

INKED IN BLOOD

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BLOOD SPILLS:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Heavy pounding music plays--

A car drives down a typical working-class neighborhood and pulls into the driveway of a small two-bedroom home.

A nondescript delivery van sits idling at the curb a few houses down.

INT. DELIVERY VAN - CONTINUOUS

A white-almost translucent, hand and heavily tattooed arm reaches for the stereo and turns the volume down.

The van is thrown into gear and it begins to inch forward along the curb.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

The car door swings open and a man steps out. JASON KEIL, mid 30s, once a high-school jock, now a divorced detective with a slight paunch. Traces of an old scar under his left eye.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Jason steps into a messy house, littered with discarded plates left on a cluttered coffee table, along with a neat row of empty beer bottles.

He continues down a hallway to his bedroom where he slips off his shoulder holster and hangs it over the doorknob. There's a knock at the front door--

Jason walks back to the door and looks through the peephole to find a shadowy figure in a baseball cap holding up a box, obscuring the man's face.

He opens the door and is immediately smashed in the face. A blur of white skin and tattoos--

Jason falls to the ground, his assailant on top of him. Fists pounding. The man's hat is knocked off and long white hair falls down past his shoulders--

AESOP QUARRELS, 30, an albino, with long white hair. Both arms are covered in TATTOOS. One arm depicts scenes of Hell, the other scenes of Heaven.

There's a calm in Aesop's manner--

AESOP

This is your past catching up with
you.

Aesop grabs a plate off the coffee table and smashes it into pieces, wielding a broken shard like a knife.

Jason scrambles to his feet and Aesop plunges the shard into his back. Jason screams--

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Sunlight scorches a lone desolate stretch of highway; heat waves shimmering off parched dead earth.

A car appears on the horizon. A lime-green 1969 Oldsmobile.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY

Aesop drives. A fresh cut on his lower lip is just starting to scab. Heavy, pounding music blasts from the car stereo.

A WOMAN wearing a waitress' uniform sits in the passenger seat, slumped over in apparent sleep. Long black hair obscures her face and chest.

A plastic name tag hangs loosely on her uniform - "KIM."

Aesop throws a quick look in her direction, then turns his attention back to the road.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The car speeds away as the sun sinks below the horizon.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A room cast in shadows. Early morning light creeps in around blinds closed tight. No flowers or "Get Well" balloons decorate this room. It's stark, cold.

A lone figure lies prone in bed, his wrist I.D. Reads - "Jason Keil." He's connected to a tangle of tubes and wires. His face a mass of bruising and scars.

His eyes move under purple, swollen lids--

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Oldsmobile's headlights cut through the black night. In the distance, a neon sign flashes - "THE RUSTIC MOTEL."

The car pulls into the parking lot of this old two-story building with paint peeling off the walls. Attached to the motel is a small cafe.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

The lobby is a dingy collage of tile floors, linoleum counters, and paneled walls. A hodgepodge of antique farming implements hang in no particular order on the walls.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - DW'S OFFICE - NIGHT

DW CUTLIFF, late 50's, stringy hair-greasy personality, the nervous type, sits on his couch watching TV and eating fried chicken, his face and hands greasy.

Above him, a shelf containing odd knickknacks and snow globes looks out of place.

Headlights rake across the office window as a car pulls in.

DW is put-out by the interruption. In an attempt to smooth out his rumpled T-shirt, he leaves streaks of greasy fried batter on his shirt as he stands.

DW
Fuckin' balls...

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

DW steps through his office door and into the lobby.

Watching through the front window, DW's eyes widen with a glimmer of recognition as Aesop emerges from the vehicle. He nervously straightens up the front counter.

Aesop steps inside, stopping to take in the bizarre room.

DW
Well-uh, good evening, sir.

Aesop steps up to the counter.

AESOP
I need a room.

DW
Have you got a reservation?

DW chokes out a nervous laugh.

DW (CONT'D)
Okay, well...

DW looks past Aesop to the silhouette of the girl in the car's front seat.

DW (CONT'D)
Let me see if I have something
that'll suit yer needs. Will the
two of you be needing that room for
the night? Or--
(winks)
Is it just for a couple of hours?
Now, we can work that out too.

Aesop looks around as if this place wouldn't have every room available.

AESOP
Have you got a room... Or not?

DW
Does a hobby horse have a Hickory
Dick?

DW stares at Aesop for an uncomfortable amount of time, the ridiculous smile unable to hide his growing unease.

DW (CONT'D)
(mumbles)
Well, alright, that-um, okay...

His fingers work the calculator feverishly.

DW (CONT'D)
That'll be thirty-eight dollars...
cash money, please.

DW's hand hovers over the registry book, pen in hand.

DW (CONT'D)
Mister?

Aesop pulls out cash and tosses it on the counter, ignoring the question.

DW greedily snatches up the money and stares back at Aesop with a look of fascination and dread - having forgotten the task at hand. Aesop returns the stare.

DW (CONT'D)

Oh, yes...

DW snaps out of it and gives Aesop his change.

DW (CONT'D)

I give you quarters. The-uh, the
bed's got them magic fingers.

(wiggles his fingers)

I think you'll find them to your
liking... you enjoy yourself now.

Aesop grabs the change and turns to leave, but DW's curiosity
gets the better of common sense.

DW (CONT'D)

Excuse me, but... you wouldn't be
Edsall's boy, would you? I mean...

DW scratches his head. He doesn't wait for an answer that
isn't coming--

DW (CONT'D)

Rumor is you-uh, he was, well...
you know... locked up in...

Aesop's intense gaze threatens to unhinge DW.

DW (CONT'D)

(nervous laughter)

You know how people talk.

AESOP

Cafe still serving?

DW fidgets.

DW

Well-uh, sure. You and the misses
might wanna grab a quick bite
before you retire for the evening,
although we'll be closin' up soon.

Aesop throws a furtive glance to the parked car.

AESOP

She's not hungry.

Aesop turns and walks into the cafe. DW strains his neck to
get a better look at the figure in the car.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A loud monitor alarm beeps incessantly--

Jason gets dressed, each movement causing him to wince in pain. His naked torso is covered in terrible bruising and stitches.

Two NURSES and an ORDERLY burst into the room with a crash cart. They stop short as they find Jason out of bed, pulling a shirt over his head.

NURSE

Mr. Keil, what are you doing?! You can't be out of bed!

Jason is calm but determined.

JASON

I'm leaving.

Jason grabs his detective badge off the rolling bed tray and clips it on his belt.

NURSE

You just had surgery, you need more time to recover.

JASON

Sorry, can't do that, sweetheart.

Jason walks out.

The lead nurse picks up a newspaper lying on the bed -
"Director Denies Patient Escape From State Mental Facility."

INT. RUSTIC CAFE - NIGHT

The cafe is equally as bizarre as the motel lobby. Two men are dining in a booth--

RUFUS BALLANTYNE, a hillbilly who fancies himself a nerdy academic, bow-tie worn with a flannel, and his brother, SEYMOUR BALLANTYNE, what he lacks in brains he makes up for in girth and grit.

Both men stop their conversation and watch as Aesop enters. They exchange worried glances as he sits at a table close by.

From the kitchen, CLYDE, the cook, ugly, scarred, a lumbering giant, chops at a slab of beef. He gives Aesop a long leering stare--

INT. LIVING ROOM - BLACK AND WHITE - FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

An overhead lamp casts harsh shadows on several figures sitting around a poker table.

Sheriff EDSALL QUARRELS, Aesop's father, rumped, mutton-chop sideburns, with a perpetual scowl, and his poker buddies--

DW (who we've met), TEDDY, balding, with a paunch, CHARLIE SYKES, stylishly unstylish, wears rose-colored glasses, and ALVIE, a teenager, afflicted with unspecified mental and physical ailments--Charlie's nephew.

Aesop, 8, watches from his bedroom doorway. Clyde and his unmistakable girth hands a fistful of money to Edsall.

A pretty blonde, ANNABEL QUARRELS, late 20's, Aesop's mother, motions Aesop back into his room. As the door closes, Clyde gets up from the table, his eyes on Annabel--

INT. RUSTIC CAFE - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

The kitchen door swings open, and a waitress in a short skirt walks out--

CANDICE CUTLIFF, 21, DW's daughter, blonde, stunningly out of place in this quagmire of inbred and desolate souls, a shining star that defies the logic of her paternal origins.

Candice approaches Aesop, undaunted by his appearance.

CANDICE

Hey there, what can I get for you tonight?

Aesop looks over his shoulder in the direction of the lobby where DW tries to look busy while clearly keeping an eye Candice.

CANDICE (CONT'D)

Oh... that's my daddy. He owns the place.

AESOP

(deadpan)
You must be proud.

CANDICE

Oh yeah, daddy's a good man, mostly, I mean... hey, you ain't one of those health department fella's, are you?

Clyde stops chopping.

AESOP

No.

Clyde resumes his business.

Candice puts her hand on his tattooed Heaven arm, relieved.

CANDICE

So, what can I get you to eat?

AESOP

Pancakes, dry, and some eggs.

CANDICE

Sounds good. I'll be right back with some coffee. You look a bit road weary.

Candice spins away in a swirl of ruffles and hair.

Aesop watches her walk away until his attention is drawn to the booth next to him--

Seymour is shoveling a mouthful of food into his open maw when Rufus grabs his hand and holds it in place.

RUFUS

Listen, Seymour, all I'm saying-and I'm quoting, is that "the present is an ungraspable ad-vance of the past devouring this here future. Truth is, all sensation is already memory."

Seymour stares at the tantalizing morsel of food hovering inches from his mouth.

SEYMOUR

Yeah well, right now...

RUFUS

See, there is no "now." Since you can't stop time, everything is continually happening, so everything is a memory of what has just transpired.

Seymour scratches his head with his free hand, causing dandruff to cascade down onto his shoulders.

RUFUS (CONT'D)

Seymour, don't be so Goddamned stupid. You ain't got an ounce of brains in your empty skull. It's Henry Bergson; I'm quoting Bergson.

SEYMOUR

I don't think I know that fellow, Rufus.

(looks to his plate)

And besides, right now, you're keeping me from savoring the memory of this here meal.

Rufus picks up a fork and stabs Seymour in the arm.

RUFUS

Eat that, shit for brains!

SEYMOUR

Son of a bitch!

Seymour pulls the fork out of his arm and throws it back at Rufus.

SEYMOUR (CONT'D)

That ain't cool, Rufus.

Rufus picks up the fork, wipes it on his pant leg, and scoops up some eggs. Without a second thought, he puts it in his mouth.

RUFUS

(mumbles)

Might as well be talking to this fuckin' plate.

Candice walks up with Aesop's coffee and glances over at the brothers.

CANDICE

Now, you two boys behave tonight.

Rufus and Seymour become blubbering idiots at even the smallest amount of attention from this pretty girl.

Candice turns back to Aesop and puts a hand on his Heaven arm.

CANDICE (CONT'D)

You need anything else, you just holler.

She walks back to the kitchen.

SEYMOUR
(lowers his voice)
So, what do you make of that?

He nods in Aesop's direction.

RUFUS
Nothin'.

Seymour leans across the table and whispers.

SEYMOUR
Rufus--

INT. BEDROOM - FLASHBACK - QUICK FLASHES

Rufus has Annabel held down on a bed, as Seymour wraps a length of black rope around her wrists.

INT. RUSTIC CAFE - BACK TO PRESENT

Rufus kicks him under the table.

SEYMOUR
Ow!

RUFUS
It ain't none of our bother. Now
let's get outta here, I wanna have
a smoke.

They slide out of their booth.

SEYMOUR
You can't smoke in my truck.

RUFUS
I ain't gonna smoke in your truck,
shit brains. I'm gonna smoke
outside.

Both men stare at Aesop as they walk by. Aesop returns their gaze, devoid of emotion. His eyes coldly follow them to the exit.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Rufus lights a cigarette as they walk. Seymour catches a glimpse of the shadowy figure in the front seat of the Oldsmobile, and walks closer to the car.

Rufus could care less.

RUFUS

Goddamn, Seymour, I'm stuffed. I feel like a grub-worm in a turtleneck.

SEYMOUR

Hey, Rufus, there's a woman in this car!

RUFUS

So what, I'm smokin.' Leave me be.

Seymour walks up and lightly taps the window.

SEYMOUR

She don't look right is all.

RUFUS

She's probably just sleepin' one off! Leave her the fuck alone!

(mumbles)

Goddamned re-tard.

Seymour throws a look to the cafe.

SEYMOUR

(lowers his voice)

She must be with him.

RUFUS

All the more reason to let it be, dip-shit.

Seymour presses his face against the car window to look in, but it's too dark to see anything.

Annoyed, Rufus throws his cigarette on the ground and angrily snuffs it out.

RUFUS (CONT'D)

C'mon, let's get the fuck outta here before I stick my foot up yer fat ass!

Seymour reluctantly gives in.

SEYMOUR

You ain't no fun anymore, Rufus... and that is happening in the now.

RUFUS

Oh, shut up, Seymour.

They walk to a red Chevy pickup, with a silver panther hood ornament and flames painted on the sides... they have small dicks.

INT. RUSTIC CAFE - NIGHT

Aesop watches Rufus and Seymour climb into the truck.

The clinking of silverware draws Aesop back to Candice, who's back with his food.

CANDICE

Don't pay them no mind. They come here, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Between the two of them, they ain't got a lick of sense.

She places the plate in front of him. Candice wears a silver band of hearts on her left ring finger.

AESOP

I gathered that much.

CANDICE

Sorry, if they were botherin' you I can sit them across the room for breakfast if you'd like?

AESOP

Don't worry about it. They won't be a bother.

CANDICE

Okay, good. So, how long are you with us?

AESOP

Just the night.

CANDICE

Oh-okay... I guess there ain't much to see around these parts. Most people we get here are just passin' through.

DW peeks out from the lobby and clears his throat.

DW

Candie!

Candice cringes.

DW (CONT'D)

Quit socializing and get on back to work now, we got to close up soon.

Candice gives him a sad smile and nod, then turns her attention back to Aesop.

CANDICE

Sorry.

Aesop motions to heart ring--

AESOP

You married?

She self-consciously twists the ring on her finger and lowers her voice a little.

CANDICE

Oh-gosh, no. Daddy makes me wear it. He says men only want one thing... he's just tryin' to protect me is all.

AESOP

So, no boyfriend either?

Candice blushes.

CANDICE

No... like I said, most people are just passin' through... it can get a little lonely around here... gosh, I'm sorry, that ain't your burden.

AESOP

That's okay... I'm sure the right guy'll come through this way when you least expect it.

Aesop's comment touches her. Her eyes water.

CANDICE

Oh my gosh... you're so sweet to say that--

DW

Candice!

Candice jumps.

CANDICE

Okay-well, sorry... I hope you enjoy your stay with us, and good luck in your travels. Maybe we'll see you on your way back?

