

STRAW DOGS

Screenplay
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Based on
"The Siege of Trencher's Farm"
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EXT. BAYOU SWAMPS - MISSISSIPPI- DAY

In the midst of a few idyllic shots of the bayou-

A FRIGHTENED BUCK

... appears before us. A thing of beauty. Exquisite. Now...

A BLAST. BAM!

And the buck drops out of the frame.

The buck lies on the dirt ground. Not dead. Shot in the leg. He struggles to stand up. Shaking. Heartbreaking. Barely on its feet. Then...

BAM!

The buck is shot in another leg. He collapses to the ground.

A group of FOUR HUNTERS comes upon the tortured animal, their high-powered rifles slung along their backs... The only man we can see clearly is CHARLIE VENNER, 27. Grizzled, athletic, handsome. He holds his rifle in front of him. He's the only one not holding a beer.

HUNTER #1 (BIC)
Goddamn perfect, Charlie.

Charlie looks almost adoringly at the buck that now seems to be chirping in last-throes-of-life agony.

Hunter number two (NORMAN) unsheathes a knife, bends down, gets ready to amputate the buck's antlers.

CHARLIE
Hold on.

Venner aims. Shoots the buck through the heart.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Now.
(shakes his head)
Drunk-ass motherfuckers.

Norman bends back down and gets to work. The men look upon the bloody chore. One of them (CHRIS) takes out a beer and starts to guzzle. Charlie turns away and starts to head to their truck. This kind of work is beneath him.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKROADS. HALF AN HOUR LATER.

Charlie and his crew roar down the road in their FORD F-350 with jacked up suspension. ZZ Top's "I'm Bad I'm Nationwide" blasts. The men hoot and cheer, all except Charlie, who sits quietly. On the front of the truck is hinged...

THE ANTLERS from their "kill."

PUSH IN on those antlers until they FILL THE FRAME.

SMASH CUT TO:

SHOT OF THE FAMOUS JAGUAR HOOD ORNAMENT

PULL BACK to reveal---

EXT. PAVED HIGHWAY. DAY

A Jaguar XK convertible zips along the tree-lined inlets and swampy eddies of this Southern Mississippi River Delta country. The slick car looks out of place among the rusty pick ups and rows of hurricane damaged houses.

Driving is DAVID SUMNER, 30, handsome, educated, well to do. Next to him is his wife AMY, a few years younger. A knockout.

"JUMPING JACK FLASH" roars from the perfect sound system.

Now the Jag passes a sign-

**BLACKWATER, MISSISSIPPI - HOME OF THE BLACK KNIGHTS
(population 7,730)**

David tries to speak over the song.

DAVID
Seven thousand, seven hundred and
thirty-two!

But Amy can't make out what he's saying. She points to her ears. Speak up.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I said...

David turns down the radio.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Home sweet home.

AMY
(forced smile)
Home sweet home.

The Jag passes by small homes and storefronts.

It passes by an isolated yellow church.

It passes by a football field where high school boys smash up on one another with tremendous violence.

Amy gazes upon her old hometown with a knowing distance.

Now, the Jag passes a large lumbering man, JEREMY NILES. He walks down the street with a cane and a mutt by his side. Several children run behind him...they take turns tagging him and running away...a kind of odd game.

Amy looks back at Niles and the children, concerned.

EXT. BLACKIE'S BLACKWATER BOWLING ALLEY. DAY.

The Jaguar is parked in the dirt lot in front of a rustic bowling alley. A cursive "BLACKIE'S" is painted on the side of the building.

INT. BLACKIE'S BLACKWATER BOWLING ALLEY. DAY.

Amy and David sit at a rickety table at the old style alley, probably not refurbished since the sixties. At the back of the joint is a bar. Pool tables and a jukebox are also in evidence. Only one person is actually bowling. Everybody else is drinking, eating or just congregating. As they eat their chili sirloin burgers, David and Amy take this all in.

AMY
Not exactly Musso and Frank's.

DAVID
Yeah, but it's great. It's just great. This is the joint, huh?

AMY
More than a joint. It's where the problems of the world are solved.

DAVID
Problems of the world?

AMY
 The Blackwater world.
 (beat)
 You have a chili mustache.

Indeed, David has a chili mustache. He looks adorably ridiculous. He laughs at himself.

DAVID
 Impossible. Nobody who has ever
 been first in his class at Yale has
 ever had a "chili mustache."

She hands him a napkin.

AMY
 You're breaking new ground then.

David wipes away the chili, points to her half eaten burger.

DAVID
 Is that all you're going to eat?
 You've been reminiscing forever
 about chowing down on "Blackie's
 Super-Sized Chili Monster."

AMY
 "Chili Sirloin Monster." And that's
 when I was seventeen. Today, I
 think I've gained five pounds just
 looking at it.

Amy picks up a fried pickle from the middle of the table.

AMY (CONT'D)
 Now, if you really want to be a
 local...

David shakes his head "No."

AMY (CONT'D)
 C'mon. Have a little courage.
 "Fried pickly." It's step one to
 fitting in.

David holds the pickle.

DAVID
 Now, this...this is disgusting.

CHARLIE (O.C.)
 Not with a little blue cheese
 dressin' it ain't.

And with that, Charlie Venner, our lead hunter from the opening scene, confidently stands behind David, who has to bend his neck around to see him.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Hello, Amy-cakes.

And takes a good look here- because Amy's entire demeanor changes. She becomes cold, stand-offish.

AMY
Hello, Charlie.

David takes in their odd exchange.

CHARLIE
I heard you were back.
(beat)
You're lookin' alright for
yourself. Ain't changed much. Not
as much as I'd have thought.

Amy doesn't feel much like yapping, but nonetheless-

AMY
This is my husband, David.

Charlie looks down at David. Not terribly impressed.

CHARLIE
I'm Charlie. Venner.

David grips Charlie's hand firmly.

DAVID
David Sumner.

CHARLIE
Yeah. I put a bid in for me and my
crew to rebuild that roof.

DAVID
Oh, yeah. Right. Venner. Right.

CHARLIE
We do good work. You can ask Amy.
(turns to Amy)
Chris and Bic and Norm and I been
doin' lotta work since the storm.

AMY
I'll bet.

CHARLIE

We went up to your place after the hurricane hit, just to see. It got busted up pretty bad, the barn did. But I think we can have it up for you in three weeks or so.

DAVID

Terrific. We're gonna stick around for a while until I finish my work. Eventually we're going to sell the place so we need to get it in tip top shape.

*

AMY

A year at the most, but-

CHARLIE

(to David)

Rumor is you're a movie director or something.

AMY

David's a writer.

DAVID

(smiles)

She means I work for a living.

CHARLIE

(knocking on the table)

Let's hear it for the working class.

(beat)

You working on anything interesting?

AMY

David's writing a movie about Stalingrad. Where the Russians defeated the Germans.

DAVID

(correcting)

The Nazis.

(beat)

Biggest battle in history. Turned the war around.

CHARLIE

No Americans in that one, though. Right?

Before David can answer (the answer is correct, by the way), a waitress, ABBY, walks over with the check.

ABBY
That's \$12.50, honey.

CHARLIE
Bet you can't get two burgers and two cokes for \$12.50 In Los Angeles.

DAVID
That's a bet you'd win.

CHARLIE
And nowhere near as tasty, huh?

David hands over his credit card to Abby.

DAVID
Nowhere close.

ABBY
Cash only, honey.

DAVID
Cash?

ABBY
What poor people use for money.

David smiles. That was a good one. He takes out his wallet and hands her some cash.

DAVID
Keep the change.

David looks over at the bar.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I'm actually going to grab a beer.
(to Charlie)
You want one?

Charlie shakes his head "no." David stands.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Can you begin working tomorrow?

CHARLIE
First thing.

DAVID
Let's do it. What the hell. If
you're a friend of Amy's-

CHARLIE
Beautiful.

AMY
Great.

David heads toward the bar. Charlie watches him walk away.

CHARLIE
Nice catch, Amy-cakes.

AMY
(coldly)
He's a good man.

CHARLIE
Hard to imagine he's anything but.

ANGLE- BAR

As David approaches, he notices that BLACKIE the bartender is tending to another customer. This is...

TOM HEDDON, a well built man in his late forties, already drunk, sits at the bar with a mug of beer. He looks over at David. Notices his Converse sneakers with no strings.

David nods to Heddon, who responds with the hint of a smile.

In the BG, we see that the other hunters from earlier in the film are all playing pool. This is Charlie's crew. They are all about the same age...

NORMAN- Tall, strong and athletic. He has been number two to Charlie all his life and still is.

BIC- Heavy and awkward and, if it's possible, the dummy of the bunch. He wears thick glasses.

CHRIS- Lanky - a meth fiend - always amped up and drunk.

Also quietly observing, once in a while looking at his watch, is a slightly older man named DANIEL.

Norman looks over at Amy and Charlie - takes note of them. We can see a bitterness fueled in him.

ANGLE- AMY AND CHARLIE

Charlie reaches over and snatches one of Amy's fries.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You mind?

Amy pushes her whole plate over.

AMY

Help yourself.

Charlie finally sits.

CHARLIE

To be honest, none of us thought you'd ever make it back.

AMY

Well, David wanted a quiet place to work. And we have to sell the place.

CHARLIE

Yeah. That's what your husband said. Sorry about your daddy.

AMY

Thank you.

CHARLIE

I saw you on that show, um--

AMY

"Battleship."

CHARLIE

I guess that's the "big time" you were looking for when you hauled ass outta here.

(beat)

That and your "good man."

Amy doesn't respond. She looks out the window. She sees Niles lumber toward the bowling alley. The dog is with him.

AMY

(re: Niles)

I thought Jeremy Niles was supposed to be put away a long time ago.

CHARLIE

We take care of our own here.

Charlie moves his hand to her shoulder.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Remember when I took care of you?

AMY
(cold)
But you didn't. Did you?

Charlie moves his hands on the small of her head. Strokes her hair. Amy moves away, forcing his hand off of her head.

AMY (CONT'D)
Don't touch me.

David observes this - takes it in. He's more curious than alarmed. He has no clue about his wife's past. At all.

David looks up at some photos on the wall. All of them related to local high school football. One of the photos shows Charlie and his crew AND Amy and a couple of other girls in cheerleading outfits. Amy has a big "B" pendant on her outfit. David smiles to himself.

BLACKIE the bartender walks up.

BLACKIE
Hey.

DAVID
Hey.

BLACKIE
(looking at Amy)
You're the new husband.

DAVID
(smiling)
The proud new husband-

Tom Heddon is taking in the conversation.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You have anything on tap?

BLACKIE
Coors.

DAVID
Coors Lite it is then.

As Blackie goes over to the tap-

BLACKIE
I said we had Coors. Fully loaded.

DAVID
 (smiling)
 That'll be fine.

TOM HEDDON
 I think I'd like another, Blackie.

BLACKIE
 Why don't we hold off, coach?

Blackie moves to take Heddon's glass mug, but Heddon quickly wraps his beefy hands around Blackie's. A firm grip. David looks upon the standoff.

Heddon's grip gets tighter.

BLACKIE (CONT'D)
 C'mon, Tom. Don't be like that.

And now the glass SHATTERS in their hands. David winces at this small violent act. Tom's hand has a small cut.

Charlie walks over. Puts his hand on Tom's shoulder.

CHARLIE
 What do you say we call it a day,
 Coach? Let's go over to practice.
 Give those kids some shit.

Heddon isn't paying attention. He has a foolish grin.

TOM HEDDON
 Sorry about that, Blackie. I'll
 pay for the glass, and, uh...
 (re: David)
 I'll pay for our new neighbor's
 beer-

DAVID
 Oh, that's okay---

Heddon is not used to having his hospitality turned down.

TOM HEDDON
 I'll pay for your drink.
 (back to Blackie)
 But Blackie, I want another beer.

BLACKIE
 (cold)
 Don't think so-

Tom violently LEAPS over the bar, throwing Charlie backward. Tom grabs a mug and pours himself a drink. When it is full he raises the mug to David. Then to the rest of the crowd. A Trophy. Charlie's crew cheers him on from the pool table.

VOICE

All right, coach. Why don't you pay for your drink and go home.

The voice belongs to JOHN BURKE, the town sheriff, a man roughly Charlie's age. Tom looks over at John. Smiles.

TOM HEDDON

Okay, then, Sheriff.

He downs the drink. He lays ten dollars on the bar.

TOM HEDDON (CONT'D)

My drink and his.

Heddon then moves with whatever pride a drunk man can muster out of the bowling alley. As he does he nods to David.

Blackie gives David his beer.

BLACKIE

It's been paid for.

David leaves some money on the counter.

DAVID

It has now.

He nods to Charlie. "See you tomorrow." Amy gets up with him and walks out.

EXT. BLACKIE'S BLACKWATER BOWLING ALLEY. DAY

Amy and David head out of the alley.

DAVID

Is that what you meant by "problems of the world?"

AMY

That's just Coach Heddon. Not the prettiest picture in the world.

David seems more amused than alarmed.

DAVID

Ah, it's all good - just part of
Blackwater's charming...
(looks for the word)
"eccentricity."

AMY

What a way with words. You should
try writing for a living.

DAVID

Brilliant idea.

Now they notice - NILES is sitting in the front seat of the
Jag, his hands on the steering wheel, pretending to drive.

Kids run around the car, making fun of Niles...taunting
him... Again, he seems absolutely oblivious to all of it.

AMY

Let me deal with it, okay?

Amy makes a beeline for the car. The kids scatter.

AMY (CONT'D)

Hi Jeremy.

And she says that with a lot of tenderness, love even. At
this point we realize that while Niles may be slow - he is
also a very handsome man.

NILES

Hello Amy.

AMY

How are you?

NILES

I'm driving.

AMY

I see. Can I drive for a while?

Niles looks over at her. Smiles. She returns the smile.
Niles sheepishly gets out of the car. From behind them comes
DANIEL. He's Niles' brother.

DANIEL

C'mon then, Jeremy. Let's go home.

NILES

For lunch?

DANIEL

Yes. Let's get some lunch.

(to Amy)

Welcome back, Amy. You look terrific.

Amy smiles at him gently.

AMY

Thank you, Daniel.

Niles and Daniel walk away together. When they are a few yards away, Niles' dog leaps out from the backseat and chases after him.

DAVID

We should make you ambassador to the United Nations.

AMY

Nah, those people aren't smart enough for me.

David looks at the backseat, notices a gift left to him by the dog. Damn.

DAVID

Can we get some towels or newspapers or something?

David looks at Niles lumbering away. He then notices Charlie and several townspeople have gathered to witness this. Tom Heddon is one of them.

