

THE UNDERTOW

screenplay by:
Joe Conway
and
David Gordon Green

FADE IN:

1 EXT. LOSHOLDER ESTATE -- DAY

1

CHRIS MUNN, 14, stands outside an elegant home staring up at a curtained window on the second floor. With his sleeves rolled up and a rotten ball cap pulled over his shaggy hair, he scratches his upper lip and stains the virgin fade of a mustache. He takes the last drag on a cigarette as he watches, waiting like a soiled spy, pressed upon an open landscape.

The trees troll in the slight breeze, Chris drops the cigarette next to his bare feet and picks up a rock. Without emotion, he pitches the rock at the window. Glass shatters.

LILA LOSHOLDER, 15, pulls back the drapery and sees Chris standing, unmoving, on the meadow. Somewhere inside the house a dog barks. A man begins to yell. The girl seems not to hear. She tucks her hair behind her ear as she looks down at Chris and gives him a sad wave. He holds his hand in a loose salute but makes no move to leave.

Chris begins to tap his foot and nod his head.

FREEZE FRAME

TITLE UP

A FLASH OF LIGHT. -- CREDITS ROLL -- CONTINUOUS

MIXED FILM STOCK/MULTI-OPTICAL TITLE SEQUENCE

OPTICAL ZOOMS, SPLIT SCREEN, SLOW MOTION, Super 8mm, 35mm:

Chris is off. -- He tears through low shrubs and dodges past a fence post of the Losholder land.

ON THE LOSHOLDER PORCH:

BERN LOSHOLDER (45) looks like old money. Runs outside in his dress pants, with suspenders up, but no shirt on... Carries a rifle like the pilgrims used.

BERN

Hey Boy! -- What the hell are you
doin'?!!!!!

His face, strong. His teeth, ivory white.

Mr. Losholder's healthy IBIZAN HOUND stands next to him barking viciously. -- They see Chris vanish into the trees. He fires a couple of shots off into the air. -- Birds scatter.

Lila runs out into the yard in a panic, past her father. Her white dress is pressed.

SLOW MOTION: She falls to her knees and squints at the sky, hums.

2 SERIES OF SHOTS

2

Chris stumbles and skids down an embankment into a shallow creek. He runs upstream...

...He thrashes past a patch of woods, past a WHISKEY STILL.

Tramples into a farmer's high cut WHEAT FIELD...

...Down a ghetto street and around a corner between two houses where DIRTY NAKED CHILDREN play in the mud. This town looks war torn and hangs in an unspecific era.

A LOOSE MUTT DOG puts a charge in Chris' barefooted act as it chases after him barking madly...

...Chris hurdles a shaky fence to evade the dog and climbs up onto the roof of a house where he balances his way across.

He drops down onto the roof of a time-honored car where an OLD MAN works under the hood like a mechanical pirate.

Chris nods to the Old Man who gives him a tart look. Chris smiles and jumps off the vehicle.

His face cringes in pain, SCREAMS at the top of his lungs. -- Looking down, he sees that he has landed on a wooden board with an uprooted nail that sticks up crooked through the middle of his right foot. He blows on it to cool the pain.

The Old Man looks and sees Chris stooped.

Chris stares at the nail poking out of his foot and the blood that pools. He pulls at the board. It's stuck. He hears the rabid bark of the Loose Mutt approaching. Desperate, Chris grabs a nearby stone and pounds on the nail hoping to knock it out. -- To his rank luck, the nail bends at the tip, locking the lumber to his foot. He sinks.

The Old Man is taken aback.

~~OLD MAN~~
OLD MAN

Ain't that the damndest thing you ever saw?

The holler of Mr. Losholder is heard.

BERN (O.S.)

Chris Munn! -- I wanna talk to you!

LILA (O.S.)

CHRIS RUN!!!!

Mr. Losholder runs down the street toward Chris. Barks and police car sirens draw near. The Old Man is encouraging:

OLD MAN
 You in trouble now.
 (hoots)
 You better get!

In fear, Chris gets to his feet and begins a limp legged sprint with the strap of wood plank bolstered to his foot. He sours in pain with every step, but makes good stride.

3 EXT. RIVERSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

3

As Mr. Losholder, TWO 70'S STYLE COP CARS and the Loose Mutt gain on Chris, he limpidly scampers to an old moose of a tree that leans over a river. Chris dives for a swingin' rope and tarzans his scrawny ass out into the current.

The cop cars skid clutch into the dusty beach and two OFFICERS spring out of their cars, armed and ready.

BERN
 He's gettin' away! -- That bastard
 broke my goddamn window!

They squint into the sun as Chris drifts downstream.

~~OFFICER CLAYTON~~
 That boy ain't gettin' nowhere. --
 Nathan's on his lunch break.

Bern looks befuddled... Clayton raises his radio...

4 EXT. RIVERBANK -- CONTINUOUS

4

The most gargantuan, untucked member of the police department roosts with a face of scars, holding a fishing line in the water. This is the ogre known as NATHAN. His radio barks:

OFFICER CLAYTON (O.S.)
 Hey Nathan, this is Clayton. There's
 a boy headin' down the river toward
 you... maybe you could put a hook
 out for him and eat him for lunch.

Nathan licks stew from his swollen fingers as he spots Chris tumbling down toward him with the board stuck to his foot. -- Nathan reels in his line and draws his cuffs with a snarl.

~~NATHAN~~
 God almighty, let's get on with it!

FREEZE FRAME -- OPTICAL ZOOM INTO THE SNARL

END TITLES.

CUT TO:

5 INT. POLICE STATION -- AFTERNOON

5

Chris sits soaking wet and sullen in front of a desk in a squad office. He wraps a bandage around his foot while his hands are still cuffed. A dispatcher's voice cuts through the static of a police radio.

A VIOLENT MAN with women's make-up on is carried out in the background by TWO OFFICERS as he has a screaming tantrum.

Three Officers stand across the room talking. One gestures toward Chris and the other shakes his head. Clayton ambles over and takes a seat at the desk. He opens a drawer and pulls out a double edged pocket knife - holds it up.

OFFICER CLAYTON

What do you need this for?

(Chris shrugs)

I'm just trying to understand. Were you angry about something?

CHRIS

No.

OFFICER CLAYTON

Well, your old man was pretty perturbed when I called him. He's on his way.

Chris gnaws his lip. The cop kicks his feet up.

OFFICER CLAYTON (CONT'D)

Maybe juvenile hall is where you want to be. -- I don't know Chris, but that's where you're headed if you don't get your head on square. The boys over at Drees County Correctional will get you in tune. They ain't gonna take it. -- I got my eye on you son and I don't want to see you in here ever again. -- This is the last time I'm gonna be nice. Next time... you gonna get it.

6 EXT. POLICE STATION -- AFTERNOON

6

~~JOHN MOON~~, a greased up Hog Farmer in his late 30's, walks into a rural police station, his jaw set. John's hair stands patchy and wild.

7 INT. POLICE STATION -- AFTERNOON

7

Chris and John stand in front of a counter as Nathan hands Chris back his wallet, pocket knife, and the board from his foot. John signs for the belongings, takes his pack of Kools.

JOHN

(sternly to Chris)

Let's go Chris.

CHRIS

I ain't goin' nowhere.

JOHN

What's that? You sharpshootin' me son? -- You gonna go apologize to Mr. Losholder for bustin' up his window. If he don't knock you on your ass, I might.

Chris glares.

CHRIS

You don't listen to a thing I say.

JOHN

Chris, I gotta drag down here seems every week to bail you out of some mess. I don't wanna hear your blame, I don't wanna hear your excuses. I'm at my wit's end. -- Your brother's waitin' in the truck.

CHRIS

Just wait.

JOHN

What I'm gonna wait for?

CHRIS

(yelling)

Just wait!

JOHN

I said get in the truck!

The cops around them look curiously.

8 EXT. POLICE STATION -- AFTERNOON

8

~~TIM MUNN~~ 9 skinny and ill, is stretched out in the seat of an older model pick-up truck reading a comic book from the Classic Comics series: APACHE TREASURE QUEST. Suddenly the doors fly open. Tim sits up as John and Chris get in. John starts the truck.

JOHN

Today was supposed to be about your brother. It's his birthday; it's not about you. Bad enough the two of us are sitting at home with our party hats on waiting for you to show up, but then to get that phone call. How do you think that makes Tim feel?

TIM

It's all right Dad.

JOHN

No Tim, it ain't all right.

(to Chris)

Don't you care about anybody but yourself?

He roars away from the police station.

9 EXT. RURAL ROAD -- AFTERNOON 9

John's truck snakes down a country road.

10 INT. JOHN'S TRUCK -- AFTERNOON 10

Chris stares absently out the window at the setting sun as his father smokes a cigarette.

11 EXT. RURAL ROAD -- AFTERNOON 11

HIGH ANGLE:

They roll down a road.

12 EXT. MUNN HOME -- DAY 12

They pull into a dirt driveway and stop in front of a low rent, dilapidated two-story home set back a bit from the road. The yard is overgrown. Strewn about the lot are rusted machine parts, wild chickens. An old freezer leans on its side beneath a gnarled oak tree whose branches approach the roof of the house. Near the edge of the property, a burnt-out hulk of a car is slowly being swallowed by a mud pit and the SIX AGGRESSIVE HOGS that slop around in it.

13 INT. MUNN HOME/LIVING ROOM -- DAY 13

Inside the home the boys move past the remnants of a child's birthday celebration: a cake on the kitchen table with two slices missing, three party hats, a single unwrapped gift box. John's harangues follow Chris as he limps up the stairs.

JOHN

And you can forget about seeing that little girlfriend of yours anymore.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

You won't be socializing for a while.
Got plenty to keep you busy around
here.

CHRIS

That's nuthin' new. You never let me
leave this place. It's always the
same thing around here. You're afraid
we'll have some fun or something.

JOHN

(confrontational)

You want to have fun? This ain't fun
for you?!

CHRIS

(with desperation)

We can't even have friends over.
What kind of birthday party is it
with just the three of us? It's like
we're bein' punished and don't know
for what.

JOHN

That's enough Chris! Anytime you
want to try me...

John takes a threatening step toward Chris, his fists
clenched. Despite himself, Chris flinches.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You just let me know. Hear?

Chris takes a breath and holds his ground, chin up but
trembling.

CHRIS

I hear.

JOHN

Anytime.

John senses he's gone too far. When he speaks again, we
hear pain and love in his voice.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Chris... I'm just trying... I - I
just think your mother would have
liked us to be together on your
brother's birthday, don't you?

(Chris hangs his head)

Don't you?

CHRIS

Yes, Sir.

JOHN

Yeah. -- Well then I ain't got nuthin'
more to say to you...

14 INT. MUNN HOME/CHRIS & TIM'S BEDROOM -- DAY

14

Chris shuts the bedroom door behind him and flops down on their bed. After a moment the door opens a crack. Tim pokes his head in.

CHRIS

What'chu want?

TIM

It's okay you didn't get me anything.
You got a lot on your mind.

Chris looks away, guilty.

TIM (CONT'D)

Do you love that girl?

CHRIS

(shrugs and turns)

Enough to break her damn window.

The explanation suits Tim. They smile.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Listen, Tim. -- Can I tell you
somethin'?

Tim nods, waiting... He picks some loose paint from the wall.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

If I'm gone for a little bit when
you get up tomorrow mornin'... Don't
tell nobody.

Tim nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You know what else? -- Happy Birthday.

Tim lights up.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Before you know it, the things you
say and the way you feel... ain't
nobody gonna listen. -- You're just
a kid... enjoy it while it lasts.

15 INT. MUNN HOME/LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

15

John eats a meal of baked chicken and dirty rice. Washes it with a glass of water. Sits alone.

16 EXT. RIVERBANK PIER -- DAWN

16

Chris and Lila sit together in a small rowboat that's docked at a pier. They kiss softly on the lips.

Lila leans over and spits in the water. She's cute, but tries to hide it.

LILA

I can't go sneakin' around like this.

CHRIS

We should disappear.

LILA

Remember when we cut each other's hands with your sorry knife?

Chris nods and looks at the scar in the palm of his hand.

LILA (CONT'D)

That's the first time I figured out that pain could be a good thing... You know?

CHRIS

It was perfect.

Chris looks to the water; runs his hand below the surface.

17 EXT. MUNN HOME/ROOF -- MORNING

17

Chris sits atop a steeply angled roof, a hammer in his hand. Strewn about the roof are boxes of tar-paper shingles. Chris takes a nail from between his lips and hammers one of the shingles in place. He pauses to remove his cap and wipe sweat from his eyes.

Chris notices his father scowling from the back yard where he's clearing brush from the Hog Pit.

JOHN

Chris. I'm goin' into town. -- I'll be back late tonight, and I want the North end of the roof to be finished.

CHRIS

Yeah. -- Why don't you send Tim up here to help me for once. I can't do all this by myself.

JOHN

He ain't much for heights. You know how his stomach is.

Chris grabs another shingle and returns to work.

18 INT. MUNN HOME/KITCHEN -- DAY

18

Chris sits at the kitchen table eating some left-over birthday cake and watching Tim struggle to blow up a green balloon. Tim's eyes bulge and his cheeks expand like a bullfrog's, but he can't force enough air in to inflate it.

TIM

It don't work.

Chris takes the balloon from Tim, stretches it, then puts his mouth to it. The balloon expands easily. He pinches the tip and hands it to Tim.

Chris looks at the bloody wound on his foot where the nail went through.

TIM (CONT'D)

That's a big ol' hole.

CHRIS

I know.

TIM

Can I stick my finger in it?

Chris looks up in disgust.

CHRIS

Why don't you ever eat? -- You gonna blow away and die.

Tim shrugs lets the balloon deflate, stares at his brother and sputters his tongue.

19 EXT. MUNN HOME/ROOF -- DUSK

19

Chris sets aside his roofing hammer as the sun sets on the horizon. He stands, stretches and witnesses the last rays of the sun glint off the Mississippi in the distance.

20 EXT. MUNN HOME -- DUSK

20

Tim picks at some loose paint on the side of the house. A sudden cramp, and then he vomits.

21 INT. MUNN HOME/BASEMENT -- NIGHT

21

In the basement of the house, among old paint cans and rusted tools, Chris uses his pocket-knife to score the block of wood that was once stuck to his foot. He sets the knife down and picks up a hammer and chisel, begins removing the scored sections.

22 NEW ANGLE -- LATER 22

Chris sands the rough edges. The block is now taking the shape of an airplane.

23 NEW ANGLE -- LATER 23

Chris climbs the basement stairs with the airplane.

24 INT. MUNN HOME/LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT 24

Chris moves through the dark living room toward the stairs.

JOHN (O.S.)

What are you doin' up so late?

Chris jumps. He squints through the dark to see his father sitting in a chair in the far corner of the room, smoking a cigarette; a bottle of Wild Turkey beside him.

CHRIS

Dad?

JOHN

Yeah.

CHRIS

You're home. -- You okay?

JOHN

I'm alright. I'm pretty beat.

John takes a thoughtful pause as he sees how close his hands can get to each other without touching.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I know I'm hard on you son... but... you know I love you. And I love Tim. -- You boys are everything I got in this world... And it ain't easy knowin' that sometimes you hate me.

John chuckles under his breath.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You must'a looked pretty classic with that board stuck to your foot. -- Wish I coulda seen that.

Chris turns away to where the light falls through the window.

CHRIS

It hurt like crap.

JOHN
The first time I saw your momma, she was sittin' on the sidewalk cleanin' grit from her glass eye. -- Sometimes it's the strangest moments that stick with you.

Chris moves off, leaving John alone in the dark.

25 INT. MUNN HOME/CHRIS & TIM'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Tim is asleep on his bed when Chris walks in holding the airplane. Tim rolls over and opens his eyes.

CHRIS
I was gonna get you a grass skirt, but... happy birthday dammit.

He hands it to Tim who is elated. He turns it over and over. Chris shrugs and crawls into bed with him.

26 EXT. MUNN HOME/ROOF -- DAY

Chris is back at work hammering shingles in the midday sun. He sees his father working with a chainsaw in the backyard, cutting limbs from a dead tree; then he looks down at Tim playing with his wooden airplane in the front yard.

Chris leans over the edge and plops a spit of drool on the gravel driveway close to Tim who looks up. Chris starts laughing, then stops short.

TIM
You tryin' to spit on me?

