

OUTER BANKS

EPISODE 101

"TBD"

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OVER BLACK

JOHN B (V.O.)
We're the Pogues, and our mission
this summer is to have a good time
all the time.

FADE IN:

EXT. BALCONY OF HALF-BUILT MCMANSION - NIGHT

A teenage kid stands with his heels over the edge of a balcony without a railing. Behind him, we see the curve of the coastline, moonlight on dark ocean. The kid is holding a beer can, and wearing a T-shirt that reads BAD BRAINS. A neck gaiter around his head gives him a surfy, Unabomber vibe.

This is **JOHN B** - a combo plate of Lloyd Dobler, Ferris Bueller, and Matt Dillon from the *Outsiders*. Two parts eccentric non-conformist, one part Angry Young Man.

JOHN B
'It won't work if you don't apply
yourself.' It's like they all went
to the same pep talk training camp.

A friend - **POPE** - 16, African-American, love child of Mr. Spock and a deadpan comedian, watches laconically.

POPE
If you fall, you have a twelve and
a half percent chance of living.

JOHN B
Then I won't fall. And I *am*
applying myself, just not the way
they want.

KIARA - a biracial hippychick with a socialist streak - sticks her head out of an unglassed concrete window.

KIARA
Oh my god they're going to have
Japanese toilets with towel
warmers. Towel warmers. Ridiculous.
(seeing John B)
Can you please not kill yourself?

JJ, a feisty, troubled 15 y/o, American hustler and future tax cheat, comes onto the balcony, holding a POWER DRILL.

JJ

It's gotta be worth something,
right?

He takes in John B, wavering, with his heels over the edge.

JJ (CONT'D)

Don't spill the beer, bro.

We gather this is a group of teenagers roaming a high end construction project. Below, a spotlight sweeps the yard. We glimpse seagrass and a wide flat beach.

POPE

Unfortunately, gentleman, and
ladies, our time on the veranda is
ending.

John B turns to see a golf cart pulling onto the yard.

JOHN B

They're early tonight.

John B tosses the can over his shoulder.

INT. HALF-BUILT MCMANSION - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

The four friends clatter down the stairs, giving hoots and cries that echo in the concrete chamber.

INT/EXT. HALF-BUILT MCMANSION - NIGHT

They BURST OUT of the mansion and run past an empty pool and jacuzzi. Two RENT-A-COPS give chase, darting flashlights. The kids love this. It's part of the game.

They run on a sandy path through dunes, cut through a hedge, and jump into John B's beige VW VAN which from now onward will be known as "The Twinkie."

INT. THE TWINKIE - NIGHT

The Twinkie screeches onto the main road. One of the rent-a-cops crosses the lawn at an angle, trying to cut them off.

POPE

Look at this guy - gunning for a
raise.

JJ

That sort of initiative is just
begging to be punished. Slow down.

John B slows. The rent-a-cop almost catches them.

KIARA

Oh, come on, guys. You'll give him
a heart attack.

JJ

(shouting to the security
guard)
They don't pay you enough -

ISLAND SECURITY

You little pricks!

JJ tosses an empty beer can. The rent a cop dodges. HIGH
ANGLE of the van speeding away. A sign with a smiling sun
reads: Welcome to the Outer Banks!

JOHN B (V.O.)

The Outer Banks. Paradise on earth.

We see The Twinkie pass MANSIONS and giant ESTATES.

JOHN B (V.O.)

If you can afford it. It's the sort
of place where you either have two
jobs or two houses.

We see another, even larger estate, blurred as they pass.

JOHN B (V.O.)

This is Figure Eight. The fancy
part of the island.

The Twinkie rumbles towards a small bridge.

JOHN B (V.O.)

Guess where we don't live.

The Twinkie crosses the bridge - and is then among cottages
and trailers. Rundown shacks.

JOHN B (V.O.)

This is the south side or The Cut.
Natural habitat of - drumroll,
please - The Pogues. That's us.

Drift to a road sign spray painted with - *POGUE ZONE*.

JOHN B (V.O.)
Pogues. Pogues. A throwaway fish.
Lowest member of the food chain.

EXT. JOHN B'S BOAT - DAY

The Pogues are sprawled on the boat. JJ vapes, Pope reads Kafka, and Kiara wears headphones. All with sunglasses.

JOHN B (V.O.)
The downside of Pogue life: we're
ignored and neglected.

John B, on the bow, pulls a NET from the water - hundreds of flipping silver fish.

JOHN B (V.O.)
The upside of Pogue life: we're
ignored and neglected, which
means...we do whatever we want,
whenever we want.

We see the name of the boat, hand painted, is the *HMS POGUE*.
We hear a DINGING sound.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU - MORNING

The rundown, comfortable lair of an unsupervised teenage boy.
Beer cans everywhere, dishes in the sink.

John B walks through the morning wreckage after a party,
which includes his passed out friends. He picks up a FADED
FAMILY PICTURE that's fallen off the wall and rehangs it.
CLOSE ON a young woman in the photograph.

JOHN B (V.O.)
That's Mom. Last I heard she was in
Colorado. I think it was Colorado.
(shifting to the father)
And there's dad. He disappeared at
sea fourteen months ago looking for
a shipwreck. Who disappears at sea
these days? 2019. So fucked up.

We find ANOTHER PICTURE of a bearded derelict holding up a
WAHOO on the back of a fishing boat.

JOHN B (V.O.)
And that's Uncle T. Since Dad
vanished he's supposedly the legal
(MORE)

JOHN B (V.O.) (CONT'D)
guardian. At the moment he's in
Mississippi, building houses.

We find John B continuing out to the main room.

JOHN B (V.O.)
Which means -

WIDE of John B and the sprawled kids.

JOHN B (V.O.)
It's just me right now. On my own.

John B sits in a lounge chair. Feet up. King of the world.

JOHN B (V.O.)
Fucking off, having fun.
(mock gravity)
My father would have wanted it that
way.

EXT. BOARDWALK - DAY

The golden hour. Tourists. Townies. John B leaning on a railing, surveying his kingdom - a scrum of scantily clad teens, bare feet, and surging hormones.

Nearby, we find JJ begging Kiara -

JJ
Come on, Kiara. Come on come on. Go
talk to them.

Angle - three PRETTY TOURIST GIRLS. Kiara looks over her shoulder at the girls. Looks away.

KIARA
Bait your own hook.

JJ
They won't come if I do it. But if
you go it'll be the cool local
rastagirl asking them. Please.

Kiara relents and leans off the railing. We notice she's a little more put together than the other Pogues. She's a rich hippy chick with a dolphin ankle tattoo over Trina Turk sandals. She pushes past a kid wearing cutoff khakis and white Oxford and arrives at three tourist girls.

KIARA
We're having a house party tonight.
You guys should slide by.

Angle - JJ - celebrating - Yes!

EXT. CHATEAU - NIGHT

Music BLASTS. Beneath a massive oak tree covered in Spanish moss, a fire circle with vapors. Kids on the warm shingles of the roof. Stars spread overhead.

INT. CHATEAU - NIGHT

John B walks through the crowd past other kids, beers, blasting speakers. He gives Pope a nod. Stay with Pope, who is talking with a pretty FEMALE TOURIST. Pope is very intelligent, always laconic, and with absolutely no game.

FEMALE TOURIST

All my friends tell me I give great advice. I'm thinking I'm going to be a life coach.

POPE

Really. I want to be a coroner.

Dead silence. He's blown it. The girl walks away as John B and Pope exchange a look.

EXT. CHATEAU - NIGHT

John B and a different TOURIST GIRL burst outside.

ANOTHER TOURIST GIRL

I've never seen so many stars.

JOHN B

You can see even more over here.

John B takes her hand and they walk towards a beached boat.

JOHN B (V.O.)

Except for my Dad being gone, which sucks, me living on my own has been the best three months of my life. No one to tell me what to do. Chill with my crew every night.

EXT. PIER - MORNING

John B wakes up by himself on the pier. There's a turtle sunning on the planks.

JOHN B (V.O.)
But adults hate it when kids exceed
the fun limit.

INT. SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER'S OFFICE - DAY

A DCS SOCIAL WORKER who has hair moused back and behind her head, a ridiculous hair style, is talking to John B.

DCS SOCIAL WORKER
It's come to our attention that you
are an unemancipated minor living
on your own. First off, I want to
assure you that we're going to find
you a safe and loving home.

John B settles back into his chair.

JOHN B (V.O.)
They actually thought I was going
to be happy to hear that.

EXT. BONFIRE IN THE DUNES - DUSK

The Pogues and friends around the fire - Pope, Kiara, and JJ - all having fun - but John B's lost in thought.

JOHN B (V.O.)
And that's where this story starts.
My Dad missing. My uncle MIA. And
the Bride of Frankenstein
threatening foster care.

INT. CHATEAU - JOHN B'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

John B's sleeping, thrashing around. And then -

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT (DREAM)

We're deep underwater. John B, in jeans and a T-shirt, swims past us, down into the depths.