AESOP

Doubt I'll be back this way.

CANDICE

Well you take care of yourself, wherever the road takes you... and, thank you.

Aesop watches her walk away.

Clyde stares him down from the kitchen and Aesop flips him the bird. Clyde slams his cleaver down into a fresh side of beef.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

Amid the clutter of the lobby walls - where there was once a pair of antique sickles, there is only a single blade hanging with the dirty outline of one gone missing.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - DW'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Three video surveillance monitors are mounted on the wall.

DW paces. Empty chicken containers are strewn about the table, along with an assortment of porn magazines.

DW scoops up a blob of mashed potatoes with his fingers. The office door opens and startles him, causing him to miss the mark.

Most of it ends up on his chin--

Candice stands in the doorway. The blob of mashed potatoes drop off DW's chin and hits the floor with a splat.

CANDICE

You okay, Daddy?

DW

Oh yes, fine, fine, just a little restless tonight. Feel another bout of the shingles comin' on... goddam old age.

CANDICE

Well, I'm all cleaned up in the
cafe, so I'm headed off to bed.

He nervously picks up a porn magazine and begins leafing
through it.

DW

(preoccupied)

Yes, that's-good, good, hurry along
then.

Candice closes the door.

DW watches Candice on the monitors as she walks down the
outside hallway... creepy.

EXT. SECOND-FLOOR OUTSIDE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Candice walks down the hallway. She passes room "19" and the
door swings open, startling her--

Aesop is standing in the doorway.

CANDICE

Oh my gosh! You scared the heck
outta me.

INT. AESOP'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Aesop has one hand behind his back, holding the small sickle -
the one missing from the lobby.

AESOP

Sorry, I didn't think anyone would
be out.

CANDICE

That's okay, I was just headed to
my room.

Silence.

INT. DW'S OFFICE - NIGHT

DW sits on the couch, staring at an old dial telephone. He
picks up the receiver, then places it back in the cradle.

The scene playing out on the monitors catches his eye. He
pulls out his handkerchief and wipes the sweat off his brow.

DW
No, no, no, this is not good. This
won't do at all.

EXT. SECOND-FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Candice is nervous in the prolonged silence.

CANDICE
Okay, well, my daddy's in his
office if you need anything. You
can just call down from your room
if you like.

AESOP
Okay.

She gives him a nervous wave and turns.

CANDICE
Good night.

As Candice walks away, Aesop watches her from his doorway.

INT. DW'S OFFICE - NIGHT

DW watches on the monitors, as Candice fumbles with the keys
to her room. He presses a button and the camera zooms in on
Aesop watching her.

DW
(shudders)
Gives me the creeps.

Aesop steps into the hallway and looks directly up into the
security camera.

DW switches off the monitors.

DW (CONT'D)
Hell no.

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Music plays from a small stereo on the nightstand. Candice
slips out of her skirt and pulls on a pair of shorts.

There's a knock at the door.

EXT. OUTSIDE HALLWAY - NIGHT

The door opens a few inches, revealing a sliver of Candice's face.

CANDICE
It's late.

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Candice takes a step back as DW pushes his way into the room. He looks her up and down.

DW
Look at you! You think I didn't see
what was going on between you two?

CANDICE
What are you talking about, daddy?
I was fixing to go to bed.

DW
From the looks of you, I'd say you
were fixing to do more than that.
With him!

Candice grabs a robe from off the bed and clutches it to herself.

CANDICE
(nervous)
Daddy please, I told you, I'm
getting ready for bed, honest.

DW grabs her by the arm.

INT. AESOP'S ROOM - NIGHT

Aesop sits at the foot of his bed, a half-empty bottle of whiskey nearby. The flickering blue light of the television casts a haze over the room.

The silence is broken by a crash and angry muffled voices. Aesop is up and headed out the door--

EXT. OUTSIDE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Aesop approaches the room and puts an ear to the door. There is a sharp crack and a yelp from within.

Aesop pushes the door open--

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A desk lamp is shattered on the night-stand, still burning. Candice stands at the foot of the bed, tears streaming down her face, with DW holding her roughly by the arm. Her left eye is already swelling.

DW stands frozen, clutching his leather belt tightly in his fist, ready to land another blow.

Aesop's gaze sharpens, full of hate.

DW
Get the hell outta here! This is family business, and it don't concern you!

Aesop pulls the sickle out of his waistband.

AESOP
You and I have our own business to take care of... Don't we?

DW grabs the broken desk lamp and hurls it at him. Aesop ducks out of the way, and DW pushes past him.

EXT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

DW careens down the hallway to the stairs--

INT. FRONT LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

DW bursts through the front office doors and races into the cafe--

INT. CAFE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Clyde is untying his apron as DW bursts through the doors, out of breath, grimacing in pain.

DW
Clyde... that fucking freak... he's got Candice... up in her room!

DW bends over clutching his side.

DW (CONT'D)
I think... can't breath... he means her harm!

CLYDE

I'll skin that son-of-a-bitch!

Clyde grabs a cleaver off the counter and runs past DW.

DW wipes the sweat off his forehead, a smug look on his face.

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Candice is curled up on the bed, traumatized. Aesop hovers. He pulls a blanket up over Candice's exposed legs.

There's a rumbling from the hall and the door crashes open--

Clyde's hulking form fills the doorway. He charges, throwing his cleaver--

The cleaver flies through the air narrowing missing Aesop, and thunks into the wall above Candice. She screams--

Aesop's snatches the sickle from his waistband. He hurls it and it sinks deep into Clyde's chest--

Clyde is frozen in place. He stares into Aesop's eyes and a smirk pulls at the corners of his mouth. He topples over.

INT. DW'S OFFICE - NIGHT

DW watches the monitors. He see's Aesop exit the room. He's frantic. He locks the office door and closes the blinds.

DW

Hell-fire, hell-fire...

He grabs the phone. It's dead. He throws it across the room and it smashes into the monitors, knocking them out in a shower of sparks.

DW (CONT'D)

Oh shit!

DW frantically looks for something to protect himself with. Hanging next to the door is a rusty spiked mace and a family crest. He snatches it off the wall--

A chair smashes through the window and DW falls to the floor cowering, his face cut and bleeding from flying shards of glass.

Aesop reaches through the ruined blinds and broken window with his tattooed HELL arm. He unlocks the door and steps into the room.

DW (CONT'D)
 God in heaven.

DW crawls away until he's backed up against the wall.

DW (CONT'D)
 (pleading)
 Don't hurt me, please don't hurt
 me. Take anything you want, take
 what's in the register. It ain't
 much, but it's yours.

Aesop approaches slowly, determined.

DW (CONT'D)
 (desperate)
 Take my daughter! She's--just take
 her with you, please, I won't tell
 no one! It's fair recompense I
 reckon--just don't hurt me!

AESOP
 You filthy animal... I know all
 your secrets--

INT. QUARRELS HOUSEHOLD - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Quick, frenetic images flash--

-- The men playing poker. DW hands sheriff quarrels a handful
 of cash.

-- Annabel struggling in DW's grasp as he starts to pull at
 her clothes.

-- Annabel tries to fight him off.

-- DW slaps her, and she screams.

INT. DW'S OFFICE - BACK TO PRESENT - NIGHT

Aesop shakes the memory away.

DW
 Now don't do anything rash. I'll
 make it up to you, I swear I will!

Aesop grabs DW by the shirt.

AESOP
 There's nothing you can do--

He snatches a snow globe off the shelf above the couch - Snow falling on a peaceful winter landscape.

AESOP (CONT'D)
--to make amends for what you've done.

He bashes DW in the head with the snow globe.

AESOP (CONT'D)
(calm)
Nothing.

DW is stunned. Blood flows from the wound. His arms and legs flail in an attempt to ward off his attacker, knocking Aesop off balance.

Aesop stumbles backward and drops the snow globe.

DW scrambles to his feet, unsteadily. He staggers to the door, trying to escape.

Aesop grabs the spiked mace and swings. The mace slams into the back of DW's leg. The impact sends DW crashing into the door jam.

Aesop jerks back on the handle and the chain snaps taught, pulling DW's legs out from underneath him. He hits the floor hard.

Aesop drops the mace handle and picks up the fallen snow globe. He shakes it, watching the snow fall on a tiny farmhouse... so serene.

He moves in close and smashes DW in the face with the snow globe. The demons on the tattooed Hell arm seem to writhe in ecstasy as blood splatters across his skin.

His rage subsides. Emotionally exhausted, the snow globe drops from his hand. It hits the ground and smashes.

The liquid and fake snow spill out and mix with the blood-soaked floor.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - DAWN

A beautiful morning. The sun is just rising into an orange sky. The familiar red pickup truck rumbles into the empty parking lot.

Seymour and Rufus climb out and walk to the front door.

SEYMOUR
Hey, that car with the girl in it's
gone.

Rufus doesn't care.

RUFUS
Shut up, dip-shit.

Rufus tries the front door but it's locked.

RUFUS (CONT'D)
What the hell, this door ain't
never locked.

The two men walk to the Cafe door. It's open--

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - CAFE - CONTINUOUS

The cafe is empty and the lights are off. Rufus and Seymour
share a look - something's not right.

RUFUS
What the hell?

SEYMOUR
Well, where they at? I'm starving.

RUFUS
You moron, how the fuck do I know
what's goin' on? Let's check the
kitchen.

SEYMOUR
I don't like this, Rufus. Where's
Candice? I need to see Candice. You
know I can't concentrate when I'm
hungry...

INT. RED CHEVY TRUCK - DAWN

Tattooed hands connect spliced ignition wires. They touch and
spark.

INT. RUSTIC CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Rufus pushes Seymour towards the kitchen.

SEYMOUR

What the fuck do you need to concentrate on? I swear to God if you're not the dumbest--

The truck engine fires-up with a roar!

RUFUS

Hell's bells...

The truck smashes through the front window and plows into the brothers. It comes to rest in the middle of the cafe, steam pouring out of the front end--

Rufus is dead, impaled on the silver panther hood ornament. Seymour is crushed under the front tire, his twisted body sticking out from under the truck.

Aesop stares into Rufus's dead eyes. Both men's face a blank slate. The job is done and the anger is gone. Aesop opens the truck door and slides out.

EXT. MAINE - STATE MENTAL FACILITY - DAY

A depressingly drab building with bars on the windows and long neglected grounds.

INT. MAINE - STATE MENTAL FACILITY - DAY

Jason sits alone in a small, dull office. He pulls out a bottle of pills and washes them down with coffee from a mug on the table next to him.

He picks up a metal nameplate off the desk - "DR. ROBERT CAVENDISH," and stares at his reflection in the polished surface and winces.

The door behind him opens and a doctor in a white lab coat enters. DOCTOR ROBERT CAVENDISH, 58.

DR. CAVENDISH

Sorry about the interruption. We have a lot of activity this time of day.

He hands Jason a Manila folder. There are three pages inside.

JASON

This all you have on him?

DR. CAVENDISH

Yes, well, he wasn't here very long, as I told you. Doctor Cole was the attending physician at the time... he's since left... retired, actually.

Jason scans the file.

DR. CAVENDISH (CONT'D)

Not much of a talker, just stared a lot. I'm told it's very unsettling.

JASON

Doctor Cole reported the escape?

DR. CAVENDISH

Yes, but the authorities assumed that he'd have headed out of state and dropped the case after a few weeks.

More scanning.

JASON

And his father? You contacted him?

DR. CAVENDISH

Yes, well... his father made it quite clear that he wanted nothing more to do with his son. Doctor Cole simply followed his orders.

Jason reads on.

The last page is a photocopy of a torn piece of paper with the word "Diner," written on it.

JASON

What's this?

DR. CAVENDISH

Only thing the police found on him when they picked him up.

Jason is visibly shaken.

JASON

(under his breath)
Shit.

DR. CAVENDISH

That help you at all?

JASON

Maybe.

Dr. Cavendish stares intently at his beaten face.

DR. CAVENDISH

Can I ask...?

He receives a cold stare from Jason.

JASON

No. Is this it then?

An awkward moment, then--

DR. CAVENDISH

There may be one more thing.

Dr. Cavendish hesitates, unsure.

JASON

Well?

Dr. Cavendish leafs through his file cabinet and retrieves another folder. He hands it over.

JASON (CONT'D)

What's this?

DR. CAVENDISH

An employee confessed to having slipped this into his cell... she's since been let go.

Jason opens the folder, scans something inside, then closes it.

JASON

Fuck.

Jason tucks both folders under his arm and walks out, slamming the door behind him.

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - DAY

Candice lies on the bed, semi-conscious, partially covered by the bed sheet. Aesop stands in the doorway. Blood splattered over his tattooed arm and face.

He walks to the bed and pushes the hair back from her face. Her eyes are vacant; she's in shock.

AESOP
He was an animal.
(pause)
I'm sure I don't need to tell you
that.

Aesop grabs a towel off the floor and wipes the blood off his face and arms. He stares at Candice's exposed legs-his intentions unclear--

He looks away, genuine remorse showing on his face.

AESOP (CONT'D)
Sorry you had to get caught up in
this.

He picks up the fallen blanket and covers her.

AESOP (CONT'D)
Casualties of war... I know about
that.

He walks out.

EXT. MOTEL - BACK PARKING LOT - DAY

The Oldsmobile is next to a dumpster. Aesop steps out a back door and walks to his car.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY

Aesop slides into the car, the waitress in the passenger seat, and fires up the engine.

INT. JASON'S DARK SEDAN - DAY

Jason dials his cellphone with one hand as he drives. He scrolls through his contacts and hits the name "Kim Bartoll."

It rings, but there's no answer, and it's picked up by her answering machine.

He ends the call and dials it again--

JASON
Come on.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

The Oldsmobile is parked on the side of the road, next to a steep embankment. A small stream runs at the bottom, mostly obscured by brush, and tall grass.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY

Aesop stares out the front windshield at an endless stretch of highway, then reaches across Kim's body and opens the passenger door--

Rusty hinges creak as it swings open--

EXT. LENNY'S DINER - DAY - FLASHBACK

A small 50s style diner and gas station in the middle of nowhere. A beat-up old pickup and an eighteen-wheeler are the only vehicles in the parking lot.

A green station wagon, rusted, wood-panel sides, a lumbering giant spewing smoke, pulls in off the highway.

INT. LENNY'S DINER - FLASHBACK - DAY

Water spots mark the ceiling tiles, and the wallpaper is peeling off the walls.

Two men sit at the counter eating lunch. A mother and her two children sit in a corner booth.

The cook (and owner), LENNY PIKE, pushing 80, a curmudgeon, ninety pounds dripping wet, whacks at a group of scattering roaches.

KIM BARTOLL, the lone waitress (Aesop's silent driving companion), pretty, late 20', with a pierced nose and heavy eye makeup, is chatting with the mother of two.

