



THE PURSUIT

By

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FADE IN:

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

OVERHEAD POV. "Big Muddy" crawling King Snake through lush green grids of farmland.

Something PLOWS through one of the grids...

A CAR racing parallel to the river, northbound on a hellbent ride straight through a cotton field.

EXT. COTTON FIELDS - DAY

LOWER ANGLE on the car, a "Johnny Cash black" 1970 Dodge Challenger R/T, strewing a wake of dust and plants, tearing ass like a screaming jack-hammer at wide open throttle.

EXT. COUNTY ROAD - DAY

Egg-frying hot black asphalt. The Dodge bursts out of the field and stops, big V-8 burbling in the heat.

Crocodile-eyed REED PARSONS is at the wheel, a little beat up, nervous, blinking sweat and dust as he checks the road.

It's empty in both directions. Nothing moving but flies.

Then Parsons notices something in the stillness, a feeling which makes him reach past his busted, bleeding lip into his mouth and wriggle out... a broken, bloody TOOTH.

PARSONS
You son-of-a-bitch...
(looks into the
backseat)
You broke my crown.

IN THE BACKSEAT

A bloodied, beaten PRISON GUARD is stuffed, hog-tied and gaffer taped, pants stained with piss, weeping, pale and clammy with fear.

Parsons punches him hard in the face, then stops as a shrill whine rises with the waves of heat on the horizon...

SIRENS.

Parsons tosses his broken tooth out the window and stomps the gas, racing away past a road sign full of bullet holes...

"WELCOME TO ARKANSAS."

EXT. WEST TEXAS - DAWN

Flat, wide open, desolate plains as far as the eye can see.

OIL PUMPS move up and down in monotonous harmony, like giant ravens pecking the ground.

Super: "Friday, July 2."

A used CAR hurtles into view, moving fast.

EXT. BROKEN OIL PUMP - DAWN

The only still one for miles. Dissembled parts everywhere.

A WELDER hunches over a steel beam, working alone to repair a broken support. An acetylene torch burns like a flare in his hands. His mid-'90's Ford F-250 pickup is parked nearby.

The car turns off the main road to the pump site.

The welder sees it, shuts off his torch and lifts his mask.

COLE STANTON, lean and wiry, crew cut, All-American high-school quarterback good looks... without the smile.

The car stops and a pretty young woman gets out... LINDA.

She looks at Cole, hesitant... a reluctant messenger.

MOMENTS LATER

Cole and Linda stand a few uncomfortable feet apart at the car, like two people who aren't supposed to be together.

LINDA

I didn't want you to hear it from
anyone else. Part of me didn't want
you to hear it at all...

Cole stares at distant oil pumps bobbing up and down.

COLE (CONT'D)

If anyone asks, tell them I went
down to Corpus on a fishing trip.

Linda's eyes start to water. Cole quickly turns to go, but she puts a hand on his arm, stopping him.

LINDA

Don't do this.

Cole looks at her like they've been over it already.

COLE
I'll be okay. I'll call you from
the road.

He gets into his pickup truck and drives away.

EXT. COLE'S HOUSE - TEXAS - DAY

Flat as the surrounding landscape. Faded paint. Shades drawn tight like eyes shut against the blazing sun.

Cole's pickup parked out front.

INT. CLOSET - SAME

Clothes in dry cleaner's plastic hang thick like body bags.

Cole makes a hole and finds a TRUNK at the back of the closet. Racing, he twists the dial on a pad lock. Opens it.

INSIDE is a bound, dog-eared FILE FOLDER, bursting with old newspaper clippings and documents.

INT. DINING ROOM

A ROAD MAP snaps open on the table.

Hand-written notes are scrawled everywhere, marking towns, dates, times, routes of travel in different colors.

Cole's FINGER finds "Pollack, Louisiana" and traces a path north to the region where Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky and Illinois touch the Mississippi River.

CLOSE ON A SMALL DOT inked on the map. Next to it in Cole's hand is written a date and a single word... **"Captured."**

COLE looks down at it, holding his breath.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Hurrying, Cole carries a packed DUFFLE BAG. Reaches for the door knob but stops, catching something out of the corner of his eye...

ACROSS THE ROOM, a clean, empty spot on the wall in the shape of a cross... Where a Crucifix used to hang.

Cole looks at it, impassive, then turns and hurries out.

EXT. TOWN HOUSE - NEW ORLEANS - DAY

We can HEAR TV NEWS on inside. And another sound... SEX.

INT. BEDROOM - NEW ORLEANS APARTMENT - DAY

Well-appointed, Southern gentry. All the finest finery.

ON THE FOUR-POSTER BED, CLEVE NUGENT, disheveled, good-looking, bad boy ladies man, sport-fucks PRISCILLA, 50, wearing nothing but diamonds.

NUGENT

Never seen you at the hotel before.

PRISCILLA

I saw you once. I was with my husband.

NUGENT

I wrote a country song about my ex-wife. "I'm So Miserable Without You, It's Almost Like You're Here."

CUT TO - LATER

Priscilla goes into the bathroom and starts the SHOWER.

Nugent waits until she shuts the bathroom door behind her, then jumps out of bed and quickly gets dressed. He goes through bureau drawers, snatching jewelry, grabbing pieces of silver, wads of cash, catching a glimpse of the TV now:

A REPORTER talks over a graphic of a map of Louisiana with the words "PRISON BREAK" blazed across the top.

Nugent's just about to look away when...

A MAN'S PICTURE COMES UP. Reed Parsons.

Shocked, Nugent drops a handful of jewelry and stares.

REPORTER (ON TV)

...Parsons, an inmate at the Federal Penitentiary in Pollock, Louisiana, escaped from a nearby county hospital where he had been admitted for emergency surgery after now apparently faking an attack of appendicitis...

Nugent is riveted.

INT. BATHROOM - NEW ORLEANS APARTMENT - DAY

Priscilla leans out the shower curtain and yells.

PRISCILLA
You coming in or not?

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - DAY

NUGENT pulls out from the alley in a silver 1975 Corvette Stingray with Tennessee plates. He reaches under the driver's seat and retrieves a Colt Python .357 revolver.

He loads it right out in the open, nonchalant, then tucks it back under the seat and drives.

EXT. RURAL GAS STATION - ARKANSAS - DAY

CRIME SCENE. Cops, yellow tape.

A silver CROWN VIC Police Interceptor pulls up.

The driver, U.S. MARSHALL DINA DOBBINS, sexy, driven, whip smart rookie, flashes a badge to a COP.

DOBBINS
Dobbins. U.S. Marshall's office.

U.S. MARSHALL JOHN MCCLELLAN, gruff, lean, gentleman veteran in pressed suit and tie, rides shotgun.

The cop waves them through.

INT. RURAL GAS STATION GARAGE - DAY

The black Dodge Challenger R/T is moving down on the LIFT.

As it reaches the floor, we see the now very dead MAINTENANCE MAN stiff in the driver's seat, rigid dead hands posed clutching the steering wheel, sunglasses on his face.

McClellan and Dobbins take it in.

MCCLELLAN
Guess our fugitive's a funny man.

EXT. RURAL GAS STATION - DAY

A MAP OPENS onto a car hood.

McClellan studies it, rolling something around in his closed fist. Dobbins reads from a file jacket.

DOBBINS

Funny man's last gig was the Rio
Bravo Savings and Loan in Midway,
Texas. Took \$1.2 million in cash,
popped three civilians on his way
out, eluded capture for 16 days.

MCCLELLAN

(eyes on his map)
Fifty-thousand dollars.

DOBBINS

What?

MCCLELLAN

That's all Parsons had on him when
he was captured. Fifty grand.

Dobbins looks at the file, surprised that McClellan is already
ahead of her. She nods, keeps reading.

DOBBINS

Said he spent it all at two casinos
and on a couple hookers in Memphis.

McClellan looks up from his map.

MCCLELLAN

You ever had a Memphis hooker,
Marshall Dobbins?

Dobbins stares at the older man for a beat, unsure.

DOBBINS

I'm from Chicago, sir.

McClellan nods, like he expected as much.

MCCLELLAN

Put it this way... Even the dumbest,
Stag-drinking, coon-screwing con
knows better than to pay twenty-five
cents for a dime bag.

(beat)

That money's still out there. And
Parsons is going to get it.

A bald, cigar-chewing ARKANSAS COP interrupts.

ARKANSAS COP

Coroner said victim's been drawing
flies since about ten last p m. Found
two packs worth of butts out back,
empty Coke cans, Slim-Jim wrappers,
and a fresh crap in the commode--

DOBBINS
They don't teach you to flush in
prison?

But McClellan's thoughts are elsewhere...

MCCLELLAN
He spent the night here.

DOBBINS
Why would he do that? APB didn't
extend this far north until today.

MCCLELLAN
He was waiting for someone...

McClellan checks his map again, searching, then stabs his
finger on the river, letting the thing he's been rolling
around in his hand drop onto the map like a pebble...

Parson's broken TOOTH.

MCCLELLAN (CONT'D)
Or something.

EXT. FERRY BOAT RAMP - MISSISSIPPI RIVER - DAY

TWO CARS wait, parked at the edge of the river on a concrete
slab. A Chevy LUMINA comes over the rise in the road, pulls
up behind them and parks.

PARSONS GETS OUT. He's wearing different clothes now, and
his face has been cleaned up.

He looks to see THE FERRY BOAT, a small river tug pushing a
flat barge that ferries cars across the mile-wide river.

Parsons turns, hyper-aware of an approaching car...

It's just a MINI VAN. It parks behind the Lumina.

A FAMILY MAN gets out of the Mini Van, tapping a pack of
cigarettes. Parsons gestures to him.

PARSONS
Bum a smoke?

Family Man nods, offering the pack. Parsons takes a
cigarette, leans in for a light from Family Man...

FAMILY MAN
(swatting a mosquito)
Bugs are bad this year.

As Parsons lights his cigarette, he spots another vehicle coming over the rise in the road...

This one's an ARKANSAS STATE TROOPER'S CAR. It slows to a crawl under the hot midday sun.

Parsons steps back from the lighter, takes a big drag.

PARSONS
Bugs are bad every year.

The Trooper's car parks behind the Mini Van. The lone TROOPER, a stump of muscle with a buzz cut, gets out and goes to the Lumina. Parsons watches the ferry boat dock and lower its ramp. He takes a big drag off his smoke, savoring it.

TROOPER (O.S.)
Sir, is this your vehicle?

Parsons flicks the cigarette into the river, turns.

PARSONS
There a problem, officer?

TROOPER
I need to see your license and
registration, please.

The other drivers start their cars and drive onto the ferry.

PARSONS
But I'm gonna miss my ferry ride.

TROOPER
Ferry runs 'til sundown. License
and registration, sir.

Parsons nods and goes to the Lumina. He opens the glove box and pulls out the owner's manual.

The ferry boat CREWMAN closes the gate at the end of the barge, then give a "thumbs up" to the CAPTAIN in the tug.

The tug REVS UP its engines and the FERRY DEPARTS.

Parsons hands a card to the Trooper.

TROOPER (CONT'D)
This is an insurance card, sir--

Parsons PUNCHES the Trooper in the face, breaking his nose.

Trooper goes for his gun, but Parsons DROPS HIM with a kick to his knee. Trooper crumples into the weeds alongside the car. Parsons is on him, fighting for his gun.

CUT TO: A POV OF THE TWO CARS FROM A DISTANCE

The Lumina and the Trooper's car, parked.

We hear FOUR RAPID POPS. Then Parsons stands up out of the weeds at the road side, tucking the Trooper's gun into his pants. The trooper's RADIO crackles...

RADIO VOICE (O.S.)
Two-seven, respond... Two-seven,
respond... You read me, Jeff?...

Parsons looks at the departing ferry, now halfway across the river. He glances back up the road, looking for more approaching cars. Then he looks back at that river...

EXT. WATER SURFACE - RIVER - DAY

PARSONS POPS UP right in front of us, grabs a floating tree branch and holds on. Coughing, he gets his breath, takes a look around and stays low in the water, treading towards the opposite bank as the current sweeps him down river.

EXT. COUNTY ROAD - DAY

Winding, wooded. Cole's truck races along, fast. TWO ARKANSAS STATE TROOPER CARS pass him, going faster.

Cole, road-weary and stiff from a night behind the wheel, glances down at his map again.

CLOSE ON THE SAME SPOT on the map that McClellan fingered.

On Cole's map it's marked "Ferry."

INT. COLE'S TRUCK - MOVING - SAME

Cole comes around a corner to see a line of STOPPED CARS.

It's a ROADBLOCK. State cops at the head of the line. Cole slows, stops. One LOCAL DEPUTY walks down the line of cars, talking to the drivers. Cole gets out, waits by his truck for the Local Deputy to reach him.

LOCAL DEPUTY
Ferry's closed, sir.

COLE
What happened?

LOCAL DEPUTY
Accident. Be about two hours before
you can pass.

Cole looks down the road to see a TOW TRUCK haul the waterlogged Trooper's Car onto a flat bed more cop cars pass by, leading McClellan and Dobbins in their Crown Vic.

COLE

I'll wait.

EXT. FERRY BOAT BARGE - RIVER - DUSK

The ferry moves out across the river.

Cole is on board, out of his truck, leaning on the rail, watching the swift current rush by beneath him.

NUGENT (O.S.)

River's deep here...

Cole turns to see Nugent standing nearby at the rail.

NUGENT (CONT'D)

But it's the current that kills you.
At least that's what they say...

Cole doesn't respond, doesn't want to engage. Nugent glances at the Texas plates on Cole's truck.

NUGENT (CONT'D)

What brings you up this way?

Cole keeps his eyes on the riverbank.

COLE

Hunting trip.

NUGENT

I'm visiting family in Memphis.
Figured I'd take the slow ride,
drive through "The Crossroads." You
know, where that blues guitarist--
what's his name--where he sold his
soul to the devil? Great story. Not
a big fan of the music, though. The
Blues is for whiskey drinkers. I've
always been more of a tequila man,
myself--

COLE

You're talking to me like I'm somebody
who cares.

Nugent pauses at the harsh interruption.

NUGENT

I'm just making conversation.

COLE

I'm not.

Nugent's quiet. He stares coldly, then let's it go.

NUGENT

Happy hunting.

Nugent moves away.

Cole watches the opposite shore recede.

EXT. FERRY BOAT RAMP - OPPOSITE SHORE - DUSK

The ferry drops its ramp.

ATTENDANT

Welcome to Mississippi...

Nugent roars away in his Vette as Cole starts his truck.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Cole passes a GAS STATION where Nugent fills up the Vette. Nugent waves like an old buddy. Cole drives on, impassive.

POV FROM INSIDE THE GAS STATION:

Through the glass door we can see Nugent replace the nozzle and head inside to pay. But he stops at the sight of something on the door...

A SMALL POSTER. Only the back of it is visible to us. But whatever's on the front has Nugent's attention.

Nugent tears the poster off the door, folds it up and puts it into his pocket before he goes inside to pay.

EXT. MAIN STREET - SMALL TOWN MISSISSIPPI - NIGHT

Cole's truck is parked. Cole talks on a PAY PHONE.

COLE

Can I speak to him?

OLD VOICE (O.S.)

He don't live here no more.

CUT TO - ANOTHER CALL

ANGRY VOICE (O.S.)

You find him, tell him to call me--

SIX CALLS LATER:

RECORDED VOICE (O.S.)
You've reached a number that is no
longer in service--

CLOSE ON COLE'S NOTE PAD - a list of names and phone numbers with lines drawn through them. Cole draws a line through the last one, frustrated.

A sharp POP startles him. He looks up to see a Jeep full of TEENS lighting off bottle rockets as they drive by.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Cole puts bottled water on the counter.

A SOUTHERN KID rings him up.

SOUTHERN KID
Headed to Pritchard?

Cole gives him a look.

Southern Kid moves aside and points to the small POSTER on the wall behind him - the same poster that Nugent saw on the gas station door. Now we see the front of it with Cole - it's announcing the "PRITCHARD COUNTY FAIR."

SOUTHERN KID (CONT'D)
Be there myself if I didn't have to
work. Midget cars ran last night--

Southern Kid looks up to see that Cole is gone. His water has been left behind on the counter.

