

THE EEL

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SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO SWIM THROUGH THE MUD TO GET TO THE SEA.

**EXT. FOREST- NIGHT**

Texas. Night. The distant sound of BARKING over the white, full moon.

We tilt down through black leaves and branches until we are facing a dark forest facade. The barking gets louder.

Suddenly a HALF-NAKED MAN, wearing COWBOY BOOTS, barrels across the forest. He pauses briefly to glance back around.

FREEZE FRAME: This is FRED ABERNATHY (35). He's wet, grizzled and scared. A faded tattoo of an Eel is etched on his arm. He has a ratty beard.

Fred's hands are HANDCUFFED together. He clutches onto a ZIPPO LIGHTER as though his life depended on it.

A four-leafed clover is etched into the lighter.

**UNFREEZE.**

Bright FLASHLIGHT PLUMES spear their way through the leaves.

Fred continues running, panicked. He glances back and then-

BANG! He drops ten feet into the ground just as a FLASHLIGHT BEAM shines in his direction.

Bird's eye view of Fred, unconscious and lying in a TRAPPING PIT, covered in leaves.

**EXT. FOREST- DAY**

The SUN shines quietly through the leaves. Stillness. Peace.

Fred sits up. He's covered in dried leaves. He peels them off and walks away.

**EXT. RIVER BED- DAY**

POV FRED: Beyond a thicket is a row of huge, dead CATFISH strung up on a rope. A tiny ROW-BOAT sits on the bank maybe 20 feet away.

A DOG sits at the edge of the river bank, barking into the water.

Fred quietly makes for the boat.

Mid-way there he glances over and spies a FISHERMAN passed out beneath a tree. A battered SHOTGUN propped up next to him. A half-eaten sandwich sits on his chest.

Fred reaches the boat and slips inside. The dog STOPS BARKING and turns to look at him.

Fred stares at the dog. The dog stares at Fred. Tension.

The fisherman stirs in his sleep but remains unconscious. Fred eases the boat off into the water.

Fred's boat has been picked up by the river's current and it pulls him swiftly away.

#### **EXT. RIVER- DAY**

The sun is now high in the sky.

Fred licks his lips. Thirsty.

He spies a COOLER sitting in the corner and lifts the lid.

There's a large slippery EEL flopping about in an inch of water.

Fred is startled at the sudden motion and instinctively scoots backwards.

He quickly recovers and stares down at the pitiful creature trying to flop its way to freedom. This is a kindred spirit if anything is.

He pours the cooler over the side, watches the eel swim to safety in its strange, eelish way.

#### **EXT. RIVER- DAY**

We're close on Fred's face. He's dozing.

Something JOLTS him awake. The cooler BUMPS rhythmically up against his head.

The boat is full of water!

#### **EXT. RIVER- LATER**

Fred swims furiously for shore. His arms are still shackled together which makes him swim strangely, arms held beneath him, body slithering through the water. Like an eel.

In the background: the boat is going under. Ass in the air.  
He hurries towards a line of trees and climbs one.

In the distance, an OIL FIELD, its derricks pumping against the sun.

Fred disassembles his Zippo and pulls out a tiny, beaten-up MAP from its chamber.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD- DAY**

Fred emerges onto an old road.

He's almost run off the road by a big, black EL DORADO. The thing honks and swerves as it roars past.

**INT. GAS STATION- CONTINUOUS**

On the scratchy old TV: A TELEVANGELIST holds the head of a YOUNG MAN in his hands, attempting to heal him.

We pull out to reveal an old gas-station ATTENDANT, staring at the TV in awe and drinking Yoohoo.

Fred, in the background, runs past a half-open window. The gas station attendant squints.

He gets up and exits the gas station to take a better look-

WHAM! Fred's fist SLAMS into him. The attendant flops to the ground.

Fred DRAGS him into the closet and quietly wedges a chair underneath the doorknob.

QUICK CUTS:

- Fred finds a pair of pliers and a hacksaw in a tool box. He sets them next to disposable razor blades and shaving cream.

- Fred saws through the handcuffs with the hacksaw.

- Fred opens a locker in the back of the station. There's an extra pair of station COVERALLS on a hook.

Sowed on the coveralls is a name tag: SAM.

On the way out of the bathroom, he catches a glimpse of his reflection in a CRACKED MIRROR. He appears deformed.

He stares at himself, studying his features.

**INT. GAS STATION- DAY**

Fred emerges from the bathroom, clean shaven and almost unrecognizable. He zips up his coveralls, steals some cash from the register and a few bags of M&Ms.

On TV: The Televangelist is in a frenzy.

## TELEVANGELIST

*And I believe this young man, he will be with Christ at His return. He will be there waiting to help others truly "find" Jesus and repent of their past, whatever it is.*

Fred knocks the TV stand over with his boot. The TV crashes to the ground in a cloud of smoke.

**EXT. DUSTY TEXAN ROAD- DAY**

Fred walks along, head down, dressed in coveralls.

He comes across a beat-up sign that reads:

PURGATORY, TEXAS. 10 miles.

Behind it the sun shines on the small Texan border town.

TITLE CREDITS: Set to Clarence Carter's PATCHES.

**EXT. RIO GRANDE- DAY**

We meet EARL GREY, a tight, scrawny Texan with a shit-eating grin frequently plastered on his face. Earl Grey is in a blood-stained tank top and beige pants.

He stares directly at us. But his face is distressed, his hair stands up unnaturally.

We rotate 180 degrees and reveal that he is HANGING UPSIDE DOWN from the bridge, suspended by his ankles.

The men holding the rope are THREE MEXICANS: ARTURO, COLON and TITO. They are of different shapes and sizes, but all covered in tattoos and intimidating.

Arturo, the leader, gestures to Colon. Colon slowly gives the rope some slack.

Earl Grey is SUBMERGED into the Rio Grande. His screams are quickly muffled by water. Bubbles rise to the surface.

Two OLD WOMEN walk past the Mexicans. The Mexicans lean against the bridge, nonchalantly. They smile at them.

**INT. MEXICANS' CAR- DAY**

The three Mexicans drive a brand new sedan through town. Mariachi music plays over the radio.

Sitting in the back, sopping wet, is Earl Grey.

EARL GREY

I wasn't expecting you so soon.

Arturo adjusts the rear view mirror and stares at him.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

I can repay you. I promise. I just need time.

Arturo raises three fingers.

ARTURO

*Tres dias. Ni mas, ni menos cabron.*

EARL GREY

Three days?! I don't know how to get it to you so fast... I can't.

**INT. MEXICANS' CAR- MOMENTS LATER**

It's the same music, the same Mexicans, but Earl Grey is no longer sitting in the backseat.

Faint YELPS and OW'S from behind. The car stops. The Mexicans get out.

**EXT. DUSTY LANDSCAPE- DAY**

Arturo stands over a battered and dusty Earl Grey, who has been dragged by his feet.

Earl Grey looks to his right. A handful of HUMAN SKULLS, scattered around, stare blankly at him. He SCREAMS.

Arturo raises THREE fingers again.

ARTURO

*They couldn't count to three. Don't make their same mistake, cabron.*

The Mexicans' car takes off, kicking up a cloud of dust that wraps around Earl Grey. He stumbles to his feet.

**INT. LOCKER ROOM- DAY**

Earl Grey washes his face, spits some dirt out of his mouth. He combs his hair.

**EXT. PURGATORY SHERIFF'S OFFICE- DAY**

Earl Grey walks out of the door... he is, in fact, the SHERIFF of Purgatory. Sheriff Earl Grey.

He is in full Sheriff uniform- button shirt, cowboy hat, boots, mirrored shades, tin star and a revolver on his hip.

He climbs into his patrol car, turns the radio on and leaves.

**EXT. PURGATORY- DAY**

Fred walks along the "Strip", head down, still dressed in gas station coveralls. Purgatory is a small, lazy border town.

POV Fred: a bar. A drug store. A gun shop.

A MEXICAN MIME steps into his view. He gestures to "smile". Then he hands Fred a flyer.

Fred studies the flyer. THE LEGENDARY RAMIREZ CIRCUS is coming to town. He pockets it.

Fred walks past a diner. His stomach growls. He walks in.

**INT. DINER-MITE DINER- DAY**

Fred looks around. Locals eat, drink, watch the TV overhead.

A petite, brown-eyed waitress, VERONICA, steps in front of him. She once was beautiful and delicate, many shifts ago.

VERONICA

Hey there honey bear. Just you?

He nods, follows her to a booth.

**EXT. CHICKEN FARM- DAY**

A flapping chicken is placed inside a chicken coup. The floor of the coup is a dirty piece of cardboard with a series of numbers penciled in.

The game being played is "Chicken Shit Bingo".

A dozen locals place cash on an overturned rusty barrel. They each claim a number as an OLD BINGO CALLER takes note.

Earl Grey removes two crumpled \$100 bill, places them on the barrel.

EARL GREY  
Number 9! Number 9!

The chicken tentatively moves around the coup. It stops on #9. Earl Grey clenches his fists, squints in desperate hope.

The chicken looks like its going to take a shit on #9.

But at the last minute... it changes its mind and hobbles over to a different box.

It shits in box number 4.

OLD CHICKEN SHIT BINGO CALLER  
That's a number 4, gentlemen.

The Bingo Caller collects all the cash and hands it over to the winner, a rail-thin MECHANIC. There's a collective sigh from the group as they leave the coup.

Earl Grey stares at the chicken, in disbelief. He goes to strangle the bird, but the Bingo Caller and the other men hold him back.

**INT. DINER-MITE DINER- DAY**

Fred stares at a TV set hanging from the ceiling. The LOCAL NEWS is on.

Fred's paranoid eyes dart between the TV set and the people in the Diner. Nobody is paying attention except for him.

On TV: A BORDER PATROL AGENT, clutching a shotgun and reflective shades, comes on. A mass of muscle and attitude. Next to him, a blonde, made-up SOUTHERN REPORTER.

Fred sinks in his chair. Hides his face with his hand.

BORDER PATROL AGENT  
He escaped Turnbull Correctional  
Facility seventy-two hours ago.

REPORTER  
What measures have been taken to  
keep us safe, officer?

BORDER PATROL AGENT  
Well ma'am... All border patrol  
units have been notified. Mr.  
Abernathy is cornered. If he tries  
to make it across the border he'll  
fall right in our hands. At this  
point in time our only advice to  
him, if he is watching, is-

The agent looks right into the camera.

BORDER PATROL AGENT (CONT'D)  
Give it up. Game's over, pal.

CLICK. A cartoon comes on. Then a weight loss commercial.

Veronica, the waitress, points the remote at the TV and zaps  
through channels.

VERONICA  
(to Fred)  
Hope you don't mind, do you? It's  
only always bad news anyway.

He shakes his head no, hiding his relief.

VERONICA (CONT'D)  
There.

She settles for a travel show about a tropical paradise.

**INT/EXT. SHERIFF EARL GREY'S CAR- DAY**

Earl Grey drives around, on the verge of tears. He sips from  
his old whiskey flask.

Something grabs his attention: a group of MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS  
sitting outside their school. He stops and stares.

His gaze falls on the most intriguing one of the bunch. LORNA  
DANIELS (14), a mature blonde girl. Lorna and her friends are  
passing a CIGARETTE around like it's a joint.

Suddenly, Lorna's STOCKY CHAPERONE approaches the group. He  
gently grabs her arm. Lorna SNAPS away.

The chaperone tries once more, but she turns her back and ignores him. He physically GRABS her by the arms and drags her over to a parked black Lincoln.

**EXT. DANIELS MANSION- DAY**

Earl Grey follows the Lincoln up a winding road. He exits his car and peers through the gate of a lavish PROPERTY.

Lorna is greeted by her uncle, EMMETT DANIELS JR. Daniels is an old Texan sporting mutton chops and tinted glasses.

He holds his arms open for her but she WALKS PAST HIM.

We hold on Earl Grey's expression as it turns from curiosity to clarity.

**INT. DINER-MITE DINER- DAY**

A formica table top. An enormous plate of chicken fried steak drowned in gravy, hash browns and potatoes is slid across.

Fred holds a knife and fork and looks down at the plate as if he's seeing a naked woman for the first time in years.

VERONICA

Can I getcha anything else?

FRED

(starry-eyed)

A... a chocolate milkshake.

She leaves. Fred shuts his eyes and savors his first bite of food as a free man.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

-dogs chased him into the woods but  
we lost him after that-

Fred's eyes POP open. He glances over.

TWO OIL WORKERS in hard hats, covered in soot, sit eating flapjacks a few tables away. One of them is RUDY GONZALES (50). He is a bear of a man, all gut and beard. A FOREMAN.

RUDY

That's the thing about coyotes,  
they can hide just about anywhere.  
At least he won't be back to bother  
the chickens for a while-

One of the men catches Fred staring and stares back.

VERONICA (O.S.)  
Chocolate milkshake.

Fred is startled, jumpy. Veronica is standing there with a large chocolate milkshake.

FRED  
Do you have today's newspaper?

**INT. DINER-MITE DINER- DAY**

Empty milkshake glasses surround Fred at his table.

Fred carefully removes a page from the newspaper. We catch the headline: "ESCAPED CONVICT ON THE LOOSE". He pockets it.

Veronica brings the Oil Men the cheque. Rudy puts \$20 on the metal tray. She bends over to pick up all the plates. His hand slides over her ass, squeezing it.

The oil men rise, put their cigarettes out in the left-over gravy, and exit, leaving her to clean up.

**INT. DINER-MITE DINER- NIGHT**

The neon lights go off outside.

Nobody left in the diner except for Fred, Veronica and a few Mexicans in the kitchen, cleaning up.

Veronica is by herself in the corner of the diner, quietly cutting squares out of the back of a newspaper with her bright red scissors.

She removes a square and places it inside her pocket.

Curious, Fred turns over his copy of his newspaper.

He notices several holes in the "Men Seeking Women" personals section. Like someone has been cutting ads out. He calls her over.

FRED  
Know of any motels around here? Any rooms for rent?

VERONICA  
I could tell you're an out-of-towner.

FRED  
How?

VERONICA

Nobody orders milkshakes in Purgatory. There's a motel two miles east.

Veronica cleans up Fred's table for him. He leans in.

FRED

You don't have to like me. You don't have to be nice. You don't owe me anything. You're not my girlfriend. There's a certain guy goes into a diner and thinks the girl in the dress is in love with him. I've got nothing to say about guys like that. That's not what I'm talking about here. That's a different thing. And it can be uncomfortable for the waitress because maybe she's got a man. I'm talking about the oldest thing a woman can do for a fella.

VERONICA

And what would that be?

FRED

A favor.

She is taken aback. But a shy smile forms on her face.

### **INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE- NIGHT**

Fred and Veronica walk through her digs. She takes her waitress outfit off in her bedroom and talks to Fred from across the hall.

VERONICA (O.S.)

I'm so sorry, the place is a mess. Then again, every woman seems to think so. But it never really is.

FRED

I didn't say it was. How long have you worked at the diner?

VERONICA (O.S.)

Almost nine years.

FRED

That's a long time.

VERONICA (O.S.)

It's a minute in Purgatory. But I'm hip, I like music and movies and stuff. I'm not just a waitress.

FRED

People are quick to judge.

Fred walks around the living room. He picks up a pair of men's aviator sunglasses on the coffee table.

FRED (CONT'D)

You must know everyone in town.

VERONICA (O.S.)

It's not that hard.

Fred notices a couple of overturned framed photographs. He turns one up, looks at it.

She walks in on him and he immediately places it down again.

#### **INT. BATHROOM- NIGHT**

Fred stands under the shower head. He turns the faucet on, and smiles as soon as the warm water hits him. He hasn't showered in days.

Veronica opens the door to the bathroom, sees Fred's figure behind the shower glass. She leaves a towel for him and some clean clothes.

She stands, meekly watching Fred as he showers.

#### **INT. VERONICA'S DRAWING ROOM- NIGHT**

Fred knocks at the door. He is dressed in a denim shirt, jeans and boots. His wet hair slicked back. A handsome devil.

Hanging from the walls are dozens of JIGSAW PUZZLES. All completed. All depicting beautiful landscapes, monuments, historical buildings.

Veronica is slumped over an UNFINISHED puzzle of the Pyramid at Chichen Itza, in Mexico. She turns to admire Fred.