EXT. ROADS. DAY

Amy drives, pedal to the metal. She laughs. David grins. He can't help but be amused himself.

DAVID

It's not funny. Somebody's gonna have to pay for that!

AMY

Well, it's not gonna be Jeremy Niles.

They come to a fork in the road. Amy swerves a hard left.

DAVID

So, that guy-

AMY
Which guy?

DAVID
"Amy-cakes" guy. Charlie. Our new contractor. I saw the two of you in a photo. You were in your cheerleader uniform.

AMY
I can get it out of storage if you want.

DAVID
You used to see him, right?

No answer.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(grinning)
Right?

AMY
A couple of times.

DAVID
Couple of times?

Now Amy has a little wicked smirk on her face.

DAVID (CONT'D)
C'mon, just a couple of times?

AMY
Well, they may have been memorable.

Amy screeches the car to a halt. She unbuckles herself, scoots over to David. She starts to rub on him.

AMY (CONT'D)
Are you jealous?

DAVID
Hey, baby, who's the guy that got the girl in the end?

And with that, Amy really gets into it.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You're nuts.

David opens the car door and jokingly runs away from the car. He comes over the crest.

AND THERE IT IS.

Grand and beautiful- It almost looks like a fort.

Here we have the WILCOX HOME. Which is now the SUMNER HOME.

A two story structure made of stone. The windows are high and small, as though the original builders begrudged every inch that didn't give the original inhabitants some kind of massive protection. The doors are made out of cast iron.

DAVID (CONT'D)

My God.

AMY

(driving next to him)

What do you think?

DAVID

I think it's just beautiful.

Amy nods. Beautiful it is.

DAVID (CONT'D)

A lot of history here.

AMY

That's putting it mildly.

David looks to his right. Next to the home is a large wooden barn with a roof caved in. David moves toward it. Amy drives the car toward the front of the house.

INT. BARN. DAY

David stands inside the barn. It is devastated. Amy walks in.

AMY

It's worse than I thought.

DAVID

(putting on a good face)

We're going to fix it up better than it ever was - make this joint even more valuable.

AMY

I hope so.

DAVID

Yeah, yeah. It'll be fine. It will. The architecture is totally different from the main house.

AMY

My dad constructed the barn on his own. The house was built during the Civil War. It was a fort. Built for high ranking officers.

David smiles at her. He's impressed.

DAVID

We're getting something like 8K in FEMA money.

AMY

8.2 K.

DAVID

That's a bit more than Charlie bid - maybe we can give him the balance.

AMY

Why would we do that?

DAVID

To help out your friends.

Amy puts her arms around David's shoulders. She admires his good intentions.

AMY

Baby, Charlie and the boys don't need help. They need work. You can spend the balance on your adoring wife.

INT. SUMNER HOME. TRACKING SHOT

Amy wanders the house - her house - the one of her childhood - a place she has been away from for years. Every room she passes seems to bring back memories. Now, she hears loud-

ZYDECO MUSIC... she follows it into the...

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Where David, having discovered an old style record player, plays a vinyl record. David gives her a big grin.

He's getting a kick out of the music. When he sees Amy he sways his hips a bit-

AMY

You found my parents' Zydeco collection?

DAVID

Your parents were pretty cool cats.

She takes the needle off the album. It's not an aggressive move, per se, but David notices that the music has provoked a simmering something within her.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I think I'll stick to Ludwig Van while I work.

AMY

Thank God.

David looks at the books on the shelves and the decorative Civil War era rifles mounted on the wall.

DAVID

Your dad loved to study the Civil War, huh?

AMY

My mom, actually. Me too.

DAVID

Yeah?

AMY

Yeah.

Now, David's attention is diverted to a MOUNTED DEER.

AMY (CONT'D)

I remember when daddy got that deer. When he put up that trophy we had a huge party. Like he had won the Super Bowl or something.

Leaning up against the wall is a huge BEAR TRAP.

DAVID

Did he get him with that?

AMY

That'd be some kind of overkill.

With that we hear the sound of a truck out front. The moving van has arrived.

EXT. SUMNER HOME. A FEW HOURS LATER. DUSK

Amy waves to the movers as they leave.

INT. SUMNER HOME. A MINUTE LATER

Amy moves through the house which is now LOADED UP WITH BOXES. She walks into the study, where...

INT. STUDY. SAME TIME.

David furiously types. This seems to be the one room where everything is well organized. Behind David is a BLACKBOARD with his entire "STALINGRAD" script is neatly outlined.

All over the walls are maps, charts, photos from Stalingrad - the greatest battle ever fought. David is so engrossed that he does not notice Amy. She walks to the blackboard. Looks at the end of outline. It says "February , 1943"

Without David noticing, she erases it with her sleeve and writes... "1944."

She plops herself down in a large armchair. David looks up at her. Smiles. Goes back to work. After a few seconds he notices her still there.

DAVID

I'll bet that was your daddy's chair.

AMY

(wry smile)

Every chair was my daddy's chair.

David talks as he continues to type.

DAVID

I - uh - am being hit with a moment of inspiration. I found- I figured a way to get Khrushchev right in the action- I'm making him a friend of Yuri's.

AMY

Khrushchev was in Stalingrad?

DAVID
A hero in Stalingrad.
(smiling)
Stick with me kid and you'll learn
something new everyday.

AMY
I knew I didn't marry you just for
your looks.

David gets up and walks to the blackboard -

DAVID
I'm going to put him right here -
right before the third act. At the
time of the liberation. Good place
to surprise the audience...just
like you were right now, see?

AMY
Great. Now, you want to take a
break and start unpacking the boxes
for the rest of the house?

DAVID
Just gimme a bit, okay? Let me
just finish off this scene.

AMY
Okay, I just thought-

DAVID
(justifying)
It's an important moment in an
important screenplay Amy- it's
history, you know. I gotta write
it when it hits me.

AMY
The great thing about history,
David, is that it'll still be there
once we're done unpacking.

David steps away from the computer and walks over to her. He
gets into the big chair with her. He gently moves some hair
from in front of her eyes.

DAVID
I'm happy we came.

AMY
Are you sure?

DAVID
 Hey, whose idea was this, anyway?
 To come here?

Amy smiles quietly. It was his idea.

AMY
 I'm just worried it'll all be too
 quiet for you. Too boring.

DAVID
 Quiet's what I want. Boring even
 more.

AMY
 Well, if you're happy, I'm happy.

David looks over at blackboard. He sees Amy's change to the
 outline. He shakes his head. Goes to the board. He rewrites
 "1943".

DAVID
 Didn't think I'd catch that, did
 you?

Out of nowhere, FLUTEY THE CAT leaps up on the counter next
 to David. This takes David TOTALLY by surprise.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Jesus!!!

Amy snatches up Flutey and faces him.

AMY
 Flutey! I was wondering when you'd
 show up. Isn't he adorable?

DAVID
 (all shaken up)
 Yup.

AMY
 A real sweetheart.

DAVID
 Tell that to the mice.

AMY
 Probably hasn't had a real meal
 since my daddy died.

Amy starts to walk out of the room, cradling the cat.

AMY (CONT'D)
Let's get you some milk.

INT. BLACKIE'S BLACKWATER BOWLING ALLEY. NIGHT

Charlie's crew is playing pool with gusto. Right now CHRIS has a pool cue in his hand, dancing around the table as he tries to figure out his next shot. He's playing and dancing in rhythm to "Eminence Front" by The Who.

Charlie smokes a cigarette and watches the game coldly.

Daniel is having a quiet beer.

Chris takes a shot. Misses.

CHRIS
Ooooooow.

NORMAN
How much they payin' us?

CHARLIE
Enough.

BAM! Norman makes the shot. Gets ready for another one.

CHRIS
Ain't no such thing as "enough"
these days.

NORMAN
Those two probably can afford to
pay us plenty. Plenty's what I
need.

CHARLIE
Well, we're all gonna get what we
deserve.

Into the bar walks Deputy John Burke. Tom Heddon, who has been observing the game, takes notice.

CHRIS
Man, Amy's looking good though,
ain't she? Don't remember them
tits quite like that. What do you
think Norm, that husband of hers
put out some titty bucks?

That line ignites Norman, almost like it's a personal slight.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Bet that's how she got on that show.

Norman knocks in the nine-ball. Game over. He grabs two twenty dollar bills from the edge of the table.

NORMAN

Who's next?

Nobody answers for a few seconds. John Burke grabs a cue.

JOHN BURKE

Twenty?

NORMAN

Twenty's fine.

John starts to rack them up.

Now, Tom speaks to Daniel - but he speaks loudly enough for Sheriff Burke's ears.

TOM HEDDON

Daniel-

Daniel continues eating, doesn't look at Heddon.

TOM HEDDON (CONT'D)

Your brother.

DANIEL

What of him?

TOM HEDDON

Your little brother was hangin' round the girls today. Again. You'd better keep a closer watch on him.

And now, directly intended for Burke -

TOM HEDDON (CONT'D)

Shouldn't be our job to mind him.

Daniel continues drinking.

DANIEL

He wasn't doing anything wrong. He was just playin' with 'em a little.

NORMAN

A little's too much for that sort.
 (beat)
 We aren't gonna stand for it. You
 keep him away from the girls or we
 will.

John is concentrating on "The break." Before he does -

JOHN BURKE

No need for that tone, Norm.

TOM HEDDON

Danny's just bein' told the truth
 is all-

DANIEL

(calm)
 If my brother ever makes a mistake,
 in any way... I'll put him away.
 You have my word. But until then,
 let him be. He's not doing any
 harm.

And CRACK! John Burke shoots and breaks. The game is on.
 Heddon looks on with a cool anger at Burke - wondering why he
 did not take his side in the exchange.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. MORNING

The next morning. The sun peaks out over the horizon. In a
 LONGSHOT - a truck arrives. Four men pour out of it.

INT. BEDROOM. MORNING.

RRRRROOOOAAAAARRRR!!!

David sits up in shock, almost as if he had been prompted out
 of his sleep by a nightmare. Amy also wakes up.

DAVID

Jesus!!!

David goes to the window and pulls the drapes aside. Charlie
 and his crew are on the roof, working, laughing it up. David
 opens the window. Charlie waves to him.

CHARLIE

Mornin', Mr. Sumner.

David timidly waves back. He closes the curtain. Amy pulls the pillow over her head.

AMY
Just go out and tell them it's too
early.

DAVID
Yeah.

David throws on a robe and heads out.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. MORNING

David strolls out to the barn. He yells up to them.

DAVID
HEY. GUYS.

Charlie and the gang keep pounding away.

DAVID (CONT'D)
CHARLIE!!!

This gets Venner's attention.

CHARLIE
What's up, boss?

DAVID
What's going on?

CHARLIE
How do you mean?

They're having trouble hearing one another.

DAVID
Hold on.

David starts to climb the ladder. It's wobbly. The men watch, slightly amused, as David gets to the roof, trying to maintain his bearings, looking slightly silly in his robe.

CHARLIE
Woah, there...

DAVID
I'm okay. I'm fine.

Charlie holds onto the ladder.

CHARLIE

Sure?

(off David's nod)

Okay then - let me introduce you to the guys. That there's Bic - that's Chris...

CHRIS

Howdy there, Mr. Sumner. Good to have you in town.

CHARLIE

And this here's Norman. We're all teammates from way back in the day. So, we know how to work together.

DAVID

Great. Great. How are you all?

The men mutter that they are doing fine.

CHARLIE

Kind of a bitch up here. We're gonna have to remove the purlins and put in some new ones - gonna break the bank on twenty penny nails.

DAVID

Well, whatever all that means, I trust you with it.

CHARLIE

So, everything okay?

DAVID

(unconfrontational)

Well, it's pretty early, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Sorry 'bout that, but that's the way we do things 'round here. You'll get used to it.

DAVID

It's just that you woke us up-

CHARLIE

Like I said, sorry 'bout that.

DAVID
Could you please just give it
another hour or so into the day
from now on? Would that be okay?

CHARLIE
You're the boss, boss.

DAVID
(waves)
Okay, then. I'm going inside to
work.

David climbs down the wobbly ladder.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY

David is at the kitchen table having a sandwich. He is going over some of his notes. FLUTEY THE CAT leaps up on the table. Snuggles up next to him. David gently pushes the cat away. The cat returns. Purrs. This time David adds a little aggression to the shove.

Now David senses something. Somebody behind him, perhaps.

He turns around. Bic is there opening up the refrigerator. David is alarmed but keeps his cool.

DAVID
Hey.

Bic pulls out a beer. Examines it.

BIC
Could be colder, huh? Something's
wrong with your fridge.

DAVID
Well, I guess there are a whole
bunch of kinks we're going to have
to iron out.

BIC
You writin' or something? Heard
that's what you do...movies, right?

DAVID
That's right.

BIC
 You ever make horror films? Like
 that movie "Saw" and such? Or
 action films?

DAVID
 Not really my specialty.

BIC
 Yeah, we love that shit. We eat it
 right up. What you done that I
 woulda seen?

DAVID
 (dry smile)
 Probably nothing.
 (beat)
 Except a bit of Amy's TV show. Did
 you see that?

BIC
 Yeah, that was good.

Amy wanders in. She's dressed in a T-shirt and shorts. Sexy.

AMY
 Hi Bic. How've you been doin'?

BIC
 (happy to see her)
 Real good. Real good.
 (beat)
 Your fridge ain't cold enough,
 Ames. Probably old condenser
 coils. I can look at it later.

AMY
 Thanks. That'd be great.

BIC
 Okay, see y'all then.
 (beat)
 Good to have you back.

AMY
 (smiling)
 For a bit anyway.

Bic grabs a few more beers and walks out.

Amy sits down. She puts her legs up on the table, her feet
 right in front of David. She starts playfully poking at him
 with her toes. David is reading, doesn't look up -

DAVID

You're worse than the cat.

AMY

Is that all he's going to be to you? "The Cat?" His name's Flutey. And he's a part of the family.

DAVID

I think it's best if Flutey and I don't get too attached.

Amy grabs a banana from the middle of the table. She eats it, provocatively. Stares at David, who is having a hard time concentrating.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Your friends do things like that a lot?

AMY

Do things like what a lot?

DAVID

Like walking in uninvited and grabbing beers.

AMY

Why don't you just chalk it up to "Blackwater's charming eccentricities?"

(grinning)

We don't even lock our doors here. We all trust each other. It's the one thing I do miss.

DAVID

Well if that's the way it is then that's the way it is.

Amy feels he doesn't believe what he's saying.

AMY

It's your house now, baby. Just tell it to them like it is.

(beat)

If you're comfortable with that.

And that last line felt almost like a challenge.

EXT. SUMNER FARM. DAY

Charlie and his gang load up the truck. They're each downing David's beers. David looks at his watch. It is only noon.

