scolded pups as Chuck stares them down.

MOMENTS LATER,

J-Lo, Snipes and Kyle wander in, like ducks in a henhouse.

They grab a booth, as Alma plods over.

ALMA
...Coffees or menus?

J-LO
Just coffees, ma'am.

Alma peers up from her notepad and surveys the cagey strangers...

ALMA
I'm gonna need you fellers to pay
now, if that's alright by you.

J-Lo and Snipes exchange weary, jaded gazes.

J-Lo stomachs his annoyance, and peers up at Alma with a terse smile...

J-LO
...No problem at all, ma'am.

J-Lo slides out of the booth and wanders over to the

FRONT COUNTER,

where Chuck waits, wallet in hand.

J-Lo and Chuck exchange subtle, polite nods.

Awkward silence....

Chuck glances down at his feet...

His shoe is untied.

CHUCK
Aw, crap...

Chuck laboriously stoops down to tie his shoe...

CHUCK
 (to self)
 There's a special place in hell
 reserved for the son-of-a-bitch
 that invented round shoelaces...

OUTSIDE,

Pabi paces up behind the guards...

PABI
 ...Excuse me...

The guards glance over as Pabi pulls his gun...

...BLAM!!!...BLAM!!!

BACK INSIDE,

J-Lo WHIPS out a gun and presses it to Chuck's head.

J-LO
 Everybody down, nobody fuckin'
 move!!!

Patrons and staff shriek as J-Lo disarms a helpless, kneeling
 Chuck, while Kyle and Snipes man the exits.

Kyle grabs a wastebasket, dumps the trash onto the floor...

J-LO
 Phones in the basket, hands where
 we can see 'em!

Kyle collects cell phones as Snipes shepherds hostages toward
 the back.

J-LO
 (to Elmer)
 Hey, you...Phones in the basket.

ALMA
 He's ninety-seven years old, for
 Christ's sakes!...Does he look like
 he owns a goddamn cell phone?!

Snipes CRACKS Alma across the face.

Reluctantly, she bites her tongue.

J-LO
 (to Snipes)
 We'll keep the cop separate, for
 now.
 (to Kyle)
 Dubs, keep your gun on him...
 He moves, you shoot.

Chuck remains still as Kyle takes over, while J-Lo follows Snipes and the hostages into the back.

QUICK CUTS

-- J-Lo dumps the cell phones into a deep fryer basket and plops it into the hot oil.

-- Snipes and J-Lo hastily bind, blind and gag the horrified hostages with duct tape.

-- Out by the van, Pabi rifles impatiently through the guards' keys, trying each one in the lock.

INT. THE LAST SHOT - DINING AREA - DAY

Chuck cautiously peers up at Kyle...

CHUCK
 ...What's your name?

Kyle remains silent...

CHUCK
 ...I know you.

Kyle half-looks away, then looks back at Chuck.

KYLE
 No, I'm pretty sure you don't.

Long, tense silence, tinted only by the panicked murmurs radiating from the back...

CHUCK
 You stock shelves at the Big Save.

Chuck waits for a response. He gets none.

CHUCK
 ...You helped me find a barbeque
 lighter, one time...

Once more, Chuck waits for a response. Once more, nothing.

CHUCK
What the hell're you doin' runnin'
around with these jackasses?

Once more, Kyle half-looks away.

Reluctantly, he looks back at Chuck...

KYLE
'Cause stockin' shelves don't pay
too many bills.

Chuck absorbs Kyle's response.

CHUCK
I'll bet whatever they've got you
doin' now pays the bills real
good... 'til you get thrown under
the bus...or shot in the head.

A guarded gaze creeps across Kyle's sweaty brow.

KYLE
...So?

CHUCK
So why the hell're you doin' it?

KYLE
You could get shot in the head
bein' a cop...Why do you do what
you do?

Kyle waits for a response. He gets none.

More silence...

KYLE
...Do you read Batman comics?

CHUCK
Do I fuckin' look like I read
Batman comics?...

Kyle is taken aback by Chuck's blunt response.

Slowly, he starts into his story...

KYLE
Okay, well, there's this one comic,
where Bruce Wayne - he's not Batman
anymore, he's retired - he takes up
race car driving.
(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

So one day, Bruce Wayne, he's
cruising along the racetrack...And
he loses control...
And he's flyin' towards a wall...
And as he's hurdling towards this
wall, he's thinking to himself...
'This would be a good death'...

Kyle pauses, assembles his words...

KYLE

I got two kids. Five 'n' three.
Both girls. The five-year-old just
started kindergarten...My wife, God
bless her for tryin', but she don't
have her shit together, man...She's
got some shit...On a good day,
school lunches are a Cheez Whiz
sandwich and an apple. On a bad
day, it's only one of those
things...The teacher noticed that
some of the kids didn't have much
to eat, so she started a 'share
table'. If you have some food you
don't want, you just put it on the
share table, and maybe one of the
other kids'll eat it...One day, my
girl didn't have too much to eat,
so she takes some cookies off the
share table. And all the kids
started teasing her. Callin' her
'poor' and shit...After that, she
never took nothing off the share
table ever again...None of the kids
did...Now, they don't even do share
table no more...

An empathetic gaze creeps across Chuck's brow.

KYLE

...So when you ask me why I do this
shit, it's probably not much
different than why you do your
shit...If I gotta die makin' sure
my girls don't have to choose
between gettin' picked on and goin'
hungry...For me, that'd be a good
death.

Chuck thoughtfully absorbs Kyle's response.

OUTSIDE,

Pabi tosses the keys in frustration, grabs a portable blowtorch, and goes to work on the van door's hinges....

BACK INSIDE,

Chuck peers up at Kyle...

CHUCK
...How does it end?

KYLE
...M'what?

CHUCK
The Batman story. How does it end?

KYLE
Oh, uh...Right after he says, 'This would be a good death'...You turn the page....And a split-second before he hits the wall...He cranks the wheel...And he says...
'...but not good enough.'

Chuck ponders Kyle's response...

CHUCK
...I'd never met an Indian that reads the Batman comics.

KYLE
And I'd never met a white guy that didn't.

Kyle and Chuck exchange muted grins...

...CRACK!!!! J-Lo pistol-whips Kyle across the face.

J-LO
What, are you guys secret fuck buddies, or something?!...

KYLE
I'm sorry, Jay, I was just t--

CRACK!!! J-Lo pistol-whips Kyle again.

J-LO
...He's a fuckin' hostage!...
Fuckin' treat him like one!

J-Lo stomps over to Chuck to tape his wrists together.

Around once, around twice...

Shit. All out of duct t--

BOOF!

Chuck SHOULDER-TACKLES J-Lo and grabs for the gun.

Poking fingers, pulling ears, and jabbing elbows, Chuck bites J-Lo's arm...

...and gets the gun.

Chuck BOLTS toward the door, clutching the gun in taped-up hands, firing haphazardly.

J-LO
(irate, to Kyle)
Fuckin' shoot him!

Hesitantly, a wide-eyed Kyle shoots...

BLAM!!!...

...and misses, as J-Lo darts to the back, grabs another gun, and cocks it on the run, with Kyle in tow.

OUTSIDE,

Pabi ditches the welding torch, grabs the door from its jamb, and tosses it aside like a sack of yams...

INSIDE THE VAN,

Johnny looks up at Pabi and grins like a Cheshire Cat.

JOHNNY
...Well, aren't you a sight for
sore eyes!...

Pabi raises his gun, points it right at Johnny...

JOHNNY
...Oh, shit.

OUTSIDE,

Chuck BOLTS for the horizon.

He watches, wide-eyed, as Pabi points his gun into the van.
Chuck aims...

INSIDE THE VAN,

...BLAM!!!

Johnny WINCES as Pabi's brains go flying.

OUTSIDE,

Chuck re-cocks his gun, haphazardly firing at J-Lo and Kyle.

BLAM!!! BLAM!!! BLAM!!!

Johnny plucks the gun from Pabi's dead grasp and joins the action.

BLAM!!! BLAM!!! BLAM!!!

J-LO
(to Kyle)
Quit fuckin' around!

Kyle anxiously raises his gun, gets Chuck in the sights...

...BLAM!!!

Johnny clips Kyle in the upper body, as J-Lo aims at Johnny...

...BLAM!

Chuck nails J-Lo right in the forehead.

A winded Chuck watches with a tinge of sorrow as Kyle's body crumples to the dirt.

OVER BY THE VAN,

A quivering, bloodied, long-forgotten Craig looks up at Johnny - urgently, helplessly, pleadingly...

Johnny strolls over, stoops down, and grabs Craig's gun...

He looks Craig square in the eye...

JOHNNY

For the record, my ex-wife is a white woman...though I have fucked my share of 'squaws'...
They don't like that word...
Don't use it anymore...'kay?...

...BLAM!!!!

Johnny shoots Craig right in the face.

The squeak of the roadhouse door snags Chuck's attention....

It's Snipes...

...clutching a machine gun.

CHUCK

...Son of a bitch!

Chuck and Johnny DIVE behind the shot-up van, as Snipes unleashes hell...

RATATATATATAT!!!.....RATATAT!!!.....RATATAT!!!....

Chuck cautiously peers around the corner.

His gaze wanders past Snipes, as a fired-up, pissed-off Travis wanders up behind the mysterious sniper, gun in hand.

CHUCK

...Well, Jesus H. Christ, it's about fuckin' time!

Travis cocks his gun, raises it...

...And aims it right at Chuck.

CHUCK

...What the f--

BLAM!!!... BLAM!!!...RATATATATATATATATATATAT!!!....

Chuck turtles back behind the van as Travis empties the clip and Snipes lights up the van like a Christmas tree...

Slowly, the gunfire subsides, like almost-done popcorn, as Travis ducks back into the restaurant.

Chuck removes the tape from his wrists with his teeth.

He rips the rear-view mirror off the side of the van, and uses it to peek around the corner...

...He sees Snipes, standing ready...

BLAM!!!

The mirror SHATTERS.

JOHNNY

...Looks like we just got mauled by
our own dogs.

Johnny shoots the cuffs off of his tender, reddened wrists,
as Chuck tries to peek around the corner with a jagged piece
of mirror shrapnel...

CHUCK

I figure it's just the two of 'em.
Peterson in the back, mindin' the
hostages, and Mr. Sunglasses, here,
keepin' us honest. If there was
more of 'em, they'd prob'ly be
testin' their chances with us.
Prob'ly runnin' low on ammo...

Chuck peers wincingly over at Johnny...

...who pilfers the half-eaten bag of ketchup chips from
Troy's corpse and chows down.

CHUCK

...Is that really your top priority
right now?

JOHNNY

(with a mouthful of chips)
No. It's my only priority right
now.

Johnny offers Chuck some chips...

Chuck responds with a sour glare.

Johnny savours his chips as Chuck pokes his head into the
van, reaches past Dead Troy, and grabs the radio...