Bells chime, and all eyes are drawn to the front door--

Aesop stands in the doorway. His clothes are dusty from the road. He looks as if he's been driving for days without rest.

All eyes follow him as he takes a seat in the closest booth. The two children stare over the top of their booth. Aesop brings the menu up in front of his face to block their view.

KIM
Be right back, Susan.

Kim walks to Aesop's table, her gaze lingering on his tattooed arms. Aesop lowers the menu and stares up at her.

AESOP
Remember me, Kim?

Nervous recognition shows on her face.

KIM
Oh, wow-uh, Davenport Junior-High,
right?

AESOP
(cold)
Yeah, right.

Kim's eyes wander back to the tattoos on his arms. She nervously plays with her hair.

KIM
Wow, I mean-well, you've really
changed.

Aesop gazes back at her without a word. Kim fidgets. She brushes his arm with her hand.

KIM (CONT'D)
I like your tattoos. I've got a
couple too... so-uh, well, how have
you been?

Aesop continues to stare without replying. Kim nervously throws a look back to her friends booth, where the entire family is watching her.

KIM (CONT'D)
Well, can I get you something?

AESOP
Pumpkin pie, iced tea, no straw.

KIM
Good choice, the pumpkin pie is
fresh, made today.

Aesop stares back with no reply.

KIM (CONT'D)
Okay.

She turns and hurries off to the kitchen.

Lenny, watching from the end of the counter, lights a cigarette and gives Aesop the stink eye, mumbling under his breath.

LENNY
Fuckin' freak.

SUSAN'S BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

The two boys are still staring over the bench seat. Susan smacks one of the boys in the back of the head, which starts a series of long wailing sobs.

AESOP'S BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Kim walks back to the table with his order. She puts the plate down, along with a glass of iced tea.

She places the check next to the plate and pulls a straw out of the middle pocket of her apron, and lays it next to the glass.

Aesop picks up the straw and places it back in the same apron pocket, between her legs, keeping his hand there.

AESOP
No straw.

Kim doesn't protest and waits for him to remove his hand.

KIM
(shrugs)
Sorry, sweetie.

He removes his hand and she walks away, looking over her shoulder at him as she heads back to Susan's booth.

SUSAN'S BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Kim and Susan speak in hushed tones.

SUSAN
You know him?

KIM
Sort of... Long time ago.

SUSAN
Well, he looks scary. All those tattoos.

KIM
I don't know, I kind of like 'em--

She turns to find Aesop's table empty. The check is still there, but no money was left behind.

KIM (CONT'D)
Damn it.

Lenny shouts out from the kitchen.

LENNY
That's comin' out of yer paycheck!

KIM
(under her breath)
Fuck off, Lenny.

INT. LENNY'S DINER - FLASHBACK - LATER

A two-hundred and fifty-pound trucker gets up from his booth and waves to Kim on his way out.

TRUCKER
Money's on the table, sweetheart.
I'll be seeing you.

KIM
Good night Hank. Be safe out there.

Lenny sits at the counter smoking, leering at Kim as she cleans off the tables.

KIM (CONT'D)
I'll finish up here Lenny, why
don't you take off.

Lenny breaks into a coughing fit.

LENNY
Fine by me, just don't forget to
lock the fucking doors.
(pauses)
And turn off the gas pump for God's
sake. Don't forget.

Lenny puts out his cigarette and promptly lights another as he walks out. Kim flips him the bird behind his back.

EXT. LENNY'S DINER - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Kim locks the front door and makes her way around the back of the building to her car - a 1969 lime green Oldsmobile.

As she unlocks the car door, a reflection appears behind her in the window. She turns to find--

Aesop standing behind her.

KIM

Oh my God! You scared the fuck
outta me!

AESOP

Sorry.

Aesop pulls a few crumpled bills out of his pocket.

AESOP (CONT'D)

I left without paying.

Kim ignores the money, realizing how completely alone she is.

KIM

That's okay. On the house... my
treat.

Kim turns to open the car door.

KIM (CONT'D)

Okay, well, you take care.

Aesop takes a step forward.

AESOP

I was wondering if we could get a
cup of coffee?

KIM

Sorry, I just closed up for the
night.

AESOP

I could really use some coffee and
another piece of that pie.

(pause)

We could talk.

Kim looks into his eyes, her resolve slipping away - always attracted to the wrong guy.

KIM
 Alright, well, maybe for a little
 while.
 (pause)
 You smoke weed?

INT. LENNY'S DINER - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

The diner is mostly dark. A few lights shine above the tables. Aesop sits alone in a booth, a piece of pumpkin pie in front of him.

Kim slides into the seat opposite him with two cups of coffee. She starts to ramble--

KIM
 Sorry, the coffee here is shit, but
 it's the only place for miles, so
 no one really complains, and Lenny -
 that miserable prick, wouldn't give
 a fuck if they did. All he does is
 smoke his stupid cigarettes all day
 and slap my ass every time I walk
 by, I swear I'm black-and-blue.

She takes a drink.

KIM (CONT'D)
 And don't even get me started on
 his teeth. When they're not
 floating in a glass of water behind
 the counter, it's all he can do to
 keep them from falling out when he
 talks. It's disgusting!

Kim runs a hand over one of his tattooed arms.

KIM (CONT'D)
 These are great, did they hurt?

AESOP
 Yeah.

Kim stops talking long enough to take a joint out of her apron. She lights it and takes a long drag, then hands it to Aesop.

KIM
 How's the pie?

The pie hasn't been touched. He takes a drag and hands the joint back to her. She takes another drag and blows the smoke out slowly.

KIM (CONT'D)
Pot makes me horny.

She realizes that her coffee cup is empty and slides out of the booth.

KIM (CONT'D)
I'm gonna get a refill.

INT. LENNY'S DINER - FLASHBACK - CONTINUOUS

Kim moves easily through the dark kitchen. She makes her way to the coffee machine and pours herself a fresh cup, when--

She's grabbed from behind and spun around--

Aesop pushes her against the counter with his body and kisses her hard on the lips. Kim grabs him back, digging her nails into his skin, by no means objecting to the kiss.

Aesop grabs her roughly by the hair and pulls her head back. He rips open the front of her dress.

KIM
I like it rough.

Kim starts to pull on Aesop's clothes, getting caught up in the moment. Aesop yanks her hair tighter. He moves closer to her ear.

AESOP
You remember our first kiss?

Kim's not listening, she tries to lean in and kiss him, but he still has her by the hair.

KIM
What?

With his free hand, Aesop grabs Kim's jaw, and stares into her eyes.

AESOP
(menacing)
Our first kiss.

EXT. SCHOOL - FLASHBACK - DAY

Aesop, 11, is eating his lunch in the school courtyard. He sits alone on a bench while other kids gather in groups, eating and socializing.

Kim is surrounded by her friends, BETHANY, and SUMMER, the pretty, popular girls.

AESOP (V.O.)

It was in junior high. You hung out with all the popular girls.

The girls occasionally throw a look to Aesop and laugh.

AESOP (V.O.)

I was a fucking freak to you and your stuck-up friends.

The girls are egging Kim on.

BETHANY

Come on, Kim, just do it. We'll give you twenty bucks.

The girls start digging in their bags for money.

KIM

No, I don't want to, he's always staring at me, creeping me out.

SUMMER

I'll throw in another ten!

Kim's boyfriend, a young Jason Keil, tall, good looking, jock, walks up to the group. He has a scar under his left eye.

He kisses Kim on the cheek and throws an arm around her waist.

JASON

What's going on?

SUMMER

We dared Kim to go and kiss the freak on the lips.

BETHANY

Yeah, for thirty bucks, but she won't do it.

Jason's face lights up.

JASON

C'mon, babe, do it, go kiss the freak. He wouldn't know what the fuck to do, he'd probably piss his pants.

They all laugh.

KIM

Alright, I'll do it, but you've got to go away so he doesn't see you. He won't even look at me if he knows you're watching.

JASON

Okay, okay.

Jason slinks away.

Kim takes the money from her friends and stuffs it in her bag. She walks to Aesop. He begins to fidget nervously.

KIM

(coy)

Hi.

He stands and nervously wipes his hands on his pants.

AESOP

Hello.

KIM

I forgot my lunch today, and I'm starving. Do you think I could have some of yours? I'd be grateful.

Aesop fumbles through his lunch bag and clumsily pulls out half a sandwich.

Kim takes it from him and holds on to his hand. She leans in and kisses him on the lips, lightly, as if afraid she might catch something.

AESOP (V.O.)

I would have given you whatever you wanted.

Her friends laugh out loud.

AESOP (V.O.)

But you thought it was so fucking funny.

Kim turns away giggling. She tosses the sandwich into a trash can, as Jason walks up to Aesop, his fists balled tight.

JASON

Hey, freak! You kissed my girlfriend; I saw you!

AESOP
No I, I didn't, she--

Jason punches Aesop in the nose, knocking him to the ground. He stands over him taunting.

JASON
Stay away from her, freak!

Aesop sits dejected and alone on the ground, blood oozing from his nose.

All the kids in the schoolyard have been watching, and laugh.

AESOP (V.O.)
But, it didn't stop there. The
beatings from your boyfriend and
his buddies became routine.

EXT. SCHOOL - FLASHBACK - ANOTHER DAY

Aesop is ambushed by Jason and his buddies in a school stairwell. They beat him to the ground.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - FLASHBACK - DIFFERENT DAY

Aesop walks home from school, his face swollen and cut from a recent beating.

Jason and his buddies jump out of the bushes and beat him. One boy grabs his fallen books and rips the pages out, throwing them into the air.

They run away and leave him lying in the street with the pages raining down on him.

AESOP (V.O.)
Every day I went home with bruises
and my father beat me for not being
man enough to defend myself.

INT. SCHOOL - HALLWAY - FLASHBACK - DIFFERENT DAY

Aesop stands in the shadowy corner of a classroom, watching the last of the buses pull away.

He cautiously makes his way down an empty hall but slows when he hears voices.

Aesop peers into a classroom--

CLASSROOM--

Kim is huddled with Jason and three of his buddies.

She pulls a small knife out of her pocket and slides it across the desk to Jason.

KIM

He gives me the creeps! He's always leering at me like some kind of pervert. I want him to go away.

Kim sees him in the doorway--

KIM (CONT'D)

Hey!

Aesop panics and bolts to the doors, but Jason and his buddies are after him.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - FLASHBACK - DAY

Aesop runs across the lunch yard and onto the baseball field, where he is cornered by the gang.

The boys grab Aesop. Jason pulls the knife out of his pocket and holds it up to Aesop's face.

JASON

Fucking loser! You can't run from us! We'll find you no matter what pile of shit you crawl back under. You better disappear, understand me, freak?

Jason stabs Aesop in the stomach with the knife. The boys let him go and take off running across the field, laughing.

Aesop falls to the ground holding his mid section, with blood seeping through his fingers--

INT. LENNY'S DINER - NIGHT - BACK TO 1ST FLASHBACK

Aesop still holds Kim by the hair. His breathing is heavy, and his eyes burn with anger.

AESOP

I was never able to go back to school again. Did you even realize that? You started it all with that fucking kiss!

KIM

Aesop, I was young, stupid...

Kim moves in to try and kiss him again. Aesop's hand moves to her neck. Kim puts a hand on his chest.

KIM (CONT'D)

That was a long time ago. Looks like you turned out okay, right? I mean...

Kim moves her hands down to his belt.

KIM (CONT'D)

Why don't you let me make it up to you.

Aesop pushes her against the counter, pinning her in place with his body. He tightens his grip on her neck.

Kim panics, trying to pry his hands off her neck. She blindly reaches around for a weapon. Her desperate thrashing motion knocks pots and pans off the countertop, clattering onto the floor.

She punches Aesop in the face, splitting his lip open--

Aesop takes a step back, putting a hand to his mouth. Kim gasps for breath.

KIM (CONT'D)

You fucking freak!

Aesop's eyes go black. He lunges, grabbing her by the neck. He drags her off the countertop, and slams her to the ground--

Kim's head bounces off the floor. She's dazed and can barely fight back. She claws blindly at his arms and manages to squeak out a few words--

KIM (CONT'D)

Mother... fucker.

Aesop's tattooed arms shake under the strain. Kim's eyes roll back in her head, and her arms fall slack.

Aesop gets to his feet and pushes the matted hair out of his face.

AESOP

You may not remember that first kiss... but I'll never forget it.

EXT. LENNY'S DINER - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Aesop carries Kim's dead body down the front steps and around the back of the diner.

EXT. OLDSMOBILE - NIGHT

Aesop is standing outside the car. He has Kim propped up in the passenger seat. He slams the door shut.

EXT. GAS PUMPS - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Aesop fills a metal gas can. He drops the nozzle, letting the gas flow onto the ground. He walks to the building, leaving a trail of gas behind him.

He dumps the can inside the diner and walks back to the car.

The engine roars to life and Aesop pulls up to the gas trail. He lights a match and drops it out of the window, igniting the gas. The HELL tattoos are lit up by the orange glow--

The tires kick up dirt as he takes off. The gasoline trail burns its way towards the pump and the diner like a living thing--

INT. OLDSMOBILE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Aesop watches through the rearview mirror as the diner/gas station explodes in a huge fireball. The blast shakes the car as it speeds away.

EXT. TWO LANE HIGHWAY - FLASHBACK - DAWN

A beautiful sunrise paints the sky, as a vehicle approaches on the horizon.

EXT. TWO-LANE ROAD - FLASHBACK - DAWN

A beat-up pickup truck pulls off the side of the road and into a parking lot. The door opens, and Lenny gets out of the truck, cigarette dangling from his mouth. His jaw hangs open--

LENNY
Mother of God.

The cigarette drops out of his mouth. Lenny's Diner is now a charred, shouldering mass of blackened wreckage.

A single pole is left standing. The gas pump switch is in the ON position. Lenny flips the switch to the OFF position.

EXT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Aesop slides out of the car. He walks around to the passenger side and opens the door.

AESOP

This is not what I wanted... you
were my first crush. My only crush.

(pause)

Things could have turned out
different, but... I'm still just a
freak to you... this is where we
say goodbye.

Aesop pulls Kim's body out of the car and carries her down the embankment, placing her body at the water's edge, partially concealed by some brush.

He walks back to the car and slides in.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - CONTINUOUS

Aesop reaches over and turns the radio up and hits the gas.

EXT. TWO-LANE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

As the tires spin, kicking up gravel, the car speeds off, and one of the rear hubcaps pops off. It spins like a top, finally settling in the middle of the road.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The Oldsmobile speeds down the highway. A gas station is up ahead. Aesop pulls in.

EXT. TWO LANE HIGHWAY - DAY

A tan and brown Sheriff's cruiser speeds across the barren landscape.

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

EDSALL QUARRELS, now in his late 50s, is at the wheel. He picks up the CB radio hand mic--

EDSALL
JJ, you read me?

