

ONE NIGHT IN MISSISSIPPI

Written by

Michele Atkins

Based on, "One Night in Mississippi"
By Craig Shreve

EXT. MISSISSIPPI -- DIRT ROAD/FOREST -- NIGHT 1964

The moon glows upon the face of GRADEN WILLIAMS, 17, a black youth in final withdrawal from childhood, not yet a full-fledged man.

He's tall for his age, wearing a bit-too-short khakis and a worn, button down shirt. His facial features are joyful; wise mien, with a naturally open presence.

We remain tight on him as he moves slowly, stopping, then moving again. It's as if he's waiting for something or someone.

He is passing through the forest of maple, hickory, and oak changing in colors. Wind is BLOWING. With each FOOTSTEP there is a CRUNCHING of leaves. He is unaware that...

A lone speck of light grows behind him through the darkness.

The CAR ENGINE HUM meets Graden's senses. Alerted, he looks over his shoulder.

The growing light separates into two beams which zero in on Graden's figure.

He turns back and takes a sharp breath as he now fully anticipates the situation.

Beat.

Graden scans the forest, considers running... but stays put. He bends his head and walks quickly forward, continuing on the main road.

An ENGINE and COUNTRY MUSIC rises and falls away. Only to rise once again as if it were next to him.

Graden barely glances toward the road.

A car BREAKS and doors OPEN. FOOTSTEPS.

Graden stops.

Remaining focused on Graden. The MEN from the CAR are mere voices, sounds - gradually moving closer.

MAN #1 -PATRICK OLSEN (O.S.)
Stay in back, Earl.

MAN #2 - MARTY BAVON (O.S.)
How ya doin' son?

Graden's eyes lower.

Leaves CRUNCHING underfoot.

In shallow focus - seeing movement of figures and only glimpses of bodies when adjacent to Graden. The back of MAN #1 and the arm/side of MAN #2.

GRADEN
I'm doing good, sir.

MAN #2 - MARTY BAVON (O.S.)
What are you doing out here at this time?

GRADEN
Walking, sir.

MAN #2 - MARTY BAVON (O.S.)
"Walking." Don't look like you was walking. Looks like you was standing there...

GRADEN
Just resting for a minute, sir.

Graden's calm is an effort.

MAN #2 - MARTY BAVON (O.S.)
What's your name, son?

GRADEN
Graden Williams.

MAN #1 - PATRICK OLSEN (O.S.)
I know this boy. I'm mighty surprised you all don't. This here is the famous Graden Williams!

ENGINES can be heard of additional vehicles pulling in.

Graden's eyes dart.

MAN #2 - MARTY BAVON (O.S.)
Where you off to?

GRADEN
I'm off to fetch my brother from up the road, sir. He's with some friends.

MAN #2 - MARTY BAVON (O.S.)
So you know this boy?

MAN #1 - PATRICK OLSEN (O.S.)
Hell ya, like I said, he's famous.

MAN #2 - MARTY BAVON (O.S.)
On account of what?

MAN #1 - PATRICK OLSEN (O.S.)
Cause he's almost white. The way I
hear it, our boy Graden is just
about the smartest Negro in all the
county and the next one too.

Quiet CHATTER behind Graden - near the additional vehicles.

FOOTSTEPS moving in Graden's direction. They belong to...

EARL, 16, stuck between boyhood and manhood, shares a frame
with Graden - **we fully see Earl.**

EARL
(Quietly)
They said to bring him.

Fear takes hold of Graden - he stares out into the dense
trees and tall grass.

MAN #1 - PATRICK OLSEN (O.S.)
Why don't you get in the car, son?
We'll give you a ride up to that
brother of yours...

GRADEN
I thank you, sir, but it's a
pleasant night and I'd rather walk.

MAN #2 reaches out and grabs hold of Graden's upper arm.

MAN #2 - MARTY BAVON (O.S.)
Get in the car, boy.

Graden exits the frame.

Earl steps forward and stares out into the forest, just like
Graden did moments before...

EXT. FOREST

Languidly pan across the forest.

A car door SLAMS.

Cars MOTORS HUM driving away.

The pan continues out onto...

EXT. DIRT ROAD/FOREST

Three cars speeding off in the distance. The rear end of a Studebaker is the last in the line.

CUT TO BLACK:

EXT. MISSISSIPPI -- SHACK -- DAY

A weather beaten, four room shack with a sloped porch sits next to a cut-for-winter cotton field. A newly built, plain, wooden coffin stands upright on the front porch.

A Dodge panel wagon pulls in and parks on a patch of dirt. Two WHITE MEN retrieve from the back a green tarp roll bundled in twine. They let it drop to the ground.

The grief stricken WILLIAMS FAMILY gather on the porch:

WARREN, 21, and his sisters, ETTA, 19, and GLENDA, 22, PAPA, 40s, and MAMA, 40s, exit with PASTOR LONNY, 60s, at their side. AUNTS, UNCLES, and COUSINS follow soon after.

Papa, whose face is dark and wrinkled, solemnly meets the White Men halfway.

WHITE MEN

Sign here to accept the body of
Graden Williams.

A clipboard is shoved in front of Papa, accompanied by a pen. Papa's arms reveal visible scars covering the length of them. His swollen, work hand shakes as he lifts the pen and scribbles a nonsensical line.

Warren walks across the dirt yard. He stands above the tarp-shrouded figure. He clenches his hands. His right bandaged and taped - tucked into a ball.

The White Man yanks the clipboard from Papa's grasp. And the White Men return to the vehicle as carefree as they came.

They call out the window as the wagon pulls away...

WHITE MEN (CONT'D)

Y'all return that tarp and twine!

Warren and Papa carry the body toward the shack. Warren's arms awkwardly wrap around the tarp - the injured hand flaps about - unable to be of real assistance.

INT. SHACK -- GRADEN AND WARREN'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Warren and Papa place the body with care on top of an awaiting plank that lies upon one of two rickety beds located in the spartan bedroom. A lantern and school books are scattered across a wooden desk.

Mama, Etta, and Glenda enter with buckets of water, soap, cloth, fresh clothes, and a comb.

INSERT: A composition notebook sits on top. Handwritten on the front reads: GRADEN WILLIAMS

Warren attempts to gently remove the twine. His maimed hand unable to help get the job done. The more he fails, the harder he tries.

Papa approaches...

Warren steps back, letting him take over.

The ladies join in and the tarp is unwrapped.

All eyes try to digest this form that lies before them that once was their brother, their son. Once a boy... turning into a man... This was Graden.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- Glenda, steely-eyed, moves forward with water and cloth.
- Mama digs her nails into her upper arms.
- Tears well in Etta's eyes -- she wipes them away quickly.
- A cloth wipes the body - mud and blood rung into water.
- Debris cleaned from knotted hair.
- Soiled, broken nails on Graden's body.
- A pillbug crawls across the clavicle. A hand removes it.
- The unseen hand reaches out a window and releases the pillbug. Once pulled back we find it belongs to Etta.

She turns. Warren is watching her.

INT. MISSISSIPPI -- SHACK -- NIGHT

Warren rises from the floor. He steps over bodies of family members locked together in their sleep.

Someone's SNORING. A random COUGH.

He passes...

INT. GRADEN AND WARREN'S BEDROOM

Pastor Lonny sitting on Warren's bed - silently reading the bible. The pine casket is set on the other bed. Graden's bed.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI SHACK -- MOMENTS LATER

Warren steps outside. Glenda and Etta sit on the front porch, legs hanging over the side.

ETTA
 Couldn't sleep?

Warren shakes his head.

ETTA (CONT'D)
 We couldn't either. When will they go and get those men?

GLENDA
 When the law gets good and ready. Or maybe never. That's when.

ETTA
 I just want this to be over. They always take the best of us.

GLENDA
 You're right about that!

Glenda abruptly stands and reenters into the shack.

ETTA
 I'm sorry. I didn't mean nothing by it. Don't let her bother you.

Etta hugs Warren. He doesn't hug back. She lets go.

WARREN
 It's all right. Can't be hurt by what's true.

Warren steps away from Etta and stands alone.

THE PRESENT -- FORTY FOUR YEARS LATER -- 2008

INT. DETROIT, APARTMENT -- MAIN ROOM -- MORNING

Morning light seeps into the room, revealing decrepit, yellowed walls and water stained ceilings.

It's a relatively bare apartment with exception of a wrought iron coffee table, a brown love seat, and a faux leather recliner with foam erupting from the cracks. Warren sleeps there...

The PHONE RINGS.

The neighbor POUNDS the wall in protest.

The RINGING continues.

Warren awakens he moves into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN -- MORNING

The kitchen wall is covered with reminders; some are readable notes: "*Check ALL BILLS on 1st of the month,*" and "*I Am Warren Williams,*" while other notes are illegible.

On an adjacent wall, an oversized calendar hangs next to a pull calendar.

On the refrigerator are names, addresses and phone numbers: "*JOB - Lafayette foods - 1565 E. Lafayette - 555-1212.*"

A packed box containing folders and notebooks sit on top the refrigerator.

Warren glances at the notes around him - familiarizing himself.

He picks up the phone.

We get a closer look at his disfigured right hand; the thumb and forefinger are partial nubs with the remaining digits atrophied together in a knotted hook. A dark scar runs down the middle of the hand.

WARREN

Yes, this is Warren Williams.

He listens, then...

WARREN (CONT'D)

You're mistaken. They've all been arrested.

He listens. A beat.

WARREN (CONT'D)
It can't be... he's dead.

Warren loses his footing. He steadies himself against a chair. He sits down.

WARREN (CONT'D)
Say that again?

He writes with a sharpie on a Post it:

"Woman with no name 555-602-6272."

INT/EXT. DETROIT -- LAFAYETTE FOODS -- DAY

Dreary, overcast days are a constant this time of year.

Warren pulls his green Explorer into a parking space. He and the car both have aged: grey hair, cracked windshield. A balding man, chipped paint.

He sits in the parked vehicle, wearing a work uniform. His hands clasp the wheel. Grounding him.

A random mix of notes and reminders of different shapes and sizes cover the dashboard of the vehicle.

He stares at the center of the wheel where a Post it sits:

"Woman with no name 555-602-6272."

An adjacent note reads:

"Must Remember."

With an arrow drawn, pointing to the phone number.

RADIO COMMENTATOR
Senator Barack Obama has pulled ahead of Hillary Clinton in the race for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination after winning Maryland, Virginia and Washington D.C. The Illinois senator has set out plans to revive the economy in an attempt to counter criticism that his campaign is too strong on rhetoric and too weak on detail.

ALBERTO, late 20's, has an afro-latino thing about him. He clears grocery carts in the lot, wearing headphones with a confident demeanor; he grooves as he gathers.

He pauses and glances toward Warren, inside his vehicle.

INT./EXT FORD EXPLORER (PARKED) -- PARKING LOT -- DAY

On Warren gazing... A hand enters frame, knocking against the window. Warren comes to, focuses on...

Alberto, his headphones lowered, speaking through the glass.

ALBERTO

It's your shift now?

Warren removes a bag of peanuts from the glove compartment and hurries out of the vehicle.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Alberto pushes a stack of carts through the parking lot toward the store. Warren follows him.

ALBERTO

What's with the Pennsylvania plates?

WARREN

I move around when I need to.

ALBERTO

How long you been in Detroit?

WARREN

A few months.

ALBERTO

You always work in grocery stores?

WARREN

I work at whatever puts gas in my car and food in my stomach.

ALBERTO

I hear you, man! I got two kids and a third on the way! That's no joke!

They enter LaFayette Foods through the sliding glass doors.

INT. LAFAYETTE FOODS -- CASH REGISTER -- MOMENTS LATER

Warren bags groceries for LUPE, 55, a small Hispanic cashier.

A MOTHER, 35, watches Lupe total the groceries on the register. A LITTLE GIRL, 3, in her stroller and her BROTHER, 7, stare up at Warren. They observe Warren's maimed hand.

He packs the last bit of groceries - several packages of Cup Noodles.

Little Girl puts her hands out, she wants one... He gives her the package to hold. She smiles.

WARREN

I like those too.

The Brother rips it out of her hand. She begins to wail.

The Mother takes another package of the Cup Noodles out of the packed bag. She bends down and turns it over the Little Girl. She coos quietly to the children in an attempt to mend the rift.

INT. LAFAYETTE FOODS -- GROCERY AISLES -- LATER

Warren sweeps and removes trash bags from the bins.

EXT. DUMPSTER -- MOMENTS LATER

Warren throws bags into the dumpster. Crows flutter. He takes peanuts from his pocket and scatters them on the ground.

FOURTY EIGHT YEARS AGO -- 1960

EXT. MISSISSIPPI SHACK -- DAY

Graden, 13, finds a young, injured crow beneath a patch of trees. He collects it onto a cloth. Warren, 17, approaches...

WARREN

What are you gonna do with that thing?

Graden brings the crow inside. Warren trails behind.

INT. WARREN AND GRADEN'S BEDROOM

Warren watches Graden softly place the crow on his bed. He pulls out prepared items from underneath his bed and places the crow on a cigarette tin lined with grass. He tries to feed the crow crumbs.

WARREN

We barely got enough to eat!

Graden ignores him and continues his attempt to feed the crow.

LATER --

It's dark outside. Warren lights a lantern. He pulls the tin out from under Graden's bed. He touches the crow's brittle wings - he grimaces. It's dead.

Warren dumps the crow into Graden's pillowcase and turns out the lantern. He crawls into bed.

Graden enters the dark room and changes out of his clothes.

GRADEN

Warren?

Warren's eyes are open, but remains still, pretending sleep.

Graden SHUFFLES about. The BED CREAKS as he gets into it.

A moment later - Graden YELPS.

Warren remains motionless. RUSTLING over by Graden.

A moment passes.

FOOTSTEPS leaving the room.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI SHACK -- NIGHT

Warren steps onto the porch. Graden digs into the earth.

WARREN

It's just a bird, leave it!

Graden stares at Warren, then drops his head in disappointment.

Warren remains motionless - his eyes well with tears.

WARREN (CONT'D)

I put it in the pillow case, but I didn't kill it!

GRADEN

I know.

Graden ignore's Warren's presence.

Warren runs to Graden, falls to his knees and helps dig the hole to bury the crow.

PRESENT DAY -- 2008

EXT. LAFAYETTE FOODS -- DUMPSTER -- DAY

Warren stares ahead. The crows crowd around the peanuts, pecking voraciously.

INT. DETROIT, APARTMENT -- MAIN ROOM -- NIGHT

Warren enters his apartment holding a bag of groceries from Lafayette Foods. The side of the bag has the Lafayette Food's logo and below it reads: "*Thank you, Thank you, Thank you,*" several times over.

Inside the kitchen he looks at his oversized wall calendar and the adjacent pull calendar - Warren examines tomorrow's date.

His finger points to February 28th, it reads:

"MAMA - Harmony Manor 4226 Rolling Hills, Pittsburgh."

INT. FORD EXPLORER (MOVING) -- DAY

It's overcast as Warren drives, leaving the city of Detroit behind. He turns on his cellphone and places it in the center console.

RADIO NEWS

Representative John Lewis, a Georgia Democrat and civil rights-era hero, formally reverses his endorsement, from Clinton to Obama for the Presidency. John Lewis is an American hero and a giant of the civil rights movement, Mr. Obama said in a statement issued after he arrived here for a campaign stop. I am deeply honored to have his support.

Warren turns to music. Bobby Hebb sings the acoustic version of "SUNNY."

On the seat next to him is a thermos, jar of instant coffee, and instant Cup Noodles.

Every so often, wearing worn glasses, he glances at a spread out map. He takes 1-76W to Harrisburg.

EXT. INTERSTATE 579 S -- DAY

Warren's Explorer turns onto exit 2A for I-579 S towards "Pittsburgh."

EXT. HARMONY MANOR ASSISTED LIVING -- PARKING LOT -- DAY

Warren drives through the grounds of a modern nursing home - he locates a spot and parks.

Warren parks his Explorer.

INT. HARMONY MANOR ASSISTED LIVING -- HALLWAY -- DAY

A NURSING AID escorts Warren to a room. She knocks on the doorjamb and pokes her head inside.

The institution makes an attempt at comfort with pictures and plants, but the sterile ambience of an "old folks" home remains.