From John B's POV, far below, an apparition appears - a middle-aged man in murky light. John B is happy.

JOHN B (V.O.)
Dad?

John B swims towards his father, but his father is already fading. John B tries to catch him, but his father sinks away, and John B, now too deep and alone, starts to drown.

John B SCREAMS UNDERWATER and -

INT. CHATEAU - JOHN B'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

John B wakes, wrecked by the dream.

JOHN B (V.O.)
Given the circumstances, a weak
member of the pack might panic...

EXT. TWINKIE - NIGHT

John B CAR SURFS on the roof of the Twinkie. Wind blasting. Riding out potholes. Preposterously dangerous.

JOHN B (V.O.)
But then I caught a break.

INT/EXT. MARINA - DAY

CLOSE ON a TV newscast. We see the words "Category Three" and a satellite of HURRICANE AGATHA. PAN to find a crowd of salt lifers with concerned faces, all except for one - John B - who can't believe his luck.

JOHN B (V.O.)
Hurricane Agatha. Coming in on the
same day that DCS was supposed to
do my assessment. Too bad.

John B exits the office to the docks where residents are in the midst of all manner of storm preparation. Supplies carried to pickups. Sandbags filled. Boats prepped.

JOHN B
(on his phone)
Looks like we'll have to
reschedule.

John B tosses the phone into the air.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Low clouds. Wind blasting. Distant lightning. John B walks towards enormous surf with a surfboard. A placard reads:

Beach Closed Due to Hurricane

POPE (O.S.)

Those aren't surfable waves, bro.

John B holds a hand up, keeps walking.

EXT. SURFBREAK - DAY

John B on his surfboard paddling towards giant waves. This is a hurricane surge. Crazy to be out there.

JOHN B (V.O.)

Way I see it, I might as well get after it while I can. Send it. Into the future.

John B peers into wind and mist and is surprised to SEE A BOAT fighting the swells. That's weird. It distracts him as -

An ENORMOUS WAVE rises and blocks his view. John B turns to paddle, but too late. The wave is rising right over him.

JOHN B (V.O.)

Cause this is the way we do things here. This is the -

The wave crashes on John B in an explosion of water and foam.

OUTER BANKS

FREEZE. Then start up again. John B is tumbled in the wave.

ROLL CREDITS over images of the HURRICANE thrashing the island. Sideways rain. An uprooted palm tree. Lightning destroys a transformer in a shower of sparks. And then -

The LIGHTS GO OUT all over the flooded island. A massive outage plunges the landscape into darkness.

FADE OUT:

INT. CHATEAU - JOHN B'S BEDROOM - MORNING

John B opens his eyes. We're in a small, cluttered, teenager's bedroom. The windows are beaded with water.

John B tries the light. *No power.* He reaches for his cell. *No Service.* He pulls on a pair of tan CARHARTT overalls, no shirt, and a bandana.

We notice maritime books, a bass guitar, a Clash poster. Fishing rods, comics, a photo of his father.

John B steps over a puddle and trundles into -

INT. CHATEAU - HALLWAY - MORNING

A narrow, dim hallway that leads to -

INT. CHATEAU - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Old couches and stained lounge chairs. JJ, crashed on the couch, knocks over a pile of clutter, and finds a stray beer.

JOHN B
You been outside?

JJ
I have polio, dude. I can't walk.

EXT. CHATEAU - MORNING

John B steps onto the porch. Normally the lot is a maritime junkyard - old boats and rusting trailers - but right now it's half destroyed. Trees down. Palms denuded.

John B takes in the wreckage. JJ appears in boxers.

JJ
Benny's gonna need you at the marina.

JOHN B
Yeah, I better hurry.

JJ
Chop chop.

John B steps down and pulls palm leaves off a flats boat with a 70 HP engine. Runs his hands along the prop.

JOHN B
Surge blows the crabs into the marsh maze. Red drum follow the crabs. Circle of life.

JJ
Aren't you supposed to meet DCS?

JOHN B

No way they're getting in with the bridges out. This is God saying you're meant to stay in OBX and fish.

EXT. JOHN B'S BOAT - DAY

John B in bandana and sunglasses, cruising a commercial waterfront lined with fish shacks, seafood joints, and outfitters. We notice pervasive storm damage. Boarded windows spray painted with BRING IT ON, AGGIE YOU BITCH.

John B and JJ slow at a MARINA SUNDRY STORE where Pope cleans the dock. No matter what he does, Pope is always understated.

JOHN B

Safety meeting. Attendance mandatory.

POPE

The overlord's got me on lockdown.

We catch a glimpse of his father, HEYWARD, a gregarious island hustler with Don King hair, pulling off plywood.

JJ

Fuck Heyward!

HEYWARD

(shouting)

I heard that you bastards.

JOHN B

We need your son.

JJ

Island rules. Day after a hurricane's a free day.

HEYWARD

Who made that up?

JOHN B

(softly)

Get in.

Pope thinks about it, drops his hose, jumps in. The boys speed off as Heyward comes onto the dock, cursing. He's mad, but not furious. It's what he would have done at their age.

The boat heads out the creek towards open water. Kiara stands on the jagged, torn up edge of the last dock, in a T-shirt

and shorts, bikini underneath, holding a cooler. She basically always has headphones on. She steps on the boat as it's moving, pulling plugs from her ears.

She greets John B by slapping hands, some complicated thing.

JOHN B (CONT'D)
What'd you bring?

KIARA
Yogurt and carrot sticks.

She sets the cooler down with muted clanking. Opens it. It's full of Coronas. JJ takes one. Cracks it. Pope gives a look.

JJ
Most important meal of the day.

John B guns the engine.

INT. JOHN B'S BOAT - DAY

In the estuary. Pope drives. Kiara sunbathes. John B ties a fishing fly. JJ is at the prow.

KIARA
Every morning?

JJ
Just kind of shows up. Like you ordered it online.

POPE
You should see trying to pee.

JOHN B
You can hit the ceiling.

JJ
You have to bend over and shit.

Kiara sits on an elbow and squints at her three friends.

KIARA
Are you guys messing with me?

POPE
I wish.

KIARA
I'm so glad I'm a girl.

POPE
Girls get pregnant.

KIARA
Not this girl.

She reaches in her sack. Pill bottles fall out. She's not embarrassed. She shakes a circular pill container.

KIARA (CONT'D)
My sister saw this and asked which
of you derelicts I was sleeping
with.

JJ
What'd you say?

KIARA
I said, 'Why does it have to be
just one?'

They like that answer. Meanwhile - John B notices a man in a MADRAS SHIRT on shore, scowling at them, and drying his yacht, a NO WAKE sign in the channel.

POPE
Salty codger, two o'clock.

JOHN B
Gun it, Pope.

Pope goes on idling.

JOHN B (CONT'D)
Show him what we think of his No
Wake sign.

Pope does gun it then.

JJ
Born here, kook!

Mr. Madras gestures angrily, and for a moment it's the old retiree against the young locals, and then they're past, cruising again. Pope cuts a sharp turn.

JJ, at the prow, motions as if he'll pour beer in front and have the wind blow it into his mouth.

JJ (CONT'D)
Hey, watch this.

JOHN B
It's not going to work.

JJ
Yeah it will.
(to Pope)
Faster.

Pope accelerates. Salt grass and trees blur by. JJ taunts with the beer - just about to pour and -

The boat LURCHES to a VIOLENT STOP. JJ cartwheels over the railing. Kiara, Pope, and John B SLAM onto the deck.

The engine sputters as the Pogues sprawl. The toppled cooler has spread ice and beer across the deck.

JOHN B
(to Kiara)
Are you ok?

KIARA
Fuck.

John B stands slowly. He checks Pope, then makes his way to the prow to see JJ on his back in the water, groaning.

JJ
I think my heels touched the back of my head. What the fuck did you do, Pope?

Pope looks off the stern, by the outboard, which has been wrenched up.

POPE
Sandbar. The channel's changed.

We see a buoy in a tree.

JOHN B
The storm surge must have been huge back here.

JJ dog paddles to the boat and as he does we see a SHADOW in the deep water. The three friends gather to look.

POPE
That's a boat down there.

A large white boat becomes visible, sunken in deep water.

EXT. JOHN B'S BOAT - AFTERNOON (MOMENTS LATER)

Splash! The four friends dive off the prow.

EXT. SUNKEN BOAT - AFTERNOON

The friends are all swimming down into the depths.

John B gets to the boat first, gliding past three outboard engines, the props silent and still.

The boat is a deep-sea sportfisher with a cabin. John B swims along the length of it, then runs out of air and turns up. The others turn up as well.

EXT. SURFACE NEAR JOHN B'S BOAT - AFTERNOON

The four friends surface. They catch their breath.

JJ

That's a Grady White. Primo rig.

John B has climbed into the boat. He helps Kiara in.

JOHN B

I saw that boat yesterday when I was surfing the surge. It must have hit the jetty.

KIARA

You surfed the surge?