CHRIS
I'm tired of lookin' at your head. -- Why don't you come up here and bring me that bag of nails?

Tim looks up and shakes his head.

TIM
I don't like bein' up there.

CHRIS
Come on, it ain't that high.

Tim looks around and sees the bag of nails. He carries it over to the base of the ladder and looks up with the best of intentions. Chris walks boldly to the top of the ladder.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
It ain't goin' nowhere.

Tim looks nervous as he takes a slow step. He squeezes tight on the bars above him and takes another two steps. He is five feet off the ground, looks down.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Come on Man, you're almost there.

Tim gets nervous and spills the bag of nails. Chris laughs.

Tim looks defeated and steps back down the ladder.

Chris sees an older model sports car turn off the road and into the long driveway leading to their house, kicking up dust as it approaches.

From the roof, Chris slides fearlessly down the ladder just as the car comes to a halt near Tim who picks up the nails

DEEL: a handsome man in his mid 30's steps out. He wears jeans and cowboy boots; surveys the house and grounds. He hooks his thumbs in his belt loops, turns to the boys and smiles, but behind his eyes there is a vacancy, a dissociation of actions from both feelings and consequences which the ready smile is able to conceal for a time.

DEEL

I think I'm lost. Does John Munn live up in here?

TIM

Huh?

DEEL

Is John Munn around?

TIM

That's my dad.

Deel laughs at Tim's deafness and looks the two boys over with renewed interest.

DEEL

He around? -- Who are you little man?

CHRIS

He's here. Hang on a sec.

DEEL

Hold up Son. Where's your momma at?

TIM

She's dead.

Chris wheels impatiently and slaps Tim on the head.

CHRIS

Hush up.

JOHN (O.S.)

Can I help you with something?

They look to where John stands near the side of the house, safety goggles over his eyes, the chainsaw hanging silent at his side. -- Deel smiles... all charm.

DEEL

Put that booger down John and come
give me a big fat kiss.

John steps and approaches the stranger, his eyes narrowed. He stops short, a flash of recognition. He takes off the goggles, clearly taken aback.

JOHN

Deel?

DEEL

It's a shocker, ain't it? -- How you
doin'?

27 INT. MUNN HOME/CHRIS & TIM'S BEDROOM -- DAY

27

Tim is lying on his bed organizing his comic books. Chris stands near the open door, listening to the muted voices floating up from the kitchen downstairs.

TIM

So that man's Dad's brother?

CHRIS

He's been gone a long time.

TIM

Where at?

CHRIS

It ain't none of our business.

TIM

You're bein' nosy too... Listenin'
to every word they say.

CHRIS

Shut up.

Chris looks oddly at his brother who sniffs each of his various detailed stacks of comics.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(whispers)

What the hell are you doin'?

TIM
Organizing my comics by the way they
smell.

Chris stares and shakes the weirdness off.

After a moment, he looks back to Tim and then attacks him on
the bed and gets him in a headlock.

28 INT. MUNN HOME/KITCHEN -- DAY

28

Deel and John sit across from one another at the kitchen
table. John is sipping a bottle of beer.

JOHN
How did you find me?

DEEL
I always wanted to be a detective. --
This was important to me. Things had
gone on too long the way they was.

JOHN
I thought a lot about you, Deel.

DEEL
Yeah, well... I never did get no
Valentines.

John stands and moves solemnly to the kitchen window.

JOHN
I didn't know if you'd want to hear
from me... The way you blamed me for
things. -- Don't say you didn't.

DEEL
(understanding)
I won't.

JOHN
And then after Audrey passed away,
well, I just took the boys out of
school and left everything behind. --
Moved out here to the sticks... Like
hermits. I couldn't take mankind and
it couldn't take me.

Deel stares coolly at his brother.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I couldn't handle it. -- The thought
of you stuck rotting away in that
place. -- I meant to go see you.
Even made plans, but I jus... I just
broke.

DEEL

Well, I feel like... If I forgive,
than I'll be forgiven. Know what I
mean? -- I need your help John... To
build my strength... Get back to
life.

29 INT. MUNN HOME/CHRIS & TIM'S BEDROOM -- DAY

29

The room is a wreck. Tim is tied to an old wooden chair
with some twine. -- Chris checks his brother's hair for
lice with a magnifying glass.

TIM

Do you ever think about Mom?

CHRIS

Stay still. -- Of course I do.

TIM

Me too.

Chris picks out a speck of somethin'. He flicks it aside.

CHRIS

You couldn't even string two words
together then. You ran around buck
nekid. -- I used to have to clean
your crap off the floor.

Tim is serious. Chris starts to reflect.

TIM

Was she pretty?

CHRIS

She was kinda good lookin' I guess...
For a momma. -- She had a little
moustache though. I always thought
that was weird.

Tim glances to a framed photograph of his mother. It's out
of focus.

TIM

I remember she was pretty... And she
had a nice smell. -- I liked her
kind of perfume.

CHRIS

She kept pretty clean.

Chris steps back and looks at his helpless brother.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

From now on, you're my slave. -- You
have to do everything I say.

30 EXT. MUNN HOME -- DAY

30

Deel steps out to where John stands.

JOHN

What are you doin' now? You got some plans for yourself?

DEEL

I always got plans. As long as I stay in the state I'm good, and check in once in awhile. -- I got a line on some brick work outside of Polashus - starting the end of Winter.

JOHN

That's a few months away yet.

DISSOLVE TO:

31 EXT. RIVERSIDE -- SUNSET

31

They walk to the side of the nearby river and have a seat on a couple of rocks.

DEEL

I got to admit, I'm a little jealous. -- You look like you're doin' all right for yourself and the boys.

JOHN

Last week I sold six hogs to this Korean. -- I'm looking for a good man to keep up around here while I drum up some business in town.

DEEL

Here? -- I'm just passing through. A moving target, you know...

JOHN

I mean stickin' around until your work starts? -- You could be a help to me.

DEEL

How's that?

JOHN

Those two are a hand full. Tim's got health problems and... When I'm gone, I worry about Chris getting into trouble and taken care of his responsibility.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Seems every time I turn around, the law's got him picked-up for somethin'... Runnin' numbers, breakin' windows, broke some kid's face with a rake. -- One time he broke into a church and the Preacher found him asleep on the alter, drunk on wine. -- I could use another pair of eyes. Couldn't pay you, but you'd get a roof and three squares a day.

Deel folds his hands behind his head, considering. -

JOHN (CONT'D)

And it'd give us a chance to spend some time together. I'd like that.

Deel glances down. A smile spreads across his face.

DEEL

All right. It's all the same to me. After all, a chicken ain't nothing but a bird.

The brothers seal the deal with a loving hug. -- They sit quietly noticing each ripple in the river current.

DEEL (CONT'D)

Hey... You remember them old Spanish coins Dad stole from the museum back when we was kids?

John looks curiously up at the change of subject.

JOHN

Yeah...

DEEL

He always said when he died, me and you should sell them suckers and split up the worth, treat ourselves like kings.

JOHN

Yeah. -- After he died, the Feds raided the place and took everything... They even took those Indian ash trays.

(nods)

Pop was a hell of a thief, but he had the worst taste in art.

Deel looks down at John's snake skin boots to change the subject.

DEEL

I like your boots. They're pretty cool.

32 INT. MUNN HOME/CHRIS & TIM'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

32

An old-fashioned, metal fan whirs atop a desk near the doorway. Chris sits feeding strands of paper through the bent and missing rails of the safety guard, watching as the strands get chewed by the fast-spinning blades. John stands over him next to Tim.

JOHN

Your uncle Deel's gonna be stayin' with us for a while. It's gonna give me a chance to get back up on my feet and all of us an opportunity to extend our family.

CHRIS

It's already too crowded here.

JOHN

When your momma passed away, I promised I would fulfill the spirit of this family. -- I'd like to share her mercy. -- Our lives are lived searching for... Space.

The bedroom door suddenly swings open, startling everyone. Deel stands in the doorway.

DEEL

Didn't mean to scare you. -- Ya'll sleep tight.

Deel closes the door, leaving the boys alone to exchange glances as they hear him singing a tune in the hallway.

33 INT. MUNN HOME/JOHN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

33

John stands looking down at several, large, plastic sheaths spread out on top of his bed. Each sheath is filled with a dozen or so gold coins of various shapes and sizes tucked inside individual compartments, and every coin is meticulously identified with a handwritten label pasted beneath it. John lifts one of the plastic sheaths, and the coins inside glimmer in the lamplight. He looks more closely at an empty compartment where a coin is missing.

34 EXT. WOODS -- MORNING

34

As the sun rises through the trees in early morning, Chris and Lila run into a patch of grass. Chris looks over his shoulder, trips on a root, falls laughing to the ground near a nappy sheep. She jumps on top of Chris, pins him down.

CHRIS

Lila, I'm here with you. You ain't got nuthin' to be scared of.

LILA

I'm scared of how you make me feel.

Chris plays off her comment with a laugh.

LILA (CONT'D)

I don't feel funny. It's not funny.

CHRIS

You look funny.

She still isn't playing.

LILA

Why can't you be someone I'm supposed to fall for?

Chris picks a clover. He chews on it and finds a sadness.

CHRIS

If I had money... And class... Would things be different? -- It's your daddy ain't it?

Lila nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Then maybe I could buy your love... Is that how it works? -- Give you a dollar, you give me a kiss?

LILA

Don't make me sound shallow.

He swallows and looks her in the eye

CHRIS

Well then don't look at me like I'm your fuckin' charity case.

FADE OUT.

35 EXT. MUNN HOME -- DAY

35

Deel is standing on a step-ladder on the front porch with a paint brush and a bucket in his hands, painting the eaves of the porch overhang. His indifference to the work is apparent.

Chris feeds a stray Jersey Cow.

Tim sits tucked away with a separate can of paint. He sticks his finger in it and then licks it clean when no one's looking.

Deel takes a seat on the porch steps. He pulls out a pack of cigarettes, lights one and looks to Chris.

DEEL

Hot enough for you?

(Chris nods)

You know, it's not the heat that gets to me; it's the stupidity.

CHRIS

(smiling)

That's a good one.

Deel offers Chris a cigarette. Chris is tempted but declines. Deel shrugs and sets the pack aside.

DEEL

It's like living in a fish bowl.

CHRIS

Huh?

DEEL

Livin' here, stuck like a slave, must get kinda cramped.

CHRIS

Sometimes.

DEEL

Me, I'd have to get away now and then. What about you?

Chris looks toward Deel's car parked in the driveway.

CUT TO:

36 INT. DEEL'S CAR -- DAY (MOVING)

36

Chris sits in the passenger seat of Deel's sports car as it speeds down a country road. Chris is smoking.

DEEL

Your dad ain't gonna mind us taking a little break. The work will still be there when we get back.

Chris hesitates, but tries to get comfortable with his uncle.

CHRIS

Is he much different now? From when you were growing up, I mean?

DEEL

Old John? -- He's just the same. Lots of big talk.

(MORE)

DEEL (CONT'D)

Got a few silly new tattoos, like he's tough or somethin'. -- I gotta give it to him though, when we were growin' up, he could beat my hide like a son-of-a-bitch.

CHRIS

Did you know my mother?

After a glance at Chris, Deel shifts into a higher gear and steps on the accelerator.

37 EXT. DEEL'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS (MOVING) 37

The car speeds forward. Fence posts and phone poles fly by.

38 INT. DEEL'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS (MOVING) 38

Deel shouts to be heard over the rushing wind.

DEEL

I knew your momma first. I introduced her to your daddy. -- She was my girl.

CHRIS

Really?

DEEL

He didn't mention that detail, huh? I shouldn't think he would. -- What did he tell you about me?

CHRIS

He said that you were in jail. That it was some accident.

Deel smiles and accepts this.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

What did you do?

DEEL

I made a mistake and trusted people. -- You got a girlfriend?

CHRIS

Not really.

DEEL

Smart. Enjoy life a little first. Girls mess with your head. -- Make you do crazy things.

CHRIS

Did you hurt somebody...? In the accident?

Deel steps harder on the accelerator. The engine whines.

39 EXT. DEEL'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS (MOVING) 39

The car powers forward. Stalks of corn are a blur at the side of the road.

40 INT. DEEL'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS (MOVING) 40

Suddenly Deel takes his hands from the wheel. Chris' eyes widen as the car drifts to the shoulder of the road.

DEEL

You wanna drive?

Chris shakes his head.

41 EXT. DEEL'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS (MOVING) 41

The car rolls onto the gravel, heading toward a shallow ditch.

42 INT. DEEL'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS (MOVING) 42

At the last moment, Chris grabs the wheel and Deel steps on the brake. The car fishtails, but Deel regains control and guides it back onto the blacktop. They stop. He grins.

DEEL

Look at this day. -- I forgot what it feels like.

CHRIS

What what feels like?

DEEL

Holdin' someone's life in your hands. -- If you'd made one mistake, we both could've died right then. Damn near perfect.

Deel breaks out laughing. Chris smiles nervously and throws out his cigarette. Deel ruffs Chris' hair.

DEEL (CONT'D)

I scared you.

43 INT. MUNN HOME/KITCHEN -- LATE DAY 43

Chris, Tim and Deel sit around the kitchen table. John is at the stove frying pork chops. Around him are pots with vegetables, sweet potatoes, gravy.

JOHN

(to Tim)

Tim, you gonna try some sweet potatoes?

Tim shakes his head.

CHRIS

(to Deel)

Tim don't eat much.

DEEL

Afraid he's gonna get fat or somethin'?

CHRIS

He contemplates infinity... the doctor says his brain ain't ready for it. -- It freaks out his ulcer. -- If he's got food or anything in his stomach, he throws it all up.

TIM

It's an anxiety disorder.

Deel nods in understanding.

DEEL

When I was a boy, I used to worry about The Pilgrims. -- I had nightmares that a whole bunch of those skinny bastards would break into my room on Thanksgiving with their shirts off and tickle me crazy. They'd force me to eat until I got fat, floated up to the sky and had a bowel movement in my white pajamas.

The boys hold back a laugh.

DEEL (CONT'D)

It's kinda funny now... It wasn't funny then.

JOHN (O.S.)

How much work you guys get done today?

DEEL

Well, not as much as we'd hoped.

(winks at Chris)

We had to run get some supplies in town.

JOHN (O.S.)

Come on and dish up.

44 EXT. MUNN HOME -- LATE DAY 44

As the sun sets, a FOX walks around a stack of logs with its BABY. -- Termites infest the logs.

45 INT. MUNN HOME/KITCHEN -- LATE DAY 45

Everyone has finished eating except for Deel, who eats voraciously. John sits picking his teeth with a tooth pick.

JOHN

(to Chris and Tim)

Go on and get some air if you want.
You can do the dishes later.

The boys faces show surprise at John's generosity. They dash from the kitchen.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Supplies in town, huh?

Deel stops eating and looks up.

DEEL

To tell the truth, Chris wanted to take a ride in my hot-rod. I could've said no, but I didn't want to get off on the improper foot with him.

JOHN

You went driving?

DEEL

You know you were sure right about those two. They aren't exactly fond of work. I kept having to stop what I was doing and go track them down.

Deel goes back to eating. John considers a moment.

JOHN

For a long time, when it was just me and the boys around here, I felt a little like I'd... Like I'd made a wreck of things. I just wanted us to be a family, you know, but... Well, anyway, now that you're here, willing to set aside old grudges... I think maybe I got a second chance. You know what I mean?

DEEL

(solemnly)

Yeah. -- I think I do.

John smiles, and Deel holds his gaze for a moment; then his eyes drift to a half-eaten pork chop on John's plate.

DEEL (CONT'D)
You gonna eat that?

JOHN
What? -- Oh. No. Help yourself.

Deel stabs the pork chop with a fork. He gnaws on it.

46 INT. MUNN HOME/BATHROOM -- NIGHT

46

Chris mugs in front of the mirror with a cigarette in his mouth; he hooks his thumbs in his belt loops and strikes "Deel-like" poses while checking hopefully for signs of facial hair. He is interrupted by a pound at the bathroom door.

TIM (O.S.)
You gonna be all day? Dad wants you.

Tim enters with a bath towel and wearing a shower cap.

TIM (CONT'D)
Hi.

CHRIS
Why you wearin' that cap?

TIM
I don't want'ta get my hair wet. I'm startin' to like this cowlick.

Chris ignores the stupidity of Tim's comment and leaves.