NURSING AID

Mrs. Williams, you have a visitor.

INT. HARMONY MANOR ASSISTED LIVING -- MAMA'S ROOM -- DAY

Mama, now in her late 80's, one side of her face drops with paralysis, lifts her head and offers a crooked smile.

Mama's speech is slurred.

MAMA

I was wondering when you were gonna get here.

NURSING AID

I'll leave the two of you.

Warren enters the room. Mama glances out the window and points out with a trembling hand.

MAMA

The hummingbirds. There's a feeder outside. They all come for some sugar, but it's cold now...

She trails off... seems lost, but comes back strong.

MAMA (CONT'D)

I asked Glenda over and over, when
is that boy gonna come and visit
his Mama.

Warren sits on her footstool. Mama puts her hand on his face.

MAMA (CONT'D)

It's been a long time. Where you
been?

WARREN

Detroit.

MAMA

How's your studies, young man?

WARREN

School was a long time ago.

She pats him twice and pulls back her hand.

MAMA

I always knew you'd do good in
that. Always sneaking out on your
Papa. You keep running to that
school like it were a playground.

Suddenly, Warren grows apprehensive. Something's not right.

MAMA (CONT'D)

Your Papa couldn't get you to do a
stitch of work. I *know* you, Graden.

Warren sags under the weight of disappointment.

WARREN

Mama.

Mama resumes looking outside.

MAMA

Where do they all go?

Warren places his head in his hands and rocks himself. He
embraces Mama and leaves the room.

INT. HARMONY MANOR ASSISTED LIVING -- HALLWAY -- DAY

Warren wanders. He starts and stops. His breath caught
somewhere inside of him. Not sure where to go and what to do.
He sits in one of the chairs lining the hallway.

FORTY EIGHT YEARS AGO -- 1960

EXT. MISSISSIPPI SHACK -- COTTON FIELD -- DAY

Moving forward... Warren, 17, drags a ten foot sack behind - connected by a strap wrapped across his shoulder. He picks cotton and drops it in.

Graden, 13, falls into step, carrying his own sack. Graden is bigger and faster than Warren. He picks effortlessly.

WARREN
Where you been?

GRADEN
School.

WARREN
I figured.

Warren watches Graden's lips move silently.

WARREN (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

GRADEN
Memorizing the states.

WARREN
What for? You ain't ever gonna
leave this one.

GRADEN
You don't know that!

WARREN
Do too. Mississippi is where your
family is. You got a head full of
stuff you don't need.

GRADEN
You know there are places up north
where black men have jobs. In
Chicago they dress up, go to work,
and get paid just like white folks.

Warren struggles to keep up.

WARREN
There's places like that right here
in Mississippi. It don't mean
nothing to you, though.

GRADEN
Maybe it does.

WARREN
Now you hold on. All that schooling
is messing you up. At least my
behind don't got welts. Going to
school, shying away from the work,
ain't working for Papa.

Warren is momentarily distracted.

Papa closes in with a paddle in hand. He pulls Graden away.
Graden drops his sack as he is taken to the work shed.

Warren listens to the PADDLE SLAP against Graden. Warren
grimaces with every blow. He watches as...

Graden moves back into position - his eyes water from pain,
but not from tears. He remains unbroken.

GRADEN
School's important.

WARREN
Not getting whipped is important.

GRADEN
I'm going to college in Chicago. I
don't care what he does to me.

WARREN
You better watch that mouth of
yours. Papa may whip you, but
others will do worse. Emmett Till
was from up there, ended up beaten
and dead in the Tallahatchie.

Graden picks as fast as he can, leaving Warren behind.

THE PRESENT -- 2008

INT. HARMONY MANOR ASSISTED LIVING -- HALLWAY

Warren continues down the hall... he exits outside.

EXT. HARMONY MANOR ASSISTED LIVING -- ENTRANCE/EXIT -- DAY

A car continuously HONKS. Warren exits and walks towards the
parking lot. The source of the honking appears...

INT./EXT. ENTRANCE DRIVEWAY -- GLENDA'S SEDAN

Glenda, now in her late 60's, rolls down her window, waving her hand in the air. She appears perpetually aggravated; big frown, pursed lips.

GLENDA

Warren! Over here! Get in!

Warren sits in the sedan's back seat.

Etta, in her mid 60's, sits on the passenger side. Kindness in her eyes for Warren.

Etta leans over to give him a hug, her coordination doesn't work and Warren holds back. Etta lovingly takes his hand into hers for a brief moment, until he quickly retracts it.

EXT. HARMONY MANOR -- PARKING LOT -- MOMENTS LATER

Glenda's jaw clenches as she circles the lot.

GLENDA

If you're gonna start coming around you should tell us when. They call me when she gets visitors, you know. The elderly always getting taken for...

Beat.

GLENDA (CONT'D)

Where you living now?

ETTA

Glenda... I told you. He lives in Detroit.

GLENDA

(Scoffs)

Lord knows for how long... moving all over the country like a drifter... upsetting Mama. Never keeping in touch with your family.

ETTA

He's here now. We don't have to do this.

Glenda can barely contain herself.

WARREN

I was trying to do right by our
brother. Mama didn't need to know--

Glenda pounds the breaks - car lurches forward.

GLEENDA

Don't you tell me how to care for
Mama. You disappeared, you know!
You gave up that right!

WARREN

It's over. There's no more to
be done.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)

I'll never understand it.
Getting a bunch of old men
arrested.

WARREN

They murdered him.

GLEENDA

You think you've suffered more than
the rest of us?

WARREN

I was supposed to take care
of him.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)

Maybe you should have stayed
gone!

GLEENDA (CONT'D)

Christ is our Savior! Not Warren
Williams! You understand?

Glenda trembles with anger...

Warren gets out, he glances inside one more time. Glenda
refuses to meet his gaze. Warren shuts the door.

INT./EXT. FORD EXPLORER (PARKED) -- PARKING LOT

Warren approaches his car. He opens the door to sit inside.

ETTA (O.S.)

Warren!

Warren turns... Etta approaches.

ETTA (CONT'D)

I wish I knew you were coming... I
would have come alone.

WARREN

Didn't they call and report me?

ETTA

I don't know why she says half the stuff she does. You're not a visitor... you're family.

WARREN

How'd you know I live in Detroit?

ETTA

Warren? We spoke? We chatted after the final arrest was made.

Warren appears confused, causing Etta to be taken aback.

ETTA (CONT'D)

I gave you this address. We talked about how it felt, now that it's over...

WARREN

Okay. That's right...

ETTA

I've missed my brother.

Etta looks inside the Explorer. She views the reminders.

ETTA (CONT'D)

What's all this?

Etta is getting the picture.

WARREN

Reminders.

Etta's watchful eye settles on the center of the wheel.

ETTA

What's "Woman with no name?"

WARREN

I'm not sure.

ETTA

It says you, "Must remember?"

The horn HONKS. Etta turns to see Glenda parked and standing outside her car waiting.

ETTA (CONT'D)

Let's try to move on. Mama doesn't have much time left.

Etta wraps her arms around her stiff, closed-off brother.

ETTA (CONT'D)

The day I get you to hug me is a
day I'll rest peacefully.

Etta releases her grip and makes her way to Glenda.

INT./EXT. INTERSTATE 76N -- EXPLORER (MOVING) - NIGHTFALL

The grey sky darkens into night. Warren turns on the radio. WHFR 89.3 plays Nina Simone's of "I Want a Little Sugar in My Bowl" (LIVE) - *IT IS FINISHED.*

On his hand, written in pen, it reads "*Call Woman with no name - who is she? 555-602-6272.*"

SERIES OF SHOTS AT NIGHT

- Warren's Explorer passes under a sign: **1-75N to Detroit.**
- Warren fills the gas tank.
- Warren inside a fast food joint eating a burger.
- Warren drives through the night.

EXT./INT. APARTMENT -- NIGHT

He enters his dark apartment. He sits in his recliner without turning the lights on.

INT. LAFAYETTE FOODS -- GROCERY AISLE -- AFTERNOON

An ELDERLY MAN, 80's, tries to balance against his walker while pushing a grocery cart, moving slowly with uncertainty.

The Elderly Man drops a can of pickles onto the ground. It SMASHES loudly - pickles and juice fly everywhere.

Warren puts a new jar into the Elderly Man's cart and begins cleaning up the mess.

INT. LAFAYETTE FOODS -- CASH REGISTER

Lupe works the front register, while Alberto packs for her customers. They watch Warren help the Elderly Man.

INT. LAFAYETTE FOODS -- GROCERY AISLE

Warren places orange cones around the spill.

INT. LAFAYETTE FOODS -- CASH REGISTER

Alberto slides over to Lupe...

ALBERTO
(Spanish)
You know who he is, right? A real
dope dude. Check this out...

Alberto pulls out his smart phone.

INSERT:

INT. STUDIO DESK -- DETROIT NEWS WJBK

Anchor, HUEL PERKINS, 60's, reports from behind a news desk.

HUEL PERKINS
Warren Williams began the pursuit
of his brother's eight killers
thirty years after the racially
motivated murder was committed in
Mississippi.

INT. LAFAYETTE FOODS -- CASH REGISTER

Lupe watches with a mixture of raw emotion and awe.

LUPE
Our Warren?

Alberto nods.

INSERT SCREEN:

INT. STUDIO DESK -- DETROIT NEWS WJBK

HUEL PERKINS
A new trial was pursued at a
federal level. The prosecution,
along with members of the local
police department, had hidden
documents and interviews connected
to the case. New evidence has been
turned over to the FBI.

EXT. POLICE PERIMETER -- DANIEL OLSEN'S TRAILER

A police perimeter is drawn around an unkempt lawn with a
cracked driveway and pots of dead plants strewn about...

HUEL PERKINS (O.C.)

The video footage shows the arrest of Daniel Olsen, which happened here, in Detroit. He is the last man to be arrested. Seven of the total eight men involved in the crime were subsequently prosecuted as guilty and put behind bars.

Several NEWS TEAMS jockey for position and get close to the action. The LEAD OFFICER steps up broken cinder block stairs; he knocks on the door. Behind him, FOUR POLICE OFFICERS provide backup, with hands near their guns.

DANIEL OLSEN, in his 80's, bald, fragile with a *hare lip and cleft palate*, wearing pajama bottoms, no shirt and slippers... shuffles outside.

LUPE (O.C.)

He's a very old man--

ALBERTO (O.C.)

A murderer. Total KKK - white supremacists. He's getting his ass put in jail and Warren's the one that put them there!

INT. LAFAYETTE FOODS -- CASH REGISTER

Alberto hides the phone as Warren approaches, pushing the Elderly Man's cart.

Warren leaves the Elderly Man with Lupe and Alberto.

INT. BREAK ROOM - LATER

Several LAFAYETTE FOOD EMPLOYEES relax on break. Warren quietly eats his Cup Noodles.

Alberto arrives, grooving with his head phones on. He holds a Subway sandwich in his hand - he uses it as a microphone.

ALBERTO

*One, two, three!
My baby don't mess around
Because she loves me so
And this I know fo sho!*

The Employees focus on the youthful Alberto's antics. Alberto stands behind Warren and puts the headphones on him.

Warren listens to Outkast's, "Hey Ya!"

ALBERTO (CONT'D)

I know... a bit old school, but it
always gets me going.

Warren takes the headphone off.

ALBERTO (CONT'D)

I got my lady with these moves...
now I gotta keep all the others
away! Nah, just playing. Warren's
the real player! A certified old
school pimp!

Alberto puts the headphones back on and eats his sandwich.

EXT. LAFAYETTE FOODS -- GROCERY AISLE -- LATE AFTERNOON

Warren removes cans of green bean from a box stocking the
shelves while humming the Outkast tune, mumbles the lyrics...

WARREN

Hey ya, hey ya, hey ya...

He removes two cans of green beans and wanders the aisle.

EXT. LAFAYETTE FOODS -- GROCERY AISLE

Warren enters another aisle - seemingly lost. Alberto passes
with a stack of deconstructed boxes.

WARREN

I don't... know...?

Warren lifts the can into the air.

ALBERTO

The green beans? Over here.

Alberto escorts Warren to where he previously stood. Warren
places the cans on the shelf.

EXT. DUMPSTER -- CROWS

Warren deposits the trash into the dumpster. He throws
peanuts out for the crows. He looks at his hand and reads the
reminder written in pen:

"Call woman with no name - who is she? 555-602-6272."

It takes him a moment to find and dial his flip cell phone.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (O.S.)
Can you hear me?

WARREN
Yes, I hear you fine. Who is this?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (O.S.)
What kind of game you playing?

WARREN
I'm sorry... I--

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (O.S.)
I've done my best. If you're not interested in what I have to say, then leave me alone.

WARREN
I am. Please tell me... How do you know me?

Warren is blank.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN
(Agitated)
I saw the news report about your brother's killers. They gave me your number.

Beat.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I know someone... He may be one of those men.

WARREN
What's his name?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (O.S.)
Earl. And I know you'll say he's dead, but... I'm not so sure.

Warren's body stiffens

WARREN
When can we meet?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (O.S.)
As soon as possible. I'm up in Sudbury.

WARREN
Ontario?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (O.S.)
Yes.

WARREN
Is that where he is?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (O.S.)
No.

Warren returns into the store...

INT. LAFAYETTE FOODS -- STOCKROOM

Warren enters a cluttered stock room... he looks around for a pen and paper... he finds a marker and a newspaper -- he writes across the paper: "*Sudbury - Ontario.*"

WARREN
Wednesday?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN
What time?

WARREN
5 or 6?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN
There is a Petrol station off the first exit. On Regent.

He continues to write on the newspaper.

WARREN
Petrol station... exit at Sudbury.

CLICK.

WARREN (CONT'D)
You there?

No answer - the Unidentified Woman is gone.

Warren tucks the cellphone back into his pocket.

EXT. LAFAYETTE FOODS -- PARKING LOT -- DAY

It's sleeting rain. Warren and Lupe cross the lot heading in different directions.

Warren to the Explorer, Lupe to the bus stop.

Lupe holds a newspaper over her head, the rain beats down. The paper does no good. She is getting pummeled.

EXT./INT. PARKING LOT -- EXPLORER

Warren takes the information written on the newspaper and tapes it onto his wheel... notes of different shapes and sizes cover the inside of the vehicle. He drives out of the lot.

Lupe waves to Warren and runs to him. She knocks on the window... he opens the door.

LUPE

Can I have a ride? Bus is late...

Warren stares, follow by a reluctant nod.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Thank you. I need to watch my grandchildren. My daughter works nights. Her husband was deported.

Lupe sits in the vehicle, closes the door. Struck silent and dumbfounded as she locks eyes onto the inside of the vehicle...

The wash of notes posted/taped on dashboard and wheel.

INT. DETROIT STREETS -- EXPLORER (MOVING)

Warren takes Bagley Avenue towards southwest Detroit.

LUPE

Warren, do you have children?

Warren shakes his head.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Where you from?

WARREN

Mississippi.

LUPE

I'm from Mexico. I miss it even though my family is here. Do you miss Mississippi?

WARREN

No.

Lupe contemplates and makes a decision...

LUPE
I know who you are.
(Beat)
I saw the news. You went after
those bad men.

Warren breaks at a traffic light.

LUPE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry for all that happened to
you and your family. You are brave.

WARREN
Not really.

Warren's face strains.

Small bursts of disjointed segments rush forth:

SERIES OF SHOTS - ALL WARREN'S POV

- Lupe talking to Warren.
- Lupe worriedly stares at Warren, she reaches over him to put the car in park.
- Warren looks down at his cell phone. He can't reach it.
- A Vision of Graden now sits next to Warren, watching Warren. The Vision of Graden looks into the street - Warren follows his stare...
- A Vision of a Young Graden stands on the street staring back.
- Flashing lights.
- Lupe is in the rain flagging down a police car.
- Hospital ceiling.
- MRI scan.

INT. DETROIT RECEIVING HOSPITAL

Warren lies in a hospital bed. DOCTOR ATTAR, 50s, stares down at him. Screens divide him from the rest of the room.

DR. ATTAR
Mr. Williams? Can you hear me?

WARREN

Uh-huh.