...Perfectly fucked.

JOHNNY

...You call it in?

CHUCK

Can't. Radio's bugged.

JOHNNY

...So use your phone, then.

Chuck sheepishly looks away.

CHUCK
...Don't got one.

Johnny stares incredulously at Chuck...

JOHNNY
You're fuckin' kidding...

Chuck responds with a sobering glance.

JOHNNY
...Aw, Christ.

INT. THE LAST SHOT - MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

A weary, worn-out row of sweat-soaked, duct-taped hostages lilt off to the side, as Travis sifts recklessly through the drawers and cabinets.

He unearths a microphone and cord and plugs it into an old, bulky CD player pre-amp...

BACK OUTSIDE,

The tinny, distorted blare of the loudspeaker snags Chuck and Johnny's attention...

TRAVIS (V.O.)
(through the loudspeaker)
You're listenin' to the smooth
sounds of me tellin' you what the
fuck to do...I'm holdin' the
microphone, I'm makin' the rules.
Here they are...

BACK IN THE MANAGER'S OFFICE,

Muffled, panicked whimpers seep forth from beneath well-worn duct-tape as Travis barks forebodingly into the microphone...

TRAVIS
(continuing)
...You come wanderin' up to this
buildin' with a gun in your
hand...I'll shoot a hostage. You
try runnin' away...I'll shoot a
hostage. You try contactin' anyone
at all...All fuckin' together,
now...I'll shoot a hostage...

BACK OUTSIDE,

Chuck and Johnny listen intently to Travis' words...

TRAVIS (V.O.)

(continuing)

...The only way you're leavin' this place is in the back of my trunk, wrapped in chicken wire. You've got about two hours to turn yourselves over. That's how long I figger it'll be 'til the back-up gets here...Oh, and every thirty minutes you make us wait...We're gonna shoot ourselves another hostage... This, here's, Waylon 'n' Johnny...

A grainy, old Waylon 'n' Johnny tune crackles eerily through the loudspeaker...

BACK BEHIND THE VAN,

Johnny hangs loose while Chuck stares pensively into space, deep in thought, counting to himself...

JOHNNY

...So what kind of cop doesn't carry a cell phone?

CHUCK

The kind that's seventy-six goddamned years old.

JOHNNY

Everyone's got a phone.

CHUCK

That's exactly why I don't need one.

JOHNNY

...You're seriously pickin' that side of the argument right now?

Chuck offers no response, as he resumes counting...

CHUCK

...Two waitresses, plus one or two in the back...Plus Keith pumpin' gas is four...Maybe two or three fellers out front...Five or six, maybe...

Long, sobering silence...

JOHNNY

So....How've you been?...

CHUCK

Don't fuckin' talk to me like we're buddies.

JOHNNY

...What?...Why the fuck not?

CHUCK

'Cause I know what you're goddamned capable of.

JOHNNY

We're all capable of what I'm capable of. You've just never been desperate enough to do what I've done.

CHUCK

So when does desperation turn into plain, old greed?...After the first million dollars, or the second?

JOHNNY

...Do you think I keep all of that money for myself?

CHUCK

Well, you can be charitable without breakin' the law.

JOHNNY

I'm not giving my boys charity, Chuck. I'm giving them opportunity. Where's the glory in letting another man feed your family? A man's gotta feel useful. Accomplished.

CHUCK

Well, you're a very 'accomplished' man, John. Wouldn't even know you were an Indian, if it weren't for all the goddamned jail time.

JOHNNY

...C'mon, Chuck!...That's racist!

CHUCK

What's with you's guys always playin' the race card?!...If I tell some brown person to get the fuck back on the boat, I'm being 'racist'. When you give us shit for comin' here, you're 'protecting your heritage'.

Johnny chokes on Chuck's comment with wide, incredulous eyes and a gaping mouth...

JOHNNY

...Wow!...Are you fuckin' kidding?!...You guys have been here for, what, like...a hundred, a hundred and fifty years?...We've been here for ten thousand years!...At least!...And there was nobody here when we got here! Just some animals, and we let them fuckin' stay!...And you get all worked up about some brown person pouring your coffee in the morning?!...You go to take a piss during the opening credits, then bitch and moan when you get back and there's someone sitting beside you. We got kicked out of our seats halfway through the fuckin' movie!...I said you could have some Skittles!...Didn't say to take all the fuckin' Skittles!...Did the 'brown people' round you up and stick you in a little 'nook'?!... It's like when you get married, and your wife says you can have a little 'man cave' for all your stuff. Do whatever the hell you want in the garage, just stay the fuck out of the living room and kitchen. Sounds like a pretty good deal, doesn't it?... 'Til you realize it's not...It's an absolutely shitty deal...

Johnny waits for a response. He gets none.

JOHNNY

You're welcome, by the way...

CHUCK

...For what?!

JOHNNY
For all this fuckin' land!

EXT. THE LAST SHOT - DAY

The van, gas pumps, and restaurant cast short, stumpy midday shadows across the dirt.

BACK BEHIND THE VAN,

Johnny hangs loose, as Chuck FLASHES the mirror at a tractor trolling through a field way off in the distance.

CHUCK
C'mon, c'mon!...

Chuck grows frustrated, as the tractor putzes onward...

CHUCK
Why in the hell ain't he stoppin'?

JOHNNY
He's not stopping 'cause he figures you need help, and he doesn't know you from a hole in the ground...

Chuck flashes away, as Johnny lounges about...

JOHNNY
...Everyone's listenin' to the same damn radio station these days...
'WIIIFM'... 'What's in it for me?'

CHUCK
Most folks ain't like that, John...
Most folks is good, decent people.

JOHNNY
God, you are so fuckin' white.

Resignedly, a frustrated Chuck drops the mirror.

Johnny stares out at the vast, empty horizon...

The unmistakable sound of a rickety trickle of piss hitting gravel cuts through the silence.

Johnny casually glances over at Chuck...

Down on one knee, draining the ol' bladder again.

JOHNNY

Sounds like you got a kink in your garden hose, there, chief...

Johnny waits for a smart-assed retort. He gets none.

JOHNNY

...Christ, now I gotta go, too...

Johnny rises to his feet, unzips his fly...

As Chuck 'shakes off', his gaze wanders over to the elongated shadow of the diner, stretched across the gravel.

A small extrusion juts out from the top of the shadow, then moves.

Suddenly, it clicks.

CHUCK

...Fuck, get down!!!

JOHNNY

Wha--

BOOF!...RAT!!!...

Chuck TACKLES Johnny to the ground as a steady stream of bullets PEPPERS the top of the truck.

The stone-faced, steady-handed Snipes - now perched atop the building - sprays the wreck with gunfire as Chuck and Johnny stay low.

...RATATATATATATTATATATATAT!!!... RATATAT!!!... RATAT!!!...

...All's quiet again.

A wide-eyed, solemn-faced Johnny catches his breath.

He looks away sheepishly, dodging a bristled, 'Don't be a moron' glare from Chuck.

INT. THE LAST SHOT - MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Travis peers at the crooked row of taped-up, slumped-over hostages...

Slowly, he breaks his gaze and turns to leave...

...VRRRRRRRRRRR! VRRRRRRRRRRR!...

...then turns back, as the faint vibration of a mobile phone pricks his attention.

He follows the sound...

...VRRRRRRRRRR! VRRRRRRRRRR...

...and unsheathes a shiny, new phone from Elmer's pocket.

He RIPS the tape from Elmer's eyes.

TRAVIS

...Does this b'long to you...

Elmer defiantly mumbles something.

Travis RIPS the tape from his mouth...

...PTOO!

...and winces incredulously as he wipes a big gob of spit from his gaze.

Travis replaces the tape...

...VRRRRRRRRRR! VRRRRRRRRRR...

...and glances down at the call display.

TRAVIS

...'5726' ring a bell?

Travis answers the phone...

TRAVIS

(into the phone)

...M'yello?...

...No, sorry, who is this?...

Elmer watches anxiously as Travis gabs with the caller...

TRAVIS

...Oh, okay...Well, I'm just sittin' here at the diner, throwin' back some bacon 'n' eggs, and I hear this phone vibratin'...Must've tumbled out of his pocket...

Travis shoots Elmer a snarky, little smirk as he babbles on...

TRAVIS

...Whose phone is this, again?...

Oh, okay...Yeah, I know Elmer...

(MORE)

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Short, little ornery fucker with
eyebrows like a damn Muppet...
Yeah, he's in here most days...
Holdin' hands with some cute,
young, red-headed girl...
Well, young for Elmer, anyways...

An urgent gaze creeps across Elmer's brow as Travis prods
along...

TRAVIS

...What's this?...You're his
wife?!...Do you have red hair?...
Aw, shit...Well, hell, I'd be
angry, too...A'ight...You, too,
ma'am...

Travis stares right through a heartbroken Elmer as he kills
the call and tosses the phone onto the floor...

TRAVIS

...Let's make sure this doesn't
happen again...

Travis points his gun down at the phone...

...then up at a wide-eyed Elmer...

EXT. THE LAST SHOT - BEHIND THE VAN - DAY

Johnny scans the horizon as Chuck sits silently...

JOHNNY

...Crops look like shit.

...BLAM!!!

Chuck and Johnny JUMP, as a gunshot echoes forth from the
diner.

TRAVIS (V.O.)

(through the loudspeaker)
That's 'one'. Every thirty minutes,
boys. Ain't fartin' around here.

A warbled, old rockabilly tune cackles forth from the
loudspeaker, as Chuck sifts through his thoughts...

JOHNNY

...So now what?

A cantankerous gaze fills Chuck's brow.

CHUCK

...I don't know, John...What in the hell do you s'pose we should do?

JOHNNY

'We're' not doin' shit...You're the goddamned cop, figure it out.

CHUCK

...And you're just gonna sit there?

JOHNNY

...Well, I sure as hell ain't gonna sit out there.

Slowly, Chuck breaks his pissed-off gaze...

...It's gonna be a long fuckin' day.

EXT. THE LAST SHOT - DAY

Crispy, yellowed, half-dead weeds beg for rain.

BACK BEHIND THE VAN,

Chuck half-sings, half-hums a few bars of a long-forgotten 1950's country song.

JOHNNY

Hey, Chuck...

Johnny waits for a response. He gets none.

JOHNNY

...If you and me ever got in a fight, I'd want to be a note...

CHUCK

...A note?

JOHNNY

Yeah, like a musical note...

Chuck shoots Johnny a 'What the fuck?' glare...

JOHNNY

...Because there'd be no fuckin' way you'd ever hit me.

Chuck stares daggers at Johnny...

CHUCK

Why're you so goddamned chipper?!
We're getting' shot at in the
middle of Buttfuck, Nowhere and
you're actin' like Mary Goddamned
Poppins!...What in the hell's wrong
with you?!

JOHNNY

Chuck, what would you be doing
today, if you weren't here?