CHRIS (O.S.)
I wiped my butt with your toothbrush.

47 INT. MUNN HOME/JOHN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

47

John stands looking at a large, framed photograph on the wall over his nightstand. In the photograph, taken some nine years earlier, John sits next to his wife Audrey - Chris and Tim's mother. His arm rests on the shoulder of seven-year-old Chris, and Audrey holds an infant Tim in her arms. The scene is a happy one, with John looking joyful and robust. A knock at the door interrupts his reverie.

JOHN
Yeah.

Chris enters and sees John adjusting the photograph.

JOHN (CONT'D)
You remember when we took that picture?

Chris nods and thrusts his hands into his pockets, sullenly awaiting what's to come.

CHRIS
What did I do now?

JOHN
(snaps)
You don't ever make it easy on me.

John looks away, shaking his head. His voice calms.

JOHN (CONT'D)
What I wanted to say is, we gotta start working together around here a little more. No more joyriding when we should be doing chores. Things like that. Okay?

CHRIS
But-

JOHN
I don't want to hear any excuses. Now go on and get to bed. -- You still say your prayers?

CHRIS
Yes Sir.

JOHN
Maybe it'll keep your focus.

John moves to the bed and changes the subject.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Doc Triplet says Tim's gonna need some professional help before we gotta start feedin' him through a tube. -- Tonight I saw him chewin' on a piece of cabbage...
(looks to his son)
...But he spit it back out.

48 EXT. MUNN HOME/ROOF -- MORNING

48

A ladder leans against the side of the house near John's bedroom window. Deel is on the roof watching John's truck pull down the driveway and out of sight. He lays a shingle down and begins to hammer it in place. He hits his thumb and yelps. In frustration he pounces on the newly installed shingles and rips one from the roof.

49 EXT. MUNN HOME/ROOF -- MORNING

49

Tim sits in the grass playing with his airplane. A shadow covers him, and he looks to see Deel who squats beside him.

DEEL

I hear you just had a birthday. How old does that make you?

TIM

Nine.

DEEL

Really? You're a lot smarter than most nine-year-olds I know. -- That's a sharp looking jet.

TIM

Thanks. Chris made it by hand.

DEEL

Damn nice. -- Your daddy's got a lot of real nice things too, don't he?

Tim doesn't respond.

DEEL (CONT'D)

I remember when I was your age, my daddy had a collection of old Spanish coins. He used to let me and your pop play with 'em sometimes. They was solid gold.

TIM

Dad has some like that.

DEEL

(excited by this news)
He does?

TIM

But he won't let me play with them. He says they're worth too much. He calls them his egg nest.

DEEL

Your grandpa gave them to his two sons, your daddy and me. Your dad probably just forgot that half are mine. -- Where does he keep them at?

TIM

He keeps 'um hid.

DEEL

Where's he hide 'um at?

TIM

It's a secret.

DEEL
I'm family... And pretty good at
keepin' secrets.

TIM
It's like this - it's a secret from
me too.

DEEL
You don't say.

Deel looks out into the nearby puddle.

DEEL (CONT'D)
You go swimmin' much?

TIM
Yeah. -- I got webbed feet.

DEEL
You do? -- Le'me see 'um.

Tim shakes his head.

DEEL (CONT'D)
I never was much of a swimmer. Maybe
you can teach me sometime.

Tim nods.

50 INT. MUNN HOME/BASEMENT -- DAY

50

Chris walks down the basement stairs. The only light comes filtering in through dirty windows above ground level. Chris moves to a shelf and picks up a can of paint. He pulls out his pocket knife and starts prying the lid from the can.

DEEL (O.S.)
You shouldn't do that.

Startled, Chris drops his knife and paint can to the floor. He spins around to see Deel kneeling in the corner.

DEEL (CONT'D)
Shouldn't open a can like that.
You'll bust your knife blade.

CHRIS
Wha... What are you doing down here?

Deel holds up a Nude Tattoo magazine.

DEEL
I found your stash in a chest under
that stone back there. -- Found some
other goodies in there too.

DEEL (CONT'D)

-- Bet your pop don't know about that stuff... Does he?

CHRIS

You gonna tell him?

DEEL

I ain't gonna say nothin'. -- It ain't any of my business to bust in on a boy's secrets. -- Besides... Me and you is friends, ain't that right?

Chris writes his initials in the dust on a work table.

CHRIS

That's right.

DEEL

Yeah. I never had all the advantages like John. I got the leavings and was told to like it. -- You wouldn't know what that was like, would you?

Chris has a hard swallow. Deel slants his eyes picks up Chris' knife and looks Chris in the soul.

DEEL (CONT'D)

I see the way your daddy looks at your little brother. You know he sees himself. Like lookin' into a goddamn mirror at his favorite son. And then there's you. -- You're a hole in the ground. A criminal waitin' to be born... Or suffocate. You're barely even breathin'. -- You know what it takes to hate.

A tear swells in Chris' eye.

DEEL (CONT'D)

There's somethin' should be known about you and me Chris. We don't play games. We don't ever let the same dog bite twice. Can't you tell?

Without looking to Deel, Chris softly wraps his arms around himself to hold his heart together. Deel smiles.

51 EXT. HILLTOP -- DAY

51

Tim sits on a rocky hilltop. He reads aloud from a joke book as Chris stirs paint in a large bucket.

TIM

Knock knock.

CHRIS
Who's there?

TIM
Interrupting cow.

CHRIS
Interrupting cow-

TIM
(interrupting)
Mooooo!

Both boys laugh. John walks up, smiles at his sons.

JOHN
It's nice to see you two getting
along for a change.

TIM
Did you and Uncle Deel fight a lot
when you were kids?

JOHN
We had our problems. Our dad didn't
put up with too much nonsense, though.

TIM
But he was nice too, right? -- He
gave you those coins.

JOHN
(surprised)
The coins? That's right, he did.
You remember that? -- Did you know
those aren't ordinary coins?

TIM
What do you mean?

JOHN
(smiling mischievously)
Oh, it's a long story.

John stands as if to leave.

TIM
No. Tell it... Please.

JOHN
Well...
(sits down beside him)
One day when I was a your age, your
grandfather went out for a walk.
(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

On the road he comes to this poor Spanish man dressed in rags, who says he hadn't eaten anything in days. -- He asked my dad for some change to buy food. Now we barely got enough money to keep fed, but your grandpa, he gave him the little bit he had. When he got home, though, he reaches his hand in his pocket and there was a gold coin.

TIM

Really?

JOHN

Absolutely. -- Worth as much as he earned in a month's work. But he couldn't stop thinking about that poor man and how much food that coin would buy. So the next day he goes looking for him and finds him in the same place. He gives him the gold coin, and the man thanked him very much, but when my father got back home, he reaches in and finds five gold coins in his pocket.

Chris glances at his father and rolls his eyes, but Tim is fully accepting of the story.

JOHN (CONT'D)

The same thing happens the next day and the day after. He gave the man five coins and finds ten. Then twenty, then forty, and on and on...

TIM

Wow.

JOHN

And then one day the man was gone. -- That's right. That's why I've kept them all this time; those coins are good luck... Good fortune.

CHRIS

If they're worth so much, why don't you sell 'um so we can get rich?

JOHN

I pawned a coin off last year and bought that truck. -- You can see what a pain in the ass it's been.

CHRIS

You superstitious?

JOHN

I broke a mirror once. -- Had the dang hiccups for seven years. That's the truth. I blamed it on your momma's cooking. I ain't takin' chances like that again. -- There is a devil, and he's got a sick sense of humor.

John and the boys laugh.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You should remember to always do somebody a good turn when you can. It'll come back to you.

They hear a distant singing and see Deel standing near the side of the house watching them. Deel turns and walks away.

John pets Tim on the head and smiles.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Go on, get washed up.

They stand to leave.

CHRIS

Dad, why was Deel in jail?

(John stiffens)

I know it was an accident, but it must have been bad. He was gone a long time.

John stops and considers how much he should say.

JOHN

It was back just before our parents died... Deel got some bad news that upset him. He went out and drank a bunch of margaritas. He wasn't thinking straight, had an accident.

CHRIS

Did he hit somebody?

JOHN

Yeah. He killed a little girl. -- Let it be a lesson to us.

CHRIS

What was the bad news?

JOHN

(looks away)

It was my fault son. And I ain't too proud of it.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

-- For a time, I thought that love was thicker than blood... Maybe it was. -- Let's get out'ta here.

52 INT. MUNN HOME/JOHN'S BEDROOM -- DAY 52

Deel stands before the large photograph of the happy family on the wall over John's nightstand. He focuses on the image of John's wife Audrey in the photograph.

He looks over to John's snake skin boots.

53 EXT. OLD ROAD -- DAY 53

John, Chris, and Tim are nearing the house.

JOHN

Family's vital. I lost sight of that with your mother gone, but now with Deel here... I mean, he came to find me for a reason.

54 INT. MUNN HOME/JOHN'S BEDROOM -- DAY 54

Deel wears John's boots and clothes. He slaps down the lid of a suitcase through which he's been rummaging and skids it back under the bed. He looks feverishly about the room. Finally his gaze comes to rest on the family photograph over the nightstand. His eyes narrow.

He has removed the photograph from the wall and set it face-down on the bed. Using Chris' pocket knife, he bends the nails back which hold the picture into the frame.

55 INT. MUNN HOME/KITCHEN -- DAY 55

John enters the kitchen shaken with memory.

56 INT. MUNN HOME/JOHN'S BEDROOM -- DAY 56

Deel pulls the cardboard backing from the frame of the photograph. Beneath the cardboard he finds the plastic sheaths containing the coins. He smiles, but his grin disappears as he hears footsteps. The bedroom door opens.

57 EXT. MUNN HOME -- DAY 57

Chris has a smoke in the front yard. He glances up at his father's window and sees Deel speaking with his dad.

58 INT. MUNN HOME/JOHN'S BEDROOM -- DAY 58

Deel and John stand facing each other across the room.

JOHN

What are you doin'?

DEEL
Dressin' up in your clothes...
Pretendin' I'm you. -- Your boots
are a little too big though.

John looks Deel up and down.

JOHN
I thought things were right between
us.

Deel points to the coins.

DEEL
You lied to me John. -- Always
twisting things around so you come
out on cap. I show up and all of a
sudden you got a second chance? Well,
I never even had a first chance. You
and the old man saw to that.

JOHN
What are you talking about?

DEEL
The two of you cooking up ways to
take what's rightfully mine.

JOHN
You're crazy.

DEEL
First my girl and then my money.
(Pointing to the
photograph and coins)
Everything that belongs to me is
here!

JOHN
We talked about her...

DEEL
We talked about her fifteen years
ago... When I was pinned down! When
I walk into my own bedroom and see
you with my girl.

John is speechless. Deel swells.

DEEL (CONT'D)
That's right. She's an old issue and
you won. Right out from under me.

JOHN
Get out.

DEEL

I can't let this go.

JOHN

Get out of my home! I took you in.
I took kind to you...

Deel gathers the coins.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Put those down!

John grabs Deel and shoves him against a wall.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Those coins are the greed that tore
our family apart! Dad died for them...
For what? For our future? Well I'll
tell you one thing brother, I'm a
strong enough man to bury the past
and make my own road. I don't want
you diggin' the torture back up again!

Deel hits John's face with the top of his head. John backs up. Deel scrapes his foot down the front of John's shin. John buckles in pain. Deel brings his elbow down hard on the back of John's head. John falls to the floor and kicks Deel's legs out from under him.

Deel falls and John climbs on top and pounds his face.

59 EXT. MUNN HOME -- CONTINUOUS

59

Through the window, Chris hears the struggle.

60 INT. MUNN HOME/JOHN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

60

Deel grabs John by the mouth. John bites hard, but Deel rips his head back and twists his neck enough to break away. He lunges for the knife on the bed. John leaps onto Deel's back and drags him to the floor. Deel elbows John in the face, and reaches up, straining for the knife. He grabs it just as John's hand grips his wrist. John smashes Deel's hand against the bed frame. Once. Twice. Three times. And the knife flies across the room.

John begins choking his brother. Deel struggles and spits until his passes out.

John lets go, rolls away and scrambles for the knife. He grabs it and sits up just to see Deel take the large, framed photograph in both hands and swings mightily. The glass shatters against John's head and the coins inside scatter.

One side of the wooden frame has a broken glass edge. Deel swings it and slices into John's neck. Blood spurts from the wound.

John looks down with puzzlement at the blood on his hands and shirt. -- He socks Deel in the face knocking him back. Deel punches back and gets him in the gut. John doubles over and Deel brings an elbow down on the back of John's neck. -- John hits the floor with a thud.

Deel brings a boot down and kicks John in the head. -- John stumbles to his feet and runs head first into a mirror. It smashes into a million pieces. In a daze, he takes a seat in an old wooden chair. He looks at his bloody reflection in a sliver of mirror.

Deel stands behind him with the knife, thirsty and heaving.

61 INT. MUNN HOME/CHRIS & TIM'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS 61

Tim stops to listen. He hears his father's horrifying scream, abruptly ending... He locks the door.

62 INT. MUNN HOME/JOHN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS 62

Deel cradles John's head in his hands and wipes his brother's brow with his bandanna. His voice is low but intense.

DEEL

You're my brother.

John's eyes are glazed as he sits up in the chair with a gash in his throat. He's gurgling blood. As he struggles to speak, Deel leans in to listen. -- John goes limp.

63 EXT. MUNN HOME -- CONTINUOUS 63

Chris climbs the nearby ladder to his father's bedroom window. He sees his father sitting dead in a chair of blood. Suddenly Deel is there at the window, his face inches away!

Chris nearly topples off the ladder but hangs on. Deel tries opening the window, can't, then smashes the glass with his fist and claws at Chris. Chris kicks furiously as he scrambles up the ladder. Deel's hand and arm are being cut from shards of glass as he tugs at Chris' pants leg.

Finally Deel yanks the ladder. It crashes to the ground, but Chris grabs onto the rain gutter, feet flailing. With effort, he swings a leg up and pulls onto the roof.

64 INT. MUNN HOME/JOHN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS 64

Deel retreats back into the room and listens to Chris' footsteps moving across the roof. Deel wraps a bandanna around his bleeding hand, gathers the coins.

65 INT. MUNN HOME/CHRIS & TIM'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS 65

Tim is about to open the bedroom door to see about the commotion when he's startled by a rapping on the window.

Chris hangs outside from the roof. Tim opens the window; Chris swings into the room, scared and out of breath. He goes to the door and checks to see it's locked.

TIM
What's happening?

CHRIS
Tim, we gotta get out of here right now. You're coming with me.

TIM
Is it Uncle Deel?

CHRIS
(nods)
He may try to hurt us. Hurry!

Tim is filling his backpack as Chris listens at the door.

TIM
What about Dad?

CHRIS
Just move! -- Shhh.

The boys pause. Chris hears footsteps on the stairs and the slam of the front door. He cautiously opens the bedroom door, peeks into the hallway, finds it empty.

66 INT. MUNN HOME/HALLWAY -- DAY

66

Chris and Tim creep into the hallway. Chris sees a blood trail on the floor leading down the stairs.

67 INT. MUNN HOME/LIVING ROOM -- DAY

67

In the living room, Chris motions for Tim to keep still as he listens for signs of Deel. Hearing nothing, he lifts the receiver on the phone, starts to dial but stops at a noise outside. He goes to the window.

Chris sees Deel's car parked in the driveway, the trunk ajar. The keys are in the trunk lock but no sign of Deel.

Without warning, the front door flies open and Deel comes running in with a crow bar in his hand, yelling at the top of his lungs! He runs at Tim who is framed by the light from the stairway, but Deel doesn't see Chris in the room. Tim rushes up the stairs. As Deel pursues, Chris pushes a chair into his path. Deel trips over the chair and crashes to the floor, hitting his head on the edge of a coffee table.

CHRIS
TIM!!! RUN!!!!

Chris runs for the stairs. Deel sits up groggily and swings the bar, striking Chris on the knee and takes him out. Chris collapses in pain. Tim watches from the top step.

TIM

CHRIS!!!

Chris starts crawling up the stairs. Deel stands, clears his head, then pursues. It's a race to the top. Chris missteps and falls. He turns. -- Deel swings the crow bar again but misses. It pierces into the flooring near Chris' head, and Deel struggles to pull it out. As Chris nears the safety of the bedroom, Deel abandons the bar.