VERONICA

You look a hell of a lot better in those than my husband did.

FRED

You're married?

VERONICA

Was. His name is Earl Grey. Like the tea, only not as pleasant.

FRED

I don't like tea much.

VERONICA

What else don't you like, Mr. Mysterious?

FRED

Being told what to do.

Fred stares befuddled at the puzzles.

FRED (CONT'D)

What's all this stuff.

VERONICA

You never did puzzles as a kid?

He shakes his head no.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

A large puzzle with 1,000 or more pieces is an exercise in patience. Sorting the pieces, finding matches, and slowly building the image takes a great deal of time. I can sit there for an hour and only get a piece or two.

FRED

Why do you do it then?

VERONICA

They help me to think about other places.

Fred walks around the room and takes them in.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I've lived in this town all my life. Even if I got out of here, I would still feel trapped. Purgatory is a state of mind.

FRED

You should leave.

VERONICA

It would just be same ol' me in some new ol' place. I don't know.

(MORE)

VERONICA (CONT'D)  
 Maybe I'll meet the right guy and  
 he'll take me away somewhere nice.  
 I'd like that. That would be nice.

He sits down at the table and goes through the puzzle pieces,  
 looking for ones that fit.

FRED  
 Ain't nobody gonna help you get out  
 of here. You've gotta do it all  
 yourself. You can't depend on  
 people. It's just you- and the road  
 ahead.

Fred is jamming a puzzle piece into a gap. It clearly doesn't  
 fit, but he goes at it angrily.

VERONICA  
 You have to be gentle.

Veronica picks out a different piece. She slides it in,  
 perfectly.

She runs her fingers up his wrist, noticing how bruised it  
 is.

VERONICA (CONT'D)  
 What happened to your wrist?

Fred quickly steps back. In doing so he accidentally KICKS  
 the puzzle on the table, which TIPS over.

Puzzle pieces go FLYING everywhere.

Veronica gets down on her knees and picks them up from the  
 floor. Fred pulls the sleeves over his wrists.

He feels bad. He kneels down and helps pick up the pieces.

**INT. VERONICA'S GUEST ROOM- NIGHT**

Fred turns the light on in the small bedroom. Flower  
 wallpaper, fluffy pillows, photos of her DEAD MOTHER.

He notices a MUSIC BOX on the bedside table. He opens it.  
 It's a creepy 1940s ballerina holding a wand.

Veronica walks in on him carrying milk and cookies.

VERONICA  
 These will make you sleep better.

FRED

Thank you.

She waits for him to take a bite. He does.

VERONICA

Delicious?

He chews and nods.

FRED

There's an oil field a few miles up the road. I noticed you talking to two oil men earlier.

VERONICA

Yeah. Rudy and Mike.

FRED

You know them?

VERONICA

I told you I know everyone.

FRED

I wanna work there.

VERONICA

Tell Rudy you know me...

She kisses his cheek. Tries to kiss his mouth, but he is hesitant.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I'm a broken gal waiting for someone to fix me up, Sam.

FRED

I'm just passing through.

VERONICA

Why did you come to Purgatory? Just to pass through? There are prettier places for that.

Fred thinks about how much to disclose.

FRED

You know your jigsaw puzzles?

She nods.

FRED (CONT'D)  
I have a jigsaw puzzle, in my head.  
I'm putting the pieces together...  
but there's one missing.

VERONICA  
Where is this piece?

Fred smiles. He lights a cigarette and looks down at the four-leaf clover on his Zippo.

FRED  
It's close enough.

VERONICA  
Can I come with you?

FRED  
You're a nice person. You don't  
someone like me in your life.

VERONICA  
Someone like you? What's that?

FRED  
A complication.

**EXT. VERONICA'S GUEST ROOM- NIGHT**

Fred lies in bed, his eyes wide open. Fully clothed.  
He climbs out of the window with his blanket.

**EXT. VERONICA'S BACKYARD- NIGHT**

The sky is filled with stars and constellations.  
We reveal Fred, looking up. His finger draws imaginary lines  
through the various constellations. He smiles and closes his  
eyes.  
Off screen: The rumble of machinery and metal grinding.

**INT. DANIELS OIL FIELD- DAY**

We are underground. Drills turn into the earth. Pipes clang.  
Oil barrels are carried outside.  
A DOZEN MEN are lined up next to each other. Men of all  
sizes. We track across their faces and stop at Fred, who is  
also in line.

RUDY GONZALES, the foreman, walks down the line observing them. He approaches one of the men and smells his breath for alcohol. Moves on.

He points at one of the men- the largest- and hands him a hard hat. The man thanks him in Spanish.

RUDY  
Everyone else- come back next month.

The group turns around, dispirited. Fred goes up to Rudy.

FRED  
Are you Rudy?

RUDY  
Mr. Gonzales to you.

FRED  
I'm friends with Veronica from the diner.

Rudy gives him a big smile, mockingly. Then frowns.

RUDY  
Next time I eat her flapjacks I'll be thinking of your pretty face.

Rudy walks away. Fred stops him.

FRED  
Mr Gonzales, I can't wait a month. I have to provide for my family.

RUDY  
You can't win 'em all, son.

FRED  
I need a job here. Anything.

RUDY  
You think it's your lucky day?

FRED  
Even a blind hog will find an acorn once in a while.

RUDY  
How much do you weigh?

FRED  
One hundred and eighty pounds wet, sir.

RUDY

Shit. I could just sop you up with a biscuit. Go home.

**EXT. DANIELS OIL FIELD- DAY**

A large TANK full of oil. Black, lifeless, dense. A couple of oil men are prodding at the bottom of the tank, trying to unclog it with a large metal rod.

Fred walks by them, on his way out. The men walk away from the tank.

Without hesitation, he throws himself into the tank, head first.

The other workers watch the scene with the corners of their eyes. Some stop drilling. The men huddle around the vat.

The oil is completely motionless. Then: the sound of GURGLING—much like that of a sink being unclogged. The oil in the vat decreases rapidly.

Angle on: a thick tube leading out of the vat. It rattles, high-pressure oil flowing through it once again.

Fred's HAND emerges, black as night. Then his face. We only see his white pupils.

Fred is pulled up by Rudy and his men.

Fred holds onto a large, heavy chunk of METAL. He breathes.

He drops it to the ground.

FRED

It's not stuck anymore.

**INT. DANIELS OIL FIELD- DAY**

Rudy takes Fred around the oil rig. They duck and dodge pipes, workers, cables. They stop to observe a drill bit. It twirls into the earth like a giant corkscrew.

RUDY

You're a roust-a-bout. A bo-weevil. Anywhere that your greasy ass is needed doing a lot of maintenance, cleanup work and odd jobs, you'll be there with a sweaty smile on your face. It's a dirty job but the money is clean.

Rudy hands Fred a hard-hat, a pair of gloves, a toolbelt.

RUDY (CONT'D)

Now, I can't have a dead bo-weevil  
on my hands, son. Emmett Daniels  
would have my head on a pike.

Fred studies the hard-hat. The profile of a SMILING MAN is  
printed on it. Underneath: "Property of Emmett Daniels Jr."

RUDY (CONT'D)

You'll depend on High Pockets. He's  
living proof that the less you say,  
the more you live in this business.

Fred is approached by HIGH POCKETS, 40s. A blonde, gentle  
giant. He is over 6ft 5, hence the nickname.

High Pockets smiles. He has the worst teeth imaginable.

FRED

Sir. I don't need to depend on High  
Pockets. Or anyone. I learn fast.

RUDY

You might be Albert Fucking  
Einstein, but in here you stick  
with him.

Rudy leaves the two men. High Pockets hands Fred a shovel and  
points at a large pit of mud. Fred digs his shovel into the  
mud and starts shovelling.

But Fred seems preoccupied with an area all the way to the  
right. A long TUNNEL. Dark, dangerous, intimidating.

#### **INT. DANIELS OIL FIELD- DAY**

The oil workers sit around, cooking pork chops out of a  
makeshift grill.

Fred wheels a barrel full of dirt. He lowers the barrel and  
scurries away, towards the tunnel.

#### **INT. DANIELS OIL FIELD, TUNNELS- DAY**

Moist walls surround Fred at the entrance of the tunnel.

A disused, rusty MINING TRACK- used to transport coal- runs  
beneath his feet.

Fred snaps his Zippo open, removes a tiny piece of paper from the chamber.

The paper reads "B 821".

He is distracted by the sound of FLAPPING. Fred raises the Zippo above his head.

POV Fred: Hundreds of BATS, huddled together. Fred carefully proceeds down the tunnel.

His feet stop in front of a specific track. He kneels down and reads the etching on the old steel. "B 821".

He quickly removes a screwdriver from his toolbelt and digs it into the wall.

The rock is incredibly brittle. It CRUMBLES like cake. Fred smiles, a kid in a candy store.

He is distracted by a FLASHLIGHT pointing in his direction.

He immediately sweeps the chunks of wall and mould in the corner. He turns around to leave... and JUMPS.

High Pockets stands there with a shovel in his hand.

Fred adjusts his zipper, pretending that he has just taken a leak.

High Pockets watches him suspiciously. Fred grabs the shovel from him and the two men walk back towards the Oil Field.

**INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE, GUEST BEDROOM- NIGHT**

Fred lies on the floor of his bedroom, doing sit-ups in his underwear. His legs are tucked under the mattress.

He hears the sound of a car parking in the driveway. He looks out of the window.

POV Fred: Earl Grey exits his patrol car, drunk. He burps and takes a swig from his flask of whiskey.

**INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE- NIGHT**

Earl Grey stumbles into Veronica's living room. He kisses her on the cheek and immediately starts searching for something.

EARL GREY  
Hello wife.

VERONICA

I ain't your wife anymore.

EARL GREY

Once a wife, always a wife.

Fred watches the scene from above the stairwell, like a child spying on his parents.

VERONICA

You look like you've been dragged through hell.

He lifts up the couch cushions, pulls drawers out of cabinets, empties jars.

He finds crumpled \$10 bills in a jar and pockets them.

EARL GREY

Where's the rest of your cash?

He runs over to her bedroom and pulls clothes out of her drawer, furiously.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

Where's the wedding ring? Your mama's jewelry? I need them.

He runs over to the bathroom, opens the mirror cabinet and empties pill cases, looking for valuables.

CLICK. Earl Grey turns around and finds Veronica pointing her pistol at him.

VERONICA

I pawned our wedding ring for \$124, which is more than our marriage was worth.

EARL GREY

Take it easy with that thing. It doesn't look good on you.

VERONICA

I don't care about looking pretty right now.

EARL GREY

I got tangled up in something, Nicky. Something Mexican.

VERONICA

What the hell are you talkin' about?

EARL GREY

The Mexicans don't fuck around,  
they'll cut my head off in three  
days if I don't appease them.

VERONICA

At least somebody is pulling it  
from out of your ass.

She cocks the gun. He puts his hands up and slowly slides  
past her with his head down.

His feet get caught in something. He looks down:

EARL GREY

What's this?

Fred's GAS STATION ATTENDANT uniform. Earl Grey picks it up.  
He passes his thumb on the name tag: SAM. She snatches it  
from him and continues pushing him out.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

You went from a lawman to a gas  
station attendant? Shame on you.

She opens the front door and pushes Earl Grey out onto the  
street. He trips up and falls on his ass. She slams the door.

Fred slowly walks downstairs wearing Earl Grey's clothes.

FRED

That was him?

She nods. Suddenly, the door BURSTS open. Earl Grey returns.

EARL GREY

My flask. My whiskey.

He goes over to the kitchen counter and picks up his flask.

He looks over and notices Fred, dressed in his clothes.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

So you're who's filling her up huh.

Earl Grey goes to PUNCH Fred in the face. But Fred's reflexes  
are lightning fast. He BLOCKS the punch and squeezes his  
wrist, hard.

The two men STARE at each other. Earl Grey is in pain.

After a moment, Fred let's go. Earl Grey scurries away.

FRED  
Is he drunk?

VERONICA  
He's an asshole when he's sober  
too.

**EXT. EARL GREY'S CAR- NIGHT**

Earl Grey drives down the main strip of Purgatory, his window down.

He passes a DIVE BAR. Stumbling out of the dive bar is a DRUNK TEXAN. The Texan knocks a trash can over, dry heaves.

Earl Grey looks around for witnesses. He points his TAZER at the guy. Zaps him. Throws him in the back of the car.

**INT. PURGATORY SHERIFF'S OFFICE- NIGHT**

Earl Grey kicks the door open and drags the Drunk Texan into the office. The Drunk Texan is in handcuffs, crying.

DRUNK TEXAN  
What did I do? Please let me go!

EARL GREY  
Drunk and disorderly conduct, sir.

DRUNK TEXAN  
Just drunk. Not disorderly.

Earl Grey removes the man's wallet from his pocket, his cell phone, and places them on his desk.

He locks the man in the tiny town jail and turns his back to him as the man sobs loudly.

Earl Grey rifles through the man's wallet, pockets some cash.

He moves over to the old photocopier and places the man's credit card on the copier bed.

As he waits for the card to be copied, he notices a FAX being spat out ever-so-slowly by the office's old fax machine.

He picks up the fax. It's a BOLO ("be on the look-out") for Frederick Abernathy III. Fred.

AKA: "THE EEL".

There are two images. One is a photo of a bearded Fred. The other is a drawing of what he might look like now.

Earl Grey brings the fax very close to his eyes.

He recognizes that face seen just a few hours ago...

**INT. DANIELS OIL FIELD- DAY**

Fred turns a lever with all his strength, as a drill bit descends into the earth. Sweat and soot cover his face.

EARL GREY (O.S.)  
Hey. Partner. Pal. Amigo.

Earl Grey, in full uniform, catches up with Fred.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry about last night. Allow me to apologize the Texan way.

He extends his hand to Fred.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
We've howdied but we haven't shook.

Fred does not reciprocate.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
Let's drink and shoot.

**EXT. TEXAN DESERT- DAY**

The sun beats down on the arid landscape. A few cacti, some armadillos, and nothing else in the distance.

Earl Grey's car is parked in the middle of nowhere.

He tosses Fred a cold beer. He opens one for himself. He removes some empty bottles from his trunk- which is full of them. Lines them up on the car's hood.

EARL GREY  
My poppa was a great old man. He was so poor, folks used to call him "Patches". I can see him with the shovel in his hand. See, he was never educated. But he did wonders when times got bad. Life had kicked him down to the ground but he would get back up again, real Texan he was.

(MORE)

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
But for the rest of his life, he  
was "Patches". Just couldn't get  
away from it.

FRED  
Nicknames stick.

EARL GREY  
Damn right they do. You got a  
nickname, Sam?

FRED  
Didn't get given one.

Earl Grey removes a pistol from the glove compartment, loads it.

He walks down the dusty field and joins Fred. He hands him the gun.

Earl Grey takes a few steps behind Fred- a precautionary measure.

EARL GREY  
Go on- shoot that shit.

Fred squints his eyes and points the pistol at the bottles.

POV Fred: The bottles are just off his sight. He shoots.

ZING. The bullet flies past the bottle.

He AIMS again... Accidentally hits Earl Grey's car.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
(laughs)  
Careful. That's a federal offense.

He AIMS a last time... The bullet hits the Cactus tree in the distance, pulverizing it.

Earl Grey takes his place next to Fred and squints as well. But instead of aiming for the bottles...

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
I'm going for the dillo.

He AIMS for the ARMADILLO in the distance, some 200 feet away. A much harder target.

BLAM! A bullet SMASHES into the armadillo's nozzle, destroying it.

A cloud of blood and dust rises from the ground.

Earl Grey calmly walks over to the bottles on the hood of his car.

Jokingly, he knocks them over with the tip of his gun. They crash on the floor, breaking.

He places his gun in his holster and walks over to Fred like a Sheriff from an old Western. He circles Fred.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

Everybody's tryin' to get out of here. Why are you tryin' to get in? I hate this shithole more than anything. The town doesn't even really exist. It's a border town. By its very definition it's half-way between here and there. And it's full of fuckin' armadillos. Most useless creatures on earth, except for providing me with these fine boots.

FRED

I got me a job. But I'm just passing through, Sheriff. I'll be gone soon enough.

EARL GREY

Where to?

FRED

Amarillo.