EXT. LEVEE ROAD - NIGHT

POV FROM ABOVE:

Cole's truck speeds along the earthen embankment built to hold back the flood waters. His headlights plow a path through the darkness while below and off to the side...

THE RIVER glistens shiny black in the night.

EXT. COUNTRY FAIR - NIGHT

Crazy rides. Midway, teeming with people.

American flags and 4th of July bunting draped everywhere.

Loud sounds of MOTOR SPORTS coming from a nearby grandstands.

EXT. FAIRGROUND PARKING - NIGHT

Cole pulls into the big grassy parking area.

He drives beyond the last row of cars, out into an empty part of the field and parks in the darkness.

He sits still in the pickup truck, looking at the lights of the fairgrounds, listening to the distinctly idyllic sounds of summer in America - the lilting sing-song of music, laughter, voices playing.

He flips on a map light, looks at a piece of paper from his file. A POLICE REPORT. We glimpse phrases like, "...alibi corroborated..." "...amusement company employee..." And a name..."Kenny Bell." Cole shuts off the map light, looks up at the night sky, clear and clean and full of stars.

A peaceful stillness comes over him. Then he moves into deliberate, calm action, like a man on a mission:

He strips off his T-shirt. Reaches into his duffle bag and pulls out a SHOULDER HOLSTER...

Slides it on. Reaches back into his bag and pulls out two SPRINGFIELD ARMORY TRP .45 caliber automatic pistols...

Digs out extra magazines...

Buttons up a long-sleeved denim shirt over it all.

EXT. MIDWAY - COUNTY FAIR - NIGHT

Cole mixes into the CROWD. Goes to a VENDOR, leans in and asks him something. The Vendor points him to the Ferris Wheel. Cole nods and goes, passing a SHOOTING GALLERY where KIDS shoot water guns into holes to blow up balloons...

NUGENT IS SHOOTING. He spots Cole walking by, but Cole doesn't see him. Even as Nugent keeps his eyes on Cole, his gun fires straight into the hole, inflating his balloon.

A bell RINGS. Nugent wins.

The HAWKER passes him a STUFFED ANIMAL which he hands off to a couple of young GIRLS who thank him as he goes on his way.

EXT. FERRIS WHEEL - COUNTY FAIR - NIGHT

Cole steps to the head of the line into the face of a grizzly biker type, GIFFORD, "Uncle Sam" hat, taking tickets.

COLE
You Gifford?

GIFFORD
Who's asking?

COLE
Friend of Kenny Bell's.

GIFFORD
Never heard of him.

COLE
You sure about that?

Gifford shoots Cole a long cold look.

GIFFORD
Want to ask me again?

Cole meets his gaze for a beat.

COLE
No. I believe you.

Cole leaves. Gifford watches him disappear into the crowd, then turns and hands off the ticket box to a YOUNG CARNY and slips away from the ferris wheel.

EXT. TENT - COUNTY FAIR - NIGHT

From shadows behind the tent, Cole watches Gifford leave the ferris wheel and move quickly through the crowd.

Cole follows.

A beat passes and Nugent moves by, tailing Cole.

EXT. TILT A WHIRL - NIGHT

KENNY BELL, mullet-headed trailer trash, measures KIDS against a stick to see if they're tall enough to ride.

KENNY
(irritated)
One at a time...

Kenny glances up to see Gifford approaching, concerned.

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

A 19 year old TWEEKER GIRL straddles Parsons on the couch with her skirt hiked up, grinding him into next week.

There are sudden frantic KNOCKS at the door. Parsons pushes the girl off of him.

KENNY (O.S.)
Open up, Reed.

Parsons pulls up his pants, grabs a .38 SPECIAL and opens the door. Kenny comes in, nervous.

PARSONS
Find me a car yet?

KENNY
Somebody's looking for you.

PARSONS
Cops?

KENNY
Don't know. Just one guy.

Parsons shoves Kenny out of the way, grabs a box of bullets and empties it into both pants pockets, hurrying.

PARSONS
Did you call Drew?

KENNY
He said they'll be there.

COLE (O.S.)
(yell from outside)
Reed Parsons!

Parsons pulls Tweeker Girl out of the way and goes to the window where he peers around the edge of the shade...

OUTSIDE, Cole stands like a gunfighter half-hidden in shadow.

COLE (CONT'D)
You coming out, or am I coming in?!

PARSONS
What the...?

KENNY
Who is that?

PARSONS
(confused)
Hell if I know...

He steps back from the window, cocks the gun, looks at Kenny.

PARSONS (CONT'D)
But you led him right to me.

KENNY
Hold on, Reed--

Parsons SHOOTS Kenny point blank in the chest.

Tweeker Girl SCREAMS, runs out the door.

EXT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Cole draws both his .45's as the trailer door opens, but has to hold his fire as Tweeker Girl bolts out, screaming.

Cole spots Parsons sprinting away behind her. He chases.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - NIGHT

The back lot, full of parked trailers, trucks, fork-lifts.

Parsons HURTLES A FENCE and sprints through.

A beat later, COLE COMES over the fence, sees...

PARSONS running for the nearby GRANDSTANDS.

EXT. DIRT RACING TRACK - NIGHT

INSIDE THE GRANDSTANDS, two lines of JUNKED CARS stretch the length of the infield.

TWO MONSTER TRUCKS drive over the cars to the ROAR of a packed crowd.

Parsons comes into the grandstands. Glances back to see Cole following...

Pulls out his gun and SHOOTS at Cole.

SCREAMS. People SCATTER and RUN in a mass panic.

Cole tries to return fire but can't get a clean shot through the crowd.

A MONSTER TRUCK slides to a stop.

Parsons climbs up to the cab of the Monster Truck and sticks his gun in at the DRIVER.

PARSONS
Get out!

The driver DIVES out the other side. Parsons takes the wheel.

Cole reloads as the big truck LURCHES FORWARD, makes a U-turn and drives right towards him--

INT. MONSTER TRUCK CAB - MOVING - SAME

Parsons SHIFTS, speeds up, aims right for Cole.

EXT. DIRT TRACK - SAME

Cole gets up and RUNS. The truck bears down.

Cole dives to the ground as it rolls over him, giant wheels clawing divots on either side.

Parsons slides to a stop. Leans out the window, looking for Cole.

Cole rolls out from under the other side of the truck and OPENS FIRE.

Parsons PUNCHES IT straight for the tall wooden fence at the back of the track...

BUSTS through.

EXT. GRANDSTANDS - NIGHT

People RUSH from the grandstands in a panic.

Cole spots an idling MACK TRUCK tractor trailer cab behind the pits. Runs to it, gets in.

Grinds the gears. Finds one. Looks ahead. FLOORS IT.

The truck GOES BACKWARDS. Cole hits the brakes, grinds through the gears, trying again. This time he scores...

Smoke blasts from the stacks as the big truck drags a giant "donut" in the dirt and hauls after Parsons.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - NIGHT

The MONSTER TRUCK crashes through another fence, bounces onto pavement.

Parsons glances back at the chaos in the fairgrounds.

Looks like he's free and clear for the moment.

He looks ahead again just in time to see--COLE IN THE MACK TRUCK, steaming out of an intersection.

Parsons SWERVES. But he's too late...

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - NIGHT

SLAM! The Mack Truck CLIPS one of the Monster's rear tires.

Knocking the ass of the Monster Truck sideways.

Parsons fights to hold the wheel as the big truck TIPS.

A WHEEL DIGS IN and the truck rights itself. Moves.

INT. MACK TRUCK AND MONSTER TRUCK - MOVING - NIGHT

Cole swings around, downshifts, pours on the gas.

Parsons glances back, sees the Mack Truck gaining.

Cole RAMS the back of the Monster Truck.

Parsons CUTS right, down a steep EMBANKMENT, out onto--

TOWN STREETS

The MACK TRUCK and the MONSTER TRUCK fight it out, shoving each other side-to-side across the street, bouncing off cars and awnings, clipping light posts and mailboxes, until-- Parsons DRIVES UP onto the back of the Mack Truck.

Plants a BIG WHEEL right on the trailer hitch.

Cole fights for control as the Monster Truck shoves him towards a row of Main Street stores.

He braces himself.

The Mack Truck SMASHES through the front window of a--

INT. FURNITURE STORE - NIGHT

CRASHING through the showroom at 50 mph. Cheap dining room sets splinter like firewood. Couches and chairs fly like bowling pins. The truck rams into the back wall and dies.

EXT. MAIN STREET - PRITCHARD - NIGHT

The Monster Truck wobbles, tilts, FLIPS OVER and slides on its roof the rest of the way down main street until it comes to a stop under a lone TRAFFIC LIGHT. The light turns RED.

EXT. FURNITURE STORE - NIGHT

Cole climbs over broken furniture out into the street.

Sees the Monster Truck on its back. Runs to it.

Sticks his gun into the cab...

But it's empty. Parsons has split. Frantic, Cole looks around for him. Nothing but SIRENS in the distance.

SCREECH!!

NUGENT'S VETTE slides to a stop right next to Cole.

NUGENT
You need a ride?

Cole hesitates. The SIRENS get louder.

NUGENT (CONT'D)
Sounds like you need a ride.

Cole opens the door and gets in. Nugent PEELS OUT.

EXT. I-HOP - NIGHT

Cole's pickup and Nugent's Vette are parked outside.

INT. I-HOP - NIGHT

Cole and Nugent sit across a booth from each other.

Neither man speaks. Cole sits with a cup of coffee in front of him, staring at Nugent who unabashedly eats a huge meal.

NUGENT
First time driving a big rig?

Cole doesn't respond, watches Nugent like a poker player.

NUGENT (CONT'D)
Don't feel too bad: they handle a
whole lot better with the trailer on
'em--

COLE
What do you want?

Nugent stops eating, starts working a toothpick.

NUGENT
Same as you. State of Louisiana pays
a two-fifty K reward for the return
of any convict who's escaped its
boundaries. I collect rewards.

COLE
I'm not a bounty hunter. I'm not in
it for the money.

NUGENT
We're all in it for the money.

COLE
I'm taking him back to prison.

Cole doesn't say a word, just keeps eating.

NUGENT
You a Marshall or something? I mean,
you look like a cop, but cops don't
usually run from other cops.

COLE
(deadpan)
I'm no Marshall. I was just up late
the other night, caught a Billy Jack
marathon on TNT, decided to spend my
Fourth of July weekend on a crusade
for justice.

Nugent doesn't laugh, just stares at Cole.

NUGENT
Crusades get bloody.

COLE
Then maybe you better go home...
before you get any on you.

Nugent shakes his head, grinning.

NUGENT
No way. You might hit somebody with
those pistols of yours next time.
That happens, they're liable to slap
your picture on a wanted poster. I
get lucky, I can double down this
trip--

Cole puts down his empty coffee cup, stares cold at Nugent.
Nugent eyes Cole's file FOLDER on the seat next to Cole.

NUGENT (CONT'D)
Or, we could pool our resources and
go after him together. Split the
prize money.

COLE
I told you: this isn't about money.

Nugent cracks a smile.

NUGENT

Setting things right might earn you miles in the next world, but money's what matters here on earth. Only a fool acts like it doesn't.

COLE

Then I'm the biggest fool you ever saw.

The waitress drops Cole's credit card receipt on the table. Nugent looks surprised that Cole already took care of it.

COLE (CONT'D)

We're even now.

Cole grabs his folder, stands and walks out of the diner.

THROUGH THE WINDOW, Nugent watches Cole get into his truck and drive away.

WAITRESS

Get you anything else?

Nugent sees something in the waitress's apron - the 'Merchant Copy' of Cole's CREDIT CARD receipt sticking out of her pocket. Nugent smiles, looks up at her face.

She's kind of cute... Cute enough.

NUGENT

I'm sure you can...
(reading her name tag)
Darlene?

INT. FURNITURE STORE - NIGHT

Crime scene. McClellan watches a COP dust for prints inside the cab of the wrecked MACK TRUCK. Dobbins comes up.

MCCLELLAN

Talk to me, Chicago.

DOBBINS

Dead man back at the fairground is one Kenny Bell, Parsons's cousin. Someone saw "Cuz" making calls from a pay phone before it went down.

MCCLELLAN

These Richard Craniums think only cell phones leave trails.

DOBBINS

Phone company's dumping the line.

MCCLELLAN
(pointing to the Mack)
What about "East Bound and Down"
over here?

DOBBINS
Witnesses described a white male,
late 20's/early 30's, with two .45
caliber pistols for hands.

She hands him something that looks like an inflatable pillow -
it's an evidence bag bursting with Cole's empty .45 shell
casings. McClellan looks at it, then holds it up to her.

MCCLELLAN
Tell me what you see.

Dobbins doesn't get it.

DOBBINS
A bag of empty shell casings?

MCCLELLAN
Wrong. What you see here are
issues...

He tosses the bag back to her.

MCCLELLAN (CONT'D)
Big ones.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI MIKE'S MOTOR INN - NIGHT

Low rent. Cole's truck is parked under a tree, out of sight.

INT. COLE'S ROOM - MISSISSIPPI MIKE'S MOTOR INN - NIGHT

Cole sits in a chair, on the phone.

COLE
What do they know?

INT. SOME KIND OF OFFICE BUILDING - TEXAS - NIGHT

Linda is on her cell phone in the hallway, speaking softly.

LINDA
Nothing.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THEM.

COLE
Then there's nothing to worry about,
is there.

LINDA
I want you back here safe and sound,
Cole. That's more than enough to
worry about.

Cole looks at a note pad.

COLE
Run a plate for me. Tennessee,
BT578F.

LINDA
You can't change the past, Cole.

COLE
This isn't about my past, this is
about another man's future.

They're both quiet for a beat, thinking.

LINDA
I'll run the plate.

Linda hangs up and walks away.

As she does, we PULL BACK to reveal that Linda works in THE
SHERIFF'S STATION in Midway County, Texas.

INT. COLE'S ROOM - MISSISSIPPI MIKE'S MOTOR INN - NIGHT

Cole sits still, staring at something in front of him...

REVERSE ANGLE, the contents of his file folder are spread
out over both beds and the floor.

EXT. I-HOP - NIGHT

Nugent is on a pay phone.

NUGENT
Just do me this one favor, please,
baby? I promise I'll get you back.

EXT. BAIL BONDS OFFICE - NEW ORLEANS - NIGHT

Busier than a bus station at this late hour.

Through the window we see KRYSTAL, hot, no-nonsense, talking
on the cordless, surrounded by desperate RELATIVES of the
newly-incarcerated jockeying for her attention.

KRYSTAL
(into phone)
You're a lying m-f'er.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THEM

NUGENT

Krystal, sugar, I wouldn't ask if it
wasn't life and death.

Nugent notices Darlene coming out of the "Ladies Room" inside
the diner, straightening her skirt.

KRYSTAL

Try antibiotics, Cleve. They'll
clear it right up. Or is it worse?
Did one of your girly-girls sick her
boyfriend on you--

NUGENT

(dropping the charm)
This one goes "ka-ching", Krystal.
Big time. For real.

KRYSTAL

I've heard that before--

We stay on Krystal as Nugent says something to her which we
can't hear. Whatever he says gets her attention. She walks
into a small cluttered office and closes the door on the
customers behind her and leans over a computer keyboard.

KRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Name and last 4 digits of the card.

Nugent reads from Cole's credit card receipt.

NUGENT

Coleman H. Stanton. 5729...

INT. MISSISSIPPI MIKE'S MOTOR INN - NIGHT

MUCH LATER. Cole fights sleep as he sifts through countless
police reports, trial transcripts, arrest records.

We catch snippets of text "...a known associate of Parsons,"
and "...criminal gang...." Frustrated, Cole sweeps an armful
of papers off the bed, scattering them all over the floor.

He buries his head in his hands, exhausted, then he spots
something among the strewn papers...a small file card.

He picks it up. Reads it. Looks at his map.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAWN

A TOW TRUCK is parked on a dirt crossroads. Moustached DREW
STATLER leans against the hood.

His younger brother BINX, beer gut and bad hair cut, sits in the truck. TODD SWOPE, dumb as a post, paces nervously, smoking a cigarette.

The whole tableau could be a Lynyrd Skynyrd album cover...

But these guys are listening to Slayer's "Raining Blood."

