

RUSHLIGHTS

©DRAFT: 03/18/2008
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Crosstown Films
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FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES, DAY

A hot summer day in downtown LA. The streets are crowded with traffic, dubious street vendors and preachers loudly proclaiming the Apocalypse. The mostly Hispanic crowd mixes with tourists, who stare at this unfamiliar spectacle.

BILLY BRODY, early twenties, a street-smart hustler, attempts to cross the street. Billy's basically a nice guy, despite having walked down some mean streets.

INT. STANLEY'S KITCHEN, DAY

The place, a true "hole in the wall" hasn't seen a new piece of furniture since the day it opened. The big blue "C" for cleanliness prominently displayed, fits. A few locals contemplate their lives over coffee as the air-conditioning hums away. Billy slides onto a stool at the counter.

The waitress, SARAH, a beautiful young woman in her late teens, comes out of the kitchen carrying plates of food. Sarah smiles at an older man sitting at the end of the counter while sliding a plate in front of him, then swerves to deposit the others. She glides toward Billy. The two know each other. There is an obvious attraction.

SARAH

Hi. What can I get you?

Billy stares and smiles as Sarah.

BILLY

Well, I was thinking about the...

Sarah starts writing.

SARAH

...Turkey-sandwich?

She winks at him. Billy's delighted she knows it by heart.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Just guessing.

Sarah sticks the order on the ticket spindle behind her and moves to a soda dispenser, filling a glass and puts it in front of Billy.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Diet coke?

BILLY

That's right. How's everything?

SARAH

Just another slow day. Anything else I can get you?

Billy hesitates. Something is on his mind.

BILLY

No, not really. Thanks.

Sarah is about to walk away. He calls to her.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I was wondering...

SARAH

Yes?

There is an awkward pause. Then:

BILLY

It's been weeks now, me showing up here, eating my turkey sandwich...

SARAH

Yeah?

BILLY

I was thinking: What if I show up here like tomorrow and you're no longer here?

SARAH

I guess I'm somewhere else. My day off. Like I should be so lucky.

BILLY

I didn't mean that.

SARAH

Why wouldn't I be here?

BILLY

You could like decide to get another job, or somebody gets sick at home and you'd have to leave. Anything can happen, you know.

SARAH

Well, I wasn't planning to spent the rest of my life in this place.

BILLY

You see? That's my point. Suppose you left with me never finding out your favorite ice cream, your favorite movie, if you like pizza over hamburgers ...stuff like that...or--

SARAH

--I prefer burgers to pizza, my favorite movie's Fight Club, and my favorite ice cream's pistachio--

BILLY

You wanna go out with me sometime? I got Dodger's tickets this Saturday. Wanna go?

Sarah is charmed. Billy smiles.

SARAH

Let me think about it.

BILLY

I knew it. You don't like baseball.

VOICE (O.S.)

Sarah!

Sarah turns and sees her BOSS, a heavy-set man in his fifties, waiving his fingers toward her.

SARAH

I gotta go.

Billy, disappointed, looks on as Sarah disappears into the kitchen. He peeks into the kitchen, catching glimpses of Sarah, as she argues with her boss. Billy sighs. Bad timing. He leaves a ten-dollar note on the counter, then strolls past a sign saying "Thank you, have a nice day".

INT. PARKING-STRUCTURE - TOP FLOOR, DAY

Billy exits the elevator of a parking-structure with his cell phone pressed to his ear while walking along rows of parked cars toward a beat-up, sixties, yellow convertible.

BILLY

It's Billy.

Billy keeps Stanley's Kitchen on the opposite side of the street, in view. He spots Sarah, still in her waitress uniform, exiting Stanley's Kitchen. She pulls out a cigarette and lights up.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Gotta call you back.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

What the f...?!!

Billy starts rushing toward the staircase as he flips his phone closed.

EXT. STREET, DAY

Aggravated and confused, Sarah is pacing in front of Stanley's. Billy approaches without her noticing.

BILLY

Hey!

Sarah turns, surprised.

SARAH

Oh, hi.

BILLY

I saw you coming out.

(beat)

We never finished our conversation about--

He sees there's something the matter.

BILLY (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

SARAH

You must be a psychic. Remember you said what if you came by tomorrow and I wouldn't be here. Well, guess what? Stanley's is closing. I'm out of a job.

They stare at each other.

BILLY

I don't know what to say. I'm really sorry. Hey, it might be a blessing in disguise. Maybe better things are waiting to happen for you.

SARAH

I sure hope so. I got bills and rent due.

BILLY

Is there anything I can do?

The front door of Stanley's opens. Sarah's Boss calls.

OWNER

Sarah, you wanna finish your shift?

SARAH

I'm coming.

Her boss's face disappears as quickly as it popped up.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Anyway, not a good day.

Sarah turns to leave. Billy calls out again.

BILLY
Why don't I give you my number. You know,
just in case, you feel like calling.

SARAH
Ok.

Billy quickly pulls out an old receipt, but struggles to find a pen. Sarah chuckles, then pulls out her pen.

BILLY
Thanks.

He scribbles down his name and number, hands the paper back to her. Sarah looks at it, brightens.

SARAH
Funny. I didn't even know your name.
Billy. I like it.

She turns to leave. He calls out to her.

BILLY
Your pen!

Smiling, she spins around, picks her pen from his fingers. Sparks are flying.

SARAH
Thanks. See ya later, Billy.

Billy watches Sarah slip inside, a big smile on his face.

INT. BILLY'S MOTEL ROOM, NIGHT

A dark, cheap bedroom. Billy is asleep in his clothes. The telephone rings persistently. Billy, sleepily, reaches out to the phone on his night table.

BILLY
Yeah? Hello?

A look of alarm comes over him.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Sit tight. I'm on my way.

He falls out of the bed, fumbles for car keys, throws on a jacket and exits the room.

It sits empty for a few seconds before the phone starts to ring again, insistent and ominous.

EXT. STREETS, NIGHT

Dark and empty, barely illuminated, ignored neighborhoods.

CU: SPINNING WHEEL of Billy's convertible, top closed.

Billy steers the car over the rough pavement, old train tracks of downtown LA. An occasional neon flashes by. He squeezes the steering-wheel and keeps flooring the pedal as the old V8 roars at hair-raising speed.

EXT. SARAH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EAST LA, NIGHT

The convertible comes to a screeching halt in front of an old apartment building. Billy jumps out of the car, quickly makes his way through the front door of the dilapidated building.

INT. HALLWAY - APARTMENT-BUILDING, NIGHT

Billy runs up the staircase facing a gloomy, long hallway. He walks down the corridor, checking for the right apartment.

From an apartment door at the far end of the hallway, a dark figure watches Billy who momentarily senses it: He quickly turns and peeks down the corridor: Nothing. Puzzled he moves on. Suddenly, a loud BANG as a door is slammed shut. Billy whirls around. Again. Nothing. Billy finds his way to the correct apartment. He takes a breath, knocks.

BILLY

Sarah? It's me, Billy. Open up!

No answer. He turns the knob.

INT. APARTMENT, NIGHT

A true dump: Dim light, trash everywhere, cheap furniture. Dirty, yellow walls show cracks, dubious spills. Drug paraphernalia spread out on a coffee table.

The twisted and lifeless body of a girl is spread out on a nearby sofa.

As Billy slowly enters he freezes at the sight of the dead girl, syringe still sticking in her arm. His face drops as he moves closer toward the dead girl: Sarah.

BILLY

(a horrified whisper)

Shit! Sarah!

Suddenly Billy's jolted by the sound of a faint sob. He turns and recognizes a familiar silhouette which gives him a moment's relief: It's Sarah. The resemblance between the dead girl and her is striking.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Sarah...what is going on here?

Sarah is tear-stained, traumatized.

SARAH

Ellen, she...I...I...couldn't..she--

BILLY
Jesus Christ, Sarah.

Suddenly, police-sirens can be heard in the distance. Billy grabs Sarah by the arm.

BILLY (CONT'D)
C'mon grab your stuff...Now!

A series of JUMP CUTS

Billy helping Sarah dress/Billy stuffing clothing and other random belongings into an old duffel-bag/Sarah rapidly stuffs pictures, mail, a few stray folders in a garbage bag. Billy's taking a last look at the corpse as the two make a rapid exit.

INT. COFFEE SHOP/TRUCKSTOP - OUTSKIRTS LA, DAWN

Customers sit at the counter of a retro-style coffeeshop. Billy sips a soda in a secluded booth towards the back. Returning from the bathroom, Sarah slides into the booth. She is red-eyed from hard crying and still dazed.

BILLY
You're ok? Have some coffee, a muffin.
You'll feel better.

He points to the coffee and an English muffin in front of her. Sarah glances at Billy nervously.

SARAH
I suppose I owe you an explanation. It's fucked up...how life can turn on you so god damn quick. Just yesterday I was full of hope, things were changing for the better. Finally. Next thing I know I'm out of a job, hours later I find my best friend with a needle in her arm. Dead.

For a moment, it looks like she's going to lose it.

BILLY
Take it easy.

SARAH
The girl...is...was...Ellen. My roommate.

Billy nods, trying not to pressure her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Well, you've figured out by now I'm not this sweet, innocent girl you probably might've thought I was...

A couple of moments pass. Sarah removes her jacket and stretches out her bare arms. She turns both her arms, revealing numerous scars. Needle marks. Healed up.

SARAH (CONT'D)

That's the past. I don't do that anymore.

BILLY

Okay.

Quietly, she continues.

SARAH

A few months ago, Ellen said she'd had enough of all this drug bullshit. She wanted to go back to school. So, she decides we should both check into rehab. She's on the phone for days till she manages to find a place that takes us. She even paid for it. So, we got really stoned and we went to this clinic. Except when I woke up, she was gone. I stayed.

BILLY

What happened to her?

SARAH

They woke her in the middle of the night. Her parents had died in a car crash the day before we checked in.

BILLY

Wow. That's really fucked up.(pause) What about tonight?

SARAH

We got into a fight because I asked her not to get loaded around me. I tell her I'm trying to stay clean and seeing her get high doesn't make it any easier. I don't think any of it registered, y'know? Couple of hours later I hear her fighting with the guy from next door, her dealer. Our dealer. At some point I fell asleep.

Sarah winces at the memory, starts to tremble.

SARAH (CONT'D)

And then I just woke up, for no reason, y'know, how that happens sometimes? And I see her on the couch sleeping...only she isn't making noises, like she's breathing...

She starts to sob quietly, again. She puts her forehead between her hands. Billy gently touches her wrist.

SARAH (CONT'D)

If only I'd just gone next door and told that prick to leave us alone!

BILLY

Thing is, if it wouldn't have been that dealer, she'd have gotten her dope someplace else. If this didn't happen last night maybe it would have happened today. Some people just have a short ticket on this planet. There's no rhyme or reason for it. It just is.

Sarah stares at Billy. She pulls out a cigarette, nervously plays with it. Then:

SARAH

What am I doing laying all this shit on you. We don't even know each other.

BILLY

We sort of do now, don't you think?

Sarah sighs, glances far away.

SARAH

I should go to the police.

BILLY

Why? Won't make any difference now. It's nobody's fault.

SARAH

What am I going to do? I don't even know where I'm going to stay.

BILLY

How about your folks? Where's home?

SARAH

Wisconsin? No thanks. Not interested.

BILLY

You can stay with me if you like.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM, NIGHT

The door opens with Billy and Sarah locking lips in a passionate kiss. Billy kicks the door shut...

LATER

Sarah and Billy are making love face to face.

INT. MOTEL ROOM, DAY

It's the next morning.

CU: SHOWER HEAD. Water pours down on Sarah's face.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM, DAY

Leaning against the railing of the second floor, Billy, cell phone to his ear, overlooks the old swimming pool of the fifty plus room motel. In jeans and T-shirt, Sarah steps through the open door. Billy turns, closes up his cell phone.

BILLY
Good morning.

SARAH
Look. Thanks for getting me out of there last night. That was really cool, but I totally don't want to take advantage of you. I should probably go and sort out my own problems...

Billy interrupts gently.

BILLY
...you can stay as long as you like.

She studies him for a beat. Gives a searching look.

SARAH
You don't think I'm trash?

BILLY
(shrugs, shakes his head)
I do not. Everybody's got a story, a bad thing that happened. My theory on life is 'what happened, happened'. It's what you do here and now and tomorrow that counts.

Sarah permits herself a smile.

SARAH
Okay then Mr. Glass Half Full. How about you? Like I know nothing about you. Why are you living in a motel?

BILLY
Ahh, it's temporary. I'm waiting for my brother to come back from overseas. He's setting up shop in LA, pending how it goes with his suppliers. Wants me as his right-hand man.

SARAH
What kind of business?

BILLY
Import-Export. That kind of thing.

Sarah smiles.

SARAH

Well, I know you're from Vegas, your Mom owns a wedding chapel....you told me that the first time you were at Stanley's.

BILLY

You know more about me than most.

Sarah gets a far-away rueful look in her eye.

SARAH

I haven't been to a ball park since I was five. That would've been really nice.

Billy moves in and gently kisses Sarah.

BILLY

So, you do like baseball after all.

SARAH

I love it.

LATER

Billy, spread out on the king size bed, watches baseball on TV, while Sarah rummages through her duffel-bag. However, instead of socks she pulls out several envelopes.

SARAH

This is not my stuff.

Perplexed, she drops into a nearby chair, pulls out a letter from an already open envelope.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I got some of Ellen's mail by mistake.

Sarah starts reading out loud.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Law offices of Cameron Brogden, State of Alabama. January 15th...Dear Ellen. As your late uncle's friend and attorney, your uncle has bequeathed his entire estate to you, his favorite niece and the only living relative... I didn't even know she had an uncle...

Billy looks up, looks at Sarah.

SARAH (CONT'D)

... however, please be informed that under Alabama law I have filed in probate court... you know what this is?

She throws the letter onto the bed. Billy picks up the piece of paper and continues reading the text.

BILLY
(reading out loud)
.... please be informed that under Alabama law I have filed in probate court... a process that might take up to ninety days. If you have any questions please contact me at your convenience, signed Cameron Brogden, attorney at law... maybe we should contact this lawyer. What else in the bag?

Once again Sarah digs through the bag's content. Suddenly, she holds up a wallet. Billy moves closer.

BILLY (CONT'D)
What is it?

SARAH
It's Ellen's wallet.

Billy gets up from the bed, steps close to Sarah.

BILLY
I know, its none of my business, but I just wanted to see something.

Sarah hands Billy the wallet.

CU: DRIVERS LICENCE, displaying Ellen's picture.

Billy looks up at Sarah. As we have seen earlier, the resemblance between Sarah and Ellen is prominent.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Unbelievable.

Sarah glances at Billy, uncertain.

SARAH
What?

BILLY
I got an idea. It just might work...

EXT. HIGHWAY ENTRANCE, DAY

The convertible enters Interstate 10, going EAST. Upbeat *MUSIC* carries us through a montage of THE JOURNEY.

EXT. GRAND CANYON, DAY

The young couple leans on the convertible staring at the vastness.

SARAH
Beautiful.

BILLY
Beautiful but terrifying.

She looks at him incredulous.

SARAH
Why terrifying?

BILLY
Anything that awesome makes me know for
sure I'm gonna die.

INT. CAR, NIGHT

Its late. Sarah is asleep. Billy can barely keep his eyes open. He reaches towards the dashboard, starts playing with the dial of the radio. He tunes into an old *Smashing Pumpkins* song, hums along.

BILLY
... shakedown 1979, cool kids never have
the time - on a live wire right up off
the street - you and I should meet ...

Sarah opens her eyes, looks over toward Billy, smiles. She starts to recall the song as well. Tranquil, she sings along.

SARAH & BILLY
...Junebug skipping like a stone - with
the headlights pointed at the dawn - we
were sure we'd never see an end to it all -
and I don't even care ... faster than the
speed of sound ...

EXT. HIGHWAY, EARLY MORNING

Sarah and Billy are eating ears of corn from a road side stand as they get into the car and zoom back on the road.

A dark figure in a baseball hat and sunglasses is parked by the side of the road nearby. He watches and then pulls out resuming his pursuit of the old convertible.

END MONTAGE

EXT. HIGHWAY, DAY

The familiar yellow convertible is cruising along a highway. A large sign indicates that Billy's and Sarah's journey has taken them south, as they cross the state-line into Alabama.

EXT. ROAD, DAY

The car comes to a stop at a small intersection. Sarah, engrossed in a local map, looks up.

An oppressive sun beats down on the green landscape. There is a large Billboard which reads: TREMO - WE'RE FRIENDLY FOLKS. A dirt road extends toward the right. Sarah points.

SARAH

This way.

Billy turns the wheel and onto a dirt road they go.

EXT. NILES ESTATE, DAY

The car approaches a huge five-bedroom plantation-style mansion built in the civil-war years. The grounds are surrounded by large weeping willows and dense woods. Billy and Sarah climb out of the convertible and stare at in awe at the estate of ZACHARY NILES IV. Once impressive the mansion is old and worn, the paint completely gone. They walk toward the large front door.

EXT. FRONT PORCH, DAY

Billy moves to the left of the porch and starts searching the top edge of the molding, framing two large windows. No luck.

BILLY

I thought I'd try.

Suddenly, a key drops onto the wooden porch. Puzzled, Sarah and Billy look at each other.

CU: Billy inserts the key into the lock. The heavy door slowly opens. A moment passes.