EARL GREY

Home of the Big Texan Challenge. Let's see... which way is Amarillo?

A long silence. Fred points in a direction. Clearly wrong.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. Come on, take a whiff. Don't be shy. You smell that? Don't it smell like tacos?

Beat.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

Take off your shirt.

Fred doesn't quite get it.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
I ain't no queer. Take off your  
goddamn shirt.

Fred removes his shirt. He is in a tank top. His tattoo of an  
EEL shines under the sun. Earl Grey studies it.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
That's your nickname, ain't it.  
"The Eel". You're no eel. You're a  
little trout, swimming upstream.  
But you'd better be careful or else  
you'll end up in the fryer.

FRED  
You don't know me, sir.

WHAM. Earl Grey pistol whips the back of Fred's neck.  
Earl Grey stands over Fred, silhouetted by the sun.

EARL GREY  
You ever met a guy called Frederick  
Abernathy- The Third? Born 1966 in  
Montgomery, Alabama. Distinctive  
features: "an eight inch tattoo of  
a snake or an eel on his arm".

Fred appears in Earl Grey's reflective shades.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
You're staring right at him.

Fred is curled up on the floor, angry as hell.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
Now, quit having a conniption and  
let's talk.

Fred has a moment of clarity. He clenches both his fists, and  
SLAMS them into Earl Grey's crotch. Earl Grey collapses, spit  
flying from his mouth.

Fred picks himself up and RUNS into the distance. Earl Grey  
SHOUTS after him.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
Desert plays tricks on you. But go  
ahead. See how far you get.

**EXT. CATTLE RANCH- DAY**

Fred approaches a rusty hand-written sign that reads  
"Absolutely NO trespassers".

He looks around. The fields are populated with under-nourished cows. They lazily eat grass and shake their fly-infested tails.

Fred eyes a FENCE beyond the property: an entry point to Mexico. He carefully walks over when...

An OLD RANCH HAND exits his house. He looks at Fred. Walks back into his house.

Fred continues walking. Quietly. A cow MOOS. He stops.

BLAM! The Ranch Hand is reloading a pump-action shotgun, aiming it straight at Fred.

BLAM. Fred ducks and RUNS away, as another shotgun blast reverberates around him.

#### **EXT. RIO GRANDE- DAY**

Fred, out of breath, emerges onto the Rio Grande. A MEXICAN FAMILY washes clothes on the other side. They wave at Fred.

Fred notices a BORDER PATROL SECURITY CAMERA hanging from a post. It pans left and right. He retreats in the bushes.

He studies the river's force. The carcass of a DEER bobs against a bed of rocks. Water keeps hitting it, violently.

The patriarch of the Mexican family knows exactly what Fred is thinking. He shakes his head "no".

#### **EXT. TEXAN DESERT, ROCKY COMPLEX- DAY**

Fred crosses a bed of rocks to reach an idyllic corner in the SHADE. His lips are chafed, and he is sun burnt.

He slides against a rock. His legs are giving in.

As he takes a moment to gather his senses, we see something behind him.

A TEXAN CORAL SNAKE. It slithers its way out of a rock.

Fred has no idea that the creature is behind him. He removes his shoes, letting his swollen and sweaty feet breathe.

HISS.

Fred opens his eyes. He doesn't even need to turn around to know what it is.

The snake crawls across Fred's leg, coiling in his lap.

WIDE: The snake sits there. Fred's eyes water. He can't move.

**TIME CUT.**

The sun sets on the Texan desert. Fred is still stuck with the snake in his lap.

He eyes a branch on the right. He takes a deep breath.

He THROWS the snake off of his lap. LEAPS towards the branch, picking it up. JABS the branch at the snake.

The snake is now in full-on pissed off mode, hissing angrily. It rises to launch its attack.

A GUNSHOT. The snake vanishes in a PLUME of smoke.

Earl Grey's armadillo boot enters frame. He STEPS on the snake's head, squashing it.

EARL GREY

You're only safe with me, Fred.  
Soon every little town in Texas  
will have your face hanging from  
window frames and cork boards. The  
border boys have already been  
notified of your escape. I hear  
they're dying to meet you.

Earl Grey helps Fred up. He hands him a bottle of water.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

There, there. Drink up.

FRED

What do you want from me?

EARL GREY

There's a price for everything in  
this world, and you're not in a  
position to bargain.

DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. WATER BASIN/ INT. DANIELS MANSION- NIGHT**

Fred and Earl Grey stand at the top of a water reservoir- a vantage point. They are SPYING on the Daniels mansion.

Fred's POV THROUGH BINOCULARS: Emmett Daniels smokes a cigar in a large jacuzzi outside.

EARL GREY (O.S.)

That's Emmett Daniels - richest man in Purgatory. Oil man. Bastard marinades in that jacuzzi for days on end. Move up a little. See her?

Fred moves his binoculars, passing many rooms of the lavish house. He finally stops at a LORNA'S BEDROOM. It is painted in pastel green. Clean and mature.

Sitting in bed with her headphones on, reading a novel, is LORNA. She is in her underwear.

EARL GREY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Break into the man's house, kidnap the girl, collect the ransom. You get that little girl and he'll be as jumpy as spit on a hot skillet. He'll cough up cash in no time.

Fred hands the binoculars back to Earl Grey. Doesn't speak.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

You need to talk to me.

FRED

I don't need to talk to you.

EARL GREY

I think that you do.

FRED

You want me to do your dirty work for you? I'll get my freedom on my own terms. Not on yours or anybody else's.

EARL GREY

The price for freedom in this town is 2 million.

FRED

Why do you need the money?

EARL

I owe it to someone in three days. And I owe it to myself to get the fuck out of here before the shit tornado hits me. Do you know where I am going?

FRED

I don't really care.

Earl Grey leans looks out onto the town itself. Melancholic.

EARL GREY

I will be hurtling through time and space, past upturned armadillos rotting in the cruel Texas sun. Past 1000 churches filled with redneck bastards and their mouthbreathing offspring. Past fast food joints dealing slow death to obscenely obese skanks in tight polyester gym shorts and industrial strength push-up bras. To the strange oasis of Phuket, Thailand where tattooed love machines await the carburetor of my lust. That's where I'll go, so help me God.

He spits tobacco into the reservoir basin. Waits for the sound to reverberate. It never does.

**EXT. VERONICA'S HOUSE- NIGHT**

Earl Grey's car pulls up outside Veronica's house.

He hands Fred a white walkie-talkie. He whistles a motif. The white walkie-talkie emits the motif.

EARL GREY

We're on the same frequency.

Fred turns it off.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

It would take me one phone call. One whisper. To send you back to the fag farm.

FRED

I am not going back to jail.

EARL GREY

This is the best deal you're gonna get. You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours.

Grey puts his hand on Fred's shoulder, mock-amicably.

**INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE- NIGHT**

Fred enters the house. Veronica waits for him like a wife, jumping up to greet him as soon as he walks in.

He is sunburnt, filthy, dusty. She kisses his cheek anyway.

**INT. KITCHEN- NIGHT**

Fred sits at the kitchen table. In front of him is a bottle of local whiskey, a shot glass and a large kitchen glass of water. He contemplates between the two, then reaches for the shot glass.

Veronica stands behind him, busy preparing dinner.

VERONICA

It'll only be a couple of seconds, darlin'. I bought us this pretty piece of pork. Some sherbert, too. We can have that for dessert. I figured you'd want that. Or you can have the sherbert first.

Veronica puts the juicy slab of pork in front of Fred, carves it. She serves it and starts eating. He downs his whiskey.

He picks at his food- but then he puts the fork down, pours himself another drink and knocks it down. Relief. He sighs.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Do you usually wash pork down with whiskey-

FRED

Last drink was six years ago.

He pours himself another.

VERONICA

I saw him pull up here. What did he want?

FRED

Just being friendly.

VERONICA

I don't think that's how I would describe him.

FRED

How would you describe him?

VERONICA

I guess I'd say... that he's a rotten son of a bitch.

FRED

And an official one, too.

VERONICA

There's plenty of them around. Earl... is a peculiar man. Something went wrong in him a while ago. And it never went right again.

FRED

Rotting is a one-way process.

Fred looks down at his drink. Knocks it back.

**INT. FRED'S BEDROOM- NIGHT**

Fred studies his body in the mirror. He is sunburnt, bruised, tired. He removes the small walkie-talkie from his pocket.

Veronica enters the room. Fred throws the walkie-talkie on the bed and covers it with a blanket.

She has a tube of ointment in her hand. She squeezes some in her hand and rubs it on Fred.

**INT. VERONICA'S BEDROOM- NIGHT**

Fred and Veronica are seated side-by-side on Veronica's double bed. They both sit rigidly. Fred's eyes are on Veronica. She stares vacantly in front of herself, expectant.

Fred begins to unbutton her blouse, it comes undone with agonizing slowness. She pulls her shoulders back, helping Fred drop the garment down to her waist. Fred hesitates, then carefully touches her shoulder. Her hair. He kisses her fully. But then he gently eases himself back away from her.

She whispers "you okay?" in his ear. He again moves close. He reaches around to unsnap her bra as she places both of her arms around him, holding him tightly. He unsnaps the top fastener, the second one catches, remains unyielding.

He RIPS it with his fingers. She flinches, slightly fearful.

The pressure of the moment is very intense for Fred. Once more he gently pulls away from her. Veronica looks at him, her eyes are very reassuring.

VERONICA  
What do you like?

FRED  
I- I'm not sure anymore.

VERONICA  
It's been a long time for me too.

Her hands grazes his thigh.

VERONICA (CONT'D)  
That?

FRED  
That.

She unzips his pants.

VERONICA  
What about that.

FRED  
Yeah. That too.

He closes his eyes as her head disappears below frame.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. PURGATORY SHERIFF'S OFFICE- DAY**

Earl Grey's feet are submerged in an Ice Box full of beers. He is assembling a KIDNAPPING KIT in a shoebox. Rope, a pocket knife, a shovel, pliers, a nylon sock.

His beloved dog, OSCAR, a white bulldog, pants next to him.

The door to the office SWINGS open. Earl Grey HIDES the kidnapping kit under the desk, frantically.

STATE TROOPER MARVIN FRANKEL (50), leathery features and no-bullshit attitude, storms in. His thumb is tucked in his belt and he drinks from a Styrofoam cup of coffee.

He sweats out of every pore in his body. Oscar goes to greet him, but Frankel swipes him aside with his shoe.

MARVIN FRANKEL  
Open these goddamn windows. It's hotter than a four-balled tom cat fucking in a pepper patch.

EARL GREY

It is.

MARVIN FRANKEL

Wasn't askin'. Was jes sayin'.

EARL GREY

You're drinkin' coffee?

MARVIN FRANKEL

Sure am.

EARL GREY

Hot coffee?

MARVIN FRANKEL

Been drinkin' coffee on the hottest days of the year ever since my cousin Chip Howe passed away twelve years ago. Bastard fell like a sack of potatoes while playin' with his kids in the yard. Guess what he was drinkin'?

Beat.

MARVIN FRANKEL (CONT'D)

Iced water. It can happen, apparently. Something to do with body temperature getting all messed up. I ain't takin' chances.

Frankel pulls out a PHOTO of Fred. It's a black and white, pixilated print out.

It reads: FREDERICK ABERNATHY III. Born JUNE 9, 1966, Enterprise, Alabama.

MARVIN FRANKEL (CONT'D)

You see this fella?

Earl Grey shakes his head no.

Frankel pulls out another photo of Fred. A CCTV camera frame from a convenience store.

MARVIN FRANKEL (CONT'D)

You see him now?

Earl Grey takes a better look at the photo, playing along.

EARL GREY

This is the escapee?

Frankel nods. He takes his hat off and fans himself.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
I haven't seen him.

Frankel seems satisfied. He almost leaves, but then he points at the old, stained coffee machine in the corner.

MARVIN FRANKEL  
Make me a fresh coffee, will you  
Earl?

Earl Grey pulls his feet out of the ice box, shakes the water off of them. He's a funny sight- in a uniform but shoeless.

Earl Grey prepares the coffee. The machine hesitates for an instant, then vomits brown water into a white Styrofoam cup.

MARVIN FRANKEL (CONT'D)  
He was spotted a few days ago.  
Probably making a run for the  
border, which would bring him this  
way. And if we get our hands on  
this sumbitch, we're talking  
payback time.

Earl Grey nervously hands Marvin Frankel his coffee. Frankel Frankel stares at his coffee. He sips on it. It's awful. He spits it right back into the cup.

EARL GREY  
Seems that finding a fugitive might  
be easier than finding a decent cup  
of coffee in this county.

Frankel walks out of the door with the coffee. He goes to put his hat on.

It SLIPS out of his hand and lands right next to the kidnapping kit.

He kneels down to pick it up and sees the rope, the towel, the knife.

He pulls the shoebox OUT. And stares at it in confusion.

We let this moment play out. Earl Grey sweats bullets.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
Hog hunting.

Frankel slowly rises again.

MARVIN FRANKEL

Thataboy, Earl. None of this  
nightscooping, sniping bullshit.  
Inhumane if you ask me. Hogs  
deserve better.

Earl Grey follows him with his gaze as he climbs into his  
car, reverses, and pulls out onto the road.

**INT. DANIELS OIL FIELD- DAY**

Fred is carrying a huge steel pipe across his shoulders like  
it's a CROSS.

He hears Earl Grey WHISTLING in his pocket. He removes the  
walkie-talkie. The red light blinks intermittently.

Fred looks over at the TUNNEL. Freedom. Then back at the  
walkie-talkie's red light. He steps into a corner, listens.

EARL GREY (O.S.)

We have to do it tonight.  
You're getting too famous, I only  
have two days left. Tonight's the  
night. I'll meet you at the  
scarecrow.

FRED

A bar?

EARL GREY (O.S.)

No. It's a scarecrow.  
Off of I-42. 9pm.

Fred turns his walkie-talkie off and pockets it.

**EXT. I-42, SCARECROW- DUSK**

Fred does one-arm push-ups next to a beaten up scarecrow in  
the middle of a corn field. The scarecrow is missing an eye,  
an arm, a leg. A CROW sits on top of it, defiantly...

In the distance, a black El Dorado approaches. The car pulls  
over, the manual window rolls down. Earl Grey.

EARL GREY

Get up and get in.

Fred doesn't move.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

Please.

**EXT. DANIELS MANSION- NIGHT**

The El Dorado backs up into some bushes, hidden from the main road.

Earl Grey turns the engine and the headlights OFF. Only the courtesy light is on.

He removes an ENVELOPE from the glove compartment and hands it to Fred.

EARL GREY  
I believe in you, Fred.

**EXT. DANIELS MANSION- NIGHT**

A kitschy WATER fountain shoots water intermittently.

FRED, wearing a nylon sock on his face, digs soil under the large fence surrounding the property with a little shovel.

He cuts through the fence with pliers, rips a hole open.

THE GUARD (50s) drinks from a half-empty bottle of Jack Daniels and watches a nature documentary on his portable TV.

THE CCTV CAMERAS follow Fred as he approaches a large plastic fuse box. He pulls a pocket knife out and cracks it open.

THE GUARD notices that the live feed on his monitor is dead.

He taps the monitor, turns the frequency. STATIC.

He cautiously leaves his cabin, a baton in his hand. He steps out onto the main property. NOTHING but crickets.

He goes BACK to the cabin, closes the door behind him.

STANDING IN FRONT OF HIM IS FRED. The guard yelps.

**INT. DANIELS MANSION- NIGHT**

EMMETT DANIELS and LORNA sit at opposite ends of an imposing oak table, finishing up dinner. She plays with her food and reads from "THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE".

EMMETT DANIELS  
...You'd be here, with me. No distractions. None of your silly friends keeping you away from your books. And it'd be cheaper, too.

LORNA

I don't want to be home schooled.  
I'm not a retard.

EMMETT DANIELS

Many smart children do it.

LORNA

I'm not a child, either.

EMMETT DANIELS

There's a pamphlet here that you  
should read. Look at how happy they  
look, Lorna. Just look.

He flips through a pamphlet for a home schooling program.

EMMETT DANIELS (CONT'D)

Will you put that darn book down?!

Lorna puts her headphones on and turns the VOLUME up. Her music drowns Emmett Daniels' blathering.

THROUGH FRED'S BINOCULARS: He has been watching the dinner play out.