CHUCK

Somethin' marginally better than
this, I can guaran-goddamn-tee you.

JOHNNY

I'd be dodging rapists in the
shower, tryin' to get me in the
middle of Buttfuck, Somewhere while
the prison guards pretend to not
notice. And about once a year,
someone'll try and stab me in the
neck with a toothbrush. It's only
once a year, but it's enough to
keep you on your toes the other 364
days. That's what I'd be doing if I
wasn't here. And that's why I'm so
'goddamned chipper'. It's all about
perspective. Someone's always got
it worse than you do.

Chuck stares incredulously at Johnny...

CHUCK

...Who do you suppose is havin' a
shittier day than us right now?

Without missing a beat, Johnny points to Troy's corpse....

JOHNNY

He is...

...And Craig's corpse

JOHNNY

...So's he.

Chuck offers no response.

...BLAM!!!

Solemn silence, as another gunshot rings forth from the
diner...

JOHNNY

...And without tryin' to sound like a smartass - so are they...You've got every damn reason to be grateful.

Chuck stares at the ground as he chews on Johnny's words.

Once more, the tinny screech of the loudspeaker snags Chuck and Johnny's attention...

TRAVIS (V.O.)

(through the loudspeaker)

That's 'two'. You's boys keep this shit up, we're gonna run ourselves out of hostages pretty soon. A'ight, I'm getting good 'n' goddamned sick 'n' tired of country music, we're gonna switch things up, here...

Awkward silence...

TRAVIS (V.O.)

...Sorry, my apologies...Looks like all they've got up in this shithole is country music...Here you go...

A jaunty, old honky-tonk tune crackles eerily through the loudspeaker...

EXT. THE LAST SHOT - DAY

Power lines hang motionless in the still, sweltering heat.

BACK BEHIND THE VAN,

The old sound of piss hitting gravel snags Johnny's attention...

JOHNNY

...Didn't you just go, like, twenty minutes ago?

CHUCK

It's my damn diabetes. Kidneys and pancreas can't keep up, so my body's tryin' to get rid of all the goddamned sugar in my blood.

The familiar squeal of the loudspeaker snags Chuck and Johnny's attention...

TRAVIS (V.O.)

A'ight, boys, it's almost that time again. To keep things all 'Even Stevens', and relatively fair, I though we'd do some 'eeny, meeny, miny, moe' to figure out who in the hell we're gonna shoot next. Now, the hostages we've got left have been very cooperative, it truly is a shame we've gotta shoot any of 'em, but so is the situation we find ourselves in...A'ight, here we go...

BACK IN THE MANAGER'S OFFICE,

Bodies tremble with fear as Travis paces from hostage to hostage, pressing the cold barrel of his gun against each of their unwitting foreheads...

TRAVIS

(starts into it)

...Eeny, meeny, miny, moe. Catch a ni--

(stops himself)

...Oh, I'm sorry. We ain't s'posed to say that word no more. It's 'tiger'. Catch a tiger by the toe. Now, where in the hell was I?...
Oh, yeah...

(resumes)

...If he hollers, let 'em go. Eeny, meeny, miny...

Priyanka freezes, petrified, as the gun comes to a full stop against her brow...

TRAVIS

...Moe...

She whimpers helplessly as Travis cocks the hammer...

...before moving along.

TRAVIS

(continues)

...And my mother punched your mother right in the...

BACK OUTSIDE,

With a terse, annoyed glare, Johnny cocks his gun, and reaches out...

...BLAM!!! Off the restaurant's soffit.

...BLAM!!! Hits the soffit again.

Chuck watches curiously...

CHUCK

...What in the hell are you doin'?!

...BLAM!!! Takes out the loudspeaker.

All's quiet...

CHUCK

...What the fuck did you just do?!

JOHNNY

'Til now, they had the upper hand.
I just leveled the playing field.

CHUCK

You just removed our only line of
communication!

JOHNNY

Communication's two ways. That's
not communication, Chuck. That's
just a mean son-of-bitch barkin'
threats at us, makin' demands,
without listening to a goddamned
word we have to say...

Chuck lowers his gaze. Johnny's right.

JOHNNY

If you think that's communication,
I should set you up on a date with
my ex-wife...Boy, she sure does
love to 'communicate'. She could
'communicate' all goddamned day.

CHUCK

Yeah, I'm sure she had absolutely
nothin' to complain about, neither.
Did you spoil her good, John?

Chuck waits for a smart-assed retort.

...BLAM!!!

Another gunshot echoes out from inside the restaurant.

A mournful gaze creeps across Chuck's face. Then Johnny's.

Long, sullen silence, as Johnny grabs a sharp rock and adds a third 'tick' to the growing body count tally etched into the van's paint job...

JOHNNY

...How 'bout you, Chuck?...
Y'got any ex-wives kickin' around?

CHUCK

Can't say that there are.

JOHNNY

Well, cheers to that.

Long, quiet silence...

CHUCK

...I did get served with divorce papers one time.

JOHNNY

...Yeah?

CHUCK

Yeah, she got fed up with the drinkin'. She'd had her fill. Was gonna take our daughter, and go move in with her mother.

JOHNNY

...What, she changed her mind?

Chuck pauses, forms his words...

CHUCK

I don't consider myself to be a God-lovin' man. But that night, I prayed to God to help us get through things. Help us weather the storm...Couple days later, she started havin' belly cramps, passin' a bit of blood. She didn't have her own health insurance, so I took her to the doctor...

JOHNNY

...Pregnant?

CHUCK

Nope. Found out she was full of cancer...

An empathetic gaze creeps across Johnny's face.

CHUCK
 ...Two months later, we buried
 her...Never did file the papers.

Johnny absorbs Chuck's words...

JOHNNY
 God sure is a twisted son-of-a
 bitch. Assumin' there is a God...

Awkward, deflated silence...

JOHNNY
 ...Well, thank God she wasn't
pregnant.

Chuck's face twists up like a ten-cent two-by-four.

CHUCK
 ...What the fuck's wrong with you?!

JOHNNY
 I'm sorry, I just get really weird
 when I'm talking about death and
 dyin'. It's like a...nervous thing,
 or something, I don't know. It's
 like my brain just doesn't want to
 deal with it...Sorry...

More awkward silence...

JOHNNY
 ...You're just lucky you don't live
 up in Canada. Everyone's got health
 insurance up there. She would've
never come crawlin' back.

Johnny weathers a sharp 'What the fuck?' glare from Chuck.

EXT. THE LAST SHOT - DAY

Heat haze blurs the horizon, as a hot-road 'fake water'
 mirage teases the distant highways.

BACK BEHIND THE VAN,

Chuck begrudgingly wipes buckets of sweat from his brow.

CHUCK
 Dirty, rotten, piece of shit sun...

JOHNNY

What are 'things my dad used to say to me'? Same category for two hundred, Alex...

Johnny waits for a response. He gets none...

JOHNNY

...Like on Jeopardy?...

Once more, he waits for a response. Once more, he gets none...

JOHNNY

...Alex Trebek?...

Again, a crabby Chuck offers no response...

JOHNNY

...Is that still a thing?...

Nothing but silence...

The screen door CREAKS as Travis saunters out...

He winces annoyedly as he eyes the shot-to-hell loudspeaker.

TRAVIS

You's boys're just hellbent on fuckin' up my day, ain't you's?... That's a'ight...

Travis pauses, gathers his words...

TRAVIS

...When we rolled out of bed this mornin', we had one thing on our minds...Kill Johnny Bellegarde... Clearly, our mission is still in progress. But that's okay. We haven't failed yet. We're just still in the process of succeeding...How's your blood sugar holdin' up, Chuck?...Did you forget your insulin in the car again?... That's too bad, right there...We're all eager to get home to our wives 'n' kids, and I imagine you're eager to get home to...whatever the hell it is that you go home to these days...so here's my proposition...You kill Johnny, show us the body, and no one else needs to die today.

(MORE)

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

We let all the remaining hostages go, we'll pack up 'n' bugger off, and you'll live to see another day, too. You have sixty seconds to accept this offer. This is the first 'n' last such offer you'll be receiving. Sixty seconds starts now...

Several seconds of tense, awkward silence tick by...

Slowly, reluctantly, Chuck presses the gun to Johnny's head.

Johnny remains eerily calm...

CHUCK

...Ain't you gonna try n' shoot me?

JOHNNY

Chuck, if I shoot you, they're just gonna run out here and shoot me...What do you think's gonna happen if you shoot me?...
A deal with the devil ain't worth the paper it's printed on.

Chuck cocks the gun, as Johnny gently closes his eyes, searching for a semblance of peace, a sliver of faith...

TRAVIS

(hollering at Chuck)

Chuck, if I wanted you dead, you'd already be dead...

JOHNNY

(to Chuck)

His cover's blown. There's no way he's letting you walk out of here.

TRAVIS

(hollering at Chuck)

He's made his mistakes. You don't worry 'bout him. You just worry 'bout yourself...

Tense silence...

TRAVIS

(hollering)

...My boys're gonna be here any minute, now...Can't bargain with the shopkeep after closin' time...

Johnny stares morosely at the ground as Chuck maintains his grip...

TRAVIS
(hollering)
...Ten seconds. Nine, eight...

Slowly, painfully, resignedly, Chuck uncocks and lowers his gun.

He can't do it...

TRAVIS
(hollering)
...A'ight. That's how it's gonna
be, then...

The screen door creaks as Travis saunters back in.

Very heavy silence fills the air. They know what's coming...

MOMENTS LATER

Travis saunters back out, clutching a blinded and gagged hostage by the scruff of the shirt.

Chuck and Johnny watch from afar as Travis RIPS the duct tape from the hostage's eyes and mouth...

It's the breakfast cook...

TRAVIS
(hollering)
...What's your name, son?!

MATEO
...M-m-Mateo.

TRAVIS
(mockingly)
M-m-Mateo!?!...

A trembling Mateo offers no retort.

TRAVIS
...Y'ain't from around here, are
you, Mateo?...

Travis waits for a response...

TRAVIS
...Are you, Mateo!!!

MATEO

...N-n-no...

TRAVIS

Why don't you go ahead 'n' tell us
all where you're from...

MATEO

...Mexico...

TRAVIS

...Mexico!?!....

Once again, a petrified Mateo offers no response...

TRAVIS

...So what made you up 'n' decide
to come up to the panhandle,
Mateo?...

MATEO

...A better life...

TRAVIS

...'A better life'?!...That's what
makes most folks up 'n' decide to
leave the panhandle, ain't it?!...
Mexico must be a real shithole!

Chuck and Johnny watch helplessly from afar as Mateo stares
morosely at the dirt...

TRAVIS

'Rivederci, Mateo...

...BLAM!!!

EXT. THE LAST SHOT - DAY

The van, gas pumps, and restaurant cast no shadows. All's
quiet.