Super: "Saturday. July 3rd."

Binx lights a pack of Black Cat firecrackers, tosses it out the window of the truck at Drew. BANG! BANG! BANG! Drew dances out of the way as they explode at his feet.

DREW
God damn it! Quit jacking around!

BINX
Where the hell is he? It's hotter
than Jenna Jameson out here.

Todd lights up another cigarette.

BINX (CONT'D)
Shit, Todd, you smoke more of those
than a Tijuana crack whore.

Todd looks at him, jumpy.

TODD
Settles my stomach.

DREW
Tijuana? When the hell you ever go
to Mexico?

BINK
I been to California twice... Same
thing.

They hear a CAR approaching.

TODD
That him?

DOWN THE ROAD comes an old VW BUG, racing over the rutted dirt like it's running the Baja 500. It skids up to the truck and slides to a stop, belching white smoke.

Parsons gets out.

PARSONS
Sorry I'm late.

Drew and Binx greet Parsons 'good ole' boy' style - whooping it up over back slaps and hand shakes.

DREW
Reed Parsons... Welcome back to the world.

BINX
Lookit this yoked up mother. Pumping prison iron did you right.

DREW
That's why you check out early and don't pay the bill.

Binx raises a hand to "high five" Drew, but Parsons just offers a sobering, anxious stare. Binx lowers his hand.

DREW (CONT'D)
We can't never repay you for what you done, Reed. You did that time for us in there, too. We ain't never forgot that--

Parsons cuts him off, impatient.

PARSON
(to Todd)
You the one who's supposed to be a wizard with a shotgun?

Todd, nervous, drops his cigarette, crushes it under foot.

TODD
Yessir.

Parsons stares him down, wary. Todd lights another smoke.

PARSONS
'Cause I got someone on me.

BINX
Shit, you got every cop in three states on you--

PARSONS
I ain't talking cops. Somebody came for me. Strong. He shot Kenny.

DREW
Aw man...

BINX
Who is he?

PARSONS

I don't know. But he's real pissed
off about something.

Drew, Binx and Todd look at him, concerned.

CUT TO - TOW TRUCK GRILL

Shoving the VW BUG off the road and into a POND where it
sinks. Drew backs up and takes off down the dirt road, with
Binx in the middle, Parsons riding shotgun and Todd sitting
in the back of the truck, clutching the tow hook.

EXT. CHURCH OF CHRIST - DAY

POV FROM ACROSS THE STREET:

A small, white-washed wooden building right out of a Norman
Rockwell painting. A sign announces "Church of Christ. Sunday
School 9:00 AM. Sermon 10:00. Rev. Tom Johnson." And
beneath this, "Lord, Make Me The Man My Dog Thinks I Am."

INT. COLE'S ROOM - MISSISSIPPI MIKE'S MOTOR INN - DAY

Cole is on the PHONE, listening to the other end ring as he
looks out the window, watching CHURCHGOERS file in.

DICKY'S WIFE (ON PHONE)

Hello?

Cole is lost, watching a little GIRL, 5, walk into the church
holding her MOTHER'S hand.

DICKY'S WIFE (ON PHONE)

Hello!?

Cole hears her this time, snaps to.

COLE (INTO PHONE)

Is Dicky home?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

DICKY'S WIFE, cigarette dangling from her mouth, 9 month-old
child hanging on one arm, struggles to cook some eggs with a
spatula as FIVE MORE kids, ages 3 to 8, run amok.

DICKY'S WIFE

Who is this?

COLE

This is Jimmy Bean, friend of his
from Marion.

DICKY'S WIFE
I know all Dicky's friends from the
pen. Never heard of you. Bye--

She starts to hang up, but Cole yells through the receiver.

COLE
I got his money.

Dicky's wife puts the phone back to her ear, interested.

DICKY'S WIFE
What money?

COLE
Money I owe him. Thirteen hundred.
Can you tell me where to find him?

EXT. MISSISSIPPI MIKE'S MOTOR INN - DAY

NUGENT'S VETTE screeches into the parking lot.

INT. COLE'S ROOM - MISSISSIPPI MIKE'S MOTOR INN - DAY

Nugent knocks on the door. The door swings open...

An OLD MAN, wearing rubber gloves, brandishing a toilet brush,
turns and squints at him.

Nugent acts upset, like he's about to weep.

NUGENT
Excuse me, sir. I'm looking for my
brother in law. Lord help him, he
has a medical condition. To look at
him you'd think he was normal as the
day is long, but his brain's got a
glitch. He thinks he's been cloned,
chases stray dogs, takes his clothes
off in shopping malls. He was
supposed to call his doctor before
he checked out. Can you check your
switchboard and help me make sure he
did that?

EXT. GUN SHOW AUDITORIUM - MISSISSIPPI - DAY

CLOSE ON A SIGN, "16th Annual Gun Show and Hunting Exhibition.
Welcome Enthusiasts. God Bless America." We follow a car
full of middle-aged, barrel-necked WHITE MEN as it pulls
into the lot, passing...

COLE, sitting in his pickup truck.

INT. COLE'S TRUCK - SAME

CLOSE ON: A MUG SHOT of a white guy who looks like a strung out Axle Rose... DICKY GOSNELL.

Cole takes a long look at the mug shot, then tucks it into his file folder. He changes into one of his dirty work shirts, then pops the hood release and gets out of the truck.

EXT. COLE'S TRUCK - SAME

Cole opens the hood, reaches in and gets some grease on his hands. He rubs the grease into his fingers, smears a little onto his face and closes the hood.

AT THE BACK OF THE TRUCK

Cole swigs from a half-pint of Jack Daniels, swishes it around and gargles it like mouthwash, then spits it out.

He looks at his reflection in the window as he pulls on a sweat-stained cap.

He has transformed himself into a passable bad ass, white trash, redneck con.

INT. GUN SHOW AUDITORIUM - DAY

The inside of the auditorium has been turned into a giant flea market of weaponry. The crowd is full of ordinary, average white people - collectors, wholesalers, dealers all buying, selling and trading guns, knives and accessories.

We FOLLOW Cole as he enters the auditorium, walks the aisles, past vendors and booths, scanning the crowd, seeing along with him in no particular order:

-CUSTOMERS inspecting, testing, dry firing weapons in front of display cases bearing signs like, "Buy Today, Shoot Tomorrow," "No Waiting Period with Valid ID." -A GRANNY buying a target depicting the silhouette of a man wearing a turban.

-A BEARDED GEEK dressed like mountain man "Jeremiah Johnson," showing off a black powder rifle to a prospective buyer.

-A NUTHEAD demonstrating an anti-chemical weapons suit for home use as a video loop of Branch Davidian/ATF Waco disaster footage plays behind him.

And then right next to an N.R.A. booth with posters reminding owners to protect their constitutional rights, Cole spots...

DICKY GOSNELL, beard and hair trimmed since the mug shot manning a card table selling "Anarchist Cookbooks" copies of

"The Turner Diaries," pamphlets and kits for "Mail Drops,"
"Fake I.D.s," "Homemade Dirty Bombs," etc.

INT. DICKY'S TABLE - GUN SHOW - DAY

Cole approaches as Dicky finishes selling a DVD to a group
of TEENAGE BOYS.

DICKY
Enjoy it now.

COLE
(interrupting)
Dicky?

DICKY
What can I do for you?

Cole pauses a beat, lowers his voice.

COLE
Nate Loyal sent me.

The name strikes a cord with Dicky.

COLE (CONT'D)
We was up at Marion together.

DICKY
How's ole' Nate doing?

COLE
He's holding up.

DICKY
Norville still sticking it to D-block?

COLE
You know it.

Dicky pauses, looking at Cole.

DICKY
So what did ole' Nate send you for?

Cole leans in closer, like a confidante.

COLE
Told me you could get 16's.

Dicky stares for a beat, then smiles, laughing it off.

DICKY
What'd he tell you something like
that for?

COLE
Told me if I was looking, you were
the one to talk to.

DICKY
I ain't into that no more.

COLE
You sure? 'Cause I'm looking.

DICKY
Look somewhere else.

Cole puts a thick envelope down on the table.

COLE
Nate said you could help me. If you
can't, point me to the guy who can.
I'm for real, man. No lie.

Dicky eyes the thick wad of CASH tucked inside the envelope.

DICKY
Meet me outside in ten minutes.
(turns to a customer)
Can I help you with something?

Cole picks up his envelope and walks away.

EXT. STATLER BROTHERS TOW - MISSISSIPPI - DAY

A "last gas for miles" kind of place in the boondocks.
"Closed" sign in the window. Junked cars crowd the lot and
garage. The Statler Bros. TOW TRUCK is parked out front.

A dilapidated, shotgun shack of a house sits behind the gas
station. INSIDE, it sounds like someone's using power tools.

DEPUTIES IN BULLETPROOF VESTS, carrying shotguns and pistols,
rush in from all sides, surrounding the buildings.

MCCLELLAN AND DOBBINS are with them. McClellan wields a
Remington 870 tactical shotgun, Dobbins carries her Glock
21.

The raiding party takes up perimeter positions.

Then McClellan waves his hand and they storm the buildings.

INT. STATLER HOUSE - DAY

Deputies charge into the empty living room where TLC's
"Trading Spaces" is turned up LOUD on TV.

DEPUTY

Clear!

A BOYISH DEPUTY kicks open a back room, drawing down on a giant MASTIFF. The mastiff peels back its lips, bares teeth, growls foam. The boyish deputy's scared to death.

BOYISH DEPUTY

I got a dog back here!

TWO MORE DEPUTIES charge in, draw on the dog, ready to fire.

MCCLELLAN comes up behind them.

MCCLELLAN

(to dog)

Easy, boy... Easy...

(to Deputies)

Give him some room, fellas.

McClellan steps forward and lays his shotgun on the floor. The deputies give him funny looks as they back away. Young Deputy stands firm, though, keeping his gun on the dog.

YOUNG DEPUTY

I got you covered, Marshall!

MCCLELLAN

Son, put that weapon down.

Boyish Deputy hesitates, then lowers his weapon. McClellan hunches down and holds out his palms to the big mastiff.

MCCLELLAN (CONT'D)

Easy now, boy. Nobody's gonna hurt you. Be a good boy and we can work this out. Scout's honor...

The dog stops growling, settles at the sound of McClellan's voice.

MCCLELLAN (CONT'D)

Good boy... Atta boy... Come here...

The dog takes a tentative step towards McClellan.

MCCLELLAN (CONT'D)

Come on, now...

The dog goes to McClellan. McClellan reaches out and starts scratching him behind his ears. The dog wags his tail, sits and licks McClellan's face like an old friend.

Deputies stare at him, dumbfounded.

INT. KITCHEN - STATLER HOUSE - DAY

A disaster area of dirty dishes, old bags of take-out food, and empty beer and liquor bottles.

Dobbins pinches her nose against the smell as she looks around. She finds a piece of paper taped under the phone, pulls it off and looks at it with disbelief...

DOBBINS

You gotta be kidding me?

EXT. STATLER BROTHERS TOW - DAY

McClellan plays 'fetch' with the dog by the tow truck.

DOBBINS (O.S.)

Sir?

He turns to see Dobbins coming up to him, holding out the piece of paper in her hand. He takes it.

CLOSE ON THE PAPER. It's a "To Do" list scribbled on the back of a collections notice. "Feed Dog. Change oil. Call Dicky 401-329-7847. Pick up Reed."

MCCLELLAN

These boys sure put the "Hill" in "Hillbilly," don't they?

DOBBINS

I think we should give Dicky a call, see what's on his 'To Do' list.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - MISSISSIPPI - DAY

We hear Megadeth's "Peace Sells" playing loud on a cheap, tinny radio...

And then a true red neck ride - faded gold, 1988 Cutlass Supreme with a red driver's side door from another car - speeds into the frame, sagging on broken springs.

Parsons drives. Drew rides shotgun. Binx and Todd sit in back. No one speaks. Binx taps Todd for another cigarette. Todd holds up his hands, he's all out. Binx fidgets, antsy.

EXT. GUN SHOW AUDITORIUM - DAY

Cole watches Dicky exit the auditorium and spot Cole. Dicky walks right past Cole without stopping.

DICKY

Follow me.

Cole follows him around the back of the building. Just as they pass out of sight...

NUGENT'S VETTE pulls into the parking lot.

We follow him as he drives through the lot and spots...

COLE'S TRUCK, parked.

EXT. BACK OF AUDITORIUM - DAY

Dicky leads Cole past a row of land-yacht sized RECREATIONAL VEHICLES parked in back to one with a REBEL FLAG rear window shade. He unlocks the door and motions for Cole to enter.

INT. DICKY'S RV - DAY

Dicky flips a switch. A GENERATOR starts. Lights come on to reveal a Joe Dirt swinger's pad decorated Confederate General meets NASCAR driver. A heavy metal version of "Dixie" plays in the background like Musak.

COLE

Nice rig. How long you owned--

SLAM! Dicky cracks Cole in the back of the head, knocking him to the floor. Cole lands, tries to shake it off when he hears the dreadful SHUCK-SHUNK of a shotgun being cocked. Dicky puts the barrel of his Mossberg to the back of Cole's head.

DICKY

You wearing a wire?

COLE

What are you talking about, man?

Dicky pats Cole down with his free hand.

DICKY

You ATF?

COLE

No!

Dicky pushes the barrel into Cole's neck.

COLE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

DICKY
Never was no Captain Norville on D-
block at Marion.

Cole's quiet. Dicky presses hard on the barrel.

DICKY (CONT'D)
Why are you messing with me?

COLE
I ain't messing with you.

DICKY
Don't lie to me.

COLE
Look, man, my cousin went to Marion,
okay. He told me about you. I need
some firepower, alright. So I lied.
Big deal. You never lied before to
get something you needed?

Dicky pulls the gun away and steps back.

DICKY
Git up.

Cole gets to his feet, rubbing his neck like he's in dire
pain and can barely move...

Dicky nods at the envelope of cash lying on the table.

DICKY (CONT'D)
How much you got?

COLE
Three grand. Count it.
(rubbing his neck,
grimacing)
Mind if I sit down?--

Dicky nods to a chair, then reaches for the envelope. Cole
springs on him, yanking the gun barrel up and driving the
butt into Dicky, knocking him backwards through a lamp. The
lamp BREAKS, as--

EXT. GUN SHOW PARKING LOT - DAY

SMASH! NUGENT'S HAND WRAPPED IN A SHIRT punches through the
side window glass in Cole's pickup.

Nugent reaches in and unlocks the door. He slides into the
truck, feeling underneath and then behind the bench seat,
finding Cole's FILE FOLDER.

INT. DICKY'S RV - DAY

Dicky and Cole fight for the shotgun. They each have a hold of it, slamming each other around the RV, bashing holes in the fake panelling, smashing the cheap built-ins.

INT. COLE'S TRUCK - DAY

Nugent combs the file folder, flipping through the records and notes for something specific.

NUGENT
Don't hide from me, sweetheart...

EXT. DICKY'S RV - DAY

GENERATOR NOISE drowns out all sound, but the big vehicle rocks violently back and forth, belying the fight going on inside. A bumper sticker above "Naked Lady" mud flaps reads "If The RV's A Rockin', Don't Come A Knockin'."

INT. DICKY'S RV - DAY

Cole lands on his ass in the narrow hallway. The shotgun sails past him, landing out of reach above his head.

Cole looks at Dicky, expecting him to come for the gun. But Dicky turns and lifts up a bench seat, revealing...

A HIDDEN CACHE OF M-16 ASSAULT RIFLES and ammo.

Dicky grabs an M-16 as Cole scrambles for the shotgun.

Dicky fumbles a clip into the M-16 as Cole grabs the shotgun.

But Dicky beats Cole to the draw, levels the M-16 at him and pulls the trigger.

Click, click. Nothing happens.

COLE
Safety...

Dicky looks to see he has forgotten to move the selector switch from "Safe." CRACK! Dicky's head snaps back as Cole lands an uppercut with the shotgun stock. Dicky drops the M-16 and reels backwards, crashing to a seat in an arm chair.

Cole jams the shotgun barrel into Dicky's solar plexus.

DICKY
You a cop?

Cole shakes his head.

COLE
I'm worse.