JJ

Fucking A. Pogues style.

John B is proud of his recklessness.

KIARA

(to John B)

What the fuck?

POPE

Do you know whose boat it is?

JOHN B

No. But I bet I can get inside.

JJ and Pope have climbed back in now, too.

JJ

It's too deep.

JOHN B

For the weak and feeble.

JJ

No way I'm resuscitating you. Just want to make that clear up front.

John B walks to the prow. He pulls the anchor up. He holds it in two hands, climbing over the railing.

KIARA

(worried)

John B.

JOHN B

(laughing)

What?

John B falls backwards, overboard, holding the anchor.

EXT. SUNKEN BOAT - AFTERNOON

John B rides the anchor down with the line paying out behind. He gets to the bottom. He lets the anchor go in a slow motion explosion of brown muck. He swims towards the sunken boat.

John B gets to the door of the hold. He pulls his feet around. He braces himself. He tugs on the door and -

It bursts open.

INT. UNDERWATER BOAT - DAY

John B swims inside the cabin. It's empty. John B opens a cabinet door. Nothing. He's running out of air. Something glints. He grabs for it. It's a MOTEL KEY with a green tab.

John B swims for the open door.

EXT. JOHN B'S BOAT - DAY

John B surfaces, catching his breath. The Pogues stand at the back of the boat looking down at him.

KIARA

That took forever.

JOHN B

(out of breath)

I was - I was - I found this.

He holds up the motel key, climbing on deck.

POPE
(eager)
Any dead bodies?

John B shakes his head.

JJ
Looting potential?

JOHN B
(holding up the key)
Just this.

JJ leans over the railing, looking at the shimmering image of the boat, just out of reach.

JJ
Really nice boat.

KIARA
(warming to the idea)
We should report it. We could get a reward.

JJ
Maritime salvage. Claim the finders fee and not work all summer.

JOHN B
Cha ching! I could fly Uncle T back and not be taken hostage by inland weirdos.

POPE
What you got against weirdos?

JOHN B
Not you. Other weirdos.

Pope starts the engine. John B pulls the anchor up. The boat kicks into gear and as they motor off we PAN to find -

A DEAD BODY, floating face up, caught in tall grass. A CRAB scurries from the dead man's mouth.

CUT TO:

EXT. TANNYHILL - DAY

An enormous robber-baron estate. Mature trees. A manicured lawn slopes down to water. A placard on a gate reads:

TANNYHILL

Entering the grounds we see workers raking, taking boards off windows, hauling a generator. WE HEAR an upset WOMAN'S VOICE.

WOMAN (O.S.)

They said I had to wait 24 hours.
But I know something's wrong.

We find LANA GRUBBS, blue collar, distraught, standing at the open front door, speaking with JOE CAMERON, 60's, fit, very seersuckery. Joe exudes a casual authority. He lives here.

JOE

Now Lana, I gave him the day off.
I'm sure he's holed up somewhere
with a six pack and Sports Center.

LANA

He would have called.

JOE

The storm, Lana. Phones are down,
power's out all over the island.
And Sarah saw him at the marina.
She'll know something.

Joe takes a step into the house. There are no lights.

INT. TANNYHILL - DAY

We enter a great room with hunting trophies and art. We find ROSE, 30's, trophy wife, not so polished.

JOE

Where's the Princess?

Rose, ignoring Lana, points out a window at a pool. Just then a generator STARTS UP and the lights FLICKER on weakly.

ROSE

Thank God. It's like living in
Nicaragua.

Joe glances at Rose and they start out to -

EXT. TANNYHILL - DAY

The grounds of the sprawling estate. Rose and Lana arrive at a POOL where Joe's youngest daughter WHEEZIE, (14 going on 21), suns on a lounge chair. WORKERS, waist deep in water, struggle with a large YARD SCULPTURE.

JOE

Storm blew it in. Rose about had a heart attack. I don't even want to know what it cost.

Beyond the pool, Joe can see SARAH CAMERON, 15, a blond GODDESS in a white summer shirt with a RED BIKINI, standing in a field below circling hawks and other raptors.

JOE (CONT'D)

(to Wheezie)

What's she doing?

WHEEZIE

Saving mice.

Joe doesn't bother asking Wheezie to elaborate.

JOE

Sarah!

Sarah waves her father off.

SARAH

Busy!

JOE

What are you doing?

SARAH

The burrows filled with water from the surge. The birds are having a field day.

Joe takes this in. Again, not surprised.

JOE

The birds have to eat, too, Sarah!

SARAH

It's a mouse genocide out there.

JOE

(exasperated)

It's the cycle of life!

Sarah arrives at the edge of the field.

SARAH

I can't be a part of it. First they came for the mice, Daddy.

(seeing Lana)

What is it?

JOE

I have an actual person here that needs your help. This is Lana Grubbs. You remember Scooter, her husband? You saw him, right?

SARAH

Prepping for the storm. He helped me latch the cabin on the *Druthers*.

JOE

Did he go out?

SARAH

From the marina? Are you crazy? There was a hurricane.

Joe turns to Lana.

JOE

See. He's holed up somewhere. I'll send word out if I hear anything. And check with the Coast Guard.

Sarah is already walking back to the field, where a hawk swoops past her head and -

CUT TO:

EXT. COAST GUARD STATION - DAY

WIDE - the Pogues approach town in their boat and tie up to the dock between two COAST GUARD VESSELS. We notice boats listing. Boats piled on cars. A mast sticks from the water.

Beyond is THE TOWN - Amity Island meets Nantucket. Boards on windows. Shops missing parts of roofs. Surfy kids with skateboards on the post office steps.

The Pogues jump off the boat and file into the station where -

INT. COAST GUARD STATION - DAY

It's chaos. Shouting, jostling. Power out, no AC. Amongst the throng, we see Lana Grubbs, waiting her turn.

DOG OWNER

I'm missing my briard.

BOAT OWNER

The Stanley! 42 foot!

The DOG OWNER and BOAT OWNER jostle and position like Draymond Green beneath the hoop.

DOG OWNER
He's a diabetic!

The Seaman at the desk is on a walkie-talkie.

BOAT OWNER
We pay taxes!

The Pogues, clumped together near the door, are singularly laconic around hysterical adults.

JOHN B
If I ever get like this - shoot me.

KIARA
Everything's sooo important.

John B edges past the angry adults.

JOHN B
Excuse me, officer.

The walkie-talkie CRACKLES. The Seaman holds up a finger.

SEAMAN
Gimme a minute.

The seaman listens. He writes something down.

SEAMAN (CONT'D)
(on phone)
Interdiction. Got it.

JOHN B
You're going to want to hear this.

SEAMAN
Sure, kid.
(into first phone)
Hang on.

He stands up and walks into a back room.

DOG OWNER
Now he's walked away!

BOAT OWNER
If the bridges aren't repaired, how
are we supposed to make money?

JJ sidles to the desk and takes a pen. Puts it in his pocket. John B rolls his eyes at this petty theft.

JOHN B
Bad JJ. Put it back.

JJ isn't putting it back.

DOG OWNER
(to John B)
If you have a request you need to wait in line.

BOAT OWNER
These kids. The world owes them.

John B looks at the line of people. He motions to the door. JJ takes another pen, then they all follow John B out.

EXT. COAST GUARD STATION - DAY

The Pogues stand on the sidewalk outside the station.

JJ
Even if there was a reward, they wouldn't give it to us.

John B holds up the motel key from the wreck.

JOHN B
I know how we could find out who owns that boat.

They all look at the key and understand what he's suggesting. Pope immediately doesn't like the idea.

POPE
We don't know whose room that is. It could be anybody.

Kiara grabs the key and starts toward the skiff.

KIARA
That's what makes it interesting.
(coaxing)
Come on. We'll be lookout.

John B and JJ start after her.

JOHN B
That way you're only an accomplice.

INT. TWINKIE - DAY

The Twinkie pulls into the parking lot of a two story, concrete motel. A rundown feel. Sign tilting. Power out.

 KIARA
Motel or meth lab?

 POPE
You be the judge.

 JOHN B
Doesn't look like a place that
someone with a Grady White would
stay, does it?

 KIARA
 (to John B)
Be careful.

JJ scowls. John B jumps out. JJ follows.

EXT. SUMMERWINDS MOTEL - BREEZEWAY - DAY

John B and JJ walk through the open air breezeways, checking the room numbers. Moving on. We notice some shingles scattered and a few windows broken. Ice machine leaking.

 JJ
'Be careful, John B. Be sooooo
careful.' What the fuck was that
about?

 JOHN B
She wants us to be careful.

 JJ
Since she heard you're being
threatened with exile she's been
like, be sooo careful, John B.

JJ runs his hand down John B's shoulder.

 JJ (CONT'D)
You could totally swoop on that.

 JOHN B
Dude, I would never. You know the
rule. No Pogue on Pogue macking.
And you're the one who's always
hitting on her.