TIM (CONT'D)

Hurry!

Chris scrambles into the bedroom just ahead of Deel. Chris tries to close the bedroom door, but Deel wedges a hand between the door and the frame.

68 INT. MUNN HOME/CHRIS & TIM'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS 68

Chris and Tim push against the door with all their strength, but Deel forces the door open another few inches and shoves his arm into the room. He grabs Tim by the hair and slams his head violently into the door.

69 INT. MUNN HOME/HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS 69

Deel has one arm inside the room.

70 INT. MUNN HOME/CHRIS & TIM'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS 70

Still pushing against the door, Chris spies the desk fan and grabs it. Tim tears away from Deel's clutch. Chris shoves the spinning fan blades against Deel's fingers. Blood splatters as the blades slice into the skin. Deel howls, jerks his hand away. The boys slam the door and lock it.

Chris grabs Tim's bag and moves purposefully to the window, motioning for Tim to follow.

71 INT. MUNN HOME/HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS 71

Deel holds his bloody hand for a moment, then with renewed fury sends the weight of his body crashing against the bedroom door. The hinges strain; the wood frame cracks. He hits it again - then again in a rage.

72 INT. MUNN HOME/CHRIS & TIM'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS 72

Chris helps Tim out the window and onto the rooftop. He hands Tim the bag, Tim looks down at the ground below.

TIM

No Chris, I can't.

CHRIS

Yes you can Tim, you have to. There's the tree outside, you can climb down it from the roof. -- Tim I'm hurt, you have to go. Go find help!

TIM

Are you coming?

CHRIS

I'm right behind you, just GO!!

Tim nervously pulls himself up onto the roof and Chris eases out the window just as Deel, with another effort, comes crashing through the door!

73 EXT. MUNN HOME/ROOF -- CONTINUOUS

73

Chris and Tim make their way across the steeply sloped roof. Chris, limping in pain, leads Tim toward the large oak tree whose branches reach to the house. Tim stumbles over a container of shingles, nearly falls, but rights himself.

In hot pursuit Deel climbs out the window and onto the roof.

Near the edge of the house Chris tosses Tim's backpack to the ground at the foot of the oak tree. Tim understands Chris' plan.

Tim sees the two-story drop to the ground.

He hesitates, unsure. Chris sees his brother's fear.

DEEL (O.S.)

You boys...!

Chris and Tim turn to see Deel standing some ways away cradling his bloody hand.

DEEL (CONT'D)

(to Chris)

I have something I think is yours.

Using a handkerchief he pulls up Chris' bloody knife.

DEEL (CONT'D)

Your fingerprints are all over this.
Not mine though. I found it here...
After you killed your father.

Holding the knife, Deel moves forward in a wary crouch.

Chris sees a roofing hammer nearby and picks it up. He swings it to keep him at bay.

CHRIS

(to Tim)

Go. -- NOW!

Deel is just a few feet away when Tim turns and climbs onto the nearest tree branch. Hands grasping, clutching at the swaying branch. Tim hangs on as the branch bends but doesn't break. He breaths in frantic relief.

DEEL

Did you hear me little Chris? -- I just thought you should know... It's a pity too. I know how this world sees you.

With a cry of anger and frustration Chris makes a lunge at Deel. Deel slips on loose tiles and falls. He drops the knife and it rolls off the roof. Deel tries to catch it but finds himself out of control and sliding toward the edge. He reaches out and grabs Chris by the ankles, tripping him and dragging him along, but Chris hooks a hand around a pipe and they both jerk to a stop, Deel still clutching his ankles.

Slowly Deel begins dragging himself up Chris' leg. With his free hand, Chris swings the roofing hammer and strikes Deel a solid two blows across the forehead. Deel grunts and goes limp. He rolls off the roof and falls hard.

Deel lies unmoving on the ground below.

Still limping, Chris gets up and manages a limp for the tree. He climbs out on it and holds on as Tim watches wide-eyed. The branch bends further under the new weight - more and more, until - SNAP! The branch breaks, sending Chris and Tim crashing to the mud of the hog pit below.

74 EXT. MUNN HOME -- DAY

74

Chris is first to sit up, too frightened to feel the pain. He rouses Tim, gathers the backpack, and heads to the front.

Chris grabs the car keys from the trunk lock, then slams it shut. He opens the passenger door for Tim and sees the gold coins on the front seat. He shoves the dazed Tim inside.

Chris fumbles to find the ignition key, glances in the rear view mirror and sees Deel stumbling toward the car.

CHRIS

Lock the door!

Tim reaches over and punch-locks his door.

Chris looks back in the mirror. Deel is gone.

He finds the right key. The car roars to life just as Deel's head pops up in the driver's side window, bloody hand at the

glass. Chris yells, jams the car into gear, and hits the gas. The car kicks-up gravel. Deel manages to leap onto the trunk and hold on. Chris jerks the wheel back and forth until Deel loses his grip and falls off.

Barely able to control the car, Chris and Tim hurtle blindly tearing through a fence then back onto the road.

75 INT. DEEL'S CAR -- DAY (MOVING) 75

Chris fumbles with the gearshift. They runs off the road and into thick brush. Bushes and branches slap the windshield; the car nicks a tree and spins down a hill into a creek bed.

76 EXT. MUNN HOME/DRIVEWAY -- DAY 76

Deel picks himself up and goes after the boys.

77 EXT. DEEL'S CAR -- DAY 77

Chris and Tim open the driver's door, climb from the wreck.

CHRIS

You okay?

TIM

Yeah.

Chris shoves the coins into his brother's bag. He takes the keys, and hurls them into the woods; then they head off into thick woods, Chris still limping from the blow to his knee.

78 EXT. DEEL'S CAR -- DAY 78

Deel looks inside his car to find the keys gone and the coins missing. He howls with rage, then continues his pursuit.

79 EXT. WOODS -- DAY 79

The boys stop for a second, listening to Deel's cry. Then Chris leads Tim deeper into the woods, through the underbrush.

80 ON DEEL: 80

Deel can't keep up with the boys. He collapses, bloody and out of breath, choked with anger; holding his head.

81 ON CHRIS AND TIM: 81

The boys continue to run. Chris knows that now he and Tim have no one to rely on but each other.

FADE OUT.

82 EXT. RAILROAD BRIDGE -- NIGHT

82

The boys sit in the woods beneath a railroad bridge. Chris has his pant leg rolled up to examine his swollen knee; pulls out and lights a cigarette.

Tim glances around at the dense undergrowth surrounding them.

TIM

Should we tell the police?

CHRIS

We can't. You heard him; he's got my knife with my fingerprints. The cops'll think I did something wrong. Especially after what I said to dad at the station the other night. -- Then they'd separate us... Put us somewhere apart from each other for sure. Do you want that?

Tim shakes his head.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

We gotta be smart and stick together.

Can you do that?

(Tim nods resolutely)

I know you can.

Tim nods as his eyes swell with tears. Chris knuckles his brother's cheek to wipe one away.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Dad ain't gonna be here to dig us out of this one.

TIM

He's dead ain't he?

CHRIS

If we cry about it, it ain't gonna help nothin'.

83 EXT. LOSHOLDER ESTATE -- DAWN

83

Chris climbs up the trellis of Lila's house toward her boarded up window. He knocks softly on the wood.

After a moment, one of the boards is removed. Lila stands in her nightgown rubbing the sleep from her eyes.

LILA

Chris, what're you doing? What if my dad sees you?

She sees that he looks like forty miles of bad road.

LILA (CONT'D)

What happened to you?

CHRIS

Lila, somethin's come up. Me and Tim are on the run. But... I don't want to leave without you. -- Will you come? -- Will you take a chance and leave with me?

Chris eyes her young beauty in the morning light.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I want you to be with me.

Lila's dog begins to bark from a distance.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Please?

LILA

Chris, I can't.

Chris stares with his eyes lost in her. He holds open his hand and shows his fish hook scar. She holds up her fist and opens her hand where her fish hook scar is open wide and bleeding down her arm.

84 INT. MUNN HOME/JOHN'S BEDROOM -- MORNING 84

Deel stares at the blood stained floor and picks a single coin from under the bed.

85 EXT. MUNN HOME -- MORNING 85

The hogs slop around in their pit, snacking on John's body.

86 EXT. WIDE ROAD -- MORNING 86

Chris stands on the shoulder of a rural road. He tries to flag down a ride. Tim sits in the grass. Traffic is sparse, but as a car approaches, Chris steps forward and sticks out his thumb. The car speeds past. Chris glances back at Tim.

CHRIS

I couldn't tell if that was a man or a woman.

Another car passes in the same manner, and then another. A nearby flock of birds makes a squawk.

TIM

They're laughing at you.

A BIG RIG TRUCK approaches from down the highway.

CUT TO:

87 INT. BIG RIG -- MORNING

87

The ~~TRUCKER~~, a brusque GERMAN MAN in his 40's with a thick broken accent, looks the boys over as Chris fidgets.

TRUCKER

Where you going to?

CHRIS

Far as you'll take us.

TRUCKER

Did you get into a fight?

CHRIS

Yeah. -- It's over now.

88 EXT. HIGHWAY -- CONTINUOUS

88

The rig rolls down the road under the sun.

89 EXT. MUNN HOME -- AFTERNOON

89

Deel sits behind the wheel of John's damaged truck. He turns the key again and again, but the engine won't turn over. He pops the hood.

90 INT. BIG RIG -- AFTERNOON

90

Tim is asleep, his head resting on Chris' shoulder. Chris is watching the passing scenery.

TRUCKER

You don't look like you've been to many places. Me, I've been all over the world... To every state in this country. But there's one state I've been in more than any other.

CHRIS

Which one?

TRUCKER

The state of confusion.

The Trucker laughs at himself.

CHRIS

You and my little brother would get along pretty good.

TRUCKER

Why do you say that?

CHRIS

'Cuz he's a comedian just like you.

- 91 EXT. HIGHWAY -- CONTINUOUS 91
The truck drives forever.
- 92 INT. MUNN HOME/JOHN'S BEDROOM -- DAY -- SERIES OF SHOTS 92
Deel cleans up John's blood from the floor...
...He fixes the family portrait back on the wall.
He shines John's boots and combs his hair with John's comb...
looking more and more like his older brother.
...He takes a nap on John's bed.
- 93 EXT. TRUCK STOP -- AFTERNOON 93
The truck pulls into the vast parking lot of a truck stop.
Parked are eighteen wheelers a hearse and a sheriff's car.
- 94 INT. BIG RIG -- CONTINUOUS 94
Tim is still asleep on Chris' shoulder as the truck lurches
to a halt. Chris opens his eyes.
The driver gets out of the cab and goes into the truck stop.
Chris nudges Tim.
- CHRIS
Wake up, man. You're droolin' on me.
My arm's all wet.
- TIM
Sorry.
- 95 INT. TRUCK STOP RESTAURANT -- DAY 95
The Trucker stands beside a booth talking to a sheriff's
DEPUTY and a bizarre looking MALE PROSTITUTE with greasy
hair, a thick mustache and a pearl necklace, eating a ham
sandwich. The trucker points out the window toward his truck.
- 96 INT. BIG RIG -- DAY 96
The boys sit side-by-side in the cab of the truck.
- TIM
I'm sad.
- CHRIS
Nobody cares.
- TIM
Why do you gotta be like that?
- CHRIS
You irk me

Chris peers out the window to the truck stop and sees the trucker talking to the Deputy and the Prostitute.

97 EXT. TRUCK STOP -- DAY

97

The Trucker and the Deputy walk to the truck. They throw open the passenger door. The cab is empty.

TRUCKER

They took my lunch.

CUT TO:

98 EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE -- DAY

98

At an old burnt out house in the middle of the woods, Chris sits on the porch. Tim looks off into nowhere. Chris eats a can of potted meat with his fingers and devours a roll. He holds a metal Thermos.

CHRIS

Tim, you gotta eat somethin'.

TIM

I can't.

CHRIS

We gotta keep our strength and we can't trust nobody from now on. From what I seen, folks ain't up front with you. We need to stay out of sight.

His jaw goes slack, and he stares ahead vacantly.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

We'll find some new place. We'll shave our heads and grow beards... And we'll only speak Apache.

99 NEW ANGLE:

99

Chris has the coins spread out in front of him and examines them under the sunlight.

CHRIS

If we sold these coins. We might be millionaires.

TIM

We can't sell them. It's bad luck. It's treasure... Don't ya think?

CHRIS

No place to sell them around here anyway. I'll take all the luck I can get

NEW ANGLE:

Chris is asleep using Tim's backpack as a pillow. -- Tim looks around nervously before chipping off a few flakes of green paint from the side of the house. -- He eats them.

100 EXT. RIVERBANK -- DAY

100

Chris and Tim splash each other and play as they clean themselves in the river.

Chris spits a fountain of water on his brother.

101 EXT. RURAL ROAD -- DAY

101

An old cotton truck drops the boys off at an intersection. They wave thanks at the elderly DRIVER and he turns away.

The boys walk down a dusty two-lane road, no cars in sight. Through a thin line of trees, Chris sees a beautiful old house recessed from the road and a strong black man in his ~~60's~~ ~~GEORGE MORGAN~~ on the yard attempting to start a lawn mower. He pulls the cord, but the engine don't to turn over.

CHRIS

(to Tim)

I got a idea. Let me do the talking.

They walk toward the house.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Excuse us Sir, you need any help?

CUT TO:

102 EXT. MORGAN HOME -- DAY

102

Chris gives a pull on the cord, and the mower roars to life.

NEW ANGLE:

George and Tim clear away some brush as Chris mows the lawn. -- Tim pulls an old straw hat out of a shrub. He hands it to George, proud of his discovery.

NEW ANGLE:

Chris pushes the mower into a side shed as George and Tim stand by their pile of debris. Tim wears the straw hat as he collects a few bucks from the man.

GEORGE

You boys are handy to have around,
but you make me feel old.

~~IRENE MORGAN~~, George's thin wife steps from the house

IRENE

Hey, would you like to eat with us?
I made enough for ten people.

Tim looks at Chris, but Chris is wary.

GEORGE

Irene's a wonderful cook. I do hate
to see her food go to waste.

103 INT. MORGAN HOME/KITCHEN -- DAY

103

Irene stands at the stove stirring a kettle as Tim watches.
The house is a clean classically elegant contrast to their
own home. Tim is in awe.

IRENE

You ain't from around here. Visitin'
kin folks?

Tim nods, takes the spoon and begins stirring the pot.

TIM

My brother's gonna get a job as an
underwater welder cuz it pays good
money. Then he's gonna get a pilot's
license and get a bi-plane so we
don't have to walk everywhere.

IRENE

We 'bout done. You go wash your hands.

TIM

Yes ma'am.

104 INT. MORGAN HOME/DINING ROOM -- DAY

104

George and the boys sit at the dining room table. The food
is laid out before them. Irene enters carrying a huge spoon.

Tim picks carefully at his food. He looks repulsed as he
takes a few bites of some peas. -- Chris tears into his food
and looks on curiously at his little brother.

GEORGE

Irene, this is most delicious. --
You ever seen a spread like this
boys?

CHRIS

It's been a long time.

IRENE

Well it's been a long time since we
had some chil'ren to share it with.

TIM

You ain't got kids?

CHRIS

Hush, up! Don't be nosey.

IRENE

It's okay. -- We ain't able to have chil'ren. We count our blessing for what we do have. Ain't that right George?

GEORGE

The other day I got a damn good bargain on a color T.V. -- Now I pray the Lord will enhance my sense of sight so I can see some nipples.

105 EXT. MUNN HOME -- DAY

105

The hood is up. Deel turns the key and John's truck roars to life. Green exhaust spits from the tailpipe.

106 INT. MORGAN HOME/DINING ROOM -- AFTERNOON

106

Like a robust comedian, George is finishing a story for Chris. He holds his index fingers about twelve inches apart.

GEORGE

So I told this fella, "No, not head to tail. That's how big that fish was between the eyes!"

Chris laughs along with George. Irene shakes her head.

IRENE

I warned you about his bad jokes.

CHRIS

Sure was a good lunch Mrs. Morgan. I ate so much...

IRENE

It's good for you. If you need to have a food baby, the bathroom's around back.

Chris tries to hide and embarrassed smile.

107 EXT. MORGAN HOME/BACKYARD -- AFTERNOON

107

Tim leans against a tree in the backyard and vomits.