No answer.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
JJ, come in JJ, you read me?

Nothing. Edsall puts the hand mic back.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
Goddamn fool.

A gas station looms on the horizon.

Edsall eats chocolate chip cookies out of a bag. He drops one in his lap and begins fumbling for it between his legs--

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Aesop is pumping gas. He pulls nozzle out and puts it back in the pump. He walks inside to pay--

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - DAY

Edsall pulls the cookie out from between his legs and looks up in time to see the green Oldsmobile parked at the pumps as he drives past.

He watches it disappear in his side mirror.

EDSALL
Damn fine automobile, that one.
Color's a bit off though.

He blows on the cookie and pops it in his mouth. Spewing crumbs, he sings to a country music song on the radio.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Aesop steps out of the gas station in time to see the Sheriff's car disappearing down the road.

His eyes narrow. He gets in the car and pulls back onto the highway in the opposite direction.

EXT. LENNY'S DINER - DAY

Lenny works alongside several other men cleaning up the ruins of the Diner.

A dark sedan pulls into the parking lot, and Jason steps out of the car. Lenny makes no effort to hide his interest in Jason's beaten, bruised face.

JASON
Accident?

LENNY
Not hardly.

JASON
Everyone get out alright?

LENNY
Don't see no bodies, do you?

Jason ignores the question. He pulls a photo of Aesop out of his pocket and shows it to Lenny.

JASON
You seen this man?

LENNY
Yeah, I seen him, gave me the
creeps.
(pause)
You a cop?

Jason pulls back his jacket to show the badge hanging on his belt.

JASON
This is personal.

He tucks the photo back into his pocket, causing a twinge of pain. Lenny studies Jason's face.

JASON (CONT'D)
You missing a waitress?

Lenny gives him a sideways look.

LENNY
You know Kimmy?

JASON
We were married for a short time,
just out of college.

LENNY
She never mentioned an ex.

JASON
I wouldn't have mentioned me
either... she still driving the
Oldsmobile?

LENNY
Yep.

Lenny can't help himself.

LENNY (CONT'D)
You square, son? Your face--

Jason turns and walks away. Lenny goes back to shoveling
debris.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - DAY

The sheriff's car pulls into the parking lot.

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Edsall tries the CB radio again.

EDSALL
JJ, do you read me?

Nothing.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
JJ, you dang fool!

Nothing.

Edsall tosses the radio hand mic aside, frustrated.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
Jesus, I'm runnin' this Goddamn
town by myself.

Edsall gets out of the car and stares, hands on hips, at the
gaping hole in the front of the cafe.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
Holy hell.

He walks to the front door of the Motel and enters.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

The building is dark. Edsall tries the light switch, to no avail. He walks to the cafe entrance and stops in the doorway. He's greeted by a grizzly scene.

EDSALL
Jesus Christ and his little baby
sister. Who the hell--

A noise from the other room stops him in his tracks. He spins, pulling out his revolver as the office door swings open--

DEPUTY JAKE JOHNSON (JJ), thin, cheesy mustache, thinks he's "the shit" with his uniform and gun on his hip, comes out of the office and stops short--

JJ throws his hands up in a defensive move--

DEPUTY JJ
(Squeals)
Ah! It's me, it's me!

EDSALL
Goddamnit, JJ! You stupid son of a
bitch! You almost got your damn
head blown off. What the hell are
you thinking?

DEPUTY JJ
Sorry, Sheriff. I parked out back,
so as not to draw attention, then
come in that way... through the
back.

Edsall holsters his weapon.

EDSALL
Attention from who, you idiot?

DEPUTY JJ
(unsure)
I don't know... the locals.

EDSALL
And you don't think that fucking
crater in the front of the building
is gonna attract the attention?

JJ sulks.

DEPUTY JJ
Well, hell, I don't know. I'm just
tryin' to do my job is all.

EDSALL
(mumbles)
Jesus and Mary.

DEPUTY JJ
Anyway, you better come take a look
at this.

JJ leads Edsall into DW's office.

INT. DW'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DW's ruined body is splayed out in a pool of blood. His face
almost unrecognizable. They both turn away.

EDSALL
Christ... that's a hell of a thing.

JJ nods in agreement.

DEPUTY JJ
We got ourselves a real situation.

Edsall's look tells JJ he's an idiot.

EDSALL
What about the girl?

DEPUTY JJ
Don't know, ain't seen any sign of
her. You think she done this?

EDSALL
JJ...

DEPUTY JJ
No, I guess not.
(pause)
No sign of Clyde, neither. He
usually opens the place.

Edsall contemplates this.

EDSALL
Well, he's capable. Ex-con, strong
as a Bull. Dumber than shit,
though.

DEPUTY JJ

You think he could have took
Candice?

EDSALL

Without knowing his particular
demons, I'd hate to speculate.
There's bound to be plenty of
evidence here though. Whoever's
done this sure as hell didn't make
any attempt to cover their tracks.

Edsall removes his hat and wipes away the sweat from his
brow.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

You call the coroner?

DEPUTY JJ

Carl's gone to the city, should be
back sometime tomorrow.

EDSALL

Picked a hell of a time for that.

JJ

Well, I don't really know as how
he'd figure on something like--

Edsall puts a hand up to stop him.

EDSALL

Head on over to the supply store
and pick up some plywood, we're
gonna patch up this hole best we
can.

Edsall takes a deep breath.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

I'm gonna take another look around
the Goddamned crime scene.

(pause)

Christ, it stinks in here.

EXT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

A small "MAYBERRY" type jailhouse sits by itself on main
street at the edge of town. The Oldsmobile pulls into the
parking lot and drives around back.

Aesop climbs out of the car and walks to the front of the building. He pulls on the front door, but it's locked. He picks up a potted plant and finds a key.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - DAY

Edsall and JJ hammer the last nails into the plywood. It doesn't cover all the damage and looks ridiculous.

They stand back and admire their work in the fading afternoon sunlight.

EDSALL

Well, you best head back to town.
When Carl gets in, send him up
here, but fill him in on the
particulars first. I don't want him
comin' up here unawares. I'll leave
everything the way it is until he
gets a look at it.

(pause)

I'm gonna search the rooms and see
if I can't piece this thing
together after I get myself
something to eat, I'm starved.

DEPUTY JJ

You ain't comin'?

EDSALL

No, I'll spend the night, wait for
Carl. I sure as hell ain't drivin'
back up here again tomorrow.

DEPUTY JJ

Are you crazy? What if the person
or people who did this come back?
Or, what if they're still here,
hiding or the like?

EDSALL

Son, whoever's done this is long
gone. What would they be sticking
around for? To get caught by the
likes of some dumb shit-for-brains
deputy? I don't think so.

JJ's feelings are hurt.

DEPUTY JJ

(mumbling)

Jeez, just tryin' to look out, is
all.

(MORE)

DEPUTY JJ (CONT'D)

You wanna stick your head in the
lion's mouth; you go right ahead.

JJ shakes a thumb at the kitchen door.

DEPUTY JJ (CONT'D)

Anyway, I'm out back.

This receives a blank stare from Edsall. JJ disappears into
the kitchen without a word.

Edsall surveys the room.

EDSALL

What a fuckin' situation.

INT. JAILHOUSE - NIGHT

The jailhouse is an old building with two desks, three cells,
and a waiting area. A hallway leads to the bathroom and a
storage room.

Aesop stands in the doorway.

In the middle cell a lone figure sits on a cot, mostly
obscured in shadow. A baseball game is being broadcast from
what sounds like a cheap transistor radio.

BASEBALL ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And in the bottom of the fifth it's
McNeil at-bat, with three balls and
a strike, runners at second and
third--

Aesop closes the door behind him, keeping his eyes on the
middle cell.

AESOP

Who's in there?

The radio keeps playing as the man in the cell rises and
steps into the light.

BASEBALL ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The pitch is on its way and it's
ball four. The batter advances, and
now the bases are loaded as
Hutchins comes up to the plate...

OTIS PENIWISE, 85, grizzled, bone thin, with more hair on his
crazy eyebrows than on his head. He has a small homemade
electronic device strapped around his neck that transmits his
voice through a radio on the table next to his cot.

Otis steps up to the bars and taps the small transmitter around his neck. The game cuts out.

The voice that comes out of the device is a mixture of human and electronically produced sounds.

OTIS

Sorry about that friend, I didn't hear no-one come in. Sometimes I pick up local stations on this thing. Got a ballgame tonight an' thought I'd listen a spell.

Aesop moves to the closest desk. Otis points to the transmitter around his neck and prattles on.

OTIS (CONT'D)

I made this here device if you was wonderin'. Sometimes it strikes folks as a little odd... say it sounds funny.

(pause)

Lost my voice after I accidentally shot myself in the throat when I was cleanin' my shotgun. Didn't have a plug nickel to my name, so I didn't say a Goddamn thing to no one for almost three years, couldn't... even if I wanted.

Aesop begins rummaging through the desk drawers, ignoring Otis.

OTIS (CONT'D)

Figured that ain't no way to live your Goddamn life. So, I fashioned this here device to transmit the frequency of my vocal cords--

Otis raises the volume on the radio as he realizes Aesop isn't listening.

OTIS (CONT'D)

I'd explain it to you in detail, but it's all very technical, and you probably wouldn't understand...

Otis watches Aesop rummage through the desk.

OTIS (CONT'D)

Not very smart, rooting around in the Sheriff's desk ya know! If you hadn't noticed, this here's the county jail.

(MORE)

OTIS (CONT'D)

There's better places to rob if
that's what's in your mind to do.

Aesop pulls a set of keys out of the drawer.

OTIS (CONT'D)

The name's Otis. You got one?

AESOP

I know who you are.

Aesop turns on a desk lamp, revealing his features.

OTIS

Well, I'll be.

AESOP

(grunts)

Hmm.

OTIS

Heard you was dead.

AESOP

Guess you heard wrong.

Aesop moves to a gun rack on the wall. He unlocks it and
removes the lone shotgun.

OTIS

Well, I'll be. And regardless of
the path, here you are. Have you
seen your daddy yet?

Aesop loads the shotgun.

AESOP

Soon enough.

OTIS

Well, maybe you could find it in
yer heart to let me outta here?
Been locked up nearly two months
now. Trumped up charges and the
like... I wasn't molesting that
little cheerleader! I don't care
what that little bitch said.

Aesop ignores him and stuffs some shotgun shells into his
pockets.

OTIS (CONT'D)

If you ask me, you're up to no good here, and I think your daddy is gonna have to put you in your place. That's what I think.

Headlights flash across the window as a car pulls up outside.

AESOP

(turns to Otis)

Don't say a fucking word.

Aesop moves closer to the entrance. The front door opens and JJ enters, eager to talk about what he's seen.

DEPUTY JJ

Otis, you should see the fucking mess down at the Rustic--

Aesop bashes JJ on the side of the head with the butt of his shotgun and JJ crumples to the ground.

OTIS

Christ! What you do that for?

Aesop drags JJ's body into the farthest cell and kneels beside him. He slaps his face several times until he comes to.

AESOP

Where's the Sheriff?

DEPUTY JJ

(groggy)

Sheriff...

AESOP

Where's the Sheriff?

Aesop slaps him again.

DEPUTY JJ

Sheriff?

AESOP

Where's the Sheriff, ass-hole?

DEPUTY JJ

Sheriff ass-hole, coming in... the morning.

AESOP

Good.

Aesop stands.

JJ stares up at him, his eyes starting to glaze over.

DEPUTY JJ
I thought you were dead.

He passes out. Aesop slams the cell door shut and turns to Otis.

AESOP
Sit down and keep quiet.

Otis taps the transmitter, and classical music plays. He backs up to his cot and sits.

Aesop grabs the keys and walks out the front door.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Edsall, humming a tune, makes himself a sandwich. A buzzer sounds, and he moves to the fryer. He lifts a basket out of the hot grease and fills his plate with a fresh batch of fries.

He grabs a bottle of chocolate milk out of the refrigerator and is on the move--

INT. RUSTIC CAFE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edsall steps into the room and scans the destruction and thinks better of it.

EDSALL
What a fucking situation.

He turns back into the kitchen.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - BACK TO PRESENT

Aesop drives slowly down the street, hands gripped tightly around the steering wheel.

A neon sign flickers in the dark - "TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA."
Aesop pulls over to the side of the road with a good view of the building.

A few cars pepper the parking lot, so he kills the engine.

INT. RUSTIC CAFE - NIGHT

Edsall stands at a prep table, rubbing his belly, an empty plate in front of him. He burps and lets out a groan of satisfaction.

He leaves his dirty dishes on the table and walks out.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Edsall steps over the pool of blood behind the counter and grabs a room key off a peg on the wall.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - NIGHT

Aesop watches a group of bowlers exit the side door and pile into the remaining cars in the parking lot. They pull away and Aesop fires up the engine.

He pulls in with the lights off and parks.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - OUTSIDE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Edsall walks down the hallway, checking the room numbers as he goes. He stops in front of room number 22, checks the number on his key and enters.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA - NIGHT

The building is old and run down, with a bar near the front entrance. Aesop stands just inside the doorway.

The town drunk, RUDY T, late 40s, is passed out at the bar snoring loudly.

Nineteen-thirties big band music is playing on the sound system.

TEDDY, now in his late 50's, comb-over, ornery, a glass-half-empty kind of guy, is counting money at the register. Without looking in Rudy T's direction, Teddy calls out--

TEDDY

Hey, Rudy T! Wake the fuck up and drag your sorry ass home! You ain't sleeping here again, and I Goddamn mean that!

He gets no response from Rudy T.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
 (mumbling)
 Ain't sleepin' here again, that's
 fer damn sure... always takin'
 advantage of my generosity.

We hear the unmistakable sound of a shotgun cocking.

 TEDDY (CONT'D)
 Rudy T, what the hell?

Teddy looks up from his money to find Aesop is standing in front of him, shotgun pointed in his direction--

Teddy throws his hands up in shock, sending a fistful of dollar bills into the air, only to cascade down around him like confetti.

 TEDDY (CONT'D)
 Holy mother!

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - EDSALL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Articles of clothing are strewn about. Edsall is sleeping in his boxers and wife beater, one hand on his revolver lying across his chest.

A low muffled moan comes from the room next door, then another, this time louder--

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Candice is just coming to. As she rolls onto her back, she moans. Her hand instinctively reaches for her swollen eye.

INT. EDSALL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edsall's eyelids flutter.

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Candice, half asleep, rolls onto her side and sits up. Her foot touches the floor and lands in something wet--

Barely visible in the dark, Clyde's ruined body lies on the floor with blood pooled on the carpet.

Candice screams--

INT. EDSALL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edsall's eyes snap open. He involuntarily squeezes the trigger of his revolver and it fires--

The bullet rips through the wall, into Candice's room--

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Candice gasps as the bullet buries itself in the wall above her head in a mini explosion of plaster dust.