EXT. GUN SHOW PARKING LOT - DAY

The Cutlass pulls up. Parsons pays the attendant and drives into the lot.

INT. COLE'S TRUCK - DAY

Cole's entire file is strewn all over the cab like fast food trash. Nugent has come up cold in his search. He sees Cole's duffle bag tucked beneath the seat. Yanks it out and opens it up. Grabs Cole's two .45's...

And then pauses at the sight of something else in the bag.

NUGENT
Figures...
(shakes his head)
Texas.

INT. DICKY'S RV - SAME

Dicky is now bound to the chair with lamp cord. Cole is busy stripping insulation off another cord with a pocket knife.

COLE
Tell me what the plan is, Dicky.

DICKY
Screw you.

Cole plugs the electrical cord into a wall socket then turns and touches the exposed ends to Dicky's chair, eliciting a big electric SHOCK. Dicky jumps, yelps, loses it.

DICKY (CONT'D)
They're coming here.

COLE
They?

DICKY
Parsons and the Statler brothers.

COLE
When?

DICKY

They were supposed to be here two hours ago. They're gonna pick up the guns and I'm gonna ride with them to get paid--

COLE

Where?

DICKY

I don't know. I don't know where she lives, I swear. I never met her before in my life.

COLE

Who?

Dicky clams up suddenly, like he's afraid he's said too much. Cole brings the wires up close to Dicky's face. His moustache starts to curl up.

DICKY

Parsons met some girl while he was on the run. She's holding some of his money. That's all I know.

Cole is quiet for a beat, processing the new information.

COLE

What's her name?

DICKY

Sue. Susie something.

COLE

Susie Something?

DICKY

Faulkner... Susie Faulkner. That's what Parsons said, 'Susie's got the money... That's all I know, swear to God.

Cole nods, takes the wires away from Dicky's face like he's finished. Dicky relaxes as Cole unplugs the cord.

DICKY (CONT'D)

Screw 'em. You want Parsons, I'll help you get him. That's what he gets for not letting me in on that bank robbery in the first place. Bastards only came to me for the guns then, too--

Cole looks straight at Dicky.

COLE
You got them the guns they used in
the bank robbery?

DICKY
(indignant)
I got 'em everything. The AK, the
flash bangs, the Mossberg, three
thousand rounds... Still ain't seen
a God damn penny.

Cole stares icy black. Dicky cracks a nervous smile.

DICKY (CONT'D)
What?

Cole plugs the cord back into the wall socket.

EXT. DICKY'S RV - DAY

The generator STRAINS as we hear a MUFFLED SCREAM.

EXT. GUN SHOW PARKING LOT - DAY

Nugent climbs out of Cole's truck, tucking Cole's .45's into
his belt.

FROM SOMEONE'S POV:

We glimpse NUGENT across rows of parked cars as he pulls his
shirt tail down over the .45's.

INT. CUTLASS - DAY

Parsons is the one looking. He stops the car.

Nugent shuts the truck door and turns to go, looking right
at Parsons. He freezes with recognition. Parsons sticks
his gun across Drew and SHOOTS out the passenger window at
Nugent, the gun DISCHARGING right in front of Drew's face.

INT. DICKY'S RV - DAY

CLOSE ON COLE as he looks up, hearing the gun fire outside.

INT. CUTLASS - DAY

Parsons shoots to empty. Reloads. Drew is stunned and
deafened, blackened with powder burns.

DREW
Did you have to do that?!

Binx SHOOTs at Nugent from the back seat. Parsons SHOOTs.

TODD

Pop the trunk!

Todd gets out and runs to the back of the car.

The Cutlass's trunk OPENS. Todd retrieves his SHOTGUN and a bandolier of shells, turns and opens up on Nugent.

Gun show PATRONS duck and cover.

Nugent looks for an exit route, spotting his Vette parked a few rows away as lead shot and bullets buzz in like hornets.

EXT. DICKY'S RV - DAY

Cole comes out of the RV holding something wrapped in a blanket. He runs up to the front corner of the auditorium where a SMALL GROUP has gathered to watch the shoot-out.

Cole looks out into the parking lot in time to see Todd fire into his truck, hitting the gas tank--BOOM! Cole's pickup truck EXPLODES in an orange and black gasoline ball of flame.

Cole sees Drew and Binx fanning out shooting at something in the parking lot. Cole can't see Nugent, but he spots NUGENT'S VETTE parked on the opposite side of the lot.

He shakes his head, then quickly forgets Nugent as he sees--PARSONS, crouched behind the Cutlass, reloading and motioning for Drew and Binx to fan out after Nugent.

COLE WALKS RIGHT OUT INTO THE PARKING LOT

Deliberate and steady towards the shooting.

Good Ole Boys call out from the safety of the building.

GOOD OLE BOYS

Where you goin'?! Get back here!

Whattya you doin'?!

Cole unwraps an M-16 from the blanket and slides a sling of clips over his arm without breaking stride. He raises the assault rifle and FIRES as he walks towards Parsons...

Parsons, Binx and Drew dive for cover as the windshield explodes. Parsons gets a look at Cole's face.

PARSONS

That's him!

DREW

Who?!

PARSONS

I don't know!

Cole reloads. Fires. Rounds rake the Cutlass. The front tires BLOW OUT. The radiator BURSTS. Bullets chew up the gravel around Parsons.

They stop. Parsons looks up to see Cole reloading out in the open. Parsons, Drew and Binx all return fire.

Cole dives behind a Chrysler as BULLETS whiz in.

ACROSS THE LOT

Nugent peeks out from his cover behind a Dodge Ram 1500 to see that Cole is keeping Parsons and the Statlers pinned down with a furious sheet of automatic fire.

Nugent grins, then turns to make a move for his Vette when-- BAM! A shotgun blast shreds the front quarter panel of the Dodge right above Nugent's head.

Another one BLOWS OUT the window as Nugent dives back under the truck for cover, sees--TODD SWOPE, bumbling dumb-ass turned methodical killer now, stalking him down the row of parked cars, cutting off his exit route.

Nugent belly crawls away underneath a car as shotgun blasts disassemble the Dodge.

ANGLE ON - PARSONS AND THE STATLERS

Keeping their heads down as Cole moves closer and closer with each clip he empties at them.

DREW

He's killing us!

Drew is cut off by another BURST from Cole's M-16.

Parsons spots a CAMARO in the next row of cars. He waits for Cole to reload then he runs to it. Breaks the window with his gun, opens the door and crawls in. Cracks the ignition open with his gun butt and hot wires the car.

Cole stands up to fire when--HIS M-16 jams.

He furiously tries to clear the bolt as Parsons BURNS RUBBER over to the Cutlass. Drew and Binx jump in.

BINX

Don't forget Todd!

Parsons SCREECHES towards Todd who sprints to meet the car-- Just as Cole clears his jammed weapon and OPENS FIRE--

ANGLE ON THE CAMARO

The back window and tail lights EXPLODING in a hail of gunfire as Todd gets HIT in the shoulder.

He drops his shotgun, screaming in pain. Parsons slows just enough for Drew and Binx to pull Todd into the moving car then punches it.

They peel out and disappear down the road.

INT. NUGENT'S VETTE - DAY

SIRENS are screaming closer now as Nugent opens the door, slides in and pulls out his key--

COLE (O.S.)

Hold it!

Nugent swings the .45 at the passenger side, only to see-- Cole, pointing the M-16 back at him through the open window.

COLE (CONT'D)

Give me the keys!

NUGENT

No!

COLE

They're getting away!

NUGENT

They already got away! Question is, do you want to?!

It's a standoff. They stay frozen, drawn down on each other, fingers on triggers as SIRENS BLARE in the background.

NUGENT (CONT'D)

I'm having deja-vu...

Cole lowers his weapon.

COLE

Just give me the keys.

NUGENT

No way. I've seen you drive.

CUT TO - NUGENT'S VETTE

Peeling out of the parking lot with Nugent at the wheel and Cole riding shotgun. The Vette races down the road and out of sight.

EXT. GUN SHOW PARKING LOT - LATER

CRIME SCENE. Cops comb the parking lot, marking empty shell casings, photographing the shot-up Cutlass.

McClellan and Dobbins watch PARAMEDICS load Dicky's unconscious body into an AMBULANCE.

DOBBINS

Meet Dicky Gosnell. Graduated a
juvie chain gang with Parsons and
the Statler brothers in Texarkana.

She hands him the rap sheet as a COP runs up.

COP

Ran the VIN off the pickup.

He hands a fax to Dobbins. But McClellan snatches it away before Dobbins can touch it. He reads it. Looks surprised.

MCCLELLAN

Well if that don't make a train want
to take a dirt road.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

CLOSE ON NUGENT'S HAND as it slaps a DEPUTY SHERIFF'S BADGE down onto the hood of the Vette.

NUGENT (O.S.)

You are a cop. I was right. You
should have said something...

Cole and Nugent stand next to the Vette, parked way off the road in a remote area at the water's edge.

NUGENT (CONT'D)

Is that a sin of omission, or
commission?... I always get those
two confused.

Cole reaches for the badge, but Nugent keeps it away.

NUGENT (CONT'D)

You're way off the clock, Smokey.
This badge says "Texas" on it. We
happen to be in "Mississippi."

(holds it to his ear
like a cell phone)

Can you hear me now, Deputy? Didn't
think so. Bet it doesn't work too
good back down in Texas anymore,
either.

Nugent tosses it on the ground. Cole stares at it.

COLE

I was on duty the morning Parsons hit the bank. I'd just pulled a car over for speeding outside of town when I got the call. Linda, the dispatcher, she was frantic. Shots had been fired. There was a description of a getaway car. It was Code 7 - all units respond. I copied and went for my ride when I realized I was still holding this guy's license in my hand. I hadn't even looked at it. I tossed it back to him, said 'Today's your lucky day.' Then I took off...

(beat)

Didn't find out until later that night that the man I had pulled over was Parsons. He'd just killed three people and I let him walk.

Nugent watches Cole stare across the lake, his face betraying the stoic front he's worked hard to keep in place, revealing a bottomless well of raw pain and guilt.

NUGENT

You're lucky to be alive.

COLE

Depends on how you look at it.

NUGENT

From what I've heard, Parsons never met a cop he didn't kill.

COLE

Until he met the one who let him go.

Silence. Nugent watches Cole's poker face return.

NUGENT

So now's your chance to redeem yourself?

COLE

Something like that.

NUGENT

Go home a hero this time?

Cole glares at him, irritated.

COLE
Are you giving, or am I taking my
guns back?

Nugent pulls Cole's .45's out of his belt, looks at them.

NUGENT
I know where he's headed.

Cole listens up.

NUGENT (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
But I need to know if we're riding
together, and if we are, I need to
know you're gonna back me up.

Cole nods at his guns in Nugent's hands.

COLE
You're the one with the triggers.

NUGENT
Hey, I've had your back since that
county fair. I already saved your
ass twice. I just want to know if
you'll even consider returning the
fucking favor if I need it.

Cole is quiet. Nugent steps closer with the guns.

NUGENT (CONT'D)
You're out for justice, I'm out for
money, and now we're both outside
the law. We hunt him down, we turn
him in, we cover each other's stories.
You get your redemption, I get my
reward.
(beat)
I won't even try to tarnish your
badge by offering you a cut. I'll
keep it all for myself, how 'bout
that?

Cole is quiet. Nugent flips Cole's guns around in his hands
so that he's holding them by the barrels as a gesture of
trust. It takes a beat, but Cole finally nods his head.

COLE
Deal.

Nugent smiles. Cole takes back his guns, checks them.

COLE (CONT'D)
So speak up.

NUGENT
Parsons is going to get the money he
stashed from the bank robbery.

Cole points guns at Nugent, angry that he's been hustled.

COLE
Fool me once...

NUGENT
(holding up his hands)
Hold on, Charlie Bronson.
(beat; grins)
I know where it's stashed.

EXT. COUNTY HIGHWAY - MISSISSIPPI - DAY

NUGENT'S VETTE scoots along.

INT. NUGENT'S VETTE - MOVING

Cole, Nugent and the Allman Brothers "Whipping Post."

COLE
Missouri?

NUGENT
Parsons has a girlfriend up in Jackson
County. She's holding it for him.
Thought you'd have her name somewhere
in that scrapbook of yours. That's
why I broke into your truck. But I
didn't see any names I hadn't seen
before.

Cole lies to him with a straight face.

COLE
Girlfriend, huh? That's the first
I've heard of it.

NUGENT
Well I know someone who might know
where to find her.

COLE
Who's that?

NUGENT
My ex-wife. She's in Memphis. She
used to run with some people who
used to run with some people. One
of those people was Parsons...

COLE

Have you actually ever caught someone bounty hunting, or is this your first time.

NUGENT

I would have gone to her for 411, but she wants me dead. She's got friends who'd shoot me on sight. Thought my chances were better going straight for Parsons.
(looks at Cole)
Didn't figure on "Walker Texas Ranger" messing up my plans.

Cole holds up his badge.

COLE

I think the police should speak to your ex, ask her who she knows.

Nugent grins.

NUGENT

Is that really yours, or did you steal that from Graceland?

Cole tucks away his badge, looks down at the stereo.

COLE

I can't listen to the Allman Brothers all the way to Memphis.

NUGENT

What? Ain't a southern man alive who don't like the Allman Brothers.

COLE

I'm not from the South... I'm from Texas.

Nugent shoots him a long look, then changes the song.

NUGENT

No problem.

ZZ Top's "La Grange" cranks out.

EXT. COUNTY HIGHWAY - SAME

The Vette flies down the road on a carpet of ZZ Top.

INT. VETERINARIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

UPSIDE DOWN POV:

Of an ANATOMICAL POSTER OF A DOG hanging on a wall.

REVERSE ANGLE:

Todd lies on a big metal operating table, looking curiously at the poster through a drug-induced haze as a sweaty, frightened VETERINARIAN stitches up his shoulder.

Binx stands behind the Vet, holding a gun on him as he works. Binx notices a bottle of pills on the counter, opens it and pops one behind the Vet's back.

EXT. VETERINARIAN OFFICE - DAY

It's a ranch house next to a kennel, barn and corral. The Camaro is parked out of sight from the main road.

A HORSE with a bandaged leg stands in the corral, watching Parsons and Drew.

DREW

How do you think he found us so fast?
Think Dicky said anything? Who's
that guy he's working with?--

PARSONS

Am I dressed like a fortune teller?

Drew shuts up, pouting. Parsons shakes his head, angry.

PARSONS (CONT'D)

We have to get rid of this before we
go to Susie's.

TWO GUNSHOTS ring out from inside the Vet's office. Parsons and Drew look to see Binx lead Todd out of the office. Todd has a goofy smile on his face.

BINX

Doc topped him off with Vicodin.

TODD

Want one?

Binx nods, smiles, hands car keys to Drew.

PARSONS

Let's get out of here.

DREW

Sure wish we had got those guns.

PARSONS

What are you worried about? This is the United States of America-- you can get guns easier and cheaper than prescription drugs.

Binx helps Todd into the Vet's CADILLAC as Drew gets in and starts it. He's ready to go, but he looks up to see Parsons lingering at the corral, gently petting the horse 'good-bye.' Parsons gets into the car and they drive away.

INT. SHERIFF STATION - TEXAS - DAY

SHERIFF HUCKEE, ex-Marine with a wedding ring, gathers around a speaker phone with several DEPUTIES.

SHERIFF HUCKEE

I haven't spoken to him in months, Marshall. Don't know anyone who has. But I'll do what I can to help you sort this out.

EXT. GUN SHOW PARKING LOT - DAY

Dobbins talks on her cell phone.

DOBBINS

I appreciate it, Sheriff--

INT. SHERIFF STATION - TEXAS - DAY

Huckee is looking through the glass window to the hallway. Linda stands outside, motioning for him.

HUCKEE

(to a Deputy)

Mike, take over for a minute, will ya. Be right back.

Huckee goes outside.

INT. HALLWAY - SHERIFF STATION - TEXAS - DAY

Huckee and Linda.

LINDA

Sorry to bother you, Sheriff. But I just found a call that got dropped from the log for some reason. Came in a few days ago. It's about Cole.

HUCKEE
You don't say.

LINDA
He's been down in Corpus for a week
doing some fishing.