BACK BEHIND THE VAN,

Chuck and Johnny keep to themselves, like exes at a dinner
party, as the growing row of 'ticks' hover like hungry
buzzards.

Awkward silence...

JOHNNY

...We gonna talk about what just happened?

CHUCK

...And what part of what just happened did you feel like talkin' about?

JOHNNY

...The part where you had your gun pointed at my head...

CHUCK

...Wasn't plannin' on it.

More awkward silence...

JOHNNY

Y'know, I've seen much-better men do much-worse things, under similar circumstances...

Johnny waits for a response. He gets none.

JOHNNY

...In my line of work, it's not uncommon to have one of your alleged 'friends' pull a gun on you...

Once again, no response.

JOHNNY

...Apparently, it's not too uncommon in your line of work, neither...

A pensive Chuck offers no eye contact.

CHUCK

I ain't your friend, John...I'm just a sheriff tryin' to do his goddamned job.

JOHNNY

...Yeah?...Well, you don't appear to be tryin' too hard, Chuck.

Johnny's words prick Chuck's ego.

CHUCK

...What'd you have me do?!...
 Huh?!...Run head-first into the
goddamned gunfire?!...With a half-
round in the clip?!...Then
 what?!...I'm no good to them
 people, you, or anyone else if I'm
 lyin' belly-up in the goddamned
dirt!!!...I am doin' the best I
fuckin' can, given the
 circumstances we're in!!!...I am
 tryin' real fuckin' hard,
 here!!!...

Awkward silence...

JOHNNY

For the sake of clarity, when I
 said you don't appear to be tryin'
 too hard, I wasn't talkin' 'bout
 this little 'shit-show', here,
 today...I was talkin' about the
 last twenty or thirty fuckin'
 years. Just so we're clear.

A jilted Chuck offers no response.

EXT. THE LAST SHOT - BEHIND THE VAN - DAY (LATER)

Long, awkward silence, as the two stubborn, old bulls lick
 their proverbial wounds under the stubborn, old son...

JOHNNY

...Why'd you want to be a cop?

CHUCK

...I don't fuckin' know...

Awkward silence...

JOHNNY

...Was your dad a cop?

Super-long silence...

CHUCK

Nope...Was a school bus driver.

JOHNNY

...Did he like driving school bus?

CHUCK

Nope. Fuckin' hated it. Hated his job, hated his life. No one hated anything more than my dad hated drivin' a goddamned school bus.

(chuckles musingly)

"The only thing stoppin' me from stranglin' these damn kids is the law that says you can't strangle no damn kids!" he'd say.

Johnny smiles.

Comfortable silence...

CHUCK

I don't know. I just figgered bein' a cop was as good as anything else, I s'pose... Hadn't given it much thought, 'til Bobby told me how much his dad makes. Thought it sounded pretty decent...That day, I went down to the depot, got myself an application form, filled 'er out, passed the physical...When I told Mom, she was in hysterics. Didn't want her boy in harm's way...Told Dad at suppertime, after he got home from work. He just puts down his fork, nods his head a bit, and he looks up at me, and he says "Well...Not much of a difference between dyin' and not livin'."

Long pause, as Johnny absorbs Chuck's words...

CHUCK

Y'know what the worst of 'er is?... Today's my last day...Twelve more hours, and this would've been someone else's goddamn problem.

JOHNNY

What are you gonna do after you retire?...Sit at home all damn day?

CHUCK

...Y'wanna know what I'm gonna do after I retire?...I'm gonna sleep in nice 'n' late, 'til seven thirty, every morning. Then, I'm gonna take a nice, long shower, slather on some Brut.

(MORE)

CHUCK (CONT'D)

And then, I'm gonna come out here, order myself some bacon and eggs, and a coffee. And I am going to sit here, by myself, never sayin' a goddamned word to anyone else, never liftin' a goddamned finger to help anyone else.

Johnny stares sympathetically at Chuck...

JOHNNY

I don't think we owe this world much...But in some roundabout selfish way, I do think we owe it the happiest, most fulfilled versions of ourselves.

CHUCK

Well, thanks for that little sliver of wisdom, there, Oprah.

JOHNNY

...So is that what's gonna make you happy?

Johnny waits for a response...

CHUCK

...Happy enough.

JOHNNY

Life's too short to be 'happy enough'.

CHUCK

You're kinda beatin' a dead horse, here, don't you think? There's a better than not chance we're both gonna be suckin' slough water in less than an hour.

Awkward silence, as Chuck's words soak in...

JOHNNY

...Well, there's not much of a difference between 'dying' and 'not living'.

Chuck shoots Johnny an icy, incredulous stare.

CHUCK

And what makes you feel 'alive', besides gettin' meth-heads hooked on smack?

Chuck's words cut deep.

JOHNNY

When we were kids, we had this old layin' hen. Millie. For five years straight, every mornin', I'd go down to the chicken coop, fetchin' eggs, and sure as shit, every mornin', Millie'd have one ready to go. Then, one mornin', I'm out fetchin' eggs, but Millie, she didn't have nothin' for me. Next day, same thing. So I go 'n' tell dad. And the day after that, Millie wasn't in the chicken coop no more...

Johnny pauses, as Chuck absorbs his words.

JOHNNY

...What do you think would happen to me if I quit layin' eggs?...

BLAM!!!...

...A gunshot blast echoes forth from the diner.

Solemn silence...

Reluctantly, Johnny grabs his rock and adds another 'tick', as a weighty lull of silence fills the air...

CHUCK

I looked over your file this mornin'...

JOHNNY

...And?

CHUCK

Doesn't go back too many years...

Chuck waits for a response. He gets none.

CHUCK

...What did you do before you started layin' eggs?

JOHNNY

Worked rigs for a while.

CHUCK

Well, you could always go back to the rigs.

JOHNNY
 (with an incredulous stare)
 ...You ever worked rigs, Chuck?

Johnny waits for a response. He gets none.

JOHNNY
 If you get on with a good crew,
 it's not too bad, but...Nah, I'm
 too old for that shit...Wouldn't
 even know what the hell I was doin'
 anymore. Shit's all different,
 now...
 (points toward the field)
 ...Y'see them pumpjacks, over
 there?...

Chuck looks over yonder at the small army of squeaky, old
 pumpjacks dotting the landscape.

JOHNNY
 ...In my day, we had a whole slough
 of guys whose only job was to drive
 around to each and every one of
 them pumpjacks, check out casing
 pressure, tank levels, flow
 temperature, ambient temperature.
 Now, it's all computers. If any one
 of them lines goes down, it sends a
 signal out to the bigwigs down
 east, and dispatches a technician
 immediately.

CHUCK
 ...Immediately?

JOHNNY
 Yep. All automatic.

CHUCK
 ...So, if one of them well sensors
 went off right now, someone'd come
 rippin' out here to fix it?...

Click. Light bulb.

EXT. THE LAST SHOT - BEHIND THE VAN - DAY (LATER)

Chuck sits back as Johnny shoots at a pumpjack...

...BLAM!!! Missed.

Across the way, Snipes perks up.

Johnny lines it up again...

...BLAM!!! Another miss.

A somber gaze creeps across Chuck's face...

CHUCK

...Y'think we oughtta be doin this?

JOHNNY

If you can think of a better way to trip off a well sensor without getting shot in the head, I'd love to hear it.

...BLAM!!! Missed again.

CHUCK

No. Y'think we oughtta be draggin' an innocent man into our shit?...

JOHNNY

Something's only a problem if you've got a solution, Chuck. You got some other plan kickin' around that I don't know about?

CHUCK

...Nope.

JOHNNY

...Then it ain't a problem...
Not for me, anyways.

...BLAM!!! Missed again.

JOHNNY

You're a better shot than me...
Why don't you take a kick at 'er.

CHUCK

Nope. Can't do 'er, John.

John grows cross...

JOHNNY

...Why's his life more important than ours?...Or theirs?...Huh?...
Ain't it worth riskin' one man's life to save two?...Or ten?...

CHUCK

That should be his choice to make...Not ours.

JOHNNY

...If you're worried about draggin'
an innocent man into 'our shit',
let me help put your mind at
ease...There are very few
'innocent' men in this godforsaken
shithole...You've been runnin'
towards gunfire and dealin' with
drug dealers and junkie mothers
with tracks up their arms more than
half your damn life...Don't you
think the losers in this town owe
you one back?

Chuck deliberates briefly, then looks squarely at Johnny...

CHUCK

No. I don't.

Long silence...

Resignedly, Johnny checks the clip on his gun.

JOHNNY

...How many clips you got left?

CHUCK

Just this one...You?

JOHNNY

My last one...Cover me.

Johnny DARTS off towards the fields, gun in hand.

CHUCK

What the hell're you doin'!!

Snipes perks up, aims his gun...

...RATATATATATATATAT!!!

Dirt flies in front of Johnny's flurried feet.

A hundred yards to go...

BLAM!!!...

Chuck fires at Snipes, keeping him honest. Snipes fires
back...

...RATATATATATATATAT!!!

Just fifty yards to go.

Johnny turns back, and fires one at Snipes...

...BLAM!!!

Barely misses.

Snipes aims at Johnny.

Almost there...

Bullets PING wildly off of painted steel as a winded Johnny ducks behind the big, old pumpjack.

Still ducking, he peers into the guts of the complex beast.

He yanks a wire. Shoots a hose. A warning indicator flashes RED.

Satisfied, he gears up to sprint back, past an on-the-ball Snipes...

...RATATATATATAT-

...Out of ammo. Snipes ditches the gun and darts away.

Johnny BOLTS.

A hundred yards to go...

Seconds later, Snipes returns with a hunting rifle...

...BLAM!!!

Chuck fires at Snipes...

...BLAM!!!

Snipes fires back at Chuck...

...BLAM!!!

Just fifty yards to go.

Johnny turns back, and fires one at Snipes...

...BLAM!!!

Barely misses.

Snipes aims at Johnny.

Almost there...

...BLAM!!!

And CLIPS him in the lower shoulder.

A wide-eyed Chuck watches from afar as Johnny JILTS.

Chuck squares up at Snipes...

...BLAM!!!...BLAM!!!...BLAM!!!

...as a bloodied Johnny LUNGES his limp body back behind the van.

CHUCK

...Come over here, we'll get you
cleaned up...

Johnny catches his breath as Chuck tends to his wound.

UP ON THE ROOF,

Snipes abandons his perch.

MOMENTS LATER,

The familiar creak of the screen door lurches forth, as Travis stomps out of the restaurant - pistol in hand, dragging a taped-up Keith by the scruff of his shirt.

TRAVIS

(hollering)

Sorry, boys. Rules is rules....

Chuck watches in the mirror shrapnel as Travis SHOVES Keith to the dirt.

Keith scrambles to his feet, hopping urgently, frantica--

BLAM!!!

Right in the back of the head.

Keith's corpse tumbles to the dirt, just a few strides from the van, as Travis ducks back inside.