108 INT. MORGAN HOME/KITCHEN -- AFTERNOON

108

Irene notices the boys' backpack lying on a chair. She opens it up and finds an old T.D tag.

Tim's name and address and phone number are printed inside.
She gets a pen and paper and writes.

109 EXT. MUNN HOME -- AFTERNOON 109

Deel carries a television set out of the house. He sets it in the back of John's truck next to a record player and other items of value. A phone begins ringing inside the house. Deel pays no attention.

110 INT. BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS 110

Irene sits on her bed listening to the phone ringing on the other end of the receiver in her hand.

111 INT. MUNN HOME/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS 111

CLOSE ON the phone ringing in the living room of John's house. A hand grasps the receiver. Deel puts the phone to his ear as he plays with the deflated green balloon.

DEEL

Hello... This is John.

112 INT. MORGAN HOME/DINING ROOM -- LATER 112

Irene returns with bread pudding and sets it before the boys.

IRENE

You two go ahead. Me and George don't generally eat sweets. We're trying to contain ourselves.

GEORGE

Irene always says you can learn a lot from a good Cob Salad! You scrawny boys need some roughage to be big in the tits someday, like me.

113 INT. MORGAN HOME/BACKYARD -- AFTERNOON 113

Chris plays with a goat. Tim swings in a hammock.

TIM

You know what George did before?

CHRIS

What?

TIM

Pulled a nickel out of my ear.
(holding out the coin)
Can't buy much with a nickel.

CHRIS

It's the thought that counts.

TIM

I wish he'd thought of more than
five cents.

Irene steps outside.

CHRIS

Ma'am? -- This is a cool goat. Does
it have a name?

Irene shakes her head.

IRENE

Not really... It's just a old goat
we found tied up in rising water.

She is filled with apprehension for the boys after making
her phone call. She places a hand on Tim's head.

IRENE (CONT'D)

You don't look very good and you
didn't hardly eat. Do you feel well?

Tim shrugs.

IRENE (CONT'D)

You boys look exhausted. Why don't
you hang around and rest a while?

Tim and Chris look at each other.

114 EXT. MORGAN HOME/FRONT PORCH -- DAY

114

Irene and George sit on a glider and stare at the beautiful
countryside.

IRENE

We didn't talk for long. He asked
for directions, that was it. -- He
said to keep an eye on them, and
that he'd be here soon. -- He was a
bit short with me on the phone. Oh,
I hope I've done the right thing.

GEORGE

He's their father, Irene. You had to
call. He's probably worried sick.

115 EXT. MORGAN HOME -- DAY

115

Chris listens from around the corner to the voices of Irene
and George.

DISSOLVE TO:

116 INT. MORGAN HOME -- AFTERNOON

116

Irene opens the front door. Deel stands on the porch. Their goat rubs up against him.

DEEL

Hi. -- Nice goat.

117 EXT. WOODS -- AFTERNOON

117

The boys scramble through a ditch and up the opposite side of the woods where three HUNTERS sit around a campfire. Chris motions for Tim to keep quiet.

118 INT. LIVING ROOM -- AFTERNOON

118

George and Deel make small talk in the living room. Deel smiles and does his best to be nonchalant.

DEEL

They're a couple of hellions. Smooth as silk when they're trying to put something over on you. I'm not surprised you got taken by them.

GEORGE

(Irene enters)

What is it, Irene? What's wrong?

IRENE

They're gone.

GEORGE

What?

IRENE

They disappeared - run off.

119 EXT. WOODS -- SUNSET

119

The woods around them are threatening.

CHRIS

It just goes to show how you can be fooled by people. They seemed nice, but folks these days say one thing and do another. I don't know why.

TIM

I fell asleep in that hammock. I was dreaming of Eskimos and Mexicans.

CHRIS

What?

TIM

I was dreamin' I was havin' a birthday party and the only folks that showed up were six naked lady Eskimos and a Mexican.

CHRIS

What the hell are you talkin' about?

120 INT. MORGAN HOME/DINING ROOM -- SUNSET

120

Deel has dropped his polite facade and now demands information from the elderly couple.

DEEL

How long ago did you see 'um?

IRENE

I don't know. They said somethin' about headin' down to Watertown. Workin' on the water. -- We should call the Sheriff. He'll get a couple of cars out lookin' for them and... They can't be far.

DEEL

No.

GEORGE

That's a good idea, Irene. They couldn't have gotten very far.
(heads for the phone)

DEEL

I tell you NO!

In his anger, spittle flies from Deel's mouth and lands on his shirt. George stops short, frightened by his changed demeanor. Deel looks at his shirt.

DEEL (CONT'D)

Well Jesus Christ, I spit on myself.

He shakes his head in shame.

121 EXT. WOODS -- NIGHT

121

Chris and Tim continue their walk through the woods.

122 EXT. RIVERBANK -- MORNING

122

The boys have stopped to loaf on the riverside. It's a handsome, warm day, and Chris has waded into the water with his jeans rolled up while Tim has stripped to his underwear and lies on the bank rubbing his aching feet. Chris uses a branch to test the depth as he moves further out into it.

TIM
Ain't you scared of snakes?

Chris hadn't thought about it until now; he pretends:

CHRIS
Hell no.

TIM
Not even Water Moccasins?

Chris wades to the bank and climbs out of the water.

CHRIS
Yeah... Actually... I hadn't thought
about that. Those can hurt.

LATER...

Chris lies down in the heat near his brother and folds his hands behind his head. Tim plays with his airplane.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
This is okay, ain't it?

TIM
Yeah.

CHRIS
No work. No roof to fix.

TIM
Nope.

CHRIS
Nobody yellin'. -- This is easy.
Like a paradise vacation.

TIM
I miss Dad... and the hogs... and my
comics... and my shower cap.

CHRIS
I know.

NEW ANGLE -- LATER:

Tim naps. Chris turns his head to see a raccoon scouring its meal in the creek. In jerk, stop-action movements, the raccoon turns a nut over in its paws, dips the nut into the creek, then takes a bite. Chris blinks and slowly sits up.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Hey, look at that? Tim?

Tim is still asleep.

NEW ANGLE:

Chris stands behind a tree some distance from where Tim lies sleeping. He cups his hand to his mouth and makes a sound like a coyote's howl. Tim doesn't stir. Chris howls again, louder. Tim wakes up and looks around, then scrambles to his feet. Chris laughs mutely from his hiding place. Frantic, Tim dashes into the woods in his underwear. Chris sinks to his knees laughing.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Hey, come on back, dimwit. I'm right here, Tim!

It dawns on Chris that Tim is out of earshot and running blindly through the woods. He gives chase.

123 EXT. WOODS -- DAY

123

Upset, Tim runs through the woods looking for his brother. He is being battered by low-hanging branches and shrubs.

TIM

Chris! Chris!

Chris breathes heavily and laughs as he tries to catch Tim.

CHRIS

Stop! Tim! Wait!

Chris hears a clamor up ahead and rushes to find Tim pitched forward in the dirt. Tim is cut and scraped from the branches. Chris crouches beside him - puts an arm around him, smiling, comforting.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You okay?

Tim nods, unable to stem the flow of tears.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It's all right. It was me. It's okay.

TIM

Where did you go? I got scared.

CHRIS

I know. I'm sorry. I'm not gonna leave you no more.

(solemnly)

I ain't goin' anywhere. It's okay.

124 EXT. RURAL ROAD -- DAY

124

Deel stands on the side of the road near a rustic building looking at the engine of John's tuck. Steam hisses from the radiator.

Deel tries to take off the radiator cap but jerks his hand back in pain.

A WOMAN passes by.

DEEL

Excuse me, Miss. You seen a couple of boys pass by here; lookin' like trouble?

The woman shakes her head.

125 EXT. COUNTRY STORE -- DAY 125

Tim squats against a wall outside a small grocery store at a highway crossroads. His mood is gloomy.

126 INT. COUNTRY STORE -- DAY 126

Chris sets a map, sodas, bags of chips, candy bars, and assorted junk food on the counter in front of a CASHIER. He points to a rack of cigarettes.

CHRIS

...And a pack of menthols.

He looks at his small change and pulls a coin out.

127 EXT. COUNTRY STORE -- DAY 127

On an old diesel engine at the side of the store, Chris has laid out their meal of junk food. It's clear that Chris has begun to adopt a more fatherly attitude toward Tim, not just in an attempt to reassure his brother, but also to give himself more purpose and confidence.

CHRIS

That's the last of the money that Mr. Morgan gave us, and the old clerk took a gold coin. Never seen anything like it. Said it had character which is even better than a monetary value.

(holds a Twinkie)

That's my bread group and my dairy group; see it's got cream. And here's some beef jerky for the meat group. I couldn't find anything that had roughage in it.

TIM

Where we goin'?

CHRIS

I'll get work. We'll get set up.

128 EXT. RURAL ROAD -- DAY

128

Beneath a threatening sky, a MECHANIC is hooking Deel's truck to a tow truck. Deel is in no mood for small talk.

MECHANIC

Where you moving to?

DEEL

Look fella, I'm in a hurry. I got this vehicle that keeps konkin' out on me every time I start to get anywhere. Could you just persuade it to give me a little... enthusiasm?

MECHANIC

Sure. Whatever you say.

(eyes John's boots)

Nice boots.

The same black hearse from the truck stop flies by blasting electronic dance music.

129 EXT. CORN FIELD ROAD -- DAY

129

The boys walk down the road beside a corn field. Dark clouds have gathered above them and thunder rolls.

CHRIS

Think it'll rain?

They spot a stable in a distant field.

130 INT. BARN -- NIGHT

130

Outside they hear the wind and driving rain. A sudden lightning strike. A DAIRY COW they hadn't noticed snorts from behind them. It's utter swings. Chris leans casually over to Tim.

CHRIS

Tim?

TIM

Yeah.

CHRIS

Guess what?

TIM

What?

CHRIS

There's a cow back there.

TIM

I know.

CHRIS

I wanna milk the hell out of it.

Tim turns around and looks at the cow's swollen utter.

TIM

Damn.

NEW ANGLE:

Chris is milking the cow. Tim holds a bucket under it.

CHRIS

Don't tell nobody, but when we were
at George and Irene's... I milked
their goat too.

NEW ANGLE:

Chris drinks from the bucket. -- The cow sits pleasantly.

131 EXT. BARN -- NIGHT

131

The boys shout and run from the barn and tackle each other
in the rain.

NEW ANGLE:

Tim eats mud.

132 EXT. TRAILER HOME - NIGHT

132

Chris sees a light in the distance, and they move toward it.
They are soaked and exhausted when they come upon a trailer
home with a hearse parked outside. A floodlight is perched
atop the trailer, but inside all is dark. Chris tries a
door on the hearse and finds it open. They climb inside.

133 INT. HEARSE -- NIGHT

133

The boys situate their wet selves in the back of the car.
Tim curls up with an ancient blanket and a tire. Chris leans
against the window watching the rain fall. -- In the distance,
a soft metal rattle is heard.

TIM

I like the sound of things that
rattle.

134 EXT. HEARSE -- NIGHT

134

An old-fashioned wind mill rattles as it spins in the wet
moonlight.

135 EXT. TRAILER HOME -- MORNING

135

A mustached man in his early 20s, [REDACTED] (who was also the Male Prostitute at the Truck Stop) runs out from the trailer and climbs behind the wheel of the hearse. He looks cleaner this time, even though he's wearing an ill-fitted dress suit and thick green tinted glasses. He's frantic.

136 INT. HEARSE -- SERIES OF ANGLES (MOVING)

136

Ray bangs his free hand on the dashboard as he drives down the main roadway of the run down municipality listening to ELECTRONIC DANCE MUSIC. He squints as if trying to see where he is going. The boys are awake in the back and fearful of being detected. -- Softly, Ray begins to cry as he grooves to the song. He pounds the dashboard in frustration.

The hearse skids to an abrupt stop at a stoplight.

Chris lifts his head to survey the scene. The light turns green and Ray enters the intersection. Looking into his rear view mirror, he squints and sees Chris take focus. He gasps and slams on the brakes, skidding around, busting into an old Paradise Gas pump. He turns, hoists his glasses.

RAY

Jesus! -- Man! -- Hey! You scared
the shit out of me!

Chris tries to force the door open. -- It's stuck. With the skewed eye-line and the cranky smile, Ray is a little too much of a goofy hillbilly to be intimidating. The smile morphs into a tear filled face of sadness. -- Tim looks at Ray with consideration:

TIM

What's wrong?

RAY

(hesitates)
You fellas busy?

They shrug.

RAY (CONT'D)

How'd you like to help me deter a
woman from marrying the wrong man?

They shrug again.

CUT TO:

137 EXT. HEARSE -- DAY

137

Ray backs the car up and pulls away full hustle with a smashed in door, bent wheel, dragging muffler and a dent in his hood.

138 INT. HEARSE -- DAY (MOVING)

138

Chris and Tim look more dumfounded than afraid as Ray turns up his music and rips through the open countryside in tears.

TIM

Where we goin'?

RAY

We gotta stop the wedding.

TIM

Do you love her?

Ray jerks at the potential of Tim's understanding, taking his eyes off the road, but not slowing down.

RAY

What do you know about it?

Ray bites his lower lip and nods to the beat, staring Tim furiously in the eye.

139 EXT. HEARSE -- DAY

139

They blaze through the land at 100 mph.

140 INT. HEARSE -- DAY (MOVING)

140

Chris and Tim sit in the front seat with Ray. Ray has the pedal to the floor.

RAY

I've known Rhonda all my life. We'd been like sweethearts since we was in the sixth grade. -- Then, six months ago... She up and left me for my old Swedish man.

CHRIS

Did she cheat on you?

RAY

Naw. She just left me. It was a while back and she had a lot goin' on. -- But she broke my heart for this no good guy. -- He's rich is all. Rich as BALLS. -- He's got a nice tan... He's real good lookin', but so what? Now I'm the family pariah.
(squinting again at the road)

Ray squints and adjusts as he about runs off the road.

CHRIS

She's getting married today?

RAY

Not if we can help it. I got a plan see. You guys will create a diversion with the Swedes... I'm gonna dress up like the Maid of Honor and sneak back into the- DAMN!! -- Last night, I was out late. And who comes prancing in with another woman...?

TIM

Huh?

RAY

...And they were dancin' around IN THEIR UNDERPANTS! The night before his wedding to the woman I love! -- Then I knew. I looked at that gesture and I just knew... This was more. -- And I'm not walkin' away from this wedding until she hears it from ME. It's just somethin' I need to say. That I love her and I'll do anything for her and this guy is a two timer. -- Easy as that. I'm not backin' down 'til she knows the damn truth!

Ray begins to cry again, he takes off his glasses to swab the tears.

Ray looks to Chris with a mount of intensity.

RAY (CONT'D)

I hope to God she takes it to heart. --
I LOVE HER!!!!!!

141 EXT. WEDDING CHAPEL -- DAY

141

In the crowded parking lot of a delicate chapel, Ray approaches blaring up in his hearse at full speed. He hurdles a curb and runs smack into a sizable Oak tree, fifty feet from the church. -- After the resounding, violent crash, the music dies. The horn blares for a twinkling and then whines to a burp. -- Everything is silent.

142 INT. HEARSE -- DAY

142

Tim and Chris rouse from the accident and gaze over to Ray who sits comatose, slumped over the wheel; The windshield cracked and bloody.

Tim touches him.

TIM

Hey...

Lifeless. -- Chris looks perplexed. Church bells ring.

143 EXT. WEDDING CHAPEL -- DAY 143

The crowd starts to filter out toward a horse and buggy. As the newly wed BRIDE and GROOM saunter down the steps, people chuck rice at them.

144 INT. HEARSE -- DAY 144

Chris and Tim stare at the wedding-goers.

TIM

You think you'll ever get married
Chris?

CHRIS

They look like they're happy... But
you never can tell.

CUT TO:

145 EXT. SMALL TOWN -- DAY 145

The boys roam down a street lined with shops. PEDESTRIANS who pass seem vaguely threatening... with sunken eastern European looks.

Looking into the window of a bakery, Chris turns to see a deputy sheriff's car slowly cruising by.

He puts his arm around Tim and strides him into the bakery to dodge the cops.

146 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DUSK 146

Chris and Tim walk along the street past a church with a paper sack of baked goods.

Streetlights flicker to life, a mother's voice sing-songs through the evening, calling her children. Up and down the block - inside warmly lit homes - families gather for supper.