DAVID
Excuse me. Charlie? Can I borrow
you for a moment?

Charlie moves over to David.

CHARLIE
What's up, Mr. Sumner?

DAVID
You guys are done for the day?

CHARLIE
You bet. Good day. Got a lot
accomplished.

DAVID
It's uh, not even noon.

CHARLIE
We're going hunting. Sorry. I
thought I told you that. Kind of a
big deal around here, hunting.
Season only comes 'round once a
year. Is it okay? Do ya mind?

DAVID
I guess. As long as the repairs are
done on time...in the agreed time.

CHARLIE
They will be. Course.

As Charlie turns to leave -

DAVID
Look, uh, if you don't mind- I'm
fine with your guys helping
themselves to some beers-

CHARLIE
Thanks by the way. For the beer.

DAVID
No problem. It's just that Bic just
walked straight into the house.

CHARLIE

Shit. Has Bic given you reason not to trust him or something?

DAVID

No.

CHARLIE

Well, let me know if that happens and I'll deal with it.

(looks at watch)

We have to get going. Sorry 'bout all the noise this morning. It won't happen again.

David nods. Charlie gets into the truck. The Ford screeches away. As David stands in its dust, the truck turns around and comes back toward David. Charlie rolls down his window.

NOTE: In the BG we hear (and will hear every time Charlie's car is present) the crackling of a POLICE SCANNER.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Hey. Do you want to come hunting with us, Mr. Sumner? The white tails really run this time of year.

DAVID

No. Thank you. I have to work.

BIC

Charlie nailed one the other day.

DAVID

Sounds great. But I really have to write. It's why we're here, after all.

Amy walks up and settles behind David. She takes his hand- it almost seems as if she does it for Charlie's consumption. She then gives David a good hard kiss.

AMY

(to David)

Hey, baby.

CHARLIE

Ya know, lotta great writers came outta the South. Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, Grisham-

DAVID

Read 'em all.

Charlie looks over at Amy with a smile.

CHARLIE

Bet it wasn't Amy's idea to come live here. She had that bus schedule memorized, oh, 'bout freshman year.

AMY

Do you blame me?

Charlie just grins and then turns to David.

CHARLIE

Well if you ever want to come huntin' with us, just say the word.

DAVID

Okay. Thank you. I may take you up on that.

The truck takes off again.

AMY

You might take them up on "hunting?"

DAVID

Just showing some respect, Amy.

AMY

Did you talk to them about Bic?

DAVID

Yes, I did.

AMY

And?

DAVID

I think they get it.

INT. TRUCK. DAY

Bic pulls out a pair of panties from his pants.

BIC

Look familiar?

Chris snatches the panties. Lays them over his face. He breathes in. Chris and Bic laugh.

CHRIS
(handing them to Norman)
This'll be as close as you'll ever
have come.

NORMAN
Fuck off.

Charlie grabs the panties. He throws them out the window.

CHARLIE
You're a buncha fucking juvies, ya
know that?

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Amy is sitting in bed. A chessboard sits in front of her. She is reading a book about chess strategy. David comes in from brushing his teeth.

AMY
It's your move.

David walks over, looks at the board and makes a move.

DAVID
Check.

Amy looks at the board. Confused. She goes back to the book. Reads to herself.

AMY
"This move now puts black into a
desperate flight with no
possibility of mobilizing his
disorganized pieces. Two pawns
down, white can conveniently use-"

DAVID
(interrupting)
I'll tell you what. I'll bet that
I can finish my exercises before
you can make your next move.

AMY
(grinning)
You're on.

DAVID
Put the book down. No help.

AMY
You should be encouraging my
education.

DAVID
Down!

David grabs a jump rope and goes at it - really at it.
Amy scans the board. Her eyes light up.

AMY
I got it!

With that, David drops the jump rope and leaps into bed.

AMY (CONT'D)
You're supposed to do one hundred!

DAVID
I was counting by binary numbers.

Amy makes a move. David shakes his head "No."

AMY
What?

DAVID
That'll put you into check.

Amy looks over the board. She makes another move.

DAVID (CONT'D)
The knight can't move straight up.
It goes in an "L" shape, remember?

AMY
Why do they call it a knight when
it's really a horse?
(off David's laugh)
Are you laughing at me?

DAVID
I'm laughing with you. I actually
don't know the answer to that one.

AMY
That's a first.
(lays the king down)
I surrender...

Amy starts to nibble on David's chest.

AMY (CONT'D)
....in every way.

DAVID
A much better prize than when I won
the Fairfield chess Championships.

David picks up one of the chess pieces: A Knight. We see it,
but Amy does not. His hand goes below her waist.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Rook or knight?

AMY
(grins)
That's the horse slash knight.

DAVID
Not bad. Close your eyes.

David lifts up a queen. Puts his hand below her waist.

AMY
Hmm. That's the queen.

DAVID
Very good. We should make this a
reality series.

AMY
I'd finally have a hit.

David now picks up a PAWN.

DAVID
What's that?

AMY
Hmmm. Is that you?

She starts to laugh. He laughs, but just for a second.

Now David gets serious.

He wants her. But first he goes through a ritual. He takes
off his watch. Then he moves to the alarm clock. Sets it.
Amy observes this patiently.

Now he's ready.

He straddles her. Gazes upon her. He pulls off his shirt. He
wants her. And she wants him.

EXT. DIRT ROAD. DAY

Amy runs at a powerful clip. Her IPOD is tuned to the DIXIE CHICKS. For the first time we get a sense of her athleticism. She is dressed in shorts and a tank top. She is not wearing a bra. She is running barefoot.

From behind her comes Charlie's truck. Amy does not notice because the music is playing loudly.

The truck slows down behind her. At first, we think that it is sinister. But then we go INTO the truck and see the POV of Norman and the guys, which is...

Amy's fantastic bum. They are transfixed.

CHARLIE

Let's go you fucking Neanderthals.

Norman snorts and hits the gas. They pass her. Amy shakes her head as they hoot and holler at her.

INT. STUDY. SAME TIME

David wanders the room, looks over the outline, makes small adjustments. Ludwig Van is playing. Loud. Out the window, he notices Charlie and the gang arriving. David looks up at the clock. It is about eleven in the morning.

EXT. DIRT ROAD. DAY

Amy continues running. Something catches her eye. Something pink. She bends over to pick it up. Her panties. She angrily balls it up into her fist and continues on.

EXT. SUMNER FARM. DAY

Amy arrives, out of breath, sweating hard.

She looks up to the roof of the barn where she catches all the men- again, excluding Charlie- ogling her. She takes the panties she found and throws them in the workers' trash bin. Aggressively. Making a point to the men.

This gets the immature Chris and Bic laughing.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY

David is having a cup of coffee and reading the local paper..
Flutey leaps up on the table. David pushes the cat away.

Amy enters. She claps her hands together. She's upset.

AMY

Let's go Flutey.

(beat)

Are you taking a break?

DAVID

Hard to work with all that noise.
They arrived pretty late, your
friends. Around eleven.

AMY

(a bit of anger)

They'll be done soon, I hope.

David doesn't notice Amy's apparent frustrations. He has a
big smirk, holds out newspaper.

DAVID

The nation's at war. There was an
earthquake in Japan. The lead story
is that the first game of the high
school football season is a week
away.

AMY

Well, Blackwater's not at war.
Though it was a big deal when John
Burke came back from Iraq.

DAVID

(dripping with irony)

You and Deputy Burke. Returning
heroes.

AMY

(cynical)

Here in the South, heroes come from
one place. That football field.

DAVID

Like the men fixing our roof?

Amy nods. Just like those assholes fixing our roof.

DAVID (CONT'D)
It's sad. Bunch of straw dogs.

AMY
"Straw dogs?"

DAVID
(beat)
In ancient Chinese rituals, dogs made out of straw were used as offerings to the gods. During the ritual they were treated with the utmost reverence. When it was over and they were no longer needed they were trampled on and tossed aside. They become nothing.

(beat)
When their football careers are over that's all these kids become. Straw dogs.

Amy doesn't say anything. She seems pissed off.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What? Don't take it personally. I'm not saying "you." You aren't like them. Not anymore anyway.

AMY
No, that's not it. It's just... The "straw dogs" were checking me out - they're practically licking my body out there.

DAVID
I applaud their good taste.

AMY
It's not funny, David---

DAVID
Look, maybe If you wore a bra.

AMY
What are you saying, that I'm asking for this?

DAVID
Ames, c'mon. You are redefining "putting words in my mouth"...
(says this carefully)
(MORE)

DAVID(CONT'D)

It's just...if you were a bit more modest you might be looked at with more respect.

AMY

Is that right?

David turns Ludwig Van back on.

AMY (CONT'D)

I should put a bra on? That's how I can get some respect?

DAVID

(shrugging)

"Reaping and sowing" and all that.

AMY

(cold)

I'm taking a bath.

David is not aware that Amy is put off.

DAVID

I guess I should try to work.

INT. BATHROOM. DAY

Amy enters the bathroom. The shades are up and she can see out to the roof where the crew is working.

Amy runs the bath. Close on the ritual.

She lays out the towel.

She puts the bar of soap on the sill.

She selects her shampoo.

The last thing she does is open the door.

She lets the robe drop.

She gets into the water. Lays back.

The men look at her. Nothing is left to the imagination.

Then, non-chalantly... She pulls down the shades.

EXT. ROOF. DAY

As the men work they hear Ludwig Van emanating from David's study.

Chris looks over at Charlie.

CHRIS
(Re: Amy)
That shit ain't right.

BIC
Well, Chris, if that ain't right
then I don't know what right is.

CHRIS
That musta been some of "that" when
you had some of that, huh...

Charlie does not answer, he just continues hammering---

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Must've been something, huh Norm?

Norman does not answer either. Charlie, as if he were doing battle with Ludwig Van, turns up the country music on their radio.

We go CLOSE---

On the incessant and hard driving hammering by Charlie.

INT. STUDY. DAY

David's fingers hammer away at the computer.

David stops typing. Looks at the screen. He turns it off.

Charlie's country music is seeping in from the outside.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. DAY.

Charlie and the crew are packing up and ready to go. David comes out of the house. He has his car keys in his hands.

CHARLIE
Knocking off a bit early if you
don't mind. The heat and all, Mr.
Sumner.

NORMAN

Hot even for here. Must be that global warmin' you educated guys always talkin' 'bout back there.

CHRIS

Bic was getting woozy.

BIC

Don't mean to be a pussy or nuthin', but it can get dangerous up there.

(laughs)

Sometimes I think Blackwater's got its own sun.

CHARLIE

It's a liability thing. Got to look out for my men.

DAVID

No problem. Just as long as the job gets done in the time we agreed.

CHARLIE

Course. You goin' into town?

David heads toward his car.

DAVID

Cell phone doesn't work up here and I have to make some calls.

CHARLIE

Pain in the ass, right?

The men pile into the truck.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Best reception is right by Blackie's Alley.

They take off... SCREECH OFF, IN FACT.

David puts on his sunglasses. He's about to get into his Jag when, sensing something, he looks up and sees...

AMY looking down from the bedroom window. He gives her a small wave, which she returns - but a kind of uncomfortable coldness has come between them.

EXT. BLACKWATER ROADS. DAY

David drives the Jag at SIXTY-PLUS... When he...

Comes up against CHARLIE'S TRUCK - almost slamming into it. He has to slow down dramatically. In the back of the truck are Bic and Chris.

David goes really slow now. Impatient. He can't pass because the road is a bit too winding and narrow for him to see past.

But now...

From the driver's seat, Norman signals David to pass.

DAVID

Finally.

As soon as he passes them, a fast moving TRUCK comes furiously toward him.

David SWERVES and...

SLAMS into a ditch.

Charlie's truck races by.

David catches his breath. He looks up and sees...

Bic and Chris laugh their asses off in the back of the truck.

He gets back on the road. Just barely blinking an eye, he continues driving into town.

EXT. HANK'S GAS AND GOODS STATION. DAY

A gas station attendant, LARRY, is filling up David's car. David is on the phone with his agent.

DAVID

Aaron, if you say not to worry I'm not going to worry- but it's not like I don't need the money.

(beat)

If Amy gets an audition then that makes sense. We'll fly in - but her agent told her not to count on anything until pilot season and that's months from now.

(beat)

I'm going to need a few weeks...

ACROSS THE STREET- David notices Niles. The local kids circle him, taunting him and his dog.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It's not a page count thing...
There's no "idea department at
Macy's" and this place turns out to
be not so conducive to the creative
process, after all... Okay. Bye.

ACROSS THE STREET - David now witnesses: There are three seventeen year old girls on the other side of the street. One of them, the prettiest, is JANICE HEDDON. David notices she is wearing the same large "B" pendant that Amy wears in her cheerleading photo.

Janice is being encouraged by her girlfriends to do something. In fact, on closer inspection, it looks like Janice's friends goading her - daring her. With a slightly mischievous look, Janice crosses the street and walks right up to Niles. As soon as she starts to talk to him, Niles drops his head.

We cannot hear what is being said but we, along with David, can read all the body language.

Janice is being flirtatious with Niles.

Niles is shy. Doesn't respond to anything she says.

David looks over at Janice's friends who are observing and laughing quietly to themselves.

Janice gets on her knees and pets Niles' dog.

The dog rolls on his back. Janice scratches his tummy. The dog's leg starts kicking.

Now... Daniel, Niles' brother, emerges from the bowling alley. He has just bought some smokes. He notices Janice with Niles. He yells out-

DANIEL

JEREMY!

Niles looks up at his brother. His head immediately drops into shame. Janice is confused.

JANICE

What's wrong, Jeremy?

Niles doesn't answer. Daniel starts moving down to them.

JANICE (CONT'D)

Its okay for us to be friends, you know.

Niles doesn't answer. Janice smiles at him and then moves to her friends. They are all giggling.

David takes this in. She's up to no good, this Janice.

ANGLE- Janice and her friends enter the bowling alley. As she does, she passes ABBY the waitress who is grabbing a smoke. Abby goes back in.

Daniel walks up to Niles.

DANIEL

What're ya doing, Jeremy? You're supposed to stay away from the girls.

He seems to get no response from Niles.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

You hear me?

When Niles doesn't respond, Daniel SLAPS a stunned Niles. The following is said loud enough that David does hear it.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

You gotta stay away from the girls, Jeremy- Ya hear me? What if her daddy saw all this?

Niles lowers his head and nods.

NILES

But she's my girlfriend.

And this alarms Daniel.

DANIEL

No she is not. She's sixteen years old.

Daniel puts his hand on Niles's shoulder comforting him.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

I can't protect you if you don't do your part. You understand?