A sullen, helpless gaze creeps across Chuck's face.

EXT. THE LAST SHOT - DAY

An old, rotting fox carcass decays in a ditch, as a curious fly lands on Craig's dead, petrified cheek.

BACK BEHIND THE VAN,

A somewhat-rested, sweat-soaked Johnny lays against the van, as the collection of 'ticks' grows ever longer.

A quiet scratching noise snags his attention.

He turns, and watches curiously as Chuck etches something into the car door with a small rock.

JOHNNY

...Whatcha got goin', there?

CHUCK

Just tyin' up some loose ends. Just in case.

A ponderous gaze fills Johnny's brow.

He plucks a sharp rock from the ground and starts doing the same.

MINUTES LATER

Johnny puts the finishing touches on his message, brushes away the errant paint flakes and surveys his work...

The message reads:

A + A
I LOVE YOU.
- J

A satisfied, weighty gaze fill's Johnny's sweat-soaked brow.

He peers over at Chuck's scrawlings. His brow furrows...

Chuck's message reads:

TRAVIS PETERSON
WENT ROGUE.

JOHNNY

...Y'serious?

CHUCK

No, John, I carved it into the fuckin' door 'cause I ain't serious...What's up your ass?

JOHNNY

You've got one last chance to tell the world something, and that's all you wanna say?!...

CHUCK

...Yes.

JOHNNY

If you're on a plane, and the engine's gone down, are you the guy reaching into his briefcase, grabbing a marker, writing his name on his arms 'n' legs?

CHUCK

As if you're not a guy that doesn't cross his T's and dot his I's.

JOHNNY

I do keep my T's crossed and my I's dotted...That's why there's nothin' else left for me to say.

CHUCK

Yeah, well, I'm pretty sure my family knows I love 'em.

JOHNNY

You're 'pretty sure'?...

Johnny waits for a response. He gets nothing.

JOHNNY

...How do they know, Chuck?...
You tell 'em lately?...

Again, Johnny waits for a response. Again, he gets nothing.

Awkward silence...

Slowly, Johnny's demeanor softens.

JOHNNY

Let's suppose for a second that this truck gets torched, and no one ever sees this stuff. If I don't make it out of here, and you do, I'd want you to tell my family that I love 'em. Can you do that for me?

Chuck somberly nods 'yes'.

JOHNNY

Now, if the shoe were on the other foot. If I make it out of here, and you don't...What would you want me to tell your family?

Chuck stares at his shoes as he searches for words...

CHUCK

I suppose I'd want you to tell 'em that I love 'em...Very much...

JOHNNY

...Okay...I can do that for you.

Comfortable silence...

CHUCK

I'd want you to tell 'em that every time I walked out the door at three in the mornin' with a gun in my hand and a scowl on my face, I was doin' it so they'd never have to... A job like the one I got ends up stealin' most of your smiles... But I loved my family more than I'd ever been able to show...Just want 'em to know that....

Johnny holds back tears.

JOHNNY

Alright...I'll tell 'em that, too.

Long, comfortable silence...

CHUCK

...And then I'd want you to tell 'em that Travis went rogue.

Johnny smiles warmly.

Comfortable silence...

JOHNNY

You're a good shit in the long run, Chuck...But who in their right mind likes long-runnin' shit?

CHUCK

I'll consider that a compliment, comin' from you.

More comfortable silence...

JOHNNY

...Well, I still can't believe you don't carry a damn cell phone.

CHUCK

And I still don't give a shit.

JOHNNY

All the cool kids're doin' it.

CHUCK

I've never been cool, and I don't intend to start now.

JOHNNY

I'm guessin' that's probably the coolest thing you've ever said.

EXT. THE LAST SHOT - BEHIND THE VAN - DAY

The cruel sun hangs high in the sky.

Beads of sweat glisten on Chuck's wrinkled forehead as he squints into the sunlight.

The blurred glint of blue and red cherries and the faint whir of sirens melt into the heatwaves, as a pair of armed patrol cops storm over...

JOHNNY (O.S.)

...Chuck...Chuck...

Chuck comes to. He peers back at the sun-scorched horizon...

Nothing. Just a hallucination.

JOHNNY

...You're suckin' fumes, bucko.

A rumble in the distance catches Johnny's gaze.

OFF IN THE DISTANCE,

A sturdy, white service truck boulders along the gravel, turns off, approaches...

The side of the truck reads: "J & T Pumpjack Services Ltd."

Johnny smiles like a sailor seeing land.

He grabs Chuck's shoulder in an "I told you so, buddy" fashion.

INT. SERVICE TRUCK - DAY - TRAVELLING

RANDY PULFER, 47 - a crimson-haired, handlebar-mustached hick - scans the horizon as he bounds along the gravel, barking into his cell phone...

RANDY

...Calls me up out of the goddamn blue, and he says to me "Y'got plans?"... "No, I don't got plans but I did just work six fuckin' twelves in a row!"... "Well, that's too fuckin bad, 'cause I need you to come in anyways", he goes to me. So, I says to him, "Well, that's too fuckin' bad, 'cause I'm five beers deep playin' video games. Can't go to work if you're drunk. I don't give a shit if it is two o'clock on a goddamn Thursday! The doctor gave me some painkillers for the nerve damage in my back, but he didn't give me shit for the pain in my ass!"... A'ight, I'm here, gotta go...

Randy throws it in park, hops out, and wanders up to

THE PUMPJACK.

His brow furrows as he peers down at the mechanical chaos.

RANDY

(to self)

...What the fuck's goin' on here?

He shields his eyes, as a FLASH of light catches his gaze.

He turns, peers...

BACK BEHIND THE VAN,

Chuck flashes the mirror shrapnel, while Johnny discreetly waves his arms.

BACK BY THE PUMPJACK,

A puzzled gaze creeps across Randy's mug as he spots the desperate duo.

RANDY
 (hollering)
 ...Did you do this?!!!

Randy waits for a response, gets none.

Slowly, a pissed-off Randy starts marching toward the van.

UP ON THE ROOFTOP,
 Snipes takes his shot...
 ...BLAM!!!

BACK BY THE PUMPJACK,
 Dirt FLIES, as a bullet kicks up dust just in front of Randy.
 He spots Snipes, stomps back over to his

SERVICE TRUCK,
 and grabs a shotgun...

RANDY
 (to self)
 Aw, shit, no!...

Randy loads it up, pops it closed...

RANDY
 Yer 'bout to git yer dough
 popped!...

Randy stomps out of the truck like a steel-plated rhino...
 Cha-chink...BLAM!!!!

RANDY
 (hollering at Snipes)
 I'll knock yer lungs loose,
 asshole!!!

Cha-chink...BLAM!!!!

RANDY
 You just fucked with the wrong
 farmboy!!!

Cha-chink...BLAM!!!!

RANDY
I will tan yer fuckin' hide!!!

Cha-chink...BLAM!!!

BACK BEHIND THE VAN,

Chuck and Johnny watch in half-disbelief.

CHUCK
Christ, we've got ourselves a wild
card, here...

OFF IN THE DISTANCE,

Randy turns, looks...

...Then aims at Chuck and Johnny...

Cha-chink...BLAM!!!...

Close.

Cha-chink...BLAM!!!...

Closer.

Cha-BLAM!!!...

Randy's cranium EXPLODES, as Snipes tags him from the rooftop.

BACK BEHIND THE VAN,

Heart rates drop, as Chuck and Johnny come back down from adrenaline-induced highs.

JOHNNY
...Well, that didn't quite turn out
how I'd hoped.

Another rumble in the distance catches Johnny's gaze...

OFF IN THE DISTANCE,

A beat-up, old truck boulders along the gravel, turns off, approaches...

Three hood rats armed with machine guns sit perched in the box.

BACK BEHIND THE VAN,

An urgent gaze fills Chuck's brow.

CHUCK

It's shit-or-get-off-the-pot time,
John. We gotta go now.

Chuck and Johnny DART off towards the orphaned rig truck,
guns in hand, scrambling, dodging Snipes' errant gunfire.

OFF IN THE DISTANCE,

The hood rat driver spots Chuck and Johnny, makes a HARD
TURN, and gives chase...

Chuck and Johnny sprint on buggered knees as the enemy truck
creeps up quickly...

Almost there....

The enemy truck's right on their heels...

Chuck and Johnny DIVE behind the service truck

As the hood rats rumble past, the gunners raise their
weapons...

...RATATATATATATATATATATATAT!

Chuck and Johnny scramble

INTO THE SERVICE TRUCK.

...Keys are in the ignition. Johnny fires it up...

VROOOOMMMMM!!!!...Guddle, Guddle, Guddle...

OUTSIDE,

The old girl ROARS to life and rumbles toward the fence line,
as the enemy truck WHIPS A SHITHOOK UP AHEAD and comes
roaring close...

INSIDE THE SERVICE TRUCK,

Chuck and Johnny DUCK as a steady stream of bullets SHATTERS
the windshield, chugging forward, heel to the steel...

OUTSIDE,

The enemy truck whips back around on a dime - gaining, gaining, gaining - as more gunfire SHATTERS the rear window of the service truck.

INSIDE THE SERVICE TRUCK,

Johnny - still half-crouching - locks gazes with the hood rat driver directly alongside the vehicle.

JOHNNY

H'Chuck!

Johnny nods toward the passenger's side window.

Chuck looks over, and spots the hoodrat driver, mere feet away, raising a handgun...

Chuck GRABS his arm...

...BLAM!!!

The errand shot whizzes by Johnny's face and SMASHES out the driver's side glass.

Chuck YANKS the driver right out of the truck through the window, pins him against the dashboard by the throat, pulls his gun...

...BLAM!!!

Blood splatters all over Chuck and Johnny's faces.

OUTSIDE,

The two trucks barrel toward a four-wire cattle fence...

Johnny CRANKS the wheel at the last moment, as the wayward enemy truck CAREENS through the fence, CATCHES the ditch, and FLIPS through the air.

One gunman dives out of the truck as it lands on the adjacent gravel lot UPSIDE DOWN and skids to a stop.

Johnny wheels back around, chugs through the truck-sized hole in the fence, and back over to...

EXT. THE LAST SHOT - DAY

Chuck and Johnny throw it in park and stroll through the wreckage, guns in hand.

Johnny spots a wounded gunman crawling through the pea rock, reaching for his misplaced gun...

Johnny strolls over, kicks it away, raises his own gun...

...BLAM!!!

Through the dust and smoke, Snipes emerges, rifle in hand.

He locks gazes with Johnny...

...Click, click...

...They're both empty.

Johnny darts toward the orphaned gun, reaching...

...BOOF!

Snipes spears him into the dirt.

Retching, clawing and gouging, Snipes hops on top, choking Johnny's windpipe with his bare hands, as Johnny fades...

...BLAM!!!

A bullet shatters Snipes' skull and scrambles his brains.

Off to the side, a sweaty, shit-bagged Chuck lowers his gun.