INT. EDSALL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edsall jumps out of bed startled, half-asleep, slapping at a black burn mark on the front of his undershirt.

EDSALL
Goddamn fool!

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Candice lies frozen, listening. Her eyes wide with fear.

INT. EDSALL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edsall presses his ear against the wall.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA - NIGHT

Aesop stands before Teddy, shotgun in hand. Teddy's voice is shaky.

TEDDY
Are you a ghost, or-or a demon?
Because the tales of your demise
proceed you, son. Although, if you
was an apparition, I don't see as
you'd have a need for that weapon
there.

Aesop levels the shotgun at Teddy.

AESOP
I'm no ghost Teddy, I'm real as
you.

TEDDY

Well, just what are your intentions? I ain't got money.

He scrambles to pick up the loose currency on the counter, betraying the money's importance to him.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

I'm sure you didn't come back here after so many years, just to rob the likes of me. Hell, the last time I saw you, you weren't more than ten or eleven years old.

Teddy scratches his head.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Think it was right before you run off if I remember... no, had to be a few years before that, I reckon. Seeing as--

Aesop taps on the counter with the shotgun to get his attention.

AESOP

I'm not here to take your precious money, Teddy. I'm here to collect against your debts.

TEDDY

(nervous)

Well, what the hell kind of debt do I owe you? I'd Goddamn like to know that!

AESOP

How much of your dirty money went into my father's pockets, Teddy? How many times did you commit your filthy unspeakable acts? That's what you're accountable for.

(mimicking Teddy)

And you can God-damn believe that.

Teddy is sweating profusely. He blots his forehead with a handkerchief.

INT. AESOP'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Aesop, 8, stands in his bedroom doorway. His father Edsall and the "poker buddies" sit around the table. Teddy slides a stack of bills to Edsall.

Edsall spots Aesop standing in the doorway watching. He gets out of his chair and approaches the boy.

EDSALL

I thought I told you not to open
that door...

Edsall backhands Aesop across the face, sending him crashing to the floor where he watches Teddy drag his mother roughly into the bedroom. The door slams shut behind them.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA - BACK TO PRESENT

Teddy wipes a sweaty palm across the front of his shirt.

TEDDY

Now hold on, son. You ain't got
your facts straight, is all. I paid-
I paid good money, and-and your
daddy said it was... now listen,
son, it-it was all his doing!

Teddy stares down the barrel of the shotgun.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Now, let's don't do anything hasty
till we talk about this.

Aesop motions to Teddy.

AESOP

Come out from behind the counter,
Teddy.

Teddy puts his hands up in the air as he walks around the counter.

TEDDY

Okay now, I think we should just
have a seat, and maybe give your
daddy a call, so we can clear this
up.

From the bar--

RUDY T (O.S.)

Fish tacos!

Aesop turns at the sudden outburst--

Rudy T wipes at the drool on his chin, eyes glazed--

Teddy grabs a bowling pin off the counter-painted with "Teddy's Bowl O Rama" across the front of it--

Rudy T's head drops back down onto the bar--

Wooden bowling pin meets flesh and bone, as Teddy smashes Aesop in the back of the head. Aesop crumples to the ground, the shotgun dropping out of his hand--

The shotgun fires as it hits the floor. Some of the blast catches Teddy in the foot and shin. He staggers back in pain and falls to the ground, clutching his lower leg.

TEDDY

Son-of-a-bitch! Goddamn it hurts!

Aesop stirs, groaning.

Teddy crawls to the shotgun and uses it as a crutch to help him get to his feet. He hobbles to the bar and grabs Rudy T roughly by the shoulder.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Rudy T, wake the fuck up!

Nothing. Teddy shakes him again.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Rudy T, you son of a bitch, wake up and help me!

Rudy T is out cold. Teddy grabs a towel off the bar and storms off. He limps over to the Aesop and puts two fingers to his neck to check for a pulse--

Aesop's hand grabs Teddy's ankle, causing him to scream in pain. He jerks his leg free and hobbles away as fast as the injury will allow.

Aesop sits up, rubbing his head, dazed. He grabs the wooden bowling pin and finds Teddy's blood on the floor. He follows the blood trail.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - OUTSIDE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Edsall steps into the hallway, revolver in hand. He makes his way to room 21, where he stops to listen outside the door.

With a touch of the handle, the door swings open--

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edsall is silhouetted in the doorway, a hulking figure, gun in hand.

Candice screams--

EDSALL

Candice?!

Edsall rushes into the dark room. He trips and falls squarely on top of Clyde's dead body.

Edsall scrambles off the dead man, panting, trying not to vomit.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

Son of a monkey!

He wipes the blood off his hands onto the carpet and tries to compose himself.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA - MACHINE ROOM - NIGHT

Teddy's shoe is wrapped in the bar towel, blood soaking through it. He hobbles along the back side of the bowling lanes.

From behind the pin catcher, he stares down the lanes, watching Aesop move through the bowling alley towards a side door that will give him access to the machine room--

TEDDY

Goddamn.

Teddy stops.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O ROMA - CONTINUOUS

Aesop is at the door to the machine room. He pulls the door open and is greeted by--

A shotgun in his face. Teddy holds all the cards, but he's nervous and shaking.

TEDDY

Okay, son, now you listen here.
We're, we're gonna go make a call
to your daddy. I'll not be accused--

Aesop pushes the shotgun barrel to the side and clubs Teddy in the forehead with the bowling pin--

Teddy pulls the trigger, and the shotgun goes off, close to Aesop's head.

Teddy falls to the floor, out cold. Aesop staggers backward and falls to the ground, ears ringing, in agony.

EXT. HAPPY'S 24 HOUR LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

A crooked neon "LIQUOR" sign flashes and sputters on the facade of a rundown spirits establishment.

INT. HAPPY'S 24 HOUR LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Jason steps up to the register and places two small bottles of whiskey on the counter.

The employee, GORDON, wearing a Confederate Flag T-shirt, pushes the tail end of a frosted donut into his mouth.

He stares hard at Jason as he rings up the sale.

JASON

What are you staring at?

GORDON

You got ID?

JASON

Are you fucking with me?

Jason pulls back his jacket to show Gordon his badge, and slaps a twenty-dollar bill down on the counter.

JASON (CONT'D)

How's that?

Gordon is deflated. He handles the money exchange without a word. Jason opens the whiskey right there at the counter. He pulls out his bottle of pain killers and washes them down.

JASON (CONT'D)

You have a good fucking night.

He turns and walks out, mumbling to himself.

JASON (CONT'D)

Jack-ass.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA - NIGHT

Teddy is tied up at the end of one of the bowling lanes, down in the pin catcher. His head at floor level.

Teddy struggles to free himself, to no avail.

Aesop stands at the ball tray, a bowling ball in his hand. He looks down at his booted feet.

AESOP

Sorry, I don't have the proper shoes on Teddy; I'd hate to damage your floors.

Teddy is still groggy from the blow to the head.

TEDDY

You got it all wrong, I didn't do nothin' to no one that didn't want it done to them! I swear!

AESOP

(enraged)

You fucking liar! I saw you, Teddy! I saw it all...

Aesop launches a ball down the lane. It strikes the far right side knocking a few pins over, narrowly missing Teddy's head.

TEDDY

Stop it, please, stop!

Aesop waits patiently at the ball return.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Let's talk about this, son! Please, I can make amends!

Aesop grabs the ball as it rattles back into the return tray.

AESOP

We're way past the point of talking, Teddy. I think you know that.

Aesop's stare is focused, deadly.

AESOP (CONT'D)

You're an animal, Teddy. I hope it was all worth it.

TEDDY

Oh, Christ.

Aesop launches the bowling ball down the lane. Teddy tries to move his head out of the way, but it catches him in the forehead.

Teddy's dazed, weeping, pleading.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Oh fuck, stop, please... don't.

Aesop picks up another ball. He throws it as hard as he can. The ball rockets down the lane--

It slams into Teddy's face with a sickening wet crunch. It caves in his skull and stays buried in his face. A pool of blood spreads from under the ball.

Aesop takes a step back and sinks into one of the plastic benches.

As the anger leaves him, his hands begin to shake. He buries his head in his hands and silently sobs, drained, shedding tears of emotional release.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - EDSALL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Candice sits on the edge of the bed, wrapped in a blanket, eyes vacant.

Edsall tries in vain to comfort her while retrieving information. Any time he comes close, she cringes and moves away.

EDSALL

Now listen honey, you're safe now,
I'll see to that personally. Ain't
no one gonna touch you while you're
in my care.

She stares unblinking. Edsall gently touches her arm. She pulls back and whimpers.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

Sorry.

(pause)

Okay, well, I hate to push the
matter, but I really do need to
know what you saw here. I need to
know who did this. Can you help me
with that, dear?

Candice's face is a blank mask. She's checked out.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

Damn.

(pause)

Well, let's get you dressed.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA - NIGHT

Aesop wipes the tears from his eyes and stands to find--

Rudy T, stands a few feet away, swaying, fist clutching a bottle of bourbon. Aesop keeps the shotgun at his side.

AESOP

You know who I am?

RUDY T

Ain't none of my business.

Rudy T takes a sip from his bottle.

RUDY T (CONT'D)

Teddy's a cunt...

Rudy T looks down the lane at Teddy's corpse.

RUDY T (CONT'D)

Was.

(pause)

You gonna shoot me?

AESOP

You never hurt me or my mother.

Rudy T sits on one of the plastic bench seats.

RUDY T

Well then... I reckon I'll have to find another bar to frequent.

AESOP

I reckon so.

Aesop walks past Rudy T, heading towards the door.

INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - NIGHT

Edsall drives. Candice stares blankly out the front windshield.

EDSALL

Any time you feel up to it, you
just go ahead and tell me anything
that might come to mind... no
pressure, you just take your time.

Edsall places his hand on Candice's thigh. She pulls away and presses herself against the door.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

(mumbles)

Christ.

INT/EXT. JASON'S DARK SEDAN - NIGHT

Jason drives down a pitch black two-lane road. His eyes are heavy; he's nodding off. He turns the stereo up louder and rolls down the window to help keep awake.

He grabs the bottle of pain killers, washing a few more down with the whiskey.

JASON

Oh, fuck...

Jason hits the brakes and pulls to the side of the road. He opens the door and stumbles out, then drops to his knees and vomits.

He leans back against the car and tries to get his breathing under control. After a moment he climbs back into the car and lies across the front seat.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - NIGHT

Windshield wipers push away a light misting of rain. Aesop turns into the jailhouse parking lot.

INT. JAILHOUSE - NIGHT

Aesop enters, damp from the walk to the front door.

A mixture of static and heavy metal music comes from the transistor radio next to Otis in his cell.

AESOP

Turn it off.

He slams the door shut.

JJ sits up on his cot in his cell, rubbing the back of his head with a sour look on his face. Otis turns the dial on the transistor radio and the music stops.

OTIS

Sorry, all I could get in this rotten downpour. Happens from time to time. It helps build an appreciation for different kinds of music though, I must admit--

Aesop lays the shotgun on the desk and pulls off his blood stained T-shirt, ribs stretching against his pale translucent skin.

OTIS (cont'd) (CONT'D)

I never did care much for salsa music till a few years back. We got us a spell of nasty weather and...

Aesop puts his hand on the shotgun, turning to Otis.

AESOP

Do yourself a favor, Otis...

Otis puts his hands above his head as a gesture of surrender.

OTIS

I get the gist.

Aesop grabs an extra sheriff's shirt that's hanging on the coat rack.

JJ stands and moves closer to the bars.

DEPUTY JJ

Just what do you intend on doing with me?

AESOP

You can shut up too.

Aesop pulls the Sheriff shirt on and rolls up the sleeves.

DEPUTY JJ

You've already assaulted a deputy sheriff, son. That alone is enough to put away.

AESOP

Don't call me son, asshole. I'm the same age as you; we went to the same fucking High-School.

DEPUTY JJ

All I'm saying is that you're in enough trouble for what you done already. And when your daddy gets back...

Aesop grabs the shotgun off the table and points it in JJ's direction.

AESOP

I'm not gonna tell you again.

JJ throws his hands up in frustration and sits back down on his cot.

DEPUTY JJ

(under his breath)
Shouldn't have that shirt on, neither.

Both captives sit on their cots, pouting like children. Aesop pulls out a chair and sits down, facing their cells.

INT. JASON'S DARK SEDAN - NIGHT

Jason lies across the front seat of his car, asleep--

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE - BLACK AND WHITE

-- Young Jason buries his knife in the backyard, Aesop's dried blood still on the blade.

-- Jason lies in bed, staring at the ceiling in the dark.

INT. JASON'S DARK SEDAN - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

Jason wakes with a start and painfully pulls himself upright. He swallows a few painkillers with the last of the whiskey, shuddering as it goes down.

He starts the car and pulls back onto the road, still rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Rustic Motel sign flickers. In the pre-dawn light, the patched-up Cafe wall is barely visible.

Jason's sedan turns off the highway, into the parking lot.

INT. JASON'S DARK SEDAN - NIGHT

Jason stares at the hastily boarded up hole in the front of the building.

JASON
What the hell is this?

He reaches for the whiskey bottle, only to find it empty. He tosses it on the floor and pulls a flashlight out of the glove box.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - NIGHT

Jason climbs out of the car and walks to the entrance. He pulls on the door, but it's locked. He moves to a gap in the plywood and shines the flashlight into the cafe--

JASON
The fuck?

The beam of light illuminates the carnage within. He yanks a board out of the way, and he squeezes through the gap.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Jason's flashlight cuts through the dark, revealing a scene unlike any he's seen before.

JASON
Christ.

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - DAWN

Candice is still comatose, her makeup running down her face in long dark streaks. Edsall glances over at her while he drives.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - DW'S OFFICE - DAWN

Jason is standing over DW's ruined corpse. He uses a napkin to pick up the broken shards of the snow-globe--

INT. JASON'S HOME - DAY - FLASHBACK

Jason is on his knees with a broken plate shard lodged in his back. Aesop pulls Jason to his feet and slams his face into the wall. He pulls the shard out of Jason's back and slashes him, cutting deep--

Jason stumbles into the hallway and punches two numbers into an alarms control panel on the wall. The alarm goes off, blaring, causing Aesop to hesitate--

Jason stumbles to his bedroom - his holster on the doorknob. He rips his gun free and falls back against the wall. He struggles to raise the gun--

Aesop hesitates, then turns and runs. Jason passes out.

INT. DW'S OFFICE - BACK TO PRESENT

Jason braces himself against the door frame. He pulls out his clunky cellphone and dials a number.

JASON

Yes, could I get the number for a Sheriff Quarrels? It's in Chesterfield County.

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAWN

Aesop is asleep in his chair. His eyeballs move under closed lids. His face twitches--

INT. AESOP'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Aesop, 12, does homework at a desk in his room. Edsall staggers in, bottle in hand. He smacks Aesop in the back of the head, then grabs him by the collar and drags him to his feet.