JJ

Of course I'm hitting on her. She's a super-hot, rich, hippie chick slumming with us. Why? I can't figure it out, either, but who cares? I know that door's locked because I've tried it. Have you?

John B gives him a look.

JOHN B

You have a serious problem.

JJ's about to reply, but John B holds his finger up and points at the room number. They've arrived. JJ looks at John B, and then knocks. No one comes. He KNOCKS AGAIN.

JJ

No persona aqui.

John B slips the key in.

JOHN B

Should we try it?

JJ turns and gives a surveillance camera the finger.

JJ

No power. No one's going to know. Why not?

JOHN B

(sarcastic)

I want to but I'm afraid.

Running with this, JJ pauses for dramatic effect.

JJ

If you walk through this door, you're walking into a world of trouble.

JOHN B

Just turn the fucking key.

INT. SUMMERWINDS MOTEL - ROOM 212 - DAY

They enter a dark room with the shades pulled. They close the door. Adjust the curtains. The bed is made up. A duffel on the floor. A second duffel next to the other bed.

On a desk JJ finds a NAUTICAL MAP with coordinates in pencil.

JJ

That's where they were fishing.

John B looks at it, head tilted.

JOHN B

That's off the continental shelf.
Big swell. You wouldn't fish there.

John B sees another suitcase. He opens it. Just some clothes and sneakers. No ID. He finds a folded scrap of paper with a string of numbers. He turns it over. Tosses it on the desk. JJ has gone into the bathroom.

JOHN B (CONT'D)

(yelling)

Did you find anything?

JJ (O.S.)

A really awesome dopp kit that you
won't let me steal.

John B opens the closet and sees - an IN ROOM SAFE. He just stands there looking at it.

INT. TWINKIE - DAY

A sharp INHALE. Kiara's vaping. Then -

KIARA

People who fake mental illness to
get Instagram likes.

POPE

Does that work?

KIARA

It must. They keep doing it. Half
these bitches don't even know what
bipolar means.

Pope likes this response. He's more animated when he's with Kiara. We get the distinct feeling he likes her.

KIARA (CONT'D)

What about you?

POPE

(thinking)

Worst peeve? I'd have to go with --

She hold the pipe out to him. He waves it off. Then -

POPE (CONT'D)

Oh fuck me.

A Sheriff's Deputy cruiser pulls into the lot. Two uniformed deputies get out, male and female. They enter the office.

POPE (CONT'D)

Call them.

KIARA

Towers are down.

POPE

If I lose my merit scholarship I'm going to kill somebody.

Pope jumps out of the car. Kiara follows.

EXT. TWINKIE - DAY

Across the parking lot, law enforcement has come out of the office. Pope hides behind The Twinkie, all cloak and dagger.

Angle - law enforcement has cut up the stairs. Pope walks out and sees a parking lot median filled with PEBBLES. Pope picks up a handful. Cocks his arm. Throws. And -

The pebbles fall to the pavement. Not close to the 2nd floor.

KIARA

Didn't you ever play baseball?

POPE

I was on the math team.

KIARA

Not an athlete. A mathlete!

Kiara grabs a handful of pebbles. She cocks her arm.

INT. SUMMERWINDS MOTEL - ROOM 212 - DAY

John B kneels in the closet, punching numbers into the safe's keyboard. In sequence. He's on 0017.

JJ (O.S.)

Punching shit in at random. That'll work.

John B punches in 0018, gets doinked, then remembers - the scrap of paper he left on the table. John B gets the paper and goes back to the safe. Tries the numbers. And -

Amazingly, the light TURNS GREEN. The door swings open to reveal a fat stack of CASH. John B just stares.

JOHN B

JJ. You need to see this.

JJ comes into the doorway. He can't believe it.

JJ

Did that really just happen?

JJ reaches for the money.

JOHN B

Don't touch it.

JJ ignores him, and reaches for the money - then realizes there's something else back there. His eyes go wide. He slowly pulls out - a HANDGUN. They look at it, stunned.

JOHN B (CONT'D)

Put it back.

JJ holds the gun. Just stares.

JJ

Sig Sauer Elite! This is a spendy gatt. Retail for twelve hundo.

JOHN B

We shouldn't mess with any of this.

JJ is momentarily in agreement. But - he can't help himself. He takes two sheaths of bills and puts them in his pants.

JJ

Take a pic.

JOHN B

Yeah, let's just create our own incriminating evidence.

JJ begins to respond, but - pebbles CLATTER the window. John B goes to the window and sees -

Pope and Kiara below. John B tilts his head. The OFFICE MANAGER and two law enforcement officers are on the steps.

JOHN B (CONT'D)

Cops coming!

John B and JJ look around the room. Then at each other.

EXT. SUMMERWINDS HOTEL - DAY

The manager and deputies walk along the breezeway and stop at room 212. The manager holds out a MASTER KEY.

INT. TWINKIE - DAY

Kiara and Pope are back in the Twinkie, looking out with horror as the deputies arrive at the room.

KIARA
Should we peel?

Pope is paralyzed and speaks in a robotic monotone.

POPE
You never leave a Pogue behind.

KIARA
No. Seriously. Should we peel?

Out the window we see the door open. The manager stands aside. The deputies approach the open door.

INT. SUMMERWINDS MOTEL - ROOM 212 - DAY

The deputies enter the room. The boys are nowhere to be seen. Everything is back in place.

The deputies are VICTOR SHOUBE, swaggering, scary, actually enjoys playing 'bad cop.' The other is TERRI PLUMB, almost too pretty for law enforcement, a kite surfer, new to the force. Shoupe wants to impress her.

The deputies put on medical gloves and begin to tag all the items. They put the maps in an evidence bag. They tag the duffel. They look around for something else.

DEPUTY SHOUBE
Check the bathroom.

Plumb steps into the bathroom, checks the medicine closet. Empty. She turns to the tub. The curtain is PULLED shut.

It's the only place the boys could be hiding. She peels it back to reveal...an empty tub.

PAN TO - a square little bathroom window.

EXT. SUMMERWINDS MOTEL ROOF - DAY

The boys stand on a narrow ledge on either side of the bathroom window. They're terrified. They totter.

INT. SUMMERWINDS MOTEL - ROOM 212 - DAY

Plumb returns to the main room. Shoupe has found the open safe with the money. He checks Plumb, and reaches inside.

We pan over to the bathroom window. We see John B's reflection in the glass.

EXT. SUMMERWINDS MOTEL ROOF - DAY

John B watches in the reflection as the safe pops open.

DEPUTY SHOUBE

I said it. Did I not say it?

Shoupe removes a MANILA ENVELOPE. Pulls out a PHOTOGRAPH. Slides it back. Then takes a stack of money and checks Plumb.

DEPUTY SHOUBE (CONT'D)

Everybody has to dip their beak.
(she begins to protest)
Part of the program.

He SPLITS one stack, gives her half, and puts the other stack in an evidence bag. John B watches all of this. So does JJ. They check each other. *Holy fuck*, JJ mouths and then -

JJ nearly loses his balance. The gun falls from his waistband and goes BOOM as it lands on the roof of a dumpster below.

INT. SUMMERWINDS MOTEL - ROOM 212 - DAY

The deputies react to the noise. Plumb is nervous. Shoupe takes off the strap from his holster, releasing the lock for quick access. Hand at his hip, he walks to the window.

EXT. SUMMERWINDS MOTEL ROOF - DAY

John B and JJ are pressed up against the wall on either side of the window. They're terrified. Shoupe is right there.

Down below, a tourist kid tries to get his mom to look at the GUN on the dumpster. He waves to Shoupe. He points at the weapon. Shoupe looks at the kid, confused.

Across the lot some LOCAL DERELICTS drink beers, play music, dance party at the car. Nothing unusual. After a moment -

Shoupe turns from the window. The mother shushes her boy. John B and JJ stand pressed against the wall. Whew.

INT. TWINKIE - DAY

Kiara and Pope are slunk low, barely visible behind the dash.

KIARA

What do you think's going on in there?

POPE

Nightstick City.

The motel room door OPENS. The Deputies exit. They're wheeling the suitcases and evidence bags. No sign of the Pogues. No sign of any disruption.

The cops make their way back to the cruiser. They put all the items in the trunk. They shut the trunk.

Pope eyes them with deep suspicion. The deputies glance at the Twinkie then get into their patrol car. Drive away.

Pope looks at Kiara, then reluctantly, cracks his door. But - John B and JJ appear from around the corner of the motel. JJ does his pimp walk. John B pretends it was no big deal.

JJ

You could have warned us earlier.

KIARA

We would have except Pope was on the math team.

John B's about to ask, but -

POPE

The cops had everything tagged, like it was from a crime scene. Did you find anything up there?

JJ is utterly pleased with himself.

JJ

Did we find anything?

JJ holds his shirt up and shows the gun and money.

POPE

You didn't take that from a crime scene, did you? Oh fuck. I'm going to lose my merit scholarship.

JJ puts his arm around Pope.

JJ

Who cares, as long as you have friends?