Chuck and Johnny exchange long, loaded glances as they catch their breath.

Long, peaceful silence.

SECONDS LATER,

The familiar creak of the door snags Chuck's attention...

...It's Travis, dragging a panicked Priyanka by the hair, with a gun pressed to her temple...

TRAVIS
(to Chuck)
Drop it.

Reluctantly, Chuck tosses his gun...

...BLAM!!!

Travis shoots Priyanka in the temple and tosses her bloodied corpse to the ground.

Johnny stares longingly at the orphaned gun in the dirt.

TRAVIS
(to Johnny)
Don't you goddamn think about it.

Long, tense, awkward silence, as the three bulls eye each other up...

JOHNNY
(to Travis)
...Was all this really necessary?

TRAVIS
Apparently, it was.

JOHNNY
Christ, Trav, I wasn't gonna roll over on my own guys.

TRAVIS
Well, then why wouldn't you just stick to the fuckin' plan!? Make a deal, roll over on some fringe players 'n' weak links, get out early, and go about your business, whatever the hell it is. Or do the full two months you got left 'n' walk free. But no, that ain't good enough for 'the notorious Johnny Bellegarde'... Christ, you probably get off to the smell of your own farts!...Takes some nerve to ask your boys to bust your ass out of jail a couple of weeks before you would've gotten out anyways!

Johnny absorbs Travis's rant with an incredulous gaze.

JOHNNY
Well, you had me fooled, Trav...
Thought you were a team player.

TRAVIS
I am a team player, John. So when a 'team member' puts his own selfish needs ahead of the team's, even if he is the goddamned 'leader'...

(MORE)

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Well, I have a hard time warmin' up to that notion.

Johnny's gaze grows solemn...

JOHNNY

Travis, these are extenuating circumstances.

TRAVIS

Oh, you have no goddamned idea...

Slowly, Travis turns to Chuck...

TRAVIS

I'm guessing you 'n' Johnny, here, are as thick as Alaskan molasses, after today's rigamorole...

Travis waits for a response. He gets none.

TRAVIS

...Did he tell you we've been workin' together for four years?...

A sour, fucked-over gaze floods Chuck's brow.

He shoots Johnny an 'Et tu, Brute' scowl, as a shame-faced Johnny tucks his proverbial tail between his legs.

TRAVIS

...Guess you's ain't as thick as you thought you were.

Travis turns back to Johnny...

TRAVIS

And just so we're on the same page, here, none of us are 'your guys' anymore. You don't have 'guys'. There's no one left for you to sell to, and there's no one left for you to buy from. They're all with me now. You just got mutinied right up the bounty.

JOHNNY

...Bullshit.

TRAVIS

No, it ain't bullshit... We're done here.

...BLAM!!!

Chuck WINCES as Travis shoots Johnny in the upper torso.

Johnny crumples to the dirt, motionless.

And then there were two.

Helpless, uncomfortable silence...

CHUCK

...Travis, why the hell're you pullin' all this shit?

TRAVIS

Because I've been writing speeding tickets and breakin' up barfights and peelin' drunk, abusive husbands off of trailer park whores for way too fuckin' long, and if there's any 'action' to be had at all in this dry fart of a town, then I am going to get myself a big fuckin' piece. Just like Frankie Marvin used to say, "There's gold up in them, thar, hills!" 'Cept it ain't 'gold', no more...It's a bunch of folks with broken dreams and no way to fix 'em...This town's full of problems, everyone says...Problems for who? Certainly not the guys sellin' meth...

Chuck glares sourly as Travis babbles on...

TRAVIS

...Drugs are rampant, there's vagrants all over the place, you can't walk into a public bathroom without fearing for your life, and nobody gives a shit!...There's gang tags on the cop shack, for Christ's sake!...You're a fucking joke, Chuck! This all happened on your watch...This 'bend but don't break' bullshit ain't workin' for nobody!...It broke this shithole town, and it broke you!...

Chuck stares at his shoes as Travis hits the nail on the head...

TRAVIS

...But today, you didn't do nothin' wrong. Just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time...

(MORE)

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Now, I know you're known for bein' the old-fashioned one 'round here - you don't even carry a cell phone, for Christ's sake - but just for today, just this one time, out of respect for it bein' your last day and all, I'm gonna be the old-fashioned one, and offer you the chance to say some last words...

Travis waits for a response...

TRAVIS

...If you've got any last words, this here's the time to share 'em.

A shit-bagged, sweat-soaked Chuck peers yearningly at the sun-crisped, wind-whipped prairie badlands, soaking in every last detail, drinking it all in...

Slowly, he locks gazes with Travis...

CHUCK

H'Travis...D'you read the Batman comics?

Travis chuckles quietly under his breath.

TRAVIS

No, I don't, Chuck. I'm a grown-ass man that washes his dick when he showers...Why're you asking?

Chuck gathers his words in his head...

CHUCK

One time, Batman - after he was all done bein' Batman - he became a race car driver. And one day, he's drivin' along, in his race car, and he loses control of the vehicle... starts spinnin' around, headin' right for a big, concrete wall... And as he sees this wall, he says to himself..."This'd be a pretty good death"...

Travis half-listens to Chuck's words...

CHUCK

After Rose passed on, a good chunk of the reason for doin' what I do passed on, too.

(MORE)

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Most days, it's enough just to remind myself to eat, let alone keep folks safe. I know shit ain't good around here. That's on me. Quite frankly breaks my heart, most days. Can't say I always did a good job, but I always tried to do the right thing...

Chuck pauses, digs deep...

CHUCK

...And this, right here, well...If I died tryin' to serve and protect a few of the folks I promised to serve and protect, well...I suppose that this, right here, would be a pretty good death...

Chuck peeks discreetly to the right.

CHUCK

...But not good enough.

Travis looks...

An almost-dead, long-forgotten Kyle Keewatin raises his gun...

TRAVIS

...Oh, sh--

...BLAM!!!

Travis' corpse crumples defeatedly to the ground.

A solemnly grateful Chuck glances back at Kyle...

...who raises his gun, points it at Chuck...

...BLAM!!!

Chuck WINCES...

...as Kyle's corpse tumbles lifelessly to the dirt.

Seemingly unharmed, Chuck glances over. A solemn gaze creeps across his brow...

Johnny stands by, gun in hand.

Slowly, calmly, he points the barrel right at Chuck.

Chuck stands silent, helpless, not daring to move...

JOHNNY

Don't worry, Chuck...I don't want to shoot you...In fact, I'll give you this gun right now...Just need your help with one more thing...

A half-relieved, half-guarded gaze creeps across Chuck's nervous, sweat-soaked brow.

CHUCK

...Is it legal?

JOHNNY

Not particularly...

Chuck's brow furrows with concern...

JOHNNY

...Might involve violating a restraining order...Or two...

Johnny watches on, impatiently, as Chuck ponders the offer...

JOHNNY

...Christ, you're stubborn!... I'm pointing a gun at your goddamned head!

CHUCK

Thought you said you weren't gonna shoot me.

JOHNNY

No, I said I don't want to... Big difference.

Tension-laced silence, as a sweat-soaked, shit-bagged Chuck deliberates...

A resigned gaze creeps across Chuck's face.

CHUCK

Alright...But as soon as we're done, your ass is goin' in front of a judge, and you are rollin' over on every goddamned last one of your boys...Every dealer, drug mule, carjacker, clean-up man, crooked cop...Every goddamned last one of 'em.

JOHNNY

(apathetically)
Yeah, sure. Whatever.

Johnny takes his finger off the trigger and offers the gun to Chuck, 'grip-first'...

Slowly, cautiously, a steel-eyed Chuck paces over to Johnny, never breaking his gaze.

He reaches for the gun, slowly, deliberately...

...and Johnny hands it to him.

All good in the 'hood.

A split-second later, Chuck FAINTS, as Johnny urgently LUNGES forward to catch him.

QUICK CUTS

-- Johnny painstakingly carries a half-conscious Chuck over to the shade, SMASHES the cruiser window, grabs Chuck's insulin kit, administers an injection, and plucks a soda from the diner's glass-fronted beverage fridge.

-- As Chuck comes to, Johnny slowly helps him to his feet and hands him a soda.

-- Clutching a gun, a somewhat-refreshed Chuck systematically clears each room in the restaurant - bursting through each threshold, collapsing corners, and running walls. All empty.

EXT. THE LAST SHOT - DAY

Johnny gathers wallets, weapons and car keys from strewn-about corpses.

He plucks a set of keys from J-Lo's pocket, then curiously rests his gaze on the '76 Pontiac Parisienne parked off to the side.

MOMENTS LATER,

Johnny pops the trunk...

...It's the black duffel bag.

He pulls back the zipper and peers at its contents...

JOHNNY
(eyes glazing over)
...Well, Sweet Baby Jesus.

Satisfied, Johnny swipes the bag and slams the trunk.

INT. THE LAST SHOT - WALK-IN COOLER - DAY

It's dark.

The light flickers ON and the door bursts open as Chuck pops through the threshold. He freezes...

A pale-faced Chuck quivers, dry-heaving a bit, as tears gather in the corners of his eyes.

Johnny wanders up from behind. His gaze grows somber as he peers over Chuck's shoulder.

With a sympathetic pat on the back, Johnny ushers Chuck away from the door, kills the lights and closes the door.

QUICK CUTS

-- Chuck morosely keeps the cruiser between the lines as Johnny stares contemplatively out at the canola crops.

-- Back at Chuck's place, Johnny enjoys a long, hot, much-needed shower, as Chuck sits guard on the toilet, clutching a gun.

-- Chuck unsheathes a bright orange pair of hunting coveralls from the front closet and plucks a sturdy set of cuffs from a junk drawer.

-- A cleaned-up Chuck discreetly leads an orange-clad, shackled Johnny into the back of the cruiser parked in the driveway.

-- The cruiser bounces into a hospital parking lot, half-darkened by late-afternoon shadows.

-- Chuck helps Johnny out of the car, slamming the door behind him. The two bulls shuffle toward the main entrance, with the black duffel bag hanging portentously over Chuck's shoulder.

INT. POPLAR COUNTY HOSPITAL - FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

Chuck calmly guides Johnny through the front doors, toward the elevators...

KEN (O.S.)
Can I help you's boys?

Chuck and Johnny stop and turn...

KEN RAYMOND, 65 - a stout, bespectacled, pot-bellied, silver-haired 'rent-a-cop' - sits behind a security desk.

He gives Chuck and Johnny a thorough, cautious glance...

CHUCK
Takin' this prisoner up to three,
for some medical attention.

Ken grabs the desk phone, dials...

KEN
A'ight, let me just give the on-
duty charge nurse a quick call,
here...

...Beedlebeedlebeedle!...

Chuck and Johnny sweat bullets as Ken waits for someone to pick up...

...Beedlebeedlebeedle!...

An anxious, desperate gaze creeps across Johnny's mug...