EDSALL

I told you to take out the God-damn trash, you good for nothing--

Edsall backhands Aesop across the face, knocking him to the ground. Annabel runs in and grabs Edsall's arm.

ANNABEL

Please, leave him alone, please!

Annabel tries to put herself between father and son.

ANNABEL (CONT'D)

Aesop, go finish your chores, don't anger your father.

Edsall pushes her away and turns back to Aesop. The bottle comes crashing down on Aesop's head.

EDSALL
You worthless shit!

Aesop lies in a pool of alcohol and broken glass, blood oozing out of a deep gash in his forehead.

INT. JEEP MOUNTAINEER WAGON - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Aesop sits in the passenger seat, holding a blood-soaked towel to the gash in his head, staring out the window.

Annabel drives, her hands clutching the steering wheel too tight, her eyes unblinking. Tears run down her cheeks.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Annabel sits in a chair as a DOCTOR cleans the wound on Aesop's forehead. The pain and guilt she feels for her son written on her face.

DOCTOR
You say he fell down while throwing
out the garbage?

Annabel continues to stare off into space.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Mrs. Quarrels?

ANNABEL
(startled)
Oh yes, he fell, outside-that's
right.

The doctor looks to Aesop.

DOCTOR
Son, you hit your head on the
mailbox? Is that what happened?

Tears well up in Aesop's eyes.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
I need to know. For the medical
report.

The doctor pulls a piece of glass out of Aesop's forehead, and casts a sideways glance at Annabel. She looks away.

EXT. QUARRELS HOUSEHOLD - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

The jeep sits in the driveway. The only sign of life is a small flower garden under the front window. Its beautiful flowers in stark contrast to the shabby facade of the house.

INT. JEEP MOUNTAINEER WAGON - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Annabel and Aesop - his head heavily bandaged, sit and stare out the front windshield at a house neither of them wants to enter. Two spent souls.

AESOP

The flowers are pretty...

Annabel slides closer to her son. She tenderly wraps her hands around his face and takes a moment to study the pain that lives behind his eyes.

ANNABEL

Someday my sweet boy, you will
leave this dreadful place and never
ever come back... promise me,
please... promise me you'll leave
here and never come back... go and
live a life free from pain.

There are tears in both their eyes.

AESOP

What about you, mama?

They both look into each others eyes. She can never leave.

ANNABEL

Promise me, Aesop... please.

AESOP

I promise.

Annabel wipes the tears from Aesop's cheeks.

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAWN - BACK TO PRESENT

The room is dark.

JJ and Otis sit on their cots, watching Aesop sleep. Otis turns the volume down on his transistor radio and holds it close to the bars as they speak in whispered tones.

OTIS
Goddamn fool's up to no good, I
know that much.

DEPUTY JJ
Well, ain't you a fucking genius?

OTIS
What the hell happened over at the
Rustic?

DEPUTY JJ
Trust me, you don't even want to
know. I ain't never seen any shit
like that before...

The phone rings, waking Aesop with a start. He looks around
the room trying to get his bearings.

Otis points to the phone on the Sheriff's desk.

OTIS
You gonna answer it?

The Sheriff's car pulls into the parking lot, but Aesop fails
to notice, distracted, and still groggy.

AESOP
Do you ever stop talking?

Otis stares back. The phone is still ringing.

A car door slams and Aesop jumps. He moves to the window in
time to see Edsall helping Candice out of the car.

AESOP (CONT'D)
What the fuck?

Aesop turns to his two captives.

AESOP (CONT'D)
(forcefully)
Keep quiet or this ends at the
door.

He backs up against the wall as the front door opens and
Edsall enters, Candice in tow.

EDSALL
JJ, you here? Goddamned phone is
ringing!

Edsall clocks JJ, locked in the cell.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
What the hell?

DEPUTY JJ
Sheriff!

Edsall turns in time to see Aesop as he lunges--

EDSALL (CONT'D)
Joseph and Mary--

Aesop slams the butt of the shotgun into Edsall's forehead, knocking him back into Candice. They both fall to the ground, hard.

Aesop pulls Edsall's unconscious bulk off of Candice and helps her to her feet. She's still in shock. Recognition flashes in her eyes, and then it's gone.

AESOP
Jesus, why did he drag you all the way down here?

Aesop directs Candice into the empty cell and sits her down on the cot. He unfolds the blanket at the end of the cot and wraps it around her shoulders.

He closes her cell door, but doesn't lock it. The phone stops ringing--

INT. JASON'S DARK SEDAN - DAY

Jason drives with the phone to his ear. He tosses it onto the seat.

JASON
Of course, no answer. Fuckin' hillbillies.

He's sweating. He fiddles with the air conditioning controls, but nothing happens. Pounding on the dashboard yields no results.

JASON (CONT'D)
You gotta be kidding me!

Jason rolls down the window and cranks up the radio.

On the road ahead there are black skid marks and a shiny round object lying in the street. Jason slams on the brakes and screeches to a halt.

EXT. TWO LANE HIGHWAY - DAY

Jason stands over a silver hubcap gleaming in the sun.

The Oldsmobile logo is stamped into the metal. He tosses it into the car, then moves to inspect the tire marks on the side of the road.

He scans the horizon, looking up and down the ravine. Something pink is sticking out of the bushes in the shallow water below. He scurries down the embankment and pulls up short--

A body lies face down in the water. He turns the body over and Kim's corpse stares back at him.

JASON
Mother fucker.

Jason says a silent prayer, then climbs up the embankment with purpose, tears in his eyes.

JASON (CONT'D)
I'm gonna' put a fucking bullet in your skull, freak.

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

Edsall is tied to a chair in the center of the room. Blood seeps out of a deep gash in his forehead.

Aesop paces like a caged animal. His eyes wild, darting.

Edsall shakes the cobwebs out of his head.

EDSALL
Damn it, boy, what the hell are you up to?

He looks down and seems to realize for the first time that he's tied up. His boots have been removed, and his big toe sticks out of a hole in his sock.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
Have you lost your Goddamn mind?!
Untie me now!

Aesop backhands his Father across the face, almost knocking him over.

Aesop is visibly shaken.

Blood seeps out of Edsall's mouth. He grits his teeth.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
That's the first and last time
you'll ever strike me!

Aesop paces, anxious, his hands shaking. JJ speaks up from his cell.

DEPUTY JJ
Aesop, stop this right now before
it goes too far! We can talk it
out.

Aesop turns on JJ. He jams the shotgun into the bars of the cell, forcing him back.

AESOP
You have no idea--

He begins pacing again.

AESOP (CONT'D)
We're way past the point of
talking, JJ. In fact, there's never
been talking, has there, Father?

He points the shotgun at his Father.

AESOP (CONT'D)
There was only violence and
control.

Edsall smirks. Aesop moves in close to his Father and presses the barrel of the shotgun against Edsall's head.

EDSALL
(laughs)
I should have known you'd find a
way back here someday. Like a
fucking stray dog I can't get rid
of.

AESOP
You bastard, you left me to rot in
that shit-hole--

INT. MAINE - STATE MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY - DAY - FLASHBACK

A bleak, sterile reception area. DONALD SHIRE, 50s, stands at the reception desk. He's haggard and close to tears.

NURSE, MONA, 50s, red lipstick on a scowling face, a real sourpuss, sits behind the reception desk. A woman devoid of all compassion.

Mona is working on a crossword puzzle. She barely acknowledges the man in front of her.

DONALD SHIRE

I'm here to see Susanna Shire. She was brought in late last night.

NURSE MONA

And you are?

DONALD SHIRE

Her husband, Donald.

NURSE MONA

Well, sit down, it's gonna be a while. Lunch was an hour ago so most of 'em are probably shitting in their diapers. I'll have to find out where the hell she's got to.

Mona pulls her sizable girth from the chair and walks through a set of double doors, mumbling to herself.

NURSE MONA (CONT'D)

Jeez, what a wicked grand life I've made for myself. Stinkin' shit job.

INT. MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY - WHITE ROOM -DAY

Aesop sits in a stark white room, on a white chair, with his eyes closed. He's wearing a white straight jacket, with several electrodes attached to his head.

There is a door with a small window against the back wall. Mona stops and peers into the room, then moves on.

DOCTOR COLE, 55, sits behind a small white desk, across from Aesop. He jots down a few notes and closes the notebook. He stands and walks to the door--

INT. VIEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A man sits in the shadows of a dark room, watching through the viewing window. The door opens, and Doctor Cole enters.

DR. COLE

Sorry, it's a disturbing image, I know. He hasn't spoken a word since he came here. Not one single word in over a month.

Doctor Cole opens the notebook as if suddenly remembering something forgotten and jots down a few notes.

DR. COLE (CONT'D)
Plenty of brain activity though.
Alarming neural patterns associated
with emotional instability, and an
almost uncontrollable rage; hence
the jacket. There have been some
outbursts... certain triggers.

The doctor flips on a light switch to reveal--

Edsall Quarrels, a sour look on his face.

INT. WHITE ROOM - SAME

The light seems to trigger an invisible connection, a shared thread of hate. Aesop's eyes snap open, and he stares into the two-way mirror, sensing his fathers presence.

INT. VIEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Cole continues on, unaware.

DR. COLE
Police records show that he's been
in Maine for about eighteen months.
He was arrested and brought here
after being deemed mentally unfit.
Caused quite a few problems at the
county lock-up. They had no choice,
really. He nearly beat a police
detective to death. A young man
from your hometown--

Dr. Cole checks his notes.

DR. COLE (CONT'D)
I believe they went to school
together. A Jason Keil--

This elicits no response from Edsall.

DR. COLE (CONT'D)
Quite a gruesome ordeal, I'm told.
(pause)
Is there anything from his
childhood, maybe something in a
past experience that might give us
some clue as to his current
condition?

Edsall makes no attempt to hide the fact that he doesn't want to be there. He never takes his eyes off his son as he talks.

EDSALL

I told you, normal enough, but he ain't exactly normal, is he? Had it better than I did when I was his age, but he was soft. A real mama's boy. What else can I say? Had no stomach for the real world. I'm not surprised he ended up in a place like this. Just like his mother--

DR. COLE

Yes, I'm so sorry--

Edsall is losing patience.

EDSALL

Yes, it's all very sad.

Edsall motions impatiently for the doctor to continue.

DR. COLE

Sorry, yes--

Dr. Cole takes a beat to get back on track, consulting his notes.

Edsall watches two orderlies come in and take Aesop out of the room.

EDSALL

(interrupting)

Listen, doc, I've got a town to run back home, and my man in charge there is just shy of moron. It's still not clear to me why you insisted I come up here? I could have given you all this information over the phone.

DOCTOR COLE

Yes, well, he's your son. I thought maybe--

EDSALL

Cost me a Goddamned fortune to travel on such short notice. Money that could have been better spent. Besides, he's better off here. So if there's nothing else, I'll wash my hands of the whole affair.

DR. COLE

No, no. I thank you for your trouble. If there's any change I'll be sure to--

EDSALL

You needn't inform me of anything further.

Edsall stands. He grabs a folded newspaper off the chair next to him and leaves the room without another word.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Edsall approaches the front desk. He stops to talk with Mona.

EDSALL

Do me a favor, sweetheart, and make sure my boy gets this.

He slides the newspaper across the counter with a smile.

INT. AESOP'S CELL - ROOM 40 - NIGHT

A white room with a single cot. Aesop lies on his back, staring at the ceiling.

The sliding hatch opens and Mona's heavily made-up face stares in, but Aesop refuses to look in her direction.

NURSE MONA

Brought you a present, Frosty. A little taste of home.

She pushes the paper through the opening and slams the bar shut.

EXT. WHITE HALLWAY - NIGHT

As Mona walks away, Aesop screams in agony. Her red lips curl into a wicked smile as a banging noise echos through the hallway.

INT. AESOP'S CELL ROOM - NIGHT

Aesop violently throws himself against the door, tears streaming down his face.

The viewing hatch slides open, and two orderlies look in-- DALE, tall, thin, balding, and FINN, a gym rat, dumb as dirt.

DALE

Knock it off, fuck face, or we're
comin' in!

Dale holds up a syringe so Aesop can see it. Aesop throws himself into the door again. The orderly slams the sliding bar closed. The door opens, and they rush in.

DALE (CONT'D)

Fuckin' freak!

Finn knocks him to the ground.

FINN

You fuckin' pecker-head!

Finn gives him a few punches until he lies still at their feet. In the struggle, his straight jacket has come loose--

DALE

Careful, I don't want him getting
free.

FINN

Don't worry about it. Look at this
scrawny little fuck--he's crying
like a baby.

Aesop lies still, as if content to accept his fate.

Finn (CONT'D)

He ain't got no fight left in him.

Finn lets go and stands over him, confident that he poses no threat.

Dale moves in to administer the injection--

Aesop slips his arm out of the straight jacket and grabs Dale's wrist. He snatches the needle out of his hand and slams the syringe into Finn's leg.

FINN (CONT'D)

Oh shit!

Finn stumbles back. He teeters on unsteady legs and collapses with a thud.

DALE

Son of a bitch, I'm gonna beat the
snot out of you!

He throws a punch at Aesop but misses--

Aesop uses his momentum and pushes him to the floor. He wraps a straight-jacket sleeve around the man's neck and strangles him.

Finn can only watch, sedated. He reaches out, grasping at air.

Dale passes out and Aesop lets him drop to the floor. He rummages through the man's pockets and pulls out a small key on an elastic ring.

Aesop stands and pulls off the straight jacket. The HEAVEN and HELL tattoos come together and wrap themselves around a flaming black heart in the center of his chest.

He searches Finn, pulling out some cash and a switchblade.

AESOP

I don't think you're supposed to
have this...

A wave of fear washes over Finn's face as Aesop inspects the blade.

AESOP (CONT'D)

Who's crying now, bitch?

With one punch he knocks Finn out. Aesop escapes his cell--

A newspaper lies on the ground - "The Teresville Gazette." Along with a photo of Annabel, the headline reads, "Annabel Quarrels, Wife Of Sheriff Edsall Quarrels, Found Dead In Apparent Suicide."

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Aesop uses Dale's key to open a locker, pulling out a pair of jeans and a T-shirt.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Mona works on a crossword puzzle at her desk. A few powdered donuts and a cup of coffee sit within arms reach.

A light dusting of powdered sugar covers her chin.

NURSE MONA

A twelve letter word for dis-
entranced? What, do they think I'm
a fucking Harvard grad?

Aesop walks in through the double doors, behind Mona. She can't be bothered to look.

NURSE MONA (CONT'D)
 Carl? If that's you, I'm busy.
 Don't bother me with any more of
 these re-tards...

Aesop grabs Mona by the hair, snapping her head back. Her eyes bulge with fear as she recognizes him.