Niles nods.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Okay then. Let's go home.

NILES
To get lunch?

DANIEL
To get lunch.

The two of them walk away.

LARRY taps David on the back...

HARRY
It's thirty-seven-fifty.

David reaches into his pocket and pulls out a credit card.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Goddamn Arabs, huh?
(looks at card)
The green stuff only, my friend.

David nods his head. Right. He forgot that about this town.

ACROSS THE STREET- Charlie and the gang arrive. They pile out of the truck. They notice David. Laughing, they all wave at him before entering Blackie's Bowling Alley.

David looks in his wallet. Pulls out two twenties.

HARRY (CONT'D)
You need change?

David shakes his head "No."

INT. BLACKIE'S BLACKWATER BOWLING ALLEY. DAY

As David enters, he notices Charlie and the crew congregated by the bar. They are laughing and carrying on. David assumes he's the butt of their good time.

Tom is also there talking sternly to Janice.

TOM HEDDON
I mean it, Janice!

JANICE
(head down)
I understand.

TOM HEDDON

There's trouble brewing with that man.

It is clear that Abby busted Janice for talking to Niles. Janice nods. Tom feels she has gotten the message and reaches into his pocket. Tom pulls a few bucks out and hands it to her.

TOM HEDDON (CONT'D)

Make sure you bring me the change.
I know how much things cost.

JANICE

(kissing him)
Thanks, daddy.

Janice trots away. She smiles to David. He nods back.

DAVID

Full leaded Coors, please.

Now the crew turns around.

CHRIS

That's the way, Chief!

Before David can respond, a voice from behind him.

COACH

Hey, boys...

This is COACH STAN MILKENS - heavy set, about thirty-five.

NOTE - The current coach, Stan Milkens, will call the former coach, Tom Heddon, "Coach" and vice versa throughout.

Tom looks over at him- a bit pissed.

TOM HEDDON

No practice this afternoon, Coach?

COACH

A hundred and five out there,
coach... don't want any lawsuits.

CHARLIE

Aw, hell. This weather's
"Blackwater Heaven." What we
thrived in.

(turns to Heddon)

It's what made us champions. Ain't
that right coach?

TOM HEDDON
Damn fucking straight it was.

Tom says this almost with resentment. It's immediately clear that the new coach REPLACED Tom Heddon.

Norman starts to rack up the pool balls.

TOM HEDDON (CONT'D)
Ain't nobody got a measure of what
it takes to make a man no more.

And the grumpy way Tom says that is an indication of why Tom may have lost his job as coach.

CHARLIE
Coach, you met Mr. Sumner, yet?

The coach turns to David.

COACH
No, I haven't. You're Amy's
husband, aren't you?

DAVID
That's right. David Sumner.

COACH
We sure are proud of her. You're a
movie man, right?

DAVID
Yup. That's me. The movie man.

David's drink is delivered to him.

COACH
I knew your wife back when she was
head cheerleader. I was Assistant
Coach... I've been meaning to come
up to your place and welcome you to
town.

DAVID
(looking over at crew)
I think I've just been welcomed.

That gets a knowing laugh from all.

CHARLIE
Yeah, We were worried 'bout you,
back there. Mr. Sumner.

NORMAN
 Helluva close call.

David lifts up his beer to them.

DAVID
 Well, I live to tell the tale.

CHRIS
 Yup. That semi just 'bout scared
 the shit outta Bic.

BIC
 Yup. Right outta me.

The coach goes back on topic.

COACH
 You a football fan?

DAVID
 The Harvard-Yale game was always
 the highlight of my year.

CHARLIE
 We were one game away from
 qualifying for state last year.
 Could even get there this year.

DAVID
 (to Coach)
 That sounds like something.
 Congratulations.

COACH
 Will you be at the annual Preach 'N
 Play on Sunday?

DAVID
 What's that?

COACH
 A little something we do every year
 week right before the first game.
 We go to church, let the rev pump
 us full of God, and then the boys
 scrimmage while the town picnics on
 the sidelines. Used to do that in
 the Civil War - town comin' out and
 actually watching the battles.
 Picnicing.

DAVID
 (smiling)
 But this, I assume, they take
 seriously.

CHRIS
 That they do.

DAVID
 I trust the whole town will be
 there.

COACH
 Every living soul.

DAVID
 In that case... when in Rome...

David finishes his drink.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Amy and I'll be there.

David looks up at a photo he has never seen before. It says "STATE FINALISTS 1997" and there is the whole crew - Bic, Charlie, Norm, and Chris - and Tom Heddon, the coach. Also there is Sheriff Burke.

CHARLIE
 Long days past.

David lays a hundred dollars on the table, gives Charlie a good stare. Then to Blackie-

DAVID
 Drinks as far as this hundred'll
 take you, gentlemen.

David then exits. And after he does, the tension is broken when... The whole group starts to laugh.

TOM HEDDON
 Well, whatchya waitin' for? Let's
 take that hundred for a spin.

EXT. CHURCH. DAY

Several cars are parked in front of the local church. We see them in a TRACKING SHOT. One pick-up Chevy or Ford after another. Eventually, we get to the Jaguar. Amy and David get out of the car.

AMY

You sure you want to do this?

DAVID

I promised I'd be here, so-

AMY

It's your Sunday.

They head into the church.

INT. CHURCH. DAY

Amy and David sit quietly as the pastor speaks. David looks around at the townfolk there. It includes the boys football team, the cheerleading squad (Janice included), Tom Heddon, and, isolated from the rest, Niles.

PASTOR

Dear Lord, please protect the members of our congregation serving overseas, brave souls who have dedicated their lives to our security, who have made it their lives' mission to protect us from those who challenge you, our Lord.

CONGREGATION

Amen...

PASTOR

And, of course, please guide to victory the Blackwater Black Knights over Alamo this Friday.

CONGREGATION

Amen!!!

PASTOR

Boys, please stand for us...

The boys football team gets to their feet. David makes note of the importance the town seems to be putting into them. He notices, in fact, that Amy is paying rapt attention.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

God stands with you boys. Because you stand with him. You listen to him... and like Noah, you will survive when he unleashes his wrath on the non-believers.

(MORE)

PASTOR (CONT'D)

Remember that the doubters and sinners mocked Noah not just for building his Ark, but for what he preached...

David taps Amy on the knee.

DAVID

I'm getting some air.

He gets up to leave...Charlie and Tom Heddon are among those aware he is leaving. Amy rolls her eyes. Her husband doesn't realize how much of a snub he has committed. She may not like it here, but she doesn't want to cause trouble.

EXT. CHURCH. DAY

David is sitting in his car, sunglasses on, resting with his chair tilted back.

Congregants file out of the Church. David does not notice.

BANG-BANG-BANG... On the window.

It is CHARLIE VENNER.

David is startled.

CHARLIE

Hey there, Mr. Sumner. I saw you leaving. Bored with the sermon?

DAVID

No. No. Just not my thing.

CHARLIE

What's that?

DAVID

Religion. God.

CHARLIE

God's not "your thing?"

DAVID

Noah and the flood, Smiting first borns, Sodom and Gomorrah.

(trying to be funny)

He sounds like a bully to me.

CHARLIE

Can I give you a piece of friendly advice?

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(off David's nod)

It's one thing to come into town,
thinking you're too good for the
people who live here-

DAVID

I don't know why you'd say that-

CHARLIE

But being too good for God? Well,
that's another thing entirely.

(beat)

The Pastor, he worked all week long
writing that sermon and then he's
gotta watch you get up and leave.
Some people might call that rude.

DAVID

Well, thank you, Charlie. I guess I
need to be more sensitive.

CHARLIE

Just some redneck wisdom. See ya at
the picnic, then.

And as Charlie walks away...

DAVID

Charlie. There is something in the
Bible I believe.

Charlie turns around.

CHARLIE

What's that, sir?

And David says the following quietly and with a small smile,
trying to be less confrontational.

DAVID

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's
wife.

From behind Charlie, Amy is coming to the car.

CHARLIE

I believe in that, too. But what
happens when thy neighbor's wife
covets you? What then?

David is taken aback by this statement, but before he can
respond at all, Amy arrives (not having heard any part of the
conversation).

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Hey Amy-cakes. Just tellin' the boss we gotta a bunch more tiles coming in on Tuesday - should really get us to the end damn quick after that.

AMY

Good.

CHARLIE

(walking off)

See you at the picnic.

Amy enters the car. David starts up the car.

INT. JAGUAR. DAY

There is a stone silence between Amy and David as they drive in a queue of vehicles heading off to the barbecue. Then-

AMY

You know, next time, if you don't want to be somewhere just don't accept the invitation.

David nods.

DAVID

You're right.

After a few more seconds-

DAVID (CONT'D)

How well did you know Charlie back when you lived here?

AMY

What? What does it matter?

DAVID

It doesn't. I just was curious. Were you guys close?

AMY

He was a senior when I was a freshman- we went out a few times.

DAVID

Were you into him back then?

Amy is getting annoyed with the line of questioning.

AMY
 Why're you grilling me, David?
 What did he say to you back there?

DAVID
 Nothing worth talking about.

AMY
 Then why are we talking about it?

David doesn't respond.

AMY (CONT'D)
 Let's just show our faces at the
 barbecue and leave.

David nods. Fine.

EXT. BLACKWATER HIGH SCHOOL. DAY

Establishing shot. There is a big barbecue going on. The same trucks that were at the church are here now.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GROUNDS. DAY

On a makeshift stage a singer is belting out his version of "Copperhead Road" By Steve Earle. The song will play over the entirety of the scene.

In the background we see a football scrimmage in process. Tom Heddon yells to the coach and the players - reliving his good old days.

Children race around and play.

At one end of the field stands Niles and his puppy.

We find David at a grill being handed some hot dogs. Behind David is Daniel, Niles' brother. David reaches into his pocket and takes out some cash, smirking.

DAVID
 No credit cards, I assume?

The two teens running the grill look at him blankly. They don't get the joke.

TEENAGER #1
 No sir, just money.

David hands over the cash. He sees a big bowl of chili.

David applies the chili to his hot dog. He starts walking, looking for Amy. He takes a big bite of the hot dog, some of the chili drips on his chin, which he wipes away. In the distance he sees Charlie's pickup truck arriving.

DAVID
(sotto)
Fashionably late.

He finally spots Amy at one of the picnic tables far away. He walks towards her.

ANGLE - AMY'S PICNIC TABLE

Amy is sitting with two people. One of them is Janice and the other is AMELIE. She is roughly Amy's age and we suspect she is Janice's sister. She is pregnant.

AMELIE
Goddamn, we always knew you'd make it. We always did.

AMY
I don't know about that. It's not like I've ever been the lead of a show, you know.

AMELIE
As far as we're all concerned, it didn't matter you weren't the lead of the show- you were the best thing on it...

AMY
We had some really great actors-

JANICE
I don't know why it's not on anymore. Everybody I knew watched it.

AMY
(smiling)
I'm sure if NBC went by Blackwater's ratings alone we'd be on forever.

AMELIE
Are you allowed to spill the beans on that guy who played Evan? What's his name-

From behind them David arrives carrying the hot dogs.

DAVID
There you are.

AMY
 Sorry, I ran into the girls.

The two girls stand up.

AMY (CONT'D)
 David this is Janice.

JANICE
 Hi!

DAVID
 Hey, how are you?

He hands a hot dog to Amy.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 (to Janice)
 I saw you at the bowling alley,
 right?

JANICE
 Probably. I'm always hanging out
 there 'cause my daddy's always
 hanging out there. The coach? You
 know, Tom Heddon?

DAVID
 Of course. A very memorable man.

David notices that Janice is wearing her "B" pendant.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Amy, you have that same pendant,
 right?

JANICE
 That's 'cause Amy was head
 cheerleader, just like I am.

Amy wants to get off this topic right away-

AMY
 And this is Amelie. We went to
 school together.

David looks over at her and he grins.

DAVID
 So when's the big day?

AMELIE
Pardon me?

DAVID
When are you going to have the
baby?

AMELIE
(shocked)
You think...I'm pregnant?

DAVID
(fumbling)
Well...I just...no, I....

Amelie starts laughing

AMELIE
Just messin' with you!
(beat)
Two months.

David laughs as well. They all sit down.

DAVID
So, what's everyone talking about?

AMELIE
We were giving shit to Amy 'cause
she ain't been down to see us since
she got here. I guess she don't
wanna be hounded for autographs and
such.

AMY
I've told them how busy we are
getting the place fixed up and all.

DAVID
Amy's been busting her butt up
there while I've been writing, I'll
vouch for that.

AMELIE
You make movies right?

David has taken a huge bite of his hot dog and his mouth is
full as he chomps away and tries to speak at the same time.

DAVID
Hmm-hmm. Write 'em.

AMY
David worked on "Battleship" for a
year. It's how we met.

Janice, when David isn't looking, looks at Amy and mouths
"He's so cute." Amy smiles back at Janice.

AMELIE
Oh, yeah? This one's a war movie
too, huh.

AMY
(interrupting)
There's also a great love story in
David's movie. That's what makes it
so layered.

VOICE
Hey all.

It's Charlie.

AMELIE
Hey handsome.

CHARLIE
(charming)
M'lady.
(to Amy)
How was it being back in church,
Ames? Didn't get a lot of that in
Los Angeles, I'll bet.

AMY
It was nice.

CHARLIE
Old times, right?

Charlie goes over to Amelie, gets on his knees.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
May I?

Amelie nods. Charlie puts his hand on her stomach.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Ain't movin' about today, huh?

AMELIE
Taking a nap, I suppose.

CHARLIE
 (Re: music)
 How do you like our local music?

DAVID
 (faux enthusiasm)
 Very much.

CHARLIE
 Yeah. We like it. But it ain't
 quite your Beethoven.

DAVID
 You recognized my music.
 (takes a swig of beer)
 I'm impressed.

CHARLIE
 That's what a year and a half at
 University of Tennessee will do for
 you. Music Appreciation.

AMELIE
 Charlie got a full boat
 Scholarship.

CHARLIE
 Which held up as long as my knee
 did. Which wasn't too long.

Norman comes sauntering over. He nudges Charlie away.

NORMAN
 Hey, man, go knock up somebody your
 damn self - this one's mine.
 (turns to David)
 See there, Mr. Sumner, you ain't
 the only one with a trophy wife.
 (grinning)
 Only difference is my trophy's for
 third place.

AMELIE
 Believe it or not, that's the most
 romantic thing he's ever said.
 (beat)
 That and "You're what?"

Everybody laughs at Norman's expense...

...Except Amy - who isn't taking well to this women-as-property chat. Everybody laughs louder. But now, look...

Niles has quietly arrived at the table.