CHUCK
...Already called 'er in. They said
to just come right up...

Ken's brow furrows...

KEN
...Who'd you talk to?

Chuck pauses...

CHUCK
...Cudmore.

KEN
...Dr. Cudmore?...

CHUCK
...Yeah...

KEN
...Thought he was windin' down...

Chuck pauses, as he crafts his response...

CHUCK

...Christ, do you think Cudmore even knows how to wind down?...The son of a bitch'll probably work the day of his own funeral. He'll yank out ten pairs of tonsils, then he'll go home, build himself a casket, and just crawl right in.

Ken chuckles silently.

Satisfied, he hangs up the phone.

...Beedlebeedlebe--

KEN

A'ight. Head on up.

With a terse nod and a smile, Chuck and Johnny mosey along.

QUICK CUTS

-- In a dark 'n' dank janitor's closet, Chuck pops off the cuffs, as a dapper, suit-clad Johnny wriggles free from the orange coveralls.

-- Chuck plops the orange bundle into a garbage canister.

-- Chuck and Johnny traverse the halls, swiftly-yet-calmly. Bright, colorful images of teddy bears and rainbows adorn the walls.

-- The twosome comes to a stop outside of a patient's suite.

INT. POPLAR COUNTY HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Johnny peeks through the threshold, as Chuck knocks gently.

ANITA DAVIS, 38 - a tough, time-weathered beauty - silently greets the guys with no semblance of a smile.

Awkward, solemn silence...

Slowly, she guides them into the room...

INT. POPLAR COUNTY HOSPITAL - PATIENT'S SUITE - DAY

Johnny looks, freezes...

Across the room, ABBIE DAVIS, 5 - a tiny, frail, doe-eyed peanut with a pale face and shaved head - rests in a large bed, with tubes and wires everywhere.

Chuck and Anita watch on as Johnny struggles to hold back tears.

JOHNNY
...Hi, sweetie...

ABBIE
...Hi...

JOHNNY
...Do you know who I am?...

Abbie glances towards her mom, who offers a guarded-yet-permissive nod.

She looks back at Johnny and nods 'yes'

JOHNNY
I haven't seen you in a real long time...

Johnny waits for a reaction. He gets none.

JOHNNY
...Gettin' to be so big...

Once more, Johnny waits for a reaction. Once more, nothing.

JOHNNY
...And beautiful.

Again, Johnny waits for a reaction...

ABBIE
...Daddy, I look like a boy.

JOHNNY
(choking back tears)
No, no, you don't, honey!...
No, you look beautiful!

Heartbreaking silence, as Johnny memorizes the details of Abbie's face...

ABBIE
...Are you comin' home with us?

Johnny searches for the right words.

JOHNNY

No, honey...I can't stay too long,
'kay?...I just had to come see you,
real quick.

Slowly, Johnny reaches into the black duffel bag...

JOHNNY

I got us something to play with,
here...Now, someone told me you
like to have tea parties...D'you
like tea parties?...

Abbie nods 'yes'.

JOHNNY

...You do?!

Johnny unsheathes an ornate tea set from the duffel bag.

A tiny smile creeps across Abbie's face.

QUICK CUTS

-- Chuck and Anita watch from afar as Johnny, Abbie, a stuffed donkey, a stuffed bear and a well-worn tiger partake in an impromptu tea party.

-- Abbie giggles and glows as her dad 'hams it up' with the stuffed animals.

-- Johnny lays beside Abbie as he reads her a classic children's book. He's genuinely impressed, as Abbie sounds out a few of the words with minimal assistance.

-- A solemn Johnny gently brushes Abbie's brow with his calloused hand. Abbie drifts off to sleep, as blood from Johnny's bullet wound slowly starts to seep through his borrowed shirt.

INT. POPLAR COUNTY HOSPITAL - PATIENT'S SUITE - DAY (DUSK)

Near the doorway, Johnny locks gazes with a weary-faced, expressionless Anita.

JOHNNY

...Thanks, 'Nita.

ANITA

I wasn't doin' this for you...
I was doin' it for her.

Anita waits for a response. She gets none.

ANITA

I have good people in my life now,
John. Your problems are not my
problems anymore. You are not
allowed to contact me, you are not
allowed to speak to me, you are not
allowed to look at me, or I will go
straight to the goddamned feds...
We clear on that?

John somberly absorbs Anita's rant as Chuck watches sympathetically...

JOHNNY

...Well, in spite of the fact I
wasn't here, you did manage to
raise a perfect, little girl.

ANITA

No, it's because you weren't here
that I managed to raise a perfect,
little girl.

Johnny stares at his shoes as what's left of his heart breaks.

Slowly, he raises his gaze.

JOHNNY

...Okay.

Slowly, he breaks his gaze and shuffles toward the door.

Chuck and Anita remain...

CHUCK

(with a nod)
Thank you, ma'am.

ANITA

...You even a real cop?

Chuck glances down at his watch...

CHUCK

...Technically, no.

Slowly, Chuck breaks his gaze and catches up with Johnny.

EXT. REAR ALLEY - NIGHT

Chuck and John walk shoulder-to-shoulder through the shadows.

CHUCK

...At some point real soon, here,
we need get you back into custody.
And then, I have some families of
the deceased I have to go see,
which I ain't lookin' forward
to...But considerin' the kind of
day we've had, and how cooperative
you've been, I was figurin' maybe
we could get you some drive-thru
first...McDonald's tastes a hell of
a lot better when it ain't bein'
smuggled into prison under
someone's armpit...Well, a little
bit better, anyways...

Chuck glances down at his shoes...

Sure as shit, his shoelace is untied again...

CHUCK

Goddamn it...

Chuck painstakingly bends over...

...then freezes.

Slowly, Chuck rises to his feet, with both hands in plain
sight, as an all-business Johnny points a HANDGUN straight at
Chuck's head...

JOHNNY

Had 'er tucked away the whole time.

An indignant gaze creeps across Chuck's defeated brow.

CHUCK

I just committed all sorts of
felonies and broke all sorts of
perfectly good laws to help you
sneak into that hospital.

JOHNNY

I know. And I'll forever be
thankful...

Awkward silence...

JOHNNY

...C'mon, Chuck. Did you really think we'd be ridin' off into the sunset together?... You're not the Lone fuckin' Ranger and I'm not fuckin' Tonto...That's not a fuckin' horse parked over there... And contrary to popular belief, this ain't the wild fuckin' west... How far'd you see this goin'?

CHUCK

...John, c'mon now.

Johnny cocks the gun. Chuck freezes.

Johnny tosses Chuck the duffel bag.

JOHNNY

There's a pencil and a pad of paper in there...Keep diggin'...

Chuck unsheathes a pad and pencil.

JOHNNY

...There you go.

Chuck moves slowly to hand over the pad and pencil.

JOHNNY

Uh-uh. Nope. I talk, you write...

Chuck obliges.

JOHNNY

...The Rusty Wheel. 4316 Railway. Gus Weston. Go in the morning, 'round lunch time, or late at night on a weekday, when it's not too busy. Order 'Mike's Special'. It ain't on the menu. With rye toast and peanut butter. And when Gus brings 'er out, ask if you can get some orange marmalade instead. And Ol' Gus'll take 'er from there.

CHUCK

...Johnny, you really want me knowin' all this?...

JOHNNY

...You think we're both walking out of here alive?...

Johnny waits for a response. He gets none.

JOHNNY

...You ever killed a man, before today?...

CHUCK

Just once. A young kid, 'bout twenty-five. Was down at the Paddock, wavin' a gun around, sayin' he was gonna shoot up the place. Me 'n' Peterson got the call, so we come rippin' down there. Told him to drop the gun... He didn't...So I shot him once... Right in the middle of the chest... Found out later that he was havin' a pretty tough go of things. His wife was steppin' out on him. She wanted to leave, and take the kids. Pretty sure he was tryin' his best to die that day. Didn't make me feel any better 'bout it, though...

Johnny absorbs Chuck's painful memoir with a sober stare.

JOHNNY

...Y'know, I'd never killed a man before today...Now, I'm up to four or five kills already...Soon to be five or six....

Johnny waits for a response. He gets none.

JOHNNY

...Do you believe in God?

CHUCK

Christ, if you're gonna shoot me, just fuckin' do i--

JOHNNY

Answer me!!!

Chuck recoils his attitude...

CHUCK

I don't know what you want me to say, John...You're the one holdin' the gun.

JOHNNY

Just answer the fuckin' question!!!

CHUCK

...Yes.

JOHNNY

...Do you think we're reunited with our loved ones when we die?...

CHUCK

...I do...

JOHNNY

...You ready to meet your wife?...

Chuck ponders Johnny's question with tears in his eyes.

CHUCK

Can't believe I'm sayin' this, but...No...I ain't.

Johnny absorbs Chuck's enlightened response with tear-filled eyes...

JOHNNY

I'll forever be grateful for what you did for me. But this is where the blacktop ends. Today was one hell of a ride, Chuck...But what happens now?...The only thing that can happen, really...One of us has made his choices and has to live with the shit hand he's been dealt...Or more specifically, the shit hand he's dealt himself...And one of us gets another crack at the 'to-do' list...And like you said, I'm the one holdin' the gun...

Chuck watches with skittish eyes as Johnny tightens his grip on the gun.

JOHNNY

You're a good man, Chuck. Just when you think you got nothin' more to give, you go and find a little more in the tank. They don't make 'em like you anymore. I'm gonna miss you...

Johnny swallows the barrel...

CHUCK

...Johnny, n--

...BANG!!!

Johnny crumples to the ground in a bloody heap as the bullet exits the top of his head.

Chuck takes a knee, staring at Johnny with tear-filled eyes. Slowly, he breaks his gaze and wanders away.

EXT. THE RUSTY WHEEL - NIGHT

Chuck strolls up to the crumbling, brick façade, as neon beer signs light the way.

INT. THE RUSTY WHEEL - NIGHT

Chuck shuffles warily through the entrance:

An empty, sad, crumbling tapestry of water-warped paneling and beer-soaked carpeting.

He perches himself on a barstool.

GUS LARSON, 64 - A big, round man in a grease-stained apron, with sweat-soaked curls on his bulbous head and a stubbly, reddish beard creeping down his neck - waddles over, clutching a small notepad and pen...

CHUCK
I'll get a 'Mike's Special'...

GUS
(scribbling on notepad)
... 'Mikes's Special'...
Not too many folks order that.

CHUCK
I can't imagine they do.

GUS
How do you want your eggs?

CHUCK
Over easy.

GUS
White, brown or rye?

CHUCK
Rye, please...With peanut butter.

A solemn, clouded gaze creeps across Gus's sweat-stained brow, quickly displaced by a polite smile.

GUS
We'll get that goin' for you right
away.

Gus waddles back into the kitchen.

Chuck stares empathetically at a grizzled, old dog lounging
in the corner, lost in his own thoughts.