The old MAID cleans up after them, removing dirty plates.

Lorna leaves the table. She walks around the huge mansion, turning lights on. Always wearing her headphones.

She arrives at her BEDROOM and plops herself onto the bed.

Fred puts the binoculars down and, like a soldier on a mission, crosses the field to make his way up a PIPE.

WITH LORNA IN HER BEDROOM: She opens up her dog-eared book up. "THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE".

Music bleeds from her earphones.

BEHIND HER: Fred CLIMBS up a pipe, a rope slung over his shoulder.

He lifts the window and climbs into her bedroom.

THE MUSIC STOPS.

Fred holds the headphone jack in his hand. Lorna senses someone behind her. She turns around.

Fred: SSSHHH. Lorna NODS.

He ties her HANDS together. He moves down to her feet. He holds them delicately in his hands.

She has her MOMENT: She KICKS him in the face and he stumbles back, knocking her bedside lamp over.

She manages to let out a SCREAM and crawls towards the door.

WITH EMMETT DANIELS and the MAID: He puts his crossword puzzle down. She stops pouring him whiskey.

EMMETT DANIELS (CONT'D)

You hear that?

MAID

Coyotes.

BACK WITH LORNA AND FRED:

She wriggles away towards the door, but he holds the rope in his hands and he YANKS it hard.

She slides over to him, like a fish on a line.

He places a HOOD over her head. Tears a breathing hole open.

He picks up her HEADPHONES and her copy of "THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE". Throws them in his backpack.

He TIES the remaining piece of rope to the radiator and almost makes his way out, but then remembers:

THE RANSOM ENVELOPE. He places it on her pillow.

WIDE OUTSIDE THE MANSION: Fred holds Lorna tightly as he slowly makes his way down the Mansion's facade, holding onto the rope.

ANGLE ON: the RADIATOR'S BOLTS coming loose, stressed by the two-some's weight.

Fred's FEET bounce off the wall.

In the LARGE WINDOW just below Fred:

EMMETT picks out a cigar for the evening in his plush office.

The RADIATOR'S BOLTS are now half-out.

FRED descends a few feet, then sees Emmett.

SHIT! He PULLS himself back up again, with one hand.

His foot accidentally slides against the window. Screech.

EMMETT goes to the window. Opens it. Looks around. Nothing.

WIDE: Fred and Lorna dangle 5 feet above Emmett.

Emmett closes the window and exits his office.

FRED AND LORNA are 20 feet or so from the ground.

Fred gives himself another push down the wall.

CRACK! The bolts RIP OUT of from the floorboards.

The RADIATOR GOES FLYING OUT of the window.

FRED LETS GO of the rope. They FALL onto the ground.

THE RADIATOR CRASHES two feet away from them.

They stare at each other, through their concealments.

#### **INT. EL DORADO- NIGHT**

Earl Grey sits in the El Dorado playing with a bobble-head Jesus. He flicks it backwards and forwards, hypnotized by its movement. His face is concealed.

IN THE DISTANCE: Fred runs towards the car with Lorna thrown over his shoulders like a rag doll.

Earl Grey opens the boot of the car. They place Lorna inside.

She leaps forward and takes a full BITE of Earl Grey's hand. He lets out a scream for a second, then holds it in.

He PUSHES her into the trunk and slams it shut.

The car PEELS AWAY. Earl Grey SCREAMS off-screen.

DISSOLVE TO:

#### **EXT. DANIELS MANSION- DAY**

Automatic sprinklers sprout from the ground the next morning. The GUARD, half-asleep, gets sprayed. Dried blood on his lip.

The MAID opens the front door to let the dogs out. They run towards the guard and when they get there, they BARK loudly.

**INT. DANIELS MANSION- DAWN**

A pen fills out the final word in a crossword puzzle:  
"CONUNDRUM".

Emmett Daniels smiles proudly. We pull out to reveal him sitting on the john in his garish toilet.

THE MAID runs up the stairs, into his bedroom. She stops outside the bathroom and SHOUTS through the door.

MAID

Senor Daniels! A man broke into the house last night!

The sound of the toilet being flushed. The door SWINGS open and Emmett rushes out.

EMMETT DANIELS

A man?

MAID

A thief.

EMMETT DANIELS

Did he steal anything?

The Maid nods.

**EXT. TEXAN COUNTRYSIDE- DAWN**

The El Dorado FLIES past us, across the empty highway.

**INT. EL DORADO- DAWN**

Earl Grey is wrapping a BANDAGE over his hand. A bloody BITE MARK seeps through the gauze.

The sound of THUMPING in the trunk.

**EXT. ABANDONED FARM- DAWN**

The warm morning sun is shining. It's beautiful. The sky is painted a pink pastel. A few cows, horses, goats mill about. They chew and look up at:

The El Dorado. It cannonballs through the farm.

**INT. FARM HOUSE- DAY**

Earl Grey kicks the rotting door to the farmhouse open. There are two rooms. Both abandoned. Both mouldy, damp, horrible.

Two stained mattresses lie on the ground, sheets thrown on them. A couple of mouse-traps (with dead farm mice) by them.

It's the barn from The Searchers if John Wayne had been a homeless crackhead.

EARL GREY

It's no La Quinta but it's good  
'nuff.

Fred walks inside carrying Lorna over his shoulder. He puts her down.

Lorna goes to take her hood off. Earl Grey walk over to her and SMACKS her across the head with his healthy hand.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

You got a strong set of jaws. But  
you're gonna learn to keep 'em  
shut. Right?

Lorna nods. Earl Grey lifts his hand, ready to strike again.

FRED grab his wrist in mid-air. He whispers in his ear.

FRED

You want the hostage on your side.

Taking this as "golden criminal advice", Earl Grey nods and caresses her face.

**TIME CUT.**

The sound of hammers hitting nails. Fred is in the room adjacent going through a box.

EARL GREY (O.S.)

One's got food in it. The other one  
doesn't.

Fred peers into the second box: Porno mags. A deck of cards.

In the MAIN ROOM: Lorna stands with the hood on her head below the beam. She can't move much, the rope is short.

Next to her, Earl Grey finished BOARDING UP the windows. There is just enough of a gap to let some light in.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
Sit nice and cozy until the  
transaction is complete.

He smiles and spits tobacco inches from Lorna.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
If you run away, I will find you.  
When I find you, I will kill you.

He leaves.

Fred steps into the room where Lorna is tied. The sound of LIQUID hitting the ground. He looks up at the ceiling. No leaks. He looks over to Lorna. Then looks down. A puddle.

She has PISSED herself. He removes her hood.

We see her now. Her eyes are swollen. Snot runs down her nose. Her lip quivers. She is SCARED.

Fred uses the hood to mop up her piss. He wrings it out just outside the front door.

He unties her from the beam overhead.

LORNA  
What's your name?

FRED  
Sam.

LORNA  
Is your friend coming back?

FRED  
I am not his friend. I am not your  
friend. I have one friend in this  
world. And that's me.

LORNA  
Ok but I have school tomorrow.

He thinks about it.

FRED  
I'm sure they'll make an exception.

He grabs a small battery-powered TV in the corner and turns it on. The TV comes alive. Fred adjusts the portable antenna, looks for a signal.

He takes a seat next to Lorna and they watch a Mexican telenovela together.

He feels his pockets, pulls out M&Ms. Rips the pack open. Offers Lorna some.

She studies the M&Ms. Eats the *brown* ones.

**TIME CUT.**

Wide on the farm. The moon shines brightly over the field. A light flickers inside the farm house.

Fred is wide awake, cleaning the farm house. Almost OCD.

Lorna is asleep on the chair. He lifts her up and gently lays her down on the mouldy, disgusting mattress.

He tiptoes into the other room and returns with a blanket. He places it onto her.

He turns the TV off and exits the farm house.

**EXT. FARM HOUSE- NIGHT**

Fred lies down on the ground. He stares at the sky once again- only there are no stars this time. Just a clouded half-moon.

A few feet away, a horse quietly approaches him. Fred gets up to greet the animal, but it scurries away, scared.

**INT. EMMETT DANIELS' STUDY- DAY**

SNAP. The blade of a cigar cutter slices the end of Emmett Daniels's Cuban. He lights it, exhaling huge clouds of smoke. And paces back and forth by his POOL TABLE. Every once in a while he stops, throws a ball, then takes a puff.

We reveal his surroundings: an emerald green office. Embalmed animals everywhere. A bear rug on the ground. A massive oil painting of his ancestor, Abraham Daniels.

Next to him is CHARLIE NELSON (50), his right hand man and lawyer. Nelson wears a bolo tie, round spectacles and a thin moustache.

Opposite them is Earl Grey. Earl Grey reads from the RANSOM NOTE in his hands, pretending he's never read it:

EARL GREY

Two million in \$100 bills, to be delivered at the old Branson Junkyard. Noon tomorrow. Your failure will result in the...

He takes a deep breath, feigning shock.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
 ... in the decapitation- and death-  
 of the girl.

Earl Grey hands the ransom note over to Charlie Nelson.

CHARLIE NELSON  
 Two million?!

Emmett Daniels SNATCHES the note and studies it.

EMMETT DANIELS  
 Bull. Shit.

CHARLIE NELSON  
 What do you mean?

EMMETT DANIELS  
 I mean, Charles, that I ain't  
 payin' these clowns a dime.

EARL GREY  
 I wouldn't necessarily call them  
 clowns, they sound pretty serious  
 to me. "Decapitation" sounds  
 serious.

Emmett goes over to a drawer and pulls out an old folder,  
 held together by string. He removes a dozen or so RANSOM  
 NOTES. From years ago. Decades. Maybe even a century.

EMMETT DANIELS  
 My family has had this problem  
 before, Sheriff.

He holds up an antique ransom note. Beautifully put together.

Then he holds up Earl Grey's. A mess of glue and letters.

EMMETT DANIELS (CONT'D)  
 I mean look at this. A blind monkey  
 could have done better. Sheriff- do  
 you know how much money we've lost  
 to the kidnapping business?

EARL GREY  
 How... how much?

Emmett takes a long puff of his cigar and forms a perfect  
 SMOKE RING. Or a ZERO.

EMMETT DANIELS

That's how much.

EARL GREY

You should probably just pay it off  
and put this behind you, sir.

Emmett slides into his armchair like a king. He throws his feet up on the table.

EMMETT DANIELS

There is no way... I will pay.

EARL GREY

Well shit, sir, with all due respect, the girl runs the risk of opening herself a worm farm if we don't get her back soon.

EMMETT DANIELS

Oh we'll get her back. Just not the way they want us to. Charlie called someone.

INSERTS:

- SMOOTH WHITE hair is carefully combed back and tied back in a pony tail.

EARL GREY (O.S.)

Who did he call?

- A pair of BLACK FINGERLESS GLOVES is pulled on.

CHARLIE NELSON (O.S.)

Bo Bishop.

- A case containing a SNIPER RIFLE is gently closed. CLICK.

EARL GREY (O.S.)

Who's Bo Bishop?

- A WASTE DISPOSAL VAN drives past the Purgatory sign.

EMMETT DANIELS (O.S.)

Now he's what you would call a...  
bounty hunter.

A KNOCK at the door. Charlie springs up to open the door for:

Bo Bishop (50). He looks a lot like KARL LAGERFELD.

**TIME CUT.**

Bo Bishop studies a CONTRACT on the table.

EMMETT DANIELS (CONT'D)  
I'll pay you \$50,000 now and  
\$50,000 later, once you get Lorna  
back.

Earl Grey watches this new rival with intensity.

Bo Bishop takes a pen and wets it with the tip of his tongue.

He SIGNS the contract.

Charlie Nelson hands him a wad of cash as well as a FOLDER.

CHARLIE NELSON  
That's to help you find her.

Bo Bishop flicks through the folder. Photos, ransom note.

EARL GREY  
We'll get you your sweet little  
lady back in a heartbeat, sir.

Everybody shakes everybody's hand. But Earl Grey GRIMACES  
when Bo Bishop goes to shake his. It's his WOUNDED HAND.

EMMETT DANIELS  
What happened to your hand?

EARL GREY  
I got bit by Muldoon's dog. She's a  
real bitch.

EMMETT DANIELS  
Didn't Muldoon's dog die last May?

EARL GREY  
He got a new one. Just as vicious.

EMMETT DANIELS  
Show it to Charlie. He studied  
medicine.

EARL GREY  
It's nothing.

Charlie Nelson takes Earl Grey's hand. Earl Grey immediately  
pulls it away.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
Really. It's just a scratch.

EMMETT DANIELS

Well you take care of yourself and  
of that scratch, Sheriff.

Bo Bishop looks at him suspiciously. He can smell a liar.

**EXT. PHARMACY- DAY**

Earl Grey stands over a trash can outside the small pharmacy. He is re-dressing his wound. Satisfied with the new dressing, he peels and throws the old bandage away.

The bandage sits, folded, in the trash can. He leaves.

Hold on the trash can. A GLOVED HAND delicately removes the bandage.

The hand belongs to Bo Bishop. He unwraps the bandage as though it were a gift.

He examines the bloody pattern traced into the gauze.

It's Lorna's BITE MARK. A human mouth, without question.

Bo folds the bandage and places it in his lapel. Neatly.

**INT. FARM HOUSE- DAY**

Sunbeams shine through the cracks in the wood panels. Lorna lies on the mattress, half-asleep, already showing the signs of captivity on her young body.

Fred walks in carrying two plates. She slowly rises from "bed" and sits down with him.

ANGLE ON: Two plates of assorted goop, re-heated.

Fred hands Lorna a fork.

She hands the fork back to him in defiance, then observes him as he eats. He chews voraciously with his mouth open. Upon noticing Lorna's disgust, he closes his mouth and keeps chewing, slowly.

He pours M&Ms on Lorna's plate. Only the BROWN ones.

FRED

I noticed you like the brown ones.

He continues eating. She flirts with the M&Ms, finally choosing to put one in her mouth.

A small victory for Fred. He pretends that he hasn't seen.

LORNA  
You think they all taste the same?

FRED  
Absolutely not.

LORNA  
My uncle won't let me eat them.

FRED  
Why?

LORNA  
He says the plastic they use to wrap them in is made by our competitors.

FRED  
I thought your family was in oil.

LORNA  
Plastic is made from oil, genius.

Fred processes this, kind of amazed.

FRED  
What else won't he let you do?

LORNA  
How much time do you have?

She picks up the fork and... starts eating with him.

She pulls out her copy of "THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE" and picks up from where she left off.

Fred stares at her as she reads. He doesn't quite know how to act around her. He peers over, trying to read with her. But she pulls the book away from him.

LORNA (CONT'D)  
You can read, right?

He nods.

LORNA (CONT'D)  
So get your own book. I hate it when people read over my shoulder.

He gets up and goes to eat his meal outside.

**EXT. FARM HOUSE- DAY**

The HORSE takes a few steps forward, hesitantly.

Fred opens his hand and leaves some M&Ms on the ground. The two stare at each other. The horse does not eat the M&Ms.

Fred makes his way back inside.

As he does so: we see the horse carefully advance towards the M&Ms, in the background. He licks them all up.

Then he scurries away as soon as he is done.

**INT. BO BISHOP'S WASTE DISPOSAL VAN- DAY**

Bo Bishop has taken apart a CB radio. He takes tweezers to the circuit board and delicately turns a knob.

He PATCHES INTO into Earl Grey's frequency.

Through BINOCULARS: he sees Earl Grey punch the steering wheel. A few seconds later, he hears it on his radio.

**INT. EARL GREY'S PATROL CAR- DAY**

Earl Grey, parked outside the Daniels mansion, screams into his walkie-talkie.

EARL GREY

Answer me you goddamn fuck!

We watch him from outside the car. Frustrated, he chokes the steering wheel.

**INT. FARM HOUSE- DAY**

The WALKIE-TALKIE's red light flashes intermittently. But Fred and Lorna watching Road Runner.

LORNA

Can I ask you a question.

He nods.

LORNA (CONT'D)

How much am I worth? The ransom.  
How much is it?

Fred raises his index finger. Then his middle finger. "Two".

LORNA (CONT'D)  
Two thousand?

He shakes his head no. She smiles.

LORNA (CONT'D)  
Wow. That's a lot of money. Are you  
guys splitting it down the middle?

FRED  
I am not in this for the money.