NILES
Hello Amy.

AMY
(quietly)
Hello, Jeremy. How are you?

Niles smiles quietly. Charlie stands up. Niles turns his direction to Janice.

NILES
Hello Janice...

Amelie gets nervous - sees the potential for trouble.

AMELIE
Jeremy, you need to git.. Okay?

Now, TOM HEDDON comes barreling into the scene, grabs Niles from behind, and throws him right ACROSS THE PICNIC TABLE.

JANICE
Jesus, daddy!

Niles goes down on the ground. On his hands and knees.

The song in the background continues. It adds a kind of ironic score to the goings on-

TOM HEDDON
You need to get outta here, boy...

Tom kicks Niles in his ass. Niles falls flat on his stomach.

AMELIE
Jesus in Heaven. Stop it, Coach!
(feigning panic)
I think I'm gonna have my baby
right now!

TOM HEDDON
(in his own world)
Ya stay away from my daughter, ya
hear, boy?

DAVID
You need to stop that!

TOM
(not paying attention)
C'mon, git up...

NILES
 (half crying)
 I didn't do anything.

Charlie and his posse gather around. They are all holding beers and watching the incident. Amused by it all. So are the others who have gathered.

Niles gets on his feet. Stands in front of Tom, head bowed. Chastened, humiliated. Charlie and his gang are laughing.

CHRIS
 (clearly buzzed)
 C'mon, Niles...you can take him.

Niles looks to Tom Heddon pleadingly.

NILES
 Janice is my girlfriend.

Tom's eyes widen with rage - Then with all his force he SLAPS Niles in the face...

TOM HEDDON
 You gonna stay away from Janice -
 You gonna stay away from all the
 girls-

Now, to David's shock, Amy barrels on to the scene.

AMY
 Stop it!

She grabs Tom's hands. But Tom quickly breaks free and holds Amy by the wrists.

TOM HEDDON
 Girl, you ain't been here in years.
 Ain't got no right to be involved.

Finally, David moves forward. But before he can do anything, Charlie is in the mix. He grabs Tom's shoulder.

CHARLIE
 Coach- C'mon, now.

Tom smiles at Amy as he releases her wrists. Amy stares him down as David comes by her side.

DAVID
 We should go.

AMY
 You leave him alone, Coach!
 Jeremy's just talking, that's all.

DAVID
 We need to go.

CHARLIE
 That's a good idea, Mr. Sumner.
 Violence ain't near as pretty a
 thing as it is in the movies.

David stares Charlie up and down. Then he and Amy walk away.
 We PULL THEM. In the BG we see Daniel walk up on the scene to
 come and collect up his brother Niles. We can barely make
 out what they are saying (meaning that David and Amy can as
 well).

DANIEL
 Alright, Niles. It's over now.
 (to Heddon)
 It's over.

TOM HEDDON
 You don't say I didn't warn you.

Amy and David arrive at their Jaguar.

INT. JAGUAR. DAY

David drives. Amy stares out the window.

DAVID
 I'm not very happy with you.

AMY
 (equally cold)
 No? Why?

DAVID
 Why did you throw yourself into
 that? With that drunk? You could
 have gotten hurt.

AMY
 Somebody had to. He was hurting
 him.

DAVID
 "Somebody" had to? What does that
 mean?

Amy doesn't have to say a damn thing. He knows exactly what she means. David screeches the car to a halt.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm not going to get into the
fucking fray, okay? I don't care
if it's "how things are done" here.
It's... it's against my principles.

AMY

Pretty convenient, your principles.

David stares at her. Pissed as can fucking be.

And with that, David revs up the car and they drive off.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Amy watches television in the bedroom. David comes in. They are clearly not talking to one another.

David begins his exercise routine - jumping rope. He is at it fast and furious. Making a lot of noise.

AMY

Do you mind?

David stops. Chucks the rope to the floor.

DAVID

Sorry.

David is ready to take a shower. He goes to get his robe.

As he opens the closet, he discovers...

FLUTEY THE CAT

DEAD.

HANGING...

From one of David's neckties. He slams shut the closet door. Horrified. He sits on the edge of the bed - speechless.

AMY

What is it?

DAVID

Nothing.

Amy gets up from the bed to see for herself.

AMY
Nothing?

DAVID
Don't.

But it is too late. Amy opens up the closet door. And she...
SCREAMS.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

David comes into the room, having locked up downstairs.

DAVID
We're keeping the doors locked from
now on. Okay?

AMY
Great.

David starts to take his clothes off.

AMY (CONT'D)
It was Charlie or Norman.

David does not respond.

AMY (CONT'D)
Did you hear me?

DAVID
What?

AMY
Venner or Scutt. Or any of those
assholes.

David is very confused here.

DAVID
Why? Why would they do that?

AMY
To prove they could get into your
bedroom.

DAVID
I don't believe that.

AMY
Who else is around all the time?

DAVID

Amy, you're jumping to- Look, the truth is that we leave our doors open all the time. Any vagrant could have-

AMY

(yelling now)

David, a complete stranger wanders into our house, strangles our cat, and hangs her in the closet... a VAGRANT? A FUCKING VAGRANT??!!

They stare it off for a while.

AMY (CONT'D)

It was Charlie or Norman or Bic or Chris. Or all of them. They came between church and the picnic.

She walks back to the closet and pulls some clothes to the side. A safe is there - a safe that David knew nothing about. She opens it up. Pulls out a gun.

AMY (CONT'D)

This was my father's. From now on it stays with us. They'll go further next time.

DAVID

Aren't you being extreme?

AMY

THEY KILLED OUR CAT, DAVID!!!
WHAT'S YOUR DEFINITION OF EXTREME??

This is the first time Amy has really let David have it. Really made him feel small. He walks out.

AMY (CONT'D)

That's right. Do that. Walk away.

EXT. SUMNER BACKYARD. NIGHT.

David digs a hole in the ground. It is next to two graves, that of Marcus and Helen Wilcox - Amy's parents. When he is done he takes Flutey and lays him in the hole.

INT. DAVID'S STUDY. MORNING.

David stares out the window at Charlie and the crew. Amy walks in with a tray that has coffee and milk.

AMY

Are you just going to stare?

DAVID

I'm not going to go out there and just blatantly accuse them. What if they didn't do it? It's going to be hard living here having accused them of something like that.

AMY

Then just mention to them what happened and see how they react.

David does not respond.

AMY (CONT'D)

It's at least possible, isn't it? That they did it?

DAVID

Okay. Okay. I'll go out and mention to them that the cat is missing. See if they've seen him.

Amy's body language betrays her disappointment in David.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You don't think that's enough, do you?

AMY

Not quite. No.

She leaves. David sits alone. Crushed that she thinks he is a coward.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

Amy looks out the window. David has climbed to the roof and is talking to the men. She and we can barely make David out.

DAVID

Can you guys give me a hand? I wanna put the bear trap up.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm a bit lost on how to do that
sort of thing.

We stay with Amy as she watches David and the men climb down.

Stay on her... stay...

The door opens and David enters. He seems excited.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm laying a trap for them.

AMY

When?

DAVID

Right now.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Charlie and Norman are sitting by the bear trap which is
laying down by the fireplace.

CHARLIE

Do you want it open or closed, Mr.
Sumner?

DAVID

Uh, I don't- open I guess.

Norman and Charlie try to open up the teeth of the bear trap
on either end. But Norman slips and the teeth SLAM SHUT.
Charlie jumps backwards.

NORMAN

Sorry, Charlie.

The two men start to work again.

CHRIS

Watch that hand on the spring.
(to David)
Pretty dangerous.

Norman slides on the safety lock. Done.

NORMAN

Where'd you like it, sir?

DAVID

Right there, I guess. Over the
fireplace.

Now Amy enters the room...

AMY
You boys want some beer?

Amy is carrying a tray with five beers and a SAUCER OF MILK.

CHRIS
That'd be great, Ames.

Norman takes his NAIL GUN and slams two nails over the fireplace.

BIC
Thank you.. Can never say "no..."

David notices the MILK. Stares down Amy. It's childish bullshit. If the workers are taken aback, they are not showing it.

Norman puts the nail gun down and lifts his beer to Amy.

NORMAN
Just right. Thank you.

CHARLIE
Now, Mr. Sumner-

DAVID
"David." Really - you guys can call me David.

CHARLIE
Great. David. Tomorrow's gonna be a helluva day for huntin'. Why don't you come with us?

DAVID
(shakes his head)
Oh, I've, uh - I never hunted much.

In fact, he's never hunted a day in his life.

NORMAN
But you have shot?

DAVID
Just once or twice, but that was-

NORMAN
It doesn't make sense to live here and not take a shot or two.

DAVID
Right - I understand.

CHARLIE
There's tradition and then there's
a lifestyle.
(friendly smile)
That whole "when-in-Rome" thing.

David exchanges looks with a seething Amy. Then to the men.

DAVID
Tomorrow, you say?

AMY
(interrupting)
What about your work? The roof?

DAVID
They can wait.

Amy nods and leaves the room.

CHARLIE
We'll pick you up tomorrow morning,
then. Say 7:30?

DAVID
Sounds great. 7:30.

The men put down their beers.

CHARLIE
Better get back to it.

DAVID
Oh, uh, I don't have a gun.

With a big grin he takes down one of the confederate rifles.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Maybe this will do.

The men laugh. Norman says quietly.

NORMAN
We'll have plenty extra, sir.

As they leave the room, David gives a stare down at the bowl of milk. Pissed.

EXT. BLACKWATER ROADS. DAY

Amy is running. Intercut this over the next TWO scenes.

INT. TRUCK. NEXT MORNING.

David is squeezed in the middle of the gang. Note that Charlie is not there. We see him following in an old Mustang (David has taken Charlie's normal seat).

BIC
So, how'd you meet Ames?

DAVID
What?

BIC
How'd you meet your wife?

DAVID
Oh. At a wrap party. For that show "Battleship" we both worked on.

BIC
That show was the shit, man.

DAVID
Thank you.

CHRIS
Love at first sight?

DAVID
Nope. At first sight, Amy gave me hell for not giving her more lines. Can't say I blame her.

NORMAN
Looks like she forgave you.

BIC
We was always wonderin' who'd she'd end up with.

DAVID
That's what I keep hearing.

CHRIS
Gotta sell your soul to the devil to get a girl like Amy Wilcox.
(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

That'll be some kinda day when he comes around to collect.

Chris has a good laugh from this.

POLICE SCANNER

John. Gotta send a unit down to McMan's.

JOHN BURKE'S VOICE

Got it.

BIC

(laughing)

Looks like Ben's been kickin' the dog and Lily 'gain...

Norm reaches behind one of the seats. He takes out a bright orange vest. He hands it to David.

NORMAN

More important than a life vest. Whole buncha assholes out there shooting anything that moves.

DAVID

Thank you.

Bic looks down at the rifle in David's lap.

BIC

You know what you got there?

David shakes his head "No."

BIC (CONT'D)

That is a bolt action thirty aught six Remington. You got yourself a three hundred yard range there with a nice flat trajectory.

CHRIS

It's a thing of beauty.

DAVID

Great.

EXT. WOODS. DAY

David, Charlie, and the crew enter through the treeline.

CHARLIE

Lemme ask you a question. Can I?

DAVID

Sure.

CHARLIE

Why're you making a movie about a buncha Russians?

DAVID

I prefer to think about it as a universal tale about survival and perseverance and the human spirit. Ninety percent of Stalingrad was occupied by the Nazis and still they managed to beat them - and they did it with innovation and internal fortitude they didn't even know they had.

CHRIS

Sounds like the time we were twenty-two down against Montclair.

CHARLIE

(ignoring Chris)

And you don't think God had anything to do with helping the Russkies?

David laughs.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

DAVID

That God would help a nation of atheists.

CHARLIE

Maybe God looked at who they were fighting and he picked his side.

DAVID

Do you think God was picking sides in the holocaust?

CHARLIE

He works in mysterious ways.

DAVID

The most dangerous line ever uttered.

Charlie smiles at that one. David decides to spring it...

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Somebody broke in to the house, by
 the way. Killed our cat.

Charlie stops in his tracks.

CHARLIE
 Flutey?

DAVID
 Yeah, Amy's a mess.

CHRIS
 What makes you think Flutey was
 killed - didn't just pass away?

DAVID
 Cats don't hang themselves.

CHRIS
 Maybe he was depressed.

Charlie gives Chris a "knock it off" look.

CHARLIE
 Somebody hanged Flutey?

DAVID
 In our closet.

CHARLIE
 I'm gonna tell you something,
 David. This world can be pretty
 fucked up. Hanged? God damn.

As they continue to quietly move through the woods into a thickening mist, Charlie quietly signals to Norman that he is breaking away. Norman nods. Charlie leaves. David is too far ahead to notice.

INT. SUMNER HOUSE. DAY

Amy goes through the same ritual we saw from her earlier as she takes a bath.

EXT. WOODS. DAY

Close on David as he walks deeper into the woods. A mist grows thicker. David can hear Bic behind him talking.

BIC
 It ain't nothin' for nothin' you
 see. My brother tells me he's
 become a vegetarian.

David does not pay attention to any of it.

BIC (CONT'D)
 Hooks up with the redhead with the
 tiny tits and becomes a health
 freak.

CHRIS
 Man, you got yourself what you call
 a inferiority complex...

Now their voices become more and more quiet...

BIC
 What does that mean?

CHRIS
 You want Eric's girl- so you, uh,
 you cut her down at the knees.

And now we can't hear them at all...

David trudges ahead... it takes him a few seconds to realize
 that he is all alone.....In the woods...In the mist.

DAVID
 Guys?

No answer. He hears a few loud SNAPS.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Guys?

No Answer. David clutches his rifle. Then...

BAM!!!

A BULLET BLASTS right past David's ear. He drops to the
 ground in a panic... What the fuck just happened??!!

Now a MAGNIFICENT BUCK leaps over David.

Then it stops. Spins.

And then disappears again into the woods. Into the mist.

David remains on the ground. Still floored.

Now here come Bic, Chris, and Norman.

NORMAN
Shit. Shit. Shit.

David clutches his rifle. Tight.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
You okay?

David can't say anything, he's fucking terrified. Did they try and shoot him or the deer?

BIC
You see the buck?

David can barely spit the words out.

DAVID
You... you... shot at me!

BIC
Don't talk like that, man. Did you see the buck?

DAVID
It was just here...it was...

NORMAN
Okay... Bic, go South... I'll go North... Mr. Sumner you go East, which is that way... Chris you go West.

Norman grabs David by the shoulders.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
You okay?
(friendly laugh)
Ain't peein' your pants are you?

DAVID
I'm fine.
(beat)
I'm going East.