SARAH

(under her breath)

I don't know... creepy shit.

Billy hums "do-do, do=do," the rhythmic twilight zone theme. Sarah nervously laughs at his teasing. Like Hansel and Gretel the fairy tale, Billy and Sarah enter as bright sunlight floods the hallway.

EXT. TREMO, ALABAMA - POPULATION 2003, DAY.

A quiet and lazy day. The DARK FIGURE tailing Billy and Sarah leans against a store window. A LIGHT BLUE EL CAMINO stops across the street. A LOCAL MAN and his TEENAGE SON get out and disappear into a hardware store. The dark figure quickly crosses the street, peaks inside the El Camino. The keys swing free in the ignition.

The man jumps into the car and speeds away. Seconds later, the truck's owner comes running out of the hardware store and dashes into the street as the El Camino drives past.

INT. NILES MANSION - LIVING-ROOM, DAY

The interior of the mansion matches its outside. Everything is on a large scale, dwarfing inhabitants as well as visitors. Inside the larger than life living room we see Billy, entrenched in a leather couch surrounded by numerous hunting-trophies, stuffed exotic animals heads, which are displayed on the tall walls. Even though it's morning and all windows are wide open, the constant humidity is unfamiliar, unbearable to Billy. He appears anxious.

BILLY

Sarah!

INT. NILES MANSION - KITCHEN, DAY

Sarah is busy preparing a pitcher of lemonade. We notice a few grocery bags sitting on the counter, indicating that several days have past since the young couple's arrival.

EXT. ROAD

The EL CAMINO speeds down the road. The dark figure driving is EDWARD ROMERO, a tough looking man in his early forties with plenty of tattoos on his arms. A PISTOL with a two inch custom silencer attached, slides about the passenger seat.

INT. NILES MANSION - LIVING-ROOM, DAY

Sarah, wearing a sexy summer dress, strolls into the living-room, carrying two glasses of lemonade.

BILLY

Thanks. Man, this heat.

Billy sits up, sips the lemonade appreciatively.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Lets go over it one more time.

SARAH

Again?

BILLY

The lawyer will be here at noon tomorrow. We gotta be on the same page or they're not going to buy it. You got to know this stuff cold.

EXT. NILES MANSION - DIRT ROAD, DAY

The El CAMINO comes over a rise and speeds toward the house.

INT. NILES MANSION - LIVING-ROOM, DAY

SARAH

My name is Ellen Niles. I was born on February seventh, 1986, that makes me 21 years old. I visited my late, uncle Zachary, once, almost fifteen years ago. I don't really remember much because I was really young.

BILLY

Why did Niles leave all his cash to Ellen - to you?

SARAH

He never had any children of his own. Besides my parents, who passed away recently, I'm his only living relative.

Billy fires off the next question:

BILLY

How did Niles get so rich?

SARAH

My grandfather was a hot-shot lawyer and developer in Pasadena.

BILLY

Very good.

Sarah's attention is caught by a large antique rifle above the fireplace.

SARAH

Look at this thing.

She lifts the rifle from the wall. The weapon is a several pounds too heavy for her, the long double barrel swings up and down. Billy nervously watches. Sarah smiles.

EXT. NILES MANSION - DIRT ROAD, DAY

Edward steers with one hand checking the pistol with the other.

INT. NILES MANSION - LIVING-ROOM, DAY

SARAH

Sure is heavy. Feels like lead. I wonder what he used it for?

BILLY

It's a hunting rifle. Be careful...

Intrigued, Sarah continues to examine the weapon.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Would you put that gun down?

EXT. NILES MANSION - DRIVEWAY, DAY

Edward pulls behind some bushes a little ways from the house. Shoving the pistol into his pants he gets out of the car and cautiously approaches the house.

INT. NILES MANSION - LIVING ROOM, DAY

The long barrels of the gun keep swinging, pointing in Billy's direction. Billy gets up and moves toward Sarah, attempting to push the rifle out of the way.

BILLY
Put it away now. Please.

Sarah, rifle in hand, walks up to Billy and kisses him softly.

SARAH
This old thing couldn't hurt a fly if it wanted to.

She smiles seductively, steps backwards. Billy grabs for the rifle, but latches onto the tip of the barrel instead. Sarah laughs, then, suddenly, she trips and falls backwards. He falls on top of her. A playful mock fight breaks out between the two. Sarah pushes Billy with one hand, rifle in the other. He leans in, kisses her. Sarah, still holding the rifle in one hand, moves forward and puts an arm around Billy. She carelessly throws the rifle away from her, onto the floor. As it hits the wooden planks:

BOOM! The hunting rifle goes off, blasting out a front window. There's a definite THUMP, as somebody hits the porch outside. Puzzled Billy and Sarah look at each other. Billy, Sarah jump up from the floor.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Holy shit!

Billy puts his index finger over his mouth, indicating to Sarah to be quiet. He stealthily heads out toward the porch.

EXT. NILES MANSION - PORCH, DAY

Billy opens the front door and looks out. Nobody. He sees a small pool of blood in the dirt. Billy looks down: The pistol. Sarah moves up behind him, scared.

SARAH
Maybe it was an... animal or something.

BILLY
I don't think so.

Billy holds up the gun and gives her an irritated look.

SARAH

Look!

Sarah points to the end of the driveway. The tail-end of the El-Camino is sticking out from behind the bushes.

BILLY

Stay here.

Billy cautiously walks toward the car.

INT. EL CAMINO, DAY

Billy looks inside the truck. He opens the glove compartment and pulls out a registration.

EXT. NILES MANSION - PORCH, DAY

Billy walks back towards Sarah reading from the piece of paper.

BILLY

Car is registered to a Sal Marinaro.
Right here in town.

SARAH

I'm freaking out, Billy. Let's go inside.

Sarah turns to go inside the house. Billy remains standing.

BILLY

You go ahead, I'm gonna look around. Take the gun, just in case. The safety is off, be careful. All you do is point and pull the trigger.

Reluctantly Sarah takes it. Her hands are shaking.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Easy, easy. Listen, it was probably an accident.

SARAH

I'm sorry about me playing with that old rifle. That was really stupid.

BILLY

Don't worry about it.

Both are on edge. As Billy turns to leave, Sarah anxiously smiles.

EXT. HIGHWAY, NIGHT

Edward is staggering along the shoulder of a highway. Pale and exhausted, he is covering his blood-drenched abdomen with his bare hands. A truck approaches, its bright headlights depict Edward in a grotesque and horrifying way. As the truck speeds closer, Edward moves off the shoulder and hides below the highway. We FOLLOW the passing truck as a bright blue neon-sign, indicating a small MOTEL, emerges.

INT. NILES MANSION, NIGHT

A fan whirls overhead. The front door opens, Billy enters. Sarah is sitting on the couch, the gun placed in front of her. She gets up, embraces him.

SARAH

Thank God, you're back. I was worried.

BILLY

I looked everywhere. There's nothing but woods for miles. Whoever it was... disappeared.

Billy picks up the pistol, crosses the room and places it into a drawer of a nearby bureau. He slides down next to Sarah, puts his head into her lap and sighing with exhaustion.

BILLY (CONT'D)

(Pause) You didn't tell anyone about us coming here, did you?

SARAH

Are you nuts? I can't believe this.

BILLY

I'm sorry, I was only asking. (Pause) Wanna know what I think? I think some curious hillbilly stuck his nose into the wrong place at the wrong time, got some buckshot his ass and hightailed out of here. I honestly don't think there is more to it.

SARAH

What about the car? Somebody will be looking for it.

BILLY

I'll make sure nobody'll find it.

Billy gently pulls Sarah closer.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING-LOT, NIGHT

An elderly couple leaves one of the rooms. Edward watches them as the seniors go about their evening.

INT. MOTEL ROOM, NIGHT

Dim light shines through the closed blinds. We hear NOISES. Somebody is messing with the door-lock. Moments later Edward enters the room, shuts the door behind him, flips on the light, then quickly crosses towards the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM, NIGHT

CU: A PAIR OF TWEEZERS pulling out pieces of lead from a bloody wound.

Edward sitting on a toilet, performing surgery on himself. Biting on a bloody towel, he suppresses his painful agony.

EXT. TREMO - STREET, NIGHT

Tremo looks like a ghost town. A police car is parked outside a convenience store.

INT. SAL'S CONVENIENCE STORE, NIGHT

SHERIFF ROBERT BROGDEN, JR. takes a report from SAL MARINARO, a heavy set man in his early sixties, owner of the stolen El Camino. In the background is the Sheriff's young deputy, EARL, twenty- something and skinny as a rail. Earl is a lot shrewder than he looks. Sheriff Robert, early fifties, is often fumbling, a bit hot-tempered, yet, there is an innocent, almost naive core to him.

SAL

I saw him, Bob. Musta been a city hoodlum, 'cause he got in there and got that son of a bitch hot wired in less than two seconds.

SHERIFF ROBERT

(taking notes)

'67 El Camino, light blue. License plate 228ZYX?

SAL

That's correct.

SHERIFF ROBERT

And you could identify him if you saw him again?

SAL

Sure as the sun beatin' down on this place tomorrow will heat it to a hundred and ten.

SHERIFF ROBERT

I'm gonna call in a sketch artist. I know every badge for five counties so there ain't no way this guy gets away without me hearing about it. We'll get your truck back, don't you worry Sal.

INT. NILES MANSION - BEDROOM, NIGHT

Sarah and Billy are in the midst of making love. Sarah's mind is somewhere else. Breathless, she pushes Billy to the side.

BILLY

What's the matter?

SARAH

I'm sorry ... its just... what about the gun? It has one of those things on top of it.

BILLY

A silencer.

SARAH

Only a killer would use something like that. Some kind of assassin.

Billy laughs, shakes his head.

BILLY

Assassin? That silencer is a poorly made homegrown device. Please. Trust me, Sarah. Chances are we're talking about some local cracker Joe. Nobody knows we're here and before you know it we'll be long gone and not a one 'll know what hit 'em...

Sarah remains silent.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Lets check this place out.

INT. NILES MANSION/CELLAR, DAY

Billy holds a flashlight as he pries the cellar door open. After several attempts it opens. Cautiously Billy descends. The space is cluttered with junk. He reaches out and dusts off a cast iron sculpture of a stork. One knee is broken but it still stands, almost three feet high. He turns to leave, but a large framed painting catches his attention. It's an African hunting scene. Several dozen books fall to the ground as Billy removes a couple of old suitcases blocking the view.

INT. NILES MANSION - NILES' BEDROOM, NIGHT

The door opens. Light pours in from the hallway as Sarah enters.

Next to a large book case is Niles' king-sized bed, a bureau and desk. She flips on the light taking it all in. On the bureau is a beat up old record player, a stack of old records next to it. Moments later classical music fills the room. Sarah sits down at the desk, starts rummaging through Niles' elaborate wooden letter box. Dust flies everywhere. She coughs and fans the air with her hand, as she opens one of its drawers and pulls out several letters.

INT. NILES MANSION - LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

Billy sets the large painting on top of the fireplace mantel, covering the shotgun. He stares at the painting for a moment, then exits.

INT. NILES MANSION - BEDROOM, NIGHT

Sarah sits at the desk, reading.

BILLY (O.S.)

Sarah?

SARAH

I'm in here.

Billy enters the bedroom and leans over Sarah's shoulder.

BILLY

What is it?

SARAH

They're letters... love letters from a woman. Very romantic.

BILLY

Great...I found a painting, might be worth something.

Sarah keeps reading.

SARAH

They had a child.

BILLY

A child?

SARAH

But she was married and... and she knows it's his but she can't tell anyone.

BILLY

Great. Last thing we need is somebody thinking they can get in on the money.

SARAH

This jerk didn't want to acknowledge his own kid. Listen to this...

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

"I know in my heart that this child is ours, no matter what you say, consummated in a moment that's special to me I beg you to acknowledge your son who, in your heart, you must know, is yours". I guess, she really loved him.

BILLY

Maybe it wasn't his.

SARAH

It was his. "And the most painful of all is the rejection of your love for me and for our baby..."

Sarah looks curiously at Billy. The record comes to an end and the needle crackles as it quits playing.

INT. NILES MANSION - BATHROOM, DAY

Billy finishes shaving, as Sarah enters the bathroom and hands Billy several sheets filled with the words "ELLEN NILES. Billy's studies the signatures.

BILLY

I don't think I could have done much better.

Sarah smiles. Suddenly, the doorbell RINGS. Billy and Sarah look at each other. Sarah checks her watch.

SARAH

Twelve noon on the nose. Talk about punctual.

EXT. NILES MANSION - PORCH, DAY

CAMERON BROGDEN is waiting on the porch. He's tall, very confident, strikingly good looking and well dressed. He checks his watch.

The front door opens and Billy appears in the doorway.

CAMERON

How do you do? You must be...

BILLY

...Billy. Ellen's friend.

Cameron extends his hand to Billy.

CAMERON

Cameron Brogden. It's good to meet you.

Cameron smiles sincerely.

INT. NILES MANSION - DINING ROOM, DAY

Sarah, wearing her jacket, Billy and Cameron sit at a huge mahogany dining table. Papers and documents are spread out all over the table. Cameron hands Sarah a piece of paper.

CAMERON

You need to sign right there... But first I'll need to see some picture ID: Birth-certificate, Passport, something like that. It's just a formality.

Sarah produces Ellen's drivers licence, hands it to Cameron, then, calm and collected, takes the paper and whips off an "Ellen Niles". Cameron looks at the licence, appears satisfied. A slight smile crosses Billy's face.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Ellen, I just wanted to express my deepest condolences. Your uncle had mentioned your parents' terrible tragedy just days before the lord took him as well. May their souls rest in peace.

SARAH

Thank you.

Cameron picks up a picture of a young Ellen and her "Uncle Niles." The young Ellen has dark hair like Sarah.

CAMERON

If you don't mind me asking, when was the last time you saw your uncle?

SARAH

Fifteen years ago, but you know... I was so young. I don't remember much.

Cameron nods. Although Sarah's response was correct, it came across a touch too prompt.

CAMERON

When did you last talk to him?

Sarah quickly glances at Billy, he doesn't know either. Sarah pretends to be in thought, trying to remember.

SARAH

Last time I talked to him?... I'm not really sure.

CAMERON

If my memory serves me correctly, he mentioned a telephone conversation with you, about a month ago?

SARAH
(thoughtful)
Yeah, that's sounds right...about a month ago. Around the time my parents died.

Satisfied, Cameron nods, sets the picture back down. Sarah wipes off the perspiration from her forehead. Billy notices.

BILLY
Let me get you a glass of water.

Billy gets up and disappears into the kitchen.

CAMERON
I apologize. I hope I'm not upsetting you any further.

SARAH
I'm ok. Thanks.

Billy returns with a glass of water. Sarah sips away.

CAMERON
Come on, let me show you around the property.

Sarah can't help herself:

SARAH
I have a... a question.

CAMERON
Of course?

SARAH
How much...what kind of inheritance, money are we talking about? I'm totally clueless.

Billy stares at Sarah. The question hangs in the air.

CAMERON
I'm not exactly sure. I'll forward you a complete list of assets, once I'm done with the assessment, but let's just say, for now, your uncle was a prominent man. We're talking, maybe middle seven figure range.

EXT. SOUTHERN LANDSCAPE, DAY

The sun beats down, as Cameron's 4X4 drives along a riverbed.

INT. CAMERON'S 4X4, DAY

Cameron drives, Sarah is in the passenger seat. Billy leans forward from the back.

CAMERON

The river marks the edge of the land.

Cameron stops the car.

EXT. SOUTHERN LANDSCAPE, DAY

Cameron, Sarah, and Billy exit the truck and start walking up a steep hill. The winds are fierce. Sarah tries to keep her hat and dress from being blown off.

CAMERON

At the top you'll have a good look at the place.

AT THE TOP OF THE HILL

Billy, Sarah and Cameron overlook the river. Woods and swamps in all directions. Some agricultural fields in between.

CAMERON

(pointing)

Right along there, that's the border. Not that anyone would ever dispute it.

Back toward the Mansion at the edge of a field, a tractor lies on its side. Sarah spots it.

SARAH

What's the turned over tractor doing there?

CAMERON

... that I'm afraid is where your uncle died. He passed out from the heat, flipped the tractor and struck his head.

Sarah looks away.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to be disrespectful.

The sun is hurting Sarah's eyes. She glances at Cameron, keeps her pose of gentility.

SARAH

Let's just go.

EXT. NILES MANSION, DAY

Standing by his SUV, Cameron shakes hands with them.

BILLY

How long will it take, to settle everything?

CAMERON

Once the court approves your documents we should be able to transfer the cash accounts in two to three days. I can take care of selling this place. Of course you may want to consider hanging on to it... It sure is beautiful.

SARAH

It is, but it's not for us. Thanks.

Cameron steps inside his 4X4.

CAMERON

I'll check in with you tomorrow. I'll do my best to make things as easy as possible. Have a good evening, folks.

BILLY

Thanks very much.

Sarah and Billy watch as Cameron's 4X4 disappears.

SARAH

That guy makes me nervous.

BILLY

You did great. Except, you shouldn't have pushed so hard about the old man's money.

SARAH

What's the difference? The only person that knew what Ellen really looked like died on that tractor. And you said I did good.

BILLY

I said you did great.