Pope shoves him away.

POPE

I'm living the nightmare. We need to leave right now.

The Pogues jump in the Twinkie and peel out.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARINA - DAY

A bloated, open-eyed, DEAD BODY lifted off a police boat on a longboard and rested on the concrete edge of the marina. A crowd of residents gather round. A FEMALE SHERIFF oversees. A PARAMEDIC listens for a heartbeat. Then -

PARAMEDIC

(to the deputy)

Three fourteen.

The deputy writes the time. A local kid, PEELER, takes a photo as the Pogues approach and see this bloated, blackened dead guy on the concrete.

JOHN B

(to Peeler)

Who is it?

PEELER

Scooter Grubbs. He was out during the storm.

(showing his phone)

Check out my pic.

KIARA

(to Peeler)

Yuckstafer.

JJ

What kind of boat did he have?

PEELER

Somehow that dirtbag had a brand
new Grady White. Everyone's looking
for it.

John B and the others are suddenly very still and quiet. Pope
looks like he's about to have an aneurysm. Just then -

LANA (O.S.)

Let me through. Let me through.

Lana Grubbs - very upset - pushes her way through the crowd.

LANA (CONT'D)

Where is he?

Lana Grubbs approaches the stretcher. She sees the corpse of
her husband, and BUCKLES with grief, falling on the body.

PAN across the four Pogues who are all deeply unhappy.

POPE (V.O.)

We didn't find anything. We don't
know anything.

INT. TWINKIE - DAY

In the round, the four Pogues in the back of The Twinkie.

POPE

We need to have total and complete
amnesia.

JJ

Pope's right. For once.
(to Pope)
See, I agree with you sometimes.
Deny deny deny.

KIARA

We can't keep that money.

JJ

Not everybody can afford unlimited
data plans, Kiara --

KIARA

We have to pass it on to Lana
Grubbs. Otherwise it's bad karma.

JJ

Oh boy.

POPE

Bad karma to be implicated in a
felony too.

(reluctant)

We gotta go dark.

JJ

If that means we get to keep the
money, then OK, I agree.

Kiara reluctantly nods her head. Pope seems to think everyone
is agreed on this, but - we land on John B.

JOHN B

I don't agree.

They all look at him. JJ is particularly interested.

JOHN B (CONT'D)

Scooter Grubbs bought individual
cigarettes at the Porthole. I once
saw him at the Sav-A-Lot begging
change for gas. He was a dirtbag
marina rat who never had more than
forty dollars. And he suddenly has
a brand new Grady White?

John B lets this sink in.

JOHN B (CONT'D)

Around here, there's only one way
marina rats get Grady Whites.

(beat)

Square grouper, bro. Radar
detection and aerial surveys aren't
conducted during storms. Everyone
knows that. It's a free pass. As
long as you survive.

JJ

(getting it)

He was smuggling.

John B looks around at each of them.

JOHN B

I'm thinking there's probably
serious contraband in that wreck.

JJ

Fuck yeah!

Pope puts a hand on his head.

POPE

Shoot me now.

JOHN B

It's our ticket.

KIARA

(warming to the idea)

If we get what we think's in there we could pass some of it off to Lana Grubbs. We could get a lawyer for you, John B. We could fly Uncle T back and then you'll have a guardian for your DCS meeting -

JJ

So we can save John B's life and be good friends and help grieving widows or we can be pussies with merit scholarships.

(to Pope)

Your choice, dude.

Pope looks off without saying anything, shaking his head.

JOHN B

Who's in?

JJ

I'm fucking in.

They slap hands.

KIARA

Get up, stand up.

That's her way of agreeing.

JJ

Only one person we haven't heard from yet.

They all turn to Pope.

POPE

For the record, if that's a smuggling boat with illegal contraband inside, it belongs to someone else. Taking it would be catastrophically stupid.

JJ

Stupid things have good outcomes all the time. Look at the pop

(MORE)

JJ (CONT'D)
charts. Right now we just have to
find a way to get into it and until
then be cool and act normal.

POPE
If we act too normal everyone will
know something's up.

JOHN B
Normal for us.

POPE
Which is what, exactly?

They all consider. Kiara has a tentative answer.

KIARA
Pony keg.

CUT TO:

INT. MARITIME MUSEUM - EVENING

FOOTFALLS on tiles. We're in a Maritime Museum. Victor
Shoupe, the deputy we saw at the motel room earlier, enters
the dim museum. A DOCENT behind a desk.

DOCENT
We're closed.

DEPUTY SHOUBE
Sure, chief. I'll just be a minute.

Shoupe walks past the docent into the main body of the
museum. Shadowy displays with framed nautical maps, and -

A DIORAMA of a sinking ship. We stop at the diorama. Shoupe
uses the light from his phone to read the placard: "*The Royal
Merchant - Lost at Sea*".

Shoupe has the PHOTOS he took from the motel safe. He holds
one of the photos up and compares it to the diorama.

CLOSE ON - a grainy, underwater shot of a submerged masthead.
The masthead in the diorama IS THE SAME as in the photograph.

DOCENT (O.S.)
The Royal Merchant.

Shoupe hides the photo. The docent has walked up and is
standing alongside the diorama.

DOCENT (CONT'D)
Sunk in the great storm of 1859
with 400 million dollars of British
government gold on board. The dream
of generations of islanders.

Shoupe takes in the diorama, the tiny, desperate men on deck,
the miniature wooden chests filled with gold bars.

DOCENT (CONT'D)
Lovely work, don't you think?

DEPUTY SHOUBE
Lovely.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

WIDE of the boardwalk and beach. Kids in clusters in golden
light. A few beached boats in the BG from the storm. John B
and crew walking along together with a pony keg.

JOHN B (V.O.)
You can't understand the Outer
Banks without understanding the
boardwalk. It's like a three layer
burrito.

ANGLE ON: John B, Kiara, Pope and JJ, jumping down from a
washed out stairway to the beach, handing the pony keg down.

JOHN B (V.O.)
There's us and our friends. Working
class fuckups. From The Cut.

We see JJ, manning the tap, filling cups with foamy beer.

JOHN B (V.O.)
Then there are the Kooks. The rich
second-homers.

ANGLE ON: the boardwalk where preppy kids in Johnnie O and
Southern Tide, with perfect hair and teeth, lounge near fancy
cars with loud speakers.

JOHN B (V.O.)
They're mostly from poncey-ass
boarding schools, trustafarian
posers. Our natural enemies.

Pogues and Kooks passing. Mutual hatred.

JOHN B (V.O.)
And then there are the tourons.

ANGLE ON: sunburned tourist kids, some with northern accents.
Deer in the headlights.

JOHN B (V.O.)
Totally clueless. Here for a week
on vacation with their families.

We see Kiara flirting with a HOT GUY. We see JJ, casually,
putting his arm around a TOURIST GIRL.

JOHN B (V.O.)
Chum for the sharks.

We go WIDE of the whole boardwalk and beach stretching away.
Golden light. Clumps of kids. Teen paradise.

JOHN B (V.O.)
Occasionally we indulged in some
tribal provocations.

FLASH - John B and friends throwing eggs from The Twinkie. JJ
putting a STOKE sticker over the "Welcome to Figure 8" sign.

JOHN B (V.O.)
But on this night, I swear on my
missing father, we were minding our
own business. The kooks came to us.

Pogues on the beach around the pony keg. While down the beach
a SCRUM OF KOOKS moves along the shore. Among them is SARAH
CAMERON. The kooks arrive at a large RED BUOY with a broken
chain embedded in the sand. Sarah begins climbing it.

KIARA
(turning to see)
What the fuck is she doing?

John B turns and watches Sarah climb the buoy.

JOHN B (V.O.)
That was Sarah Cameron. Kook
princess. Kiara's best friend in
elementary school. Not anymore. I
cleaned Sarah's Dad's boat. She was
always nice to me. But you ask me,
that was just guilt for being born
lucky.

We swing from Sarah to TOPPER, waiting below, an imposing
teen stud, like something made by a machine. His eyeglasses
make him look like a Dutch architect.

JOHN B (V.O.)
And that's Topper, her not so
pleasant boyfriend.

Topper slings white bangs out of his eyes.

JOHN B (V.O.)
Topper thinks Pogues were bred to
mow lawns.

The Pogues carry plastic cups, wander over to the buoy and
join the kooks. Sarah is perched with a leg in the gridwork,
looking out to the ocean. She's excited.

SARAH
I'm sure I saw it. Right out there.

We swing out to the water and see rolling swells and some
pelicans and nothing else. Then -

A WATER SPOUT. And the breach of a wide, dark back. For a
moment, the kids are silent.

SARAH (CONT'D)
The storm must have pulled them in.

Sarah watches - kook goddess in golden light - then jumps
down to the sand.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Hey, K.

KIARA
Hey.

These two were once good friends. We sense this.

SARAH
Haven't seen you at the regatta
lately.

KIARA
Not really a regatta girl these
days. You know that.