MINUTES LATER

Gus shuffles out, food in hand.

He plops a big, oval-shaped plateful of lukewarm breakfast in
front of Chuck and shuffles off.

CHUCK
I don't know if peanut butter's
gonna agree with me today, Gus...

Gus freezes up...

CHUCK
...Got any orange marmalade?

A solemn gaze creeps across Gus's trembling brow, his eyes
glazing over as he holds back stubborn tears.

Slowly, he composes himself...

GUS
...I'll be right back.

Chuck watches anxiously as Gus shuffles back to the kitchen.

SECONDS LATER

Gus emerges, clutching a long crowbar.

GUS
Get up.

CHUCK
What's this?

GUS
Need you to stand up.

Reluctantly, Chuck stands, one hand on his holster, as Gus
approaches...

...then stops.

Chuck watches curiously as Gus spins the top cushion on the barstool and pops it free from its base.

Using the crowbar, Gus pries the base of the stool free from the floorboards.

He ditches the crowbar, grabs the base, tips it over...

...Phwooosh!

Dozens upon dozens of tiny, folded up pieces of paper tumble out of the base and litter the beer-stained floor.

Just as quickly as he came, Gus saunters back to the kitchen.

Chuck and the dog remain.

Slowly, warily, Chuck stoops over.

He painstakingly plucks each paper from the floor and tosses each one into the duffel bag.

QUICK CUTS

-- Chuck cruises through the darkness, staring numbly through the windshield, with the black duffel bag resting portentously on the passenger's seat.

-- The big beast glides into the moonlit concrete rampway at the sheriff's office, as bugs flock to the lone floodlight.

INT. POPLAR COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CHUCK'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Chuck hobbles through the threshold.

He tosses the duffel bag onto his desk, plops into his chair, and lets the day fade away.

He glances unenthusiastically at his phone.

He reaches for the receiver, dials...

CHUCK

(into the phone)

You've reached the former line of Chuck Massey. As of June 1st, I am no longer with the Poplar County Sheriff's Department. This mailbox is not currently being monitored. If you require immediate assistance, please call the main line at extension 1349.

(MORE)

CHUCK (CONT'D)

If this is an emergency, please
dial 911.

Mbeep!

PHONE VOICE

To accept this greeting, please
press 1. To record a new greeting,
press 2...

Mbeep! Done.

Slowly, Chuck rises from his seat and shuffles toward the
threshold.

He stops, looks back...

The duffel bag beckons like a siren's seductive song.

He opens the bag, dumps its contents onto the desk, and
uncrumples a note...

His aged brow furrows as he reads...

Org charts, names, aliases, phone numbers, addresses, licence
plate numbers, maps, delivery routes, diagrams of hiding
places, burial sites, code words...

Just like Johnny said: 'Ol' Gus'll take 'er from there.'

INT. LOCAL NEWS STUDIO - DAY

News anchor AMBER MOSELY, 35, delivers today's newscast...

AMBER

(into the phone)

...So, what did you do on your last
day of work? Shake a few hands,
clean out your desk, and take off
five minutes early?

(MORE)

AMBER (CONT'D)

Not the case for 76-year-old Poplar County Sheriff, Chuck Massey, who single-handedly infiltrated one of biggest and most notoriously-dangerous drug-smuggling operations in the country, resulting in the third-biggest drug bust in U.S. history - and the largest for a non-port city - with 72 arrests on 315 total charges, with 412 illegal firearms, 30.7 million dollars in cash and other proceeds of crime seized, and quantities of meth, cocaine and other illegal substances with a market value totaling upwards of 1.7 billion dollars...

MONTAGE OF SHOTS (OVER NEWS BROADCAST, ABOVE)

-- A gaggle of bug-eyed, black-toothed tweakers run for cover as a sturdy pack of S.W.A.T. team officers BURST into a meth lab.

-- A cop restrains an erratic drug dog as his partner raises the rolling door on an outdoor storage unit absolutely stacked full of hard drugs.

-- Two undercover street cops arrest a thuggish dealer.

-- A desk officer tosses a large Ziploc baggie of cocaine into an already jam-packed evidence locker.

-- A smug-faced cop putzes away at his desk, gabbing on the phone. He glances up, freezes, as two foreboding, fully-uniformed officers throw him in cuffs and read him his rights.

-- Chuck, clad in street clothes, traverses a back alley in a rough neighborhood on foot. He ducks into a weed-infested rear driveway, pulls up a sidewalk block...and extracts a thick stack of well-wrapped cash.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY (DAWN)

The early-morning prairie sun paints the room.

The clock reads: '7:45'. TV's on.

ON THE SCREEN - Amber winds up the segment...

AMBER (V.O.)

(continues)

...When asked for comment, Massey said to reporters, "As of five o'clock on May 31st, I'm now retired. Go talk to someone else."

...Click.

Clad in his trusty undershirt and plaid pyjama bottoms, brushing his teeth, Chuck KILLS the TV and darts into the bathroom.

QUICK CUTS

-- Chuck draws up some insulin, taps the syringe, and pierces his abdomen.

-- Chuck drags a razor across his chin and cheeks.

-- Chuck splashes a healthy dollop of Brut into his palms and slathers it onto his face and neck.

-- Chuck saunters down the staircase, into the...

LIVING ROOM,

Where he's greeted by Deb and Reece.

CHUCK

(joshingly)

...Where's my damn cake?

He gives his daughter a heartfelt hug.

Reece goes in for a handshake...

CHUCK

...Put that shit away.

...while Chuck goes in for a hug.

QUICK CUTS

-- Chuck grabs his Stetson and heads out the door. A well-maintained, '70s-era pickup truck brightens up the driveway.

-- Chuck cruises through town. A gaggle of jubilant children lend a splash of life to the rusted-out play structures.

-- The sturdy pickup ZOOMS past the familiar, old "LAST SHOT" plywood sign, with the smaller, rope-hung "OPEN" plank dangling proudly.

EXT. DAVIS HOUSE - DAY

A modest bungalow with an unkempt, dandelion-riddled lawn and rusty swing set in the back rests near the very edge of town.

Chuck's truck slows to a stop by the front curb.

MOMENTS LATER

Chuck raps on the screen door...

...and Anita answers.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Chuck fretfully follows Anita through the threshold...

Every spare surface is adorned with wilted bouquets, sympathy cards, a stuffed donkey, a stuffed bear, a well-worn tiger, and photos of happier times.

ANITA

...Can I fetch you a coffee?

CHUCK

No, that's a'ight...

Awkward silence...

CHUCK

...My condolences.

ANITA

Thanks...

Awkward silence...

CHUCK

Not just for your daughter, but...
For John, too...

A guarded gaze creeps across Anita's weathered brow...

ANITA

John's been gone for quite some time. This just means he's never comin' back.

CHUCK

Yeah, well...Sorry, all the same.

More awkward silence...

CHUCK

He wanted you to have this...

Chuck unsheathes a crumpled-up, paper-bagged bundle and places it on the coffee table.

Anita stares aloofly at the ample packet...

ANITA

...I can't say that I have much use for it.

CHUCK

'Nita, don't cut your nose off to spite your face. The way I see it, you've already earned this. I had to spend one day with his stubborn ass. You've had to put up with his shit for years.

Chuck and Anita share a brief smile and a forced chuckle.

CHUCK

...If you don't have much use for it, maybe you know of some folks who might.

A resigned gaze creeps across Anita's face.

Awkward silence...

CHUCK

Well, I'd best be headin' along...

The two exchange terse nods and stiff smiles as Chuck moseys toward the door.

As he reaches for the door knob, muffled cries radiate from the living room...

He turns, and locks sympathetic gazes with Anita, as she tries to hold it together...

Slowly, he wanders over, as she loses it.

ANITA
(crying profusely)
...I'm tryin'!...I'm tryin' to move
on, and put one foot in front of
the other, but I can't!...Can't
even make it to the mailbox most
days!...And with Johnny, I'm tryin'
to not care, but I do!...

Anita collapses onto Chuck's shoulders, as he consoles her in
an awkward-yet-heartfelt hug.

CHUCK
The brain and the heart ain't
always on the same page. You miss
him 'cause he's a good man. Even
though he was an asshole.

Slowly, she wipes away the tears from her reddened face.

She glances at a nearby photo of her and Abbie.

ANITA
I miss her so much...

Chuck can't find the words.

ANITA
How do you do it, Chuck?...How does
one person deal with so much loss?

Chuck sincerely ponders the question...

CHUCK
You didn't lose her, 'Nita...
You know exactly where she is...
She's with her daddy.

Anita smiles warmly through tears. Chuck reciprocates.

Slowly, he breaks his gaze and heads out the door.

INT. CHUCK'S TRUCK - DAY - TRAVELLING

Chuck cruises along the sun-drenched highway - one hand on
the wheel, one arm perched casually on the window jamb.

All things considered, it's a glorious day.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Back at Anita's place, a heartwarming, framed picture of a smiling Anita and a jubilant Abbie rests on the end table.

On the far right edge of the cropped photo, right next to Abbie, partially covered by the frame, is a man's arm.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Chuck pauses in front of large glass double-doors, closing his weary eyes as he takes a deep, cleansing breath.

Somewhat resignedly, somewhat reluctantly, he enters.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - MAIN RECEPTION

Chuck approaches a sterile-looking receptionist's desk.

He's greeted by the smiling face of LEAH BARNES, 24 - prim, polished and professional.

LEAH
...Good morning.

CHUCK
Chuck Massey. Here to see, uh...
Scott Clark.

LEAH
Oh. Right this way.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - AN OFFICE

SCOTT CLARK, 34 - clean-cut and friendly-faced - leads Chuck through the threshold as he flips on the lights.

Chuck discerningly surveys the place...

It's a mostly-empty office.

CHUCK
...Don't I get a phone?

SCOTT
(suddenly remembers)
Yes...

Scott reaches into his pocket, unsheathes an iPhone, and hands it to Chuck.

A furrow-browed Chuck stares at the peculiar device...

SCOTT
...Just push 'Phone', then
'Voicemail' to dial in...Password's
'1234', though you'll probably want
to change that...

Scott hovers as Chuck fumbles through the prompts...

CHUCK
(sourly)
I got 'er...

Scott buggers off.

Chuck holds the phone up to his face...

CHUCK
...You've reached Chuck Massey,
Special Agent with the DEA Office
of Intelligence, for the date of
Tuesday, September 5th. Can't come
to the phone right now, so please
leave your name, number and a short
message after the 'beep'...

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Officers of the law, special agents, and a smattering of
civilian staff buzz in and out of the big, glass hive as the
still-rising sun casts mid-morning shadows across the grass.

An official-looking "Drug Enforcement Administration" sign
looms off to the side.

CHUCK (V.O.)
...If you require immediate
assistance, please press '0'. If
this is an emergency, please dial
911.

...Mbeep!

FADE OUT.