INT. CAMERON'S OFFICE, DAY

A large, well-appointed office. Leather furniture on plush carpet, paintings on the walls. In the center of the room we see a big polished wooden desk with Cameron seated behind it. Sheriff Robert bursts in.

SHERIFF ROBERT

You go over to Niles'?

Cameron holds up an envelope marked "Niles".

CAMERON

I got their file right here.

SHERIFF ROBERT

What were they like?

Cameron hesitates for a minute.

CAMERON
Seemed like a couple of nice young folks.

SHERIFF ROBERT
Sure. You can afford to be nice when
you're getting all that money.

Cameron puts the file into his desk drawer, slams it shut.

INT. JOE'S DINER, EVENING

The diner resembles an old fashioned Denny's. Cameron and Sheriff Robert sit eating in a secluded booth.

SHERIFF ROBERT
Did you hear Sal's truck was stolen?

CAMERON
No kidding. Well, its the only El Camino
in town. Shouldn't be too hard to track.

SHERIFF ROBERT
That's just the thing, it up and
disappeared.

CAMERON
I'll keep my eyes open.

ALICE, the waitress, mid-thirties, a charming, typical southern "belle" approaches Sheriff Robert and Cameron. Currently single, she likes to show off her long legs.

ALICE
Is everything all right with you boys?

Cameron flashes his dazzling smile.

CAMERON
It's just great, thanks.

Alice takes the plates, smiles back at Cameron.

ALICE
You call me if you need anything.

Sheriff Robert watches as Alice saunters away.

SHERIFF ROBERT
She's got the hots for you.

CAMERON
Please.

SHERIFF ROBERT
The foreigners mention what they were
going to do with the inheritance?

CAMERON

Didn't say.

SHERIFF ROBERT

Don't it strike you the least bit strange? Your Niles' attorney all these years and he didn't leave you a dime, and instead he leaves all that scratch to some girl he barely knew.

CAMERON

Niles paid me my hourly price. It was fair and hardly cheap. And as for Ellen, she has a right to his equity by birth. It's called inheritance Bob.

SHERIFF ROBERT

(getting up)

Anyway, gotta finish up another report. Burglary yesterday over at the Lazy Inn.

CAMERON

Sounds like you got a crime wave on your hands.

SHERIFF ROBERT

Yep. Plenty of action lately. And all started up since Niles kicked.

CAMERON

But that was an accident.

SHERIFF ROBERT

I'm starting to wonder. No one was asking for a coroner's report. Maybe I should look into it.

Sheriff Robert starts to get up from the table.

CAMERON

Do what you need to do, Bob.

SHERIFF ROBERT

I just want everything...straight. For the record, y'know.

He exits, giving a quick casual wave.

EXT. NILES MANSION, NIGHT

A car approaches the front porch. Billy, dozing away wakes up and stands. The engine stops and an elderly woman emerges.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Good evening folks. My name's Belle. I used to be Mr. Niles' house keeper.

BILLY
I'm Billy... Ellen's boyfriend. Did you
need something from the house?

Belle approaches the porch.

INT. NILES MANSION - BEDROOM, NIGHT

From the bedroom window Sarah looks down onto the porch
watching Belle and Billy. Billy looks up, spots Sarah.

BELLE (V.O.)
I baby sat for Mr. Niles years and
years ago when Ellen was visiting.
I bet she'll remember me.

Billy and Belle sit down.

INT. NILES MANSION - LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

Sarah climbs down the stairs and moves toward the kitchen.
She stops as she sees a picture of Niles and Ellen on a
bureau. Sarah glances at the picture and pulls her hair back
the way Ellen used to wear it.

EXT. NILES MANSION - PORCH, NIGHT

BELLE
What did you say your name was, again?

BILLY
Billy.

Belle reaches inside her handbag, pulls out a pen and a small
scrap of paper and begins to write.

BELLE
Oh, Billy. I've been coming here,
every other week for more than forty
years, keeping this place tidy. He'd
never would've had a home cooked meal if
it weren't for me. He was never married,
you know.

Belle finishes writing, holding the paper out to Billy.

BELLE (CONT'D)
I wouldn't mind keeping this place clean
for you. If you might need me.

BILLY
That's real kind but we're only gonna be
here a short time.

At that awkward moment, Sarah appears with a tray holding
three glasses of ice tea. Excited, Belle stands up to get a
better look at her.

BELLE
Oh, Ellen. Look at you. Pretty as ever.
You remember me?

Sarah smiles, sits down.

SARAH
I'm sorry. I was...too young to remember,
won't you have some tea?

BELLE
You've grown, but you haven't changed a
bit. You look just exactly like Mr.
Niles.

Belle continues to stare at Sarah. Sarah, uncomfortably looks on. Billy smiles.

BELLE (CONT'D)
I never thought it'd be the last time I
saw him. It was so sudden. I can almost
feel him watching us.

Belle pulls out a handkerchief and wipes tear from her eye.

SARAH
I know how you feel.

Sarah reaches out and hugs Belle, looking at Billy with a helpless expression. Belle gets her composure back.

BELLE
How strange.

SARAH
What?

BELLE
You used to have a little beauty mark
right there on your left cheek.

Sarah looks at Billy.

SARAH
Musta outgrown it.

BELLE
Yes, well, I better get going. You young
people must have things to do. It was
wonderful to see you, Ellen.

SARAH
You too, Belle.

Sarah and Belle get up, hug awkwardly one more time. Eventually, Belle lets go of Sarah then turns. Billy helps her down the porch.

BELLE
 Billy, right? You're good people I can
 tell. You take good care of that little
 girl now...

Belle gets in her car. Billy and Sarah watch as its tail-
 lights disappear into the night.

SARAH
 Beauty mark.

BILLY
 I wouldn't worry about it.

EXT. NILES MANSION - DIRT ROAD, DAY

A police car approaches the old mansion.

INT. POLICE CAR - DIRT ROAD, DAY

Sheriff Robert drives. Earl sits in the passenger seat.
 Sheriff Robert hands him a camera with a long telephoto lens
 attached to it.

SHERIFF ROBERT
 Now, I want you to get some good
 pictures of the two of them.

EARL
 Why?

SHERIFF ROBERT
 Just do it, okay?

Earl shrugs and pops two mouth full's of chewing tobacco into
 his mouth.

EXT. NILES MANSION - PORCH, DAY

Sarah, sitting on the porch, looks up and sees the police
 cruiser nearing. Moments later, Billy steps out of the front
 door, leans against the entrance columns.

SARAH
 Visitors around the clock.

BILLY
 What the fuck do they want?

INT. POLICE CAR, DAY

The car comes to a halt in front of the large house. Sheriff
 Robert steps out of the car and moves towards Billy. Earl
 starts clicking away, taking pictures. Sarah notices and
 turns back into the house.

CU: TELEPHOTO-LENS POV: CLICK. CLICK.

EXT. NILES MANSION - PORCH, DAY

SHERIFF ROBERT
Sheriff Robert Brogden. Nice to
make your acquaintance.

He climbs the stairs toward Billy and shakes his hand.

BILLY
What can I do for you?

SHERIFF ROBERT
We're looking for a stolen car. An old El
Camino. Light blue, metallic. Don't
suppose y'all would know something about
it.

BILLY
Sorry, we just arrived from out of town.

SHERIFF ROBERT
Sometimes kids'll take a car out for a
joy ride and dump it in the fields.

EXT. POLICE CAR, DAY

Earl steps out of the patrol-car, leans against the hood. He attempts to spit a wad of tobacco juice onto the ground, but the brown saliva won't separate from his mouth. Distracted, Billy watches. Earl spits again, succeeds finally.

EXT. NILES MANSION - PORCH, DAY

BILLY
Wish I could help, but I haven't seen it.

Sheriff Robert glances at the barn.

SHERIFF ROBERT
You don't mind if we look around
the property, do you?

BILLY
Not at all.

SHERIFF ROBERT
'appreciate it.

BILLY
No problem.

Quickly, Billy walks back into the house.

EXT. NILES - DRIVEWAY, DAY

Earl joins the Sheriff as they slowly move towards the barn.

SHERIFF ROBERT
Did you get them pictures?

EARL
Oh yeah. What are you up to Boss?

SHERIFF ROBERT
Routine is all, Earl. Always check where
you least expect to find anything. That's
what my old man taught me.

INT. NILES MANSION - DINING ROOM, DAY

Billy enters, hastily moves to the bureau and retrieves the
gun. He turns. Sarah is standing in front of Billy locking
eyes with him. Billy is on the edge.

SARAH
What are you doing?

Billy checks the cylinder, closes it.

BILLY
Nobody is gonna get hurt. But we can't
afford to let that hillbilly arrest us.

SARAH
You're crazy!

He tucks the gun into his pants, sidesteps Sarah, exits.
Sarah rushes towards the window, watches the action unfold.

EXT. NILES MANSION - BARN, DAY

Sheriff Robert and Earl stop at the yellow convertible. The
Sheriff nods to Earl. Earl pulls out a paper-pad and pencil,
writes down the license plate, then follows the Sheriff.

AT THE DRIVEWAY

Walking swiftly toward the barn, Billy is closing in on the
two police officers.

AT THE BARN

Sheriff Robert and Earl arrive at the barn door.

SHERIFF ROBERT
Well, what are you waiting for? Open it
up.

Earl grabs the iron door handle and slowly slides the heavy
door open, inch by inch.

SARAH (O.S.)
Honey?

Sarah has stepped onto the porch wearing her jeans jacket. Billy turns, stops. He stands halfway between the house and the barn, fingering the gun. The tension is about to climax when a car comes traveling down the dirt road. As Earl struggles to open the door, Billy squints at the approaching car. Billy pulls his shirt tail over the pistol.

AT THE BARN

Sheriff Robert spots the advancing car and starts walking back toward the house. Earl stops pulling on the door and follows Sheriff Robert. Through the partially opened barn, the covered El Camino is visible. The 4x4 comes to a halt as Cameron gets out of his car.

CAMERON

Bob, what are you doing bothering these nice people?

SHERIFF ROBERT

I was looking for Sal's truck.

CAMERON

Come on, Robert. You think you'll find it around here? Not to mention you need a warrant to search people's property.

SHERIFF ROBERT

Just making sure.

(to Billy)

Sorry to bother you. Let's go, Earl. See ya later, Cameron.

Sheriff Robert moves toward his cruiser. Earl follows.

EXT. NILES MANSION, DAY

Cameron and Billy walk towards the front porch where Sarah has been watching.

CAMERON

I'm sorry about our overzealous Sheriff. Been like that since we were kids.

BILLY

Schoolyard pals?

CAMERON

Well in fact, he's my brother.

BILLY

Brother! Of course. Same last name! Brogden!

CAMERON

Our father was the local sheriff for many years. I think Bob's just trying to keep up.

.....

CAMERON (CONT'D)

There's been a rash of crime around here lately. Tremo is a small town, drunk teenagers 'bout the worst thing we get.

Cameron and Billy arrive at the porch. Sarah steps into the frame, greets Cameron.

SARAH

How are you doing Mr. Brogden?

CAMERON

Doing just fine. Thanks for asking. Now, the reason for me stopping by... there's been a hitch in your case.

Billy's face drops. Sarah looks worried.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Why don't we all go inside and sit down?

AT THE BARN: Someone is watching Sarah, Billy and Cameron.

INT. NILES MANSION - LIVING ROOM, DAY

The three enter, sit down. The gun pokes into Billy's back.

CAMERON

It's not that bad, really. It's just ...well, some guy in Las Vegas has filed an injunction.

BILLY

An injunction? Who?

CAMERON

I don't know, he's... he's claiming he's Niles son.

SARAH

Las Vegas? Very strange.

Billy and Sarah are uneasy. Cameron notices.

CAMERON

Yes, it is strange. My gut feeling is, most likely, he's somebody just looking for a quick pay off.

SARAH

I don't get it, doesn't the will leave everything to me?

CAMERON

Yes, it does. However, if Niles didn't know he had a son, and then found out about it, and this individual could somehow prove that Niles had some intent to change his will ...

There is an awkward silence.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Option two... I suppose if you could prove that while Niles knew about this son and still left him nothing...

Billy and Sarah look at each other.

SARAH

Excuse me for a second.

INT. NILES MANSION - BEDROOM, NIGHT

Sarah steps into Niles bedroom and starts searching the desk. A few moments later she finds what she is looking for.

INT. NILES MANSION - DINING ROOM, DAY

Cameron reads Belle's letter addressed to the old Niles, the same letter Sarah discovered several nights ago.

CAMERON

Yes... this is very telling. I'm glad you showed this to me. It'll definitely make your case a lot stronger,...but you need something more.

BILLY

More?

CAMERON

Well, it's not his letter. What you need is something he's written, that specifically says he wants all of his estate going to Ellen, despite any other claims.

BILLY

What are the odds of finding that?

Cameron stands up, puts the letter into his briefcase.

CAMERON

No reason to get concerned. You see, the burden of proof is primarily on him, the rival party.... will take a little more time, but 'round here there ain't nothing but time.

EXT. NILES MANSION - BARN, NIGHT

Billy sits inside the El Camino and turns the ignition.

EXT. NILES MANSION - PORCH, NIGHT

Sarah steps outside and shouts at Billy who is driving by.

SARAH
Where are you going?

BILLY
I'm getting rid of this damn car.

Sarah watches as Billy drives the El Camino into the woods.

EXT. WOODS, NIGHT

Billy steers the El Camino through the woods, toward a swamp-area. He stops at the edge of a muddy lake, steps out of the truck, then reaches back inside the car. He is about to shift the transmission into DRIVE when he notices a laminated card stuck near the drivers seat. He picks it up, pulls out a cigarette lighter, holds the flame close. It reads *LA CASH CHECKING*. "Edward Romero". Billy stashes the card into his pocket and leans back into the car. Moments later, the El Camino rolls into the lake, slowly disappearing. Billy waits until the taillights expire and walks away.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE, DAY

Sarah exits the convenience store with a bag of groceries. She gets into the yellow convertible, puts the bag onto the back seat. Suddenly her head is yanked backwards. It's Edward, firmly pulling her hair. Sarah is about to scream.

EDWARD
(calm, collected)
Start the car or I'll break your neck.

Without hesitation Sarah slides the key into the ignition, while peeking into the rearview mirror.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
Drive.

EXT. STREET - TREMO, DAY

The convertible pulls out and disappears out of sight.

INT. CONVERTIBLE - OUTSKIRTS - TREMO, DAY

Sarah is at the wheel, petrified. Edward, in pain, moves to the front passenger seat. Wearing a odd Hawaiian shirt, he looks surprisingly good. One wouldn't know he was shot only days earlier. He stares at Sarah with a menacing smile.

EDWARD
You look real good, baby. Far cry from what I remember. Truly amazing this rehabilitation stuff. I'm proud of you. So, what do you want me to call you? Sarah? Or should I say, "Ellen"?

Edward smiles, looks out the window.

SARAH

Eddie...what...what are you doing here??

EDWARD

You think I'm stupid?

SARAH

You gotta believe me, I don't know what you're talking about. We're just passing through, paying our respects, that's all.

EDWARD

Yeah, sure.

Without warning Edward strikes Sarah across the face. Temporarily, Sarah loses control of the car, which zigzags on and off the shoulder.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Keep your eyes on the road, sweetie!

Sarah regains command of the convertible. She touches her face, notices blood dripping from her nose.

SARAH

I don't understand. Why you're doing this?

EDWARD

You know, I fucked Ellen right up the ass, she started singing about her wealthy folks, the charming uncle down in sweet home Alabama. And when you and the new boyfriend started heading south, I figured you weren't here for a memorial service. "Paying respects" my ass is what I say.

Edward laughs. Sarah looks like she is ready to throw up.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Let me ask you. Them drug meetings you go to, don't they teach you about making amends to people you did wrong?

SARAH

What?

He jabs lightly but insultingly at the side of her face.

EDWARD

I follow your little ass nineteen hundred fucking miles to this one horse hicktown, next thing I know I got a bullet in my gut.

Edward lifts his shirt and reveals his bandaged abdomen.

SARAH

Oh my God. It was an accident. I fell...
I'm so sorry.

EDWARD

'appreciate the apology, baby.

He lights up a cigarette. Sarah remains silent.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Pull over.

EXT. OASIS INN MOTEL PARKING-LOT, DAY

Sarah comes to a stop in the parking lot of a small motel. A sign above the front office reads: "Oasis Inn. Vacancy".

EDWARD

What's the little fucker's name? The
boyfriend you're dragging along?

SARAH

He's just a guy. He's nobody.

As she speaks Edward has produced some white powder which he is deftly packing into a pipe. He lights it, takes a drag.

EDWARD

Now you.

He forces her to smoke the pipe, relighting it for her. Now he leans into Sarah and touches her cheek.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

One more time. What's his name?

SARAH

Billy...

EDWARD

Billy. Ok. Now, you keep it nice and
quiet about me bumping into you...

He slowly starts squeezing Sarah face tight, while pushing his thumb into her bloody nose. She screams in agony.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

...otherwise little Billy's the first one
to go. I'm here to collect. On Ellen's
behalf, so to speak. You follow me?

SARAH

(shaking, desperate)
The lawyer says it'll be a few more days
before he's going to transfer the assets.

Edward lets go of Sarah's face.

EDWARD

And by the way. I want my piece back.
Come by tomorrow. Any time between noon
and three, Room 116...

Edward simply looks at her. Sarah doesn't know what to say or do. He mock-tenderly touches her chin.

SARAH

I'll be there.