LORNA  
It's just a hobby for you?  
"Kidnapping Wednesday"?

FRED  
It's a means to an end.

He reaches into his front pocket for a cigarette. Lights it,  
takes a long drag.

She watches him enviously as he smokes. Fred looks down at  
his lit cigarette.

FRED (CONT'D)  
You want one?

LORNA  
I got grounded for two weeks for  
smoking once.

Beat.

LORNA (CONT'D)  
Yeah. I want one.

He gives her his lit cigarette and lights himself a new one.

She smokes dramatically, trying to look sexy, taking big  
drags that fill the room with smoke. But she doesn't inhale.

FRED  
You shouldn't smoke... but if  
you're going to, do it properly.

LORNA  
What?

FRED  
Watch.

He takes a long drag of his cigarette and fills his lungs with smoke. Then he does a "waterfall"- blows smoke out of mouth and sucks it in with his nose.

LORNA  
I can't do that.

FRED  
Hold the smoke in.

She takes a drag and does as she is told. Her face turns blue and her eyes fill with water.

FRED (CONT'D)  
Hold it in, that's it.

She can't hold it in any longer. She coughs and drops the cigarette on the floor. Almost throws up.

FRED (CONT'D)  
Still wanna smoke?

LORNA  
I quit.

The sound of a car ROLLING VIOLENTLY towards the house.

Fred and Lorna's expressions immediately change. Earl Grey SCREAMS from outside.

EARL GREY (O.S.)  
Put the hood on her Fred, I'm coming in!

LORNA  
I thought you said your name was Sam.

Fred grabs the wet, urine-drenched hood. He realizes it's a horrible thing to do so he grabs the PILLOW CASE and tears a small hole through it. He slides it on Lorna's head.

He lifts her by the waist and carries her to the adjacent room, puts her down and locks her inside.

EARL GREY  
The cards got shuffled. The old bastard refuses to pay. He hired an independent contractor to go lookin' for her. A fucking professional.

LORNA'S POV: She presses her nose against the wall, removes her hood and peers through a tiny GAP. It's tiny enough that she can see:

Earl Grey's ARMADILLO BOOTS.

She watches them as he paces back and forth, in a frenzy.

FRED

It's never as simple as you think  
it's gonna be.

EARL GREY

It's time to start cutting our  
losses. Some fingers, too. If he  
wants proof that we're serious,  
we'll give it to him. Where is she?

Lorna GASPS and steps away from the wall, terrified. She quickly puts the pillow case back on her head.

Earl Grey bursts through the door and grabs her, pulling her into the living room. He wrestles with her, trying to subdue her.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

Grab the wire cutter.

A rusty wire cutter sits in the corner. Fred hands it to him.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

I'll hold her down. Come on!

Fred, startled, grabs Lorna's delicate hand. He releases the spring on the wire cutter.

He clenches his teeth. The wire cutter wraps around Lorna's pinky...

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

That's it. Good girl. Shhh.

Fred's hand coils around the handle, nervously-

He PULLS Earl Grey away, in the corner. He whispers to him.

FRED

Listen. I noticed something with  
the girl. She's a hemopheliac.

EARL GREY

A what?

FRED  
It's a disease. They don't stop  
bleeding.

EARL GREY  
How do you know?

FRED  
She bit her tongue earlier. Bled  
for hours. I had to pinch it shut.  
You cut her finger off and she'll  
be dead in an hour.

Earl Grey is not convinced.

EARL GREY  
Let's ask her. Are you a  
hemopheliac, little lady?

She doesn't know what to say. Her head is covered by the hood  
and she searches around for an answer that won't come.

She relies on her instincts and NODS.

Right answer.

FRED  
A lock of her hair should do it.

Earl Grey thinks for a moment then takes out a pocket knife.  
He grabs a handful of her hair. He runs the knife through it.

The knife slices through it with ease.

Earl Grey places the hair in an envelope and seals it shut.

EARL GREY  
I'll be back soon.

He gets in his car and drives away.

The sound of THUNDER echoes around the farm.

**EXT. TEXAN ROAD- DAY**

Earl Grey's El Dorado crosses the landscape. We pull back to  
reveal:

BO BISHOP, looking through binoculars, as he tracks Earl  
Grey's car from a look-out spot.

**EXT. ABANDONED FARM- DUSK**

A torrential DOWN POUR. The sky is dark, water comes down violently.

**INT. FARM HOUSE- NIGHT**

The farm house is FLOODING.

Lorna stands in the corner, soaking wet, trembling. She holds her blanket over her shoulders.

Water leaks from holes in the roof, from the walls, from the ground. There are close to two feet of water inside.

Fred is busy scooping up water with a bucket.

He opens the front door, but he lets more water in than he gets out.

He looks for something. The WALKIE-TALKIE.

It sloshes on the floor, in a few inches of water. He tries to get it to work. But it's DEAD.

FRED

We can't stay here.

LORNA

There's gotta be someone around.

FRED

If we leave this place... If you say something to someone... you will put me in a very difficult position. So... don't. Okay?

Lorna nods.

**EXT. COUNTRYSIDE- NIGHT**

Fred wades through mud and water, up a steep hill. He pulls Lorna across.

Up ahead: a LIGHT.

**INT. VENNING'S HOME- NIGHT**

Lorna knocks at the large door of the beautiful white home.

The door opens. Standing in front of them is PREACHER JOHN VENNING. Mid-50s, white hair, goatee, bow tie. He has bright blue eyes. Gentle and comforting.

He sports a large CRUCIFIX around his neck.

LORNA  
Can you help us?

Venning lets her in. He almost closes the door.

Fred appears from the darkness.

**INT. VENNING'S VESTIBULE- NIGHT**

Fred and Lorna dry themselves off with fluffy towels. Venning helps Lorna dry herself.

VENNING  
My name is John Dwight Venning.

FRED  
Thank you, sir.

VENNING  
Doesn't rain much around here, but when it does, it's unforgiving.

LORNA  
We didn't mean to intrude upon you.

VENNING  
As a matter of fact, I was just making myself a light supper. Perhaps you would like to join me.

FRED  
Thanks but we will be on our way as soon as the storm calms down.

VENNING  
That is a shame. I had prepared chicken, mashed potatoes, fried okra. I even had some strawberries and whipped cream set aside for later.

Lorna can't believe her ears. She looks over at Fred.

LORNA  
Please?

Fred feigns a smile.

FRED

I wouldn't want to impose. We're just passing through.

VENNING

You can pass through on a full stomach. A preacher such as myself has an obligation to feed the needy. And if you deny me, I will feel that I have failed in the eyes of the Lord. So please. Stay.

**EXT. VENNING'S HOME- NIGHT**

Through the wet window: the DINING ROOM. White, colonial.

VENNING

Great God, Thou Giver of all good. Accept our praise and bless our food. Amen.

**INT. VENNING'S HOME, DINING ROOM- NIGHT**

Lorna barely breathes as she shovels food into her mouth.

Venning pours them some wine.

VENNING

Don't choke yourself there honey.

She has a little bit of gravy on her chin.

VENNING (CONT'D)

We wouldn't want such a pretty girl to get messy.

Venning takes a napkin and wipes it clean.

Fred looks around the room. It is full of Christian iconry. Crucifixes, illustrations of the Virgin Mary and of Christ, various versions of the Holy Bible.

VENNING (CONT'D)

You know my name, but I don't know yours.

Fred chews through his chicken wing.

FRED

My name is Sam.

VENNING

Sam. Short for Samuel, perhaps?

FRED

Short for Sam.

VENNING

And your daughter's name?

LORNA

Lorna.

VENNING

Now how did you two end up in this wet predicament?

FRED

We were on our way to the lake when our car broke down. The serpentine belt went out. We got lucky and found shelter in a barn.

VENNING

Luck? It was God's will. But... a barn is no place for a young lady like her.

FRED

It's safe enough while they fix the car.

VENNING

Until the rats know you're there. Or the coyotes. Or some of the other not-so-friendly neighbors. But you're safe here, with me.

**INT/EXT PORCH- NIGHT**

The storm has calmed down considerably. It is now just drizzling. An old gramophone spits out a crackling, distorted version of Fats Domino's "Blueberry Hill".

A slip 'n' slide is laid out on the grass outside. Lorna takes a huge run-up and SLIDES across it, in her undies.

She is drunk. And happy. Out of breath, she repeats the run.

A few feet away, Fred and Venning sit on the porch. They are drinking and smoking together.

VENNING

I've been preaching for over thirty years. You kinda get a sixth sense for who's righteous in this world and who isn't. And it gets complicated, sure. But there ain't nothing complicated about a man who doesn't believe in the divine. You believe in the divine, Sam? I noticed you didn't say grace.

FRED

I believe in keeping your eyes on the road, and putting the past where it belongs.

VENNING

Have you tried embracing Him?

FRED

You can't turn on the faucet and expect soda. I tried for many years but I don't think the Lord would want to embrace someone like me.

VENNING

And why is that?

FRED

He's got better people to take care of. People such as yourself. I just got the short end of the stick.

VENNING

There's good and bad in all of us.

FRED

I always thought when I got older God would sort of come into my life in some way. He didn't. I don't blame him. If I was him I'd have the same opinion about me that he does.

Fred puts out his cigarette on the floor. Venning looks over at Lorna, who has made her way into the house.

FRED (CONT'D)

You can tell if a man is good or bad, can you?

Venning nods confidently. Fred stares at him.

FRED (CONT'D)  
Indulge me.

The moment is interrupted by the sound of CRASHING.

**INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT**

Lorna is giggling on the floor, drunk. She has accidentally knocked over a vase. Venning pulls her up by the arm.

VENNING  
It looks like somebody is ready for bed.

Fred grabs Lorna's other arm.

FRED  
Thanks. I think we are going to go.

VENNING  
Go? Go where? Back to the barn? I made your beds already. They're waiting for you.

FRED  
We should leave.

LORNA  
I want to stay.

VENNING  
Please.

LORNA  
I am not sleeping with the rats.

Fred pinches her arm.

LORNA (CONT'D)  
Ow! Fred! Stop it.

VENNING  
Fred?

FRED  
That's what she calls me when she is angry.

LORNA  
Fred Fred Fred Fred Fred.

She keeps repeating his name loudly.

FRED  
Quiet down or I'll smack you.

VENNING  
That's the wine talking.

LORNA  
I want to sleep here.

Lorna and Venning both stare at Fred, who has now really been forced into playing "dad".

FRED  
Alright. We'll take off at sunrise.

**EXT. ABANDONED CHURCH- NIGHT**

Bo Bishop KICKS the door down to a decrepit church. Doves fly away, scared, as his FLASHLIGHT scans the area.

He takes a big whiff of the room. He pulls out his shotgun and SHOOTS a warning shot.

He listens carefully. Not a sound.

He pulls out a MAP and lays it out on the altar. He crosses that location and circles his next one.

**INT. LORNA'S BEDROOM- NIGHT**

Venning accompanies Lorna to her bedroom. It's beautiful, ornate and girly. Cookies wait for her on the pillow.

She jumps up and down on the bed.

Venning and Fred watch her from the doorway. As they leave, Fred locks her in and takes the key.

FRED  
She's a sleepwalker.

**INT. FRED'S BEDROOM- NIGHT**

Venning opens the door to Fred's bedroom. It's also very beautiful, but darker and without frills- or cookies.

VENNING  
I am down the hall if you need anything, son.

Venning pats Fred's shoulder and exits.

How nice it would be to sleep in this room. But Fred cannot.

**INT. LORNA'S BEDROOM- NIGHT**

Lorna lies in bed, stuffing her face with cookies. She goes through channels on the little TV in the corner of the room.

She tunes into a local news channel.

A report is rolling. It's about FRED. The reporter is standing outside the PRISON WALLS. He points at a small hole in the barb wire fence.

A super-imposed photograph of Fred appears on the screen. Lorna sits up, her eyes wide open.

**EXT. VENNING'S FRONT PORCH- NIGHT**

Fred wraps a blanket around himself and stares at Lorna's window. The light is off and the only sound is that of the few remaining drops of rain hitting the grass.

He slowly dozes off.

**EXT. LORNA'S BEDROOM- NIGHT**

A key is inserted into a keyhole, and turned ever so quietly.

**INT. LORNA'S BEDROOM- CONTINUOUS**

The room is pitch black, but as soon as the door opens a shaft of light brightens it. Lorna turns around and squints in confusion when she sees who it is.

**EXT. VENNING'S FRONT PORCH- NIGHT**

The sound of a STRUGGLE from inside the house.

The light in Lorna's bedroom flickers on and off.

Fred's eyes SPRING open, like a lion's. He runs inside.

**INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE LORNA'S BEDROOM- NIGHT**

Fred runs to Lorna's bedroom. He tries opening the door but it's LOCKED. He searches for the key in his pocket but doesn't find it.

Lorna SCREAMS from beyond the door.

Fred takes a few steps back. He SHOULDERS the door down.

**INT. LORNA'S BEDROOM- NIGHT**

Fred stumbles into the room to see:

VENNING. On top of Lorna. LORNA. Writhing in bed.

Venning stumbles back as soon as he sees Fred.

Something SNAPS inside Fred.

He LEAPS onto Venning, in an animalistic frenzy.

We have not yet seen Fred's violent nature- but we will now.

He grabs a hold of Venning and THROWS him across the room. Venning lands on the antique dresser, destroying it.

Venning's eyes are almost popping out of his face, he's so scared.

Fred grabs Venning's head and, in a frenzy, slams it against the floor.

Lorna slides against the wall, puts her hands over her ears.

Venning's trembling hands go to his crucifix. He prays.

FRED

You think you can hide behind this?

VENNING

Please just go. Take what you want.  
Forget this happened.

Fred RIPS the crucifix, and PRESSES it against his throat. Venning turns blue as Fred chokes him.

LORNA

Stop it! Please! Stop!

Lorna interrupts Fred's frenzy. It's like he snaps out of a murderous trance.

He looks down at Venning. Venning has been praying the whole time.

Fred's fingers slowly relax, and release the crucifix. It hits the ground. Venning grabs his neck, gasps for air.

**INT. HALLWAY- NIGHT**

Fred stumbles out with bloody hands. Lorna follows him.

FRED

Did he... get anywhere? With you.

Lorna shakes her head no. She is SHOCKED.

**INT. VENNING'S BEDROOM- NIGHT**

Fred pulls out drawers. Lorna stands behind him, scared.

He finally finds what he was looking for: an old .357 Magnum, wrapped in a towel. Next to it: a dozen bullets.

LORNA

Is he dead? Did you kill him?

FRED

I knew we should have stayed home.

LORNA

Is he just passed out? Or did you kill him?

Fred pockets the gun and the bullets.

FRED

He's not dead.

**EXT. VENNING'S HOME- DAWN**

Fred pulls Lorna's hand across the field. Lorna is pale. Scared.

She now realizes just how dangerous Fred can be.

LORNA

You helped me.

FRED

I helped myself.

LORNA

Why?

FRED

I need you alive to get to where I need to go.

She stops.

LORNA  
I have to go.

FRED  
You're not going anywhere.

LORNA  
I mean. I need to go.

Fred ignores her request for a second.

LORNA (CONT'D)  
Fred. I have to pee.

**EXT. CORN FIELD- DAY**

Fred holds Lorna's hands and takes her out into a corn field. He stops at a specific spot and gestures her to do her thing.

Lorna, in discomfort, pulls her jeans down and tries to pee. But she can't with Fred standing right there. Stage fright.

She pulls her pants up and walks a little further into the crop field. Fred lets her.

WITH LORNA: surrounded by tall corn husks, she removes her earring and quickly PRICKS the palm of her hand. Winces.

Within seconds, her hand is bleeding. She rubs her hand on her thighs. Places her earring back in her ear.

He looks over at where Lorna was. He doesn't see her.

Then, slowly, a little head emerges from the tall corn husks. She makes her way over to Fred with... BLOODY HANDS and LEGS.

LORNA  
I have... girl problems.

**INT. FARM HOUSE, ADJACENT ROOM- DAY**

A battered old COWBOY HAT hangs from a nail. It hasn't been worn in decades. Fred dusts it off and puts it on his head.

A long beige COAT, also dusty and from years ago, hangs next to it. Fred pulls that down and throws it on. Cowboy Fred.

Finally, he flips a chest open. A saddle.