DR. ATTAR

You're at Detroit Receiving Hospital. I'm Dr. Attar. Is there a history of dementia in your family?

Warren nods as he begins to digest his surroundings.

DR. ATTAR (CONT'D)

Your MRI reveals cortical atrophy. With additional tests we can ensure an exact diagnosis and rule out other causes, but you have definitive signs of dementia. It's possible it could be onset of Alzheimer's, but we have to get you to a Neurologist--

WARREN

Do you know where my car is?

DR. ATTAR

Police left information at the front. Let me find the nurse to walk you through the process, but it's not advisable to drive. We can help in calling a taxi for you to get home. If the diagnosis is as I suspect, you will need to talk over the best course of action with a Neurologist.

Dr. Attar pulls the curtain aside to flag down a nurse.

INT. HOSPITAL DESK -- MOMENTS LATER

Warren signs some papers. He is handed his wallet and cellphone. He places those items into his pocket.

EXT. TAXI -- IMPOUND LOT -- NIGHT

A taxi drops Warren off in front.

EXT. DETROIT IMPOUND LOT -- MORNING

Warren pays the cashier.

Warren exits the lot in the Explorer.

INT. DETROIT, BASEMENT APARTMENT -- MAIN ROOM -- NIGHT

Warren enters. He moves immediately into the kitchen.

He pulls down the packed box containing folders and notebooks from on top of the refrigerator. He unloads previously packed contents.

INSERTS:

- A photo from 1964 Mississippi. **Eight Men, mostly dressed in fine suits and shined shoes walk down courtroom stairs:**

PATRICK OLSEN ,in his 40s, with a bulldog face, leads the pack. He's follow by MARTY BAVON ,30's, goblin-like with bent yellow teeth.

BLAINE PLIMPTON, 30's, with pockmarked cheeks and PAUL PROUST, late 40's, the oldest of the group are followed by the red-headed cousins, BARRY and ROB TYWATER, both in their 20's.

Lagging behind, different than the rest, is DANIEL (40's) and Earl Olsen. They wear worn clothes, heads hung low.

- Graden William's 1964 autopsy folder and paperwork. It reads: "Deceased testicle's clipped, broken skull, cause of death, drowning."

- Maps, yellow notepad with notes, Graden's composition notebook... Warren runs his fingers over Graden's name written on the front. Something sticks out from behind...

- An autopsy photo of a ravaged body. Warren pushes it back inside.

- Lastly, a picture of Graden, face-down in the swamp.

LATER --

Warren rests on the recliner. Opposite from Warren, on a wrapped piece of furniture, sits a Vision of Graden.

GRADEN

You shouldn't be driving.

WARREN

It's the only way... to end this.

GRADEN

This ends when you decide.

Warren stands and yells.

WARREN

It's not my decision!

Graden's stare penetrates. Warren sits back on the recliner.

WARREN (CONT'D)

I'm trying to... let me just do
this. I have to... I'm very tired.
I need sleep.

Warren closes his eyes.

SOUNDS of the SWAMP emerge. The chitter and whistle of
insects. Grey heron's high-pitch croak along side a chorus of
frogs, then...

FADE TO:

EXT. MISSISSIPPI -- SWAMP -- DAY

SOUNDS of the SWAMP continue as we push in hovering above
stagnant water that grows tupelo and giant bald cypresses
displaying autumnal colors.

We venture further into the forested wetland and focus upon
what looks to be a shadow from the trees above. Moving in for
a closer inspection, it becomes clear it is a lifeless, naked
body floating face down in the algae and duckweed.

NEXT EARLY MORNING --

Morning light seeps into the basement room. Warren remains
asleep in the chair. The Vision of Graden has left.

Warren awakens.

EXT. KMART - DAY

Warren parks his Explorer. He walks inside.

INT. KMART FOOD COURT - DAY

Etta sits at a table with a cup of coffee cupped between her
hands. She rises and hugs him. At first, he doesn't respond.

Warren does his best to give a hug.

ETTA

(Shocked)

As I live and breathe... Warren
Williams!

They sit together.

ETTA (CONT'D)

I got you coffee, you want anything else?

A coffee and cake sits at an empty seat.

WARREN

I don't... this is good, Etta.

ETTA

After the matter at the nursing home, well it's just nice to see you. I'm glad you called.

Warren EXHALES with a WINCE.

ETTA (CONT'D)

Glenda's always been angry. She blames the world. Graden's not your fault. It doesn't matter he was out there to fetch you home. Those men had their eyes set on him, and they would have gotten to him anyway, if not that night then on some other.

Warren solemnly stares, she hasn't changed his mind.

ETTA (CONT'D)

This woman you're meeting. What if she isn't telling the truth?

WARREN

I have to see for myself.

ETTA

It doesn't sound right, especially seeing that he's dead. The police said so--

WARREN

Mississippi police.

ETTA

Well... I can't help wishing things were different for you. Easier. But I made my mind up. I watched you work from afar, but I am here for you brother. Anything you need. I did some research.

Etta pushes forward Warren's birth certificate... Warren opens it and examines the yellowed and aging document.

INSERT: *Standard Certificate of Live Birth. State of Mississippi.*

ETTA (CONT'D)
Surprised I held onto it?

Warren nods.

ETTA (CONT'D)
You'll need this to get over the border. Also, I was thinking... you should clean out some of the notes in your car, the ones that seem older and don't mean anything to you.

She stares at Warren sipping his coffee. He nods.

ETTA (CONT'D)
How's your memory?

Warren takes an exhaustive breath...

ETTA (CONT'D)
That good huh? Good thing you called when you did. You're gonna need my help, even if you don't remember needing my help.

Etta chuckles. Warren manages a crooked smile.

LATER IN THE DAY --

The kitchen is cleared out - all reminder notes removed. Warren's duffle bag is packed on the kitchen table.

Warren wears his coat and hat. He counts cash and leaves it in a piece of paper, fashioned to an envelope on the table. He scribbles "Landlord" onto it.

He picks up a single reminder note left next to the phone:
"JOB - Lafayette foods - 1565 E. Lafayette - 555-1212.

He dials.

WARREN
This is Warren Williams.

Warren listens...

WARREN (CONT'D)
Yes. I'm okay. I'm calling because I'm going out of town...
(MORE)

WARREN (CONT'D)
I can't continue. I'm sorry for any
problems that may cause...

Moments later... he loads the investigation materials into
the "Lafayette Foods" grocery bag.

He adds: a camera, thermos, instant coffee, and several
containers of Cup Noodles. He picks up the bag and duffle.

INT. DETROIT, APARTMENT -- MAIN ROOM

Warren exits the apartment - the lock SNAPS. The keys slide
under the door.

Out the apartment window. It's a grim, grey morning. Warren
loads the Explorer, gets inside, and drives away.

INT./EXT TRAVELEX CURRENCY SERVICE -- STREET -- LATER

Warren exits with an envelope of Canadian currency in hand
and gets into the Explorer.

INT./EXT AMBASSADOR BRIDGE -- EXPLORER (MOVING) -- DAY

Warren crosses the large blue, steel structure suspended over
the Detroit River.

On the center of the steering wheel the ripped piece of
newspaper hangs, reading: "Sudbury, Ontario."

INT./EXT. CUSTOMS -- EXPLORER -- DAY

A CUSTOMS OFFICER, 50s, glances inside Warren's Explorer.

Warren hands his identification card and his birth
certificate over. Next to him a road map has been unfurled
and the notes have been somewhat cleaned up.

CUSTOMS OFFICER
Where you headed to?

WARREN
Sudbury.

CUSTOMS OFFICER
For what purpose and how long?

WARREN
Vacation. A couple weeks.

Customs Officer hands back Warren's identification.

CUSTOMS OFFICER
Got your map ready to go. Don't see too many of those.

WARREN
Trying to check how long the drive is? My eyes aren't working good... lost my glasses.

The Custom Officer softens.

CUSTOMS OFFICER
Seven hours. Your best bet is to take the 401 East to the 400 North to Sudbury.

Warren grabs for a pen and quickly writes on a note.... He finishes, placing the note on the wheel.

CUSTOMS OFFICER (CONT'D)
Welcome to Canada.

Warren "nods a thanks" and drives into Canada.

INT./EXT. CANADIAN LANDSCAPE -- EXPLORER (MOVING) -- DAY

Warren drives by different landscapes as cloudy weather churns through the day. Toronto rises on the west as the Explorer turns away from it - heading north.

RADIO COMMENTATOR (O.S.)
A three day severe weather alert for the Ontario region begins today February 20, 2008. For the next three days a tricky system is tracking in, set to bring a blast of wintry weather; heavy snow and icy precipitation with below freezing temperatures.

He drives through several small towns, Barrie and McDougall.

An **animal road sign** exhibits **ducks crossing** the road.

EXT. SUDBURY, PETRO-PASS TRUCK STOP -- EXPLORER -- DAY

Warren parks at a large truck stop with several buildings containing: restaurants, convenient stores, showers, and gas.

INT. PETRO-PASS TRUCK STOP -- SHOWER AREA -- DAY

Warren, with duffle bag in tow, enters a depressing, dark waiting room where TRUCK DRIVERS - mostly men, some women - watch television and smoke cigarettes.

INT. PETRO-CANADA TRUCK STOP -- SHOWER/BATHROOM

Warren enters a small bathroom with shower, toilet, and sink with mirror. His duffle placed next to a clean towel and washcloth.

LATER --

Warren exits the shower and dresses in layers. He wipes his hand across the steamed mirror. He stares at his face - the face of an old man.

EXT. PETRO-PASS TRUCK STOP -- CONVENIENCE STORE -- LATER

Warren pumps gas into the Explorer's tank.

INT. PETRO-PASS TRUCK STOP -- CONVENIENCE STORE -- MOMENTS

Anything and everything you could imagine is available for purchase: clothes, stuffed moose, and snow globes.

Warren tries on a pair of readers, followed by a sweatshirt with the "Canada" logo, gloves, packages of Cup Noodles, and a hot coffee. He refills his thermos with hot water.

EXT. PETRO-PASS TRUCK STOP PARKING -- EXPLORER -- DUSK

The Explorer sits in a parking space overlooking a barren field with a cluster of trees gathered to one side.

Warren drops off the purchased goods into his car. He looks at his notepad: "*Sudbury. 5pm.*"

INT. PETRO-PASS CONVENIENCE STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

Warren sits with notepad in hand at a small seating area nursing a cup of coffee. He watches out the window: various big rigs, trucks, and cars pull in and out of the truck stop.

LYMAN, 70's, large man with baggy Levis' that sag in the ass - wears oversized glasses as he fills his Kia Sportage's tank. His head and shoulders bent downward exhibiting a personal inadequacy.

Warren's CELL PHONE RINGS.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (O.S.)
Are you sitting at the booth?

WARREN
Yes.

The phone CLICKS.

The Unidentified Woman, 50s, with a strained look and red-hair exits the Kia and speaks to Lyman.

Lyman watches the Unidentified Woman cross over to the convenience store. She adjusts her hair as she enters.

The Unidentified Woman enters the convenience store and sits in the empty seat across from Warren.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN
You Warren?

Warren nods.

The Unidentified Woman was once pretty, but has gotten older; time and lack of care has had it's way with her. She wears too much eyeliner and portions of her skin have been picked out.

She is full of nervous energy and avoids eye contact

WARREN
I didn't get your name?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN
Does it matter?

Unidentified Woman glances around the store.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (CONT'D)
You alone?

Warren nods.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (CONT'D)
Lyman didn't want me to come. I was in rehab for a short bit. Had to take a break. I was afraid when I came in I'd see news cameras. I'm gonna get something to drink.

The Unidentified Woman walks to retrieve a soda fountain drink... she returns to Warren.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (CONT'D)
I didn't bring money... I can go
out and ask Lyman...

She doesn't go out and ask... she waits. She stares.

Warren pats himself down to find his wallet. He pulls out a
Canadian five note. Miriam takes it without hesitation.

She pays the CASHIER and returns to sit across from Warren.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (CONT'D)
You see him out there?

Warren glances out the window at Lyman, as Lyman turns the
page of a book.

WARREN
Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN
Reading?

WARREN
Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN
He sure likes books...

Miriam opens something below the table top. Her hands shake
as she removes the plastic top and straw. She pours two
airplane sized bottles of liquor into her fountain drink.

She sips through the straw voraciously.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (CONT'D)
I didn't offer any. Sorry.

WARREN
Don't drink booze.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN
What's that for?

Referring to the notepad next to Warren.

WARREN
So I remember everything.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN
You got problems with that?

Warren doesn't respond.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (CONT'D)

I do because I barely sleep. And I'm talking for days on end... no shut-eye. You get through detox and then you realize you can't sleep. Then you wonder why you tried to get sober.

She removes a prescription bottle from her purse.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (CONT'D)

They're prescription. My nerves.

She takes two of the pills.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (CONT'D)

I keep telling myself it couldn't be true, but... its been on my mind for a long time... keeps me awake. Never sat right--

WARREN

What didn't?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN

Earl. That's why we are here? Right? You know, he hasn't always lived here. He's from the south. Somewhere way down. His father passed away months back. He was old and whatnot, but he was in jail. That's something that you tell someone you live with. Someone you love. Anyway, it was the beginning of our end. The end. He said I asked too many questions... Kicked me out like a dog. Like a fucking dog. Felt like shit.

Unidentified Woman's breath is taken away with a GASP, she lays her head on the table.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (CONT'D)

He moved to the place up north. We had a place not far from here. I live with Lyman now. He tries hard... wouldn't hurt a fly.

WARREN

Would Earl?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN

What?

WARREN

Hurt a fly?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN

He'd have to, to do the things he's done. Wouldn't he? If he's the one, which I don't know if he is? You can figure that out. It seems like you've been good at it.

She knocks her forehead a few times on the hard surface, she rubs it and turns onto her cheek.

The attractive CASHIER, 20s, stocks the shelves.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (CONT'D)

That can get you everything... I used to be young like her.

The Unidentified Woman uses her index finger to point and follow the Cashier through the store.

WARREN

What about Earl?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN

He didn't go to the funeral. Weird. He mentioned his dad's first name was Daniel.... So that was weird... a person being named two of the same names.

WARREN

What's he calling himself?

Tiring...her words begin to slur.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN

Earl Daniel. So his dad would be Daniel Daniel... would have been. He got angry... He went back... up north...left me. With nothing.

She takes her jacket off.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (CONT'D)

(Whispers)

I would like to have some peace and whatnot... Once I get through this bad patch, I want to live a good life. Feel more better than bad.

WARREN

What's your name?

Her head drops.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN
(Whispers a chuckle)
Not on the menu.

She reaches her hand over to Warren's maimed hand.

WARREN
(Urgency)
You have an address for him?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN
Outside of Hearst. Been there once.
Hope-something... There's no hope.

Warren retracts his hand. He removes his glasses to write information onto his notepad.

The Unidentified Woman disappears into the ladies room - leaving her coat behind.

Moments pass.

Warren pulls the Unidentified Woman's coat to him and removes the pill bottle. It reads: MIRIAM GANGE

The Unidentified Woman will now be MIRIAM.

Warren writes her name onto his yellow pad.

Warren glances out at the Kia meeting up with Lyman's staring directly at him.

Warren pockets the pill bottle and exits the store. Leaving the coat behind. At the same time...

EXT. PETRO-PASS CONVENIENCE STORE - DUSK

Lyman rises out of the car with book in hand.

WARREN
She's in the bathroom. I don't know
how long...

Lyman puts the book into the car races inside. Warren follows.

INT. PETRO PASS/BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Warren watches as Lyman tries to open the bathroom door.

Lyman KNOCKS. Nothing.

Warren quickly crosses to the front desk.

Warren follows the Cashier to the back and grabs Miriam's coat bringing it with him.

The Cashier uses her keys to open the locked door.

Warren looks on as Lyman enters. Miriam is on the toilet, she leans against the wall, it holds her up.

CASHIER

Should I call an ambulance?

LYMAN

No. Don't do that! No, she's had the flu. Been sick. Give me a minute. One second. Miriam... Miriam... wake up!

Lyman makes sure Miriam is properly covered. Miriam MOANS.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

Everything is fine now.

The Cashier rolls her eyes and moves away from the door.