HUCKEE
(quizzical)
Uh-huh?

LINDA
Said someone stole his truck a couple
nights ago.

HUCKEE
(skeptical)
Uh-huh.

LINDA
I wasn't on duty when the call came
in. I just thought you should know.

HUCKEE
Yes, I should.

He takes the call report from Linda, looks at it, then looks
right at her, straight through her. He's not fooled at all.
And she knows it.

HUCKEE (CONT'D)
I appreciate it, Linda.

LINDA
My pleasure, Sheriff.

She walks away. Huckee watches her go, then turns and looks
at the wall: Three decades of plaques commemorating "TEXAS
OUTSTANDING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THE YEAR".

COLE'S PICTURE is the only one on the wall THREE TIMES in a
row.

EXT. GUN SHOW PARKING LOT - DAY

McClellan stares at Cole's burned out truck as Dobbins studies
a map.

DOBBINS
It's bullshit. They're all covering
for him. We should send a team down
there right now and arrest the whole
department.

MCCLELLAN

He's one of theirs. You might do the same for one of yours.

DOBBINS

(shaking her head)

Not me. A criminal's a criminal. Written law's the only thing that separates man from beast and I, like you, have sworn to uphold it.

MCCLELLAN

Just don't get your panties in a bunch over this vigilante. We're here to catch a convict.

DOBBINS

My eye's on the prize, sir. 200 bucks says Parsons goes back to prison wearing my handcuffs.

MCCLELLAN

You're on.

DOBBINS

(looks at Cole's truck)

I just hope our vigilante doesn't beat me to the punch.

A black SEDAN pulls up. U.S. MARSHALL CRAIG, slick, dressed like a Harvard MBA, hustles out, stopping to shake hands and exchange words with several men in FBI and ATF windbreakers.

MCCLELLAN

Hold that thought, Chicago.

FBI AGENT MURPHY, barely old enough to shave, follows Craig over to McClellan and Dobbins, huddled at their car.

CRAIG

John...

McClellan shakes hands with the younger man.

MCCLELLAN

Craig...

Craig looks at Dobbins, stumped for a name. But she steps forward, offering her hand, eager to make an impression.

DOBBINS

Marshall Dina Dobbins, sir. It's a real pleasure to meet you. Let me bring you up to speed--

CRAIG
That's alright.

She quiets, confused. Craig address McClellan.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
We're changing gears, John. Regional office is going to take the baton. FBI and ATF are running flanker. I need you to download Agent Murphy here before you punch out. You've done an outstanding job. Thanks for all your hard work.
(nods to Dobbins)
Nice to meet you.

Craig walks away, leaving young Agent Murphy behind. Dobbins stares, confused.

DOBBINS
What was that?

MCCLELLAN
That was the two of us just getting shit-canned from this man hunt.

DOBBINS
What?!

She's incredulous. Agent Murphy smiles like the tool he is.

AGENT MURPHY
Ready when you are, Marshall.

Dobbins looks at him with utter disdain.

DOBBINS
Blow me, Poindexter.

EXT. TENNESSEE TRUCK STOP - DAY

Cole is on the pay phone, watching Nugent flirt with a convertible full of SOUTHERN GIRLS dressed in red, white and blue as he fills up the Vette.

LINDA (O.S.)
The Vette's registered to a Debbie Fulton in Memphis. The address--

COLE
Never mind that.

LINDA
What?--

COLE

I need a 10-28 on a Susan Faulkner.
Try Jackson County, Missouri and
neighboring counties in Illinois--

LINDA

Listen, Cole, they know who you are
now. Huckee's been on the phone
with the Feds. The gig's up.

COLE

Then you better hurry up with that
10-28.

IN THE BACKGROUND, Nugent looks over at Cole, curious about
his phone call. Cole turns his back to Nugent.

COLE (CONT'D)

Linda? Please. It's almost over.

LINDA

I'll do my best.
(remembering)
Oh... And I checked with the attorney
general in Louisiana about the amount
of that reward--

Cole turns, looks at Nugent, watching him as he listens to
Linda. We DON'T HEAR it, but Cole doesn't blink.

INT. TENNESSEE TRUCK STOP - DAY

Cole pays for a ROAD MAP as Nugent enters.

NUGENT

Did you see that little brunette?
She's my Miss July...

Nugent sees that Cole is buying a road map.

NUGENT (CONT'D)

Toss the Cliff Notes. I've bounty
hunted this whole area. Know it
like the back of my hand...

COLE

Keep your hands to yourself.

Cole takes his change from the CASHIER and brusquely heads
for the exit. Nugent catches up to him before the door.

NUGENT

Sorry about your scrapbook, okay,
but I didn't have a chance to grab
it once the shooting started.

Cole stops, looks at Nugent, surprised. Grabs him by the arm and hustles him to a corner so they can't be overheard.

COLE

They opened up on you first?

Nugent looks at him, blank for a beat.

NUGENT

Saw me coming out of your truck and opened right up.

COLE

You telling me they knew my truck?

Nugent looks down at Cole's hand, still gripping his arm.

NUGENT

You gonna let go my arm, or you gonna ask me to dance?

Cole lets go and walks out of the gas station.

EXT. HIGHWAY - TENNESSEE - DAY

The Vette weaves through slower moving holiday traffic.

INT. NUGENT'S VETTE - MOVING - DAY

Cole studies Nugent driving.

COLE

Bounty-hunting business going well?

Nugent looks at him, surprised to hear the question.

NUGENT

I'm no Dog Chapman, but I'm not looking at jail time in Mexico either. Not yet anyway.

Cole looks down at his map, again, studying it.

NUGENT (CONT'D)

Mind if I ask you something?

COLE

Yes.

NUGENT

At the bank robbery back in Texas, you said they got a description of the getaway car...

Cole nods, like he's answered it before.

COLE

It was a black '79 "Bandit" Trans Am. The gang got split up outside the bank. Parsons took off in another car with all the money. The car I pulled over.

NUGENT

But you couldn't have known that.

COLE

I know I had Parsons and let him go.

NUGENT

That's my point. It wasn't your fault in the first place, and you got the satisfaction of catching him later on anyway. So why are you feeling so sorry for yourself?

Cole's quiet for a long beat.

COLE

I didn't go on the manhunt.

NUGENT

What? You didn't go-- You had the whole thing mapped out like you led it.

COLE

They wouldn't let me go. "Conflict of interest" they said.

(beat)

I told them I couldn't think of anyone more interested than me.

Cole looks up from the map at the passing landscape, seems to go somewhere within himself.

COLE (CONT'D)

I've never been out of Texas.

NUGENT

You gotta be kidding me...

COLE

Never had a reason to leave.

NUGENT

Shit. I can think of a million reasons to leave Texas and I've only been there once.

EXT. BLUES CITY CAFE - MEMPHIS - DAY

The best wet ribs in Memphis. Packed. McClellan and Dobbins sit at a table, plates of ribs in front of them. McClellan eats with gusto. Dobbins fumes, leaving her plate untouched.

DOBBINS

How can they do that? Just shove us to the side like that?

MCCLELLAN

You need to taste this sweet sauce. It's good for the soul.

DOBBINS

This is our case. They can't just take it away from us.

MCCLELLAN

He's got a 'reserve batch.' Kicks like a mule in a barn fire--Dobbins slams her hands on the table, angry.

DOBBINS

I don't give a shit about anybody's sauce! I'm talking about my career here, God damn it!

McClellan just stares at her, calmly.

DOBBINS (CONT'D)

'John McClellan's one of the best,' they said. 'That man could track a cotton ball through a snowstorm.' 'You'll learn more in one hour with him...'

(shakes her head)

You didn't even flinch when he gave us the boot. You could have said something to keep us on. You could have at least put a word in on my behalf.

She trails off, frustrated. McClellan wipes his mouth with a paper napkin, puts it down across his plate.

MCCLELLAN

Once upon a time, I was one of the best. But I learned that the best don't always live to get to be the oldest. Now I'm one of the oldest.

He gets up from the table and walks out.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS - DAY

McClellan unlocks the Crown Vic. Dobbins hurries up to him, apologetic. McClellan starts to open the car door, stops.

MCCLELLAN

My daughter Cassie would have been about your age by now. She was a headstrong little firecracker just like you.

DOBBINS

I didn't know you were married.

MCCLELLAN

I'm not. Not anymore.

DOBBINS

What's your daughter do?

MCCLELLAN

She's dead. Died of Leukemia when she was 7 years old. She was just a tiny little thing. I used to dance her to sleep in my arms...

He trails off, the memory dulling his sharp edge. He becomes just another man for a moment... a vulnerable father. Dobbins doesn't know what to say. He looks right at her.

MCCLELLAN (CONT'D)

Chicago, you are one whip smart Yankee. You make a fine Marshall. Your time's all ahead of you.

She looks at him, touched.

DOBBINS

Thank you, sir.

Her CELL PHONE RINGS, breaking the silence.

DOBBINS (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Dobbins...

She listens for a beat, then looks at McClellan, happy.

DOBBINS (CONT'D)

They just kicked us over to vigilante detail.

MCCLELLAN

What did I tell you?

As they hurry into the car.

MCCLELLAN (CONT'D)
Looks like someone might go home
wearing your bracelets after all.

EXT. MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE - NIGHT

Nugent's Vette cruises up Riverside Drive, past Mud Island and the Pyramid.

EXT. BEALE STREET - MEMPHIS - NIGHT

Home of the Blues. A mini 'Bourbon Street.' Revelers carry open containers from bar to bar. The street is closed to traffic. Packed with tourists and music lovers.

Nugent's Vette pulls to a stop at the curb.

INT. NUGENT'S VETTE - NIGHT

Cole and Nugent stare at something across the street.

COLE
That's where she works?

NUGENT
I told you I wasn't a Blues fan...

COPPERHEAD'S BLUES BAR is across the street. Going off. A crowd waits in line to get in. BLUES MUSIC howls inside.

Cole starts to get out.

COLE
What's she look like?

NUGENT
Trouble.

INT. COPPERHEAD'S BLUES BAR - NIGHT

The Blues meets Voodoo kind of vibe. Packed.

A BLUES BAND grinds out a sweaty rendition of "Hey Joe." Cole enters and scans the room. It doesn't take him long to find a beautiful, long-legged, woman running the bar like a killer queen bee... DEBBIE FULTON.

CUT TO - THE BAR

Cole steps past a big bouncer, LEON, to get to Debbie. Leon cuts him off with an arm as big as a leg.

LEON

Think twice.

Cole sticks his badge in Debbie's face, ignoring Leon.

COLE

I need a word with you.

DEBBIE

I'm a little busy right now, officer.
Why don't you come back later when
I'm not here.

COLE

It's about your ex-husband.

DEBBIE

Which one?

COLE

The one who stole your Corvette.

Debbie exchanges a glance with Leon, looks at Cole.

DEBBIE

That one.

INT. BACK OFFICE - COPPERHEAD'S BLUES BAR - NIGHT

Cluttered with liquor stock and an assortment of high-end audio components brand new in boxes that must have 'fallen off a truck.' Cole and Debbie talk in private.

COLE

Has he tried to contact you recently
in person?

DEBBIE

Cleve? You kidding? In this town,
his face is nothing more than an
invite to an ass-kicking. I got
zero to do with him anymore.

COLE

What about an S. Faulkner? You got
anything to do with her?

DEBBIE

Don't know any Susie Faulkner. But I
see Cleve Nugent's skinny ass around,
I'll call the coroner.

COLE

You slipped up, Little Debbie.

She gives him a funny look.

COLE (CONT'D)
I asked if you knew S. Faulkner.

DEBBIE
I heard you. And I told you--

COLE
I said "S."; you said, "Susie".
Either you're lying, or I'm hooked
on phonics.

A DOOR opens behind them, spilling MUSIC into the room.
LONNIE, a bigger, meaner bouncer, steps in.

LONNIE
'Sup, Debbie?

DEBBIE
My blood pressure about now.

LONNIE
(to Cole)
Who you?

Cole shows his gun and badge to the Lonnie at the same time.

COLE
I'm busy.

DEBBIE
Be out in a minute, Lonnie.

Lonnie doesn't move. Just stares down Cole.

COLE
Did you hear her, Lonnie? She said
she'd be out in a minute. Go find a
clock.

Cole KICKS the door shut in Lonnie's face. Turns to Debbie.

COLE (CONT'D)
Let's try this again.

EXT. BEALE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Cole climbs in, hands Nugent a cocktail napkin with an address
scribbled on it.

COLE
The girl's in town. Parsons is
meeting her there in four hours.

Nugent reads it.

NUGENT
"President's Island". That's the
harbor. We got 'em, baby. Hot damn.
Did she know the girl's name?

Cole looks right at Nugent... and betrays nothing.

COLE
No.

NUGENT
She say anything about me?

Cole looks at him. Nugent's serious. Waiting to hear
something, anything. Cole answers with a straight face.

COLE
She misses you and wants you back.

Nugent smirks and starts the car.

COLE (CONT'D)
Where we going?

Nugent smiles.

NUGENT
To celebrate.

EXT. DROP DEAD LEGS - NIGHT

A remodeled house turned strip club/bordello out in the
country hick boondocks. The Vette's in the parking lot.

INT. DROP DEAD LEGS - NIGHT

Strippers work the poles and the crowd to AC/DC's "How Do
You Make Your Money, Honey." Cole and Nugent sit at a table
in the back. A dancer dressed like a U of Georgia CHEERLEADER
drops onto Cole's lap.

CHEERLEADER
Would you like a dance?

COLE
No thanks.

CHEERLEADER
It's two for one.

Nugent intercepts for Cole.

NUGENT

This man's sworn off pussy, honey
buns. He's doing the Lord's work.

She moves on.

NUGENT (CONT'D)

Don't have to keep up appearances in
front of me. You need to get your
freak on, go right on.

Cole's only got one thing on his mind.

COLE

Who was the other guy at the gun
show? The one pumping the shotgun?

Nugent watches the girls as he talks with Cole.

NUGENT

Don't know. His face was kinda fuzzy
through all that lead.

Nugent winks and waves at a dancer across the room.

COLE

There were four men at the bank
robbery in Texas. Parsons was the
only one caught on camera. Back at
the gun show, Dicky told me the
Statler brothers were there. The
getaway driver must have been him
with the shotgun.

Nugent looks at Cole, aggravated.

NUGENT

Naw, I heard he took two in the head
popping a liquor store in Baton Rouge.

COLE

What was his name?

NUGENT

Don't you ever get tired of talking
business?

COLE

I want to be sure of how many we're
dealing with out there tonight.

NUGENT

Well you can't. And whatever the
number is, it's more than us.

(MORE)

NUGENT (CONT'D)
(gestures at the girls)
That's why you ought to get up and
move around a little, brush up against
something...

Cole drinks his water, checks his watch.

NUGENT (CONT'D)
'Cause in less than 2 hours, Parsons
is gonna be sportin' zip ties and a
frown. I'll be on my way to a nice
check, and you'll be heading home a
hero. The redemption train's pulling
in to the station. So why not cut
yourself a break...
(leans closer; serious)
Life throws shit at everybody. You're
no different. You can't make something
right that you didn't make wrong.
Don't you get that? Besides...
(motions to the room)
Nothing beats a happy ending like a
'happy ending.' And if anybody
deserves a happy ending, it's me.

Nugent stands up, grabs a passing BUSTY DANCER.

NUGENT (CONT'D)
How you doin', Dolly?

She grins. He sticks a 5 into her bikini top.

BUSTY DANCER
You want a tour?

NUGENT
You got my all-access pass?

She pulls him with her towards the back.

Cole watches Nugent disappear into the VIP room.

INT. COPPERHEAD'S BLUES BAR - NIGHT

Debbie is on a pay-phone, trying to talk to someone above
the noise of the club. Someone taps her on the back. She
turns around to see DOBBINS and MCCLELLAN standing behind
her.

DOBBINS
Debbie Fulton?

Debbie just looks at them. Dobbins holds up her badge.

DOBBINS (CONT'D)
United States Marshall's office.
Got a sec?

Debbie looks completely confused.

DEBBIE
(into phone)
Can I call you back?

EXT. SKID ROW HOTEL - DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS - NIGHT

Derelicts and junkies hang in the lobby watching television.