NURSE MONA (CONT'D)
 You-you shouldn't be out of your
 room.

AESOP
 Your problem, Mona, is that you've
 become unsympathetic to the human
 condition. Let's fix that.

Aesop slams Mona's head on the desktop. Her body slides off her chair and flops heavily to the ground. He dumps the contents of her purse on the counter, taking her money and car keys.

EXT. MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Aesop walks out into the night.

There is only one car in the parking lot. A rusted-out, late-model green station wagon with wood side-panels.

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Edsall spits blood on the floor near Aesop's feet.

EDSALL
 You waited too long to save your
 precious mama, didn't you?

Aesop lands a barrage of punches, then takes a step back. He steels himself. He won't let his father see him cry.

AESOP
 We both know she wouldn't take her
 own life.

Edsall laughs a low, wicked laugh.

EDSALL

She waited a long time for you.
Never gave up hope on her precious
little freak baby. When we heard
about your arrest in Maine, she
demanded that we go see you.

Edsall spits more blood on the floor. His eyes lock on
Aesop's.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

Can you believe it? She demanded I
take her to you... demanded!

From his cell, JJ moves closer to the bars, his interest now
piqued.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

I couldn't have that... I wouldn't
have it.

DEPUTY JJ

Sheriff?

Aesop levels the shotgun at Edsall.

EDSALL

Well, what are you waiting for? Do
it, if that's what you've set your
mind to.

AESOP

It's not gonna be that easy. You're
gonna know that every one of your
friends are dead before it's your
time.

Aesop slams the butt of the shotgun into Edsall's stomach.
Edsall gasps for air, spitting up blood.

AESOP (CONT'D)

All the beatings... I could handle
the pain. But, what you did to my
mother-you rotten bastard. That's
what you're accountable for. What
you let your friends do to her!

EDSALL

You ignorant shit. I beat you to
make you stronger. At least I
tried.

(coughs up blood)

(MORE)

EDSALL (CONT'D)

I guess I failed 'cause you're still weak and useless, just like your mother. Goddamn her for giving birth to a freak like you. She must have spread her legs to the devil himself--

Aesop punches him again.

AESOP

The only Devil in her life was you!

EDSALL

Son, the day you clawed yer way outta yer mamma you opened a door that let all manner of evil into our lives.

Aesop smashes him in the face with another right cross. Edsall laughs - cruel, mocking.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

You were the poison in our home.

AESOP

When I'm done with you, you're gonna beg me to kill you.

Aesop begins beating his father when JJ rattles his cell bars.

DEPUTY JJ

Goddamn it, son! Don't do this!

Aesop thrusts the butt of the shotgun through the bars and smashes JJ in the face, knocking him to the ground with a gash in his forehead.

Blood flows over his face as he lies unconscious on the floor.

OTIS

Hells bells.

Rage burns in Aesop's eyes. Candice gets to her feet and reaches through the bars. She lays a hand on his arm and it seems to quiet the storm.

Aesop turns back to his Father, who has passed out from the beating. He grabs the back of the chair and drags Edsall into the back hallway.

OTIS (CONT'D)

Where you going with the Sheriff?

AESOP (O.S.)
Shut up, Otis!

Aesop comes back and grabs his car keys.

OTIS
What do you intend on doing now?

AESOP
Finish what I started.

Aesop turns to Candice, standing at the bars, tears running down her cheeks.

AESOP (CONT'D)
I'm sorry... you shouldn't have to witness any of this.

He turns to leave, hesitates.

AESOP (CONT'D)
You don't have to fear me.

Candice wipes at the tears.

CANDICE
(whispers)
I know.

AESOP
When I come back I'll take you somewhere... anywhere you want to go.

Aesop walks out, locking the door behind him.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Oldsmobile drives down the sleepy, small-town road.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - CONTINUOUS

Aesop passes an old movie theatre, the ORPHEUM, with a dilapidated marquee out front. The once majestic building is now in a state of disrepair.

He drives around the theatre and pulls into a back alley.

INT. JAILHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Edsall is coming too. His eyes flutter and open. He looks around disoriented, trying to get his bearings.

The hallway seems to stretch out endlessly before him.

EDSALL
Son of a bitch.

Edsall calls out.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
Candice?! I need you to listen to me.
(pause)
Candice, can you hear me? I need you to focus on my voice.

EXT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - BACK ALLEY - DAY

Aesop uses the butt end of the shotgun to make quick work of a padlock on the back door.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Aesop enters a small room, full of empty film canisters, boxes of candy, cups, and popcorn. He closes the door, and the room goes black.

INT. JAILHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Edsall is still trying to get through to Candice as he works at his bonds.

EDSALL
Come on, darlin', you've got to snap out of it, now. I really need your help and your cell ain't locked. All you gotta do is get up and open the door. JJ's in a bad way and he's gonna need a doctor real soon.

INT. CANDICE' CELL - CONTINUOUS

Candice looks to Deputy JJ lying prone in the next cell but makes no move to get up. Tears begin to roll down her cheeks.

OTIS

Now, Miss Candice, I think we may all be in mortal danger here, not just the Sheriff. His boy ain't stable, you've seen it for yourself. No telling what he's capable of. He killed your Pa, didn't he?

CANDICE

(mumbles to herself)
The things the Sheriff did to his own family.

OTIS

Sweetheart, if you could just unlock my cell, I'd surely appreciate the gesture, and likewise--

EDSALL

Otis! Shut up, you ain't helpin' matters!

(pause)

Now, Candice, I want you to concentrate on the sound of my voice! Can you do that?

Candice wipes at the tears that streak her face.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - LOBBY - DAY

ALVIE SPAIN, now late 30s, stands behind the concession stand wearing a red velvet ushers jacket and a plastic name tag that he's constantly fiddling with.

Alvie wipes down the countertops.

A voice calls out--

CHARLIE SYKES (O.S.)

Alvie! You clean out the theatre yet?

ALVIE

Uh-no sir, no I didn't.

CHARLIE SYKES (O.S.)

Well get to it, goddammit! We open up in forty-five minutes!

ALVIE

Okay, boss... boss?

CHARLIE SYKES (O.S.)

What?!

Alvie pulls his flashlight out of his pocket and turns it on.

ALVIE

Please don't use those words, boss.

He walks out from behind the counter and through a set of double doors to the auditorium. His afflictions making his movements jerky and unsteady.

INT. PROJECTION ROOM - DAY

The room is filled with shelves crammed with reels of film, and old film projectors are strewn about.

CHARLIE SYKES, now late 50s, sits at a small table repairing one of his machines. It's been said that Charlie has an onion permanently lodged up his ass.

He wears polyester pants and a short sleeve polyester shirt with white Rockports and the same rose-colored glasses.

He looks up to the heavens.

CHARLIE SYKES

Lord, what the fuck did I ever do to get stuck with my sister's crippled kid? It's a fuckin' unfairness.

He shakes his head and goes back to his work.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

The theatre is dark, with ornate walls and seats covered in red velvet, matching Alvie's jacket.

With his awkward gait, Alvie's flashlight dances crazily in the darkness. He fiddles with his name-tag and it pops off his jacket. It disappears under a row of chairs.

ALVIE

Crud.

Alvie bends over and smacks his head on the seat in front of him, dropping his flashlight.

He watches it roll down the center aisle, too far to warrant the physical toll it would take for him to retrieve it.

He gets down on all fours and crawls between the seats looking for the name tag.

He frees a hand from the sticky floor and finds popcorn and a condom wrapper stuck to his palm.

A window in the projection booth above him opens and Charlie pokes his head out.

CHARLIE SYKES

Alvie, I gotta go to the Piggly
Wiggly to get a light bulb for this
Goddamned projector! Don't open the
fucking doors till I get back! You
understand?

Alvie halts his search under the seats to reply.

ALVIE

Boss?

CHARLIE SYKES

What?

ALVIE

Please don't use those--

CHARLIE SYKES

Shut up!

He disappears back into the booth and slams the window shut.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Jason drives through town. He turns a corner and slams on the brakes as a battleship of a car swings out onto the street from an alley, almost clipping him.

JASON

(yelling out the window)
Watch where you're going you
ignorant fuck!

Charlie Sykes drives away oblivious to it all.

Jason pulls away, then hits the brakes again. Down the alley the back end of the Oldsmobile is just visible.

INT. JAILHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Edsall painfully inches his chair down the hallway. It's slow going, and his frustration level is peaking.

EDSALL

Candice, you need to be strong and get out of that cell. Think about your daddy. Do it for him.

He rounds the corner, exhausted from the effort.

CANDICE

My daddy... used to beat me.

EDSALL

(deflated)
Christ.

CANDICE

I'm glad he's dead.

Edsall's near his boiling point. He takes a deep breath.

EDSALL

Candice... you've seen what my son is capable of. Now, I've got to go and stop him from makin' a mess of my old friend Charlie. You don't want that man's blood on yer hands now do you? He's got a cripple in his care.

Otis stands at the bars and turns his transistor radio to classical music. Candice wipes the last of the tears away and stares back at Edsall.

Edsall has lost his patience.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

Goddamnit, Candice! Get up and help me outta this fucking chair! Now!

Candice moves deeper into her cell.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

You're just like yer fucking mother... useless in trying times!

Her stare hardens.

CANDICE

(barely audible)
My mother?

Edsall gives one more violent struggle to get loose and nearly tips over.

EDSALL
Goddamn-it!

Candice locks eyes with Edsall.

CANDICE
You know my mother?

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Alvie is searching for his name tag under the seats when a bright light shines down on him--

He struggles awkwardly and turns to look up into a blinding light--

ALVIE
Boss?

Aesop cracks him over the head with the flashlight, and the world goes black.

INT. PROJECTION ROOM - DAY

Alvie is propped up in a chair. He's starting to come to. He rubs the welt on his forehead. Aesop holds the shotgun up to his face.

Alvie is dazed, confused--

ALVIE
Sheriff?

Aesop pokes him in the chest with the shotgun.

ALVIE (CONT'D)
You're not the Sheriff. Why did you hit me?

AESOP
You're lucky that's all I did.

ALVIE
What did I ever do to you?

AESOP
It's not about what you did to me.

Alvie shudders. Tears begin to well up in his eyes.

ALVIE

I'm sorry; I don't remember your name. I'm afflicted...

Alvie lowers his head in shame.

ALVIE (CONT'D)

I forget things.

Aesop lowers the shotgun--

INT. QUARRELS HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The room is filled with cigar smoke. Aesop, 10, watches from his doorway as DW, Teddy, and Charlie Sykes are all playing poker.

A young Alvie sits in a chair behind Charlie, staring off into space, uninterested.

Annabel places a beer in front of Edsall. Her left eye black and blue. Edsall gives Charlie a nod.

Charlie gets up from his seat and grabs Alvie by the arm.

CHARLIE SYKES

Come on Alvie, it's time fer you to grow up and become a real man. You just watch me, an I'll lead you to the promised land.

(under his breath)

You worthless shit.

Alvie resists and Charlie backhands him across the face, knocking him to the floor. He jerks him to his feet--

INT. PROJECTION ROOM - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Both men stare at one another with a shared memory between them.

AESOP

You were there, in that room with her. I need to know.

ALVIE

Oh no, I don't want-I just can't, please.

AESOP

I need to know. For your sake, I need to know.

Aesop's tone tells him he better start talking.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Jason creeps through the dark theatre, gun in hand.

ALVIE (V.O.)
My Uncle's not a good Christian
man...

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - PROJECTION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alvie takes a deep breath.

ALVIE
And he had his way with... when he
was done-he, he tried to make me do
the same, but, but I didn't think
it was right, so he beat me. He
beat me bad.
(pause)
He said I wasn't nearly a man...
and never would be.

Alvie wipes away some tears.

ALVIE (CONT'D)
I remember your mama was a real
handsome lady. I'm sorry for her
passing... your sister carries her
looks.

AESOP
I don't have a sister, Alvie.

ALVIE
Well, your half-sister least-wise.
Seeing as DW's the father.

The news hits Aesop like a lead pipe to the brainpan.

AESOP
Sister... no... my God...

ALVIE
Everyone in the group knew it.
Except Candice, and I guess... you.

Aesop stumbles backward, sending a stack of film canisters clattering to the floor. Tears well in his eyes.

AESOP
Jesus Christ... my sister?

Using the shotgun like a baseball bat, he begins smashing everything in site. Alvie cowers in fear.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The sound of destruction echos through the building. Jason moves toward it.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - PROJECTION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Aesop slumps to the floor, his chest heaving and his face streaked with tears, defeated.

AESOP
I don't know if I can do this
anymore.

There's a shared connection. Alvie's eyes well with tears.

ALVIE
I'd be lyin' if I said I hadn't
thought the same thing a hundred
times, but every time I wanted to
end things... I thought of my
Mama... and the sacrifice she made
bringing me into this world... My
Mama died giving birth to me.

AESOP
In a way... mine did too.

The silence is broken by footsteps on the stairs. Aesop grabs the shotgun and scrambles to his feet.

The door swings open and Jason is standing on the landing. Both men fire. Both men are hit--

A bullet slashes Aesop's side, and he drops. Jason stumbles backwards, the gun falling from his hand--

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Charlie steps through the lobby doors and runs to the stairs with a brown paper bag under his arm.

CHARLIE SYKES (O.S.)
Goddammit Alvie! What's all the
racket? You better not have touched
any of my--

Jason's body tumbles down the stairs and lands completely
still at Charlie's feet.

CHARLIE SYKES (CONT'D)
Holy Mother...

Charlie leaps over the body and races up the stairs.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - PROJECTION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charlie takes a step inside the room--

CHARLIE SYKES
Fucking balls--

The butt of the shotgun smashes Charlie in the forehead and
he crumples.

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

Edsall inches his way closer to Candice, sweat mixing with
blood.

EDSALL
Goddamn it, Candice! If you don't
get up and help me, I'll give you
something to really be scared of!

She won't acknowledge him, just stares, trying to put the
pieces together.

CANDICE
How do you know my mama?

Edsall struggles violently against his bonds.

He lifts the chair off the ground and slams it down. One of
the legs splinters and the chair collapses. He hits the
ground hard, with the chair in pieces.

Edsall lies stunned, but his anger quickly lights a fire in
his eyes.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - PROJECTION ROOM - DAY

Charlie lies prone at Aesop's feet, dazed. Blood oozes out of a deep gash in his face.

Aesop pushes the shotgun into his side.

CHARLIE SYKES
The hell... who hit me?
(blinking)
Sheriff?

The cobwebs clear--

CHARLIE SYKES (CONT'D)
You're not the Sheriff.

AESOP
No, I'm not the Sheriff. I'm my
mother's son, you scum-bag.

CHARLIE SYKES
(recognition)
Crap.

Charlie registers the tattoos, blood splattered on his Hell arm--

CHARLIE SYKES (CONT'D)
Oh shit... you son-of-a-bitch.
Alvie, help me! Help me, you
worthless cripple!

Aesop levels the shotgun at Charlie's heart, his cold eyes resolved to a purpose. He pulls the trigger--

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

Edsall is unsteady on his feet. He staggers to his desk and catches a glimpse of his battered face in a mirror by the door.

Enraged, he grabs the mirror off the wall and smashes it on the floor. Edsall grabs the car keys off the desk but hesitates. He walks into Candice's cell--

Candice stands in front of him and stares back defiantly. Edsall backhands her across the face, and she crumples back onto her cot.

EDSALL (cont'd)
 You can sit in here and rot for all
 the help you've been! And yer as
 useless as yer mother was.

He walks out and slams her cell door shut, locking it.

Edsall looks down at his brown polyester socks.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
 Where are my Goddamned boots?

OTIS
 Uh Sheriff, I don't think you're in
 your right mind.

EDSALL
 I'm gonna put a bullet in that
 boy's fuckin' skull.

OTIS
 Well, Sheriff, now... he is still
 yer son--

EDSALL
 Well, he ain't the son I wanted!

Giving up the search for his boots, he hurries out the front door and slams it shut behind him.

OTIS
 (calls after him)
 I don't think you should be
 driving!

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - STAIRWELL - DAY

Aesop steps down the last few stairs, shotgun ready. His hand clutching his side.

Jason is gone, but he's left plenty of blood behind. Aesop walks back up the stairs.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - PROJECTION ROOM - DAY

Blood is splattered across the floor. Alvie takes a tentative step towards Charlie's ruined body.

ALVIE
 The Bible says to turn the other
 cheek.

AESOP
More like an eye for an eye.

Alvie pauses, then comes to a conclusion.

ALVIE
Okay.

Aesop pulls up his shirt to reveal a deep laceration in his side from the gunshot.

AESOP
You got a first-aid kit?

ALVIE
There's one in the downstairs
bathroom.

Aesop nods and walks away.

Alvie picks up the fallen paper bag and pulls out a new projector bulb.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jason stands at the back of his car with the trunk open. He pulls out a tire iron and winces. His right shoulder is peppered with small shotgun pellet holes, oozing blood.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY

Aesop sits behind the wheel. He checks his wound. It's crudely bandaged, and still seeping blood.

He slams his fist against the steering wheel--

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jason slams the trunk and walks back towards the theatre. He turns at the sound of screeching tires--

EXT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

The Oldsmobile screams around the corner and speeds away--

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jason watches Aesop's car disappear down the road.

JASON

Fuck.

He turns back to his car.

EXT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

Edsall rummages through the trunk of his cruiser and grabs his backup pistol, shoving it into his waistband. He moves to close the trunk but stubs his toe.

EDSALL

Son-of-a-whore!

Edsall angrily limps around the car to the passenger door and climbs in, leaving the trunk open--

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Edsall starts the engine and throws it into reverse--

He hits the gas and flies backwards out of the parking. He looks to the rearview mirror, but all he can see is trunk--

EDSALL

Son-of-a-bitch!

The Sheriff's cruiser smashes into a red gardening pickup truck speeding down the road--

EXT. TWO-LANE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The truck careens off the road and flips over, into a ditch. The passenger is sent flying through the windshield and pinwheels down the road.

The Sheriff's cruiser spins to a stop in the street.

Edsall pulls himself out of the wrecked car and staggers into the street. He registers the truck lying on it's roof and the twisted body in the street.

EDSALL

Crud.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY

Aesop drives, lost in thought.

The Sheriff's cruiser appears up ahead, crumpled, smoke pouring from the engine.

AESOP
What the hell?

Aesop slows and pulls the car onto the shoulder, close to the sedan that's overturned in the ditch. He climbs out.

EXT. TWO-LANE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Aesop checks the Sheriff's cruiser. He clocks the mangled body in the street and moves to the pickup truck.

A metal gas can and lawnmower are lying in the grass. Aesop puts the shotgun aside and gets down on his hands and knees to look inside the truck... nothing.

Something hits the car and bounces off with a metallic clang-- Kim's metal name tag lies in the grass at his feet. Aesop turns--

Jason stands in the road, gripping the tire iron and the Oldsmobile's hubcap in his other hand. He's bloody, unsteady, barely able to hold himself up.

AESOP
You don't look so good, Jason.

JASON
Fuck you... why Kim? I can understand coming after me... there's no excuse for what I did to you, but Kim didn't deserve that.

Aesop looks past Jason to the jailhouse. It's too quiet.

AESOP
To tell you the truth, at the time I don't think I really knew what I wanted from her. I just needed her to know how she affected my life... what I went through. Things just got out of hand.

Aesop takes a step closer to Jason.

AESOP (CONT'D)
She just wanted to fuck.

His words have the desired effect. Jason's blood is boiling.

JASON

You sick son of a bitch.

Jason lunges. He swings the hubcap, catching Aesop in the side of the head--

Aesop stumbles back and falls to the ground. Jason is thrown off balance by the force of the connection and topples--

Before he can recover, Aesop is on him. Jason elbows Aesop in the face knocking him backwards--

Jason lunges and snatches up the tire iron, but Aesop is there to grab his wrist. Jason is too weak to pull free.

AESOP

Sorry, there's one more thing...
the only thing I've got left to do.
I can't let you fuck that up. It's
the reason I'm here.

Aesop pries the tire iron out of his hand and tosses it away.

AESOP (CONT'D)

For what it's worth, It wasn't my intention to kill Kim. It's just one of many things I'll have to live with... or take to my grave. I know that doesn't mean shit to you... but when this is done, if you survive, you can walk away or you can come after me... but know this. What those men did... What I did to them. It was better than they deserved.

JASON

That doesn't make it right,
asshole.

Aesop picks up the gas can with his free hand.

AESOP

I guess it depends on your
perspective.

Aesop stands over Jason.

AESOP (CONT'D)

I'm tired... and this was never
really about you. I don't need
revenge for myself.

(MORE)

AESOP (CONT'D)

I thought I did, but I realized that was just a small part of my suffering. I've been through far worse.

Jason pulls himself up on his elbows and studies Aesop's tattooed arms - Heaven and Hell.

JASON

You don't have to go in there. It's your decision... which side wins?

AESOP

Nobody wins.

Aesop slams the gas can into Jason's face, knocking him out. He turns and walks towards the jailhouse--

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

Aesop pushes the front door open, shotgun on his hip, and steps inside.

The room is eerily silent. The broken chair and pieces of discarded rope lie on the floor. Blood stains mark the place of Edsall's beatings.

Candice is slumped over in her cell, and Otis sits in the shadows of his.

OTIS

What manner of demons have you brought with you, son?

Aesop ignores him and checks the hallway for signs of Edsall. He comes back out and stands in front of Otis's cell, tapping the shotgun against the bars.

AESOP

Where is he?

OTIS

Don't reckon I know... you're bleeding.

AESOP

(measured)

Where is the old man?

OTIS

I'm sorry son, but I can't tell you what I don't know...

(MORE)

OTIS (CONT'D)

But if you were to let me out of this here cell, then I'd help you look. Of course, that would be on the condition that I remain free after an appropriate amount of searching, seeing as he could'a dropped dead after that beating you put on him.

Otis reaches his hand through the bars.

OTIS (CONT'D)

We could shake on that, an I'd then take you at your word.

Aesop turns away.

AESOP

You can rot in there.

OTIS

Ain't very Christian of you, son.

Aesop moves to Candice's cell. He places the shotgun at his feet and grips the bars. He stares at Candice through matted hair.

Candice sits up, slowly. She pushes the hair from her face, revealing a swollen eye. A thin stream of fresh blood runs out of her nose, a gift from Edsall.

AESOP

I'm sorry.

Aesop looks away, unable to make eye contact.

AESOP (CONT'D)

We have a lot to talk about.

Aesop pulls at the cell door, but it doesn't budge. Otis states the obvious.

OTIS

It's locked.

Aesop turns to Otis who is watching him intently. Otis's eyes dart to the doorway, causing Aesop to turn--

He's struck from behind and crumples to the ground--

Edsall stands over him, pistol in hand. Aesop fumbles for the shotgun but Edsall kicks it away.

EDSALL

You should have killed me when you had the chance.

Edsall looks down at Aesop's exposed tattoos.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

(disgusted)

You're even more of a freak now than when you were a kid. All those fucking tattoos. You weren't weird enough to look at already?

Aesop musters the strength to push up his left sleeve, the Heaven side.

AESOP

I did this side for my mother. For all the years she tried to protect me. For all the abuse she took because of me.

He pushes up his right sleeve, the Hell side.

AESOP (CONT'D)

This side is to remind me of who you really are.

Edsall kicks him in the stomach, then leans in close and grabs Aesop by the hair.

EDSALL

I regret not smothering you in your sleep when you was an infant... trust me, I wanted to.

While both men profess their unwavering hate for each other, Otis tries in vain to get the shotgun just out of his reach.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

I cursed God and your mother for giving birth to such an abomination. And when your mother finally come home with her little freak baby, I beat her good...

Edsall lets go of Aesop's hair and stands over him.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

You was a hard fuckin' birth and the doctor said she'd never carry another, but you know what? She got knocked-up the year you tucked tail and run.

(MORE)

EDSALL (CONT'D)

And I was a Goddamned bigger fool
for letting DW talk me into letting
him keeping it.

Edsall pulls a flask out of his back pocket. He unscrews the cap and drinks deep.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

I never was interested enough to
ask why he wanted to raise a little
girl on his own... and I never did
give a fuck what his intentions
were...

Candice wipes at the blood on her face, listening to Edsall's words, her eyes locked onto his.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

I'll tell you one thing.
(laughs)
It cost him one hell of a pretty
penny. And--

Edsall throws a look to Candice.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

I made damn sure the two of them
never did see each other again.
Those were the terms I set down. I
plucked you right outta her arms...
And now your precious mama is dead.

Candice grips the bars, her face twisted in despair as fresh tears begin to fall.

CANDICE

(softly)
You animal.

Edsall spots Otis reaching for the shotgun--

EDSALL

Otis! Knock it off, you Goddam
fool!

Aesop lunges. He grabs ahold of Edsall and the two men struggle for control of the pistol.

Edsall breaks free. They both stumble and fall backward. Edsall fires as he falls, the first shot misses; the second grazes Aesop's shoulder.

Aesop falls back into the bars and slumps to the ground. Edsall's last step backward takes him into the shattered glass from the mirror. He falls to the ground grabbing his foot.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
Fuck, fuck, fuck!

He scrambles to his feet, bleeding from a dozen cuts, one foot deeply lacerated. He holds onto the desk for support and pulls a large piece of glass out of his heel.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
Christ! You've caused nothing but misery in my fucking life since the day you were born!

Edsall limps to Aesop, leaving a trail of blood in his wake. He stuffs the pistol into his waistband and grabs one of the chair legs off the ground.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
A bullet in the head is too good for you... too easy. I'm gonna open your skull and watch your brains spill out on the floor. I've earned it...I deserve that much. You should never have come back here--

Edsall swings the chair leg. Aesop manages to get a hand up and partially block the blow, but it glances off his head with enough force to daze him.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
I've God's righteousness on my side!

Edsall rears back for another powerful blow--

OTIS
Uh, sheriff--

Otis is looking past the Sheriff--

EDSALL
Shut up, Otis--

Edsall is hit from behind and he crumples to the floor--

Jason stands over him. Edsall rubs the back of his head and his hand comes away bloody.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
What in the hell, boy?

JASON

You stay the fuck down there.

He turns his attention to Aesop.

JASON (CONT'D)

It's over, Aesop. No more--

A shot rings out and a bullet rips through Jason's shoulder. He falls to the ground--

Edsall pulls himself off the floor, pistol in hand.

EDSALL

Alright, I don't know who the fuck
that ugly sack of bones is, but
he's right... it is fuckin' over.

Edsall gets to his feet and grabs the chair leg. He moves in on Aesop.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

But it ends by my hand...

Edsall rears back for a fatal blow--

A shotgun blast rips into Edsall's side. He staggers back and falls to the ground. His pistol clatters to the floor--

EDSALL (CONT'D)

You... bitch.

Candice stands at her cell bars, shotgun in hand, the barrel still smoking. Through the grief written on her face, there is a new found strength.

CANDICE

That's for all the years you stole
from us, and the pain you caused
her... my mother.

OTIS

(whispers)
Hell fire.

Aesop uses the bars to pull himself up. He stares back at Candice. They share a look. A new bond.

Candice sinks back onto her cot. Aesop turns his attention back to Edsall. He kneels next to his father.

Edsall can only stare back, helpless.

EDSALL

You don't have it in you... you're weak. Always have been... now get me to a doctor, boy.

Edsall makes a weak attempt at getting up, but Aesop pushes him back down.

AESOP

I'm not weak, old man, because I survived. You spent your life abusing a defenseless woman and child. You tortured the only two people in the world that you had power over.

This is the first time Aesop's words have had any impact on Edsall. The first time he's ever been speechless, but his scowl remains-ever defiant.

AESOP (CONT'D)

Growing up, I actually believed everything you said about me... It almost buried me.

Aesop looks away. He won't let his father see any sign of weakness. Aesop's eyes go cold, and he refocuses on Edsall.

AESOP (CONT'D)

After today, I won't let the past control me. I'm letting go of the hate and the pain.

Edsall laughs weakly, coughing up blood.

EDSALL

You'll never change... who you really are.

AESOP

I've done some terrible things. Things I'll have to pay for some day, because I let it poison me, turn me into a monster. But that ends today.

Aesop stands and retrieves the fallen pistol.

AESOP (CONT'D)

Because the monster that lived inside me--

Aesop kneels.

AESOP (CONT'D)
That monster was you.

EDSALL
You don't have the guts.

Edsall's words don't carry the same weight they once did.

AESOP
(calm)
I've got news for you, old man.
(pause)
A bullet to the brain ain't too
good for you.

Aesop shoves the gun under Edsall's chin.

AESOP (CONT'D)
This is for my mother.

A deafening blast. The muzzle flash explodes like a bolt of lightning, and Aesop's face is splattered with his Father's blood.

Aesop looks down on his corpse, tears flowing - his life's brutal purpose realized. He steps back and turns--

Jason is gone, only a pool of blood where he fell.

Aesop moves to the front door. He hesitates and turns back--

EXT. CEMETERY - DUSK

Aesop and Candice stand together, silently staring at their Mother's gravestone.

Aesop carries a handful of purple flowers, like the ones from his mothers garden. He lays them over her grave.

EXT. JAILHOUSE - NIGHT

A street lamp illuminates the Sheriff's cruiser, sitting at the edge of the road like a wounded animal.

Jason sits slumped against the side of the building, beaten, bloody, still clinging to life, refusing to die.

A haunting melody carries from inside the jailhouse through the darkness from a tiny transistor radio.

THE END.