David pulls away from Norman and starts to walk East.

INT. SUMNER HOUSE. FOYER. DAY

Amy answers a knock at the door. It's Charlie. Before Amy can object, Charlie insinuates himself into the door jam.

CHARLIE

Amy-cakes.

Amy doesn't say anything. She moves to close the door. But Charlie's in the way.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

What?

AMY

Somebody killed Flutey.

CHARLIE

I heard about that, baby. I'm sorry. But I didn't do it.

AMY

(not listening)

Why... why would you do that?

CHARLIE

I wouldn't and I didn't.

(beat)

I want to come in.

AMY

You can't.

Charlie moves into the house nonetheless. Note that the door has been left open.

AMY (CONT'D)

David's going to be home soon.

CHARLIE

David's busy becoming a man out in the woods. Gettin' his first blood.

Charlie moves to the couch. He taps it.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Remember?

AMY

(scared now)

Look, Charlie, just leave, okay?
Forget about the cat-

Charlie moves toward her, angry now.

CHARLIE

I didn't hurt Flutey!!!

AMY
Okay. I'm sorry... You're scaring-

CHARLIE
You're sorry?

AMY
Yeah, I just---

Charlie pushes her up against the wall. She's trapped. He moves into kiss her. She pulls her head away.

CHARLIE
Don't give me this shit. You can fool Davey boy --- but you got more history with me than him.

AMY
I'm with him now. We're married.

CHARLIE
I hear that doesn't mean shit out there in Hollywood.

AMY
It means something to me- please leave.

CHARLIE
I will. Soon.

Amy tries to push her way past Charlie, but he violently slams her up against the wall. He puts the palm of his hand over her mouth.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Best if you just let it happen.

Charlie releases his hand. He pushes her backwards and she flips over the couch. Charlie leaps over the couch, landing on top of Amy. He's so heavy on her that she can't possibly move. He leans in to kiss her. She avoids him.

Charlie moves his hands down to her pants and pulls them down. Amy shakes her head "No." A tear developing. But Charlie continues.

As he lowers his pants, he moves in to kiss her. Again she averts her head. Now, matter of factly, he enters her.

EXT. WOODS. DAY

David continues to walk. And then he sees it. THE BUCK. Looking regal. Beautiful. David slowly lifts his rifle and aims it at the unsuspecting animal. But look at David's eyes. He can't bring himself to do it.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Charlie is slamming into Amy. Every time that she moves her head away he draws her face back.

CHARLIE

Did you miss me, baby? Have you missed me?

Amy nods. She's crying - not hysterically though - it's tears of abject sadness. Or humiliation.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Tell me you missed me.

And this is not a request.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Tell me, Amy!

And what she says now is bathed in both truth and overwhelming fear.

AMY

I missed you, Charlie.

CHARLIE

How many times when he was inside of you, did you imagine it was me there? Me making that love?

Amy doesn't answer. Instead, she uneasily pulls Charlie's face in and kisses him.

EXT. WOODS. DAY

David and the buck continue their stand-off. Eventually, he lowers his rifle. Ready to fire. The Buck takes off. David is relieved. But then...

The Buck stops. Frozen in place.

David's instinct takes over. He lifts his rifle and... BLAST!

The buck goes down. Clearly dead. One perfect shot. A shot that David had no idea was in him.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Charlie and Amy continue to have sex. He climaxes. She smiles gently but not genuinely - overwhelmed by a bizarre series of emotions. Does she feel guilty for betraying David now? Or for betraying her heritage for all these years? Or did she betray him? Or - it's just so fucking confusing to her.

Now, look at Charlie. He unemotionally pulls his pants up. Amy runs her hands along his chin. Now Charlie averts her.

And with that, Norman materializes. He's holding his rifle. Moves in closer.

Amy is stunned. Terrified. Charlie seems equally surprised.

Norman nods to Charlie. It's his turn. Charlie shakes his head, but Norman nods once more.

AMY
(crying)
No.

Charlie looks down at Amy. Then back to the determined Norman. He makes a decision, chooses a path...

Charlie flips Amy over. Looks at Norman and nods.

AMY (CONT'D)
(crying)
Don't...

Charlie holds Amy down. Nods to Norman. "Let's go." And as Amy cries, Norman climbs on top of her.

Norman starts raping her, sodomizing her. She lies defeated, resigned. Charlie looks on. In fact, the CAMERA REMAINS on Charlie throughout.

EXT. WOODS. DAY

David walks up to the slain buck. Kneels. Runs his hands along the fur.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Norman runs his hands down Amy's back.

EXT. HIGHWAY. DAY

David walks along the side of the road. Clearly pissed. He has been abandoned. The gun is slung over his shoulder. As a car passes him, David puts out his thumb and is ignored.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Norman is done. He gets up.

Charlie kneels down by Amy. Runs his hands through her hair. Amy is too numb to respond. He kisses her on the forehead.

CHARLIE
Sorry about Flutey.

Charlie gets up and signals Norman to follow him.

INT. TRUCK. DAY

A TRUCK DRIVER looks David over.

TRUCK DRIVER
She break down on ye?

DAVID
(blankly)
I'm sorry?

TRUCK DRIVER
Your car?
(David nods.)
Do me a favor, put the safety on
that would ya?

David looks over the rifle.

TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)
Right there.

David sees where he is pointing and puts the safety on.

TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)
Sure is a beauty.

David smiles at him, but looks out the window. He doesn't want to yap. After a few seconds...

TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)

Where do you wanna be dropped off?

DAVID

Blackwater.

As David looks out the window. Charlie's pick-up SPEEDS past. The buck lays in the bed of the truck. The antlers are tied to the front. David seems to make eye contact - it's kind of eerie, really - with the slain beast.

INT. SUMNER HOUSE. DAY

David enters the house.

DAVID

Amy?

He continues to walk. He opens the bathroom door. Amy sits in the bathtub, clutching her knees. David notices a glass of wine on the sink. Amy is startled.

AMY

Jesus!

David realizes the rifle in his hand, puts it down.

DAVID

Are you okay?

AMY

I'm fine.

DAVID

You're fine?

AMY

I'm fine.
(cold beat)
How was hunting?

DAVID

Your friends, they abandoned me up there. Your fucking hillbilly friends.

AMY

They're assholes.

DAVID
I'm firing them.

AMY
(sarcastic)
Hooray for you, tiger.

DAVID
(he's had enough)
What the fuck does that mean?

AMY
If you would have said something
ages ago about the cat, this would
never have happened!

DAVID
I was getting them to talk until
you pulled that childish stunt with
the milk.

AMY
You...

DAVID
(firm)
I'm not done. You pushed me and
you never do any good by pushing.
When are you ever going to learn
about growing up?

AMY
I'm trying to. Believe me.

DAVID
Well, you're a little late.

And now, David starts to leave.

AMY
You're a coward.

DAVID
No, I'm not.

AMY
And I'm a coward. Plain and
simple.

David is still stuck on Amy's accusation. Repeats himself.

DAVID
No, I'm not.

AMY
 I don't blame you for hiding in
 your study.
 (starts crying)
 But, I can't live in there with you
 anymore.

Amy is so emotional that David comes by and sits next to her,
 on the rim of the tub.

DAVID
 Okay...easy, baby.

David gently kisses her - As he does we get a

FLASHBACK OF THE RAPE.

And we snap back to Amy.

AMY
 David, let's leave.

DAVID
 No...

AMY
 Let's go. Let's be happy. We'll
 go back to Los Angeles. Please.

David stands up.

DAVID
 No. Not a chance.

AMY
 (pleading)
 David, I want to go back to work.
 We could have a baby.

DAVID
 We're not being chased out of our
 home. We won't be bullied!
 (points at her)
 Tomorrow I'm firing them and that
 will show them.

AMY
 There's a difference between
 standing up to somebody and using
 power over them.

David soaks this in for a bit. Then -

DAVID
I need to write.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. DAY

The next morning, as the men unload from the truck, David walks up to Charlie.

DAVID
Charlie, can I borrow you for a minute?

CHARLIE
You bet.

INT. STUDY. DAY

David and Charlie enter.

CHARLIE
What's up Mr. Sumner?

DAVID
I don't think the roof is coming together fast enough.

CHARLIE
Really? How fast do you think it should be coming together?

DAVID
Its been two weeks, more than that-

CHARLIE
How long's it usually take you to roof, David?

DAVID
That's not the point. You guys work for a few hours, laze about-

CHARLIE
"Laze about?"

DAVID
I'm sorry, maybe a bad choice of words. I'm just not happy. I think that maybe we should just wash our hands of it, be good neighbors... just tell me what I owe you.

CHARLIE
We've already ordered supplies. We
can't renege on that.

DAVID
That's okay. I'll cover that cost.

CHARLIE
It'll come out to five thousand and
a few - let's make it five
thousand.

The number sounds high, but he wants to get it over with.

DAVID
Okay. Fine.

David opens a drawer and takes out a checkbook.

CHARLIE
That'll be cash only...neighbor.

DAVID
Cash? What makes you think I'd
have that much money on me?

CHARLIE
(laughing)
I'm just fuckin' with you.

DAVID
Oh.

CHARLIE
But if you could make it out to
"cash," that'd be appreciated.

David opens the checkbook and starts to write. Charlie looks
around the room. Examines David's outline. Seems interested.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Got your lead character dying at
the end of your movie, huh?

DAVID
That's the way it is right now.

CHARLIE
Interesting.

Charlie is still looking over the outline.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 Most people don't realize that
 without the Russians, Hitler
 probably woulda won the whole
 shebang.

DAVID
 That's right. University of
 Tennessee?

CHARLIE
 Nah. History Channel.
 (grinning)
 The working man's Harvard.

As David completes writing the check, Amy appears in the doorway. Charlie notices her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 Hello, Amy.

AMY
 Charlie.

And the cold and hard way that she says this indicates that Amy is very much in sync with Charlie being fired.

DAVID
 Here you go.
 (beat)
 No hard feelings.

CHARLIE
 Hard feelings are for the weak,
 wouldn't ya say?

DAVID
 (nodding)
 I would.

CHARLIE
 (to Amy)
 Now that we ain't working for you
 no more, maybe we'll see you around
 town, huh?

AMY
 (ice cold)
 Maybe.

Charlie nods and walks past the two of them.

DAVID

Charlie-

Charlie turns around. David points to the rifle he used in the hunt.

DAVID (CONT'D)

That's yours.

CHARLIE

You can hold onto that. In case you get the itch to go huntin' again.

David shakes his head no. Charlie smiles and snatches up the weapon and leaves.

Amy and David don't speak. Instead, they watch Charlie through the window as he tells his crew that they've been fired. Charlie shows them the check. They all start laughing as they climb into their truck.

EXT. SUMNER FARM. TWILIGHT

David sits outside with a notebook in his lap going over his screenplay. He seems to be intently editing. The unfinished barn looms large behind him. After a few seconds, Amy comes walking up behind him. He looks over at her. There's still obviously some tension between them, but there's a bit of apology in his voice as he speaks.

DAVID

Hey.

AMY

We've gotta go.

DAVID

Where?

AMY

The game.

DAVID

(smiling)

Game?

AMY

(cold)

You want to stay in this town? Be a part of it? This is what we do.

(MORE)

AMY(CONT'D)

This is what we do on Friday
nights. We go to the game.

Amy crosses her arms. She's making a point. Taking a stand.

David looks up at her and he shuts the notebook.

DAVID

Let's go watch football.

He gets up.

EXT. BLACKWATER ROADS. A FEW MINUTES LATER

David and Amy drive in the car. Amy is at the wheel.
They're not saying anything to one another as they pull into-

EXT. BLACKWATER STADIUM. NIGHT

The crowded parking lot. They find a space between two
pickup trucks. One of them belongs to Charlie and the crew.

Amy gets out and starts walking toward the stadium. He
follows behind her and eventually catches up with her and
tries taking her hand. She pulls away from him. He tries
taking her hand again. This time she accepts it and they
continue walking in. They don't say anything to one another.

INT. STADIUM. NIGHT

Various shots of the two football teams, including our very
own Blackwater Black Knights, warming up on the field. We
see the cheerleaders warming up as well...

ANGLE - BENCHES

David and Amy find seats.

David holds her hand firmly.

ANGLE - SIDELINES

Tom Heddon patrols up and down the sidelines, clapping his
hands enthusiastically yelling to the team.

TOM HEDDON

Come on boys! Come on boys! Gonna
take it to these pricks!

ANGLE - MIDDLE OF THE FIELD

Coach Milkens is walking around his team as they stretch.

COACH

Time for battle, boys! Time for battle! First game of the year, we're gonna show them the Blackwater Knights are gonna go to state. It starts here. Goddammit, it starts right goddamn here.

ANGLE -

Janice is talking with her friends - the same ones that she was with outside the bowling alley. They seem to be goading her. Now we see what it's all about:

Janice walks over to Niles, who is quietly on the sidelines.

JANICE

Hey Jeremy, how are you?

Niles smiles weakly back.

JANICE (CONT'D)

Can I ask you something?

Niles nods.

JANICE (CONT'D)

You're so strong. How come you never played football for my daddy?

NILES

'Cause I wasn't right in the head, they said.

JANICE

I'll bet if you'd played, you'd have been a real star.

NILES

But I wasn't right in the head.

JANICE

(smiling. Kind)

Well, you seem just fine to me.

(beat)

You wanna take a walk with me?

Niles shakes his head.

JANICE (CONT'D)

Why not?

NILES

I'm not supposed to be talking to you. I'm not supposed to be talking to any kids.

JANICE

Do I look like a kid to you?

Niles says nothing.

JANICE (CONT'D)

Really, do I?

Janice puts out her hand for Niles to take...and carefully, gingerly, he does.

EXT. BLACKWATER STADIUM. NIGHT

Charlie and the crew are all really sauced. They all take their beers and throw them into the bonfire. The fire really explodes in huge flames. The boys have to back up, they're so taken by it. Chris and Bic start giggling. Norman and Charlie look at each other. Pathetic souls.

CHARLIE

Kick-off's five minutes away.

EXT. BLACKWATER STADIUM - BLEACHERS. NIGHT

David and Amy seem to get cozier with one another. Now Amy looks out on the field as the defensive players rush up against one another, slamming one another. As soon as she sees one of those harsh body slams, she has a...

FLASHBACK TO THE RAPE. TO HER AND NORMAN.

Now we will intercut between the players on the field and the other flashbacks to the rape. David looks over at Amy, notices her seemingly uncontrollable winces.

ANGLE - LOWER BLEACHERS

Charlie and the crew sit down. They have their women with them - including Amelie. They look up at Amy, wave to her. Amy doesn't say anything. But again the very face of Charlie, the very face of Norman create another...