INT. SKID ROW HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Drew and Binx clean and prep an assortment of NEW GUNS while Todd sleeps on the couch, cradling his shotgun like a baby.

The sounds of ROUGH SEX come from another room. There's a KNOCK at the door. Todd wakes up, racks the slide on his shotgun as Drew and Binx position themselves.

BINX
What?

DEBBIE (O.S.)
It's me.

Binx opens it. Debbie's outside with Leon and Lonnie.

BINX
They can't come in.

Debbie stares at him like he's little people.

DEBBIE
Where's your daddy at?

BINX
Reed!

The sounds of sex stop. The connecting door to a second room opens. Parsons stands there, naked and covered in sweat. On the bed behind him are two PROSTITUTES.

DEBBIE
My girls treat you right?

PARSONS
You know how to raise a whore better than anyone, Debbie. They ought to give you a plaque.

Debbie nods to the guns.

DEBBIE
My man hook you up with new toys?

PARSONS
Yeah, yeah, we're all good here.
How'd that other thing go?

DEBBIE
Did what you asked me to -- threw
'em like loaded dice.

PARSONS
You're a one-stop shop, Debbie.

DEBBIE
Nothing left to do but collect my
fee and be on my way.

PARSONS
Come on in, I'll get my wallet.

Debbie follows him into the second bedroom. Lonnie starts to follow, but Drew sticks a gun in his face.

LONNIE
Don't point that shit at me, chicken
dick.

PARSONS
Drew...

Drew looks at Parsons. Parsons shakes his head -- "it's okay." Drew steps aside.

DREW
Go right ahead, PeeWee.

Lonnie follows Debbie into the second bedroom. Parsons shuts the door behind him. Leon parks himself by the door.

INT. SECOND BEDROOM - NIGHT

Parsons goes back into the room, reaches under the mattress.

DEBBIE
Never thought I'd see you again,
Reed. Don't think I want to again
after all this, no offense.

PARSONS
None taken.

Parsons turns around holding a gun with silencer attached. He SHOOTs Debbie in the face. She's dead before she hits the floor. Lonnie goes for his gun, but Parsons pops him in the chest. He flops onto the bed, rolls onto the floor, dead.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Leon hears the commotion. Parsons opens the door from the second room and steps out aiming at Leon's head. Click! Nothing happens. Parsons taps the magazine, racks the slide, pulls the trigger again as Leon fumbles for his gun. Click!

Leon gets his gun out, but Todd sticks his shotgun to Leon's chest and pulls the trigger, blasting a hole through him.

Parsons calmly clears the jam on his weapon, then turns and looks at the two prostitutes and shrugs.

PARSONS

Looks like it's time for you two
Girl Scouts to find another Den
Mother.

Someone POUNDS on the wall from the next room.

SOMEONE (O.S.)

Keep it down in there!

Parsons ignores it, nonchalantly tosses his gun to Binx.

PARSONS

Rub some oil on it, dumb-ass. I'll
be in the shower.

He turns and disappears back into the second room. Everyone just stares at the carnage.

BINX

I ain't cleaning this up.

EXT. DRY DOCKS - MEMPHIS - NIGHT

A facility where tugs and barges are hauled out of the water to be repaired. THE FLOATING DOCK - a steel container a quarter the size of a football field, open on either end, high walls to either side bearing catwalks and control booths - holds a big BARGE under repair, elevated on jacks.

Moored against it is a small fleet of TUG BOATS and other working barges and platforms.

On the banks, there's an office trailer, machine shop, heavy machinery, piles of steel and scrap surrounded by a fence.

OUTSIDE THE FENCE

The Vette is parked in the shadows.
Cole and Nugent have a clear vantage
point of the approach to the gate
and dry dock yards as they sit in
the car, loading weapons.

NUGENT

What kind of woman sits on a million
in cash for two years without spending
it.

COLE

A woman you trust.

NUGENT

Right.

COLE

A woman who trusts you.

NUGENT

Exactly. That's what I mean. I
never met that woman. Either kind.

Cole's quiet for a beat, looking at his gun.

COLE

I have.

Cole checks his watch.

COLE (CONT'D)

They're running late. I'm not liking
this anymore--

NUGENT

You were liking it before?

Suddenly, SHOTGUNS are shoved through both open car windows.

McClellan has Cole, Dobbins has Nugent. No one moves for a
beat. They've been taken completely by surprise.

COLE

You're making a mistake.

MCCLELLAN

No sir. "Oops, I just shot my
suspect" is a mistake.

Cole and Nugent drop their guns out of the car. McClellan
opens the door, steps back.

MCCLELLAN (CONT'D)

(to Cole)

You know the drill, Deputy.

Cole gets out with his hands in the air, puts them on the hood of the car. Nugent looks at Dobbins.

NUGENT

You're just in time, officer. I was going to turn him in myself--

DOBBINS

Shut up and get out.

Cole and Nugent face each other across the car. Nugent gives Cole an 'I was just playing around' look as McClellan and Dobbins take turns patting them down.

NUGENT

Debbie... That's what I get for taking her car.

DOBBINS

Should have heard what she said about you.

Nugent looks at Dobbins, nervous. But Cole looks alarmed.

COLE

It's a set-up.

NUGENT

That's what I just said.

Cole turns to McClellan, tense.

COLE

No. I mean you, too.

MCCLELLAN

Eyes straight.

McClellan pulls out his handcuffs.

COLE

You didn't come out here for Parsons, did you?

Dobbins cuffs Nugent, turns him around to face her.

DOBBINS

We got who we came for.

COLE

That's what I mean. She told us
Parsons was going to be here.

McClellan and Dobbins exchange a glance.

NUGENT

Oh, fu--

BUZZZZIPIPPP! McClellan is SHOT through the arm. He falls
to the ground in a puff of blood as GUNFIRE rakes the Vette.

Everyone hits the dirt, scrambling for cover.

COLE

How far away is your backup?!

DOBBINS

There isn't any! We're it!

McClellan looks up at her, surprised.

MCCLELLAN

What?

FLOOD LIGHTS burst on as a big engine ROARS to life.

They look to see a giant BULLDOZER charging them.

Drew drives. Todd and Binx hang off both sides of the cab,
shooting. Gunfire streams forth like dragon breath.

Cole, Nugent, Dobbins and McClellan scatter as the dozer
ROLLS RIGHT OVER THE VETTE, crushing it like a beer can.

NUGENT

They killed my music!

INTO A SHALLOW DRAINAGE DITCH

Our guys slide, seeking cover. Cole, McClellan and Dobbins
return fire, but it comes right back at them thick and fast,
pinning them down.

NUGENT (CONT'D)

Get these cuffs off me, lady!

Dobbins ignores him. Rips off her jacket and wraps it around
McClellan's arm to try to stop the arterial bleeding.

DOBBINS

I'll go for the radio!

MCCLELLAN

Don't waste your time!

McClellan reaches down and pulls a gun from an ankle holster.

MCCLELLAN (CONT'D)

(re: Nugent)

Give it to him.

DOBBINS

What?!

NUGENT

You heard him.

ZIPPP! A bullet nicks the tip off one of Cole's fingers.

COLE

Owwwssshit!

He drops his gun. Nugent reaches for it. Dobbins grabs it before he can get to it.

NUGENT

I'm not shooting at us! They are!

COLE

Let him go.

DOBBINS

You're both under--

COLE

You want to die right here, or you want to start doing the killing?!

ZIP ZIP. More shots kick up gravel all around them.

Dobbins returns fire with two guns now.

Cole sees the dozer wheel around, ready to make another run at them. He spots a FUEL TANK, momentarily illuminated in the dozer's lights.

He grabs Dobbins right arm, 'aims' it at the fuel tank as she shoots...

BOOM! The tank EXPLODES. Burning gas streams onto the bulldozer.

Drew and Binx bail off, clothes ON FIRE. Parsons and Todd bail after, returning fire as they escape into the yards.

Cole leaps up to chase, but hesitates as he sees McClellan lying right in the path of the dozer.

Nugent and Dobbins have rolled out of the way, then see McClellan at the same time--

DOBBINS

No!

Cole dives back into the ditch and pulls McClellan out of the way just before the dozer plows a big trench through the ditch where they were lying. Then he gets up and runs.

Nugent looks at Dobbins.

NUGENT

(holding up his cuffed
hands)

I would have done that but I'm all
stuck up!

Dobbins goes to McClellan and binds his tourniquet tighter.

DOBBINS

I need to go for the radio!

MCCLELLAN

You need to go for Parsons!

DOBBINS

You need help!

She turns to see that Nugent has disappeared.

DOBBINS (CONT'D)

Damn it!

She looks at McClellan, worried.

DOBBINS (CONT'D)

I didn't call for backup! I thought
we could handle it ourselves! I'll
go for the radio--

MCCLELLAN

I can take care of myself! I've
been doing it for 20 years! No reason
to stop now!

EXT. DRY DOCK YARDS - NIGHT

Cole stays in the shadows next to a rack of propeller shafts.

He spots Binx and Drew scrambling over the fleet of tugs and barges moored to the floating dock, heading for a small BASS BOAT tied up to the last barge.

BANG! Cole takes fire from Parsons on the floating dock.

EXT/INT MACHINE SHOP - DRY DOCKS - NIGHT

Nugent hears the shooting, ducks into a large machine shop.

Giant TUG BOAT PROPELLERS under repair, 7 feet tall, hang from chains on crane assemblies riding on an overhead track.

Nugent spots a machine press. Throws a power switch. The press starts... and every light in the shop turns on.

Anxious, Nugent watches the press MOVE DOWN. He has to make a run out into the open to get to the press. He waits until the last second, then runs to the press, slides his handcuffs under--SNAP! The press breaks the chain like a twig. Nugent dives out of sight just as--Dobbins steps inside the shop.

Sees no sign of movement. Then spots a MAN'S SHADOW behind one of the big propellers.

She moves forward, using the propellers for cover until she swings her gun around to see that the 'man' is a worker's COVERALLS, HARD HAT and BOOTS hanging from a hook.

SLAM! A hand grabs her from behind and shoves her face-first against a propeller blade.

A SHOTGUN slides up under her chin.

It's Todd Swope, burned and battered. He leans in to her from behind, talks into her ear.

TODD

Drop it.

Dobbins drops her gun. Todd turns her around and puts the shotgun barrel to her lips.

TODD (CONT'D)

(a la "Deliverance")

You sure got a pretty mouth.

WHAM! LOUD MACHINE NOISE as the whole crane assembly holding the propellers jerks forward on its tracks.

Todd's shotgun slips off of Dobbins and clatters against a blade. Dobbins goes for her gun as Todd tries to recover.

BAM! Nugent shoves a propeller at Todd. The blade dings him right in the face. He wobbles and drops the shotgun.

It discharges, BLASTING him in the chest.

Todd falls to the ground, dead.

Dobbins grabs her gun, holds it on Nugent. He freezes.

NUGENT

Can I just say one thing?..

DOBBINS

No.

BING! A propeller blade creams Dobbins in the back of the head. She falls to the ground, unconscious.

NUGENT

Watch out behind you.

He picks up her gun and runs out of the machine shop.

EXT. FLOATING DOCK - NIGHT

Cole sprints across the gangway onto the floating dock.

Parsons pops up from the other side of the jacked up barge, fires at Cole until he runs out... All out.

PARSONS

Binx!

Cole fires. Parsons ducks, scurries underneath the big barge, hiding. Cole sticks his gun under the barge and shoots into the dark crawl space underneath.

UNDER THE BARGE, Parsons lies flat as bullets whiz past.

Cole sees one of the JACKS holding up the barge. He kicks the release lever. The jack drops.

UNDER THE BARGE, a corner collapses onto the dock right in front of Parsons. He panics.

Cole kicks the lever of the next jack. SLAM!

UNDER THE BARGE, Parsons is nearly crushed as the corner falls, blocking his exit. He spots his last escape on the other side, crawls fast for it.

Cole empties his gun underneath the barge again.

Then SHOTS ring out. Incoming rounds SPARK around him.

Binx has come back onto the floating dock. He shoots at Cole. Cole tries to return fire, but realizes he's empty...

Suddenly, the entire dry dock LURCHES SIDEWAYS.

Cole looks up to see Nugent outside the control booth, pulling a lever that manually floods the dock bulkheads...

The dock begins to SINK.

Parsons rolls out the open end of the barge and leaps to the next tug as the floating dock shifts beneath him.

EXT. TUG BOAT - NIGHT

Parsons hurries across the tug, into the small boat where Drew is waiting. Parsons starts the outboard engine.

DREW

Wait! Binx!

They look back to see--

EXT. FLOATING DOCK - NIGHT

Cole and Binx roll down the slanting floating dock towards the river, its powerful current rushing through the narrow gaps between the dock and barges like a white water rapids.

Binx and Cole slide off the lip of the dock.

Binx hits the water. Cole holds onto his arm, keeping him from slipping away in the deadly current.

BINX

Help me! Don't let me go!

Cole holds onto Binx.

COLE

Where's Susie?

WATER washes onto the dock surface. Binx grabs onto a piece of cable with his free hand. Cole stomps his fingers. Binx lets go, but Cole keeps his grip tight around his arm.

Cole is the only thing keeping Binx from slipping under.

COLE (CONT'D)

Tell me!

OUT IN THE BASS BOAT

Parsons keeps pulling on the starter cord, trying to get the outboard to kick in as the small boat is swept down stream from the floating dock. Drew watches Binx, helpless.

DREW

Do something!

PARSONS

Like what?!

Parsons ignores Drew as he pulls on the starter cord.

DREW
He can't swim!

ON THE FLOATING DOCK

As more water rushes onto the floating dock, the barge starts to slip off of its last two jacks. Only Cole and Binx stand between it and the river.

BINX
Pull me up and I'll tell you.

COLE
Tell me first.

The barge slips off one of the jacks.

COLE (CONT'D)
Where's Susie Faulkner?!!

Binx looks up at him like a wet, frightened kid.

BINX
(yells it)
Bluff City! She's in Bluff City!
Now pull me up, damnit!

A beat. Cole shakes his head.

COLE
You're all dead.

Cole lets go of Binx's arm. Binx is sucked right down into the current. He disappears into the dark rushing river.

Cole turns to see Nugent, standing right above him on the catwalk.

He has seen and HEARD everything.

They lock eyes for a moment. Then a loud NOISE jars Cole as the barge slips off its last jack and crashes down the dock.

Cole scrambles out of the way, grabbing safely hold of a ladder as the barge sluices past him into the river.

He looks back up to see that Nugent is gone.

MOMENTS LATER

Cole reaches the gangway - his only path back to land before the floating dock sinks beneath him. Cole is about to cross when he stops, spotting Nugent on the bank, holding the cotter pin that secures the opposite end of the gangway.

NUGENT

You didn't come to take him back to prison. You came to kill him.

Cole eyes Nugent's hands on the cotter pin, ready to pull.

COLE

You're wrong. I came to kill all of them. I'm going to plant every last one of them in the ground.

NUGENT

You lying sonofabitch! We made a deal! We were working together! There's no reward for a dead body--

COLE

There is no reward! I checked it out! It doesn't exist! You made it up! You're after the cash from the bank robbery! If he's dead, he can't lead you to it!

There's a long beat of silence. Neither man moves.

NUGENT

Congratulations, Deputy... You just made Detective.

Cole lunges for the gangway. Nugent yanks out the pin.

The gangway FALLS AWAY from the river bank.

Cole grabs on, clinging to it like a cat to a ladder as it swings down and slams against the wall of the floating dock.

Cole hangs on as the dock sinks. Climbs to the top where he finds a LIFE RING hooked on the catwalk railing.

He looks across the gap to land. Nugent is gone.

Cole grabs the life ring and jumps into the roiling water.

He is swept downstream. He holds onto the life ring and tries to kick himself towards shore.

EXT. DRY DOCKS - NIGHT

Dobbins is at the Crown Vic, listening to the radio.

RADIO VOICE (O.S.)

...Ambulance is ten minutes out...
SWAT team mobilizing...

NUGENT pulls her out of the car.

DOBBINS

Hey!

She goes for her gun, forgetting that Nugent already has it.

He gets into the car and shuts the door.

NUGENT

Sorry...