147 EXT. BASEBALL FIELD/DUGOUT -- DUSK 147

The boys settle in the DUGOUT of a deserted elementary school baseball field. It is near dark, and the first stars are visible. Chris lies down and eats a strudel.

TIM

I'm sad because we didn't stop the
wedding.

CHRIS

Eat your super. Don't ever talk about
that again, okay?

Their laughter echoes through the darkening sky.

148 EXT. BASEBALL FIELD/PITCHER'S MOUND -- NIGHT

148

Chris sees, hovering above his head, the intermittent glow of fireflies. Tim is watching them too, half a dozen, dancing about. Chris reaches out and catches one in his cupped hands. The pulsating blush is visible through his fingers.

TIM

What's that?

CHRIS

A firefly.

Chris opens his hand to show the lightning bug.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You know, I remember something about Granddaddy... something he told me once. It was a long time ago. It was Momma's dad.

(trying to remember)

We were walking in the forest, and there were fireflies - a bunch of them. -- He called 'em... nature's night lights - they help animals find their way in the dark.

Chris opens his hands and sets the firefly free.

TIM

Why'd you let it go?

CHRIS

You can't keep 'em. They need to be able to fly around. They'll die if they can't.

The boys continue to watch the fireflies flit about them.

Tim tries to blow them away and then considers the moment. There is yearning in his voice when he speaks.

TIM

Why don't we go see them?

CHRIS

Who?

TIM

Granddaddy and Grandma.

CHRIS

They live at Texas.

TIM

I'll bet they're nice - like George and Irene.

CHRIS

Tim, you don't know how good we got it. Sleep as late as we want. Go to bed when we want. We're like outlaws.

(bitterly)

Maybe Grandma and Granddaddy don't want us anyhow. You ever think of that? -- They don't ever stop by.

TIM

Why don't they?

CHRIS

They didn't like Daddy's style.

149 INT. MECHANIC SHOP -- DAY

149

Deel is the lone patron in the mechanic shop, He's flirting with a cashier, MURIEL, a woman in her 20's.

DEEL

What's your name?

MURIEL

Muriel.

DEEL

You got a nice smile; you know that, Muriel? -- It just makes me want'ta smile back.

She coyly twirls her hair with her finger.

DEEL (CONT'D)

You seen a couple strange young boys hangin' round town?

Muriel thinks...

MURIEL

Saw some boy down the street eatin' the heck out of a strudel last night.

DEEL

What did he look like?

MURIEL

Just some kid, like anybody else I guess.

She accidentally swallows her gum and chokes.

DEEL

What's the matter?

MURIEL

I just swallowed my gum. -- Hell.

DEEL

Do I make you nervous?

MURIEL

Naw... I like your manners.

DEEL

You gonna be around?

MURIEL

You could stop in and say hi.

DEEL

Perfect.

MURIEL

If you don't mind my asking, how'd you come by that?

Deel runs a thumb over the gash on his forehead.

DEEL

My nephew socked me with a hammer when I tried to kill him and his brother. -- There's lovers and there's fighters. Guess I'm a little of both.

He winks at Muriel just as the MECHANIC comes in to the office wiping his grease-stained hands on a rag.

MECHANIC

We got that radiator installed quick as we could. Should last a good while and keep her... enthusiastic.

Deel starts for the door but turns around as he reaches it.

DEEL

I want you to know something, Muriel. I'm gonna come back here and look you up. I think we can be real good friends. -- You married?

She shakes her head.

DEEL (CONT'D)

Got a boyfriend?

MURIEL

Yeah.

DEEL

Well... We'll see about that.

He walks out singing, leaving her standing wide-eyed. She whispers after him:

MURIEL

Bye. -- Hope you find whoever you're
lookin' for.

150 EXT. RIVERSIDE DOCKS -- DAY

150

In a mercantile area on the banks of the river, several BARGES and TUGS are moored on the concrete docks. A few DOCKWORKERS move here and there. A forklift runs down the main pier past Chris and Tim. Chris leaves Tim sitting on the curb of the pier and walks into a shack with a sign above the entrance: J. Kingston/Freight Handlers.

Tim sits holding a glass of fishing worms and watching the various birds that contrast the industrial atmosphere. He looks nearby to the wizened face of EDDIE, a drifter in his 40's. Eddie holds a bottle of wine and has a smear of jelly on his cheek. He looks over to Tim. Tim brushes a finger across his own cheek as an indication to Eddie. -- Eddie gets the picture and wipes the jelly from his cheek. He takes a slug of wine. Tim smiles and looks away.

After a moment, Eddie smiles and pats the back of his own head and slicks his hair with his hand. Tim licks his hand and mats down the cowlick in his hair.

Eddie knocks his fist a few times on the wooden plank he sits on. Tim looks to him, knocks back. They begin communicating in Morse coder

Eddie finishes his wine, lets out a belch, then crushes the bottle in one hand. -- Tim pulls a WORM out of his jar. He tosses it in the water and then squeezes the glass as hard as he can trying to break it.

TIM

It's too hard... I can't do it.

151 INT. FREIGHT COMPANY OFFICE -- DAY

151

Chris stands in front of a desk in a seedy office. A BOSS MAN behind the desk is having sport at Chris' expense while his ASSISTANT looks on and snickers.

BOSS MAN

Labor laws my boy, labor laws. You've never even seen the business end of a razor.

(sticking a leg out
toward Chris)

Here. Pull my other one. Ha! --
Ain't no work for you here. Last
Summer I had a underage kid working
on the boats. He set sail and headed
for the Bermuda Triangle.

(MORE)

BOSS MAN (CONT'D)

Got as far as the equator before a thunderstorm swept right up off the water, tore his trousers clean off and he died of embarrassment. He was uncircumcised and realized that finally the gods would know.

The Boss Man cracks himself up. -- Red faced, Chris glances out the window and sees Eddie sitting beside Tim.

BOSS MAN (CONT'D)

It's helpful to know that if there's ever another Great Flood, we'll be allowed to eat the animals and use their hide for swim trunks.

Chris stands dumb.

152 EXT. RIVERSIDE DOCKS -- DAY

152

Chris comes out of the freight office and sees Tim sitting alone and Eddie some distance away shuffling down the wharf.

CHRIS

Who was that?

TIM

That was Eddie.

CHRIS

What did he want?

TIM

Money. All I had was the nickel George pulled out of my ear, so I gave him an old book.

CHRIS

Why'd you do that?

TIM

I already read it six times. It wasn't funny no more. -- Did you get a job?

CHRIS

Oh, well... I remember now that I ain't such a good swimmer.

TIM

So.

CHRIS

So. It worries me a little, you know, working as an underwater welder. What if there was a storm?

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

-- I figure we could make money just as easy mowing lawns and stuff. Then we could save up for bus tickets and go anywhere we want.

TIM

(hopeful)
Texas?

CHRIS

Yeah... maybe. See some old people.

153 EXT. PAWN SHOP -- DAY

153

Deel exits a pawn shop stuffing a wad of bills into his pocket. He unfolds a map against the hood of his truck. The cab of the truck is now empty; gone are the TV, record player, exercise bike, etc. On an old tea stained map, Deel traces a route with his finger. He eats a peach.

154 EXT. JUNKYARD -- SERIES OF SHOTS -- DAY

154

The boys discover an unlicensed junkyard near a creek at a clearing in the timberland, a large field full of abandoned vehicles, appliances, trash. It looks like some sort of urban gothic graveyard. -- They gaze as if they've stumbled upon a lost city.

Chris looks around for signs of life:

CHRIS

Hello?

NEW ANGLE:

Chris and Tim find an aluminum storage shed turned on its side, drag it to a clearing, and right it to serve as their new home. They lay plywood down for a floor and string rope at ankle level throughout the woods surrounding the shed and offset it with viscous metallic shards. They connect the rope to tin cans hanging from the doorway and pull cushions from the seats of an abandoned car to use as mattresses.

155 EXT. JUNKYARD -- DAY

155

The boys stand filthy from the day's labor. They clean off a broken mirror and look at their soiled faces.

156 EXT. SHED IN WOODS - DAY

156

They sit beside a campfire near the entrance to their shed. A train whistle cuts through the night. Wild Dogs bark in the distance.

TIM

I wish we had a knife, so we could kill wild animals that come around.

CHRIS

Shut up. -- You ain't never killed nuthin' in your life.

Tim slaps his leg and kills a mosquito.

TIM

I almost got bit by that mosquito... but I killed the crap out of it.

Chris laughs.

Tim crawls around on his knees and begins howling in response to the other dogs. -- Chris throws another board on the fire.

157 EXT. BAKERY -- DAY

157

Deel ~~walks~~ walks into the old timey bakery. He walks up to the ~~OLD LADY~~ behind the counter.

DEEL

Excuse me ma'am, I'm lookin' for my kids. -- Heard you had a damn fine strudel here and I was wonderin' if he might have prowled in yesterday to get them some.

OLD LADY

Why yes there was a couple of strangers come in. -- Paid for it with some Mexican Pesos.

DEEL

Any idea where they headed?

158 EXT. RIVERSIDE DOCKS -- DAY

158

Deel moves up the pier to his truck. He scans the surroundings. He stops a group of FIVE MEN who head to work.

DEEL

Excuse me. -- Suppose I wanted a job workin' on the water, where would I head?

159 EXT. JUNKYARD -- NIGHT

159

Chris opens a box of macaroni and pours dry noodles into his hand. Dusts it with powdered cheez. It crunches as he eats.

TIM

Is it good?

Chris takes a bitter bite. -- Tim smiles.

CHRIS
I saw you eating paint again. -- You
know what Doc Triplet said about
lead poisoning.

Tim nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Does it taste good?

TIM
Naw... It just feels right.

Suddenly, they hear a noise. The trap of stacked cans alerts
them that they've got company.

CHRIS
Shhh.

Tim is wide eyed. -- They hear the breathing of an animal.

TIM
It's an animal.

The sound is behind them. They both look terrified. --
Another sound ahead of them begins to grow. -- Tim stiffens
and watches as a coyote steps into the fire light.

TIM (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Chris?

CHRIS
Shhh. -- Stay still.

It begins eating some of the spilled food. -- Howls in the
distant dark echo through the wooded valley.

TIM
Should I kill it?

CHRIS
No way.

Tim smiles.

160 INT. JUNKYARD -- DAWN

160

Tim lies on the floor of the shed, moaning and clutching his
stomach in pain. Chris wakes up and moves to his side.

CHRIS
What's wrong? -- Tim?

161 EXT. JUNKYARD SHED -- DAWN 161

Tim is on his hands and knees outside the shed throwing up.
Chris kneels beside him, holding him.

162 INT. DRUGSTORE -- DAY 162

Chris examines over-the-counter medicines. He reaches into his pocket and sees that he has only a few cents.

163 EXT. GAS STATION -- DAY 163

Deel fills up his truck with gas. As he pumps the gas, he notices a LITTLE MEXICAN BOY, about 6, staring up at him beside the pump. The boy wears a cowboy hat, boots, and a holster with a toy gun. He chews a stick of turkey jerky. Deel tries to ignore him, but the boy won't stop staring. He looks to see if the boy's parents are around.

DEEL

You're the ugliest kid I ever seen.
Go on, get out of here with your
dirty hands.

The boy keeps staring and chewing.

DEEL (CONT'D)

Don't look at me. -- I mean it.

164 INT. DRUGSTORE -- DAY 164

Chris takes a bottle of liquid medicine from the shelf. He looks around, then slips it in his pocket.

He takes a deep breath and passes the checker with a smile.

165 EXT. GAS STATION -- DAY 165

The boy draws his toy gun and points it at Deel.

DEEL

I swear to God, I will shove that
gun where the sun don't shine, kid...
It'll make you walk cool though.

~~MOTHER~~ (O.S.)

Leon!

The BOY'S MOTHER calls to him from across the lot.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Leon, leave that man alone and get
over here!

DEEL

Go on Kid. Get.

Deel checks her out and gives her a nod.

DEEL (CONT'D)
That's what I thought.

Leon leaves and Deel finishes pumping his gas. He hangs the nozzle on its cradle and sees Chris emerge from the drugstore down the street. Chris turns and begins walking away from Deel, oblivious to his presence.

Deel jumps in his truck and peels out.

166 INT. JOHN'S TRUCK -- DAY (MOVING)

166

Deel follows Chris at a distance until he has to stop at a red light at an intersection. Chris steps off the curb at the opposite end and moves directly in front of Deel's truck. Deel guns the engine and seems about to lurch forward when he sees flashing POLICE LIGHTS in his rear view mirror.

The streetlight turns green, Deel pulls over.

167 EXT. MAIN STREET -- DAY

167

Deel rolls down his window for an approaching ~~DEPUTY~~, he watches anxiously as Chris walks into a field.

DEEL
Hi.

DEPUTY
I thought you might want this.

He holds out his hand. -- A GAS CAP. Deel breathes easy.

DEEL
That's my gas cap.

DEPUTY
That's right.

DEEL
My momma always sayid I'd lose my head if it wasn't attached... You know... To my neck?

DEPUTY
Yeah.

Chris turns a corner and disappears from view.

DEPUTY (CONT'D)
Well, you have a good day now.

DEEL
Thank you. You too, Sir.

Deel puts the truck in gear and is about to pull out when the deputy calls out:

DEPUTY

Bye!

DEEL

(frozen, tense)

Huh?

DEPUTY

I said, Bye-Bye.

DEEL

(confused)

Whatever man.

Deel gives the man an odd wave. When he puts his hands back on the wheel, his fingers are trembling.

168 INT. JUNKYARD SHED -- DAY

Tim is recuperating. The medicine bottle open beside him.

CHRIS

Can you hold it down?

Tim nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You can't get sick no more. -- This here is medicine for intestinal problems. It's gonna make you better. You'll be all right.

Tim is pleased by Chris' words. Suddenly the tin cans hanging over the entrance to their shed begin to rattle. Chris glances, concerned.

TIM

Maybe the coyotes come back... To take care of me.

Chris looks around and sees Deel forty yards from the shed lying on the ground. He's cursing, having tripped over the rope trap and set off their homemade alarm. Deel looks up and sees Chris. Chris turns and rushes to the shed.

CHRIS

Come on!

They grab the bag and run. Deel sees them and pursues.

They know the yard and are able to duck around the dense garbage that Deel fights to get through.

The boys take refuge behind a trash pile. Chris looks around, seeking a better hiding place. He takes Tim by the hand and leads him through a maze of rusty refrigerators, washing machines, and automobiles. They lean behind an abandoned car. Chris quietly opens a door of the car, but an arm swings out from inside. Chris yelps and jumps back.

Emerging from the junkyard, still some distance from the boys, Deel hears the yelp and goes into an alert crouch.

Eddie, the drifter, has been sleeping in the back of the abandoned car. He scares the boys as they slide into hiding. Eddie looks like he's in shock.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Shhh.

EDDIE

Shhh.

A train whistles in the background.

Deel pulls Chris' knife from his pocket. He unfolds the blade and continues forward, stealthily. He calls to the boys. As he talks, coming nearer to their hiding place.

DEEL

Why don't you boys come out and let me take a look at you?

He pauses for a moment and waits for a response.

DEEL (CONT'D)

Looky here. We're family, right? Family looks after each other. Protects each other. They even forgive each other. Don't they, Chris?

Eddie looks to the boys, doubtful now.

Deel continues to close in on them, glancing beneath rusty cars and around piles of trash as he talks.

DEEL (CONT'D)

Chris, look what you're puttin' Tim through. Running him all over. Makin' him hide in the garbage. Let's stop all this... foolishness.

Eddie makes up his mind that they are telling the truth. He grabs Chris hard by the head. His jaw is clinched.

EDDIE

Go on, get out'ta here.

Deel is getting nearer all the time.

DEEL

Boys, I know you can hear me. --
There's something you got that belongs
to me. And I want them back!

Deel hears a noise and moves toward it. As he nears an abandoned car, he hears another noise farther off, the sound of someone or something moving quickly downhill. Deel dashes down an incline in the direction of the sound, but at the base of the hill he finds no one, but a lonesome NUTRIA RAT.

He runs back up the hill only to hear a similar sound leading off in another direction. As he approaches a second drop-off, he sees a rusty hubcap rolling down the incline, skipping off rocks until it collides noisily with a refrigerator. Deel won't be fooled again. He approaches the abandoned car and sees another hubcap rolling out from behind it.