FLASHBACK TO THE RAPE.

ANGLE - ON THE FIELD

The coin flip.

INT. DESERTED EQUIPMENT/LOCKER ROOM. NIGHT.

Janice takes Niles in here, holding him by the hand. He is quiet. Maybe a bit frightened.

JANICE
Here we are.

Niles looks around- unfamiliar with the surroundings.

JANICE (CONT'D)
This is where we come when we want
to be alone.
(beat)
Do you like being alone with me?

NILES
No.

JANICE
You know you're very handsome,
Jeremy.

Jeremy is very quiet. Lowers his head.

JANICE (CONT'D)
You have kind eyes.

Janice leans in and kisses him on the lips. He doesn't kiss back- doesn't know what to do.

JANICE (CONT'D)
When I kiss you do you want to be
alone with me?

Niles nods. She kisses him again.

JANICE (CONT'D)
You kiss real nice. Did anybody
ever tell you that?

NILES
(quietly)
Becky.

JANICE
Becky told you that you kiss nice?
Becky Millman?
(MORE)

JANICE (CONT'D)
 (off of Niles nod.)
 She's a lucky girl.

Janice's hands get friendlier.

JANICE (CONT'D)
 Did you and Becky ever make love?

Niles nervously shakes his head "No."

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD. DAY

ANGLE - ON THE FIELD

On the sidelines, Tom Heddon is still moving back and forth, exhorting to the team. One of the referees comes up to him.

REFEREE
 Alright, Coach, take your seat now.

TOM HEDDON
 (drunk)
 These are my goddamn boys! They're
 my goddamn boys!

REFEREE
 I know that, Coach, but you gotta
 take a seat anyway so we can begin.

As Tom starts to walk towards the bleachers, he yells one more time to the team.

TOM HEDDON
 Go get 'em boys! These fuckers are
 ours!

ANGLE - BLEACHERS

Amy and David watch all of this.

DAVID
 Sad huh?

Tom sits down with the crew. He pats Charlie on the back.

TOM HEDDON
 This is our year, boy. This is our
 year. Wish you were out there,
 though.

CHARLIE
 Wish I was young enough to still be
 out there. With you leadin' us.

EXT. FOOTBALL BLEACHERS -

KICKOFF!

The ball is knocked into the air by one of the Blackwater Knights. Their opponent takes the ball in mid air and rushes down the field. There's a gigantic collision that once again prompts from Amy a vision of

THE RAPE.

ANGLE - The cheerleaders start doing their cheers

ANGLE - Tom Heddton is on his feet- cheering like a drunk madman. He notices that Janice is not among them. Tom turns to the crew.

TOM HEDDON

Ya guys seen Janice at all?

BIC

Nope.

EXT. SIDELINES. A FEW MINUTES LATER.

Tom walks up to one of the cheerleaders, in fact the one who had been goading Janice a few minutes earlier.

TOM HEDDON

Melissa-

One of the girls turns around.

MELISSA

Hi coach-

TOM HEDDON

How come, Janice ain't with ya?

MELISSA

(clearly playing dumb)

I don't know where she is. Maybe she went to the lady's room or something.

One of the younger cheerleaders, HELEN, overhears this-

HELEN

I saw her talkin' to Jeremy Niles.

As Melissa gives Helen a nasty look-

TOM HEDDON
You sure about that?

HELEN
They went off somewhere, but I
don't know where.

And Tom becomes overwhelmed with rage and fury.

ANGLE - FOOTBALL GAME

Again, the pounding of the football players gets Amy wincing.
She's obviously thinking back to THE RAPE.

DAVID
Are you okay?
(no response)
Are you okay?

Amy nods. But David notices a small tear.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Do you want to talk about it?

Amy shakes her head "no."

DAVID (CONT'D)
We can leave if you want.

AMY
I'm okay. I wanna stay---

DAVID
(unconvinced)
Okay.

INT. LOCKER ROOM. SAME TIME

Janice is kissing a dazed and frightened Niles. She starts
to unbutton his shirt. She moves his hand to her panties.

JANICE
It's okay, Jeremy.
(whispering)
I'm like your girlfriend.

Now, from outside we hear

TOM HEDDON (O.S.)
Janice!!

Niles' eyes widen with fear. He grabs Janice and brings her into the shower where they are more hidden.

NILES

Shhh...

He puts his hands over her mouth.

TOM HEDDON (O.S.)

Janice, girl!!

ANGLE - Stay on Niles' face. Scared to death.

ANGLE - Janice, her mouth covered by Niles, unnerved.

ANGLE - Niles again.

ANGLE - Janice's feet - off the ground.

ANGLE- Janice's face, trying to speak, but muzzled by Niles-

ANGLE- Tom Heddon wandering right outside the lockers-

ANGLE - Janice's face - she is dead - inadvertently suffocated.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM. SAME TIME.

The game is in full swing. David cheers, Amy looks apathetic - and out of it.

INT. LOCKER ROOM. SAME TIME

Tom Heddon enters the locker room, looks around, doesn't see his daughter obviously.

TOM HEDDON

Janice! Where are you? Janice!

There's no response.

TOM HEDDON (CONT'D)

Janice!

Tom looks over at the end of the locker room, and there he sees her SILVER "B" - the head cheerleader pin.. She's obviously been here. He picks it up, grasps it in his hands. He looks left, looks right. He searches the rest of the locker room, but his daughter is nowhere to be seen...and neither is Niles.

ANGLE - BLEACHERS

David looks at Amy one last time. Something is wrong.

DAVID
Do you want to leave?

Amy looks over at David, nods her head yes.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Okay.

He holds her hand and walks her, excusing himself and clumsily passing over people that are packed into the bleachers. They have to crawl over Charlie and the crew which is obviously extremely uncomfortable for Amy who once again has no eye contact with them.

NORMAN
Enough for ya, Mr. Sumner?

David doesn't respond. Charlie puts his hands on Amy's thighs - stopping her.

CHARLIE
Why don't you stay, Amy-cakes? Old time's sake.

DAVID
(firm)
Let go of her, Charlie.

Charlie releases her.

CHARLIE
Sorry, boss.

The crew start laughing.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Have a good night!

As we pull back with Amy and David, we see Tom Heddon racing up to Charlie and the crew and saying something to them, something that has obviously gotten their attention.

INT. JAGUAR. NIGHT

David and Amy drive. Amy is devastated. David is saying nothing, but is clearly concerned.

Then...

AMY
David!!!

In front of them, Niles wobbles onto the street. David hits the brakes.

The car spins out of control, a complete 360 and- THWACK!!!

They SMASH into Niles. Niles flies in the air, a massive rag doll. A huge cloud of dust as the car continues to spin.

David screeches the car to a halt. He is stunned, out of breath. Amy is holding tight to the door handle.

DAVID
Are you okay?

Amy nods. He sees Niles in the middle of the street.

David runs over to him.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ, Niles, are you okay?

He gets closer.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What're you doing wandering in the street like that?

AMY
(yelling)
Is he hurt?

And David sees something --- Niles is most certainly NOT okay. A bone sticks out of his arm. Niles stares at it. Mesmerized. He even reaches over to touch the exposed bone.

DAVID
Jesus, Niles. Don't touch that.

NILES
It hurts.

DAVID
I know.

NILES
I didn't do it.

DAVID
I know, Niles. It was me. And I'm sorry.

NILES
No. It wasn't you.

Niles just keeps staring at the bone.

DAVID
Hold on.

David takes off his jacket.

EXT. ROAD. NIGHT - FEW MINUTES LATER

David and Niles approach the car. David has created a sling for Niles. Amy is repulsed by what she sees.

DAVID
Get in the back, Amy-

AMY
We have to get him to a hospital.

DAVID
The nearest hospital is forty miles away. I'm calling for an ambulance- we'll take him to the house.

Amy is in shock- Nile's wound looks so very severe.

DAVID (CONT'D)
In the back, Amy! Please---

NILES
(quietly)
It wasn't me....

DAVID
He's just babbling. He's in shock.

David takes out his cell.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Good, there's reception, here-

EXT. STADIUM. NIGHT

The roar of the game is in full swing. Charlie, Tom, Norman, Bic, and Chris drive in the pick up. Over the police scanner:

POLICE SCANNER

Just wanted to let y'all know that an ambulance been called up to the Sumner farm. Jeremy Niles had an accident of some kind and he's up there...

DEPUTY VOICE

Got it... we'll check into it after the game....

The men look amongst one another. NILES MUST BE THERE.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

The three get out of the car. Amy still has no idea what's going on. He lets Niles in.

DAVID

Go in and lay down on the couch.

Niles nods. Goes in. Amy looks terrified.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Its going to be okay. It'll be fine.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

Charlie's truck pulls up in front of the Sumner house. Charlie turns to his cohorts.

CHARLIE

Stay here.

TOM HEDDON

Fuck that. I'm gonna goddamn come with ya-

CHARLIE

Coach, let's just keep our heads here. Lemme handle it. I'll get Niles out.

TOM HEDDON

You'd best.

Charlie gets out of the car. He ambles up to the front door and bangs on it. Hard. There is no answer. He bangs again.

CHARLIE
Amy!! David!!
(no answer)
Mr. Sumner!!

INT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

David looks over at Amy. This can't be good. He gives the "shush" sign to Amy.

CHARLIE
You need to send him out, Amy. You
send him out and we'll all be
friends.

NILES
I didn't do it...

CHARLIE
Is that Niles? Send him out.

DAVID
Why do you want him?

CHARLIE
We need to talk with him. About
what he did to Janice Heddon.

David realizes something is seriously askew.

DAVID
We can't do that, Charlie.
(whispers to Amy)
Get him upstairs.

Amy gently leads Niles up the stairs.

CHARLIE
Sure you can, David. You just send
him out.

DAVID
We're not going to let you take
justice into your hands. I don't
care what you think he did.

Charlie smiles. Doesn't say anything.

CHARLIE
Well, Janice was with him and now
she's missing - and we need to find
her. And we're going to.

David now realizes that he is in it deep.

DAVID
We'll call the state police and let them handle this. Okay?

CHARLIE
You know, David, this ain't your business.

DAVID
You're just gonna hurt him. That's all you wanna do.

And now, a fed up Tom Heddon has come up behind Charlie.

TOM HEDDON
Oh, no... You're wrong 'bout that, Mr. Hollywood.
(beat)
We're gonna do much more than that.

Charlie turns to Tom.

CHARLIE
Coach-

But Tom is on a drunken fire now.

TOM HEDDON
You send that fucking Niles out now, hear? Or you're gonna see a rain of all hell on you and your house- HEAR?

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

Charlie walks away and returns to the truck, where the men have now piled out of the car, holding their weapons.

BIC
What's going on?

TOM HEDDON
Mr. Sumner's under the impression that he's in charge.
(To Charlie)
Ya wanna get full of diplomacy, Charlie - or are you gonna help me get Niles to tell we what he done with my Janice?

NORMAN

He can't get away with this.

TOM HEDDON

Not when my Janice is missing.

Charlie is convinced. He grabs a weapon himself. Installs a full magazine into it. He looks at Tom.

CHARLIE

Okay, then, Coach. For Janice.

TOM HEDDON

Damn right.

Charlie hands Tom the only other rifle that they have.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

David enters the bedroom. Niles is there, sitting in the corner.

AMY

What do they want? Why do they want to hurt you, Niles? What've you done? Did you hurt somebody? Did you hurt Janice?

Niles recedes into the corner, semi-catatonic.

DAVID

Calm down, okay? You're freaking him out.

AMY

Jesus Christ, what're we going to do?

David ignores Amy and her hysteria and walks over to Niles. He kneels in front of him.

DAVID

We're going to protect you, Niles.

And now the tension starts to get to Amy. She's scared and that fear soon turns to a kind of anger... an anger that she's in a terrible situation not of her creation.

AMY

(to Niles)

You'd better be innocent.

(MORE)

AMY (CONT'D)

Of-of whatever the fuck they're talking about.

David gets up. Then, quietly to Amy-

DAVID

I want you to take your daddy's gun and shoot, just shoot, anybody that's not me, okay?

Amy says nothing-

DAVID (CONT'D)

OKAY???

AMY

Okay.

As David leaves to go back downstairs.

AMY (CONT'D)

How are you going to protect yourself?

DAVID

I don't know.

There is a beat.

DAVID (CONT'D)

But this is my house. They're not coming into my house.

And with that David leaves.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

As Charlie and Tom walk toward the house, Tom is yelling up-

TOM

I'm comin' to get ya, Niles. I said I would and I will---

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Amy, now holding the handgun, looks out the window as she sees Tom and Charlie approach.

TOM HEDDON

Let 'im out, Amy. You don't need
this world of hurt comin' your way,
honey... He done somethin' to my
girl, he did. To my Janice.

She looks over at the still catatonic Niles.

Now, from behind Tom and Charlie see a vehicle approaching.
John Burke in his patrol car!

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

John Burke's patrol car screeches to a halt. John gets out of
the car and moves to Tom and Charlie.

JOHN BURKE

Okay, guys, put those goddamn guns
down for Christ-fucking-sake.

Charlie and Tom don't respond.

John Burke puts his hands on his revolver.

JOHN BURKE (CONT'D)

Right fucking now!!!

Charlie and Tom put down their weapons. Norm, Chris, and Bic
exchange a look. Their leader has been humbled.

JOHN BURKE (CONT'D)

You got no business in this matter,
Charlie.

CHARLIE

My town. My matter.

JOHN BURKE

Our town. We gotta set of laws and
I been elected to enforce them.
Tom, I know you're angry. And
worried. And we're gonna get to
the bottom of this right fast.

TOM HEDDON

We're at the bottom, Johnny. We're
already there. We all know they're
just gonna take that retard and put
him away in a hospital and that
ain't no kind of justice.

JOHN BURKE

Even if Niles has done something wrong, the law's gotta sort it out. Now, I'm gonna get Niles. I'm going to bring him to Odessa, lock him up there. This'll all get sorted out. And we'll find your Janice. I promise you that.

John stares them all down. "Are we clear?"

CHARLIE

Alright, John. You go get 'im. We won't mess with you.

John nods. "Thank you." He turns and walks up calmly to the front door. He knocks.

JOHN BURKE

Mr. Sumner...

INT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

David looks through the peephole.

We see the DISTORTED figure of Deputy Burke.

JOHN BURKE

You gotta send him out. It's all going to go by the law, I give you my word.

DAVID

I'M NOT GIVING HIM TO YOU. You're with them.

(calmer)

You get the state police up here and I'll turn him over then.

Again, David's POV of the fishbowed figure of Burke.

JOHN BURKE

These boys ain't gonna hurt him if that's what you are worrying about. You have my word.