EXT. PETRO-PASS CONVENIENCE STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Warren helps Lyman bring Miriam out to the car. Lyman opens the passenger side door and places Miriam inside.

Warren hands Miriam's jacket over and the prescription bottle.

LYMAN

She take any?

WARREN

Maybe two.

Lyman feels Miriam's pockets. He removes the vodka bottles.

LYMAN

God dammit.

Warren walks away from the scene. He crosses to...

EXT. PETRO-PASS TRUCK STOP PARKING -- EXPLORER -- DUSK

The sun drops behind the horizon. Warren looks in his notebook, he reads "Hearst" - he transfers it to a Post-it note and sticks it onto the wheel: "Hearst, Ontario."

He continues to read his notebook: "Hope?"

And then reads a note: "Call Etta/Sister - 555-555-1414."

He feels his pockets. He dials his cellphone.

WARREN

Etta? I had to buy new reading glasses. I couldn't see the map and lost the others.

ETTA (O.S.)

That's to be expected at your age. Reading glasses come and go. If you had GPS you could plug it in.

WARREN

I met her. She said he lives outside of Hearst, Ontario. Hope or something like that?

ETTA

I'll look around the area and see if I can book a room. On the computer now.

WARREN

Nothing fancy.

ETTA

I see a town called Hearst, but I don't see anything called Hope.

WARREN

I'll drive through the night, gonna take a quick nap though.

ETTA (O.S.)

I've located a boarding house next to a surplus store. I'll see if they have a vacancy... it's a long drive for you.

Warren closes his eyes. He shivers. He opens them.

WARREN

It's cold up here.

ETTA (O.S.)
 You still think you're in
 Mississippi after all these years.

WARREN
 Mississippi.

ETTA (O.S.)
 Warren, where will you go when this
 is over?

Warren looks at the note in his hand - "*Etta.*"

WARREN
 Etta?

ETTA (O.S.)
 I'm still here. You didn't
 answer... Where will you go when
 you're done up there?

WARREN
 It doesn't matter. I spent most of
 my life doing nothing. Doing
 nothing is easy to go back to.

Warren watches a murder of crows swarm a tree.

EXT. PETRO-PASS TRUCK STOP -- FIELD -- DUSK

The final blue before darkness takes the sky. We watch Warren
 at a distance as he walks towards the gathering of trees.

Crows swarm into the air - land on the adjacent trees, only
 to swarm again - like ephemeral art or fireworks in the sky.

Warren stands beneath the spectacle.

INT. EXPLORER (PARKED) -- NIGHTFALL

The Vision of Graden sits in the driver's side.

Warren gets in on the passenger side. He trembles from the
 cold, pouring hot water into his Cup Noodles and stirs them.
 He puts them close to his face and warms his hands on it.

GRADEN
 You suffer, my brother.

WARREN
 (Too much to bear)
 You're the one that suffered.

The crows settle in the trees.

Off Warren...

FORTY FOUR YEARS AGO -- 1964

EXT. MISSISSIPPI SHACK -- 1941 FORD FARM TRUCK -- DAY

Warren backs the truck away from the shack - GEARS GRINDING.

Graden watches, sitting in the passenger seat.

Warren notices Graden, watching him. He's annoyed by this.

Graden turns away, but continues with an unobtrusive eye.

INT./EXT. MISSISSIPPI TOWN ROAD -- 1941 FARM TRUCK (MOVING)

Warren's brow furrows. He clenches the wheel.

Graden relaxes, kicks his feet up and enjoys the ride...

An oncoming dark blue Pontiac GTO, filled with WHITE MEN veer in their direction. DEWEY, 20's, a local, drives the GTO.

Warren hits the breaks. The truck SCREECHES to a halt. He adjusts the gears in attempt to move forward, the truck SPUTTERS.

GRADEN

You want me to drive?

WARREN

No! Papa asked me. Not you!

Warren continues on at the wheel.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI TOWN -- OLSEN'S STORE -- DAY

Warren parks at the side of the store.

Patrick Olsen smokes a cigar as he stands out front talking to Paul Proust and Marty Bavon in a black sedan.

He notices Warren and Graden and motions for them to head to the back.

Warren nods and follows instructions.

MOMENTS LATER --

INT. OLSEN'S STORE -- DAY

Warren enters the back, followed by Graden. Patrick Olsen arrives through the front.

Earl Olsen sits by the cotton at the scales. He watches on...

Segregation signs - dividing the bathroom and fountain into "COLORED PEOPLE" and "WHITES."

WARREN

Hello sir, my name is Warren--

PATRICK OLSEN

You're James Willams's son.

WARREN

Yes sir, he's sick and sent me this way with the cotton.

Graden steps forward.

WARREN (CONT'D)

This is my brother, Graden.

Patrick Olsen ignores Graden.

PATRICK OLSEN

Bring it on in. Wait in back when you're done.

Warren and Graden carry loads of cotton inside. Patrick Olsen's WORKERS weigh the cotton as each bag comes. Earl Olsen assists.

EXT. OLSEN'S STORE -- 1941 TRUCK -- LATER

Warren and Graden wait outside. Graden is visibly annoyed by the process...

Patrick Olsen steps out, waving Warren in.

INT. OLSENS STORE

Warren enters, followed by Graden.

PATRICK OLSEN

Your old man knows how to run a field, does a good job with the cotton. Them bags are pretty even for measure. I can give a dollar and eight-five cents on the bag.

(MORE)

PATRICK OLSEN (CONT'D)
That's an even twenty dollars for
the lot.

Patrick Olsen reaches in his pocket and starts counting off
dollar bills.

GRADEN
We brought fourteen sacks, sir.

Warren stiffens at his brother's pronouncement.

PATRICK OLSEN
Yup, don't worry about it. We
counted them.

GRADEN
But that ain't right, sir. A dollar
eighty-five a sack is twenty-five
dollars and ninety cents.

Patrick Olsen's expression darkens. His Workers and Earl
Olsen tune into the conversation.

PATRICK OLSEN
(Amazed)
You say I'm cheating ya?

GRADEN
No, sir, a mistake. I can show you?

Warren steps in front of Graden.

WARREN
Please, pay him no mind, sir.

Patrick Olsen is confused. Taken aback...

PATRICK OLSEN
Don't pay him no mind? That's an
odd request considering that he
just called me a cheater or an
idiot? Now listen here, I done
right by your old man. I dealt with
him for a lot of years and always
been fair. I don't need some boy
coming to my store to insult me. I
can't understand it. After all I've
done for you people.

Graden stands still - he's not backing away. Warren turns to
Graden, his eyes pleading: say no more.

WARREN
 (Under his breath)
 Go back to the truck. This ain't
 the time to get fancy.

Graden leaves.

Warren faces Patrick Olsen.

PATRICK OLSEN
 (Confiding)
 You know, I'm the only man in town
 that will buy cotton from a nigger.
 I hate to say this, but I imagine
 your father is gonna tan your hide
 something awful when you gone back
 to him with a truck full of cotton
 and no money.

He turns his back on Warren.

PATRICK OLSEN (CONT'D)
 I'll tell you what. I will give you
 thirteen dollars for your father's
 sake and you can be on your way.

Warren stares at the back of Daniel Olsen.

INT. 1941 FARM TRUCK (MOVING) -- MOMENTS LATER

Graden watches Warren drive through town and out onto a
 country road.

GRADEN
 He's cheating us!

WARREN
 Don't you think I know that!
 That's right! You want to go back
 there and talk some more? Maybe
 we'll get nothing instead of
 thirteen, and maybe you'll get a
 beating out of it too.

Warren stares ahead...

PRESENT DAY -- 2008

INT. EXPLORER (PARKED) -- NIGHT

The Vision of Graden is gone.

The Kia pulls up adjacent to the Explorer.

Lyman rolls down his window. Warren does the same.

LYMAN
You staying up in Hearst?

WARREN
Yep. A boarding house.

Warren watches Miriam readjust her positioning in the passenger seat - she's only partly awake.

LYMAN
You know her name... the prescription bottle?

Warren is unreadable.

LYMAN (CONT'D)
You gonna call the police?

WARREN
Not yet.

Lyman thinks hard before he speaks.

LYMAN
Could you keep her out of it?

WARREN
You speaking for her?

LYMAN
This man has nothing but problems.
She's fragile and on probation.

WARREN
It will take what it takes.

LYMAN
(Incredulous)
She came here to help you.

WARREN
I just met her. Know nothing about her. You know where he lives?

Lyman SCOFFS.

LYMAN
I don't know nothing.

Lyman rolls up his window and pulls out to the main road.

Warren starts the car in an effort to warm up. Closes his eyes. Sleeps until...

A heavy glare of light shines through Warren's window. An eighteen wheeler rolls by with it's high-beams blasting at the Explorer until it turns past.

Warren wakes. He looks at the clock... 12:22A.

The Post it note on the steering wheel: *Hearst, Ontario.*

WARREN

Hearst.

Warren puts on his "Canada" sweatshirt with maple leaf.

He reaches into the visor and removes Visine - he drops liquid into each eye.

He makes a cup of instant coffee.

Warren puts reading glasses on and examines the map.

He puts on gloves, drops into gear and pulls out. Warren turns on the radio... music plays... he turns the channel... RADIO NEWS plays on the radio in the background.

EXT. ONTARIO HIGHWAY 144 N. -- EXPLORER (MOVING) -- NIGHT

Warren takes an exit onto the Ontario ON 144 N.

Animal road signs exhibit **deer crossing** the road.

He turns on his wipers, a light snow hits his windshield.

INT. EXPLORER (MOVING) -- NIGHT

Headlights passing by, few and far between, mostly trucks.

INT./EXT. FORD EXPLORER (MOVING) -- NIGHT

Warren continues driving. Sleet taps against the windshield.

The **animal road sign** exhibits **moose crossing**.

Driving this way...

Suddenly - a black object smacks into his window shield.

Warren turns too quickly.

The Explorer skids and swerves. The two front wheels fall into a trench cut on the side of the highway.

EXT. FORD EXPLORER - TRENCH -- NIGHT

The Explorer tilts forward. Warren opens the door and falls into the snow.

The wind HOWLS wildly.

He climbs from the trench, onto the snowy land. He stares at the windshield. It's cracked, there's blood and black feathers.

The Vision of Graden stands next to Warren. Warren walks out into a field to nowhere.

The land is far-reaching. In the distance is a forest. Warren walks randomly in that direction.

GRADEN
(Yelling)
Where are you headed?

Warren turns.

The Vision of Graden stands across the trench, on the highway. He motions for Warren to follow him.

WARREN
I know where I'm going.

GRADEN
This way!

WARREN
Leave me alone.

Warren continues his own way. Leaving Graden behind.

GRADEN
It's not time yet.

WARREN
What?

GRADEN
You know, brother. It's not time.

Warren pauses and considers, staring out into the open land - WIND RUSTLES.

He changes direction and forges toward Graden, sliding awkwardly down and then back up onto the road.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- LATER

Warren watches the back of Graden's head as he follows him along the side of the highway.

Graden turns on occasion to watch Warren's progress.

Time passes.

An eighteen wheeler flies by.

Warren raises a hand with some effort...

It keeps moving.

Warren sits on the ground.

WARREN
I'll rest a bit now.

Warren stares up at Graden and holds his gaze for a moment. He stares back down at his hands.

WARREN (CONT'D)
I can barely feel them.

Warren shivers.

WARREN (CONT'D)
Graden?

Warren looks up...

GEORGE, 30s, Anishinaabe/Obijiwe, in a mechanic's uniform covered by an army parka, stands over him. Next to him, EUGENE and JOE, 7, THE TWINS.

GEORGE
You go into the ditch back there?

WARREN
Yes.

GEORGE
Okay.

Warren looks behind... shockingly, he's not accomplished any significant distance from the Explorer.

INT. TOW TRUCK, HIGHWAY -- NIGHT

George backs the tow truck up towards the Explorer.

A Canadian Army cap rests on the dashboard Warren sits in the passenger side. The Twins are in the back seat.

All arching their heads in unison watching Georges's precision driving.

George opens the door of the tow truck.

Warren makes a move to get out.

GEORGE
Stay in the truck.

George shuts the door behind him.

EXT. HIGHWAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- George connects the tow truck to the Explorer's rear and pulls it out.
- George unhitches the tow truck and moves it to the front.
- George stares into the front windshield and sees bird feathers and blood.
- He finds Warren's glove on the ground.
- George pulls away with the Explorer in tow.

INT. TOW TRUCK -- NIGHT

The Twins sleep in back as George drives. George watches Warren, taking his eyes away from the road every now and then to look across at Warren.

Warren struggles to keep his eyes open.

GEORGE
What happened?

WARREN
I think a bird smashed into the window causing me to lose control of the truck?

George pulls a black feather out of his pocket and places it onto the dashboard.

GEORGE
Or the truck hit into the bird
causing it to die...
(Beat)
Where you headed to?

WARREN
I'm not sure.

GEORGE
Who is Graden?

WARREN
My brother.

George slows the tow truck...

GEORGE
Where is he?

Warren leans back

WARREN
Dead.

The tow truck pushes ahead.

EXT. EABAMETOONG FIRST NATION - NIGHT

The tow truck makes it way down a rural road with small homes and trailers... some lit by porch lights.

GEORGE
You can sleep inside.

They pull up to a dimly lit trailer.

INT. EABAMETOONG FIRST NATION -- TRAILER -- MOMENTS LATER

Warren lies on a couch. George deposits first Eugene and then Joe, on the adjacent couch and floor, respectively.

George lights a fire in a small wood stove. He removes burning charcoal, placing it on the hearth pad to cool.

GEORGE
(Softly spoken in
Anishinaabemowin)
(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 We offer our prayers, tobacco, and
 out hearts. Thank you for the
 Grandfathers and Grandmothers of
 yesterday, today and tomorrow.

He removes tobacco from a pouch and scatters it into a bowl.
 He places the bowl on top of the stove.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 (Softly spoken in
 Anishinaabemowin)
 Thank you spirits of the winds,
 water, fire and earth.

He marks the boys head with the cool piece of charcoal.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 (Softly spoken in
 Anishinaabemowin)
 Thank you spirits of the north,
 east, south and west. Please help
 us to live a good life.

He moves to mark Warren. Warren blocks his hand.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 Helps brother's spirit leave limbo.

Warren lets go. George marks Warren's face with charcoal and
 takes leave...

Warren watches Eugene's chest rise and fall - taking comfort.

He closes his eyes and opens them.

Watching Eugene's chest rise and fall.

Warren closes his eyes.

SOUNDS of the SWAMP rise.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI SWAMP VISION -- NIGHT

SOUNDS from the SWAMP continue... we push through water
 tupelo and bald cypress trees into the center of the swamp.
 Graden's body floats face down.

INT. TRAILER -- KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM -- DAWN

Warren awakens. His face covered with charcoal markings.

A soft light radiates from kitchen. The Twins sleep soundly. Both of their faces marked with charcoal.

The couch he lies upon is in a small den that opens into the kitchen.

Warren rises, joining George who putters around in the kitchen.

WARREN
(Referring to charcoal
marking)
This work?

GEORGE
Won't hurt. Boys are younger, more
open to the walking spirits.

George shrugs his shoulders.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
When did your brother pass on?

WARREN
Forty-four years ago.

GEORGE
Long time in limbo.

Warren flinches, barely. He wants to change the subject. He recovers with a glance over at the Twins.

WARREN
Those boys got a mama?

GEORGE
Dead. Cancer.

George closely examines Warren.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
You ever been in war?

WARREN
No.

GEORGE
Eats at the mind. Sticks to you. On
you. Death. With death always at
your door... you learn to live in
fear. People don't want to be
around it. They run from it. Those
boys...

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)
when it became just me and them,
helped me find life's direction
again... Peace. Without them I'd be
fucked.

WARREN
Not everyone has a choice.

George nods.

GEORGE
Maybe so, although it is a lonely
life with no peace. That is until
The Creator has decided the end has
come for you... You and the spirit
who walks with you. Maybe you were
already taken a long time ago. It's
hard to say.

George walks over to the sleeping Twins. He sits with them,
softly jostling them awake.

INT. BATHROOM

Warren enters the small adjacent bathroom. He wipes his face
and rids himself of the dark black, charcoal markings.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Warren returns to the kitchen. The Twins sit, each eating Cup
Noodles.