**INT. FARM HOUSE- DAY**

Fred, in his new outfit, ties Lorna up to the roof beam. He takes a final glance at her: everything looks okay.

LORNA  
You look like you're going to a Halloween party.

FRED  
Maybe I am. What am I picking up?

LORNA  
Always.

FRED  
Always what?

LORNA  
"Always a happy period."

**EXT. FARM- DAY**

Fred steps outside and looks into the distance. The horse rides over to him.

Fred checks the tattoo on his neck: "Jupiter". Fred rubs his hand on Jupiter's mane and pats his big head.

He adjusts the saddle, HOPS onto the horse and, after almost falling off, he settles in.

Jupiter neighs and TAKES OFF.

**EXT. TEXAN HIGHWAY- DAY**

Fred rides Jupiter onto the desert highway, looking for a pharmacy.

The sun dips below a huge hill creating an awe-inspiring SUNSET.

**INT. FARM HOUSE- DAY**

Lorna is completely alone in the farm house. Only the sound of cows grazing and the wind blowing through the windows.

She sees something in the other room that catches her eye:

The tiny CAMP STOVE with a propane tank attached to it.

She goes to grab the stove- but is PULLED BACK by the rope tied to her ankle.

She SLAMS against the floor, hard. She eyes the stove with longing eyes. Escape.

**EXT. KAISER DESERT PHARMACY- DAY**

Fred "pulls up" at the parking lot. He picks a space and unsaddles.

He ties Jupiter to a pole and tips his hat low, hiding his face as much as he can.

He enters the pharmacy.

**INT. FARM HOUSE- DAY**

Lorna removes the antenna from the top of the TV and straightens it out. She curves the end of it, creates a hook.

She gets as close as she can to the stove and tries hooking it with the antenna. She SWIPES at the stove a few times.

SUCCESS! She slowly pulls the stove towards her.

She TURNS THE KNOB. The hissing of GAS. A small box of matches rests on the stove. She strikes one. They are WET.

She finds a single match that is dry. She closes her eyes and strikes it. It IGNITES. She places it onto the stove.

A blue FLAME erupts from the rusty pilot.

Lorna angles herself and lets the flame BURN her rope.

**INT. KAISER DESERT PHARMACY- DAY**

The pharmacy is IMMENSE. Muzak fills the air, and sick-green neon flickers over the seemingly infinite aisles.

We track with Fred as he walks down, searching for TAMPONS. He stops at an aisle. Hanging above it is a sign:

"FEMALE INTIMACY PRODUCTS".

The only person in the aisle is an OVERWEIGHT TEXAN WOMAN, probably 50. She and Fred stand next to each other scanning the hundreds of different tampons.

Fred picks out a box of Always. He smiles, satisfied.

The woman stares at him strangely.

FRED  
"Always a happy period."

**INT. FARM HOUSE- DAY**

Angle on: the BURNING ROPE. Lorna purses her lips, the flame is very close to her body and she is feeling the heat.

A light THUD. The rope drops to the floor. She is FREE.

Without hesitating, she RUNS for the door.

But the door is LOCKED. She pulls at it. It doesn't budge.

She smells something burning. She turns around.

The ROPE is ON FIRE! The flame spreads towards the ROOF BEAM.

**INT. KAISER DESERT PHARMACY- DAY**

Fred is at the checkout counter. His head tilted low.

The obese Texan woman is in front of him. We hear the BEEPING of a scanner. She hands the CASHIER dozens of COUPONS. The cashier starts scanning the coupons.

Fred sighs under his breath as muzak plays in the background.

He notices a couple of Teen Magazines stacked on a rack. He picks one out and places it on the checkout belt.

The GENERAL MANAGER of the store, sitting in a glass office, stares intensely at Fred. His eyes nervously gaze down at a police-issued poster of Fred. Then back at Fred's face.

Fred sees the General Manager. His hand slowly reaches below his desk- caressing the red "Emergency" button.

Fred knows what he is doing. He shoots him a "don't even think about it" look. Subtly shakes his head no.

The General Manager's hand rises again. He gets it.

**EXT. FARM HOUSE- DAY**

SMOKE seeps out of the farm house.

**INT. FARM HOUSE- DAY**

Lorna is panicked- the fire has now taken over the ENTIRE house. She coughs, trying not to breathe.

She shoulders the door but it's stuck in dried MUD. She runs over to a window, tries to rip the wooden boards out but they're nailed shut.

SUDDENLY: a BULLET HOLE rips through the door.

The rescuer KICKS the door down. Smoke escapes immediately.

Lorna runs towards the door- safety! She coughs and wipes her eyes clean.

POV Lorna: as the smoke vanishes from her view, we reveal the rescuer's face.

BO BISHOP. Bounty hunter.

A look of confusion washes over her. He scoops her up like a dumpling and LEAVES WITH HER.

**EXT. TEXAN HIGHWAY- DAY**

Fred rides with Jupiter in the middle of the road, his purchases in his hand. A loud engine RUMBLES from afar:

Bo Bishop's Van. It HONKS and PUSHES Fred out of the way.

**EXT. FARM- DAY**

A GLIMMERING light in the distance. Fire.

Fred KICKS Jupiter and rides fast, closer to the farm house.

**EXT. FARM HOUSE- DAY**

Fred dismounts Jupiter. The fire is dying out now.

He notices something on the floor- up ahead: LARGE TIRE MARKS.

We hold on Fred, as he studies the "evidence".

He makes his way into the charred remains of the farm house.

**INT. FARM HOUSE- DAY**

No sign of Lorna. Fred punches the wall in frustration.

Lorna's "THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE" book, half-burnt, sits on the floor.

Fred kneels down, picks it up.

A chapter heading stares back at him.

"Habit 2. Begin with the End in Mind. Self-discover and clarify your important character values and life goals."

**INT. SHERIFF EARL GREY'S HOME- DUSK**

Earl Grey rocks back and forth in his "sittin' chair", sipping from an almost-empty bottle of whiskey. He holds the walkie-talkie in his hand and, every now and again, he presses the "talk" button. He mumbles "Hello?" into it.

Nothing except static on the other end.

Oscar hops on the couch and licks his face. But Earl Grey is distracted. He stares at something on the wall:

A faded POSTER of a Thai girl, laying out on a beach. "Phuket, island of your Dreams"...

He drops his whiskey and stumbles over to the poster.

EARL GREY

I'm coming baby. I'm coming soon.  
Promise me that you'll wait for me.

He puts his ear against the poster.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

Louder baby. I can't hear you.

Oscar licks whiskey from the empty bottle on the couch.

Suddenly: the sound of an approaching TRUCK outside.

Earl Grey pulls his blinds down and looks through them. HEADLIGHTS snake their way towards his dusty driveway.

He knows exactly whose headlights they are.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

Fuck me running. The Mexicans.

His eyes go to his rifle. He changes his mind and BOLTS for the door in the back. Oscar looks at him, tilts his head inquisitively. Earl Grey waves him over but he stays put.

The truck is now outside the driveway. The engine hums menacingly.

Earl Grey throws himself to the ground and crawls on his elbows, under the house itself. Into the crawlspace.

POV Earl Grey: THE MEXICANS- Arturo, Colon and Tito- exit the truck with a DROOLING DOBERMAN by their side.

They speak Spanish to each other. Arturo KNOCKS at the door.

The Doberman SNIFFS the area around the house.

Oscar BARKS crazily from inside.

Tito KICKS the door down.

TITO

*It's been three days, cabron.*

The Doberman GROWLS. Oscar YELPS in fear.

We hold on Earl Grey's face as we hear the sound of the Doberman ATTACKING Oscar. The Mexicans laugh.

The sound of FOOTSTEPS right above Earl Grey's head. Saw-dust rains on his eyes. The Mexicans discuss among themselves.

Then, silence.

INSIDE: They WRECK his home. Baseball bats fly across furniture, the TV set, bottles, walls, windows. They destroy EVERYTHING.

Arturo pulls his pants down and PISSES on Earl Grey's floor. The piss dribbles down the floorboards, onto Earl Grey.

Earl Grey puts his fingers in his ears. He can't stand the sound of his life being erased.

After their work is done, the Mexicans LEAVE.

Earl Grey crawls out and runs into his home.

OSCAR limps over. His white fur is red with blood. Earl Grey picks him up and caresses him like a child. Kisses him.

Earl Grey breaks down in a drunken crying fit.

He stands there pathetically with his dog, in his wrecked apartment. He has drool coming out of his mouth, snot coming out of his nose, he's drunk as hell, and he's not going to take it anymore.

**INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE, BEDROOM- NIGHT**

It's the middle of the night. Veronica is awakened by:

The SOUND of HEAVY FOOTSTEPS.

**INT. VERONICA'S, HOUSE, DRAWING ROOM- NIGHT**

Veronica nervously walks out of the bedroom.

She sees a figure in the corner, turns the light on.

Earl Grey stands there calmly with Oscar in his arms.

EARL GREY

Why did you tell them where I was staying?

VERONICA

What the hell are you talking about.

EARL GREY

I don't know. You tell me.

VERONICA

You're drunk.

EARL GREY

And you're lying. Liar liar ex-wife on fire.

VERONICA

I'm going back to bed- g'night.

EARL GREY

I'm living on borrowed time.

She turns around to leave but his hand grabs her hair.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

They destroyed everything I own. They shattered Oscar's eye socket. His ribs, his paw. You're the only person who would know where my trailer was parked.

(MORE)

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

All I want to know from you is...  
did you tell them.

VERONICA

Why do you care who told them? A  
lot of people dislike you, Earl.

EARL GREY

It's a matter of principle. Answer  
and I will let it be.

VERONICA

If I told you I didn't, would you  
believe me?

He shakes his head no.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I told them.

EARL GREY

Explain it to me.

VERONICA

I kept repeating that I hadn't seen  
you in months. But they knew I  
knew. One of them very politely  
told me he would carve out my womb  
if I didn't reveal your  
whereabouts.

EARL GREY

Why would you need it anyway?

VERONICA

I want to have children with Sam,  
as soon as he's back from his  
cousin's funeral. I'm in love with  
him. You wouldn't understand.

EARL GREY

He's an escaped convict, you, you  
fucking idiot.

VERONICA

What?

EARL GREY

His real name isn't Sam. It's  
Frederick Abernathy. The third.

VERONICA

You're jibber jabbering.

EARL GREY

Look!

He pulls out the crumpled fax with Fred's ID on it. Veronica takes a moment to process it.

VERONICA

I don't care what he is. He's a good person and he keeps me company.

EARL GREY

He was using you to lay low. You really think you had a thing going?

VERONICA

Shut up.

EARL GREY

Did he even fuck you? He probably didn't even fuck you, did he. He probably turned queer in prison.

VERONICA

He fucked me better than you ever did!

EARL GREY

I knew you was dumb, but shit-

VERONICA

You wanna know something, Earl? I was glad the Mexicans came. I was looking forward to it. I couldn't wait to see you and your stupid dog dead.

Earl Grey clenches his jaw. He puts Oscar down.

She grabs a LAMP from the hallway, rips it from the socket and jabs it at Earl Grey.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Stay back you son of a bitch.

EARL GREY

What are you going to do?  
Illuminate me to death?

He takes another step forward.

She SMACKS the lamp against his face. It breaks into a million pieces. He holds his face.

OSCAR growls and BITES her ankle.

Earl Grey SLAPS Veronica in the face.

She SPINS, loses her balance...

And tumbles down the steep staircase.

A THUD... followed by a CRACK.

Earl Grey peers over at the bottom of the staircase.

Veronica. Lifeless, her head twisted unnaturally.

DEAD.

**EXT. DANIELS' MANSION- DAY**

Bo Bishop sits in his van, at a crossroads. To the right, above a hill, is the Daniels mansion. To the left is the open road.

Lorna is tied up next to him.

Bo studies the contract he signed. His finger runs across a sum.

"\$50,000" + "\$50,000".

He picks up the RANSOM NOTE from the folder. His finger runs across a sum.

"\$2,000,000".

His eyes dart back and forth between the two sums. He thinks for a moment. Nods at himself. Smiles.

ANGLE ON: The jaws of the waste disposal van close violently on the original "50 + 50" contract Bo Bishop signed.

**INT. EMMETT DANIELS' OFFICE- DAY**

A big clock strikes NOON.

Emmett Daniels, Charlie Nelson and Earl Grey stare at a telephone, waiting.

It RINGS.

Emmett Daniels picks up with lightning fast speed. He activates the SPEAKER PHONE.

LORNA (O.S.)  
 (breathing heavily)  
 Uncle. It's me. Lorna.

Emmett Daniels' lip quivers. He is emotional.

EMMETT DANIELS  
 Sugar plum. Are you okay?

WITH LORNA: she is in a dingy motel room, tied to a chair by the bed, reading from a piece of paper.

BO BISHOP stands by the window, silhouetted. He gestures to her to "go on" with a delicate hand gesture.

LORNA  
 (reads from the paper)  
 "My captor demands twice as much money or he says he's going to start sending pieces of me in the mail. He says to meet him at the Branson Junkyard, as planned."

WITH EMMETT DANIELS: The line goes dead. Emmett Daniels gently hangs up the phone.

EMMETT DANIELS  
 I have affection for my little niece. And I do miss her. But I hate paying for things, Sheriff. I can't help it. It's my curse.

Earl Grey nods, shows compassion.

Quietly, he places an envelope on Emmett Daniels' desk.

EARL GREY  
 Got it this morning in the mail.

Emmett Daniels rips the envelope open, empties its content on the desk.

Lorna's LOCK OF HAIR.

He studies it, rubs it between his thumbs.

EMMETT DANIELS  
 What are your thoughts?

EARL GREY  
 I believe the bounty hunter you hired just double-crossed you.

EMMETT DANIELS  
Charlie, how did you find him?

Charlie Nelson shrinks in his seat.

CHARLIE NELSON  
I used the google.

EMMETT DANIELS  
The what...?

CHARLIE NELSON  
He came highly recommended on the  
google, sir. Had his own page and  
everything.

EMMETT DANIELS  
Can't trust anybody and any thing  
these days.

EARL GREY  
Only the law.

Emmett Daniels seems reassured by this statement.

He moves over to the pool table, deep in thought.

He grabs the cue and HITS the white ball.

It rolls across the green mat, gently. Taps onto the eight  
ball ever so slightly. The eight ball goes in.

EMMETT DANIELS  
(sighing in pain)  
Alright, let's get the cash ready.

**INT. MOTEL- DAY**

Lorna is tied to a chair. She watches Bo Bishop as he clips  
his TOENAILS. They fly off like chunks of concrete. A ceiling  
fan whirls noisily overhead.

LORNA  
Are you from around here?

He shakes his head no.

LORNA (CONT'D)  
First time in Purgatory?

He shakes his head no.

LORNA (CONT'D)  
 You must like it here.

He shakes his head no again.

LORNA (CONT'D)  
 Can I lie down? My neck hurts.

He pushes her chair back with his boot. It wobbles precariously but he manages to keep it balanced.

Then he lets go. The chair- and Lorna- SLAM to the ground.

POV Lorna: the ceiling fan spins dizzily above her.

MONTAGE:

- BO BISHOP polishes his sniper rifle and loads his Colt .45.
- CHARLIE NELSON counts hundred dollars bills and places them in a briefcase, amidst many other hundred dollar bills. Earl Grey watches him with wide, greedy eyes.
- FRED washes his face at a well, Jupiter by his side. He fills his cupped hands with water, lets Jupiter drink.

Fred stares at his reflection in the puddle on the floor. The ripples don't settle long enough for it to be a clear image.

EXT. BRANSON JUNKYARD- DAY

INSERT: a ROCKING CHAIR, rocking lazily back and forth.

INSERT: a MINUTE HAND of a grandfather clock, hitting noon.

INSERT: a PIPE being smoked at regular intervals.

Bo Bishop's van rolls into the center of the junkyard. Complete silence except for the WIND and sheets of METAL flapping away in the distance.

The junkyard is a car cemetery, mostly of carcasses and burnt out vehicles and vintage Cadillacs left to die.

INSERT: the rocking chair STOPS ROCKING.

The owner of the Junkyard, JEREMY BRANSON, gets up from the chair in his small booth and peers through his blinds.

Bo Bishop exits the van and looks around himself. He removes Lorna from the passenger's seat.