TOPPER
Let's roll, Sarah.

Sarah hesitates, then starts to go with Topper, but - JJ
can't help himself.

JJ
Hey, Sarah, can we offer you a
tasty Old Milwaukee beverage?

JJ's holding out a plastic cup of beer.

SARAH

No thanks.

JJ holds the beer out. Not so nice.

JJ

Oh, come on. Not fancy enough?

Topper steps up.

TOPPER

I'll take it.

JJ pulls the cup away, taunting.

JJ

I didn't ask you, Topper. If you'd said pretty please, maybe. But you didn't, so too bad. You can have it, Sarah. Not Topper.

The crowd is getting interested in this. JJ holds the beer back to Sarah.

TOPPER

She doesn't want it, asshole.

Topper SLAPS THE CUP away. The beer SPLATTERS over John B.

TOPPER (CONT'D)

(laughing)

See what happens?

Pope senses things spinning out of control.

POPE

We're laying low. Being normal.

John B pushes Topper who's knocked back into a tidal pool. As Topper steps out he shoves John B towards the water and -

TOPPER

Don't make me drown you like your old man.

John B is instantly enraged. He lunges at Topper who sidesteps and retaliates with a REAL PUNCH that knocks John B's bandana whoppyjawed. And -

IT'S ON. A REAL FIGHT. The teenagers circle to gawk, catcall. Some of them hang off the gridwork of the buoy to watch.

EVERYONE
Fight, fight!

Sarah turns away in disgust. Everyone else closes in.

The fight is vicious and evenly matched. John B is scrappy. Topper fights with fierce intensity.

CLOSE ON: John B. We sense that this means more than just a scuffle. He feels like he's fighting for his life. Then -

BAM! Topper connects brutally. John B goes down near the tidal pool. Topper drags John B to the water. He holds his head under. Pope TRIES TO GET THROUGH but can't.

KIARA
Stop!

SARAH
Topper!

Then - there's a GUN at Topper's head.

JJ (O.S.)
Your move, broski.

We pull back to reveal JJ POINTING THE GUN that he took from the motel room. Topper holds his hands up. Backs up slowly.

Pope has forced his way in and lifts groggy John B from the tidal pool. He spits out water. JJ looks at Sarah.

SARAH
Put the gun down, JJ.

JJ
Did you say something, Princess?

Sarah's afraid, but she doesn't flinch.

SARAH
John B, can you check your psycho friend please?

John B has recovered just a little. He doesn't want to appear to listen to Sarah, but, after a moment -

JOHN B
Cool out, JJ.

JJ
(not looking at him)
I was saving you, bro.

KIARA
 Tranquilo.

After a moment - JJ raises the gun to the sky.

 JJ
 (to the kooks)
 Get the fuck off our side of the
 island.

BANG - JJ FIRES. The report echoes down the strand. The throng of kids duck and scatter. As the Pogues move off, Kiara shoves JJ.

 KIARA
 You're an idiot.

 JJ
 Yeah, sure. I just saved his
 fucking life.

Pope's walking off, speechless. John B sits, and touches fingertips - Ow! - to his already swelling eye.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

The dark ocean at night.

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT (DREAM)

We dip underwater where there's a strange green light - John B swims by in his clothes. It's the dream again. John B's father appears below him, just like before.

 JOHN B (V.O.)
 There's something about my father I
 haven't mentioned. The week before
 he went missing he was getting all
 twitchy -

FLASH - John B's father (BIG JOHN) studying a nautical map. He hides the map as John B gets close.

 JOHN B (V.O.)
 And he says to me -

John B's father speaks as John B narrates.

JOHN B (V.O.)
'I think I found something. Your
Uncle T's going to come stay. I
might have to vanish for a while.'

We see John B on the beach, looking out at the ocean.

JOHN B (V.O.)
So he talks about vanishing, and
then he vanishes. Everyone else was
saying he's lost at sea. I didn't
believe it. At least not at first.

We're back underwater. John B swims down after his father,
but this time he reaches him. John B's father holds him at
arm's length. Then -

They EMBRACE. We see John B's face over his father's
shoulder, underwater, and HE LOOKS HAPPY.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU - JOHN B'S BEDROOM - MORNING

John B - sleeping - with a black eye - hugging a pillow.

EXT. OUTER BANKS - MORNING

Shots of the beautiful Outer Banks at dawn. The rich side
with its estates. The working side with its old fish shacks.
The long curve of the coast, battered by the storm.

We come down on a Sheriff's cruiser turning on a sandy drive.

INT. CHATEAU - MORNING

The door opens and a uniformed sheriff enters. We recognize
the sheriff from the marina. It's SUSAN PETERKIN, 60's. Looks
like an old dowager, but as harmless as a water moccasin.
Golden Girls meets Cersei Lannister.

Peterkin stands over sleeping John B. Slowly, his eyes open.

SHERIFF PETERKIN
Get decent, sweetie. We need to
talk.

INT. CHATEAU - MORNING (A FEW MINUTES LATER)

John B sits on the couch across from Sheriff Peterkin.

SHERIFF PETERKIN

Sorry to break in like this, but DCS called. It might be awhile before they can get over for your assessment. They wanted me to check in to see how you're doing. So how are you?

JOHN B

I'm good. Fantastic. Thanks.

SHERIFF PETERKIN

(looking around)

I'm glad to hear you say that, John B, though I've heard a few things that worry me. Let me see if I can remember. Oh, one thing I heard was that your Uncle Teddy, your 'guardian,' hasn't been in the state for three months.

John B opens his mouth to answer.

SHERIFF PETERKIN (CONT'D)

You don't need to say anything. I know it's true. I called school. They said you used to be a good student and now you're failing all your classes.

JOHN B

Just one. Or, like, three tops.

Sheriff Peterkin's frown deepens.

SHERIFF PETERKIN

And now I hear there was a fight on the beach last night.

John B hides a bruise on his face.

SHERIFF PETERKIN (CONT'D)

And that a gun was involved.

JOHN B

(terrible liar)

I got in a little dust up. I don't know anything about a gun.

SHERIFF PETERKIN

That's ok. I know who it was. I'll get to him. What I'm worried about right now is making sure you are in a safe home.

JOHN B

I got a safe home. Right here.
Super safe. T's coming back.

Peterkin seems skeptical.

SHERIFF PETERKIN

Is that what he told you? Well, if
he really is coming back I think
you should be allowed to stay. But
if I stick my neck out for you, you
need to help me. Tit for tat.

John B seems to consider this.

JOHN B

What kind of tat?

SHERIFF PETERKIN

Let me think. That's right - there
is a way you could help.

Sheriff Peterkin stands. Drags her chair closer. She sits
back down. Adjusts herself. We get a creepy feeling.

SHERIFF PETERKIN (CONT'D)

A body was found yesterday in the
marsh. Maybe you heard that. Were
you in the marsh yesterday?

John B hesitates.

JOHN B

We were chasing some drum, yeah.

SHERIFF PETERKIN

You catch anything?

JOHN B

Skunked.

SHERIFF PETERKIN

Strange. Fishing's usually good
after a storm. All sorts of things
get stirred up.

John B says nothing. He holds very still.

SHERIFF PETERKIN (CONT'D)

Did you happen to come across a
wreck?

JOHN B

No.

She looks at him closely. Hard to tell if she believes him.

SHERIFF PETERKIN

You're skimming just along the surface, John B.

(running a hand horizontally)

Down here is foster care, juvy. Pretty big drop for a smart kid like you.

(letting this settle)

Now up here is you being allowed to stay on your own with you and your little friends doing whatever you want. Outer Banks. Or foster care on the mainland.

(getting even closer)

You're one inch above the surface. I'd start flapping those wings, John B. Flap flap flap. You sure you didn't come across a submerged boat yesterday?

JOHN B

I'm sure.

She clenches his forearm.

SHERIFF PETERKIN

It's better if you didn't, do you understand?

John B nods.

SHERIFF PETERKIN (CONT'D)

I want to hear you say it, sweetie.

JOHN B

I'll stay out of the marsh.

SHERIFF PETERKIN

And I'll look the other way, long as you keep out of trouble.

She stands. She looks at the trashed place. Shakes her head.

SHERIFF PETERKIN (CONT'D)

I got dogs live better than this, John B. Might want to think about cleaning up.

She walks out, and John B sends a can flying.

JOHN B
Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

We HEAR the sheriff's car start up. John B checks the window then goes back to the couch.

JOHN B (CONT'D)
Oh shit, Dad, where are you?

John B holds his head in his hands and breaks down crying.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOAT RAMP - DAY

Deputies and other local law enforcement GATHERED at a boat ramp. We see many pickups with towed boats. Shoupe, who loves the spotlight, and is among his people, STRUTS in front.

DEPUTY SHOUBE
Your job today is to keep privates off the marsh so we can do our job and find this wreck. That's straight from Peterkin. Don't forget your sunscreen, ladies. Bring a lot of liquids.

FROM THE CROWD
Does that include Natty Light?