He starts the car. She gets up, grabs onto the door handle.

DOBBINS

I know who you are.

Nugent looks right at her for a beat.

NUGENT

You're too damn good-looking for
government work.

Nugent hits the gas. Dobbins loses her grip on the door handle and wipes out. Stands back up into a cloud of gravel and dust as Nugent drives away.

Then she sees something out of the corner of her eye...

McClellan limping towards her, pale as a ghost...

REACHING OUT FOR HER.

He collapses to the ground. She runs to him, distraught.

EXT. RIVER BANK - NIGHT

Cole comes up through the brush, soaking wet, matted with mud and garbage from the river.

IN THE DISTANCE, he spots the twinkling lights of a commercial boulevard.

EXT. USED CAR LOT - HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Closed. Locked. Dark. There's something on the door, though. We MOVE TOWARDS it as we hear the sound of someone trying to start a car, finding...

AN ENVELOPE stuck into the door jam.

It's Cole's envelope of cash. Soaking wet. He has left it in the door, hanging with a giant window sticker advertising "\$2500." Across the sticker Cole has written, "Keep the Change." We hear that car finally START.

REVERSE ANGLE to find Cole behind the wheel of his new used car, an early 1980's Mustang 5.0 barely holding together.

Cole punches it and screeches away into the night.

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Dead of night. Quiet blacktop.

We hear Van Halen's "Jaime's Cryin'" faintly under the sound of an approaching CAR...

The CROWN VIC speeds by, cop strobes spinning.

INT. CROWN VIC - MOVING - NIGHT

Nugent drives 100 mph as Van Halen cranks.

Nugent bangs a hand on the wheel, "drumming" to the music.

Swings from a can of BEER with his other hand.

Stares down the road, harried and intent.

EXT. HOSPITAL - MEMPHIS - NIGHT

Establishing.

INT. INTENSIVE CARE - RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

McClellan's hooked up to all sorts of machines and IV's, sleeping. Dobbins sits next to him, quiet and somber.

A NURSE comes in, carrying McClellan's jacket.

NURSE

This was left in the ambulance.
I'll hang it up for him.

The Nurse hangs McClellan's jacket on the door, then leaves.

Dobbins looks at it, spots something sticking out of the inner pocket... McClellan's dog-eared ROAD MAP.

She gets up, goes to the jacket, takes the map and opens it.

It's filled with McClellan's meticulous notes surrounding the man hunt. Dobbins is fascinated. She sits down, studying the map. She grabs her own papers, opens them up. Starts comparing her notes with those in McClellan's map.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - TEXAS - NIGHT

Linda is on the pay phone.

LINDA
I checked every 411 in three states.
There's no Susie, Susan, Suzanne or
S. Faulkner listed in Bluff City,
County or the whole state of
Missouri...

EXT. BAIT AND TACKLE SHOP - TENNESSEE - NIGHT

On the edge of nowhere. Bugs thick as snow swirling around
the single bare bulb outside the shop.

Cole's on a pay phone.

COLE
What about DMV--

LINDA
(interrupting)
I ran DMV, NFF... I ran everything,
Cole. There is no Susie Faulkner.
She doesn't exist.

Cole's startled by a random HIGHWAY PATROL CAR speeding by
with its flashers on but no siren.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Cole?

COLE
Yeah.

LINDA
Come home.

COLE
I'll be home as soon as it's over.

LINDA
It's over, Cole. They know who you
are. You're a fugitive now just
like him. This can't end anyway but
bad.

COLE
Run it again.

LINDA
Cole...

COLE
(calmly)
Run it again.

LINDA
Cole, please, you can't undo the
past. It's not worth losing you--

COLE
I killed one of 'em, Linda. Binx
Statler.

A beat.

LINDA
How did it feel?

A longer beat.

COLE
Not the way I thought it would.

Cole hangs up the phone.

INT. SHERIFF STATION - TEXAS - NIGHT

Linda listens to the dial tone, starts to cry.

SHERIFF HUCKEE (O.S.)
Linda...

Startled, she turns to see Huckee standing behind her.

SHERIFF HUCKEE (CONT'D)
Let's talk, honey.

EXT. GAS STATION - ILLINOIS - NIGHT

Crown Vic at the pumps, cop strobes still flashing.

INT. GAS STATION - ILLINOIS - NIGHT

Nugent is inside on a pay phone as a CASHIER rings up a huge
pile of food, water, beer, etc., behind him.

NUGENT
(into phone)
F, a, u, l, k, n, e, r. That's right.
Are you sure?

INT. BAIL BONDS OFFICE - NEW ORLEANS - NIGHT

Krystal works her keyboard.

KRYSTAL
Nada, partner.

NUGENT
Try again?

KRYSTAL
Try what?

NUGENT
Try something. Try anything. This is the big one and this window's closing fast. We slide through and we'll be eating cheeseburgers in paradise, baby--

Krystal bangs her fist on the desk.

KRYSTAL
My computer crashed--

Nugent abruptly hangs up, irritated. Goes to the register.

CASHIER
Sixty-five, seventy-two including the gas.

NUGENT
Can I see the receipt?

The cashier tears off the receipt, hands it to him.

NUGENT (CONT'D)
You got a pen?

The Cashier hands him a pen. Nugent scribbles something on the back of the receipt, hands it to the cashier.

NUGENT (CONT'D)
Call this number. A man will answer. You say, "Blackbird 72" and hang up. A check will come in three days.

The cashier looks skeptical as Nugent stuffs the last of his purchases into a paper bag.

CASHIER
How do they know where to send the check?

Nugent stares right at the cashier like a psychopath.

NUGENT

You don't want to know how they know
what they need to know. But they
know it because they need to. You
don't.

Nugent pops the tab on a beer, gulps it as he walks out the
door and hops back into the Crown Vic.

INT. HOSPITAL - MEMPHIS - NIGHT

Dobbins has spread out all of her notes and the map. She
speaks to McClellan, who remains unconscious in bed.

DOBBINS

(connecting the dots)

...when Parsons was busted, they
caught in Cairo, Illinois. It was
always assumed that he never made it
north of Cairo. But he was caught
wearing a workman's shirt belonging
to a tug boat crew docked up river,
at a depot in Missouri. Parsons said
he found the shirt in a car he stole.
Turns out the owner of the shirt was
found dead two night before Parsons
was caught. Coroner said he'd gotten
drunk and fallen overboard...

She pauses for a second, then turns to McClellan, excited.

DOBBINS (CONT'D)

But let's just assume for a minute
that Parsons killed the guy. It's
not a stretch. If he got the shirt
off him in Missouri, that would mean
the last place he spent any time
before he got caught was in the town
where the depot was...

(seeing it for the
first time on the
map)

Bluff City.

She stares at McClellan's unconscious face, fully taking in
the seriousness of his condition. She tears up.

DOBBINS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, sir. I didn't want anyone
else stealing our show out from under
us again. I thought it was worth
it. It's wasn't...

She takes out her badge and lays it on the bed next to him.

McClellan stirs, mumbling. Dobbins leans over him.

DOBBINS (CONT'D)
Sir? John? Can you hear me?

McClellan flutters an eye open, looks straight at her. Mumbles again, tries to clear his throat. Dobbins leans closer, right next to his face as he tries to speak.

DOBBINS (CONT'D)
It's okay. Take it easy. You're in the hospital--

MCCLELLAN
Bluff City...

It's clear and vivid. Dobbins stares at him.

DOBBINS
Sir?

MCCLELLAN
You're right. It has to be.

Dobbins realizes he's been able to hear her the whole time.

DOBBINS
It's just a guess. I can't be sure--
McClellan grabs her arm with an iron grip.

MCCLELLAN
Chicago, stop pissing me off second guessing yourself. You want him, you got him... Now go get him.

Dobbins stares at him, stunned.

INT. HOSPITAL - INTENSIVE CARE WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Dobbins walks fast and deliberate through the busy waiting room, clipping her badge back onto her belt. COPS and FEDS mill about, talking.

Agent Murphy catches sight of Dobbins.

AGENT MURPHY
Marshall Dobbins?

Dobbins keeps walking, ignoring him. He hurries to catch up with her.

AGENT MURPHY (CONT'D)
I have a few more questions...

Dobbins hits the exit. Agent Murphy follows.

EXT. PARKING LOT - HOSPITAL - MEMPHIS - NIGHT

Parking lot. Agent Murphy catches up with Dobbins.

AGENT MURPHY
Please... Marshall... Stop!

She stops. Turns to him and smiles pleasantly.

DOBBINS
Do you have a car here?

Agent Murphy's caught off guard by her friendly tone.

AGENT MURPHY
Of course.

DOBBINS
Where is it?

He casually points across the lot to a silver FORD TAURUS.

DOBBINS (CONT'D)
Can I speak to you privately?

BEAT LATER - AT THE TAURUS

Agent Murphy gets out his keys to unlock the car.

AGENT MURPHY
Sorry we got off to such a bad start--

WHAM! Dobbins punches Agent Murphy in the jaw, knocking him out. She picks up his car keys and looks down at him.

DOBBINS
Me too.

She takes his gun, gets in, starts the car and drives away.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - MISSOURI - DAWN

SOMEONE'S POV FROM A HIGH BLUFF:

Dawn mixes pink and orange into the muddy, mile-wide swath of river. On the opposite shore, there's nothing but thick woods as far as the eye can see. A beautiful, tranquil view that's barely changed since Lewis and Clark paddled by.

Super: "Sunday. The 4th of July."

PARSONS stands on the bluff, smoking a cigarette, taking in the sunrise, relishing the peace and quiet.

A TRAIN WHISTLE jolts him. He looks down to see a big freight train blasting along next to the river.

EXT. MISSOURI WOODS - DAWN

Drew, sweaty and pale, cleans a gun in the shelter of the thick woods near the train tracks.

His burned arm is wrapped in a dirty, charred scrap of T-shirt. There is no life left in his eyes.

He jumps as someone comes through the bush. Points his gun, ready to fire, only to see...

Parsons come out of the woods, down from the bluff. Parsons hesitates when he sees Drew pointing the gun at him. Drew keeps it pointed for a second too long...

PARSONS

Stop thinking bad thoughts. He was like a brother to me, too.

Drew lowers his weapon. Parsons bitch slaps him.

PARSONS (CONT'D)

Get over it!

Drew looks up at him, ashamed.

PARSONS (CONT'D)

Let's get this done.

EXT. BLUFF CITY, MISSOURI - DOWNTOWN - DAWN

A small sleepy river town stuck in a time warp. The once-thriving Main Street has gone the way of most of small town America: legitimate stores and shops, driven out of business by the Wal-Mart's and Best-Buys out on the interstate, have been replaced by seedy bars and pool halls, a greasy restaurant or two.

A tall RIVER WALL stands between the downtown and the Mississippi. Black stripes reaching almost to the top of the wall, mark record high water levels and flood history.

NUGENT stands next to an open gate in the river wall, flipping through a local PHONE BOOK as the same TRAIN that we just saw moves slowly along the downtown tracks.

Nugent watches it pass, then looks out at the river again where some LOCAL MEN ready a FIREWORKS BARGE connected to a

SMALL TUG BOAT for the evening festivities. They are placing sand bags around a big mortar tube in the barge, loading crates marked "Fireworks," "Explosive," "No Smoking." Nugent looks spent and tired. He watches a big log move down stream, bobbing like a toothpick in the awesome current.

Nugent slings the small phone book out into the river.

Watches it sink and disappear.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

CLOSE ON A SIGN, "Welcome to Bluff City. Home of the Central Tigers State Championship Marching Band." Cole leans against the Mustang at a railroad crossing while the same TRAIN passes through. He watches it go by with a vacant, empty look... a look of defeat.

There are a few cars parked behind him. One of them is a BIG RIG and flat bed trailer hauling a front end loader.

The BIG RIG DRIVER ambles up to Cole, just pausing to chat.

BIG RIG DRIVER
That's a dying industry...

Cole turns to note the man, but says nothing.

BIG RIG DRIVER (CONT'D)
Railroads built America, and then
America left the railroads behind.

Big Rig Driver checks his watch, spits tobacco into the dirt.

BIG RIG DRIVER (CONT'D)
Nobody cares about history anymore.
Want to wipe it all out. Nothing's
sacred. They're digging up the damn
cemetery just to put a bridge in.
Can't even let the dead rest in peace
anymore--

Cole is suddenly struck. He turns to the big rig driver.

COLE
What did you say?

Big Rig Driver looks stunned that Cole's actually listening.

BIG RIG DRIVER
I gotta drop off this loader, turn
right around tonight so I can bring
another back up tomorrow--

COLE

You said something about a cemetery?

BIG RIG DRIVER

The old Civil War cemetery south of town. This time next week it'll be gone. New bridge is going right through it--

Cole has jumped into the Mustang. He punches it and goes.

EXT. RIVER WALL - DAY

Nugent watches the train caboose pass. He steps across the tracks, heading back to the Crown Vic when something across the tracks catches his eye. He stops.

He can't believe his eyes. Transfixed, he crosses the tracks and walks right up to...

NUGENT

What kind of woman sits on your money
for two years without spending it?
Why you dumb sonofabitch...
(smiles)
A dead one!

REVERSE ANGLE to reveal a tiny bronze STATUE - a figure of a diminutive woman, dressed in Civil War era clothing. She carries a lantern in one hand, and a battle dressing in the other. She's set out of the way near the river wall, obscure and alone.

A plaque beneath her reads: "Susan Faulkner. Who tended the wounded sons of America during the War Between the States."

Nugent jumps up and plants a kiss right on the statue's lips. One of the LOCAL MEN loading the fireworks barge notices, does a double-take. Nugent sees him looking.

NUGENT (CONT'D)

Hey, buddy! Where's this pretty
ole' girl buried at?!

EXT. CIVIL WAR CEMETERY - DAY

CLOSE ON A TOMBSTONE, plain and simple, chipped and eroded away by time's cruel hands. "S. Faulkner 1835-1865." DIRT FLIES past it, landing in a pile.

REVEAL PARSONS and DREW digging into the grave with shovels.

They are about 4 feet down when Drew hits something solid.

He looks at Parsons, expectant.

PARSONS
Takes the pain away, don't it?

EXT. CEMETERY GATES - DAY

Nothing moving here at all. Complete silence.

Nugent appears, low running across the entrance to the cemetery. He hides behind a crypt, takes a look around.

IN THE DISTANCE, he spots Parsons and Drew wrestling the small wooden coffin out of the grave.

Breathless, Nugent pulls out his gun, checks the cylinder. He has three bullets left. He closes the cylinder, steels himself for what he has to do.

AT THE OPEN GRAVE

Drew turns his back to Parsons, looking down at the coffin.

DREW
Don't feel right anymore.

Parsons points his gun at the back of Drew's head.

PARSONS
Yeah...I know what you mean.

Parsons is about to pull the trigger when--A GUNSHOT rings out. A round ZINGS in.

Parsons and Drew dive for cover.

BEHIND THE CRYPT
Nugent hasn't fired a shot. He peeks around a corner to see Parsons and Drew taking fire from...

COLE, behind a tombstone off to Nugent's left.

AT THE OPEN GRAVE

Parsons spots Nugent making a move. He shoots at him.

PARSONS
Nugent, you piece of shit!

Drew returns Cole's fire. Parsons takes cover behind the coffin. He desperately tries to pry it open, working a small crow bar with one hand while returning fire with the other.

COLE shoots, and then crawls from one grave marker to the next, working his way closer to Parsons.

Everyone starts yelling and shooting at the same time.

NUGENT
Go to hell, Parsons!

Drew slithers away, moving to outflank Cole. Cole moves again, dodging gunshots. He takes cover behind a tall old tombstone. He spots Nugent from his new vantage point.

BANG! The top of the old brittle tombstone shatters from one of Parsons's gunshots. Cole ducks lower. Parsons furiously works the crow bar. Cracks open a corner of the coffin.

PARSONS
You wanted this money, you should
have stuck around when you had the
chance, Nugent!

Cole hears this. Pauses. Looks at Nugent.

PARSONS (CONT'D)
Getaway driver's supposed to wait
until the money's in the car to
getaway. But this ole' boy took off
by himself. Left us behind. Screwed
it all up.

Boom. Nugent was the getaway driver...

Cole flushes with rage. The veins in his neck bulging with hatred. He looks back to Nugent... but Nugent is gone.

CRACK! Parsons pops another corner off the coffin.

PARSONS (CONT'D)
Come and get it now, you asshole!

Cole races out from his cover, shooting as he runs for the next grave marker. He empties his clips at Parsons. Dives for cover right at the base of a LARGE CRYPT. He ejects his empty clip from his .45, reaches for another when--Drew comes around the corner. Points his gun right at Cole's head.

Cole's a dead man. He freezes mid-reload, clip in one hand, gun in the other.

DREW
You killed my baby brother.

BOOM! Drew gets hit in the shoulder. BOOM BOOM! Two more shots punch him in the chest and put him on the ground, dead.

Cole looks up to see Nugent lying low under a dead tree.

NUGENT

I never shot anybody before...

Cole points his gun at Nugent, tightening on the trigger.

COLE

You were there. You were the getaway driver. You're the one who drove the Trans-Am.

It pours out of Nugent like water from a broken damn.

NUGENT

Nobody was supposed to get hurt. I was outside, waiting in the car. They all came running out. And then he did it. Right in front of me. He shot those people. I hit the gas and left them all behind. I didn't want any part in any killing.

(beat)

You're not the only one looking for redemption, Deputy.

Cole points his gun at Nugent, shaking with rage.

COLE

Those people he shot... the woman was named Emily. She was my wife. The five-year-old girl... that was my daughter, Annie Lynn.

NUGENT

Oh God.

COLE

I had my hands on the man who murdered my family. And I let him go without even giving him a speeding ticket. There is no redemption for something like that.

NUGENT

It wasn't your fault. You have to forgive yourself. You can't carry this to your grave.

Cole's burning up, his gun to Nugent's head, every cell in his body screaming for him to pull that fucking trigger. Nugent shuts his eyes, waiting for the inevitable.

Cole YELLS as he FIRES the gun into the dirt next to Nugent's head. Emptying his magazine.

Nugent waits a beat, then opens his eyes, surprised that he's still alive.

He sees Cole reloading and looking back at the open grave.

PARSONS IS GONE.

Cole turns back to Nugent.

COLE
You saved my life. If I ever see
you again, I won't return the favor.

Cole gets up and takes off after Parsons. Nugent collapses to the ground, exhausted. He looks up to see...

STATUE OF THE VIRGIN MARY

On top of a headstone. Weathered and worn, it stares sad and lonesome back at Nugent.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

Parsons crosses the train tracks along the river and hurries to bank where the small bass boat is tied off.

He tosses the bag into the boat. Gets in.

Pulls on the engine. It doesn't start. He sweats, watching Cole get closer as he pulls and pulls the starter cord.

The engine starts.

He motors out into the river, heading across.

COLE reaches the river's edge. Spots Parsons getting away.

Hears a TRAIN approaching. Sees it coming down the tracks behind him.

Follows the tracks with his eyes to a TRESTLE BRIDGE crossing the river downstream.

The train is headed for the trestle - its path across the river is going to intersect with Parsons and his boat.

EXT. CEMETERY GATES - DAY

The Taurus SPEEDS into the cemetery.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Dobbins finds Nugent, sitting on the ground with his back to the crypt, head in hands. He looks up at her, drained.

NUGENT

They got a head start.

She handcuffs him to an iron grate in the crypt. She runs.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

Cole has climbed out onto the branch of a tall tree overhanging the tracks.

The train rolls past beneath him, cars shucking past one-by-one in a steady blur.

Cole feels to make sure his .45 is tucked into his belt, then swings out and...

DROPS DOWN ONTO THE MOVING TRAIN.

EXT. TOP OF MOVING TRAIN - DAY

Cole hangs on, watching the trestle bridge approach.

EXT. BOAT - DAY

Parsons motors for the opposite shore. Glances down at the duffle in the bottom of the boat. Peels open the top, revealing BRICKS OF CASH in plastic bags.

He smiles. Then hears something and looks up to spot the SMALL TUG BOAT on the other side of the trestle, pushing the FIREWORKS BARGE towards him into the middle of the river.

EXT. TRAIN - MOVING - DAY

The train begins to cross the trestle bridge, moving out over the river. Cole looks over the edge of the car he's riding on. It's a long, vertiginous drop to the water.

He sees Parsons approaching beneath him, oblivious.

EXT. BOAT - DAY

Parsons steers away to avoid a collision course with the fireworks barge when...

THE OUTBOARD ENGINE on the boat quits.

Parsons pulls, trying to get it started. No go. He glances at the tug, pushing the fireworks barge on a head-on collision course for his tiny boat, dead in the current.

Parsons stands up and waves at the tug.

PARSONS

Hey! Hey!

INT. PILOT HOUSE - TUG BOAT - DAY

The CAPTAIN smokes a pipe, steering the tug towards a gap in the trestle pilings.

He doesn't see or hear Parsons.

EXT. BOAT - DAY

Parsons stands up in the boat, waves and yells at the tug.

He looks down at the big bag of cash in front of him.

Then the sharp, sudden TRAIN WHISTLE makes him glance up for the first time. His eyes almost pop out of his head...

COLE rides on top of a box car, almost directly above him.

Cole opens up with his .45.

Parsons gets HIT in the leg. Falls back into the boat, dropping his gun overboard into the river.

EXT. TRAIN - MOVING - DAY

As the box car that Cole is riding begins to line up directly above Parsons, Cole runs out of ammo. He feels for another clip. He's out. There's nothing he can do now... except.

He stands up, takes a breath and--

JUMPS FROM THE MOVING TRAIN!

INT. PILOT HOUSE - TUG BOAT - SAME

The Captain spots Cole dropping from the trestle right in front of the barge.

The Captain panics. Slams a "kill switch."

UNDERWATER

The big tug propellers STOP. But the tug and barge plows forward, riding huge momentum.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Cole pops to the surface, choking river.

Parsons's boat is right in front of him, riding the current.

Cole reaches out and grabs onto the bow when--THE TUG HORN blasts the air behind him.

He turns to see--

THE LEADING EDGE OF THE BARGE

Bearing right down on him, seconds from impact.

He heaves in air and dives back under just before the barge--RAMS PARSONS'S BOAT, spinning it like a top.

Parsons sails overboard, into the river.

UNDERWATER

Cole holds his breath as the barge moves over him, sealing off the surface above like an eclipse.

Cole kicks for daylight at the back of the tug.

EXT. TUG BOAT - SAME

The two crewman rush to the rail, reach out and--

GRAB PARSONS BY THE ARM, hauling him out of the water, choking and spitting.

CREWMEN TWO

You okay, pal? What happened?

Parsons looks around, nervous.

PARSONS

Where's the other guy?

CREWMAN ONE

There's another guy?

Parsons pulls himself up on the rail. He glimpses his small boat, intact and drifting away downstream.

The bag of cash still in it.

Parsons SHOVES Crewman One off the tug.

Crewman One hits the water, floats away in his life jacket.

CREWMAN TWO

What the--

Parsons beats Crewman Two in the face, right off the tug.

EXT. REAR OF TUG BOAT - SAME

SOMEONE'S POV:

Crewman Two bobs away in the current, held aloft by his life jacket.

REVERSE ANGLE to find Cole hanging onto the back of the tug. He watches Crewman Two drift past, then climbs onto the deck.

EXT. PILOT HOUSE - TUG BOAT - DAY

Parsons reaches the door just as the Captain comes out, fumbling to load a SHOTGUN.

Parsons grabs the shotgun by the barrel and jerks it out of the Captain's hands.

He flips it around, one-handed, and points it at the Captain.

PARSONS

Start it up.

EXT. TUG BOAT DECK - DAY

Cole cautiously makes his way towards the bow when--

THE ENGINES START. And the tug lurches forward.

INT. PILOT HOUSE - TUG BOAT - SAME

The Captain has the wheel. Parsons eyes his boat getting smaller as the current pulls it downstream.

PARSONS

Get me close to that boat!

CAPTAIN

It's too shallow that side--

Parsons cracks him across the back with the shotgun. The Captain drops to the floor in agony.

Parsons grabs the wheel and spins it to the right--

COLE comes through the door, charging him.

Parsons pivots, tries to bring the shotgun on Cole.

BOOM! He fires. Misses Cole. Shatters the window.

The tug wheel spins free.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

The TUG pushes the barge right for a trestle piling.

INT. PILOT HOUSE - TUG BOAT - DAY

Cole grabs the hot shotgun barrel, searing his hand.

Parsons FIRES again. The blast is deafening.

Cole kicks Parsons in his leg wound. Parsons howls in pain.
Cole gets the shotgun away from him, tosses it.

Parsons tackles Cole out of the pilot house--

EXT. TUG BOAT DECK - DAY

Cole and Parsons crash to the deck below in a heap.

They fight a bloody death match that ends up with them
crashing through a metal FIRST AID BOX.

Parsons, exhausted and bleeding, looks at Cole.

PARSONS

Who the fuck are you?

Cole looks back at him through a blackened, bloodshot eye.

COLE

You killed my family.

Parsons stares at him, completely bewildered...

Then he simply SHRUGS as if the whole thing was nothing more
than a fender bender, then catches sight of something...

HIS BOAT, hung up in marshy overhang on the opposite shore.

Parsons gets up, leaving Cole behind like wounded, dying
game. He climbs over the bow of the tug, drops onto--

THE FIREWORKS BARGE.

He limps across it, intent on his boat.

He grabs a life jacket off a hook on the barge. Slips it on
and keeps limping towards the other end of the barge.

He's going to jump off and swim for his boat.

Cole pulls himself up. Sees Parsons escaping.

Feels something roll up against his foot.

An emergency FLARE, loose from the First Aid Kit.

EXT. FIREWORKS BARGE - DAY

Parsons is halfway across the barge when...

COLE (O.S.)
Parsons!

Parsons stops, turns. Looks at Cole standing up on the bow of the tug, holding something out over the fireworks barge.

Parsons sees that it's a flare.

Cole pulls the top. The flare IGNITES. Burns white hot in his hands like a torch...

COLE (CONT'D)
Happy Fourth of July...

Parsons leaps for the edge of the boat, trips and falls.

Cole lobbs the flare.

It lands in the middle of the fireworks barge.

Nothing happens. Both Parsons and Cole stare, frozen.

Parsons grins, like he's been given a free pass.

Then suddenly... a fuse SIZZLES.

Parsons struggles like a dying bird to get up as FIREWORKS shoot off.

KA-BOOM! The entire barge EXPLODES in multicolored star bursts, one-after-the-other - a giant pinwheel of fireworks.

EXT. TUG BOAT DECK - DAY

Cole spots the wounded Captain floating away to safety in his life jacket.

Cole looks for another jacket. There are none.

Fire leaps from the barge to the tug.

Cole dives overboard into the river.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

FROM A DISTANCE, we see a great black and orange FIREBALL leap out of the tug as the boat goes up in flames.

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY

Cole is held under, tossed and turned by the current.

He kicks and claws for the surface, but can't get there.

So he just lets go. Stops fighting. Lets the current take him through the thick brown water...

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Cole pops up. Gasping for air. Discovers that he's been spit into a small eddy where the water slows down...

He swims for the bank.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

Cole climbs out of the river, choking on mud and swamp.

He claws his way up the steep, muddy bank, gets to his feet.

Looks up into...

THE BARREL OF DOBBINS'S GUN.

He holds up his hands in surrender, like he's confessing.

COLE

I just wanted to set things right.

Dobbins keeps her gun on him, steady and confident.

DOBBINS

I know. So do I.

Cole looks at her, oddly struck by what she's said.

And then Dobbins lowers her gun.

DOBBINS (CONT'D)

We found your truck, the one you
reported stolen. Seems some felons
took it for a joy ride. We're sorry
it can't be returned to you.

(she tucks her gun
away)

I hope you enjoy the rest of your
fishing trip, Deputy.

She turns and walks away, letting him go.

Cole glances at the river and the hulk of burning barge drifting downstream, then runs off into the woods.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Dobbins comes back up the hill to find lots of activity - COP CARS parked all over. COPS probing the open grave, etc.

She stops when she realizes something is missing...

Her car is gone. She looks from the spot where it was parked to the crypt where Nugent was handcuffed...

He's not there anymore.

The iron grate he was cuffed to has been ripped right out of the old, weakened mortar of the crypt.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

MORE COPS wade into the shallows, grab the small boat that Parsons tried to escape in. They pull it up onto the banks.

Dobbins climbs down to look inside.

The boat is completely empty. The money is gone.

Dobbins looks out at the big muddy river, flowing past as steady and indifferent as time itself.

EXT. OIL PUMP - TEXAS - DAY

The one that Cole was fixing at the beginning. It's working now. Cole picks up his tool box and walks away.

EXT. GRAVE YARD - TEXAS - DAY

CLOSE ON TWO HEADSTONES placed side-by-side.

"Emily Anne Stanton. Mother. B. 1978 D. 2004" "Annie Lynn Stanton. Daughter. B. 1999 D. 2004" Cole stands under the hot midday Texas sun looking down at the headstones. He holds a bunch of flowers in his hands. He kneels down and places the flowers between the graves.

He stands back up, then looks out over the endless horizon and the oil wells pumping up and down, up and down...

He turns to notice a SHERIFF'S CAR pulling up.

Sheriff Huckee gets out, approaches.

HUCKEE

Can I talk to you about something?

Cole glances back at the working pump, then looks at Huckee.

COLE
Yeah... I'm all finished here.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS BAR - DAY

Empty and forlorn. From INSIDE, sounds of TV NEWS.

INT. NEW ORLEANS BAR - DAY

Nugent sits next to BECKY, punked-out grifter chick, watching the TV above the bar. Nugent has changed his hair color, his choice of clothing, like someone trying to run in new circles... or hide from old ones. He's drinking whiskey.

ON TV: A REPORTER stands in front of the "Rio Bravo Savings and Loan" in Midway, Texas.

REPORTER
...bank officials say that the money was returned late last night, through a night deposit box. Serial numbers on the bills match those stolen from this very bank during a 2004 robbery where three people lost their lives. Over a million in cash was returned. There was no note...

BECKY
Holy shit! What kind of fool finds a million in cash lying around and returns it?

Nugent has stepped over to the jukebox. He drops a quarter, makes his selection, then turns to Becky, straight-faced.

NUGENT
Biggest fool you ever saw.

Robert Johnson's "Cross Road Blues" wails from the jukebox.

EXT. HOSPITAL - MEMPHIS - DAY

Dobbins, dressed down casual and looking hot in faded jeans and T-shirt, pushes McClellan in a wheelchair through hospital doors. His arm and shoulder are bandaged tight.

She wheels him to a car parked at the curb. Stops.

MCCLELLAN
Where we going?

She looks down at him. Smiles.

INT. BLUES CITY BARBECUE - MEMPHIS - DAY

Dobbins and McClellan sit across from each other in a booth.

A WAITER drops off two big plates of ribs on the table.

Dobbins digs right in. Notices McClellan is not eating.
He's just watching her fondly from across the table.

DOBBINS

Gotta try this sweet sauce. Good
for the soul.

McClellan takes a bite, chews, smiles warmly at her.

MCCLELLAN

Yes it is, Chicago. Yes it is.

INT. SHERIFF STATION - TEXAS - DAY

DISPATCHER'S OFFICE. Linda finishes a call.

LINDA

(into radio)

Tim asked if you could drive by the
ranch and hit your siren... the kids
are having a birthday party.

JIM (O.S.)

Copy that, dispatch. Tell him we'll
be there in fifteen.

Linda looks up, startled to see...

COLE standing at the door to the dispatch office.

Wearing his DEPUTY SHERIFF'S UNIFORM.

COLE

Want a lift home?

EXT. COUNTY ROAD - DUSK

Cole's SHERIFF'S CAR drives along.

INT. COLE'S SHERIFF'S CAR - DUSK

Cole drives. Linda sits next to him. They are both quiet
for a long time. Then...

COLE

How about a little music?

He turns on the radio, surfs, finds the opening drifts of the Allman Brothers "One Way Out." Linda nods, likes it. Cole reaches out and takes her hand. She looks at him, pleasantly surprised. He smiles at her. Squeezes tight.

FADE OUT.

THE END.