She has a dirty towel in her mouth. Her hands, legs are tied. Bo Bishop takes her arm and they walk deeper into the yard.

**INT. BRANSON JUNKYARD, SCHOOL BUS- DAY**

The bus is rusty, half-demolished and eerie. Bo Bishop pries the doors open. He throws Lorna inside.

He removes his LEATHER BELT and straps it around Lorna's wrists, binding her to a rusty seat. He TIGHTENS the belt, carelessly.

**EXT. BRANSON JUNKYARD, GATE- DAY**

Earl Grey and Charlie Nelson pull up in a Buick.

Charlie Nelson holds onto the briefcase with the money tightly to his chest, knowing how important it is.

He presses his glasses against his nose and looks straight ahead, fearful.

CHARLIE NELSON  
Here we are, then.

EARL GREY  
Let's do this and let's do it good.

Earl Grey goes to grab the briefcase. But Charlie Nelson's grip is unwavering.

CHARLIE NELSON  
I really think I should come with.

EARL GREY  
You? You belong in an office,  
Charles. This might get ugly.

CHARLIE NELSON  
I don't trust these people.

EARL GREY  
Me neither. Which is why I want you  
here, with these chips. Nothing  
will happen to you here.

He pulls out a pack of tortilla chips and POPS them open.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
You know what? Hell. Hold on.

He opens his glove box and pulls out a can of CHEESE WHIZ.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
Now we're cookin'.

After another attempt, Charlie Nelson gives in and allows the briefcase to leave his hands.

**EXT. BRANSON JUNKYARD- NOON**

Earl Grey steps onto the dusty ground of the junkyard's main strip.

Opposite him is Bo Bishop.

Earl Grey's forehead is dotted with sweat pearls.

A FLY lands on Bo Bishop's nose. He swats it away.

The two men cautiously take a few steps towards each other.

Earl Grey waves. Bo Bishop does not.

EARL GREY  
I have the money. Where is she?

Bo Bishop throws his head to the side as though to say "over there, somewhere".

INSIDE THE SCHOOL BUS:

Lorna slides up and down in her seat.

She is using a piece of BROKEN GLASS to cut through the rope.

Her wrists accidentally SLIP and she cuts herself. Ouch. She winces in pain. But then she immediately gets back to work, continues rubbing the rope against the glass.

BACK WITH EARL GREY AND BO BISHOP:

Bo Bishop points at the briefcase, then points at a patch of land in front of him.

Grey looks around himself. Under his hat, his eyes scan the junkyard.

INSIDE THE SCHOOL BUS:

Lorna is now in full-swing. She slides one last time, exhausted. The rope FLOPS to the ground. She watches it in amazement. Success!

She quickly RIPS the gag from her mouth, removes the shard of glass from the window and goes to work on the rope tying her ankles together.

BACK WITH EARL GREY AND BO BISHOP:

Earl Grey's hand, wrapped around the briefcase's handle, releases the briefcase in the spot Bo Bishop had pointed at.

Earl Grey starts walking backwards, always facing Bo Bishop.

Bo Bishop walks over to the briefcase, grabs it, walks back, always facing Earl Grey. These men do not trust each other.

WITH LORNA: She runs through a maze of cars, turning corners, ducking below metal rods, jumping over heaps of tires.

She doesn't know where she is going but she's running like crazy.

Bo Bishop, briefcase in hand, hears panting and footsteps in the distance. He turns his head ever so slightly.

Earl Grey's hand moves over to his GUN.

LORNA appears from out of nowhere, catching the two men by surprise.

Everybody FREEZES.

EARL GREY's hand removes his pistol with incredible speed.

LORNA throws herself to the ground, kicking up dust as she does so.

BO BISHOP goes to get his gun ALMOST as quickly as Earl Grey.

EARL GREY squints his eye and his finger SQUEEZES the trigger with incredible determination.

BO BISHOP pulls out his gun from his holster. BUT...

BO BISHOP's chest SMOKES. Two bullet holes, dead center of his torso. His mouth is agape. Incredulity. Pain.

He COLLAPSES, in a plume of dusty blood.

With majestic confidence, Earl Grey waltzes over to Bo Bishop's clawed hands and REMOVES the suitcase from them.

Lorna is still face down. She peers through her fingers.

POV LORNA: she notices, again, Earl Grey's ARMADILLO BOOTS. Only this time she gazes up, to see the man's FACE.

Backlit by the sun, Earl Grey wears a huge shit-eating grin.  
He extends his hand to her.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
Hello Lorna. I'm Sheriff Grey. It's  
nice to finally meet you.

She RECOGNIZES HIS BOOTS. And his VOICE.

She does not take his hand. A look of utter SHOCK washes over her.

She stumbles back, falling over a tire, as Earl Grey advances.

He grabs her by the foot and pulls her into the middle of the "strip". Prepares her for... AN EXECUTION.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
I can't have you runnin' around  
tellin' everyone on me, little  
lady. That's just the way it is.

He COCKS his gun and points it right at her forehead.

His finger goes to squeeze the trigger...

BANG! A gunshot. Except it is not produced by Earl Grey.

Earl Grey's gun goes FLYING out of his hand.

IN THE DISTANCE, like a WESTERN GUNSLINGER: Fred. He is on top of Jupiter, who neighs in approval.

Fred is a GREAT shooter. His gun shimmers in the light.

Earl Grey CRAWLS over to recover his gun.

Fred SHOOTS. The bullet grazes Earl Grey's left hand, wounding it once again.

Earl Grey grabs his hand, in excruciating pain.

Fred approaches him, slowly.

FRED  
I hate being told what to do.

Fred extends his hand to Lorna. She hesitates for a second.

FRED (CONT'D)  
I may be a bastard. But there's  
bigger bastards out there.

She accepts his hand. He lifts her up.

Fred points the gun at Earl Grey, who recoils pathetically.

EARL GREY

Don't shoot. Don't do it-

FRED

The eel's an interesting creature. It looks very similar to a snake, and in dry periods it can live in mud for a short time, while other fish would die. It's got oil in its skin that keeps it moist so it can wriggle its way through mud to reach open water. I said it *looks* like a snake. But it isn't a snake. It's a fish. And it swims with all the other fishes. Most importantly, the eel... when it gets caught in a bad current... the eel can swim forwards as well as backwards. You remember how you asked me what my nickname was?

Fred cocks his gun. Earl Grey covers his face.

FRED (CONT'D)

I'm The Eel.

Fred does NOT shoot him.

He takes off with Lorna. Soon they're specks in the distance, framed by dust.

**EXT. BRANSON JUNKYARD, GATE- DAY**

Charlie Nelson is chewing loudly on the last tortilla chip.

Suddenly Fred and Lorna BARREL across, on horseback. Charlie Nelson wipes his mouth with his sleeves and exits the car.

He is joined by Earl Grey, who is tightening a tourniquet on his hand.

CHARLIE NELSON

What just happened?

EARL GREY

Fred Abernathy shot you in the head and stole your car.

Grey raises his pistol.

CHARLIE NELSON

What?

Charlie Nelson squints in confusion.

BANG.

INSERT: Blood pours out of Charlie Nelson's head, into a pool of engine oil.

Earl Grey reaches for his walkie-talkie inside the car.

EARL GREY

I need you to put an all points  
bulletin out. On Fred Abernathy. A-  
B-E-R-N-A-T-H-Y. Killed two people  
at the ol' Branson Junkyard.

Earl Grey looks over at the booth. Jeremy Branson's eye peers through the blinds. The eye retreats into darkness.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

Actually- three people. Yessir.

Beat.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)

Shoot to kill.

Earl Grey pockets the walkie-talkie then makes his way over to Jeremy Branson's booth.

He knocks at the window with the tip of his gun.

Earl Grey presses the gun against the window and FIRES several bullets around.

The glass SHATTERS in a million pieces. Silence.

A BLOODY HAND claws at the window sill. Then another.

Finally Jeremy's face. Blood pours out of his mouth.

JEREMY BRANSON

I wouldn'tve said any thang you  
sumbitch.

EARL GREY

See? You just said too much.

Earl Grey points the gun and FIRES.

A geyser of blood gushes out of Jeremy Branson's neck. He holds onto his wound, crashes through the broken window and falls over. Dead.

BO BISHOP'S BODY: Flies are already circling him. Earl Grey goes through his pockets. He removes a pair of KEYS to his van.

Earl Grey removes the SNIPER RIFLE CASE from the passenger seat and lays it flat on the hood of the van.

He opens the case. He caresses the high-tech rifle.

**EXT. TEXAS DESERT ROAD- DAY**

Fred and Lorna ride Jupiter down the deserted highway. She caresses Jupiter, affectionately.

The SUITCASE full of cash rests in Fred's lap, safely.

LORNA

Where are we going?

FRED

I'm going to take you home. To your uncle. Before you end up dead.

LORNA

My uncle doesn't love me. If he did, he would have paid already. And he would let me be.

FRED

People have strange ways of showing affection. Get used to it.

LORNA

He shows it by locking me up and telling me how to live.

FRED

Some day, you'll be free to do as you please.

LORNA

Do you have somebody who loves you?

FRED

I don't really know.

LORNA

Your parents must love you.

FRED

My daddy worked at a peanut plant in Enterprise, Alabama. And he was a hunter. And my mama.... Well. She was very good at getting very drunk after my brother passed. But they're all dead now so they can't do much loving. Or hating.

Lorna waits a moment, then she spits out what's on her mind.

LORNA

You escaped from prison, didn't you.

Fred's lips tighten.

LORNA (CONT'D)

I saw it on TV last night.

FRED

You should have been sleeping.

LORNA

Why were you there?

FRED

Why would you wanna know.

LORNA

Because I think you wanna tell me.

Fred takes a moment. He chooses his timing carefully.

FRED

You break your back. Can't relax, not a minute. You wake up and your dreams are starving just as much as you are. So you need an answer, an easy one. And that's the problem. All the mistakes I ever made was when I wanted to say 'No.' But that word don't come easy. So you say 'Yes.' Say it just once. Or just twice. Cause even in the best of lives, mistakes are made, right? No sweat. You tell yourself whatever you got to, whatever lie justifies the deed. And you tell them... Yes.

As he speaks, he looks straight ahead since they are both riding Jupiter. Therefore the impression is that he is speaking to himself, as much as he is to Lorna.

FRED (CONT'D)

I kept thinking it wasn't my fault that man died. That I did everything right. But you need the seed of an idea and I planted that seed. And now? It's just me and my shadow. And that bastard ain't going nowhere. Least not until I get to Mexico. Yessir, we'll get it all straightened out down there... Yeah. Down Mexico way. Mañana...

Silence.

Suddenly: a distant, faint POP. Like a balloon going off.

LORNA

What was that?

THUNK! A bullet SLAMS into Jupiter's hind leg.

He goes APE SHIT.

Frothing at the mouth, raising his legs like a wild horse.

FRED

Stay down-

Fred grabs Lorna's waist, trying to keep control of Jupiter. But the horse is moving erratically, in massive pain.

Fred and Lorna get THROWN OFF.

Jupiter stumbles to the side of the road, until his leg gives in. He lies on all fours, PANTING and YELPING.

A dusty patch of land. On the other side of the road is a field of CACTI.

Lorna holds Jupiter's head in her hands while Fred examines his WOUND.

POV CROSSHAIRS: From at least a mile away.

Earl Grey's finger SQUEEZES the trigger.

WITH FRED AND LORNA: They hear another faint POP.

Fred sees a tiny plume of smoke in the horizon.

He thinks for a millisecond, then he THROWS himself onto Lorna, shielding her.

A BULLET strikes the ground opposite them, kicking up dust.

Fred pulls Lorna's arm. They HIDE behind Jupiter.

THUD. A bullet hits Jupiter. He neighs in pain.

Lorna winces. Fred cradles her head in his arms.

THUD. Another bullet. Hits Jupiter in the belly.

POV CROSSHAIRS: Earl Grey can't get a clear shot at them now that they are behind Jupiter.

WITH FRED AND LORNA: Fred looks over at the field of cacti. It's about 20 feet across the highway.

He peers CAREFULLY above Jupiter's mane.

POV Fred: Earl Grey's scope GLIMMERS in the sun.

FRED (CONT'D)  
Are you a good runner?

LORNA  
I didn't make the team.

FRED  
I never believed in try-outs.

Fred GRABS the briefcase with the money. They RUN!

POV CROSSHAIRS: Earl Grey follows them with his scope as they run as fast they can towards the field. He SHOOTS at them.

WITH FRED AND LORNA: They CROUCH in the field of cacti.

Fred looks at the briefcase: a BULLET HOLE smokes through it. He grabs his arm. BLOOD trickles down. He has been SHOT.

EARL GREY hops in the BUICK and advances angrily towards the field.

FRED AND LORNA dodge CACTI. Fred grinds his teeth, in pain.

EARL GREY stops, exits the car, barrels through the field with his gun out.

BIRD'S EYE VIEW: Fred and Lorna are close to exiting the cacti field. Earl Grey is only at the start of it.

FRED AND LORNA reach a clearing.

LORNA  
Look!

A CIRCUS BIG TOP flutters in the distance. Safety.

**EXT. RAMIREZ CIRCUS, TRAILER- DUSK**

Two short, squat MEXICAN CLOWNS stand outside the back entrance smoking cigarettes and chatting.

The clowns put their cigarettes out and make their way into the tent.

Fred and Lorna appear behind: they run towards the trailer.

**INT. RAMIREZ CIRCUS, TRAILER- DUSK**

Fred and Lorna barricade themselves inside, locking the door and propping a chair against the handle.

They look around themselves: it's a dressing room. Toilet paper, a half-eaten burrito and a bottle of Tequila sit on the make-up desk. A radio plays tejano rock.

Fred pulls up his sleeve, revealing his WOUND.

He spots the Tequila on the desk. He unscrews it and pours it on the wound, squinting in pain as he does so.

Lorna transfers the cash from the shot-out briefcase to a heavy duty TRASH BAG. She tightens the loose ends.

OUTSIDE: the sound of a SCUFFLE.

Lorna climbs up a stool and peers through a small window.

POV Lorna: Earl Grey has arrived on the scene. A MEXICAN MIDGET argues with him as he tries to shoulder his way into the BIG TOP.

LORNA  
He's outside!

Lorna jumps down and runs over to a chest of drawers. She frantically pulls COSTUMES out.

LORNA (CONT'D)  
Quick.

**EXT. TRAILER- DUSK**

The door to the trailer opens.

Fred and Lorna, DRESSED AS CLOWNS, complete with big shoes, nose and wigs, hobble out of the trailer.

They are unrecognizable- to anybody but us. As soon as they turn a corner, a STRONGMAN grabs them.

STRONGMAN  
(in Spanish)  
*Where are you going? We're on in  
five minutes. Move it! MOVE IT!*

Fred and Lorna exchange worried glances through their make-up as they are herded into the Big Top.

**INT. BIG TOP- DUSK**

A rundown, cheap, grimy circus. Think FELLINI after the APOCALYPSE. The stage is full of MANURE and BROKEN BOTTLES.

The small audience of 50 people is comprised of families, with a handful of old cowboys and Mexicans scattered about.

INSERT: a CLOWN presses the play button on an old stereo system. Jolly CIRCUS MUSIC blasts over the overblown P.A.

BACKSTAGE: Fred and Lorna are huddled with the rest of the circus performers. A cannon lady, a fire-breather, some animals, a pair of tight rope walkers. All haggard, their costumes stained and faded.

The RINGMASTER takes a swig from a bottle in the backstage area, throws it to the FIRE-BREATHER.

MAIN CIRCUS TENT: The Ringmaster stumbles onto the stage.

A SPOTLIGHT shines on him. He speaks in SPANISH on a mic.

RINGMASTER  
*Ladies and gentlemen, children of  
all ages. Welcome to the greatest  
show this side of Mexico! Are you  
ready for some fun?*

A handful of unenthusiastic "woos" and claps.

RINGMASTER (CONT'D)  
*And now. THE biggest. THE most  
dangerous. THE most spectacular.  
FIRE. BREATHER. OF. THEM. ALL.*

The old fire-breather comes out, carrying a bottle of alcohol and a flaming baton.

He takes a swig of the bottle, then SPRAYS the baton with alcohol. A large flame ERUPTS.