At the back of the car, Deel finds Eddie reclining on the ground as is recovering from a seizure, Tim's western comic book in his hand and a pile of hubcaps beside him. Eddie points in two opposite directions. Dead serious.

EDDIE

They went that-a-way.

Eddie smiles politely before he gets socked in the face with a hard punch by Deel.

169 EXT. MARSH -- SERIES OF ANGLES -- DAY 169

The boys slosh through a marsh and enter the woods on the other side. They run until Tim falls down out of breath. He is weak and failing. Chris kneels beside him and listens

Deel crosses the marsh and enters the woods in pursuit.

170 EXT. RAILROAD YARD -- DAY 170

Chris and Tim come to a chain-link fence at the edge of the woods. Beyond, they see the railroad yard with several trains, a freight train ready to depart.

171 EXT. WOODS -- CONTINUOUS 171

Deel has lost their trail. Suddenly a train whistle cuts through the air. He turns and runs toward the sound.

172 EXT. RAILROAD YARD -- DAY 172

The boys crawl under the fence into the railroad yard. The train whistle blows again, and the train lurches forward.

Deel looks just in time to see the boys hop the freight. He runs to catch it.

173 INT. RAILROAD FREIGHT CAR -- DAY (MOVING) 173

Thinking they're safe, the boys take refuge in a corner of the freight car behind packing crates. Chris puts his arm around Tim, and they huddle together, shaking and broken.

174 EXT. RAILROAD YARD -- DAY 174

Unseen by the boys, Deel struggles to catch the last car on the train. He grabs a handrail and pulls himself up.

DISSOLVE TO:

175 INT. RAILROAD FREIGHT CAR -- NIGHT (MOVING) 175

The railroad car is lit by intermittent warning lights on the track. Tim is lying on the floor, pale. Chris is worried.

Chris puts an arm around Tim as the train rolls on through the night. Chris speaks softly as if in prayer:

CHRIS

I was thinkin' about Dad... How he spoke to us and had his feelings hidden... Like he was afraid. When he'd look me in the eye, sometimes I'd believe he had no idea who I was... Or didn't care. -- Who was this kid? How did he spring from me?

(Chris chuckles)

Now I remember...

The train rattles through the night. In Tim's open eyes, we see that he becomes very aware of the sounds around him.

176 EXT. RAILROAD YARD -- MORNING 176

In the dim light of morning, the train pulls into a station. A RAILROAD WORKER walks down the line of freight cars. He sees Chris and Tim jump from a car at the end of the train. -- He lobs a rock at them.

The boys run and jump a fence, disappearing. Deel watches from where he hides inside the last freight car. He backs into the shadows as the worker passes.

177 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET -- MORNING 177

The boys walk down a residential street and come upon a group of LITTLE GIRLS playing with a jump rope on the sidewalk. The girls stop their game and stare at them. -- OLD WOMEN hold their dogs back.

178 EXT. PARVO SQUARE -- DAY 178

RUNAWAYS hang out - some begging - some busking with broken instruments like a run down circus.

Groups of boys tap-dance in oversized shoes to music. Chris and Tim roam through.

179 INT. GAS STATION -- MORNING

179

At an abandoned gas station, the boys use the mildew stained bathroom to clean themselves.

They wash their hair in the sink and use the hand dryers to blow themselves dry. Chris removes his T-shirt and holds it up to his nose - makes a face.

Tim tries to hold his shirt to Chris' nose, but Chris bats it away. They rinse their shirts in the sink.

180 EXT. ALLEY -- DAY

180

The boys pass an alleyway. They notice three figures - a male and two females - arguing in low intense voices at the opposite end of the alley. Suddenly one of the girls, LILLY (16), cries out as her large brother, JACOB (24), punches her hard across the face, knocking her down.

JACOB

Do you think I'm blind?! You're breakin' my back here. I'm not takin' it anymore. -- How could you sell me out like that Lilly?!

Jacob reaches into Lilly's pocket, pulls out a wad of bills.

JACOB (CONT'D)

What's this? What's this in your pocket? -- How did this get here? This couldn't be my money, could it?

TARA

Stop it Jacob! -- She's your sister. She worked for it.

The other girl, TARA (17), tries to help her, but he shoves her against the fence.

JACOB

Stop looking at me. -- Stop looking at me!

Jacob sees Tim. He turns and points a finger at Lilly and then puts her money in his own pocket.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Looks like you got a date Lillian. You might wanna clean up for him.

He storms out of the alley. Tim tentatively approaches the girls. Lilly lies crumpled on the wet cobblestone as Tara kneels over her.

CHRIS

Tim, mind your business... Tim!

Tim walks to the girls, but in his own world.

TIM

Hi.

Lilly looks up at him fiercely. Her face is red from the punch. Her ear is cut and bleeding. While she's not unattractive, she wears baggy clothes and has the harsh, vacant look of a longtime street kid. She tries to stand up but can't. Chris joins his brother. He takes an arm, Tara the other, and they help her up.

LILLY

He's not a very nice guy. -- It's personal. -- A rotten brother.

She yanks her arm away from Chris.

She scowls, turns and takes a couple of steps but has to stop and put a hand against the fence for support.

CHRIS

You're bleeding.

Chris unzips his backpack and pulls out a T-shirt.

Lilly's POV: inside the backpack, she catches a glimpse of the gold coins. She momentarily locks eyes with Tara.

Chris hands her the T-shirt and she dabs her bloody ear. She notices cuts on her arm.

LILLY

You and your friend there are lucky Jacob was in a good mood.

Chris just stares, already fascinated by her tough persona.

TIM

He's not my friend. He's my brother.

LILLY

Treat him like one then, eh. Mine's not so hot. -- Are you lost?

CHRIS

What? -- No. I don't think so.

LILLY

Then you must be. This town is the end of the line. Everybody has to get off before the train rolls into the ocean.

Chris looks to Tim by the wall, grabbing his stomach in pain. Tara steps away and lights a cigarette.

LILLY (CONT'D)

(to Chris)

What's the matter with him? He got a gripe?

CHRIS

He's got stomach trouble. He thinks about infinity and... an ulcer opens up.

LILLY

You boys are alone? -- Follow me then, I know a place he can lay down.

Chris supports Tim's shoulders and guides him from the alley.

181 EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

181

Lilly and Tara lead the boys to a rusty, iron fence surrounding a cemetery on a riverside. The girls slip through a space where the bars have been bent back. The boys follow.

They find themselves in an old, neglected cemetery that looks like a gypsy campground. LEROY, a young black man who looks like death, sits with a small den of CATS. The cats fight around holes of dug up graves. An old shovel sits nearby.

LILLY

That's LeRoy. He's in shock. Last week my brother made him dig up a grave to see if there was any jewelry on the body.

TIM

Saw the skeleton?

LILLY

It was a baby in a giant's casket.

NEW ANGLE:

Lilly and Chris sit with the bottle of wine between them.

LILLY (CONT'D)

I've lived all over - Madrid, Branden Fields. I lived in Brazil with my mom for a bit. Bad idea that was. -- My father and I get along a little gooder, but I got a wicked witch for a stepmom. I tried living with them, but she told him I was suicidal, so he cast me and my brother Jacob out.

CHRIS
Why'd she tell him that?

LILLY
Because I've tried killing myself three times. -- The last time, I leaped from an eight story parking garage, landed on the concrete and didn't feel a thing.

CHRIS
You're lucky.

LILLY
No stupid. When you try to do something and botch it up, that's bad luck. Even if its damaging. I didn't even get a headache.

She puts the bottle to her lips and takes a big swig.

TIM
Chris? -- Where are we? -- Have I been sleepin'?

CHRIS
Yeah.

LILLY
Are you hungry? I know where we can get some food.

Chris and Lilly help Tim up. The three of them move off.

CUT TO:

182 EXT. RESTAURANT -- DAY

182

Chris and Tim wait at the side of a diner. Tim is slouched against the wall. Chris smokes and peeks around the corner to the back of the building where Lilly digs through a dumpster. She pulls out a plastic bag and a BABY DOLL.

183 EXT. RIVERBANK -- DAY

183

Chris and Lilly sit on concrete rubble near the banks of the river. Tim is lying on the ground a few feet away, pale and dazed. Lilly opens the plastic bag and pulls out several potatoes wrapped in greasy butcher paper. She tries giving one to Tim, but he waves it away.

LILLY
(to Chris)
He's not doing too good.

CHRIS

He's a pretty tough kid. He'll fight it off.

She turns up her bottle and polishes off the last of the wine. Chris chews on his potato and looks out across the river as the sun sets blood-red on the horizon.

An idea occurs to her. She tears off a piece of wrapper.

LILLY

You got something to write with?

Chris finds a pen in his backpack. She begins writing.

LILLY (CONT'D)

I heard this from a gypsy.

CHRIS

What?

She finishes and hands Chris the pen.

LILLY

Write down a wish, like whatever you most wish for in the world. Don't tell me what it is, though.

CHRIS

Why?

LILLY

Just do it.

Chris thinks a moment, glances over to Tim, then writes.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Then we fold them - like this. And put them inside.

Chris folds his paper and hands it to Lilly. She puts the slips into the empty bottle and replaces the cork. She stands and takes a few steps toward the water, beckoning Chris.

LILLY (CONT'D)

This river goes all the way to the ocean. If the bottle makes it all the way there, then our wishes come true.

CHRIS

Everybody is so goddamn superstitious.

LILLY

But a lot can go wrong before it gets there.

(MORE)

LILLY (CONT'D)

It could wash up on a sandbar or get pulled down by a... a... It's like a whirlpool...

(Chris is confused)

Just below the surface. It'll drag you down and drown you if you're not careful.

Chris looks out at the swift-moving river and now sees more clearly the swirling eddies and crosscurrents on the surface.

CHRIS

You remind me of a friend of mine.

Lilly smiles and hands Chris the bottle. He walks out to the river's edge, pulls his arm back and throws the bottle high into the air.

It lands with a splash, sinks below the surface, then bobs up and begins its journey downstream. He watches it drift away, getting smaller.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Lilly, can I ask you somethin'?

When he turns around, Lilly and his backpack is gone.

Tim sleeps; a little blood drools from his mouth, he stirs.

184 EXT. PARVO SQUARE -- DAY

184

Deel crouches beside a couple of STREET KIDS sitting on a blanket in the square. Jacob is giving the GIRL a tattoo on her arm using a safety pin which he dips into a tin cup of water and cigarette ashes.

DEEL

Ages fourteen and nine.

GIRL

I hadn't seen 'em.

(to the boy)

Have you?

(Jacob looks up)

I'll ask around though.

DEEL

I'd make it worth your while.

The girl looks at Deel as the pin sticks deep into her arm.

GIRL

It don't hurt. I don't feel a thing.

Deel moves off and stands. He puffs on a cigarette and sees a scrawny kitten nosing around near his feet.

He takes a last drag and flicks his cigarette at the kitten.

LEROY (O.S.)

Say Man!

Leroy gets up from the grass where he's been sitting reading a comic book and scoops up his kitten. He scowls at Deel and walks away.

Deel looks to the ground where Leroy had been reading Tim's *Six Mandarin Treasures Classic Comic*. He follows him.

185

185 EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

Chris walks Tim down a deserted street. Tim is doubled over in pain. After a few steps, he collapses onto the sidewalk in front of a small church. Chris looks up at the facade - the large, iron cross over the door. He helps Tim onto the steps and wipes his mouth as he spits up.

186

186 EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Lilly and Tara sit on the steps of an abandoned house, dilapidated and nearly overgrown with kudzu. They rummage through the stolen backpack.

TARA

There's nuthing in here.

LILLY

He must've stashed the money some place when I wasn't looking.

Lilly dumps the contents onto the ground. The wooden airplane Chris made for Tim comes tumbling out.

Lilly picks up the plane and examines it, then breaks it.

187

187 EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

Tim, barely conscious, sits on the steps of a church.

CHRIS

You know you never did anything wrong... But I hate to bring you down with me, 'cuz we ain't got nuthin' now...

Tim doesn't respond or even seem to understand. Chris stands; puts his hands on Tim's head. His voice choked with emotion.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I just don't know how sick you are.
I don't know what to do for you, and
I can't take a chance you'll get worse.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

-- I see you in everything good,
like there's a purpose... lifted up. --
You be good, and... and...

Chris almost breaks into tears, but holds back.

TIM

Where are you going?

Chris starts down the sidewalk. He turns and sees Tim following, feebly trying to keep up. Chris swallows.

CHRIS

Go back. You can't come with me!

TIM

I want to stay with you!

Chris closes his eyes, on the verge of tears.

TIM (CONT'D)

Stay.

CHRIS

Look here.

He takes Tim by the arm and walks him back to the church.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You'll be safe here. I got nuthin'
left to give.

He tries to leave, but again Tim follows.

TIM

Just stay with me.

Chris gets indignant.

CHRIS

I told you no! Get back there and
sit down! I don't want you around
messing up my fun anymore.

TIM

You promised. -- I believed you.

Chris swings at his shadow and punches the ground below him before he explodes on his little brother. His fist bleeds.

CHRIS

Well I can't! -- Tim I tell you I
can't! I ain't to be believed!

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

-- I'll tear you down... And you'll be broken, shot and ashamed of who you are, just like me. Lord, I gotta find myself, and I'm askin' you to let me go. -- No, I'm tellin' you... I'm walkin' away. I love you but I gotta go.

A dazed and dejected Tim wanders back to the church steps, crushed, puts his head between his knees and cries. Chris watches him, then turns and runs away, tears down his face.

188 EXT. TOWN -- DAY

188

Deel discretely watches LeRoy heading into an old fruit shop. Jacob startles him as he turns around.

JACOB

You lookin' for those kids?

Deel catches his breath.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I know something you don't know.

Jacob smiles. Deel turns...

DEEL

I don't play games son.

He looks him in the eye.

DEEL (CONT'D)

You're steppin' on my boot.

189 EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

189

Chris squeezes through the bars of the cemetery gate.

Among the burial vaults he comes upon the encampment of runaways.

LILLY (O.S.)

What do you want?

Chris turns to see Lilly sitting in the shadows of a crypt sipping from a wine bottle. -- He nods for her to come to him. She stands guarded with her arms folded.

LILLY (CONT'D)

It isn't safe for you to be here. My brother will kill you. If I scream, he'll kill you.

Chris laughs.

CHRIS
I ain't never been much for safety.

LILLY
Your bag is over there. Is that what you came for?

Chris stands strong and determined.

CHRIS
No.

LILLY
What then?

Chris pauses and looks to her with thick grains of hope.

CHRIS
I want you to love me.

LILLY
You what? -- You want to *fuck* me? Is that what you want?

Chris stands void of emotion, searching for understanding.

CHRIS
I don't know.

LILLY
You need to go Chris.

Chris reaches under his T-shirt and pulls out some coins. He tosses them on the ground in front of her. He speaks sincerely and without anger.

LILLY (CONT'D)
(suspicious)
What are you doing?

CHRIS
Those belonged to my old man. They're worth a lot. And if you believe in hocus pocus, they bring you good luck. -- I figured you could use it and I could take them in trade...

She's confused by his gesture, looks around, eyes narrowed. She slowly lifts the coins and examines them.

LILLY
You don't even know me.

CHRIS
I don't care.
(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

-- You remind me of someone I used to know... I want you to love me. -- She was afraid. -- You could buy a palace with all I'm givin' you. -- I'm just lookin' for somethin' simple.

Chris' eyes swell with tears.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I ain't got nowhere to go... Ya see? Look at me?

He holds out his hand. She snorts.

LILLY

You remind me of how I used to be - about a thousand years ago. Where did you come from?

She drifts and tilts her head to get a sideways view of Chris; as if she beholds him for the first time. -- Chris smiles desperately and touches her face.

CHRIS

I'll do anything.

Suddenly a figure comes walking toward them out from behind a crypt and stumbles to the ground. It's Jacob. His face bleeds heavily and his mouth is tied shut. Deel emerges from the shadows behind him, knife drawn. Chris stiffens.

DEEL

I didn't know if I'd ever see you again, Chris. I sure have been lookin' forward to it.

(to Jacob)

Get on over there with them man.

Jacob scrambles over to the others and collapses.

DEEL (CONT'D)

(to Chris)

Now gather up them coins.