Edward pulls out a small plastic bag and drops it between Sarah's legs.

EDWARD

Just that you know, I'm with you, Sarah.
I know, you got your head all mixed up
from all that rehab mambo-jumbo. I say,
treat yourself. Life's short. Enjoy the
moment. Know what I mean?

Edward turns to the backseat, grabs the bag of groceries, then slowly drags himself out of the car. He slams the passenger door shut, smirks as he leans into the car.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Man... impossible to tell you two birds
apart. (Pause). See you tomorrow.

Terrified, Sarah floors the gas-pedal and looks into the back-view mirror, as Edward moves out of focus.

EXT. TREMO - POLICE STATION, DAY

Sheriff Robert pulls up next to a COUNTY POLICE CAR. Carrying an envelope, he proceeds into the station.

INT. POLICE STATION, DAY

Sheriff Robert enters his sparse office. Sal is sitting next to a desk, talking with a young female sketch artist, MEL.

SHERIFF ROBERT

Good afternoon, Sal.

SAL

Afternoon. Hot enough for you?

SHERIFF ROBERT

I suppose, I suppose.

Sheriff Robert looks at the sketch. It's taking shape.

SHERIFF ROBERT (CONT'D)

Mel, I was starting to think you weren't
coming.

MEL

Come on, Robert. A stolen truck in Tremo ain't exactly the crime of the century.

Sheriff Robert opens the envelope and takes out several snap shots of Billy and Sarah. He shows the pictures to Sal.

SHERIFF ROBERT

Is this him?

Sal takes the photographs and studies them...

SAL

That ain't him, Bob, but I seen the girl. She comes by the store every so often. Matter of fact she bought a bag full of groceries just a few hours ago.

SHERIFF ROBERT

Are you sure it ain't him?

SAL

One hundred percent. Why? What'd they do?

SHERIFF ROBERT

Oh, nothin'. Just hopin' for a grounder.

Disappointed, Sheriff Robert puts the pictures back into the envelope. Mel shows Sal her drawing.

SAL

Yeah, yeah... his face was a little rounder, a little fuller.

Mel continues to make the changes. Sheriff Robert looks hard at the picture, as Edward's face starts to show.

EXT. NILES MANSION - DRIVEWAY, DAY

The convertible is parked in the driveway. Sarah, tormented, pulls down the sun-visor, checks her face in the vanity-mirror. She pulls out a handkerchief and removes the dried blood from below her nose. The small plastic bag packed with dope sits on the passenger seat.

CU: Pipe, as Sarah lights up.

Suddenly there is a knock on the car-window. Sarah screams. Its Billy, looking straight at her, puzzled. Sarah is still holding the pipe. Billy opens the car door and slides in. Tense silence follows.

BILLY

I thought you were done with that. Where did you...?

Sarah, trying to act 'normal' as best as she can.

SARAH

I'm sorry. I found a little with Ellen's stuff. That and the pipe. You know, with all the shit that we're dealing with, I feel like its ok to have a little... fun. You're mad?

BILLY

I'm not mad. Hey, if it makes you happy.

SARAH

I want us both to be happy.

BILLY

Alright. Then I deserve to have a little fun as well, don't you think?

SARAH

What do you mean?

Billy reaches out and takes the pipe and the lighter from her hands. Sarah is unsure, nervous.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What are you doing? Are you sure about this? Last thing I wanna do is get you hooked on dope.

BILLY

Not to worry. Let's party together. Just like one time, ok?

Sarah hesitates.

SARAH

Ok.

Billy lights up the pipe, inhales. Sarah watches.

BILLY

That...is pretty good.

A big blissful look comes over Billy's face. He kisses her. Sarah responds, kisses him back, as the two drop into oblivion.

INT. NILES MANSION - BEDROOM, NIGHT

Billy eyes are wide open while Sarah appears to be sound asleep. Several moments pass. Then:

BILLY

There is a way out of this.

Sarah slowly opens her eyes.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Remember when I said that everybody has a history? I used to forge documents for a living.

SARAH

You what?

BILLY

Back in Vegas I worked with this friend of my brother's. Dean. Very cool guy, really taught me stuff. We forged passports, birth, death certificates, pink-slips, insurance claims, you name it. He had a fully equipped trailer in his backyard. Let me tell you, that trailer was something else. Super high tech. Anyway, there was this girl I knew from high-school. Long story short: Prom-night she crashes her mom's car into a casino. Right on the strip. Put to icing on the cake she pulls out a fake ID. Get it? Well, that was the end of it. FBI and what not. I did a year in juvenile hall, then six months in jail.

Sarah can't believe her ears.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Point is, I was thinking about taking a closer look at Niles' letters. The problem is, if I get caught... I'm going away for a long time.

SARAH

So, what, you're like a forger? A scam artist. What the ...?

BILLY

Not anymore. That's in the past.

Sarah turns over.

SARAH

And what do you call us being here? Its a scam. Billy, you say that your mother is a minister and runs a wedding-chapel. And what about your brother and this business thing in LA? I've never seen you call him once. Do you really expect me to believe any of it?

BILLY

Now wait a minute. I said my mom used to be a minister. She's retired now...

SARAH

Stop it. I'm not an idiot, you know. I don't care about what you used to do, your *history*... Actually, the less you say, the better. I like you for who you are. For some very bizarre reason I even trust you. Just... don't lie anymore.

There is long pause. Then:

BILLY

I was only trying to find a quick and easy way out of this.

SARAH

I think we should get out of here. That's quick and easy. Ellen's dead. Stealing her money... Billy, nothing is right about any of this.

It's a delicate situation. After a moment:

BILLY

We're this close and you're doing really good. I say, let's play along a bit longer, see what happens. If it gets too dicey, we split. What do you think?

Sarah hesitates.

SARAH

Let's sleep on it.

Billy smiles, kisses her. He notices a cut on Sarah's lip.

BILLY

What happened to your lip?

SARAH

I bit on it. Had a bad dream.

A little to prompt of an answer. Suddenly her head pops up.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Did you hear that?

BILLY

What?

SARAH

There's something out there.

Sarah jumps out of bed and pokes her head into the hallway.

HALLWAY

Sarah toward Niles' bedroom then turns back to Billy, her face ashen. She holds her finger to her mouth. Billy grabs a flashlight off the night stand and joins her.

NILES BEDROOM

A DARK FIGURE has lifted up a few floor boards.

HALLWAY

Billy aims his flashlight at the figure. POP! Billy turns on the flashlight.

NILES BEDROOM

The INTRUDER looks up. He's on his hands and knees, his eyes glow, as the light reflects off his pupils. He's short and stocky, with long dark hair...

BILLY (O.S.)

Hey!

...and the intruder is gone.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Sarah, turn on the light!

Sarah searches for the light switch.

SARAH

I can't find it!

Suddenly there's a noise as Billy and Sarah watch the figure jump out the open window. Quickly, the two move back toward their bedroom.

BILLY

Stay inside and lock the door!

Billy darts down the stairs. Sarah slams the bedroom door.

EXT. NILES MANSION, NIGHT

The intruder leaps onto the porch roof then down to the ground. He doesn't miss a beat but he unintentionally drops a VIDEO TAPE, as he escapes.

INT. NILES MANSION - DINING ROOM, NIGHT

Billy rushes down the stairs, goes to the bureau and removes the pistol.

EXT. NILES MANSION - PORCH, NIGHT

Billy storms out of the house. The intruder jumps on a dirt bike nearby, fires it up. Billy aims the gun but hesitates.

The intruder races away and disappears into the woods. Billy notices the video tape lying in the dirt.

INT. NILES MANSION - BEDROOM, NIGHT

Billy and Sarah stand around the open floor boards. Several hundred dollar bills litter the floor.

BILLY

That guy knew exactly where the old man kept his stash.

Billy kneels down, points his flashlight underneath the floor boards and discovers several gay porno magazines.

SARAH

...and his "personal" secrets.

INT. NILES MANSION - LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

Billy pops the video tape into the VCR, presses play.

CU: TV. Blurry home-video images. Two naked men on a large plush bed are kissing. It's the Intruder and Niles Zachary. The camera zooms in on Zachery Niles' face, as the Intruder "disappears below" to please old Zachery.

VOICE (O.S.)

We're having fun now, aren't we Zachary?

Another scene. This time Niles and another man, dressed in eighteenth century wig and white make-up, are tied to a contraption inside a phony candlelit dungeon. Classical music plays in the background as a hooded figure in black leather enters and whips the chained men.

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

Who is your master, you sissies? Who is your master?

Billy hits the remote, turns off the TV set. Billy and Sarah look at each other.

BILLY

Well, he was your uncle..

SARAH

Very funny...

INT. JOE'S DINER, DAY

Sheriff Robert sits at the counter talking to JOE, early sixties, wearing a stained cooks uniform. Joe also owns the place. The sketch of Edward sits on the counter, the pictures of Billy and Sarah next to it.

JOE

Never seen the mean looking one. But think I've seen them around. Those are the kids staying out at Niles' house, right? The jackpot winners.

Sheriff Robert puts the pictures back into his envelope. Alice checks the ticket spindle, addresses Joe.

ALICE

Joe, you're going to take care of them orders or do I have to go back there myself?

JOE

Just talking to the Sheriff, doll.

Earl enters the Diner, carrying a folder.

ALICE

Bob, is your brother seeing anyone?

SHERIFF ROBERT

No, he's still Tremo's most eligible bachelor. I'll mention you asked though.

ALICE

I wish you would.

Earl arrives and takes the seat next to Sheriff.

EARL

I ain't seein' no one, Alice.

ALICE

I "ain't" teaching pre-school.

EARL

Excuse me?

SHERIFF ROBERT

She's saying you're wet behind the ears, son.

EARL

You don't know what you're missing, Alice.

Alice rolls her eyes and moves off to her other customers.

JOE

These kids in some kind of trouble Bob?

SHERIFF ROBERT

No, no. Routine police work is all, Joe.

Something catches on fire in the kitchen. Joe takes off running.

EARL
I've got something important to relay to
you, Sheriff..

SHERIFF ROBERT
Well, ... what is it?

EARL
I got what you've been waiting for.

SHERIFF ROBERT
Yes? Earl, what am I waiting for?? Spit
it out!

EARL
Sheriff, they faxed us the Coroner's
report.

Earl pushes the report over to the Sheriff, who hastily opens
the envelope. Earl can't resist revealing the highlight.

EARL (CONT'D)
It rules out heat stroke as the cause of
death. It says he died from suffocation.
Now ain't that a pisser?

Sheriff Robert studies the report.

SHERIFF ROBERT
I'll be damned. I got myself
a murder in Tremo.

INT. MOTEL ROOM, DAY

Edward lies in bed, smoking, watching TV. Wrestling. There is
a KNOCK. Edward quickly get up, peeks through security-hole.
It's Sarah. Edward opens the door, pulls Sarah inside.

EDWARD
Glad you could make it.

He steps up to her, reaches inside Sarah's jacket and pulls
out his gun. Edward checks the pistol, stares at Sarah.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
You know, first you forget to say "I'm
sorry". Now, not even a "thank you"?

Sarah doesn't understand.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
My little present to you, yesterday. That
was prime cut.

SARAH
Thanks.

She looks around the room not knowing what to say. Then:

SARAH (CONT'D)

I thought you might wanna know... this whole thing turns out to have lots of kinks. It could take months.

EDWARD

Really? Well, you just have to tell that lawyer you need the money now. You're Ellen Niles, its your money baby, right?

SARAH

What if I can't?

Edward moves close, touches her hair. Sarah is petrified.

EDWARD

Don't say you can't. You can. You'll do as I say and all will be good.

SARAH

I got the gun like you asked.

Edward doesn't respond.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I better leave.

EDWARD

Already? It does get awful lonely 'round here. Let's play a little...huh? What do you say?

Edward starts kissing her. He murmurs to her seductively, interrupting the kisses.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Back in the day...when Ellen was around...you was always looking at me kinda friendly like...curious sorta...

SARAH

Stop it! Don't. I don't...

Edward grabs her shoulders and throws her onto the bed. His looks are stone cold.

EDWARD

There is lots of swamps around here. Nobody'd find you in a million years. You better start bein' cooperative.

SARAH

What...?

Edward unbuckles his belt, unzips his pants and grabs Sarah's wrists, pushing his free hand into her pants.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Leave me alone!! Don't... I can't...
Don't do this please....

EDWARD

Don't fuck with me you good for nothing
crack bitch! You already got one foot in
the grave. You'd best concentrate on
transferrin' some of them assets into my
fucking wallet, or I swear I'll kill the
both of you.

Attempting to fight Edward off, Sarah scratches his face.
It's of no use as he pushes her down into the bed.

SARAH

Get off!!!!

Edward continues his assault. Tears cover Sarah's face. In
the background the TV roars as wrestling match comes to a
brutal climax.

DREAM SEQUENCE

EXT. DAY, DESERTED LAKE - MONTAGE OVER MUSIC -

A hot summer day. Overcast skies. We see Billy and Sarah
swinging high above the smooth waters of an abandoned mining
lake via a make shift swing. Dressed in cut-off jeans, both
are laughing, teasing each other, while swaying back and
forth below the vast branches of large overgrown trees,
reaching beyond the edge of the lake. Eventually both release
their grip as their skinny bodies plunge into the blue water.
We watch as the two are swimming below the surface of the
lake ascending toward the blurry sunlight. Moments of joy and
young innocent love follow. Billy and Sarah are necking each
other while embracing and kissing, holding on to one another,
subsiding and rising between the water surface. Lounging
inside a car's inner tube, Sarah puffs a cigarette, blowing
smoke into Billy's face. She laughs innocently. Both giggle
away and engage in a mock fight as Billy splashes water onto
Sarah, rocking the rubber tube. Ultimately the black
makeshift lounge-chair tips over as the two disappear into
the depths of the lake.

INT. NILES MANSION - LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

CU: BILLY, asleep, dreaming away. Except the TV's static the
house appears pitch dark. Billy's eyes open. He hears the
sound of food being prepared.

INT. NILES MANSION - KITCHEN, NIGHT

CU: Two pieces of chicken frying inside a pan.

Trying to forget what she went through with Eddie, Sarah,
tense, mechanically prepares a meal. Moments later Billy
walks into the kitchen.

BILLY

Wow. Real home cookin'. You're a real chef.

SARAH

I got lots of talents you don't know about.

BILLY

What's that supposed to mean?

SARAH

I mean we only just met for God's sake.

BILLY

Well, I think we're starting to know each other pretty good. (Pause) Where have you been?

SARAH

Went into town while you were sleeping. Store was closed. I drove around, got lost. I hate this place. Not one god damn supermarket.

Billy sits down at the kitchen table. After a moment:

BILLY

You're ok? You look... stressed out.

SARAH

It's the heat.

INTERCUT

INT. POLICE STATION, NIGHT

Cameron is sitting at his brother's desk, glancing at his files. He picks up the phone, dials.

INTERCUT

INT. NILES MANSION - DINING ROOM, NIGHT

Sarah turns away from Billy, runs into the dining-room to pick up the phone.

SARAH

Hello?

CAMERON

Ellen, its Cameron Brogden on the line. Sorry to call so late at night, but, I have some, well, disturbing news.

Sarah coughs into the phone.

SARAH

Excuse me. What is it?

CAMERON

I've had a look at a coroner's report concerning your uncle and it appears that he didn't die of natural causes. It looks like he was suffocated. Its been ruled a homicide. I'm terribly sorry.

Sarah pauses. Billy steps into the room, listening. Suddenly a wave of nausea comes over Sarah. She puts her hand over her mouth, as vomit spews from between her fingers. She drops the phone and doubles over.

CAMERON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Ellen...Ellen? Are you alright?

Ellen gestures to Billy to stay back as she gets to her feet.

SARAH

I'm just not feeling well right now.

CAMERON

Miss, I realize this must come as a shock to you...

SARAH

... who would want to kill that sweet old man?

CAMERON (V.O.)

I wish I knew the answer. Another thing: Please be advised that the sheriff might stop by tonight.

SARAH

The Sheriff?? What does he want?

CAMERON (V.O.)

He'll probably examine the tractor, ask a few routine questions.

SARAH

Well, I didn't kill him if that's where you're going with this. And neither did Billy.

CAMERON (V.O.)

Ellen, I had no intention of even remotely suggesting such an indecent premise. I'm truly sorry. Listen, don't you worry. I promise you I'll do my very best and handle this unfortunate situation. Meanwhile, let's keep the conversation to the parties involved, let's not upset the Sheriff any further, if you know what I mean.

SARAH
Yeah, well, thanks for calling...

CAMERON (V.O.)
It's the part of my profession I hate,
breaking such awful news. Ellen, I'll be
prayin' for you and I'll keep you posted.

Sarah hangs up the receiver. Concerned, Billy approaches Sarah, handing her a towel.

SARAH
Well, this whole deal just got a whole
lot more fucked up than it was already...

BILLY
What?

Sarah smiles a bitter smile.

SARAH
Sheriff 'Bob' ordered a coroner's report
and just got the results. Niles' death is
now officially a homicide. Excuse me...

She rushes for the nearest bathroom.

BILLY
Fuck!

EXT. NILES MANSION - PORCH, NIGHT

Billy and Sarah sit on the porch, waiting. In the distance a police-car slowly drives into view.

SARAH
Here they come.

Sheriff Robert and Earl step out of the police car and walk up to the porch. Billy and Sarah sit there, doing their best imitation of a decent rural couple out of American Gothic.

SHERIFF ROBERT
Folks. Sorry to bother you at this hour.

SARAH
What's going on?

SHERIFF ROBERT
As of today this plot of land's a crime
scene in a homicide investigation. Me and
Earl are gonna do some dusting for
fingerprints on your Uncle's tractor. We
thought to be polite we should pay you
kids a visit, first.

Billy gets up.

SHERIFF ROBERT (CONT'D)
Where you goin' son?

BILLY
Can't wait to see a team of crack law
enforcement professionals at work...

EXT. FIELD, NIGHT

Flashlights expose the tractor Cameron pointed out earlier to Sarah and Billy. Two officers dust it for fingerprints.

Sheriff Robert, Earl and Billy are in the background.

SHERIFF ROBERT
How are we doing boys?

OFFICER #1
Looks like we've got a whole bunch of
clean prints.

BILLY
Cracked the case, Sheriff?

SHERIFF ROBERT
Still investigating. You don't mind if we
take a few fingerprints, do you?

BILLY
No. Make yourself at home.

SHERIFF ROBERT
This time we need yours and Miss Niles.
If you two could fall by the station
tomorrow morning it'd sure be
appreciated.

BILLY
Fingerprints? What for?

SHERIFF ROBERT
Tradition here in Tremo, kinda a keepsake
to remember you by. Ain't that right
Earl?

Earl smirks away. Billy stares at the Sheriff with contempt.

SHERIFF ROBERT (CONT'D)
Seriously. What do you think, smartass? I
need your prints to see if they match
what we just collected. So we can crack
the case. Get it?

BILLY
You got some fucking nerve to show up
here in the middle of the night...

SHERIFF ROBERT

... now, don't get yourself all worked up, boy. Just doin' my job. Be at the station ten AM sharp. Have a good night.

COLLAGE OVER MUSIC

A series of "MOMENTS", showing the principal characters, entrenched in thought, contemplating. The idea is that of a brief time-out.

- 1) EXT. TREMO - DESERTED, NIGHT. Establishing.
- 2) INT. OFFICE, NIGHT: Cameron, in his dimly lit office, feet up on his desk, smoking a cigar, staring out of the window into the dark.
- 3) INT. BEDROOM - SOMEWHERE IN TREMO, NIGHT: Sheriff Robert's, rolling around in his bed, unable to sleep.
- 4) INT. BEDROOM, SOMEWHERE IN TREMO, NIGHT: The Intruder, glancing at the ceiling of his room. A tense look in his eyes, as he takes a long drag of a cigarette.
- 5) INT. NILES MANSION - BATHROOM, NIGHT - CU: Sarah, sitting on the bathroom-floor, eyes barely open. Next to her we notice her drug gear.
- 6) INT. OASIS INN MOTEL, NIGHT: Edward, lying on his bed, eyes wide open, staring at the TV, which displays nothing but static. Periodically he takes a sip from a can of beer.
- 7) INT. NILES MANSION, NIGHT: Billy, lying on one side of the bed, eyes open, pondering.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, DAY

An overhead projector blasts images of fingerprints onto a screen. Sheriff Robert, Cameron, Earl, and DOTTY, a middle-aged forensic scientist, look at the screen.

DOTTY

These are the fingerprints you lifted off of the tractor...

She points to several spots on the prints.

DOTTY (CONT'D)

...and as you can see they belong to two different people...

SHERIFF ROBERT

Any matches?

DOTTY

One belonged to Mr. Niles, but the other one... we don't have a match.

SHERIFF ROBERT

(shakes his head)

A murder, an unidentified suspect, a stolen car...

Cameron glances at his brother.

CAMERON

Don't look at me Bob, I've never been involved in something this complicated.

INT. YELLOW CONVERTIBLE, DAY

Billy is at the wheel. Sarah stares out of the window watching the trees go by.

SARAH

Nothing but trees, swamps and boiling heat. I don't know how anybody can live here.

BILLY

I think I'll do it.

SARAH

Do what?

BILLY

Forge the letter. Might just be worth the risk.

SARAH

I don't want you to do anything stupid. I mean that. But, if you think it'd get us out of here faster... murder, weird hillbilly sex-tapes, not to mention that I shot somebody. Accident or not. This is a bad bad fucking nightmare.

BILLY

We'll get through this, I promise.

Sarah slides close to Billy, presses tight against him.

INT. POLICE STATION - TREMO, DAY

Billy and Sarah sit as Earl and a matron take their fingerprints. Sheriff Robert paces. Cameron watches.

SHERIFF ROBERT

Where were you two the Sunday before last?

CAMERON

Bob, you are crossing the line.
 (to Billy and Sarah)
 You don't have to answer that.

BILLY

Was that the day he was killed? Ellen and I were in LA. Guess what? We can prove it, too.

SHERIFF ROBERT

I certainly hope so.
 (beat)
 How much you think old man Niles was worth, Billy?

BILLY

What is with you? You don't have a shred of evidence against us. We don't even have to be here, except for courtesy.

SARAH

He's just being mean Billy, don't let him bother you.

CAMERON

The young lady happens to be correct Bob. Why don't you just lay off.

Earl, nods to the matron, hands Billy and Sarah paper-towels.

EARL

We're all done here.

Sheriff Robert steps into Billy's face, blocking him.

SHERIFF ROBERT

People do some real crazy shit to get their hands on a winning lottery ticket. Even a hick-town sheriff knows that. Somehow, right from the jump, I could tell that you boy, are nothing but a bad piece of news.

BILLY

You could tell, huh? What is this?? Listen, I know my rights. May I go now?

SHERIFF ROBERT

I bet you do know your rights. Bet you had plenty of scrapes with the law...

CAMERON

Bob, I have to protest. This is...

SHERIFF ROBERT

...it's my office Cam, my investigation.
 (pause) In case I haven't been clear,
 sooner or later I'm gonna nail your
 maggot ass to the wall. I don't care how
 long it takes. Down here we follow law
 and order. You missed the big sign
 outside of Tremo. Know what it reads? Not
 welcome! Have a nice day!

Billy moves around Sheriff Robert, takes Sarah's hand and
 exits. Cameron follows them outside.

EARL

What do you think Boss? We gonna get them
 bastards?

SHERIFF ROBERT

It'll be like shootin' deer in a pen.

EXT. POLICE STATION TREMO, DAY

Billy and Sarah come storming out of the building. Cameron is
 one step behind the couple.

CAMERON

I'm really sorry about what happened in
 there. My brother's a good man. He is
 just a bit too eager at times.

Billy thinks for a moment, then:

BILLY

Should I've told him about the guy, that
 broke into the house a few nights ago...
 Maybe Niles was mixed up in something...
 you know...something...fucked up.

CAMERON

Were you able to get a look at this guy,
 this "intruder"? Could you ID him?

BILLY

Short with long, dark hair... kinda
 stocky.

CAMERON

Did he take anything?

BILLY

I'm not sure. He tried.

He exchanges a glance with Sarah.

SARAH

We didn't bother you about it but with
 the Sheriff pulling all this nonsense...

Billy's tentative. Something's not right. But they've gone this far.

BILLY
The guy dropped something on his way out.
A videotape.

Sarah and Billy share another glance.

SARAH
Uncle Niles is on it and uhm, it's, well,
it's not altogether pleasant to look at.

CAMERON
If it's all right, I'd like to see it for
myself.

INT. NILES MANSION - LIVING ROOM, DAY

Sarah, Billy and Cameron enter the mansion's entrance-hall.

SARAH
If you'll excuse me I'm going to lie
down, see if my stomach can settle.

Sarah disappears up the staircase.

CAMERON
Good day, Miss Niles.

LATER

THE LAST IMAGES OF THE PORN TAPE

Billy presses "Eject". Seconds later a tape pops out. Cameron looks on, however, Billy's back is blocking the view. Billy, tape in his hand, gets up and turns to Cameron.

CAMERON (CONT'D)
Wow!

Billy nods and hands Cameron the tape.

CAMERON (CONT'D)
I'll get rid of this dirt. Niles had a
respectable reputation, and I don't see
how its being tainted now will serve our
cause particularly...

BILLY
Would Nile being gay, weaken the claims
of an illegitimate son?

CAMERON
Not significantly I'm afraid. The
phenomenon of men with homosexual tastes
fathering children isn't that rare.

Cameron puts the cassette into his briefcase. The lowering sun beams inside the living room, hitting Billy in the eyes. He moves to the window to lower the blinds.

BILLY
I gotta question.

CAMERON
Go right ahead.

BILLY
In your professional opinion, how much longer is this whole ordeal gonna last?

CAMERON
Well, once foul play is suspected, Alabama probate court will put an immediate hold on the case. I'd say at least a month, closer to two.

The blinds won't lower. Billy pulls on it, but it's stuck.

BILLY
A month or two? I don't think we can stay that long.

Billy twists the cord way over to the right, then rips it back to the left. Finally the blinds lower.

CAMERON
Are you folks strapped for cash? Since I do have power of attorney, it wouldn't be improper for me to advance you some money.

BILLY
What did you have in mind?

CAMERON
How about five thousand dollars?

Billy responds without hesitation.

BILLY
We'll wait... for the settlement.

CAMERON
I understand. Do you know anything about art, Billy?

Cameron moves towards the mantel and points to the painting Billy retrieved from the cellar. Billy shrugs no.

CAMERON (CONT'D)
Well, Niles' taste in art was...pretty eclectic. I think he paid a hundred and thirty five thousand for that one.
(MORE)

CAMERON (CONT'D)

I imagine you could get at least twice
that much at any art auction.

Billy moves closer to the painting. Two men aim muskets at a large white elephant that is fleeing across a river in the African bush country, while African natives look on.

BILLY

A hundred thirty five thousand bucks? For
this?

Cameron nods. They both look at the painting.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Must be nice to have that kind of cash...

CAMERON

I wouldn't know...I should get going.

He heads for the front door, resumes the avuncular mode.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

I hope Ellen feels better. And trust me,
it'll all work itself out.

They're at the door. Billy opens it to let him out.

BILLY

Thanks for everything.

Billy watches as Cameron drives away then shuts the door.

INT. CABIN, NIGHT

A red scarf covers the only light bulb inside the small room. The walls are decorated with male pin-ups. JAMIE ALBRIGHT, twenty eight, sits on a bed. We recognize him as the intruder Billy chased out of Niles' house several nights ago.

JAMIE

I tried my best. It's not my fault he
gave you the wrong tape.

Cameron stands behind him. Both look at the television set:
IT'S AN INSTRUCTIONAL TAPE FOR A NEW LINE OF TRACTORS.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Are you sore at me? I did everything you
wanted.

CAMERON

Yes you did.

JAMIE

Don't be mad at me.

Cameron glares at Jamie.

CAMERON

I'm not mad. I'm not mad at all.

Cameron takes off his belt with its monogrammed buckle.

CU: TELEVISION SET, as the tape continues to play. In the BACKGROUND we hear the SOUNDS of a struggle: Bits and pieces of squelched words, brief shouts and screams.

CU: JAMIE. A leather belt is tightened around his neck. An infuriated Cameron glances at the TV while his hands grapple at the ends of his belt. Suddenly, the buckle flies off.

INT. NILES MANSION - KITCHEN, NIGHT

Sarah walks into the kitchen. Billy is sitting at a table with a phone book. Sarah sits in his lap, kisses him.

SARAH

What are you doing?

BILLY

Trying to get to the other side of the story. I think Mr. Cameron Brogden is jerking us around.

SARAH

What about the letter?

BILLY

We may not need it.

Billy looks up.

BILLY (CONT'D)

You're ok?

SARAH

I'm fine.

Sarah gets up, moves to the refrigerator, pulls out a carton of milk and fills a cup.

BILLY

You look pale.

SARAH

Really? Well,... thanks!

Sarah takes a sip.

BILLY

You don't think I know what's going on with you?

SARAH

What are you talking about?

BILLY

You slept for fourteen hours that's what's wrong. Listen to me. You need help. Go back to LA... go back into rehab if that's what it takes. I'll stay, get the money and we'll meet up when I'm back.

Sarah looks at him in disbelief. She bursts out:

SARAH

You know what Billy? I just wish you'd get your act together and forge that goddamn letter. All you do is talk and talk and wait and wait. I'm sick of this fucking place.

BILLY

You don't think I know that you've been shooting up?

Sarah, unsure of herself, stares at Billy.

BILLY (CONT'D)

One look into your eyes and I know exactly what you've been doing. You think about what I said. Unless you want to wind up like Ellen.

SARAH

You're wrong.

Billy gets up and moves close to her.

BILLY

I'm gonna go out on a limb here. And keep in mind that this is only to prove how much I care for you. I believe you...

He takes her hand and turns her arm over. Fresh bruises cover her arm. Sarah looks away.

BILLY (CONT'D)

...until its true.

Sarah breaks down, sobs. Billy reaches out and pulls her into his arms.

SARAH

I'll quit. Soon. When this is over. We're in this together...

Sarah slides away from Billy, walks out of the kitchen. Billy looks after her. He sits down and flips through the phone book, to... *lawyers*. He sees Cameron's ad and one other large ad for SLY WHEATON, the only other lawyer in Tremo. It's already been circled in thick black ink. Billy rips out the page, slams the phone book shut and dials.

BILLY

Mr. Wheaton, Sly Wheaton? Hi. I'm calling regarding with the estate of Zachary Niles.

INT. POLICE STATION, NIGHT

Sheriff Robert sits at his desk. Dotty enters with a file.

SHERIFF ROBERT

Any of the prints match?

DOTTY

No match. But remember that fella who used to work for Niles, Jamie Albright? Turns out he had some priors and his prints were as clear as day.

Sheriff Robert gets up, grabs his jacket and storms out.

EXT. WOODS - CABIN, NIGHT

Out in the middle of nowhere. Two police cars are parked next to the small cabin. A familiar looking dirt bike leans against the porch railing.

INT. CABIN, NIGHT

Sheriff Robert sees Jamie's naked body lying on the bed. Dead. TWO OFFICERS examine the corpse. Earl pokes around.

OFFICER #1

Boy was strangled... don't look like forced entry though.

Earl laughs while glancing at the male pin-up posters.

SHERIFF ROBERT

Earl, why the fuck are you wearing sun glasses at night?

Large aviation glasses cover Earl's eyes. He spits a wad of dark tobacco juice into a cup.

EARL

Makes me look meaner.

Sheriff Robert sighs.

EXT. TREMO - MAIN STREET, DAY

Billy drives along Main street. He spots a parking space and pulls in. Billy gets out of the car, examines the page from the telephone book. Blinded by the bright sun, Billy stumbles across the street. HONNNNK! A car barely misses him. Billy looks at the numbers. 52, next to that 56. He wanders into an alley, looks up. 54. Sly Wheaton's office. Billy enters.

INT. SLY WHEATON'S OFFICE, DAY

Noticeably less plush than Cameron's office. SLY WHEATON, a poorly groomed man in his mid fifties sits at the desk, talking on the phone. In addition to a tacky suit, he wears a gallon of styling gel in his hair. As soon as he sees Billy:

SLY (INTO PHONE)
I got to go.

He puts the receiver down.

SLY (CONT'D)
Hi-ya. William, I take it?

BILLY
That's me. You can call me Billy, if you want.

SLY
Sit...sit down.

Billy obliges.

SLY (CONT'D)
You've come to settle up? Must say though, I thought I was going to have to file before I ever saw any money outta you.

BILLY
Settle up?

SLY
Must be a lot of people tryin' to horn in on the inheritance?

BILLY
Well, yeah, that's what I wanted to talk to you about.

SLY
What'cha drinking?

Sly pulls out a bottle of gin and two glasses from below his desk.

BILLY
I'm fine, thanks.

Sly looks up.

SLY
Suit yourself. You don't mind if I do?

Billy shakes his head.

BILLY
I just need some advice, possibly
representation. I can pay you, as soon
as...

Sly starts laughing.

SLY
I bet you can.

Billy leans forward.

BILLY
... lets say... suppose the old man had
an illegitimate child that was trying to
get some of his money. What would be the
quickest way to find some kind of
solution?

SLY
Solution? Kill'em.

Sly laughs out loud, then shifts gears to serious.

SLY (CONT'D)
You need a document stating that Niles
wanted his money going to his niece, and
his niece only.

BILLY
Well, I don't have that document.

Sly smiles and nods, takes a sip from his glass.

SLY
You've got a problem then, don't you? I
bet Niles knew all about this 'cause he
came to me two days before he passed
away. He was going to have me change his
will to explicitly exclude anyone... but
Ellen.

Sly lets this sink in. Billy's mind races.

SLY (CONT'D)
You want that drink now?

Sly pours Billy a drink and slides the glass toward Billy. He
then pours one for himself and quickly drains it.

SLY (CONT'D)
Kind of a coincidence, don't you think?
He ends up dead right before he intends
to change his will.

BILLY
You could testify...

SLY
...for a price.

BILLY
This has already gone on forever.

SLY
It'd be worth it. I already started the paperwork for the old man. Listen, why don't you leave me a check for the three thousand Niles owed me? You know, to show good faith. Mind you, I ain't charging an arm and a leg like Cameron Brogden.

BILLY
I don't have three grand.

Sly leans back in his chair.

SLY
Well, then you better get it. We all gotta eat, you know.

BILLY
That's a fact. Anyway, thanks for your time. I'll call you.

SLY
Anytime.

INT. THE ELBOW-ROOM-BAR, DAY

Several locals are sitting quietly inside the dark watering-hole. Soft country music plays in the background. GEORGIA, the bartender, a woman in her sixties, sporting a Coors baseball cap, is fixated on solving her crossword puzzle. The Sheriff enters, takes a seat at the bar-counter. Georgia looks up.

GEORGIA
Sheriff Robert? What a surprise. Haven't seen your charmin' face in long time. How's everythin' ?

SHERIFF ROBERT
Its going. Its going.

GEORGIA
How about a cold one?

SHERIFF ROBERT
Sure sounds good, Georgia.

Sheriff Robert opens an envelope, pulls out several sketches of Edward, along with pictures of Billy and Sarah. Georgia places a tall glass of tap beer in front of the Sheriff. She glances at the photos.

GEORGIA
Crime suspects?

SHERIFF ROBERT
Yup. Any of them faces look familiar?

Georgia glimpses at the sketch of Edward, looks at it again.

GEORGIA
I know him. Dangerous kinda fella, I tell ya.

SHERIFF ROBERT
You know this man? Are you sure?

GEORGIA
Yeah, I'm sure. He was sitting right here. I even talked to him.

SHERIFF ROBERT
What did he say ?

GEORGIA
I don't know, this and that. Said he's staying at the Oasis Inn.

SHERIFF ROBERT
Did you get his name?

GEORGIA
Gnaw.

Sheriff Robert quickly gets up, puts on his hat and exits.

INT. NILES MANSION - BEDROOM, EARLY EVENING

CU: SARAH. Lying in Bed, like frozen. Starring into nothing. In the background we hear the phone ringing.

LIVING ROOM

Billy enters, picks up the receiver.

BILLY
Hello?(beat) Hello?(shouting)

There's no one on the other end. Billy slams down the phone.

INT. SLY WHEAT'S OFFICE, NIGHT

Sly, tumbler in hand, sits at his desk reviewing a file labelled NILES. The office doorbell rings. He looks up.

SLY
(muttering)
Damn. I'm coming. Hold your horses.

Sly crosses the room, approaches the front door and opens it.

SLY'S POV: There is no one at the door. SUDDENLY, a shadowy figure holding a revolver comes forth rapidly. BANG! BANG! BANG! Three shots blast into Sly. He tumbles backwards, falls onto his desk, dead before he hits the floor.

EXT. OASIS INN MOTEL, NIGHT

Sheriff Robert pulls into the parking lot of the motel, honking. CLYDE, the night porter, fifties, sporting thick eye wear, steps outside his office.

INT. OASIS INN MOTEL, NIGHT

Standing by the window of his room, Edward looks down towards the front office, watching Sheriff Robert and Clyde talking. The Sheriff pulls out several sketches. Clyde points.

CU: EDWARD. He cocks his gun.

INTERCUT INT. / EXT. OASIS INN MOTEL, NIGHT

Pistol in hand, Sheriff Robert moves up the staircase. He positions himself in front of Edward's room, spreads his legs, both hands on the revolver. Just like in the movies. He knocks on the door with the tip of the barrel. No answer.

CU: EDWARD. Standing to the side of the door, gun pointed.

Sheriff Robert pulls out the key to the motel-room.

CU: DOOR LOCK. The key slides inside. The lock turns. CLICK.

Sheriff Robert pushes the door open. It's pitch dark inside. He flips the light-switch. Nobody home. The Sheriff tip-toe's towards the bathroom, same procedure as at the entrance door. The bathroom is empty. He carefully steps backwards, lowers his revolver and aims at the mattress in front of him.

CU: EDWARD, underneath the bed, his gun pointed bulls eye at the Sheriff's legs.

Suddenly the SPEAKER-MICROPHONE, placed on the Sheriff Robert's shoulder, goes off. He jumps up like he has been hit by lightning. It's Earl, requesting the Sheriff. He responds with a quick "ten-four" and slowly leaves the room.

INT. NILES MANSION - BEDROOM, NIGHT

CU: SARAH. Lying in Bed, like frozen. Starring into nothing. In the background we hear the phone ringing.

LIVING ROOM

Billy enters as the phone rings again.

BILLY
Hello?(beat) Oh. Hello there.

INT. BELLE'S HOUSE, NIGHT

In the background we see that she lives in the genteel lower middle class poverty that is the fate of most widow's. An old TV in her parlor, doilies, ancient watercolors, framed pictures everywhere.

BELLE

It's Belle Brogden, you recall. I came and visited you and Ellen the other day.

BILLY

Oh yes. How are you?

BELLE

I'm just fine and how are you?

BILLY

I'm just fine.

BELLE

How's Ellen?

BILLY

She's just swell. Uh, thanks for asking.

BELLE

I don't mean to be any trouble, I just wondered if, about the housekeeping. ...if you needed me to look in on you?

BILLY

That's very thoughtful of you. I'll ask Ellen and we'll call you tomorrow. How's that?

BELLE

Yes, call me tomorrow then.

BILLY

Ok.

BELLE

Well, good-night then.

BILLY

Good night.

Billy hangs up, sighs. He rubs his eyes, stops, stares ahead in thought. Something's clicked in his mind. He swiftly pulls out his wallet, takes out the scrap of paper with Belle's name and address scrawled on it.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(muttering softly)

Wait a minute.

He leaves the room in a hurry.

INT. MANSION - NILES BEDROOM, NIGHT

Billy sits down at Niles' desk, pulls out the old letter box and places it in front of him. He takes a breath, then removes a letter from the box and compares Belle's name and address on the scrap of paper with Niles' name and address on the envelope. The handwriting is clearly the same. BELLE WAS NILES' LOVER.

INT. NILES MANSION - BEDROOM, NIGHT

Billy enters. Sarah appears to be sleeping. Billy leans over her and whispers.

BILLY
I think we got what we needed.

He kisses her. A tender moment. Sarah's eyes slowly open.

SARAH
What?

BILLY
I'll be back soon.

SARAH
Be careful.

Her remark surprises him.

BILLY
You're worried about me?

SARAH
Always.

Billy kisses her once more.

BILLY
Go back to sleep.

He steps away, exits.

CU: SARAH, cautiously listening as Billy leaves the house. She jumps out of bed, grabs her jacket and leaves the room.

INT. BARN, NIGHT

The CADILLAC stands in the dark. The barn door slides open, Sarah enters. She jumps into the car turns the ignition key. After a few attempts the engine starts up.

EXT. BARN, NIGHT

The CADILLAC drives off into the dark, its headlights cutting through the pitch black night.

EXT. SLY WHEATON'S OFFICE, NIGHT

Two police cars and an ambulance are parked in the alley outside of Sly's office. Cameron's 4x4 pulls up.

INT. SLY WHEATON'S OFFICE, NIGHT

Sheriff Robert, Earl and two Officers examine the scene as a POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER takes pictures. Two MEDICS are packing up Sly's body. Sheriff Robert opens a file cabinet as Cameron enters and surveys the scene.

SHERIFF ROBERT

Daddy was the Sheriff of this town for more than forty years and he never had one murder. I've got three murders in one week.

CAMERON

And I'm sure he'd be proud of the way you're handling it.

The medics pass Cameron and Sheriff Robert with Sly's body.

EARL

Niles, Jamie, Sly, who's next? It's the "Dregs of Tremo Killer".

The two officers and the photographer crack up.

SHERIFF ROBERT

Shut up, Earl. That ain't funny!

Sheriff Robert looks around the room contemplating, trying to make some kind of connection within the puzzle of events.

EXT. TREMO - STREET, NIGHT

The streets are empty. Billy pulls up in his convertible in front of Sal's Convenience store.

INT. SAL'S CONVENIENCE STORE, NIGHT

Billy enters, as Sal nods politely. Sal takes a big swig from a pint of bourbon and returns to watching TV on a small monitor. By the back door of the store, SAL'S SON and two other TEENAGERS are packing up several cases of beer. One of the cases drops, muffled laughter follows. Sal peeks down the hallway and spots the kids. His expression hardens.

BILLY

Do you know where Laurel...

SAL

Excuse me for a minute.

Sal disappears, moments later a commotion breaks out.

SAL (O.S.)(CONT'D)
You piece of shit, what's going on here?

SAL'S SON (O.S.)
I swear, I was gonna pay you back...
ain't no big deal.

SAL (O.S.)
No big deal? Stealing from your own
father? Is that what I get for raising
your ass?

SAL'S SON (O.S.)
Just a couple of beers...it's Friday
night an' all...

Billy listens. He slowly moves into the narrow hallway: Sal is beating the living daylights out of his son.

SAL
Come on you sissy... just like your
mother. Why don't you start weeping while
you're at it.

Another blow hits Sal's son hard in the face. Billy steps up.

BILLY
Take it easy.

SAL
What are you doing here? Wait at the
counter and mind your own goddamn
business.

BILLY
Why don't you try me?

SAL
You're with the Niles girl, ain't you?
Yeah, I recognize you.

BILLY
Motherfucker like you reminds me of my
old man, until one day I walked in on him
while he was screwing my girlfriend.
Stuck the old service revolver right up
his dirty crack and pulled the trigger.
Trust me, he ain't beating and drinking
no more.

Sal swings at Billy who dodges the blow, counters. Blood is flying everywhere as Sal's nose takes a bad hit. Sal's son watches with a sense of relief and horror. Billy turns, leaves the scene. The other two teenagers, carefully move in closer, checking out the carnage. Sal slowly comes to.

SAL (TO HIS SON)
 Be a man for once and take care of that
 son of bitch.

Sal's son gets up and the teenagers take off into the night.

INT. OASIS INN MOTEL, NIGHT

Edward is in the midst of packing his belongings. There is a knock on the door. Edward grabs his gun from the night-stand and moves next to the entrance.

SARAH(V.O.)
 It's me, Sarah, open up.

Edward checks the security-hole, opens the door. Sarah holds a Burger King paper bag.

EDWARD
 What do you want?

SARAH
 Thought you might be hungry... I really
 need to use the bathroom.

Edward looks at the bag. He sticks his head out into the outside hallway, checks left and right.

EDWARD
 You're a strange girl...get in.

EXT. TREMO - STREET, NIGHT

Billy walks down the street, looking at the street signs. The three teenagers are on Billy's tail.

FURTHER UP

Billy stops. The teenagers stop, now about twenty yards back. Billy turns around, catches them. He keeps walking, only a little faster.

EXT. TREMO - STREET, NIGHT

Billy's brisk walk has become a slow jog and soon he is all out sprinting. The kids stay right behind. Billy rounds a corner, ducks into an alley. He gets to the end of the alley only to find a high chain link fence: No way out. The teenagers round the corner and slowly move toward Billy.

SAL'S SON
 Why you're running?

BILLY
 Look, I don't have any beef with you.
 Besides, take a look in the mirror, you
 don't need another beatin'.

SAL'S SON

You think you're some kind of badass
don't' you, whipping my old man like a
dog.

Sal's son attempts to smirk, not sure of himself. Suddenly,
one of the teenagers swings at Billy with a two by four.
Billy quickly ducks, responds, sends the kid flying against a
brick wall. Out for the night.

SAL'S SON (CONT'D)

You're gonna pay for that...

INT. OASIS INN MOTEL, NIGHT

Deep in thought, Sarah sits on the edge of the bathtub.
Suddenly, we hear Edward's voice, shouting from the bed-room:

EDWARD (VO)

Good thing you stopped by. You and I
gotta talk. Some redneck cop was snooping
around here. Gotta find myself some new
digs, as in asap. Time to wrap things up.
Know what I mean?

(beat)

What are you doing in there? Fallin'
asleep?

Sarah gets up, faces the door, opens it.

BEDROOM

Sarah, wearing nothing but panties and bra, enters the room.
She glances at Edward, steps over to the bed and slides under
the covers. Edward smiles, pulls Sarah close to him.

EDWARD

What's on your mind, angel? Need some
dope?

Sarah starts kissing Edward, who melts away. Simultaneously,
she reaches out and attempts to retrieve Edward's gun from
the night-stand. All she finds is Edward's hand holding on
firmly to his pistol. Sarah's idea has taken an ugly turn.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Is this what you're looking for?

He smiles and sticks the barrel onto Sarah's forehead, cocks
the gun. Sarah freezes.

EXT. TREMO - ALLEY, NIGHT

CU: SWITCHBLADE-KNIFE, as the blade spring open.

Sal's son makes a quick move towards Billy. Billy grabs his
arm, deflects the stab, headbutts Sal's son hard.

Sal's son drops the blade, goes down on his knees, holding his bloody face. The third kid freezes, then takes off running.

CU: Billy, breathing hard.

INT. OASIS INN MOTEL, NIGHT

Edward forces himself on top of Sarah, about to rape her once again. Desperate, she reaches out and slowly, inch by inch, pulls her jeans jacket closer. Edward is too caught up to notice as Sarah's fingers frantically search the pockets.

Finally, she removes a disposable syringe.

In one bold move, she jolts upward and sticks the needle into Edward's left eye. Edward drops his gun as he covers his face with both hands. Howling with pain, he violently jerks backwards, attempting to remove the syringe. Sarah picks up the pistol, points it at Edward. She paces in front of him. Her voice trembles with fear, anger, anxiety.

SARAH

Eddie... did you know you've got the smallest penis I've ever seen. All the time you were on top me... nope, didn't feel a thing. Nothing. Zero. I kept thinking: Poor Eddie. What a sad story. You know, I almost started calling you two inch Eddie. Kinda funny, no?

Edward is shrieking. Lots of blood is oozing from his eye.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I cried plenty. I did. The mere thought of you touching me... I couldn't get it out of my head... But look who's crying now? You want me to end your misery? No Problem!

Sarah fires one round into Edward's chest. His remaining eye opens wide as his body slips away into oblivion. She slowly lowers the gun, stares at the corpse. She's never shot anybody before.

EXT. TREMO - STREET, NIGHT

Billy sees a street sign: LAUREL STREET. He takes out Belle's scrap of paper, starts looking at the numbers on the houses.

INT. OASIS INN MOTEL, NIGHT

A series of quick cuts:

Sarah, towel in hand, is busy wiping off her fingerprints inside the bathroom. In the living-room she starts removing the bloody sheets.

At the entrance we see Edward covered from head to toe in a bloody bed-sheet - hunched over in an arm chair. An extension cord is wrapped around him.

INTERCUT: EXT. TREMO - STREET /INT. OASIS INN MOTEL, NIGHT

Billy crosses a side street and looks to his right.

CU: Billy. His face drops as he spots Niles' Cadillac parked in the back of the Oasis Inn Motel.

Under great distress Sarah manages to drag Edward across the room toward a french window. She pulls the curtains, opens the narrow, floor to ceiling double windows and peeks over the railing of a small, two feet wide balcony. The CADILLAC below is parked with its trunk towards the building.

CU: BILLY, hiding near the rear of the motel, watching Sarah standing on the balcony.

Sarah pulls out the keys and hits a small remote attached to the key-chain. The CADILLAC'S trunk pops open.

She takes a deep breath and picks up the heavy load. She manages to push Edward upright against the railing, then grabs his ankles and pulls. Just like a pendulum, Edward's own weight draws him over the railing, facing the trunk below.

One last shove and Edward's is flying. CRASH: Edward misses the trunk. His body lands on a row of large bushes instead.

CU: BILLY. Staring, amazed.

Sarah, large laundry bag in hand, comes hurrying down the back staircase. She throws the plastic bag into the corner of the Cadillac's trunk, then rushes over to Edward. With all of her remaining strength left, she grabs him by his arms and starts tugging. Soon, the ordeal is over. Edward is stashed away. Sarah slams the trunk hood shut, jumps into the front seat and drives off.

EXT. TREMO STREET CORNER, NIGHT

Billy turns back onto Laurel Street...

CU: SAL'S SON, swinging a baseball-bat...

WHACK...connecting with Billy's face. Billy goes down as the three kids hit and kick him. Once exhausted, the teenagers run away, howling, laughing as they go. Across the street, in an older two-story house, the porch-lights go on, a window opens.

CUT TO: BLACK

INT. BELLE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

Billy is lying on a small couch in Belle's tiny living room. His face is covered with dried blood, a bag of ice sits on his forehead. Belle helps Billy to sip from a small flask. His expression sours as he swallows the liquid.

BELLE
You had yourself a little trouble?

BILLY
I had these three guys following me...

Billy looks across the room: Its Sheriff Robert. The Sheriff pulls out Edward's police drawing, approaches Billy.

SHERIFF ROBERT
Take a look. Buddy of your's?

BELLE
Leave the poor boy alone. He's been beaten.

SHERIFF ROBERT
He'll live. Come on now, son. You might as well come clean.

Billy peeks at the sketch, shakes his head.

BILLY
You tell me. Who the hell is he?

SHERIFF ROBERT
He's the guy who stole the El Camino. Probably the same son of a bitch you sent to kill Niles.

Belle is shocked.

BELLE
Stop it, Robert. No one killed Mr. Niles.

BILLY
You're insane. I've never seen that guy in my life.

Billy's head spins, as he drops back onto the couch.

BELLE
Bob, leave it be.

Reluctantly, Sheriff Robert crosses toward the door.

SHERIFF ROBERT
Call me if there's any more trouble, Mama.

Billy's eyes open wide. His attention is caught by two sets of photographs. One is with Belle, her two sons and her husband the Sheriff, Robert Sr. The other is a picture of her with Zachary Niles.

BILLY

You know, I was looking for you tonight.

BELLE

For me? If it was about the house-keeping it could've waited till tomorrow.

Billy rises, a little fragile and goes back to the pictures.

BILLY

No, it wasn't about the housekeeping... you and your late husband raised two sons, Sheriff Bob and Cameron.

BELLE

Yes, that's right. Two big beautiful boys.

BILLY

Your family didn't mind all those long hours with you keeping house for Zachary Niles.

BELLE

It was a privilege working for an accomplished and prosperous man like Mr. Niles. And we needed the extra money.

Billy peers at the photos again.

BILLY

You, the late Sheriff and Bob, you look like three peas in a pod.

BELLE

Yes.

BILLY

Not Cameron though.

Belle shrugs a little uneasily.

BELLE

I don't know what you mean.

She adds a nervous smile that doesn't convince.

BILLY

You truly admired and respected Niles, didn't you?

BELLE

Well of course, I told you that's why...

BILLY
You had a child with him didn't you...

Belle's eyes darken in alarm.

BELLE
Wha... How dare you...

BILLY
I read the letters you wrote to him,
asking that he acknowledge your son.
How could you stand for it... what he did
to you? I mean after the way you took
care of him and the way you felt about
him?

BELLE
(beat)
It wasn't that simple. What would people
think if they knew what we were up to?
How would they treat my family, my
husband, my little boys...

BILLY
If you didn't want to make him pay, there
was somebody else who did.

BELLE
What do you mean?

BILLY
Cameron is Niles' son. And when Niles
handed the inheritance to Ellen, he
realized that he was going to be cut out
of everything that was rightly his. Cut
out, same as his mother had been.

BELLE
You have no right...

BILLY
Deep down you gotta know... that it was
Cameron that killed Niles.

BELLE
That's not possible... Zachary... Mr.
Niles' death was an accident...

BILLY
You're not up on current affairs ma'am.
The coroner's ruled Niles' death a
homicide. (a beat) Your son killed his
own father.

Belle stares at Billy. A look of horror covers her face.

BELLE
Get out of here. You-you--GET OUT!

She starts to sob hysterically on the edge of violence.

BELLE (CONT'D)
I said LEAVE!

Billy, a little rickety on his feet, exits. Belle, sniffing, watches through a blind to make sure that he's gone. She goes to the phone. Dials.

BELLE (CONT'D)
Bobby? It's your Ma. I hate to be a bother, but it's important.

INT. CAMERON'S OFFICE, NIGHT

A match ignites as Cameron lights up a gas fireplace inside his office. He crosses towards a large drawer and pulls out a file marked "Niles". Its the same file we saw earlier at Sly Wheaton's office. We see a second file open to Billy's police sheet, pictures of Billy and Sarah as well as a copy of a newspaper clipping: "DEAD JANE DOE IS ELLEN NILES 21, DAUGHTER OF FAMED ATTORNEY", is highlighted in bright yellow.

Cameron moves back to the fireplace and tosses all documents, one by one, into the flames. He curiously looks on.

INT. POLICE STATION - TREMO, NIGHT

Sheriff Robert removes several sheets from a fax machine. He sits down at his desk, unrolls the paper.

EXT. NILES MANSION - DRIVEWAY, NIGHT

Billy sits inside the convertible, contemplating. Moments later he steps out of the car, staggers toward the porch.

INT. NILES MANSION - LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

Billy stands in the doorway and takes in the sights and... smells. The room is dark but light flows in from the kitchen. Sarah is cooking.

INT. NILES MANSION - KITCHEN, NIGHT

Sarah turns, startled by Billy, who's standing in the doorway. He looks awful. Considering Sarah's previous ordeal, she appears to be in control of herself.

SARAH
What happened to you?

BILLY
Ran into a couple of local tough guys.

Sarah steps up to Billy, looks at his face.

SARAH
Jes... that doesn't look very good.

INT. NILES MANSION - BATHROOM, NIGHT

Billy sits on the edge of the bathtub while Sarah carefully cleans his face.

BILLY
So what'd you do all night?

SARAH
I went shopping. I found another market a couple of miles outside of town. Hold still.

Sarah applies a band-aide onto Billy's forehead, then kisses him.

SARAH (CONT'D)
There you go. Just like new.

BILLY
Thanks. How did you get around?

Sarah hesitates, then looks at Billy point blank.

SARAH
How did I get around? I took the Cadillac if that's ok with you. Dinner will be ready in a minute.

She smiles and exits the bathroom.

INT. NILES MANSION - KITCHEN, NIGHT

Sporting a new set of clothes, Billy has cleaned himself up. He walks into the kitchen and starts searching the cabinets. He pulls out a bottle of Jack Daniels, then opens the refrigerator, tosses a couple of ice cubes into a glass. He is about to close the refrigerator when he notices the shape of a gun underneath a kitchen towel. He peeks into the living room where Sarah is busy setting up the table. Billy takes out the familiar pistol, tucks it into the back of his pants. Shortly after Sarah enters. Puzzled, she looks at Billy, as he pours himself a stiff one. He points to the stove.

BILLY
Looks great.

Billy takes a big swig from his tumbler, frowns.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Boy, I really needed that.

Billy smiles at Sarah as he leaves the kitchen, carrying the bottle of Jack Daniels with him. Sarah freezes.

INT. NILES MANSION - DINING ROOM, NIGHT

Sarah and Billy sit at the candle lit table. Sarah looks on, as Billy is picking his food, preoccupied.

SARAH
I forgot the salad.

KITCHEN

Sarah moves to the refrigerator, opens it and takes out a large bowl.

DINING ROOM

Billy watches Sarah serve. He pours himself another round, this time he fills the glass to the brim, drinks up. Sarah, shocked, hands shaking, sits down.

SARAH
There were all these cook books in the kitchen. This dish is a local favorite.

BILLY
Very good.

Billy makes no effort to conceal the fact that any small talk is of zero interest to him.

SARAH
This morning, I was thinking about Stanley's, the day you asked me out. I remember coming out of the kitchen with your turkey-sandwich but you had left already. I thought I would never see you again.
(beat)
And here we are. You and I. Having dinner.

Billy looks straight at Sarah, continuing his silence.

SARAH (CONT'D)
...Stanley's. I hope I'll never have to work in a place like that again.

BILLY
Why should you? You're going to be rich very soon.

Aware that Billy is not quite himself, Sarah is getting increasingly nervous. She lights up a cigarette, as Billy takes another swig from his glass. Finally, Sarah finds the courage to ask:

SARAH
What's up with the drinking?

BILLY
I'm a bit on edge. That's all.

Billy finishes the tumbler, puts the glass down and crosses the room. He picks up the phone, dials. A new intensity of purpose in his eyes.

INTERCUT

INT. CAMERON'S OFFICE, NIGHT

Cameron picks up the receiver.

CAMERON (V.O.)
Billy? How're you doing?

INTERCUT

BILLY
Well, I guess you could say, I've been better and I've been worse.

CAMERON
I know the feeling. What's on your mind Billy?

Periodically Billy's glance meets Sarah's.

BILLY
The headline is that I know a lot about you, your brother, your mother, and Niles.

CAMERON
Billy, you gave me the wrong tape.

BILLY
You know, I wonder what would happen if brother Bob gets a hold of the video? What do you think he'd say?

CAMERON
I don't think you trying to blackmail me and besmirch the late Zachary Niles' spotless reputation is going to put you in good with the Sheriff.

BILLY
..."Zachary Niles' spotless reputation". What the fuck is wrong with you? Listen, you want me to call the Sheriff right fucking now?

There's a long silence.

BILLY (CONT'D)
I'm gonna take that as a "no."

CAMERON (V.O.)

How much do you want, Billy? Five thousand?

BILLY

Make it ten. Cash. Tonight. Then we'll get out of here, so that you and the rest of the cracker assholes can stew in your own shit.

CAMERON (V.O.)

(Pause) Okay.

The phone goes dead. Billy takes his seat at the table.

SARAH

The lawyer? It's not coming through is it? The inheritance.

BILLY

Nope. That's one number that's never comin' up.

He plays with his food. Sarah is about to break.

SARAH

I had enough. I wanna get out of here, Billy. As in yesterday.

Billy says nothing, then he just stares at her coldly.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What's wrong? What's going on?

She gets up, starts pacing the room. Billy remains seated.

BILLY

What's going on? Well, I think I should be asking questions. (Pause) Like, what do you have in mind for after dinner? Stuff me in the trunk with, you know, what's his name...?

Billy pulls out Edwards cash checking card, reads:

BILLY (CONT'D)

Edward Romero. That's it.

He throws the card in front of Sarah's plate.

BILLY (CONT'D)

What? You don't think I know where you score your dope from? I saw you at the motel tonight. Boy, what a spectacle. Tell me Sarah, did you fuck him first and then kill him...how exactly did it go down?

Sarah is shocked. She hesitates, then:

SARAH

I did not fuck him! That guy is Ellen's dealer. She owed him a ton of money and somehow he thinks that I have to pay him back.

BILLY

Well, he's dead now, isn't he? Might as well get rid of me while you're at it, no? I mean, that is the plan after all isn't it? Why split all that cash with him, or me, right?

Sarah is stunned by this.

SARAH

How dare you? I didn't have a clue about Ellen's money till I found that letter. Besides, this is all your scheme! Not mine! Remember?

BILLY

So, you're telling me that "Edward Romero" didn't have the same idea, a whole lot earlier?... I should have seen it coming, but I gotta hand it to you. I bought you hook-line and sinker.

She walks over to him and coolly slaps him in the face. Billy wipes the slap off his cheek. He stands his ground.

BILLY (CONT'D)

So, what's next? You're gonna go upstairs, shoot up some dope... then a little later you'll sit close, maybe even blow me while you're at it and when I'm all moonstruck you're gonna put a bullet between my eyes? Well, there is going to be a slight change in plans.

The poise Sarah showed in slapping Billy has worn itself out. She starts to crack, trembles with emotion.

SARAH

You're drunk. That's why you talk so crazy! You think I went to that hotel room to get high, or worse, sleep with that animal? You think I fooled you. You fooled me. I didn't know you were just another asshole.

Billy stands up, pulls out the gun and points it at Sarah.

BILLY

Maybe I am drunk. But I'm not stupid.
Tell me what's the gun doing in the
fridge? Desert?

Sarah's face drops. She slowly backs up and starts to cry,
then turns and rushes upstairs.

EXT. CAMERON'S OFFICE - STREET, NIGHT

Cameron exits his office as Sheriff Robert pulls up in his
cruiser and honks. Cameron steps up to the car, slides in.

INT. POLICE CAR, NIGHT

SHERIFF ROBERT

I just got back from Mama's. Guess who
was there? The boyfriend. Billy.

CAMERON

What'd he want?

SHERIFF ROBERT

Mama found him in the street. Got a
little roughed up. Suits him well, that
smart ass. Anyway, I got a piece of news
for you that's gonna knock your socks
off.

Sheriff Robert pulls out several fax sheets, including a copy
of Billy's police file.

SHERIFF ROBERT (CONT'D)

Ellen Niles is dead.

CAMERON

What? Who are...

SHERIFF ROBERT

Sarah Johnson, Ellen's roommate and Billy
Brody, Sarah Johnson's boyfriend.

CAMERON

No! Where did you get this?

SHERIFF ROBERT

A good pal from the LA Police Department
xeroxed me the whole skinny on them two.
Says Ellen had fallen in with the wrong
crowd after her parents accident. She
overdosed on heroin weeks ago. And this
Brody guy, he did time in jail for
forgery, illegal gambling. It's all
there.

CAMERON

(reading)

I can't believe it.

SHERIFF ROBERT

Not to say I told you so, but I knew something was up with them two. I'm gonna round up my boys first thing in the morning and arrest them punks.

Cameron takes a deep breath.

CAMERON

Good thinking... Bob, we've got another problem. I can barely talk about this...

Cameron hands Sheriff Robert an envelope. The Sheriff opens it, takes out Belle's letter.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Him... Brody, whatever his name... gave it to me. They found it in the house... it's horrible...

Sheriff Robert starts reading the letter.

SHERIFF ROBERT

What the hell is this? Niles didn't have no son. It's a forgery.

CAMERON

Look at the writing. You know who's writing that is.

Sheriff Robert looks as if he is getting punched in the gut.

SHERIFF ROBERT

I don't know nothing.

CAMERON

Mama used to spend a lot of time over there.

SHERIFF ROBERT

... don't say it.

CAMERON

I'm that son!

SHERIFF ROBERT

You better shut up.

CAMERON

Ask herself if you don't believe your own brother. This whole thing is just awful.

Sheriff Robert is breathing hard. After a long silence:

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Bob, I'm just as shocked as you are, but I'm sure Mama will straighten all this out.(Pause) Take it easy.

Cameron slides out of the car. Sheriff Robert turns the engine, pulls out. Cameron looks on as the police cruiser takes off.

INT. NILES MANSION, HALLWAY - BATHROOM, NIGHT

Sarah has locked herself into the bathroom. Her face is covered in tears. Billy is standing outside in the hallway.

BILLY

Sarah. Open up...

Sarah reaches inside her jeans-jacket. She pulls out several bullets and slides them underneath the bathroom door, into the hallway. Billy eyes widen. He picks up one of the bullets, then checks the chamber of the pistol: It's empty.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Shit. Sarah... I...just uhm... about the gun. There's no bullets in the chamber...

SARAH

Stay away! Nothing worse than the stench of booze.

There is a long pause. Nobody knows what to say. Then:

SARAH (CONT'D)

You know, my dad owned this car dealership. When sales were up and he was drunk enough, he'd run around the house calling himself the 'King of Chrysler'. It was so damn stupid. On weekends he had these business friends over to our house. His "Inner Circle" he said. Sometimes, around three, four in the morning, he would come bashing into our rooms and drag us down into the den. First they made us drink and sometimes we had to dance and strip.

Billy glances at the bullets as he listens closely.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Dad came up with this idea for a contest. Whoever was the most sexy was allowed to go back to bed. I was eight, I think. My two sisters were older and they'd do all kinds of things. I tell you, the stink of liquor and old men, I'll never forget it.

BILLY

I was wrong. I'm... I'm sorry. I mean it.

SARAH

Listen. Eddie showed up out of the blue. I was going to tell you, I swear, but he kept saying that he was going to kill us both if I mention him to anybody.

There is silence, then:

BILLY

We're getting outta here first thing in the morning.

Billy turns and heads downstairs. Sarah slowly rises from the floor, picks up a 'loaded' syringe from the bathtubs edge. She points the needle towards the sink and squeezes the brown liquid down the drain until the plastic is empty.

EXT. PORCH OF BELLE'S HOUSE, NIGHT

Belle is seated on a rickety porch swing. She speaks slowly, on the verge of tears, while confessing to Sheriff Robert. He is in utter disbelief.

SHERIFF ROBERT

My life ain't nothing but lies.

BELLE

I never wanted you to find out. Sheriff Robert Sr. raised both of you, but you're his only true son. I'm sorry, but I thought it was for your own good.

SHERIFF ROBERT

A life built on lies and the only people I've ever trusted... perpetrators. Who gets the inheritance? Cameron?

BELLE

Don't mention that at a time like this! After all those crazy mean things that boy said you gotta promise me you won't arrest your brother, your own flesh and blood?

SHERIFF ROBERT

I ain't no attorney like my "brother" Cameron...but trust me, I'm gettin' to the bottom of this and see what's what.

BELLE

Robert please. Your brother didn't know!

Upset the Sheriff exits.

INT. NILES MANSION - LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

Billy sits at the dining table, a video tape is placed next to the familiar letter-box.

The old record player from Niles' bedroom has been moved into the living-room. Classical music reverberates through the warm, humid night.

EXT. DRIVEWAY OF NILES ESTATE, NIGHT

A car, headlights shut off, approaches the estate. The car comes to a stop. The driver's door slowly opens.

CU: BOOTS, as somebody walks about the driveway.

INT. POLICE CAR, NIGHT

The police car is parked outside Joe's diner. Sheriff Robert sits behind the wheel, silent. Earl is sitting next to him. His sixth sense tells him that something is wrong: Finally:

SHERIFF ROBERT

You know that stuff causes mouth cancer?

EARL

I ain't worried. My dad's been chewing for over forty years. Ain't nothing ever happen to him.

Sheriff Robert shakes his head. He hands Earl the fax.

SHERIFF ROBERT

The girl at the house is an impersonator. And that Billy fella has a list of priors as long as the eye can see.

EARL

You was right all along, boos. It'll be like shootin' deer in a pen.

Earl studies the fax, then turns toward the Sheriff and holds up a monogrammed belt buckle displaying a big "C".

EARL (CONT'D)

Before I forget. Isn't this your brother's?

SHERIFF ROBERT

Where did you get that?

EARL

At Jamie's cabin. I was out in the woods yesterday, finishing up the report. I just happened to take a closer look and there it was. Right underneath the bed.

Sheriff Robert stares at Earl. Something clicks. The Sheriff turns the ignition, floors the gas-pedal. Earl spits a huge wad of tobacco out the window, reaches into the back seat and retrieves a shotgun.

EXT. DRIVEWAY TO NILES ESTATE, NIGHT

We PULL OUT revealing Cameron, walking towards the house.

INT. NILES' MANSION, NIGHT

The front door slowly opens. Cameron enters. Billy, still at the table, turns around and sees Cameron's silhouette.

BILLY
Mr. Brogden?

CAMERON
You must be crazy to still be here.

BILLY
Did you bring the money?

CAMERON
You got the tape?

Billy taps with his index finger on the videotape placed next to him. Cameron crosses the room pulls out a manila envelope and slides it across the large dining table. Billy picks up the envelope looks inside: Bundles of cash. He pockets the envelope, then shoves the tape towards Cameron.

CAMERON (CONT'D)
I hope this is what I came for?

BILLY
You know, the guy in the black mask was kind of extra spooky. He looked to be your size and weight.

CAMERON
We'll discuss your tastes in home video entertainment on some other occasion...

Cameron quickly stashes the tape into his jacket.

CAMERON (CONT'D)
I hope you can spend that ten thousand before they arrest you.

BILLY
It was you that killed Niles.

CAMERON
The world is a better place with Niles absent from it, trust me on that.

BILLY
And I bet you knew about us all along?

CAMERON

Well, I figured it out pretty quickly. I'd happened to come across this article about Ellen's parents' accident. Next thing I know, you kids show up here with your hands out, well, it didn't exactly look legitimate. You two had everybody in town all worked up. Kept any kind of suspicion away from me. Perfect timing.

Cameron starts to back away.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

I hung around this dead-end shithole for twenty years. The inheritance is my ticket out. I sweated for it and I will have it. But, hell, I tried to be fair to you. I gave you and that chippie of yours every chance to run... but now... you're going to jail for murder.

BILLY

You can't prove I killed the old man, 'cause I didn't.

CAMERON

No, they got enough evidence that Jamie Albright killed him.

BILLY

Who's he?

CAMERON

The young fellow who tried to retrieve the video.

BILLY

You can't link me to... one of your boyfriends.

CAMERON

I don't know. The police is going to find your driver's license about three feet from where good old Jamie was killed. I called you from his cabin several times, so it's going to look like...well, you've been in contact for... quite a while.

BILLY

Keep dreaming. You're not going to see a single dime of Niles' money: Sly Wheaton has a legal document proving that every cent of the estate was intended for Ellen and nobody else. Period.

CAMERON

You know, Billy. You've got balls but no brains.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Sly Wheaton had an unfortunate setback tonight. Trust me, he won't be processing any more documents. Legal or otherwise.

Cameron lets this sink in. Game over. The music in the background comes to an end.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Now, do you really think I'm gonna let you walk out of here with ten big ones... of my money?

Cameron whips out a PEARL HANDLED PISTOL, aims, but Billy is ready: He fires his - Edward's - gun at Cameron from underneath the table. Cameron dives into the darkness of the living room. Looking for his pistol, Cameron glimpses at his hip: Blood. Plenty of it.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Fucker...

EXT. NILES MANSION, NIGHT

The patrol car, headlights off, slowly approaches the Niles house. Sheriff Robert spots Cameron's 4x4 and draws his pistol. Earl alongside, the Sheriff marches towards the porch. Earl notices the open barn-door, motions to his boss.

INT. BARN, NIGHT

Sheriff Robert and Earl enter. The Sheriff turns on the overhead light. Earl peeks inside the CADILLAC: Nothing.

CU: EARL'S BOOTS, as he steps into a puddle of blood. Earl looks down, remains calm. Sheriff Robert and Earl exchange looks, move toward the trunk. Traces of blood cover the hood. Earl steps aside and reaches inside the car.

CU: TRUNK CADILLAC. The hood pops open. Sheriff Robert and Earl stare at a body wrapped up in bloody sheets. Earl pulls out a switchblade knife and starts cutting along the wire. He pulls back a piece of the cloth to reveal:

CU: EDWARD'S BLOODY HEAD. A gruesome sight.

SHERIFF ROBERT

God all mighty.

Both turn as they hear GUN SHOTS coming from the main building.

CU: EDWARD'S BLOODY HEAD. His eyes are twitching.

INT. NILES MANSION - DINING ROOM, NIGHT

Billy moves in for the kill, but Cameron manages to get a hold of his pistol and shoots. Billy is hit in the leg.

He dives underneath the dining-room table and keeps shooting away with Cameron "answering". Windows shatter. A picture of Ellen and Uncle Niles is riddled with bullets, crashes to the floor. Another round grazes Billy's arm. Billy drops the pistol as he dives toward the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Billy hits the linoleum floor. Silence follows.

STAIRCASE

Sarah slowly moves down the main staircase. She spots Billy's gun, carefully picks it up.

DINING-ROOM

Cameron reloads his pistol, then watchfully rises from behind an easy-chair and disappears into the dark.

KITCHEN

CU: Billy, breathing hard, crawls backwards looking about the kitchen. Nobody in sight. He checks his pocket making sure that the envelope containing the money didn't get lost.

EXT. NILES MANSION, NIGHT

Sheriff Robert tiptoes alongside the mansion, his gun drawn.

INT. NILES MANSION, NIGHT

We hear the SOUND of a gun being cocked. Billy turns, gazing down the barrel of Cameron's pistol.

CAMERON

Checkmate. Game's over.

Suddenly, another SOUND of a gun being cocked. Cameron turns. Sarah is aiming at Cameron.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Silly me. I forgot all about you.

Dragging his right leg, Cameron limps toward Sarah.

SARAH

I will pull the trigger.

Sarah pulls the trigger. The gun fires nicking Cameron's ear. Cameron keeps moving, swatting the blood from his ear.

CAMERON

You little junkie whore...

She pulls the trigger again CLICK. CLICK, CLICK. Nothing. Cameron smiles.

He grabs Sarah by her hair, throws her hard onto the floor. Billy and Sarah huddle up to one another. Cameron points.

CAMERON (CONT'D)
Who wants to go first?

CU: SHERIFF ROBERT, as he steps onto the scene, targeting Cameron.

SHERIFF ROBERT
Hold it right there...

Cameron swiftly turns, aims his gun at his brother.

CAMERON
Bob? Jesus Christ, what the hell do you think they're doing?

SHERIFF ROBERT
I'm here to arrest these two for criminal fraud, trespassing, identity theft and a dozen other things...

CAMERON
Then how come you're pointing your pistol at me?

SHERIFF ROBERT
Looks like you're gonna have some questions to answer yourself. Put the gun down Cameron.

CAMERON
Robert, just turn around, walk away and pretend you never drove up here. I'm taking care of the two hoodlums.

SHERIFF ROBERT
You mean besides being a hot shot attorney you're taking over my job too? What's left for me then, Cameron?

CAMERON
I'm dug in here Bobby, go home, please!

SHERIFF ROBERT
Put the gun do....

Cameron calmly fires. Eyes filled with disbelief, the Sheriff goes down: Almost simultaneously.

CU: LONG DOUBLE BARREL. BANG!!

Cameron's head explodes into pieces. Blood, brains everywhere. Sarah screams. Billy dives to hold her. Earl lowers his rifle, takes off his sun glasses "Dirty Harry" style. He rushes to the Sheriff and examines the wound. Sheriff Robert slowly regains consciousness.

EARL
 Ain't that bad, boss. Ain't bad at all.
 I'll have an ambulance here in no time.
 (looks at Billy and Sarah)
 What do you want me to do with them two
 misfits?

Sheriff Robert hesitates, then:

SHERIFF ROBERT
 Let 'em go Earl.

EARL
 What?

SHERIFF ROBERT
 They'll wind up behind bars or in the
 obituary page without us lifting a
 finger.

Earl does his best version of a sombre thoughtful nod. He
 looks over at Billy and Sarah.

EARL
 Go on. You heard the Sheriff. Get movin'.

With Sarah's help, Billy pulls himself together. The two
 quietly exit.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. MOTEL - SOMEWHERE IN THE SOUTH, DAY

CU: SHOWER HEAD, as water pours down on Sarah.

Sarah emerges from the bathroom, wearing her summer dress, a
 towel wrapped around her head. Billy wakes up, rubs his eyes.

SARAH
 How're you feeling? You've been sleeping
 forever.

Sarah moves over to the bed and sits next to Billy. He peaks
 at the bandages covering his arm and his leg, frowns.

BILLY
 You did that?

SARAH
 Yep.

He kisses her. Sarah responds tenderly.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 It'll do for now. But you gotta see a
 doctor.

Billy nods, looks around the room.

BILLY
Sure. You seen my jacket somewhere?

SARAH
Its in car.

BILLY
I got a surprise. I think you gonna like it.

EXT. MOTEL, DAY

Limping, Billy steps out of the motel room. He looks about the parking lot. Except his convertible, there is no other car in sight. Billy spots an ice cream machine close to the front office. He checks his change.

EXT. MOTEL, FRONT-OFFICE, DAY

CU: LARGE BUTTON, being pushed. Seconds later, a wrapped ice cream bar spirals down the dispenser. Billy picks up the frozen treat, then slowly crosses towards his car.

EXT. MOTEL, PARKING-LOT, DAY

CU: CAR-DOOR. Billy opens the door and grabs his jacket from the backseat. He checks the inside pocket, pulls out the cash envelope we saw earlier.

CU: TRUNK-LOCK. Billy turns the key, opens the trunk lid.

He reaches deep inside the trunk. Amidst the junk inside is the broken flamingo sculpture from Niles basement. He slams the hood shut, carrying the weird looking flamingo. Nothing but the sound of traffic in the distance.

AT THE DOOR

The door is slightly ajar. Billy gives the door a gentle kick, it sways open. He steps inside. The room appears empty.

BILLY
Hey, remember at Stanleys, when I asked you about your favorite ice cream? Check this out... I brought along a keepsake from the plantation...

He holds the ice cream bar, puts the flamingo down. There's no answer. Something isn't right.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Sarah?

A gush of wind goes through the room. Curtains blow, doors swing. A series of quick cuts follow:

CU: SARAH'S REFLECTION in a mirror on the bathroom door. EDWARD'S large hand covers her mouth.

WHIP-PAN TO CU: BILLY, as he spots Sarah's reflection. He whirls his head back to the parking lot, staring at a car at the far end of the parking-lot. It's the CADILLAC.

WHIP-PAN TO CU: A COCKED GUN, pushed into Billy's cheek.

WIDE: THE SCENE UNFOLDS. Billy standing inside the room. Keeping Billy at gunpoint, Edward steps out of the corner of the room, tossing Sarah onto the bed.

EDWARD

Ice cream? What flavor?

Edward takes the ice cream out of Billy's hand, licks the bar. A split second later he pistol whips Billy. Billy falls onto the floor, as Edward slams the front-door close.

INT. MOTEL, DAY

Edward is not a pretty sight, but unmistakably he cleaned himself up since spending time inside the trunk of the Cadillac. His clothes are several sizes too big, obviously stolen. His injured eye is hidden behind an eye patch. Hurlled up in the corner of the room, Billy is leaning on Sarah's shoulder. Edward pulls out a small plastic container, tears off the lid with his teeth and starts chewing away on several pain killers.

EDWARD

I know... I look terrible. Had to borrow some clothes, and what not... but all things considered not a bad comeback, what do say, Sarah? I even found myself a nice 38 along the way...oh... one piece of advice: Billy, next time you're on the run, don't ever park a fucked up car like yours along a highway. Might as well put a balloon with a for sale sign on it.

Edward pulls out a pint of liquor from his jacket, washes the pills down.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Tell me, Billy Boy. You got any money for me?

Billy hesitates. He takes out the envelope from his jacket, throws it on the bed.

BILLY

Ten grand's all I got out of that friggin' lawyer.

A grotesque grin comes across Edwards face. He quickly crosses the room, grabs Billy by his shirt and pulls him away from Sarah. Edward sticks the barrel of the 38. into Billy's mouth.

EDWARD

How come I don't believe you... you lying motherfucker?

Edward cocks the gun.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Where is the rest?

Billy, shaking with fear, mutters something incomprehensible. Edward slowly removes the pistol from Bills mouth, keeps the barrel point at him.

BILLY

You can turn the place upside down.
That's all there is, I swear.

Edward steps back and sits down on the bed. He takes the envelope and start counting the bills.

EDWARD

Thief like you invests all that time baby sitting little Sarah and ten measly grand's all you got to show for? Billy, that's about five cents on every dollar you owe me. That's not good. Not good at all.

SARAH

Billy... what's he talking about?

EDWARD

Go ahead, tell her.

Billy stays silent while Edward keeps counting the dollar notes.

SARAH

Tell me what?

EDWARD

You see Sarah, your boyfriend sold a half a kilo of my dope to pay his gambling debts. Turns out that Billy's buyer just happens to be an acquaintance of mine... Get the picture? Well, me nice guy that I am, instead of chopping his good for nothing head off, I let him have a chance to redeem himself. All he had to do is give you a helping hand collecting your look-alike's fortune. Sarah baby, you follow? You look confused. You were set up, you understand?

Sarah stares at Billy in disbelief.

SARAH

I need a cigarette.

Edward pulls out a pack of smokes and throws the cigarettes toward Sarah. Close to a nervous breakdown, she lights up.

BILLY

Take the money and let us go.

Edward raises his voice.

EDWARD

Got yourself a little romance in the works, Billy? Can't blame you, I took a joyride myself with that sweet pumpkin. And boy, does she have a surprise waitin' and I ain't talking about strawberry ice cream. Sorry folks, there ain't gonna be no happy ending... 'cause the both of you made one very bad mistake.

BILLY

What's that?

Edward moves toward Billy and Sarah, clinches his fist.

EDWARD

I got hurt real bad and I'm really...
(searches for the word) ... pissed off.

SUDDENLY, Edward is struck by a terrifying wave of rage. He picks up the whiskey bottle and throws it against the wall. The bottle smashes into pieces, the liquor drenches the carpet. He strikes Billy with his gun across the face. Billy cries out in pain.

SARAH

Stop it!!

Sarah throws her arms up, attempting to hit Edward. The lit cigarette goes up in the air, then hits the alcohol-drenched carpet. The carpet ignites. Edward punches her into the stomach. Sarah falls to the ground, groaning, coughing.

EDWARD

You wanna to kill me, baby? Well, you don't know what you're doing. Forgot to make sure to kill me dead! Let me show you how its done...

Edward points his gun at Billy. Billy's eyes drift towards the flames. For a snip of a moment Edward turns around, sees the blaze going up the wall behind him. Billy takes advantage, jumps up and tackles Edward. Viciously fighting, both men fall onto the bed while the fire spreads around them. Sarah, coming to, looks on in horror.

CU: GLASS TOP, NIGHT-STAND, as it crashes, leaving large pieces of glass spread about the carpet.

Meanwhile, the fight continues. Despite his injuries Edward appears to gain the upper hand as he slowly pushes the gun towards Billy's chest. Billy, helplessly, stares into Edward's face.

CU: EDWARD'S FACE, twitching with pleasure. Suddenly, he grimaces with pain.

Sarah, a large piece of glass in both hands repeatedly thrusts the sharp object into Edward's back. Finally, her stabbing-frenzy comes to an end, Edward stumbles backwards. As if that wasn't "enough", Sarah spots the flamingo with its broken off leg, exposing a metal rod. She grabs the sculpture and plants the stake-like pole deep into Edwards chest, leaving the flamingo standing tall. Sarah shouts:

SARAH
Dead enough for you, asshole?

In the meantime, most of the room, including the money, is consumed by fire. Billy takes Sarah's hand and pulls her out the front door.

EXT. MOTEL, DAY

The couple comes dashing out the room. A dark cloud of smoke follows them. The twosome runs toward the convertible. Moments later the car takes off, leaving the burning motel and Edward behind.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY, YELLOW CONVERTIBLE, NIGHT

Billy is at the wheel. Sarah peeks into the dark. Both look pale and tired. A long silence. Then:

SARAH
So, was it all true, what he said?

Billy stares into the night ahead.

BILLY
It was my only chance to get out. So, I went along.

Sarah is almost amused by how disappointing it all is.

SARAH
They must've had a school to train you to lie as much as you do.

BILLY
I wanted to tell you everything a million times. But I...I didn't want to loose you...

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

Somehow in my fucked-up head I kept thinking that once I found a way around the lawyer, we'd be set up for life, and how it started wouldn't matter. It's a bad gambler's habit: You need a lucky streak so bad you get convinced it's gotta come.

SARAH

You really want me to believe that?

Billy pulls over onto the shoulder of the highway. There is silence as the engine idles calmly. Then:

BILLY

Sarah, there is no excuse for what I did, But, if I would have known about... what he did to you, I would have killed that monster a long time ago.

Sarah looks ahead with a strange calm.

SARAH

... he lied. Nothing happened. (beat) You'll never know how sad it feels when a guy says just what you want to hear but none of it's true. Every kiss, every look... nothing but a fairy-tale.

BILLY

But it was true.

Sarah half-laughs, half cries at him saying that.

SARAH

How do you get off saying that?

BILLY

I was in love with you from the first moment I walked into Stanley's. No matter what else I said, no matter what else I did, that was always true. It still is.

Billy pulls out a rolled up canvas from the back seat and hand it to Sarah.

SARAH

What is it?

BILLY

Remember the painting?

SARAH

The one above the fireplace.

BILLY

Yeah. I want you to have it. Apparently it's worth around a hundred K.

BILLY (CONT'D)

You can start fresh, forget about me. I'm
a bad seed, just like Eddie said.

Sarah is exhausted, not sure of herself. Then:

SARAH

You know what? Screw Eddie.

Billy manages a smile, as the car disappears into the night.

The End