David's eyes open with alarm as he sees, from behind Burke- the image of TOM HEDDON, shotgun at the ready.

DAVID

John, behind you...

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Scott drops like a stone. Dead.

The next thing that David sees is the pistol pointed directly at him...

BLAM!

DAVID ducks. Terrified. On his knees.

But the bullet bounces off of the iron cast doors.

INT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

Amy comes running down the stairs with her father's pistol-

AMY

Oh my God. They're going to get
into the house- Did you see that?!

David runs over to the bookcase.

DAVID

I saw that. Help me with this...

AMY

David---

DAVID

HELP ME WITH THIS!!!!

Amy races over to help David push the bookcase in front of the door. From outside...

TOM

Give him to us and we'll be fine.

David looks around, grabs the antique guns from the walls.

Pulls trigger on the first. It doesn't work.

The second, and the third, same thing. Shit.

David looks about. He moves around the house. Starts to turn off all the lights. He turns to Amy.

DAVID

Help me, here.

AMY
He's done something to Janice
Heddon.

DAVID
(firm)
We don't know that.

AMY
David-

DAVID
Look. We just saw what we saw. Your
friend's not going to count on us
to keep quiet.
(sotto)
HELP ME WITH THIS!!!!

Amy races over to help David push the bookcase in front of
the door.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

The men gather around the dead body of Burke.

CHRIS
Jesus Christ, man...

CHARLIE
Get it together, Chris.

CHRIS
(almost crying)
Jesus-

Charlie grabs him by the throat.

CHARLIE
Together!

CHRIS
He didn't need to kill John, Coach--
- you shouldn't have done that...
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT!

TOM HEDDON
He was gonna let Jeremy Niles get
away with what he's done!

Charlie very coolly lets him go.

CHARLIE

We're all accessories now. That's
the way the law works.

(to Chris)

You can leave if you want, Chris.
But now we gotta job to finish.

It is clear Chris is not going to abandon his friends...
scared as he is.

INT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

David, in the pitch black, looks outside the window... Amy is
on the other end of the room.

BAM!!! A large brick comes through the window. It just
barely misses him.

AMY

David!

David beelines to Amy. Grabs her.

Once he sees she is safe...

DAVID

They are not coming in this house.
I'm going to hold them off.
Somebody is going to show up. The
ambulance. They must've notified
the police. I'll hold them off-

AMY

How?

AT THAT MOMENT - bricks fly through every window at the same
time--- glass shatters...

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

Bic uses a pick-ax and tries to break through the kitchen
door. Sparks fly off of the cast iron door. No luck breaking
through, though.

INT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

David looks out the window, carefully-

AMY
How're you going to keep them out?
There are five of them.

DAVID
I know that...

AMY
They have guns.

DAVID
(fed up)
I know that too!

Now a new barrage of bricks....

Amy is scared half to fucking death.

AMY
If you don't give them Niles, I
will.

David gets in her face. Grabs her forcefully.

DAVID
Oh no, you don't. OH NO YOU DON'T!

And this new fire, this anger in David, it scares Amy. She
backs way.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(calmer now)
You saw what Tom Heddon did. Niles
isn't the point to them anymore -
they have to come in. They have to
kill us. Do you understand?

Amy nods.

David looks up at the bear trap.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Let's get this down.

Amy and David pull it down and start to set it up. David
undoes the safety.

DAVID (CONT'D)
We'll put it under that window.

Over Amy's head a brick flies through the window. Smashes
David in the face. He's a bloody mess.

AMY

David?

David spits out the blood. The adrenaline cooking.

DAVID

Go upstairs. Turn off the lights,
That way they can't see us, but we
can see them... stay with Niles...

Amy is frozen. From upstairs, the sound of glass breaking.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Go!

Amy takes off.

EXT. BARN. NIGHT

Norman runs to the barn and grabs a ladder. As he runs with it, he notices a gas container. He pours gas on the barn and takes out a match.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

David turns on the gas stove.

EXT. BARN. NIGHT

The barn burns. Norman stares at the monument ablaze.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

David takes pots fills them with water...

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. DAY

Charlie grabs his hunting rifle. Starts firing at the door.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Amy enters, sees Niles sitting in the corner, almost frozen. Amy is stunned by the PELT-PELT-PELT of the bullets bouncing of the stone walls and the cast iron door.

Amy then gets it together and turns off the lights.

Amid the sound of violence, Amy looks at Niles, full of sadness and fear and disbelief. She grips the revolver more tightly and looks out the window again.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

Charlie turns his attention to the Jaguar. He aims at it as if it were a buck in the woods. Pulls the trigger.

KABOOM!!! The car explodes. A HUGE fireball. He fires again. But he is out of ammo.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

David is shocked by the blast, drops to his knees. He then nervously puts the pots on the gas stove.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

Norman leans the ladder against the house, starts to climb.

INT. STUDY. NIGHT

David goes into his study. He sees Chris trying to climb through the shattered window.

David grabs the NAIL GUN that Norman had used to put up the BEAR TRAP.

Races to the window.

WHAP!!!

HE NAILS CHRIS' HAND INTO THE WALL.

Chris shrieks in agonizing pain.

Swiftly, David grabs a WIRE and wraps it around Chris' neck and Then wraps the other end around a handle. Chris is totally trapped. Like an animal.

CHRIS

Lemme go, you're cutting me...

Chris' neck is bleeding.

DAVID

Don't you move, you son of a bitch.
It will slit your throat.

And now we see that Chris' neck sits on a huge glass shard.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Gimme your other hand. C'mon.

Chris moves his other hand in. David ties it off as well.

DAVID (CONT'D)
If you move, you'll die.

David walks away. There is a feeling of triumph in him.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

Charlie gets into the front seat of his truck. Puts the headlights on. For the first time, because they are silhouetted, we see ANTLERS on the front of the truck.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

David walks into the kitchen.

It's on fire!!!

David races in... but as soon as he does....a rifle comes in from outside the window and starts to shoot at David.

David manages to crawl by the window. He grabs the rifle.

But Tom Heddon pulls it out of the way, momentarily losing his footing.

At that moment, David grabs the boiling pots and lets Tom have it right in the face...

Tom screams in pain... drops his weapon... runs away, covering his scalded face with his hands.

David immediately takes a fire extinguisher and puts out the fire.

INT. STUDY. NIGHT

David walks in and goes right to the RECORD PLAYER. He looks through the assembled albums and pulls one out. It's the Zydeco music. LOUD AND BLARING. IT WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY UNTIL OTHERWISE NOTED.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

Charlie helps a still yelping Tom to his feet.

CHARLIE
 (smirking)
 He's playing music.
 (beat)
 That son of a bitch's got some man
 in him, after all.

INT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

Look at David, invigorated. We stay on him for a few seconds - his expression, the music, the heaving - it's all meant to suggest a turn in him. He nailed Chris. He nailed Tom. He's outsmarted them for the time being. He's the better man, thus far - and he fucking likes it.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Amy looks out the window. Sees Charlie, Bic, and Tom get into the truck. She realizes right away what is going to happen.

AMY
 David! They're going to ram the
 house.

INT. SUMNER LIVING ROOM. DAY

David stares at the door.

AMY (O.C.)
 Did you hear me?

DAVID
 (quietly)
 I heard you.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

The truck rams into the front door. The deer antlers SHATTER but otherwise barely makes a dent...

INT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

David flinches as the truck again rams the front door. This time there is a bit more of a rumble.

He hears the sound of shots being fired. It's coming from upstairs...

He races up.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Amy is firing her pistol out the window... missing like crazy. David rushes in... grabs her as she fires off another around.

DAVID

Don't waste the bullets.

She pulls the gun on Niles. Angry and bitter at the crisis they are in.

AMY

What did you do???

And Niles cowers into the corner. Petrified.

NILES

(quietly)

She loves me.

Amy's face betrays a horror- *what must he have done?*

David moves in front of her. He tries to talk calmly through his adrenaline.

BAMMMM!!!! Comes the sound from downstairs... ANOTHER attempt to ram the house..

David starts to run downstairs... Follow him... The door and the bricks have loosened and now...

SMASH!!!

The truck comes through the wall, stone blocks descend upon it...

David goes and grabs a fire iron...

The only person who can get out of the car as of now is Tom Heddon from the passenger side, his face still burnt red. The bookcase makes it impossible to get out of the driver's side.

Tom gets out of the truck with his rifle.

David takes the fire iron and slams it down on the rifle-

BLAM!!! The gun goes off and literally blows Tom's foot off.

Tom screams in agonizing pain.

Bic starts to get out... David picks up Tom's rifle.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(voice trembling)
You stay in the truck. You don't
come in here.

Bic continues to come at him...

DAVID (CONT'D)
I'm warning you.

Bic stalls - but at that moment Tom yells out a primal SCREAM -- David looks over at him. Tom has a pistol in his hand - ready to fire -

BAM!

David fires at Tom - killing him instantly - He points the rifle at Bic, who continues forward.

BIC
You shouldn't have done that -

David pulls the trigger. But this time...*nothing*.

Bic is prompted, smiles, comes charging.

David throws the rifle down and picks up the same FIRE IRON and slams it right into Bic's face.

Bic collapses.

Dead.

Something overpowers David - some primal instinct - and he takes a few more WHACKS at him...

Then from behind him he hears a CLICK. Turns around. Charlie is facing him and pointing TOM'S GUN at him.

Now, the ZYDECO MUSIC stops. All we hear is the thump-thump-thump of the needle hitting the inner ring of the record.

DAVID
The, uh, gun's empty.

CHARLIE
Is it?

DAVID
Pull the trigger.

CHARLIE
Got plenty of time for that...

There is a brief stare-off then, from upstairs...

SCREAMS from Amy...

Both Charlie and David race upstairs... They both burst into-

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Where Amy is on the bed being attacked by Norman - who HAS AMY'S GUN IN HIS HAND! It is clear he is in the throes of trying to rape her... Amy fights back ferociously...

David grabs Norman by the ankles, pulls him off the bed.

Norman lands face first with a THUD on the floor.

But Norman gains control, is on his feet.

Charlie points the rifle at Norman.

Norman points Amy's pistol at Charlie.

All the people in the room breathe hard, exhausted.

David looks to his side and sees...

Niles is in the same corner. He has been knocked out cold.

NORMAN
She belongs to both of us now.

When David hears this it hits him like a punch to the gut -it has meaning. Deep meaning - one too horrifying to even consider. David looks over at Amy who can not maintain eye contact with him.

CHARLIE

That's not why we're here, Norm.
We're here for Niles...

NOTE: *We are now in Close-up on Charlie and Norman.*

Charlie knowing that his rifle doesn't have any bullets- lays his gun down.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I'm puttin' my weapon down. Norm.
We shouldn't have guns on each
other.

Norm looks tense-on the edge...

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

C'mon, Norm.

Then...

BAM!

A BULLET RIPS...

Into Norman's gut- an explosion of blood and guts that lathers the entire room...

AMY has grabbed Charlie's rifle and pulled the trigger.

The rifle was loaded after all. It was simply jammed.

Norman's fluttering eyes reveal he is still alive. Now, Amy pulls the trigger again - a woman possessed with a righteous fury- and BAM- Norman is deader than dead- But Amy continues moving forward-

Now Charlie leaps on her, forcibly and quickly removing the weapon. Amy is flung to the ground... and instantaneously...

Something overcomes David.

David in a rage evidenced by a HOWL of anger tackles Charlie. They grapple on the ground...

But it is not long before Charlie, being larger and stronger, has the upper hand....

Amy jumps into the fracas but is thrown off by both men.

Amy sees her father's pistol on the ground.

But so does Charlie... who races for it. Grabs it. He takes the butt of the gun and WHACK! - he slams it against David's face - a burst of blood. The another whack and another... Now David manages to his forearm to deflect another hit from the gun.

Now, the fight goes into the hallway, both men slamming up against the walls. Well, actually, more Charlie slamming David up against the walls...

Eventually both men take a tumble down the stairs, head over heels...

When they get to their feet, they continue to fight, but clearly David is exhausted and there seems to be no way he can keep up with the stronger and more fit Charlie.

OVERHEAD -

We see that the two men are standing next to the huge PUDDLE OF BLOOD surrounding the dead Tom. David throws a swing at Charlie, who deflects him so deftly that David slips on the blood and collapses to the ground...right next to the bear trap.

Charlie gets on one knee next to David. He points the gun to David's forehead.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You couldn't just give him up?

DAVID

(quietly)

No.

And at that instant David grabs the bear trap, flings it over himself and right onto Charlie's head.

SNAAAAAPPPPPP!!!!

Charlie's head is trapped.

Amy screams in horror...

David backs up, stunned by what has just happened.

Charlie is still alive... His neck caught helplessly in the steel fangs of the trap.

AMY

(quietly, crying)

Charlie.

And then, Charlie, looking over at Amy, his eyes seem to be pleading.

In the background we hear SIRENS approaching.

David finds the gun that Charlie has dropped. He picks it up. He's not going to let Charlie expire on his own.

BAM!

Charlie is dead. David looks over at Amy who is as stunned as he is.

David wanders the house...

He passes the dead Tom Heddon. The dead Bic. Amy follows David as he enters the...

INT. STUDY. SAME TIME

David sees that Chris is dead, his throat slit, a puddle of blood beneath him. Then - to Amy - or maybe himself...

DAVID
I'll be damned.

From behind him.

AMY
Aren't we all.

David turns to Amy and says to her - or maybe to himself - it's not really clear- given the joyful disbelief in his voice:

DAVID
I got them all.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

David sits quietly, waiting for the emergency vehicles to arrive, watches the barn burn.

INT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT.

Amy is still inside. She looks at David's bulletin board, looking over the outline to his movie.

She is holding the revolver. Looks at it. Can't believe what she has been through.

Amy sits down in her Daddy's chair. Exhausted - a human being altered - a bit destroyed.

We end on a CLOSE-UP of Amy.

The sound of the sirens are getting louder.

EXT. SUMNER HOUSE. NIGHT

David's face is brightly illuminated by the burning barn.

From behind him Niles appears - a ghastly vision given the reflection of the orange flames.

David doesn't notice him. Not at first. Not until...

NILES' DOG trots past David. David is only slightly alarmed.

NILES

Can I go home now?

DAVID

No, Jeremy you can't.

Niles sits down on the ground, Indian-style. He smiles up at David who smiles back to him. And then David turns away...

As the sound of the sirens get CLOSER AND CLOSER... his eyes seem to be welling with tears.

And we end on a CLOSE-UP of David. A small smile.

EXT. HELICOPTER SHOT. NIGHT

As the barn continues to burn, emergency vehicles head toward the Sumner farm.

STRAW DOGS