GEORGE
Breakfast?

George holds up a styrofoam cup for Warren.

EXT. TRAILER -- JUNK YARD -- MORNING

The first morning light barely peeks through the trees beyond
as Warren follows George out into a yard filled with trucks
and car parts.

EXT. JUNK YARD -- GARAGE

The Explorer is raised on a jack. The front tire is replaced.
The old tire sits adjacent, mangled and crushed.

WARREN
How much do I owe?

GEORGE
It's a used tire. Old rim.

WARREN
And the tow? Labor?

GEORGE
I was driving this way. Picked up
the boys from their grandmothers.

Warren opens his wallet - pulls several twenties and hands them over. George takes what Warren offers.

INT./EXT. GARAGE -- EXPLORER -- MOMENTS LATER

Warren backs out from the garage with George and Twins looking on. He puts the Explorer into park.

Warren checks over his yellow notepad. It reads: "Hope?"

He brakes next to George.

WARREN
You know of a place called Hope?

GEORGE
We live in Eabametoong. White folk call it Fort Hope, but it is not our name. Nearby there is a mountain called Great Mountain - Kitchi Wajiw - White folk call it Hope mountain... they like to rename things to take for their own.

He points into the distance.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Kitchi Wajiw is not part of the reserve. Road to the mountain heads northwest. People go there to get lost. Hearst is to the East.

Warren scribbles in his yellow notebook - drawing a small map.

George steps to his truck, he returns with Warren's glove and hands it over to Warren and walks away.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(To the Twins)
Let's go.

George and The Twins proceed to the trailer. George turns back toward Warren.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Don't kill anymore birds!

Warren nods. George nods back. George and The Twins enter the motorhome. He closes the door behind them.

INT./EXT. EABAMETOONG FIRST NATION -- EXPLORER (MOVING)

Small houses and trailers sit far apart in a random mix. Electric lines and their posts loom large. The town center has little in offerings: only a few stores and town clinic.

EXT. FORD EXPLORER (MOVING)-- HIGHWAY -- MORNING

Warren merges back onto the highway heading East.

EXT. EXIT TO HEARST - FORD EXPLORER (MOVING) -- MORNING

Heavy, dark, clouds fill the sky. The Explorer exits the highway into the small town of Hearst.

Warren parks in the center of town and listens to his cellphone message...

ETTA (O.S.)
I made a reservation at the local
boarding house. Off Main on Queen.

Warren writes on the notepad.

EXT. HEARST, MAIN STREET -- FOR EXPLORER (MOVING) -- MORNING

Warren passes modest storefronts, mostly occupied by mom-and-pop shops & restaurants - a blue collar flashback to yesteryear.

ETTA (O.C.)
They have one room left, so check
in as soon as you arrive. It's next
to a store called Greeny's Depot.

Canadian flags hang from lamp posts.

PEDESTRIANS moving about are bundled in winter wear.

INT./EXT. QUEEN STREET -- FORD EXPLORER -- MORNING

The Explorer turns onto a side street and parks in front of Greeny's Depot with mural of forest painted across the front.

ETTA (O.S.)

Call me. As soon as you get this.

He unloads bags, puts his notebook into his brown paper, research bag. Makes his way next door to...

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE -- MORNING

Warren rings the BELL of a large Victorian brown brick home in neglected condition.

A moment passes.

EDWARD, 50s, answers the door. A stocky, small man, hobbit-like - breathing heavily. His hair is long, a reddish grey. He wears a "Fu Manchu" mustache.

DOGS BARK out back.

WARREN

I'm Warren--

EDWARD

Oh, you betcha. Wasn't sure when you'd arrive. I'm headed out, but will show you up real quick.

The DOGS continue to BARK. Edward moves to the side making room for Warren in the foyer.

INT. WAITING ROOM -- BOARDING HOUSE -- MORNING

A spartan waiting room with a small colonial writing desk and several straight back chairs give way to a narrow stairway to the second floor.

Warren removes his hat and gloves.

Edward notices Warren's hand, but quickly averts his eyes.

EDWARD

My parents lived here for forty years. After my father died, my mother turned it into a bed and breakfast... Once she passed on, I took over. Now it's a boarding house.

(MORE)

EDWARD (CONT'D)
Youse certainly wouldn't want to taste my cooking. There's a small kitchenette in your room.

BARKING is nonstop.

Edward stares at Warren's hand.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
That's Buddy and Buster. Beagles. They saw me packing up and they're ready to run. They'll shut up soon enough. Taking some folks hunting for snowshoe hair. You a hunter?

WARREN
No.

Edward leads and Warren follows as they climb the narrow stairway to the top.

EDWARD
Dolores cleans in the mornings. If youse don't want your room cleaned, put the sign on your door at night or else you'll wake up finding Dolores.

Edward chuckles.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE -- SECOND FLOOR

A slim hallway that connects six rooms - all doors are closed except for a shared bathroom at the end.

EDWARD
We're full to capacity. Got a couple snowshoers... you snowshoe?

WARREN
No.

EDWARD
Washroom at end of hall. If the door's locked, someone needs privacy. And if youse need privacy, lock the door or else you'll get unwanted visitors.

Edward stops at the door closest to the stairs and opens with a key that he hands over to Warren.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE -- WARREN'S ROOM

A twin bed with a patchwork bedspread, two pleather, olive green chairs, and a dresser with colonial flourishes.

Along one side is a kitchenette: consisting of a mini-refrigerator, microwave, and mugs.

Warren drops the duffle and grocery bag on the bed.

EDWARD

There's a squall out there that's surely shaping into a storm. Once in a while a real bugger rolls around, locks us in for days. Stock up in the store. Never know how long it will last, eh? Good for the folks that like to cross country ski... but not for everyone else. You ski?

WARREN

No.

Warren stares out from one of two large windows. He puts his hand over the crack - cold air shoots through a stuck window.

EDWARD

We'll get someone up here to fix that. Your sister said you'll be here for a week and decide from there, eh? I told her cash only.

Warren takes out some Canadian cash from his wallet.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Two-fifty loonie will do ya.

Warren hands some bills over.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Pleasure doing business with youse.

Edward exits into the hallway counting the money. A "DO NOT DISTURB" sign swings.

Warren hangs it on the outside, shuts it, and locks it.

Warren empties the grocery bag - placing the **brown paper research bag** on one of the pleather chairs. He removes his camera, coffee, and Cup Noodles - placing these items on the counter.

INT. MAIN STREET -- FORD EXPLORER (MOVING) -- DAY

Warren drives down Main Street and turns into...

INT. GROCERY STORE -- AISLE -- MOMENTS LATER

A modest, small town grocery store - a few LOCALS glance in Warren's direction. A new face in town.

He picks up groceries and a local Hearst, tourist's map and cashes out.

INT. PARKING LOT -- FORD EXPLORER (PARKED)

Warren wears reading glasses as he examines the map.

INSERT: He uses a finger to follow the main street until the end of town. He finds the reservation and a road cutting northwest. The map dead-ends at the forest's edge. The forest goes on forever...

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE -- DAY

Warren enters.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE -- ROOM

Warren locks the door behind him. He puts groceries away and makes instant coffee, warming water in the microwave.

He reopens the Hearst map and the Ontario map on the bed.

He turns to the pleather chair where he placed his **brown paper research bag** - the **bag is missing**.

His eyes dart about. It's nowhere.

Warren unmakes his bed, he pushes up the mattress, he opens drawers, and moves the dresser away from the wall.

LATER --

Warren paces the room. He nervously wrings his hands.

WARREN
Someone knows...

The Vision of Graden stands at the window - looking outside. Warren sighs with momentary relief.

GRADEN
Steady, brother.

WARREN
I thought you moved on.

GRADEN
I'm not going anywhere.

Warren stands next to Graden and looks outside.

WARREN
I knew that. I did.

Warren suddenly runs out from the room.

INT./EXT. FORD EXPLORER (PARKED) -- DAY

Warren marches through gentle snowfall to his vehicle.

Warren scavenges inside, underneath the seats, in the glove compartment... nothing.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE -- BACK HALLWAY -- EDWARD'S ROOM

Warren KNOCKS on Edward's downstairs door. No answer.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE -- STAIRS -- DAY

Warren bounds up the stairs. He spots through the railing...

Feet moving on the second floor towards...

INT. HALLWAY/SECOND FLOOR -- THE NEIGHBORING ROOM

Warren ascends the rest of the stairs, the adjacent GUEST ROOM door closes.

Warren POUNDS on the door.

A BEARDED MAN (late 30s) opens the door. He's large in stature, but doesn't look well. His skin is pale with a green hue and his eyes red and watering.

WARREN
I'm missing things from my room.

The Bearded Man is confused by Warren.

WARREN (CONT'D)
I'm right next to you. Right
there... You go in there?

Warren points to his room.

BEARED MAN
What? I have been up all night.
Puking my brains out. Can't barely
make it to the bathroom.

The Bearded Man closes the door. Warren inserts his foot at
the bottom, stopping the door's movement short.

WARREN
I saw you wandering and everyone is
gone. There's only you.

BEARED MAN
I told ya, I'm supposed to be
hunting, but I'm sick. I have to
go... Sorry.

Warren bulldozes forward. The Bearded Man pushes him back.

BEARED MAN (CONT'D)
Stay away, old man. I told ya,
you're gonna get hurt.

Warren tries to thrust the Bearded Man aside. Bearded Man
raises his arm swatting Warren away like a fly.

Warren hits the wall, bashing his head and landing on the
floor. A wound on his forehead begins to bleed.

BEARED MAN (CONT'D)
Jesus! I'm sorry. You made me! I
told ya! You're fucking crazy, old
man!

The Bearded Man closes the door. The lock CLICKS.

Warren picks himself off the ground.

INT. HALLWAY -- THIRD DOOR

Warren knocks on the adjacent door. No answer.

INT. WARREN'S ROOM -- LATER

Warren sits on the bed, in the upended room, with a rolls of
paper towels. He blots his head.

The Vision of Graden is no longer.

The front door BUZZES.

Warren stares out the window.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE -- FRONT DOOR -- DAY

Miriam stands at the front door nervously picking her face.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE -- SITTING ROOM -- DAY

Warren descends the stairs and opens the door with pieces of paper towel adhering to his head.

He steps aside letting Miriam in.

MIRIAM

Lyman told me you were staying at a boarding house. There's only one in town. I called your cell phone. You didn't pick up.

He pats himself down. No phone.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

You need stitches?

WARREN

No. It's okay.

MIRIAM

Hold on.

Miriam pushes out the front door, back outside.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE

She runs to the KIA and opens the trunk. She rummages inside.

INT. SITTING ROOM

Warren touches the soaked piece of paper towel covering the wound. There is blood on his fingers. He wipes them across his pants.

Miriam returns with a small first aid pack.

MIRIAM

It's freezing out there.

Mirima shuffles through the box. She locates a large sized band aid.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
This should do it.

Miriam pulls the wrapping off and places the bandage across the wound in a haphazard manner.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
Sorry. My hands are blocks of ice.

WARREN
I have coffee.

Miriam nods.

WARREN (CONT'D)
I'll get you one.

Warren heads up the stairs. He pauses and unexpectedly realizes that Miriam follows. He continues up the stairs.

INT. WARREN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Miriam looks over the wrecked room. Warren is self conscious.

WARREN
I think someone broke in. I'm missing things.

MIRIAM
(Alarmed)
Who?

Warren shakes his head.

Miriam begins to nervously clean the room.

WARREN
You don't have to do that.

MIRIAM
It couldn't have been him. He doesn't even know...

Warren makes coffee as Miriam continues cleaning up.

Warren brings the cup to her. Miriam sits on a chair.

Warren sits on the bed across from her. A drop of blood seeps out from the bandage.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
You know my name.

Warren nods. Miriam shudders.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
I don't want to get mixed up in
this, but I couldn't live with
knowing... something like that. It
would be a terrible thing.

WARREN
Are you scared?

MIRIAM
I am because you know my name.

Miriam's sob come from deep down.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
He knows me... things I've done.
(Breaks Down)
I'm on parole and I won't go back.
I'll kill myself before that
happens. I swear to God I will.
I've done things, but I'm not an
animal.

Her cup shakes, coffee spills. She places the cup on the
ground. Her hands, covered with coffee.

She moves to the refrigerator and pulls off several paper
towels. She cleans her spot.

She sits next to Warren. He starts to get up.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
Stay here.

He sits back down.

She dabs the wound on his head with a clean paper towel.
Genuine tears roll down her face. She holds onto his hands.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
I need sleep, but the thing is...
when I finally do, I have awful
dreams...

Beat.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
Do you dream?

Warren slowly nods.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

This sense of dread. It's in the
pit of my stomach. Rotting me.

Miriam folds into herself and fully leans into Warren. She continues a muffled cry.

Warren unsure what to do, places a awkward hand on her back.

WARREN'S ROOM - DAY -- LATER

Warren and Miriam both lie on the bed, side-by-side, fully clothed. Miriam sleeps in a fetal position... her hands grasping Warren's arm.

Warren lies flat and stares at the ceiling.

Miriam opens her eyes.

MIRIAM

Will you call the police? Isn't
that what you do?

WARREN

Not this time.

(Beat)

Is that why you came here?

MIRIAM

I came because... I didn't know
what I said--

WARREN

Why didn't you?

MIRIAM

You know! Don't make me say it!

Miriam sits up.

WARREN

You told the truth.

MIRIAM

Yeah.

WARREN

Does he own a gun?

MIRIAM

He did. Probably still does.

She gazes outward at sky.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
I should go. It's Lyman's car and
he'll be worried.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE -- MIRIAM'S VEHICLE -- DAY

Miriam and Warren stand next to the KIA, which is parked next to the Explorer. Miriam puts her hand forward to shake Warren's, as if they are formal business partners.

MIRIAM
Thank you, Warren. For the coffee.

WARREN
Thank you... Uh...

Warren continues his own way. Leaving Graden behind.

MIRIAM
(Thin, plaintive)
You forgot it?

WARREN
My minds not working. Don't be
hurt.

MIRIAM
You a lush like me? You black out?

WARREN
I am sick, but in a different way.

MIRIAM
What way is that?

WARREN
Don't make me say it. When we spoke
last, you mentioned where I could
find Earl...

Miriam stares hard at Warren.

MIRIAM
I know I can trust you.

Moments later --

EXT. SNOWY ROAD

Warren's Explorer follows close behind Miriam's KIA.

Off Warren...

FORTY FOUR YEARS AGO -- 1964

EXT. TOWNSEND FARM -- COTTON FIELD -- NIGHT

A POV - but we don't know whose - moves out of the forest toward a cut-for-winter cotton field and a barn.

EXT. TOWNSEND BARN -- NIGHT

The barn door is slightly ajar, the POV peers through.

A congregation of fifty some members of the local black community gather; they sit, lean, and squat wherever a space is found. There are mostly MEN, a few WOMEN, dressed in dark colors.

Graden speaks with Mr. Townsend and a light skin MALE #1, late 20s, who makes an effort to dress like one of the farmers, but fails to convince.

Graden stands on the back of a farm truck.

GRADEN

We all know the risk... We'll go anyway. It's our right to vote and even the President of The United States says so.

There is a MUMUR of approval from the crowd.

GRADEN (CONT'D)

They use dogs and fire against us because their ideas *have lost force*. And so they turn to force. But if we yield to these tactics, they will continue to use them. If we let them push us back, they will continue to push. The way to defeat them is simply not to be deterred. We will not be intimidated. Show them that the power they wield will not give them power over us.

LUTHER, 40s, slides through the door, out into the field, we turn back to the door to discover **it has been Warren's POV** all along. He continues watching...

Graden finishes speaking and moves to the back of the room, shaking people's hands, moving towards Warren.

PRESENT DAY -- 2008

EXT. HEARST, MAIN STREET -- EXPLORER (MOVING) -- DAY

Warren at the wheel driving, he follows behind the Kia with Miriam driving....

EXT. HEARST -- EXPLORER (MOVING)

We follow the Kia leading the Explorer to the outskirts of town and back onto the highway.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- HOPE MOUNTAIN -- LATER

The Explorer follows the Kia. They veers off onto what looks to be a single lane fire road, but is a country road heading deep up into brush and trees.