Fred and Lorna watch the show from behind the curtain.

Specifically, they catch a glimpse of EARL GREY. He walks up and down the aisles, looking for Fred and Lorna.

The fire-breather finishes his show. He bows, scurries away.

The spotlight is turned OFF. The stage is in total darkness.

A DRUM ROLL.

The curtains are pulled back. A WALTZ starts on the P.A.

COUPLES of Clowns make their way to the stage. Twelve clowns, in twos, waltz to the music. Surreal, beautiful even.

The clowns all have their big shoes on, which is source of humor as they keep STEPPING on each other's shoes.

As Fred and Lorna watch, they are PUSHED onto the stage by the stagehand, a MIDGET.

They are ON STAGE now. Too late to turn back.

Fred grabs Lorna's hand and they dance to the waltz together.

Fred looks out at the audience but the spotlight is BLINDING.

POV Earl Grey: He studies the stage. There are fat clowns, midget clowns, tall clowns, short clowns.

He removes the GUN from his holster.

The CLOWNS start spraying each other with water from their PLASTIC FLOWERS.

The CHILDREN in the audience LAUGH.

A \$100 BILL falls out of Fred's trouser cuff. Several clown feet step on it. Fred does not notice the money falling out.

MORE MONEY falls out of his cuff as he dances.

Earl Grey SQUINTS, trying to figure out where the money is coming from.

A CLOWN goes to pick up the BILLS from the ground, amazed.

Earl Grey sees him. He aims and FIRES his gun at the stage.

The CLOWN, holding cash in his hands, squeezes his plastic flower. BLOOD streams out of it, instead of water.

The audience SCREAMS. The clowns SCREAM. Everybody RISES.

EARL GREY

Please! Don't panic! It's all part  
of the show!

The audience tears the curtains of the tent apart, trying to get out.

Fred and Lorna quietly takes steps back, turn around, RUN.

Earl Grey examines the dead clown. WRONG CLOWN.

**EXT. BIG TOP- DUSK**

Audience members and circus folk run around in a panic. Fred and Lorna find an old PICK-UP truck parked in the back.

Fred pops the trunk open. A chicken PLOPS out. He uncovers wiring. Joins two cables together. Nothing. He tries again...

The pick-up truck ROARS to life.

Fred hops in, with Lorna, and they drive away...

...towards silhouetted derricks, pumping tirelessly against the setting sun.

**INT. FORD PICK-UP TRUCK- DUSK**

Fred and Lorna bounce around in the old truck. They look like they've been through hell. Fred is bleeding. He props himself up and removes the TRASH BAG full of cash from within his costume. Drops it in the backseat.

Lorna has Fred's MAP spread out on the dashboard. She folds it back up and places it inside the Zippo.

LORNA

How do you know it's still there?

FRED

It's there. I saw it.

LORNA

My uncle's men will be looking all  
over town for me. And for you.

Fred looks over at Lorna. He smiles at her.

FRED

I know.

Silence as the truck passes the gas station from the beginning of the movie.

LORNA  
How many bullets you got?

FRED  
Not enough.

She thinks for a moment.

LORNA  
Fred. I can help you get to Mexico.

FRED  
How?

LORNA  
You have to trust me.

The pick-up truck ROLLS into town, passing a SCHOOL ZONE sign: "15 mph". Onlookers exit shops, houses, trying to figure out who that is, driving like a bat out of hell.

Fred SWERVES around a Post Van, nearly colliding into it.

**EXT. DANIELS OIL FIELD- NIGHT**

A group of oil workers, headed by HIGH POCKETS, make their way towards the main gate, calling it a day.

The sound of screeching tires is heard off-screen. The oil workers rush to see:

The PICK-UP SWERVING to a halt. Fred and Lorna pour out of it. His GUN pointed at her TEMPLE, bag of cash in his hand.

FRED  
OPEN THE GATE! I'M COMING IN!

Nobody does anything.

FRED (CONT'D)  
OPEN THE FUCKING GATE, GREASE  
MONKEY.

A burly man hits a button. The gate OPENS. They RUSH inside.

**INT. DANIELS OIL FIELD- NIGHT**

Fred, his arm tightly wrapped around Lorna's neck, backtracks into the oil field.

High Pockets and the oil workers, brandishing wedges, hammers, pipes, advance towards Fred. They mean business.

Fred shoots a WARNING SHOT on the ground. Lorna wriggles trying to FREE herself.

FRED  
Stay where you are! I'll shoot her  
head off.

LORNA  
(crying)  
Please. Do as he says.

High Pockets signals the others to STOP from advancing.

Fred kicks an OIL BARREL over. Oil spills across the floor. He SHOOTS at it. It GOES UP IN FLAMES.

Fred and the Oil Workers are now separated by a FIREWALL.

Fred and Lorna disappear into the TUNNELS.

**INT. DANIELS OIL FIELD, TUNNELS- NIGHT**

Fred and Lorna walk briskly down the tunnel. They avoid pipes, steam and other perils along the way.

FRED  
How'd I do?

LORNA  
You make a very convincing  
criminal.

FRED  
You're funny.

LORNA  
I'm a clown.

Fred stops in front of a track. He kneels down and reads the etching on the steel. "B 821".

Lorna stands next to him. She acts as a look-out, his LIGHTER safely in her hand.

He looks for something, concerned. He gets down on his knees.

Lorna taps his shoulder: She points at a HAMMER. Fred, picks it up, and KISSES it.

He SWINGS with all his strength and HITS the wall. Chunks of mouldy rock CRUMBLE.

Again. He repeats this action, each blow stronger and more determined than the last. Again. AGAIN.

FRED IS IN A FREEDOM FRENZY.

**INT. DANIELS OIL FIELD- CONTINUOUS**

High Pockets and the other oil workers are putting out the firewall. They throw old rags on it, step on it. It dies out.

Earl Grey RUNS into the oil field. His hand is bloodied and he has a crazed look in his eyes.

EARL GREY

Alright, y'all stay here while I go down there.

RUDY

We're coming with you.

EARL GREY

Didn't you just hear what I said?

RUDY

That little girl belongs to our company. Hell, that girl is our company. We're responsible.

EARL GREY

Yeah? The escaped convict that is doing God-knows-what to her is my responsibility. Now I'm going in there alone. This is not the fucking OK Corral. OK?

RUDY

(sarcastic)

Okay, John Wayne.

EARL GREY

You're lucky I don't write you all up for obstruction of justice!

The oil workers slowly let Earl Grey move forward.

Earl Grey pulls a FLASHLIGHT out of High Pockets' tool belt, steps over the oil spill and heads into the tunnels.

**INT. DANIELS OIL FIELD, TUNNELS- CONTINUOUS**

Fred has just finished clearing a sizable HOLE in the wall. Just big enough for him to go through. He looks inside. A deep PASSAGEWAY, narrow and damp. Rats scurry about.

FRED  
This is it...

LORNA  
Yeah?

Fred looks down into the dark passageway, mesmerized.

FRED  
This is the tunnel. The last stretch.

LORNA  
I guess you need this.

Lorna hands him the trash bag full of cash.

LORNA (CONT'D)  
Wait a minute. What am I doing.

She scoops up a lot of cash and stuff her pockets with it.

LORNA (CONT'D)  
It's my ransom money, after all.

FRED  
Yeah, it is.

He puts his big hand on her little head, awkwardly.

FRED (CONT'D)  
I think you're worth more than two million bucks, Lorna. You're worth my gratitude and respect. And that's priceless.

He extends his hand to her. It's huge compared to hers.

LORNA  
Thanks, Fred. Send me a postcard from Mexico.

They shake hands, but Lorna chooses to give him a big hug.

Fred is quite surprised by this act of affection.

As her head is placed against his chest... Fred looks down at Lorna. Shamefully.

FRED

Do you think I am a bad man?

She thinks about it.

LORNA

You'll get better at being good.

Before he forgets- he removes something from his pocket.

Lorna's charred, but mostly intact, copy of "THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE".

He tucks the book in her belt and smiles.

And with that, he takes off, into the tunnel. She watches him go, one last time, then walks away.

**INT. TUNNEL TO MEXICO- NIGHT**

Fred crawls down the dark passageway. Lit only slightly by the flame of his trusty Zippo.

He looks down. OIL. There's a foot of oil on the tunnel floor. Fred closes the lighter. Just to be safe.

**INT. DANIELS OIL FIELD, TUNNELS- NIGHT**

BATS hang upside down on the ceiling.

Lorna walks with her back to the wall, her eyes squinting in fear. She moves ever-so-slowly across the wall.

She sees LIGHT in the distance, as inviting as a warm blanket. She RUNS towards it.

SLAM. Lorna hits something.

Standing in front of her is Earl Grey. He is holding a FLASHLIGHT.

He grabs her by the hair and SLAPS her across the face. She falls to the ground, out of breath. He shakes her shoulders.

EARL GREY

Where is my money?

Lorna notices his BANDAGE.

She DIGS HER FINGERS into his wound- again!

He lets out a blood-curdling SCREAM.

She stumbles backwards. He gets up, aims his gun towards her.

BANG.

Lorna FALLS to the ground.

Earl Grey waits for her to move. But she doesn't.

He walks over to her, holding his bleeding hand. Prods at her with his boots. No movement. Her big eyes simply stare at us.

SHE IS DEAD.

**INT. TUNNEL TO MEXICO- NIGHT**

Fred slishes through the passageway towards light. Suddenly:

He stops. Hears something behind him.

Earl Grey's WHISTLING.

A light FLASHES behind Fred. Intermittently. Like a lighthouse beam.

Fred squints and turns around, towards the source of light.

The whistling STOPS.

ZING. A bullet flies down the tunnel, towards Fred.

Fred THROWS himself to the ground.

EARL GREY

I want us to sit down and leave our  
egos at home and let's get an  
understanding as to where all this  
foolishness is coming from.

Earl Grey waves the flashlight around, at the oil below, at the ceiling, searchingly.

SILENCE. You could hear a pin drop.

He points his flashlight at something on the floor.

He gets closer...

FRED EMERGES from the floor, covered in OIL.

He GRABS Earl Grey towards him and PULLS HIM UNDER.

Earl Grey ELBOWS Fred in the solar plexus.

Fred stumbles back, catching his breath.

Fred GRABS HOLD of Earl Grey's face and digs his nails in. He sticks his thumb in Earl Grey's mouth, grabs a piece of cheek, and starts twisting.

Earl Grey's face is getting torn up, but he's also biting hard on Fred's thumb.

Fred brings his head back and SLAMS it into Earl Grey's nose, busting it.

Fred socks Earl Grey in the face. One, two, three.

Earl Grey KNEES Fred in the balls. Hard.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
I'm from Texas, boy!

Fred hits the floor like a sack of potatoes. He curls up into a fetal position and holds his balls, tears coming out of his eyes.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
From *fucking Texas!*

Earl Grey's face is torn up from Fred's nails. He has blood and oil streaming down his face.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
We're bigger than France!

His hands sift through the oil, searching for the MONEY.

Finally, he stops. He pulls something up from the floor.

THE BAG WITH THE MONEY.

He puts his hand in and removes... A STACK of \$100 BILLS.

He SMELLS them.

Fred, still rattled and on the ground, looks up at Earl Grey.

Earl Grey draws his pistol and points it at Fred.

EARL GREY (CONT'D)  
Life's a cunt, Fred. You've gotta be a clever dick to play it.

Fred's lips quiver and he knows that his time is almost over.

A BAT flaps above Earl Grey's head, distracting him for a millisecond.

Fred removes his lighter, SNAPS it, FLICKS it into the air.

It PIRQUETTES, its flame feeble but steady.

Fred's gaze FOLLOWS IT through the air.

The Zippo LANDS into the open bag of money.

Fred LEAPS to his feet and watches.

A FLAME can be seen through the bag. It grows quickly. Earl Grey blows into the bag, trying to put the fire out.

Fred walks, backwards at first. Then he turns around and RUNS.

The bag quickly goes up in flames. Earl Grey clumsily tries to save some of it, but it's too hot and the fire spreads too fast.

Fred reaches a RUSTY LADDER. He CLIMBS it, desperately.

Earl Grey can't let go of the bag, even though it's burning to a crisp. He cradles it even as the flames burn his hands.

Finally, he lets go.

THE BURNING BAG HITS THE OIL.

WOOSH. A WAVE of flames, 3 foot high, SPREADS through the tunnel.

Fred is almost at the end of his CLIMB. He watches the flames below him.

Earl Grey is quickly ENVELOPED by flames, an infernal gargyle, burnt cash fluttering around him.

FRED looks ahead at a COLUMN of light, ethereal, heavenly, shining in front of him. Could it be... Mexican light?

He crawls towards it.

**INT. DANIELS OIL FIELD, TUNNELS- NIGHT**

Lorna's lifeless eyes stare at us.

After a moment, her eyeballs MOVE. She BATS her eyelids.

She pulls her top up... And removes her BOOK.

It has a huge smouldering BULLET HOLE in it. But it was thick enough to stop it from blasting through her skin.

She gets up, RUNS towards safety.

**EXT. DANIELS OIL FIELD- DAWN**

LORNA, exhausted and looking five years older, sips on hot chocolate in the main stretch of the oil rig. A blanket rests on her lap.

The OIL WORKERS are huddled around her like the seven dwarves, each one of them holding something for her. Cake, bandages, more blankets, a bottle of whiskey.

State trooper MARVIN FRANKEL sits next to her taking notes.

MARVIN FRANKEL

What did he look like? The kidnapper?

LORNA

Which one? There were a few.

EMMETT DANIELS runs into the room, panting and red-faced.

EMMETT DANIELS

Are you alright? Did they touch you? Did they make you do anything to him?

He drowns her in kisses. She wipes the kisses off her face.

LORNA

No, Uncle Em.

His voice breaks, tears fill up his eyes.

EMMETT DANIELS

Would you like to go home now?

She throws him a knowing look.

LORNA

Can I do mushrooms with my friends this weekend?

EMMETT DANIELS

You can do whatever you like, sugar plum.

He had no idea what that meant. She smiles, mischievously.

IN SLOW-MOTION, set to Mr. Bungle's SWEET CHARITY:

The OIL WORKERS, armed with fire extinguishers, put out the fading fire in the tunnel.

The WHITE FOAM from the extinguisher sprays the carbonized body of Earl Grey.

The STATE TROOPERS, wearing protective gas masks, carry his body back to the oil rig.

Angle on: Earl Grey's BADGE. Charred dollars are stuck to his outfit.

**EXT. CIUDAD ACUÑA- DAWN**

A SLEEPY MEXICAN bordertown. The sun extends a pink blanket over it.

A handful of MEXICANS set up stands in the main square of town. Fruit, flags, bags of candy.

TWO BOYS- one FAT and the other SCRAWNY- kick an old SOCCER BALL around the square.

The SCRAWNY KID and his FAT BROTHER CHASE after the ball. It rolls next to a MANHOLE.

The MANHOLE COVER moves a little.

SCRAWNY KID takes a step back. FAT KID is intrigued.

A HAND slides the cover off. Another hand appears. And then a FACE.

Scrawny kid SCREAMS in panic and runs away.

Fat kid's jaw drops. He can't believe what he sees:

FRED. Wounded, covered in oil, blood, clown make-up and dirt.

He emerges from the man hole and throws himself to the ground, exhausted.

FRED  
*Donde estamos?*

FAT KID  
*Mexico.*

Fred slowly gets to his feet, and HUGS the little boy.

He pulls out a stack of \$100 bills from his underwear- he saved some- and hands the kid one.

FRED

*Agua, por favor. Agua.*

The boy nods and grabs Fred by the arm.

We BOOM UP, watching this unlikely duo, as they walk through Ciudad Acuña.

It's sunny. Tranquil. Everything Mexico should be.

They turn a corner.

Facing them is an old, beaten up FOUNTAIN.

Fred smiles the biggest smile ever. The smile of FREEDOM.

He throws himself, arms outstretched, into the fountain. Water spills out, onto the ground.

Two dogs bark at him. They jump into the water and swim around with Fred.

He emerges from the water. His face is clean. The oil, the clown make-up, the blood, and the dirt have dissolved.

He leans into the fountain and looks at his reflection in the water.

For the first time... it is CLEAR.

END CREDITS over Duran Duran's ORDINARY WORLD.

FADE OUT.