Deel pulls out his bandanna and wipes the sweat from the back of his neck. He seems to be at the end of his rope, a man eaten alive by tragedy and loss.

DEEL (CONT'D)

Do it, or somebody's gonna get hurt!

Chris kneels and starts gathering the sheaths of coins.

LILLY

Who are you?

Deel takes a threatening step toward her. Chris motions for her to keep still. Coins in hand, he approaches Deel.

DEEL

Set 'em right there Boy.

Chris sets the coins on the ground near Deel's feet. He kneels to examine them, keeping one eye on Chris, Lilly, and Leroy. Deel pulls one coin from the sheath and holds it up.

CHRIS

I ain't your boy.

Deel lowers the coin and looks Chris in the eye. He combs the boy's hair from his face with his hand gently and smiles... Genuine. -- He touches the red of Chris' cheek.

DEEL

Your mother and me had some good times. -- She was beautiful.

CHRIS

Don't talk about my mom.

Deel simmers to a low voice, lost in thought.

DEEL

She was my light... And you were gonna be our gift.

CHRIS

You don't know nuthin'.

DEEL

Your father took her from me. -- He was the smart one... And he won her love fair and square. -- But you know the stranger he sees in you...? That's because you didn't belong to him... And he had no right. -- Now let's take that money and start over. Just you and me. -- Let's be strong.

Chris' face melts. He grabs Deel's shirt and twists it with feeling. He tries to push away and begins hitting his father.

Deel takes the hits and puts an arm around the boy, holds Chris' crying face strong with the other hand. Is this security realized? -- Slowly his strong hand moves down toward his neck. Chris begins breathing heavily, Deel begins to squeeze and choke the boy. -- Their faces clench as Deel presses on and gives his son a soft... Almost a kiss.

TIM (O.S.)

Chris?!

Startled, Deel turns to see Tim standing behind him.

Lilly rushes forward and swings a shovel at Deel's head. -- Smash! -- He lets go of Chris and falls. -- Lilly turns around and whacks him again on the back. He screams in pain.

LILLY

Chris, run!

Tim turns and runs out of sight. Lilly drops the shovel and grabs the coins just as Deel staggers to his feet. Chris stumbles to regain his breath. Leroy disappears into the darkness while Chris and Lilly rush through the cemetery.

LILLY (CONT'D)

This way!

Chris can't see Tim anywhere. He calls out.

CHRIS

Where's Tim?! -- Tim?!

190 EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

190

Chris and Lilly climb through the iron gates of the graveyard. Chris is frantic with worry.

CHRIS

Where is he? -- TIM!!!!

Suddenly Tim slips through the narrow gate. Relieved, Chris embraces him.

LILLY

(whispers)

Come on.

The three of them run down a dark street.

Deel staggers up, leaps the gate and follows.

191 EXT. SERIES OF SHOTS

191

Chris Tim and Lilly run down alleys...

...Climb a chain link fence

Through yards...

...They slide down a hill

192 EXT. RIVERBANK -- SERIES OF SHOTS -- DAY

192

They run and stumble through high grass and muddy fields through industrial decay at the side of the river.

Tim collapses in the mud. Chris and Lilly pull him to his feet and then stop dead in their tracks, listening to the sounds of nature around them. Chris holds Tim's mouth shut.

CHRIS

Shhh.

Tim looks to the sky above him then down to his heart as he listens to it beat. They whisper:

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I don't know where I'm goin'.

LILLY

I'm with you.

CHRIS

You don't have to...

She thrusts the coins to Chris as he begins to cry.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I'm gonna kill him.

LILLY

Is he your father?

CHRIS

I don't know.

Deel reaches from the mud and grabs Chris' knee. He pulls. Lilly and Tim grab Chris' arms and fight as he screams.

Deel yanks Chris violently away from the others and gets ahold of his nephew. He throws him as hard as he can into the swamp. A Muck Boat floats by. VOICES from the boat call out in FRENCH as Deel freezes. -- Lilly yells to them:

LILLY

HELP!!!!!!

Chris gets to the land and is helped by Tim and Lilly. Covered in mud, they run.

193 EXT. BRIDGE -- DAY

193

Lilly leads Chris and Tim through an overgrown plot to a dead end, cement wall at the bottom of a bridge. -- There is no way out except a rusted ladder up.

Looking up, they see the old metal BRIDGE spanning the river. Cars pass with a reverberating drone of tires on steel girders. The bridge has two small towers jutting into the support structure which forms a roof in a crisscross pattern from base to peak.

Deel is quickly closing the gap.

Chris scoops Tim in his arms as they reach the ladder and sets him onto it. Chris goes up next, then pulls Lilly after. Lilly grabs the bag, and the three of them climb.

Tim, holds his stomach, slows them down.

Deel reaches the wall and pulls himself up onto the ladder.

As they all climb higher and higher.

Chris, Tim, and Lilly are up to the bridge - at a point where a narrow, steel footpath runs across. Chris and Tim continue to cross, but Lilly stops at the footpath.

CHRIS

What are you doing?

Lilly looks down to see Deel getting ever closer. He'll easily overtake Chris and Tim unless she does something.

Chris and Tim continue their cross just above Deel.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Move Tim, MOVE!!!

Tim is scared out of his mind as he cramps up near the tower.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Tim, there's nowhere to go but up.

TIM

I can't.

CHRIS

You can Tim. Yes you can. -- Help is coming.

As they begin climbing up the tower, a hand grabs Chris' ankle again. Chris looks down and screams as he sees Deel. -- Chris hangs on tight, and with his free foot, boots Deel in the face several times screaming in fury until Deel lets go.

Lilly calls out from the footpath:

LILLY

Hey! Hello! Look here!

She holds out Tim's bag for him to see.

Deel casts one more glance at the boys, then runs after Lilly.

Chris sees what's happening.

CHRIS

No! LILLY!!!

(to Tim)

Stay put.

He leaves Tim and starts back down toward the footpath.

Tim looks to the stars in utter fear and confusion.

Lilly runs to the opposite side of the bridge and climbs over the rail.

Deel runs after Lilly.

Deel climbs the ladder after Lilly.

Chris climbs down to the footpath and runs to help her.

Lilly is breathing heavily when she steps onto a small platform that sticks out of the bridge.

Deel reaches the platform and sees Lilly out on it. -

The waters of the river swirl a hundred feet below.

DEEL

Now be a good girl and hand those coins over. We can forget this ever happened.

She extends the bag and turns to face him.

LILLY

Why don't you come and get 'um?!!!

DEEL

You ain't a part of this baby. Just walk away before you fall!!!

Chris hits the platform; sees her staring Deel in the eye.

LILLY

I'm not afraid!! -- I'm not afraid of you. You're nothing! I've been coming up here for years looking for a new reason to jump. -- No fall has killed me yet.

DEEL

Easy darlin'...

He holds his knife between his teeth as he reaches out. He smiles, but then the smile fades as he creeps toward Lilly.

Chris walks toward them. He nearly falls but manages to right himself. Arms outstretched for balance, he moves as quickly as his nerves allow.

Deel pulls the knife from his mouth and slashes at Lilly. She grabs the knife by the blade and holds a good grip. As he jerks it out of her hand, it slices into her. -- She looks up at him bleeding and smiles.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Dad?!

Deel turns to see Chris holding a coin out toward Deel.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Don't hurt her.

Deel's lip quivers in a flood of honest emotion.

Chris tosses it over the side of the bridge. The coin flutters to the water below like a stricken bird.

DEEL

NO!!!!

Deel lunges back toward Chris. Chris stumbles backwards, falls, but manages to grab hold of the bridge with one hand.

Deel grabs Chris by the wrist saving him before he loses his loose grip. The real coin sheath dangles in his other hand.

DEEL (CONT'D)

Hand me the coins.

Chris looks to the long fall below him and holds back tears of fright. -- The rusted platform begins to bend.

CHRIS

No.

Deel's eyes swell with weakness and sadness.

DEEL

Hand me the coins, I'll pull you up.

Chris raises his arm as if to hand Deel the bag. -- Closer... Closer... Then a simple swallow graces Chris' face as he turns the bag upside down and lets them go. -- Falling like glitter into the water. The corroded metal joint whines with the ache of the weight. -- Lilly sits frightened in the background, holding on tight.

Deel's face is absolute. He holds the knife in one hand, and Chris' life in his other. -- Suddenly, the platform gives and breaks away. It falls several feet, but is caught by a lower cross beam. Deel hangs onto Chris' wrist, but his expression has changed to pure horror. -- He softly lets go of Chris' hand.

Chris reaches up and screams as he plunges - down and down - for what seems like an eternity into the eddying river.

Lilly screams in horror. -- Deel's expression goes flat. He breathes as time slows down in front of him. He rolls over to look at the knife which has embedded itself in his chest. He looks at the wound and begins to tremble.

Lilly opens her hand and looks quietly at the blood pouring out of her wound. -- Deel straightens up in shock.

He sits up and looks at the water below as he pulls the knife from his heart.

LILLY

Chris!!!

Lilly looks desperately down at the water for Chris. Seeing no sign, she jumps in after him.

Deel drops the knife and reaches into his pocket. He pulls out the deflated green balloon.. He stretches it a couple of times and then blows to inflate it. Bigger and BIGGER...

He sits holding the balloon, numb. He hears a familiar voice:

TIM (O.S.)

I used to get confused...

Deel turns slowly to see Tim sitting beside him, peacefully.

TIM (CONT'D)

I used to get confused by where things begin, and when they end. And what happens before and after. -- Is there even a past and how do I know that history isn't something that the writers just made up?

DEEL

You don't quit, do you kid.

TIM

Is it over?

Deel nods and holds his heart.

TIM (CONT'D)

Then where do I go?

DEEL

That's your guess.

TIM

And what about my mom and dad? Are they watching us now? I wonder sometimes if I'm superstitious... Do I believe in broken mirrors, and ghosts and good luck? Because sometimes it's a comfort.

DEEL

You think too much.

TIM

I just climbed to the top of the bridge.

(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)

-- I never been that high before. --
After a minute, I wasn't even scared.

DEEL

(sincere)

I'm proud of you. -- I knew you could
do it.

UNDERWATER -- CONTINUOUS

As Tim continues to speak, we see Chris underwater, floating through the current with his eyes open in a daze. He spreads his arms and tries to fight the strength of the water and get to the top for a breath. Strange burning lights flood in from the surface of the dark river. Lilly swims to join him. She grabs him around the waist.

TIM (O.S.)

It helped me when I looked down and
you were here, and you were so small.
And Chris... He was in the distance...
And for once, I was on my own. I was
the biggest one. I was looking at
myself. -- I saw there wasn't an
end... that everything goes forever.
And if I died and left this earth,
than that's okay as long as I left
things I created behind. Then they
would exist forever in some form,
just like me.

194 EXT. BRIDGE -- CONTINUOUS

194

Tim and Deel continue to talk.

TIM

...And next, I might be an alien, or
just an energy or a new emotion...
And worms will eat my body and I
will be food... And that's how things
grow and live. That's what infinity
is... It's a bunch of circles.

Tim smiles and makes circles with his fingers. Deel shifts.

DEEL

You got it all figured out, huh Tim?
You're lookin' at a guy that's got
stomped on all his life. -- That
girl, them coins, you boys... Was
gonna be my opportunity. -- I was
gonna buy a parakeet and teach him
to say bad words.

Deel bites his knuckle.

TIM
Did you kill my dad because you hated
him?

Deel nods his head.

TIM (CONT'D)
I loved him. -- He hurt me
sometimes... but I loved that guy.

Tim goes deeper into his own head and finds sadness. Deel
stays with him.

TIM (CONT'D)
How did it feel?

DEEL
It felt like letting go... Like I
was an animal letting go.

A tear falls from Deel's eye. He laughs it off and hands
Tim the balloon.

DEEL (CONT'D)
Here.

Tim smiles. -- Sirens are heard in the distance.

DEEL (CONT'D)
One thing don't fit in your theory.

TIM
What's that?

DEEL
Emptiness... Nothing... That pit
when infinity don't look like
something you want to stick around
for.

Tim opens his fingers and lets the balloon deflate.

Deel holds his chest and tries to get to his feet. He takes
a step toward Tim but the snake skin boots slip and he falls
like a stone off of the bridge, disappearing at last with a
faint splash into the pitch-black water.

Tim watches as Deel's body floats to the river's surface,
face-up and twisting slowly in the crosscurrents. Then his
body is pulled under, swallowed by the powerful undertow.

195 EXT. RIVERBANK -- DAY

195

Chris opens his eyes to a blinding white light. A figure
moves behind the light - a ~~PARAMEDIC~~ pointing.

PARAMEDIC

I got 'em! Washed-up right here!
Bring the stretcher!

Chris is lying on his back with Lilly on the muddy riverbank, barely conscious, dripping wet. He turns...

196 EXT. BRIDGE -- DAY

196

Chris is being pulled out strapped to a stretcher. Lilly has a blanket wrapped over her shoulders. Police cars and two ambulances line the bridge, their lights flickering off the water below.

A PARAMEDIC talks to Chris.

PARAMEDIC

Can you hear me, son? Do you know
who you are?

Chris turns his head and sees Tim standing beside a POLICEMAN. When Chris speaks his voice is barely a whisper.

CHRIS

That's my brother.

They slide Chris' stretcher into the back of the ambulance.

From out of the open ambulance doors, Chris sees Lilly standing in a CROWD of onlookers on the opposite side of the bridge. As the paramedic starts to close the doors, Lilly lifts her cut and bandaged hand and gives a sad wave.

197 EXT. UNDERWATER -- CONTINUOUS

197

Lit by the intermittent red, yellow, and blue flashes of police lights, Deel's lifeless body twists in the undertow of the river, floating with arms outstretched down to the sandy bottom where dozens of gold coins lie scattered.

DISSOLVE TO:

198 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

198

The Loud "Pop" of Tim's green balloon bursting by the window.

Chris blinks awake to the sun shining through the blown out light of his hospital window. He turns his head to see Tim all cleaned up. Chris smiles.

GRANDMOTHER (O.S.)

Chris?

He looks up into the eyes of his GRANDMOTHER, 70. In her kind features there is a resemblance to Chris' own mother from the photograph. She stands over his bed and puts a loving hand on his forehead.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)

Chris, do you remember me?

(he nods)

Your grandfather is here too. We've been so worried about you. Everything is okay now.

CHRIS

Deel?

GRANDMOTHER

The police know all about it... all that he did. It's over now. -- It's all over.

Chris nods. There is a new maturity in him, a strength of character forged by his recent trials.

Tim is standing at the bedside.

TIM

The doctor said you almost could've died.

CHRIS

I ain't goin' nowhere. -- How 'bout you?

TIM

I got some medicine now. It hardly even hurts to swallow.

Chris smiles.

Their ~~GRANDFATHER~~ enters, a sturdy man in his 70's. His eyes moist, looks down at Chris.

GRANDFATHER

Hi.

Chris smiles.

CHRIS

Hi.

Chris leans back and looks to the antique ceiling fan. His face shows relief from his night; his lips tremble with joy.

DISSOLVE TO:

199 EXT. THE COAST -- SUNSET

199

Chris looks out over the sloppy waters stretched before him.

Tim and their grandfather sit on the beach side-by-side.

Chris stands a little apart from them both. He and Tim wear new clothes: buttoned-down shirts and slacks but they still need haircuts. -- Chris takes a deep breath, smiles, and with a confident stride starts walking down the beach, the grandfather's words slowly fading away.

GRANDFATHER

I look out... on the rivers and the ocean and the sky and the land. I know every place is home to somebody. -- There must be civilizations in space looking down at us... From their own comfort, at our world. Like spies. -- Counting us by our centuries.

TIM

Can they see us? -- I bet we look like ants.

GRANDFATHER

They can see us, but we're not much more than a mystery. -- If they came to you, could you specify what life was like?

Tim smiles and nods.

NEW ANGLE:

Chris has wandered far down the beach. Tim and the grandfather are nearly out of sight. Chris has taken off his overshirt and shoes and rolled up his pants. He wades out into the crashing waves, dragging his shirt carelessly behind him through the foam. He stops when the water reaches his thighs and, smiling, turns slow circles in the surf.

PAN to an outcropping of rocks near where Chris is standing. The waves wash and retreat rhythmically over the rocks. As the water pulls away, we see in the wet sand at the base of the outcropping, the broken fragments of a glass bottle.

FADE OUT.