The Kia pulls to the side, Warren pulls up next to it. Miriam rolls down the window. She nods toward the country road.

MIRIAM

It will take some time before you see it. Brown cottage.

Warren examines the road.

WARREN

How long?

MIRIAM

I don't know.

Miriam quickly takes off in the opposite direction.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - FORD EXPLORER -- LATER

A steep grade, covered with packed snow. The Explorer climbs, until it skids, almost hitting a mailbox.

Through the trees, approximately two hundred yards away, is a small brown cottage with green trim.

INT. EXPLORER (PARKED)

The snow quickly accumulates on the windshield. Warren turns on the wipers. He spots a crew cab truck in his rearview mirror making its way up the grade, towards where he sits.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING -- FORD EXPLORER (MOVING) -- DAY

Warren continues up the hill and cuts his vehicle back into a clearing. He watches...

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- CREW CAB TRUCK

An UNIDENTIFIED MALE, 60's, exits the cabin and lumbers to the truck. After performing a rough three point turn the truck returns down the hill.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING -- FORD EXPLORER

Warren pulls out and drives back to...

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- MAILBOX

Warren stops at the mailbox. He puts his glasses on and looks inside - it's junk mail with "Resident" as the receiver.

EXT. HEARST, MAIN STREET -- FORD EXPLORER (MOVING) -- DAY

Warren follows the crew cab truck at a distance. The truck pulls over to the side. Warren parks on the opposite side.

The truck's logo reads: *Hutchinson's Hunting*.

INT./EXT. HEARST, MAIN STREET -- EXPLORER (PARKED)

Warren focuses his camera on...

EXT. HEARST, MAIN STREET -- HUTCHINSON'S HUNTING TRUCK

The Unidentified Male grips onto the top of the door pulling himself out of the crew cab truck. He steps onto a sidewalk and shuffles with a slight limp into a small market.

INT./EXT. HEARST, MAIN STREET -- EXPLORER (PARKED)

Warren shoots photos until the Unidentified Male disappears into the market. Off Warren...

FORTY FOUR YEARS AGO -- 1964

EXT. TOWNSEND BARN -- NIGHT

Graden exits into the night air, dragging Warren with him.

GRADEN
Who's out here?

Graden whirls about. He places a hand on Warren's shoulder.

WARREN
It's me! Watching you! Those people
are from the North. You shouldn't
be here. This is trouble.

GRADEN
Trouble is that gin shack you spend
so many nights at.

WARREN
I don't know what you think you've
gotten into, but this is no good.

Warren shakes Graden's hand loose.

WARREN (CONT'D)
I'm going up the hill and minding
my own business--

Warren runs into the field.

GRADEN
To get drunk is what you mean!

Warren ignores Graden and keeps running.

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

We lead/follow Luther as he runs through the forest. He is on alert and checks his surroundings as he runs into...

EXT. MAIN ROAD -- LATER

Luther exits the forest onto the main road, running along the side. A car approaches...

Luther ducks into the brush.

The car passes.

Luther resumes his journey.

EXT. DRIVEWAY -- FARMHOUSE -- LATER

Luther walks a long drive that ends at a farm home with wraparound porch and a black Studebaker parked out front.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI -- FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

Luther grows closer... We see a dark figure sitting on the porch smoking a cigar. Upon closer inspection it is revealed to be... Patrick Olsen.

Luther pauses for a moment

PATRICK OLSEN
That you, Luther?

LUTHER
Yes, sir.

PATRICK OLSEN
You got news for me?

LUTHER
Yes, sir.

Luther climbs the stairs.

PRESENT DAY -- 2008

INT./EXT. HEARST, MAIN STREET -- FORD EXPLORER (MOVING)

Warren starts the car, puts it into gear, pulls away continuing down the street.

IN. GREENY'S DEPOT -- EXPLORER -- DAY

Warren parks and exits from the Explorer with a reminder note in hand. Through snowfall he watches as...

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE -- DAY

Edward and several HUNTERS remove limp, blood soaked rabbits from the back of the truck.

INT. GREENY'S DEPOT -- DAY

An all purpose store filled with outdoor gear, winter wear, pet feed, dry goods, hardware, office and art supplies.

Warren checks his pockets for his glasses... unable to find them... he squints in order to print out pictures from his camera on the computer...

Warren copies the Unidentified Male's photo.

Warren tries on reading glasses in the small mirror on the stand. He notices his long forgotten, head wound needs redressing.

He locates a first aid kit.

Warren refers to a reminder note - using his new glasses -
"ETTA'S FAX 555-555-1212."

As the fax works it way through...

Warren removes a single piece of paper from the fax machine. He sketches a map depicting the Unidentified Male's property: The road, the clearing, and writes the letters "E" on top of a square depicting the cottage.

THOMAS (O.S.)

What happened to your hand?

Warren flips over the hand-drawn map.

THOMAS, 5, a blond haired boy stares at Warren. JUDITH, 30s, spots her son across the way. She swoops in from behind.

JUDITH

Thomas! What have we talked about?

She grabs Thomas by the shoulders - her eyes land on Warren's maimed hand, but pretends she never did by averting her eyes.

Warren pushes his hand in his pocket.

WARREN

It's no problem, ma'am.

JUDITH

He knows better, but apparently he doesn't this afternoon.

Judith chuckles an uncomfortable laugh.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

Thomas, you know not to be rude to people. Apologize to the man.

THOMAS

I'm sorry.

WARREN
(Mumbles)
It's really no problem.

JUDITH
His curiosity gets the best of him.
I haven't seen you around before?
Are you new to Hearst? A hunter?

WARREN
Just visiting, ma'am.

Thomas tries to steal another look at Warren's hand.

JUDITH
This is my boy, Thomas. I'm Judith.

Judith stares. Warren is not going to introduce himself.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
Is your head okay?

WARREN
(Shortening in temper)
It's fine. I slipped.

JUDITH
Well, if your not used to the snow
and ice it can really get ya...

Thomas moves ever-so-slightly towards Warren's pocket to try
and look at Warren's hand.

Warren suddenly jerks back, slightly hitting into Thomas.

WARREN
Get the fuck away from me!

Judith pulls Thomas back in protection.

Warren gathers his things, with one hand, continuing to hide
his maimed one.

WARREN (CONT'D)
I didn't mean... I should be going.

Warren cashes out and makes a quick escape.

EXT. GREENY'S DEPOT -- FORD EXPLORER -- DAY

A trail of blood from Edward's truck leads to the back of the
boarding house. Warren gets into the Explorer takes note of
the bloody bandage on his head.

He awkwardly redresses his wound using the rearview mirror.

He writes a note, on his newly purchased post-its, to himself, "*glasses in visor*" and sticks the note with the many others on the dashboard.

INT./EXT. QUEEN STREET -- FORD EXPLORER -- NIGHT

The Explorer is covered with snow. Warren uses the brush to clear his vehicle.

The Vision of Graden sits in the passenger seat.

He returns to the wheel, throwing the brush into the back. A CRUNCHING beneath... He shakes his head.

He pulls the newly bought glasses out from under him. The glass is intact, the frame is broken.

Graden smiles.

Warren tapes the frame together with tape from the first aid kit.

Graden nods to Warren's maimed hand.

GRADEN

You never told me the whole story?

Several snow plows ride past.

Off Warren...

FORTY FOUR YEARS AGO -- 1964

INT. MISSISSIPPI, FOREST -- HILLSIDE GIN SHACK -- NIGHT

In the forest sits a small, abandoned grain shed, that has been cleaned and fashioned into a hang out. The radio turns momentary static.

JOHN YOUNG, 19, readjusts the antenna and SAM COOKE is in the middle of "Twistin' The Night Away."

Warren along with THE TITTLE BROTHERS - SAM & RONNIE, 20's with their cousin, John Young, drink gin and play cards. SEVERAL GIRLS party with them. Some are dancing.

Warren - **right hand perfectly formed at this time** - fills everyone's drink with a jug of gin... he drinks his down and refills it quickly again. He stops when he sees..

PENNY NEWCOME, 20s, white with blond hair, blue eyes, thin frame, and large chest, appears at the door with two white GIRLFRIENDS who cower outside the shack's door.

Howlin' Wolf sings, "Going Down Slow" on the radio. Everyone looks away. Except...

Warren who doesn't look away... can't look away.

Penny beelines directly to him.

WARREN

You shouldn't be here, Miss.

PENNY

You shouldn't worry about it.

Penny places her hand on Warren's chest and sways.

Warren moves stiffly with her.

Her lips to his ear...

PENNY (CONT'D)

Not like that... like how you dance
with those other girls...

He places one hand firmly on her upper arm.

His other on her hip and begins to move more freely.

Warren observes the smooth skin along her collarbone as she rolls her head backward.

The music abruptly stops. Warren and Penny look around - all eyes are on them.

GIRLFRIENDS (O.S.)

We should leave now, Penny.

Penny runs to where she first left her Girlfriends, they dart outside together.

The music turns back on.

EXT. ROAD -- FOREST -- NIGHT

Warren walks home for the evening. He visualizes...

INT. HILLSIDE GIN SHACK -- FLASHBACK

Penny's dress, her hips, her collarbone as she throws her head back pressing against him.

EXT. ROAD -- FOREST -- NIGHT

Warren runs into the forest.

He drops to his knees onto the spongy underbrush, he pleasures himself against a tree.

Passionate SIGHING to an orgasmic HOWL.

He falls onto the tree.

He exits the forest and continues on the main road.

DAYS LATER --

EXT. MISSISSIPPI TOWN -- FARM TRUCK ON STREET -- DAY

Warren exits a store carrying a crate of canning jars; moving towards the farm truck in the distance.

Out of the corner of his eye...

EXT. MISSISSIPPI TOWN -- SERVICE STATION

A Girlfriend (from gin shack) of Penny Newcome, chats with THREE WHITE MEN - one is Dewey - with slicked back hair. Adjacent to them is a blue, Pontiac GTO. They all turn to stare in Warren's direction.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI TOWN -- STREET

Warren quickens his pace and avoids eye contact...

DEWEY (O.S.)
Hey! Hey! I know you hear me!

RUNNING FOOTSTEPS grow louder, closing in. A white hand lands firmly on Warren's shoulder and violently swings him around.

Canning jars crash to the ground.

Warren is pushed down, on top the of shards of glass.

Feet kicking and pounding on Warren.

A fist hammers against Warren's jaw.

MOMENTS LATER --

Warren's POV watching the blood trail his wounds leave behind as he is dragged across the street moving closer towards...

EXT. MISSISSIPPI TOWN -- SERVICE STATION

Penny's Girlfriend with terror in her eyes.

DEWEY

Is this him? Is this the one that
put his hands on Penny?

Warren is pushed up, on display, in front of her.

Penny's Girlfriend nods, sobs, and runs for cover into the station. Warren's body slacks, he slumps backward...

Dewey removes his jacket, throws it into his Pontiac GTO. His perfectly coiffed hair becomes loose, a piece falls, to dangle and bounce in his face as his anger grows.

DEWEY (CONT'D)

(Screaming)

You want to touch my girlfriend?
Grab his hand...

The trunk of the Pontiac is lifted...

Warren's hand is pressed against the inside, above the taillight. The White Men SLAM the trunk downward - onto Warren's hand.

And again... they lift the trunk again and SLAM it down...

Warren falls onto the ground.

Warren watches the White Men SHOUT... It's indiscernible to him... He can't hear... pain has taken over.

The White Men return to the station and reappear with fresh colas. They get into the GTO and drive away.

Warren is left bleeding in the dirt. He focuses beyond his mangled hand and the trail of blood across the street at...

EXT. PATRICK OLSEN'S STORE -- MOMENTS LATER

Earl stands outside staring towards Warren's limp body...

Daniel Olsen - *hare lip and cleft pallet* - collects Earl from out front and takes him inside.

PRESENT DAY -- 2008

INT./EXT. QUEEN STREET -- FORD EXPLORER (PARKED) -- NIGHT

Warren observes the falling snow. The street lights have icicles hanging from them.

The Vision of Graden is no longer there.

Warren exits the vehicle. The supply store's lights turn off, closing for the evening. He crosses to...

INT. BOARDING HOUSE -- SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

It's dark, with the exception of outdoor lights illuminating the back of the yard. Warren walks through the downstairs hallway to the back window. Through ice frosted windows...

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE -- BACKYARD -- NIGHT

Edward and another HUNTER at a makeshift plywood table next to a small work shed.

They hack off the snowshoe rabbits' heads and feet under a glaring white light.

INT. WARREN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Warren enters, locking the door behind him. The wind blows through the open window.

He drops into a pleather chair, closes his eyes.

WARREN

It's so loud. The blood flowing
through my body.

SOUNDS of the SWAMP rise.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI SWAMP VISION -- NIGHT

SOUNDS from the SWAMP continue... we push through water tupelo and bald cypress trees into the center of the swamp. Graden's body floats face down.

INT. WARREN'S ROOM -- MORNING

Warren remains slumped in the same chair from the night before. His eyes closed, his skin grey. Almost lifeless.

His eyes open, darting about with uncertainty.

KNOCK on the door.

Warren focuses on the door with fear. He walks to it and unlocks it, partially opens and stares out...

Edward waits on the other side.

EDWARD

I don't like any problems here.

Warren opens fully.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

There's a call for you.

Edward arches his neck to examine Warren as he moves toward the stairs. Warren follows Edward out.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE -- HALLWAY DAY.

Warren picks up the phone in the small hallway behind the sitting room. Edward disappears behind a closed door.

Dogs BARKING outside.

WARREN

Yes?

ETTA (O.S.)

Warren. Thank goodness, I've been trying to reach you. Where have you been?

Silence.

ETTA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Why haven't picked up your phone?

WARREN

I've lost it.

ETTA (O.S.)

Oh, Warren! The owner said you were having problems with another guest?

WARREN

Mama?

ETTA (O.S.)

(Incredulous)

It's Etta. Your sister.

WARREN

God, you sound like Mama.

ETTA (O.S.)

She has no idea you're up there!

WARREN

(Covering up)

I know, but you're getting to be like her.

ETTA (O.S.)

You're worrying me. Should I come up there?

Warren stares at his arm. Earl's address.

WARREN

No!

(Warren whispers)

My bag was stolen. My folders are gone. Someone knows...

Warren glances out the window to the back yard.

EXT. BACKYARD -- DAY

The bounty of Edward's hunting trip - skinned rabbits - hang across a wooden pole. They flap in high winds that blow.

The beagles jump into the air in an attempt to snag a rabbit.

ETTA (O.S.)

I don't like this, Warren. Are you sure it was stolen?

WARREN (O.S.)

(Warren whispers angrily)

Do you think I'm lying?

ETTA (O.S.)

No. I don't. But when we get older we lose things, we forget--

WARREN (O.S.)
I know what is happening! I know
what is going on!

ETTA (O.S.)
(Calming)
Don't be confronting anyone.

Beat.

ETTA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I got the fax. He doesn't look the
same. Too full in the face--

INT. BOARDING HOUSE -- HALLWAY -- DAY

Warren smacks the wall with the palm of his maimed hand.

WARREN
(Whispers, impatiently)
He's gained weight. He's older.

Edward exits the back room. He observes Warren for a moment,
then exits outside - back to the rabbit carcasses.

ETTA (O.S.)
How can you be a hundred percent
sure?

WARREN
I'm not yet.

ETTA (O.S.)
Call the police when you are.

Warren looks outside.

EXT. BACKYARD

Edward bags rabbit parts, while intermittently YELLING at his
beagles.

WARREN
The ugly way we treat one
another...

ETTA (O.S.)
Do you hear me, Warren?

Warren barely listens to these words. Her voice is muffled.

INT. WARREN'S ROOM -- LATER

Warren removes a cup of hot water and adds instant coffee. He opens the mini refrigerator and takes out the milk. Inside...

The **brown paper research bag**. He removes it.

He stares at Graden's composition notebook with his name written on the front of it. He touches Graden's name.

WARREN

Goddamn losing it. Please let me finish what I started. Help me keep my broken mind straight.

He sits abruptly on a chair with the bag in his lap.

Warren removes the photo of the Eight Men walking down courtroom stairs - he focuses on Earl.

He places it next to the photo of the Unidentified Local.