Laughter from the crowd.

DEPUTY SHOUBE
That's on your own recognizance. What I don't see I don't worry about.

Shoupe slaps his hands and the men head to their boats. Shoupe wanders over to two men whose attire suggests they are not locals. They wear jeans, long sleeve shirts, and heavy workboots. We'll call them RATTER and CRUZ.

DEPUTY SHOUBE (CONT'D)
What can I do for you fellas?

RATTER
We're associates of the owner. We're here to help however we can.

CRUZ
We're devastated about Scooter. We just feel sick about it.

There is zero empathy in these words.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

You mind if we tag along with the
armada and take a look ourselves?

DEPUTY SHOUBE

Why not? Another set of eyes.

Ratter immediately turns for his vehicle, which is a new Ford F-350 towing a fast, powerful-looking boat. We see him lift a long black case from the SUV and put it into the boat.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU - LIVING ROOM - DAY

John B facing Pope, Kiara, and JJ. A group pow wow. John B, for once, is defeated and scared.

JOHN B

She says if we stay out of the
marsh she'll help with DCS.

JJ

And you believe her? A cop. An
actual cop.

John B doesn't answer. He does believe her.

JOHN B

All I have to do is stay away from
the marsh for a few days. And I
don't have a choice cause you
pulled a gun last night.

JJ

I should have let Topper drown your
ass.

JOHN B

Yeah, well. That's on you. Our
back's are against the wall.

JJ gets up and walks away. He's really frustrated.

JJ

They always win, don't they? Always
fucking win.

Kiara puts an arm around John B, comforting him.

KIARA

It's ok.

JJ

No it's not. If they don't want us in the marsh it means there's something valuable down there.

(to Pope)

I understand why you don't want to go out. You're the golden boy. If I were you I wouldn't risk it either.

(to Kiara)

And why would you bother? You live on Figure Eight already.

(to John B)

But fucking A, bro. You and me have nothing to lose. It didn't used to be that way for you - I know - sorry dude - but now we're in the dirt together. And if you think Sheriff Peterkin or anyone else is going to help you, you're tripping.

JJ lets this settle.

JJ (CONT'D)

You have the key to the Cameron's big boat. There's scuba gear inside. We could borrow it and get down into that wreck this afternoon. And that's what will save you. They don't send rich kids to foster care. But you have to decide - are you going to sit around and wait for Sheriff Peterkin to throw you a crumb or are you going to --

JOHN B

Send it into the future.

JJ

That's about it. Your deal.

John B considers. Then -

JOHN B

You're right. Fuck it.

(to Pope and Kiara)

You guys don't need to come.

POPE

And let you go alone with JJ. Who's going to do the thinking?

JJ

Good point.

KIARA

If this can help you stay, we're
all in, right?

She checks Pope.

POPE

Pogue squad is go.

KIARA

Bring it in, guys.

Kiara holds her arms out. They all put their arms around John B. Group hug. After a moment, JJ pushes away, embarrassed.

JJ

Let's get the fuck out of here.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The Twinkie goes past a rundown cottage. Some poor person, shovels sand out the front door.

JOHN B (V.O.)

My Dad said the island was like
America on steroids. Haves and have
nots like anyplace, but magnified
and multiplied.

The Twinkie goes over the little bridge and then, suddenly, it's manicured lawns and giant houses.

JOHN B (V.O.)

'That's just the way it is,' Dad
said. 'Fighting it's for losers.'

John B slows as he nears Tannyhill. He cuts into a sandy side road. He gets out of The Twinkie. Walks to a brick wall.

JOHN B (V.O.)

Stay in school. Work hard. End up
on the winning side.

John B finds a place in the wall where there's a brick missing. John B puts his foot in the hole and jumps the wall.

EXT. TANNYHILL - DAY

JOHN B (V.O.)
He believed in that dream. And I
used to. But not anymore.

In a window John B sees the Cameron family together. A loving
tableau. Bitterness simmers. He had a family once. No longer.

JOHN B (V.O.)
Way I see it, the game is rigged.
Maybe it always has been.

John B is going on now, walking towards a giant docked YACHT
at the marina. On the back we see the name - *MY DRUTHERS*.

JOHN B (V.O.)
And with no parents, no money, no
one looking out for me.

John B steps up the short gangplank and slips inside.

INT. YACHT - DAY

JOHN B (V.O.)
I got no chance.

John B walks through a large state room. He goes down a
stairway quickly and through a dim hallway that ends at a -

GEAR CLOSET

John B slips inside to see the dull gleam of scuba gear.

John B takes a large duffel and begins shoving scuba
equipment inside with a kind of anger.

JOHN B (V.O.)
Unless I make my own.

EXT. TANNYHILL - BOATHOUSE - DAY

John B carries the duffel past the boathouse. At the corner
he hides the gear. Peers out. No Camerons in sight. He turns
back for the duffel and - almost RUNS INTO SARAH coming down
an outside stairway.

SARAH
Oh, hey John B. You stalking us?
Plotting revenge?

John B's startled but recovers quickly.

JOHN B
Tell your Dad I blew out the bilge
on the *Druthers*. It's good to go.

He starts to walk past.

SARAH
Are you ok?
(re: his face)
That looks like it hurts.

JOHN B
You can tell Topper that was just
round one.

SARAH
Can we stop with the whole Pogues
versus Kooks thing? It's
just...dumb.

JOHN B
Easy to say if you're a kook.

Sarah considers this. Then -

SARAH
I'll tell my Dad you stopped in to
check on the boat.
(starts away, then turns)
And John B, I'm not what you think.

John B watches her go, a little rattled. But no time to think
of that. He grabs the gear and goes on.

FADE TO:

EXT. MARSH MAZE - DAY

John B's boat anchored in complicated whorls and channels.

EXT. JOHN B'S BOAT - MARSH MAZE - DAY

CLANK. Kiara stands a scuba tank on deck.

KIARA
Empty.

Kiara unscrews the regulator. She takes another tank. Stands
it up. Clank. Puts the regulator on.

KIARA (CONT'D)

Empty. These are all empty. You took empty tanks.

Two tanks in a row. Kiara takes a third tank. Screws the regulator on. The air gauge BOUNCES.

KIARA (CONT'D)

This is a quarter full. That's enough for one of us.

POPE

I love it when a plan comes together.

KIARA

Who knows how to dive?

Silence. John B, JJ, and Pope all look at each other.

KIARA (CONT'D)

Anyone?

JJ

Kind of a kook sport -

POPE

I read about it.

KIARA

Great. Pope read about it. Someone's going to die.

JJ

You stick the thing in your mouth and breathe. How hard could it be?

POPE

If you come up too fast nitrogen gets in your blood and you get the bends.

JJ bends over. That doesn't seem so bad.

POPE (CONT'D)

The bends kill you.

JJ stops bending. Pretends he wasn't doing that. Pope gives him a skeptical glance. Suddenly...

JOHN B

I can dive.

JJ
You can dive.

John B's feeling nihilistic. He's lying.

JOHN B
I don't care. I'll do it.

Pope pulls out a sheet of paper. Stands next to John B.

POPE
I did some calculations.

JJ
Oh, we're cool. Pope did some calculations.

POPE
That boat is about thirty feet down. It'll take twenty-five minutes at most at that depth. When you come up you need to stop at ten feet for three minutes.

JOHN B
Ten feet. For three minutes.

Kiara, standing on the prow, begins feeling inside her YELLOW T-SHIRT. She takes it off. Bikini underneath. The guys all turn to watch. This is interesting.

She holds the T-shirt in one hand and slips over the railing - dives into the water.

POPE
What's that all about?

JJ
Don't know. But I like it.

JJ steps into John B's field of vision. He holds up a brass cylinder with a notched end on a string.

JJ (CONT'D)
If you see a hole in the floor that fits. Stick this in. Turn. Got it?

John B nods. JJ hangs the cylinder around John B's neck.

JJ (CONT'D)
My father moved a little weight back in the day.

POPE
Who didn't?

JJ nods, agreeing. Kiara surfaces and climbs onto the boat in her bikini. They all pretend not to look.

KIARA
(to John B)
I tied my T-shirt to the anchor chain. Ten feet down. That's where you do your safety stop.

JOHN B
Cool.

John B exhales nervously. He puts the vest on.

POPE
Keep an eye on this.
(holding the gauge)
You need to save enough air for your safety stop.

JOHN B
(worried)
How much is enough?

POPE
Unclear. Breathe as little as possible.

JJ makes a motion like he's holding his breath. John B steps to the edge. This is all seeming more and more sketchy.

Below, John B sees the wavering image of the boat. Then the sun comes out from behind a cloud and FLARES the water and the underwater boat vanishes in glare.

John B turns to look at the sun, and then turns to his friends who are all watching him.

POPE (CONT'D)
If you get caught out here in the marsh, you're fucked. You better get on.

Kiara steps up. Stands close.

JOHN B
Diver down.

KIARA
Diver down.