INT. HEARST LIBRARY -- COMPUTER DESK -- DAY

Warren, appearing wan and tired, searches through Hearst telephone books dating back several years.

INSET: Warren's finger runs over the D's and the O's... trying to locate a "Daniel" or an "Olsen."

Warren logs onto a computer and tries to locate the address of the cottage on a GPS map program... to no avail.

BARB (O.S.)

Good morning, Mr. Daniel.

Warren raises his head and observes through a space between books on the library shelf...

INT. LIBRARY -- FRONT DESK

The Unidentified Male/Mr. Daniel waits for BARB, 40s, to return to the check-out desk. Earl leans against the counter.

Barb reappears a moment later.

BARB

Here you go!

Barb presents what looks to be a large stack of newspapers and magazines.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE

Have a good one.

BARB

Stay warm out there.

The Unidentified Male shuffles through the contents as he moves away from the desk.

INT. LIBRARY -- LOBBY

The Unidentified Male exits the library.

INT. LIBRARY -- FRONT DESK

Warren returns the phone books to Barb.

BARB

Find what you need?

WARREN

I'm not sure, maybe... You know, I think I recognized that man? Earl is it?

BARB

Yes. Earl Daniel. He comes in every so often to pick up mail... Not a lot of it though. People don't really write anymore, we do most things online, I suppose. I guess he makes it easier on the mailman by coming in here, rather than heading up the mountain.

WARREN

I understand. Thank you.

Warren turns to leave.

BARB

It's funny. You both have the same accent.

Warren lingers.

WARREN

We do?

BARB

I'm pretty good with dialects. It's from the south... faint, but I hear it. Well, have a good one.

Warren meanders with careful steps out of the library.

INT. HEARST FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH -- MORNING

The church is filled with eighty-or-so PARISHIONERS.

INT. BACK PEWS

Warren sits in the last pew. His exhaustion apparent. His hand tremors. He controls it by pushing it under his leg. His pew is vacant with exception of the Vision of Graden sitting at his side.

INT. HEARST FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH -- FRONT OF CHURCH

The CHOIR sings the "Holy, Holy, Holy" hymn. REVERAND SCOTT sits adjacent to the podium.

The choir sits down. Reverand Scott rises to the podium.

REVERAND SCOTT

Greetings to you all on this Sunday morning. I see some familiar faces that are with us time and time again to celebrate our Lord and Savior. And I also see new faces who are welcome to join us to rejoice in His name.

The Unidentified Male will now be called Earl. Earl sits in the front pew.

Reverand Scott smiles and looks pointedly at Warren.

REVERAND SCOTT (CONT'D)

Are there any new or visiting members who would like to introduce themselves at this time?

The Parishioners swivel about, following the Reverand's gaze, which lands on Warren. Earl swings around spotting...

BACK PEWS

Warren remains motionless, stone-like, as if he were still enough he would disappear. There is no Vision of Graden through Earl's eyes.

FRONT OF CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

Reverend Scott CLEARS HIS THROAT.

The Parishioners turn to face the front. Earl follows suit.

REVEREND SCOTT

Job was holy and yet he suffered.
Satan will come like a flood with
hardship and Christians will
observe sorrow and trouble. And
just as God brought Job out of his
affliction, so He will bring us out
even though we, too, will go
through the fire. God causes the
rain to fall on both the just and
the unjust. Take down Your wall of
protection, God! Put us to the
test.

Earl turns to glance, once again, toward the back....

BACK PEWS

The pew is empty. Warren is no longer there.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE -- WARREN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Warren stands at the window with the Vision of Graden. The wind blows harshly into the room. The window crack remains.

GRADEN

It's never gonna be fixed.

WARREN

I know that.

Warren nods in agreement.

INT. MAIN STREET -- VILLAGE RESTAURANT/COFFEE SHOP -- DAY

It's a dark afternoon as we look out a coffee shop window through backward letters that spell VILLAGE RESTAURANT.

Thick snow flurries fall. A rising HUM as the wind whips and stirs on the ground outside.

Warren's Explorer is parked across the street.

It's a cozy place with five tables and a counter that sits an additional five. A TABLE ADJACENT TO THE COUNTER SITS...

Earl with JARED AND JASON HUTCHINSON, 40s, eating together.

A television hangs behind the counter announcing...

ANNOUNCER

The Northern Ontario region is entering a weather advisory. A low pressure system is moving in this afternoon so we will expect freezing rain, sleet and snow. Be prepared for snow covered roads and limited visibilities.

The shop door WHINES each time a customer enters or exits.

Out restaurant window - Warren exits his Explorer and cautiously crosses the street. His steps are uncertain. He enters inside keeping his maimed hand concealed in his pocket.

Warren sits at the counter several feet away from...

Earl sharply glances Warren's way.

Jason elbows Jared.

JASON

Friend of yours, Earl?

EARL

I just noticed him around.

JARED

Know who he is?

Earl shakes his head.

A bowl of soup and coffee is set on the counter top in front of Warren. Warren swallows a partial spoonful, but puts the spoon down onto the side of the bowl.

JARED (CONT'D)

(Across to Warren)

Hey there. Name's Jared, this here is my brother Jason and this is Earl.

Warren pauses, caught off guard. He manages a light nod.

JARED (CONT'D)
New to these parts?

WARREN
Yes, sir.

Jared and Jason break out laughing.

JARED
Sir. Did you hear that? Now that is
some respect!

Earl remains quiet, his face expressionless.

JARED (CONT'D)
Where you come from?

WARREN
Detroit.

JARED
What brings you up here?

Warren hesitates.

WARREN
Hunting.

JASON
Good hunting up here... I had a
couple tourists this year, took-'em
up to a spot I know. They bagged a
bull moose the size of an elephant.
I grabbed one edge of his antlers
and couldn't reach the other edge.
It's rabbit season... if you're
looking for a place to stake out,
let me know.

Warren stares into the bowl of soup. Still full. Uneaten.

WARREN
I appreciate the offer, but I just
assume to stay on my own.

JASON
Suit yourself. Some of these
forests can be a little tricky
though. And not meaning to offend a
fellow, but truth be told, you
don't look like a woodsman to me.

WARREN

No offense taken. Maybe some of us
are more than we appear.

Warren gathers himself. He removes the wallet with his left hand and pulls out bills, leaves them on the counter.

He crosses the room.

Earl glances upward and manages to steal another look as Warren walks past, exiting out of the coffee shop.

Jared and Jason CHATTER AWAY. Earl continues to watch Warren outside, through the heavy winds and falling snow, until he gets into his Explorer and drives away.

INT/EXT. HOPE MOUNTAIN -- FOREST ROAD -- DAY

The Hutchinson Brother's crew cab truck advances slowly up the steep grade through a heavy snow fall; the 4WD wheels slide on the icy snow, unsuccessfully gripping the ground below. The pick-up stops.

Earl struggles to get out. He removes a box from the back filled with food supplies.

EARL

I got it Jason, I appreciate the
ride. Now go on and get home!

Earl walks painstakingly up the hill as the truck reverses down the steep mountain.

Earl slips on ice and the box falls from his hands... hitting the ground hard - his supplies, CRASH and scatter.

Earl lifts his head and crawls towards the box. He gathers random bits of food and glass, some salvageable, some beyond repair - putting them back into the box.

Earl attempts to stand, slips again, falling to the side.

He finally pushes himself upright and lumbers forward with an increasingly pronounced limp. The wind blasts against Earl's cheeks, his breathing labored.

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- SMALL BROWN COTTAGE -- DAY

Earl sets his box of food down and rests at the mailbox.

Through the trees is the small brown cottage with green trim.

EARL
Jesus christ.

Earl picks up the box and continues on.

EXT. SMALL BROWN COTTAGE -- DAY

Earl kicks the screen door open with his foot. He leans on the unlocked door to open it. His hands still cradle the box.

INT. SMALL BROWN COTTAGE -- MAIN ROOM

Rustic and worn, with a stone masonry fireplace and wooden floors. Through an archway, stairs lead upwards. There is melted snow in the foyer.

EARL
Hello?

INT. SMALL BROWN COTTAGE -- KITCHEN -- DUSK

Earl turns into the kitchen - setting the box on the counter.

Takes off his boots and wet socks.

Pours himself some water and drinks it.

Out the kitchen window...

EXT. SMALL BROWN COTTAGE -- BACKYARD -- DUSK

The immediate backyard is cleared of trees. The weather worsens; sleet hits the windows... The official storm has arrived.

MAIN ROOM

Earl returns and tracks a trail of melted snow with his eyes... The path leads up to the fireplace. His eyes move up the stone wall... The wall mount for a rifle is vacant.

FOOTSTEPS. CREAKING. Aware of another presence, Earl turns...

Warren appears under the archway at the bottom of the stairs. His left hand wrapped around Earl's rifle, his right inserted into his pocket.

Warren's lips are chapped, his face cold and grey; his sweatshirt/windbreaker combo lacking in proper coverage.

WARREN
You Earl Olsen?

Beat.

WARREN (CONT'D)
I'm guessing you know who I am.

Earl glances at Warren's boots - a pool of water gathers on the floor beneath them.

EARL
Your boots are wet. Could you remove them?

Warren ignores him. He steps down fully into the main room.

EARL (CONT'D)
I've seen you on television. Newspapers too. News this far north doesn't care much for what's happening down in the States.

WARREN
You must have gone to some trouble to get it then.

EARL
You must have gone to some trouble to get here.

They silently stare at one another.

EARL (CONT'D)
I'll fix some tea, it looks like we may be here for awhile... weather isn't looking too good.

Warren silently watches Earl move into the kitchen - through the back window he watches the growing blizzard outside.

Off Warren...

FORTY FOUR YEARS AGO -- 1964

INT. MISSISSIPPI -- HILLSIDE SHACK MISSISSIPPI -- NIGHT

Warren downs a cup of gin. Through his blurry vision the Tittle brothers, along with John Young shake their heads at his drunken state.

JOHN YOUNG
It's best you sleep it off.

They exit the shack.

Warren CHUCKLES to himself as he leans against the wall and slides to the ground. He braces himself with his one good hand to land on the ground. His right hand: newly bandaged.

GRADEN (O.S.)
Figured this is where you'd be!

Warren raises his eyes to see Graden standing above him.

WARREN
Am I in trouble?

GRADEN
Not yet. We better get you home, we have to be up early to help Papa.

Graden lifts Warren off the ground.

WARREN
You remember all the times I did your work? You sneaking to school.

GRADEN
I know. I remember. But you don't get a pay back for coming here. I told you this place is no good.

WARREN
You just say that cause you don't know how to have fun. You can't dance like me.

Warren performs a few exaggerated dance steps and snaps his fingers with his one good hand. He loses his footing and stumbles.

Graden wraps his arm around Warren's waist letting Warren lean on him. Graden pulls Warren's maimed hand closer into him... Holding it close to his chest.

GRADEN
Brother.

Warren snaps the injured hand away - no pity.

GRADEN (CONT'D)
You're going to be doing some real dancing if Papa finds you slept here.

Graden and Warren walk out, arm-in-arm, into the dark night.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI -- FOREST DIRT ROAD -- NIGHT

Graden and Warren move forward together on a road that passes through the forest. The fall season leaves cover the ground.

Warren staggers and stops.

WARREN

I gotta piss.

EXT. FOREST

We lead/follow Warren into the dense trees, covered with fall leaves and wade through tall grass toward a large growth pine. Behind him...

GRADEN (O.S.)

I'm gonna go ahead. You come when you're ready.

No response.

GRADEN (CONT'D)

You hear me?

WARREN

(Calls back to him)

Yeah, I hear ya!

Warren looks over his shoulder and through the trees...

EXT. DIRT ROAD

Graden grins at his brother and disappears from view.

EXT. FOREST

Warren sways until he anchors himself against the tree. He unzips his pants with his good hand.

A LOW HUM from a car ENGINE BUILDS.

Warren stares beyond the trees... out onto the road... headlights grow closer...

A Studebaker passes on the nearby road, playing COUNTRY MUSIC on it's radio.

Warren hidden by the woods - attempts to twist around, but his situation is precarious as he urinates against the pine tree.

CAR DOORS OPEN. Unrecognizable CHATTER.

One voice elevates...

PATRICK (O.S.)
I know this boy. I'm mighty
surprised you all don't. This here
is the famous Graden Williams!

Warren MUMBLES to himself.

Distant CHATTER continues on as...

Two additional sedans drive up and park parallel and closer to where Warren stands.

Warren pulls his pants up - struggling with his maimed hand to fully zip up. Warren's view partially blocked by leaves...

DIRT ROAD -- MOMENTS LATER

Earl Olsen greets the two additional sedans. He speaks to Paul Proust inside one of the cars. Daniel Olsen with a *hare lip and cleft palate* sits in the passenger seat.

PAUL PROUST
Is that him?

EARL
Says his name is Graden Williams
and he's off to fetch his brother
from somewhere on the hill.

PAUL PROUST
Bring him.

Earl makes his way back over to where Graden stands.

EXT. FOREST

Warren's POV stumbles a bit closer to...

EXT. ROAD

Earl arrives at where Patrick Olsen, Marty Bavon, and Graden stand on the side of the road. *These are the men depicted in the courthouse stairs picture.*

Earl speaks to the men, but too quiet for Warren to hear.

PATRICK OLSEN

(To Graden)

Why don't you get in the car, son?

GRADEN

I thank you, sir, but it's a pleasant night and I'd rather walk.

Fear takes hold of Graden - he stares out into the dense trees and tall grass.

Marty Bavon reaches out and grabs hold of Graden's upper arm and pulls him out of Warren's view.

MARTY BAVON

Get in the car, boy.

EXT. FOREST

Warren takes a few additional, uncertain steps towards the action, but falls to his knees. Partially drunk, partially in fear. He tries to get up. He's caught on his improperly zipped pants.

He looks up and stares... pain in his eyes - wide, aware - mostly scared.

Agony of indecision. Then, stillness.

SILENCE.

Car doors SLAM. Car ENGINES start.

Warren falls on his back to quickly fasten his pants with his good hand. He rises and stumbles through the woods toward...

EXT. DIRT ROAD/FOREST

Three cars speeding off in the distance. The rear of the Studebaker is the last in the line.

The convoy has traveled a great distance.

Warren runs - lagging far behind with no possibility of catching up.

PRESENT DAY -- 2008

INT. SMALL BROWN COTTAGE -- MAIN ROOM

The WIND DRONES.

Earl observes a dazed Warren from across the room. He moves towards him. Warren appears to be in a trance.

Earl stands in front of Warren, offering the cup of tea.

Moments pass.

Warren, still balancing the gun, becomes aware... he glances at the table next to him - instructing Earl to place the cup.

Earl does what he is told, then notices Warren's maimed hand.

WARREN

Look familiar?

Earl is disconcerted, he refocuses on his cup of tea - takes a sip and forces himself to swallow.

WARREN (CONT'D)

It's what happens when you touch a white girl.

Warren stares at Earl. Waiting.

EARL

I'll answer your question. I'm Earl Olsen. I'm sure that comes as no surprise to you.

WARREN

Why you using the last name Daniel?

Earl stares, coldly.

EARL

That was my Daddy's name.

WARREN

You mean you've been hiding. People think you're dead.

EARL

I told you. People up here don't care much about all of that.

WARREN

But you've been keeping your eye out.

Earl sits down - across from Warren.

EARL

You're right, I've been keeping my eye out.

(MORE)

EARL (CONT'D)

I suppose you've suffered quite a bit over the years. I'm not gonna pretend that's not true. You're not the only one.

WARREN

Not the only one? Not the only one who has suffered?

Warren scoffs with disgust.

EARL

He did a terrible thing. I know that, but it was my fault he got involved. He wasn't one of them and my Daddy didn't need to die in no prison! He didn't deserve it!

WARREN

I got no interest in assigning fault.

EARL

If you're not interested in hearing about it, then what are you doing here? How did you find me?

WARREN

It don't matter how. What matters is everyone else is behind bars. Only one left living free is you.

EARL

That's too simple. There were lots of things going on back then, it got complicated. You, the courts, the FBI, the media... you ever think that maybe you just don't know what went on that night?

Warren grows agitated. His anger rises. He uncrosses his legs and leans forward, gripping the rifle tightly.

WARREN

I know plenty what happen that night. I know he was beat for hours. I know his chest was carved up. I know he was castrated. I know he lived through it all and was still alive when you dumped him into that swamp. I know more about that night than you could ever want to know in a hundred lifetimes.

Warren pulls a picture from his coat, hands it to Earl.

INSERT: Graden's autopsy photo - a body mutilated.

Earl's face startled, though only giving so much.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Have you seen that? Did your Daddy see it? He got what he deserve.

EARL

You don't know what he deserved!

WARREN

I know what he did.

Earl puts the photo down. Something in Earl's eyes conveys a flash of guilt and remorse.

A long pause.

EARL

You gonna set things straight. Make everything right in the world by hauling me in? What do you really think you've accomplished so far? I'll tell you what. Nothing! Nothings changed and sending me to prison ain't gonna change nothing either.

Warren rises. He rubs the last bit of melted snow from his hair with his right hand.

WARREN

I don't need to change things. Never did. But you somehow think you get to walk free just because time has passed?

(Beat)

You don't.

EARL

Well, where's the police then? Ain't that how you work. Show up on the lawn of doddering old men with police and news crews. Just about time to call them in!

Warren clenches his jaw. Determined.

WARREN

Don't need no police. Don't need no news team... you're the one who knows what I want to know.

EARL

What's that?

WARREN

Why didn't you take me too?

Earl stares at Warren for an interminable beat. Off Earl...

FORTY FOUR YEARS AGO -- 1964

EXT. MISSISSIPPI -- FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

Young Earl sits on the stairs, staring up at Patrick Olsen leaning back on a porch chair.

Two Sedans pull in front of the house...

Daniel Olsen emerges from the shadows around the corner.

DANIEL

Earl, time to go home. Supper.

PATRICK OLSEN

Now hold on, Daniel... we got some business to discuss. Luther paid a visit last week... he said some kinda weekly meeting going on... The kind that disturbs our very beliefs here in this great state of Mississippi.

Patrick spreads his legs apart, placing his fists against his hips.

PATRICK OLSEN (CONT'D)

You live on our land, you pay the dues.

Daniel Olsen anticipates a conversation he's not gonna like. Earl sits back down eager to listen.

INT. TWO ROOM SHACK -- NIGHT -- LATER

We're caught in the middle of something... Earl sits, waits - he watches across the table...

Daniel Olsen holds his hand to his forehead - in deep contemplation of a decision that carries a heavy weight.

DANIEL

You can't go. This is man's work.

EARL

I'm ready for it.

DANIEL

I hope that's not true. This ain't the kind of thing a man should ever be ready for, son.

They hold each other's gaze for an interminable beat.

EARL

This is what's best.

Earl has made his decision. He won't be swayed.

DANIEL

It ain't up to you to decide. I'm still your father.

Earl rises from the table.

EARL

And I appreciate what you've done for me, but what's it gotten us? We live here in a shack, pick cotton, no better than a... (Earl stops himself.) Uncle Patrick lives a good life, in a nice house... He's part of the community. He's been trying for us! Why won't you let him? We just need to help out every so often.

Daniel sharply looks at Earl.

DANIEL

You don't know what it means--

EARL

I ain't had anything nice in my whole life. Don't you get tired of doing everything the hard way?

DANIEL

Son, every way is the hard way.

Daniel Olsen gets up to serve himself coffee from the stove.

Earl Olsen steps across the shack. He opens the front door and moves out into darkness...

EXT. YARD -- BETWEEN SHACK AND FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

Earl Olsen, *leading us*, moves toward the farmhouse... a black Studebaker and two sedans sit with a circle of WHITE MEN smoking and waiting.

Circle around... now moving away from the shack... we see that Daniel Olsen follows - anguish on his face.

Earl glances behind... then looks forward with a determined focus...

EXT. PATRICK OLSEN FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

A circle of white men smoke and chatter amongst themselves: Patrick Olsen, Marty Bavon, Blaine Plimpton, Rob and Barry Tywater, Paul Proust.

MARTY BAVON

You think he's up there?

PATRICK OLSEN

Old Luther's a good nigger. He said it goes on every week. Same time, same place. I lay good odds on it.

Earl stands alongside Patrick Olsen.

BARRY TYWATER

Breaking one in tonight?

The Men laugh at Earl's arrival.

They nod at Daniel Olsen as he enters the circle.

INT. COUNTRY ROAD -- STUDEBAKER (MOVING)

Earl sits in back. Gravel crunches under the Studebaker's tires as it drives down the country road. Patrick Olsen at the wheel, with Marty Bavon riding shotgun.

They listen to COUNTRY MUSIC.

Earl sneaks a long look at Marty Bavon - a goblin-like appearance with the essence of pure evil. Marty Bavon catches his stare.

Earl shrinks back into the seat.

The Studebaker slows and passes Graden pausing, then walking on the side of the road.

The Studebaker stops and yanks into reverse. Realigning with Graden, pacing along with his footsteps.

The Studebaker cuts in front of Graden and stops.

MOMENTS LATER --

EXT. STUDEBAKER (PARKED)

Earl notices Graden clenching his fists. Patrick and Marty inch closer to Graden; closing in on the prey.

Graden's eyes dart from man to man.

Earl continued POV - he turns to see...

Parking behind the Studebaker - TWO ADDITIONAL CARS arrive, one right after the other.

Earl searches for relief, he walks over to...

One of the two additional cars. The WINDOW ROLLS DOWN. Daniel Olsen sits in the passenger side and Paul Proust drives.

PAUL PROUST

Is that him?

Earl stares at his father... Daniel Olsen avoids his gaze. There is nothing he can do.

EARL

Says his name is Graden Williams
and he's off to fetch his brother
from somewhere on the hill.

PAUL PROUST

Bring him.

Earl hesitates, but eventually makes his way over to where Graden stands adjacent to Patrick Olsen and Marty Bavon.

EARL

(Quietly)

They said to bring him.

PATRICK OLSEN

Why don't you get in the car, son?
We'll give you a ride up to that
brother of yours.

GRADEN

I thank you, sir, but it's a pleasant night and I'd rather walk.

Earl watches...

Fear takes hold of Graden - he stares out into the dense trees and tall grass.

MARTY BAVON (O.C.)

Get in the car, boy.

Graden is led to the Studebaker.

Earl steps forward, taking Graden's place. He stares deep into the woods...

EXT. WOODS -- NIGHT

Through scrub and grass... A PAIR OF EYES looks back at Earl.

PRESENT DAY -- 2008

INT. SMALL BROWN COTTAGE -- MAIN ROOM

Earl, blindsided, closes his eyes for a brief moment and reopens them...

EARL

That was you?

Warren holds the stock of the rifle in his left hand.

WARREN

Hiding in the grass. You looked right at me, and you left me there. I want to know why?

Warren leans in, his whole body hungry for the answer. The picture of Graden's mutilated body sits between them on the table.

EARL

If I had said something to the others, you would have ended the same as your brother.

Warren lifts the rifle - pointing directly at Earl.

Earl half rises, half stumbles from the chair.

EARL (CONT'D)
Wait, wait, wait!

The barrel is aimed at Earl's head. Earl's voice shakes.

EARL (CONT'D)
Please, just wait. I'll tell you
whatever you want. Ok? But not with
a gun pointed at me. Sit. Sit down.

Beat.

EARL (CONT'D)
We'll talk.

Earl puts his hand to his chest.

EARL (CONT'D)
But, I need my pills. For my heart,
I need them now.

Warren's finger flexes on the trigger guard, he nods.

Earl holds his breath and backs into the kitchen... The color drains from his face.

KITCHEN

Earl leans against the sink. He trembles from fear. He turns the faucet on and scoops water into his mouth.

Earl opens the cabinet and shakes an aspirin bottle - utilizing time to plan his next steps.

He glances into the mudroom - a light weight, jacket hangs and summer rain boots on the floor.

He stares out his back window...

Night has come and the blizzard is in full tilt, blowing wildly. The bright lights from the cabin beams into the yard - lighting it for a distance.

Where the lit yard ends and the forest begins, a wall of black spruce covered with snow, from there it descends into blackness.

Earl breaks with a limp for the mudroom. He throws on his coat and boots. He steps outside...

EXT. SMALL BROWN COTTAGE -- BACKYARD

Earl quickly runs across the yard, moving with a wobbly gait as he favors his one leg in order to pull the bad leg around.

Off Earl as he looks up into the light...

FORTY FOUR YEARS AGO -- 1964

INT./EXT. COTTON GIN COMPANY -- NIGHT

A warehouse that processes cotton - several motorized cotton gin stands & hoppers are positioned across a wooden floor.

Earl ducks into a partially blocked view behind the doorjamb - next to an open door. He observes...

Exposed rafters covered with veins of wire lead to a socket and lit bulb; it glares onto the complexions of White Men in the midst of the most savage brutality.

FIST PUNCHING, SMASHING, A GUTTURAL SCREAM...

A TRAIN ROARS.

Onto a dirty wooden floor, covered with spattered blood droplets, bits of teeth.

Graden, tied to a chair, is swollen, almost unrecognizable from the beating. His face tilts upward.

Daniel Olsen stands in between Earl and the violence - separating the two.

Close-up of Barry Tywater with a loose cigarette hanging from his mouth as he MUMBLES to his cousin Rob Tywater...

Blaine Plimton and Paul Proust sit at table - having a quiet discussion, seemingly unfazed by the violence.

Marty Bavon juts his chin forward and delivers a forceful blow, turning Graden's nose sidewise into an unnatural permanent state.

Patrick Olsen removes an item from a toolbox. He walks over and hands the hidden item over to Earl.

In Earl's hands is a pair of blood-rusty pliers.

PATRICK OLSEN

You're a man now. You take care of
business.

All eyes watch closely, judging Earl's next step.

Earl trembles with the pliers in hand. Unable to move. He focuses on...

Graden's head pitifully hangs, hardly moving except for attempts to breath through blood and broken bones. His dark skin coated with wet blood. His foot twitches.

Daniel Olsen crosses over to Earl removing the pliers from his hands.

DANIEL OLSEN

Wait outside, son.

Daniel Olsen gently guides Earl into the night air. Daniel Olsen returns inside... closing the door behind him.

EXT. COTTON GIN -- RAILROAD TRACKS -- NIGHT

A grain elevator stands adjacent to the cotton gin, while railroad tracks run next to the two structures.

Earl jumps as a TRAIN ROARS by ... once it ends...

GRADEN'S SCREAMS take over - permeating into the night air.

Earl puts his hands over his ears. The SCREAMS carry over to...

PRESENT DAY -- 2008

EXT. SMALL BROWN COTTAGE -- BACKYARD -- NIGHT

On Earl as he hastily glances back at the cottage.

No sign of Warren.

Earl runs into the mouth of the forest.

INT. SMALL BROWN COTTAGE -- MAIN ROOM -- NIGHT

Warren's head cocks ever-so-slightly. He bursts out of the chair and enters...

KITCHEN

Earl is gone.

Warren stares out into the backyard. The storm rages.

Warren looks towards the mudroom, the door slightly ajar. He leaves frame and through the window we watch...

Warren, with his hat and gloves on, crossing the backyard with signs of an ataxic gait, into the darkness.

INT. FOREST -- NIGHT

The interior of the forest is somewhat shielded from the heavy snowfall and lit by the three-quarter moon; there is moderate visibility.

Warren plods forward searching for Earl's trail. He spots broken branches and brushed off limbs.

The snow deepens. Warren struggles through.

ON EARL...

...stumbles through the snow. His chest heaves... he falls forward into the snow, WINCING with pain. He bends over and rubs his knee.

He pulls himself up and staggers forward to continue on.

ON WARREN...

...determined to push forward, delving into a trance-like state....

Warren's POV - a burst of movement in the distance. He keeps pace until he gets a clear view of...

Earl moving in the distance.

ON WARREN...

... quickens his stride. His BREATHING ESCALATES... as he closes in on...

Warren's POV - he is gaining on Earl - moving through densely packed trees.

The trees quickly flash by, one after another and every so often, in dispersion through the trees...

...the Vision of Graden appears, repeatedly.

ON WARREN... confusion.

Warren's POV - tries to continue focus on Earl, but the Vision of Graden interrupts...

GRADEN
It's time to go home.

Warren stops in front of the current Vision of Graden - holding his gaze.

WARREN
I got to see this through.

GRADEN
You gonna listen this time?

Graden grins - the same one he gave when Warren saw him for the last time... before his end.

We push in on Warren - of look of resolution on his face, peace, clarity.

WARREN
I waited too long. I ran to you,
but I was too late.

The back of Earl disappears into the forest.

WARREN (CONT'D)
I was scared.

Warren lowers the rifle, letting Earl go. Warren exhales we see his breath against the moon.

The snow-laden ground morphs into moss-covered rocks, the black spruce and trembling pine trees that sway above become hardwood covered with fall colored leaves.

Warren sits against a fallen tree. He removes his gloves, his hat.

The lines on his palms are white. The skin on his knuckles are cracked and bloody. His fingers too stiff to bend.

His crippled fingers have turned blue and the scar that traverses his hand cracked open.

A weight appears lifted... suddenly he is free.

Tears well in his eyes. He closes them.

The storm winds are overtaken by Warren's BREATHING.

A SERIES OF IMAGES ONE AFTER ANOTHER:

GIN SHACK --

Young Warren downs his gin.

His friends wave goodbye to him.

Graden appears above him.

GRADEN

You know I wish you wouldn't come
to this place.

YOUNG WARREN

And you know I don't need you to
lecture me. Gotta piss.

Young Warren wades through the tall grass into trees.

Warren's BREATHING TAPERS.

A CAR ENGINE.

NURSING HOME --

Mama leans over and joyfully looks upon him.

NOTEBOOK --

Young Warren traces the letters of Graden's name.

BACK IN THE SNOWY FOREST --

On Warren.

Crows CAW in the distance.

Warren removes his boots. He lifts his feet into the air and
drops them back onto the ground.

Graden is a short distance away...

Warren falters as he tries to stand.

GRADEN

I'm going ahead. You come when
you're ready.

WARREN

Wait, I'm coming!

Warren stands only to fall onto his hands and knees.

Graden turns back.

Young Warren stares up at Graden...

YOUNG WARREN

You shouldn't have come to get me.

Graden looks downward.

GRADEN

I wouldn't leave without you.

Warren looks up at Graden, standing above.

WARREN

They say, up there, is a magical
place to be...

Graden reaches his hand out for Warren to grab hold.

Warren does so and is hauled up, he stands beside Graden. An
old man, beside a young man.

Two brothers walk together - disappearing into darkness.

OVER BLACK, Warren's final breath RASPS... Silence.

EXT. SNOWY FOREST -- NIGHT/LATER

Earl MURMURS. He desperately continues to fight his way...
His face red, hideously distorted.

Exhausted and worn, he repeatedly twists around looking for
signs of Warren trailing him.

He exhales with trembling breath.

A BUZZING rises in the distance.

Earl stops and listens.

A CAR ENGINE...

Earl pushes toward the direction of the BUZZING. He stumbles
over logs and hurls himself through the bushes...

He bursts out of the forest onto the middle of an open road.

He WHIMPERS, while GASPING for air...

... an oncoming truck.

Earl waves his hands in the air.

The truck pulls over to the side, picking Earl up roadside.

INT. HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

The CHATTERING of a working hospital. PATIENTS, FAMILY, AND DOCTORS come and go.

Earl sits on a gurney in an open space divided by curtains. He is covered with cuts, his clothes torn.

His pulse is taken as a NURSE questions him.

NURSE

Your name?

A long pause.

EARL

Earl Olsen.

The Nurse writes his name down as if it were nothing, but to Earl this means everything.

EXT. SNOWY FOREST -- MORNING.

The blizzard is over. It is quiet now.

The sun casts a bright, white light onto the forest, hitting the blanket of snow with a prism of light - refracting, creating sparkles like diamonds.

Floating past this picturesque scene until we land on...

... Warren half sits, half lies against a tree that has fallen. His eyes partly closed, staring outward... his lips slightly parted.

There is a child-like spirit to his form... an openness, a peaceful calm. As if he were part of the natural setting; permanently resting in this frozen earth.

His search has ended and so has his journey in this world.