*

Kiara gets on tiptoes and kisses his cheek. Kiara notices JJ smirking, and scowls. She's just worried for her friend. JJ's being an idiot. Meanwhile, Pope gives the ironic thumbs up. *

John B turns to the water. He's not feeling so confident. He puts the mask on, the mouthpiece in. We hear him BREATHING. And then - from his POV - he falls and HITS THE WATER.

EXT. SUNKEN BOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

John B is UNDERWATER now. We see the curved bottom of John B's boat and the anchor chain arching into the depths.

John B sees the T-shirt tied to the anchor chain. John B swims past and down to the sunken wreck.

He reaches the door of the cabin, which is wedged shut with sand. John B yanks at the door and accidentally PULLS the regulator from his mouth in a chaos of bubbles.

John B THRASHES for his regulator. He gets it. Puts it back in his mouth. That was scary. He's BREATHING FAST. He looks at the gauge. He has a little less than a quarter tank now.

John B flicks on a light. He goes -

INSIDE THE HOLD

Solid beam of light in grainy water. Sand on the floor. Creepy down here. John B opens a cabinet and -

A tennis ball floats out, rolls along the ceiling, and goes out the door and up towards the surface. John B opens another cabinet. Sunscreen and bug spray. Nothing else.

John B kneels and brushes sand from the floor. He finds a round hole in the floor. John B takes his regulator out. He blows at the hole. Water and sand swirl up. He puts his regulator back in. When it clears we see a hole in the floor.

John B reaches around his neck. He takes the notched brass cylinder that JJ gave him. He puts it in the hole and turns -

A whole panel of the floor lifts up. John B puts it to the side. He shines the beam into this smuggling compartment. There's a BLACK BAG inside. John B lifts the bag out. He checks the compartment. Nothing else. Just the bag.

John B takes the bag and swims out of the hold. He almost swims for the surface but then sees the anchor chain with the yellow T-shirt tied to the chain. He swims to the spot where the T-shirt is tied and stops. Thank you, Kiara.

John B looks at his air gauge. He's close to empty. He sets his timer on three minutes. He HEARS a soft CHOPPING NOISE -

A BOAT slides overhead with an eerie underwater WHINE. John B sees that it's a Sheriff's boat.

EXT. JOHN B'S BOAT - MARSH MAZE - DAY

JJ, Pope, and Kiara are all standing there on deck, trying to look innocent, as Deputies Shoupe and Plumb on the law enforcement boat pull up alongside them.

POPE
Hey there Officer.

DEPUTY SHOUBE
You know the marsh is closed.

POPE
Closed, really?

JJ
No. Not aware.

POPE
We just came in from Mud Creek to hit some drum.

DEPUTY SHOUBE
(to Plumb)
I thought we got all the entrances. Those assholes aren't in the right place.
(to Pope)
I'm gonna need you guys to leave.

POPE
Sure thing, officer.

JJ gives Pope a skeptical look. *Sure thing.* The tone strikes SHOUBE as suspicious.

DEPUTY SHOUBE
We're looking for a boat that went down. Have you seen anything?

POPE
No sir. Nothing. Not one boat.

DEPUTY SHOUBE
Where's your friend you always hang with? He here?

KIARA
 He's working.

Pope stands very still. Shoupe looks them over, suspicious.

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY

John B is rasping for breath. The gauge is ALMOST ON EMPTY. He really wants to surface but - the deputies are up there.

EXT. JOHN B'S BOAT - DAY

Shoupe checks the Pogues' boat. His eyes drift to JJ, then Kiara, still in her bikini. Kiara LOOKS RIGHT AT Shoupe. He's busted, and flustered. Kiara checks Deputy Plumb, who sympathizes.

 DEPUTY PLUMB
 (to Shoupe, sarcastic)
 Are you finished with your
 inspection?

 DEPUTY SHOUBE
 Oh, yes, yes.

Kiara is pulling on a rash guard, covering up, as Shoupe, very official now, walks to the edge of the boat. We can see the underwater boat right beneath him. Shoupe looks over, but-

The sun comes out. The light FLARES the surface. The Pogues are practically losing their minds, but the glare keeps Shoupe from seeing the boat.

EXT. UNDERWATER NEAR JOHN B'S BOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

John B looks up at the WAVERING IMAGE of Shoupe looking over the edge of his boat. We can hear John B RASPING.

ANGLE ON: the gauge on empty. He can't hold out much longer.

EXT. JOHN B'S BOAT - MARSH MAZE - LATE AFTERNOON

Shoupe has gone back to the prow.

 DEPUTY SHOUBE
 Let us know if you see anything on
 your way out.

 POPE
 Will do, officer.

We hear the engine start up. Shoupe motors off.

JJ
(mocking)
Will do?

Just then - GASPING. John B has surfaced. They all go to him.

KIARA
Are you ok?

JOHN B
I ran out of air. What happened?

KIARA
Shoupe didn't notice the boat right
beneath him.

JJ
Did you find anything?

John B lifts up the bag to show.

JJ (CONT'D)
Fuck yeah.

JJ takes the bag and lifts it on deck.

POPE
Guys, it's been fun, lying to law
enforcement and all, but let's get
out of here.

JJ
Agreed.

John B climbs on board. JJ starts to pull up the anchor.
Kiara is looking towards the end of the channel.

KIARA
Bogey. Ten o' clock.

They all turn to see a FAST AND POWERFUL BOAT coming. We hear
- a deep, evil CHUGGING. JJ instantly has a bad feeling.

JJ
(re: the anchor)
Don't wait for me.

Pope starts the engine. The two boats approach each other in
the narrow channel and as the BOATS PASS, we see it's RATTER
and CRUZ, and from their POV - we see John B taking off his
scuba equipment. CLOSE ON: the black bag. Then they're past.

POPE
Are they coming?

John B, JJ, and Kiara all turn to watch the fast boat go on down the channel to where they were anchored. The boat stops for a moment. Cruz and Ratter look down into the water and then back at the Pogues. Beat. And then -

The fast boat's engines GUN and the boat swings around -

JJ
They're coming!

POPE
Should I wait for them?

JOHN B
Are you kidding?

John B pushes Pope away, takes the helm, and GUNS IT. Behind them, the fast boat is already gaining.

JJ
He's got duelies, bro, we can't outrun him -

John B looks back at the pursuers and makes a VIOLENT TURN at speed that almost throws everybody out of the boat.

John B cuts hard in a narrow channel, carving dark water.

JJ (CONT'D)
Gaining on us.

They hear a POPPING SOUND.

POPE
Are they firing? They're shooting at us!

The two boats weave and cut through the marsh. John B can't outrun them. Kiara stands and wants to get in a hatch that Pope is sitting on.

KIARA
(to Pope)
Move it, bitch.

Kiara opens the hatch. She takes out a net with floaters.

John B sees Kiara with the net. He guns it, and at the last moment, cuts through an even narrower channel.

Branches clip them on either side. Kiara waits until they cut a sharp angle and FLINGS THE NET behind them.

ANGLE ON: the pursuing boat makes the hard cut and then the engine makes a crazy whine and DIES.

John B motors out into the OPEN WATERS of the INTRACOASTAL.

From the marsh maze they see - A FLARE is up in the sky from the DISABLED BOAT.

POPE
Who was that?

JJ
I don't even want to think about
it. Just keep going.

John B motors into another channel.

EXT. JOHN B'S BOAT - DUSK (LATER)

They're anchored now, in a hidden, tree covered spot, all huddled around the black bag that rests between them.

KIARA
What do you think it is?

JOHN B
It's gotta be money, right?

JJ
Or couple of keys with a street
value in the low to mid millions.

POPE
Just open it!

JOHN B
That was a rare outburst of
emotion, Pope.

POPE
You're killing me.

John B looks around, then opens the bag and pulls something out. It's another black, rubber dry bag. Just smaller.

That's weird. A bag inside a bag. John B unclips the top of the dry bag and unrolls the folds. He reaches inside and takes out -

AN AIR TIGHT CONTAINER, almost like a thermos, with a screw top. He looks around at the others.

John B unscrews the top of the container. We hear a HISSING SOUND as air escapes. It flaps open on a rubber hinge. They all lean over to look at what's inside -

From a LOW POV, with the container framing their faces, we see the four teenagers looking down - puzzled, and then - all of them except John B are TOTALLY DISAPPOINTED.

JJ laughs bitterly. Pope feels like an idiot. Kiara pretends she never expected anything.

But John B has a COMPLETELY DIFFERENT REACTION. He has a look of wonder and even joy. John B reaches towards the camera.

CLOSE ON - John B's hand coming out of the container, holding - AN OLD COMPASS. That's it. A scratched, battered, brass compass. It's worthless.

John B runs his fingers over it gently. His expression of wonder and joy, if anything, increases. The others have now noticed John B's reaction.

JJ

Dude. What? It's not worth anything.

John B looks around at his friends. He's so happy and moved he can hardly speak. He holds the compass up.

JOHN B

This is my father's.

CUT TO BLACK: