

"THE MEADOW LAKE MURDERS"

by

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Registered WGAw

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THE MEADOW LAKE MURDERS

FADE IN:

Rural area in southern Oregon. Springtime.

SUPER: "SOUTHERN OREGON - 1959"

EXT. THE DAWSON HOUSE - DAY

OPENING CREDITS OVER

Lower middle class rural house with outbuildings that include a ramshackle chicken house and egg-cleaning shed.

INTERCUT. INT/EXT. EGG-CLEANING SHED - DAY

DIANA DAWSON BOXING AND LOADING EGGS

DIANA DAWSON gets flats and cartons of eggs from egg-cleaning shed - loads them in the back of her 1941 Chevrolet pickup. The bed of the pickup has been modified to accommodate flats of eggs.

She is early thirties, careworn, strong, pretty.

Chicken coop in the background with the gate open. Hens peck and CLUCK and CACKLE around Diana as she works. She CLUCKS and CACKLES back at them.

Inside the ancient shed is a rickety homemade contraption for cleaning eggs.

BEGIN MONTAGE

Diana delivering flats and cartons of eggs to her customers.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

EXT. EGG CUSTOMER HOUSE - DAY

An old frame house on a dirt driveway. Open garage with dirt floor filled with an array of junk. EGG CUSTOMER is hanging clothes. She is thirties, raggedly dressed. Four pre-school children play nearby.

She gives Diana three empty egg cartons and Diana gives her 3 full cartons from the back of the pickup.

EXT. COUNTRY STORE - DAY

A country store, OLD MAN sitting in front, nods at Diana as she brings 2 flats of eggs from her truck into the store.

INT. STORE - CONTINUING

STORE PROPRIETOR takes the flats of eggs from Diana. She gives him a slip of paper and he signs it.

EXT. CUSTOMER HOUSE 2 - DAY

Old but nicely-kept 2-story wooden rural house. Diana knocks on door carrying 2 cartons of eggs. EGG CUSTOMER 2 - an old woman - opens door. Exchanges empty cartons for full ones. Gives Diana some coins.

EXT. MCMANUS HOUSE - DAY

END MONTAGE

END CREDITS

A lavish, architect-designed estate. Expansive lawns, brick walls, arbors, horse stables, and feeding corals full of prize Black Angus cattle.

There is a 2-car garage with the door open. One stall is empty. In the other is a 1959 Oldsmobile.

Diana drives into the circular driveway, parks, gets out of the car and comes back to the bed of the pickup.

ROSE MCMANUS comes down broad brick steps from the front of the house. She is in her 30s, a vacant woman, snobbish, tightly wrapped and expensively dressed. She carries two empty egg cartons as if they were contaminated.

DIANA

Hello, Mrs. McManus.

ROSE
(with disdain)
There were three broken last time.

Rose comes around the pickup - keeping her distance from it - and stands watching Diana take out two cartons of eggs. Diana takes Rose's empty cartons and hands her two full ones.

DIANA
Well, we'll have to check them this time, won't we?

Rose checks the eggs in the cartons as Diana gets three single eggs from a flat, putting them in one of Rose's empty cartons and handing it back to her.

Diana stands up tall but becomes deferential.

DIANA
Do you think it is possible for you to pay me for these today?

ROSE
(bothered)
Oh, I'll have to see. Come inside.

Diana follows Rose into the garage.

DIANA
How's Ricky?

ROSE
Oh, he's fine, I suppose.

They disappear through a back door leading from inside the garage into the house.

ANGLE ON DRIVEWAY

JASON MCMANUS drives up in a 1959 Cadillac.

He parks in the garage next to the Olds and gets out of the car. He is 40, exudes power and influence, fastidious in a linen suit and tie.

As he enters at the back door he nearly bumps into Diana coming out.

DIANA

Oh, excuse me.

He glances at her briefly, then dismisses her brusquely without a word and continues into the house.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

A dirt road, single lane, bordered by open fields, scrub juniper, plum brush, sage brush, pine trees.

TOMMY DAWSON - age 12 - tough-guy façade - walks in the middle of the road brooding, eyes downward, kicking at dirt clods.

He carries school books and a lunch pail in one hand and fools around with a baseball in the other. A weathered baseball glove is tied to his belt.

He comes upon remnants of the dried skin of a snake. He regards it briefly, grinds it in the dirt with his heel and moves on.

Emerging DRONE of a pickup truck (O.S.) approaching from behind him. It is coming closer but moving slowly. Tommy seems oblivious.

INT. DAWSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

A working class rural home. Diana washes dishes at the sink listening to a SOAP OPERA on the radio. She looks out the window over the sink.

FRONT YARD - DIANA'S POV

The front yard is bordered by a dirt road and barbed wire fence. Off to one side is the chicken coop and egg shed.

The Dawson dog lies in the shade of a pine tree. The scene is quiet and pastoral.

BACK ON DIANA

SOUND of a stove timer. Diana wipes her hands on her apron, turns from the sink, gets a hot pad, and takes cookies from the oven.

BACK ON THE DIRT ROAD

Tommy shuffles along on the dirt road, the SOUND of the pickup idling along behind him.

INTERCUT SHOTS

The pickup creeps along, a green 1950 Chevrolet. We see a vague outline of a man driving.

The truck is ominous because it seems to be stalking Tommy and because he doesn't seem to be aware of it as it draws closer.

Tommy readjusts his books and accidentally drops his lunch pail.

SOUND of the pickup truck is very close.

Tommy stoops and picks up the lunch pail, glances nonchalantly back at the truck, then drifts to the right side of the road so it can pass. We see the truck's shadow on the dirt road beside him.

BACK IN THE DAWSON KITCHEN

Diana is setting baking sheet with cookies on the drain board. She studies them, tests the temperature of a cookie with her finger, licks her finger, gets a plate from the cupboard.

A clock radio is on a shelf above the drain board. The time reads 4:30. A COMMERCIAL is playing.

She changes the station to COUNTRY MUSC.

She returns to the window over the sink to look out toward the road.

DIANA'S POV

The dog under the tree lifts its head, sniffs.

BACK ON THE DIRT ROAD

The pickup pulls alongside Tommy, keeping pace with him. He looks up at the truck window, still a nonchalant tough guy.

His face begins to register apprehension as he looks at the driver. He is struggling unsuccessfully for recognition.

TOMMY'S POV

CONNIE HAMILTON is driving the pickup. He is a huge, rough-looking man in his 30s. He flashes Tommy a warm and disarming smile.

INT. DAWSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Diana is on the telephone. She is smoking a cigarette.

DIANA

Hi, Mrs. McManus, it's Diana Dawson.

(pause)

I called to thank you for paying me today. I had some unexpected things come up and ... listen, is Tommy over there by any chance?

(pause)

Oh, no, he's just a little late getting home is all, and I know sometimes he and Ricky ... Is Ricky home yet?

INT. MCMANUS HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

A large foyer and an open spiral staircase.

Rose is standing at a desk talking to Diana on the phone.

ROSE

No, he hasn't arrived home yet. You know, he got a new baseball glove for his birthday. They probably stopped along the way to play.

DIANA (o.s.)

I'm sure they did.

ROSE

It is springtime, you know. I'm sure they'll be along soon.

ON DIANA

DIANA

If you should see Tommy, tell him I baked cookies.

She hangs up. Stares at the phone for a moment, takes a deep breath.

BACK IN THE MCMANUS HOUSE

Rose puts the phone in the cradle, walks to the front door and opens it and walks outside.

EXT. MCMANUS HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUING

Rose steps out on a brick walk from the front door.

ROSE

(calling)

Ricky. Yoo hoo. Ricky.

In a POV shot we see the empty walkway, broad steps leading down to the driveway, sage brush and pine trees beyond.

Jason is in the distance, leaning against the fence of the coral, making a WHISTLING SOUND at the cows. He pays no attention to Rose.

EXT. DIRT ROADSIDE - DAY

Across from a partly-plowed field is an area where people have dumped trash just off the dirt road.

In the underbrush near the trash is the dead body of twelve-year-old Ricky McManus. He is on his back, arms at awkward angles. It is a peaceful image. He has been partially covered with brush so that he seems to blend into the background - only his head and upper trunk are visible.

School books similar to those Tommy carries are strewn nearby, along with a new baseball glove.

INT. CONNIE HAMILTON'S PICKUP - DAY

Connie has come to a stop beside Tommy. He holds up a small dog so Tommy can see.

CONNIE

You like dogs?

Tommy looks at the puppy.

CONNIE

Need a lift? Open the door. It's busted.

Tommy opens the pickup passenger door.

INT. CONNIE'S PICKUP TRUCK ON THE DIRT ROAD - LATER

Connie is driving. Tommy sits on the passenger side holding the puppy, books and lunch pail beside him on the seat. Connie looks down at him and smiles.

TOMMY

(pets the dog)

Where did you get him?

CONNIE

I got him at the pound over in Westborough. You ever been to Westborough?

TOMMY

Sure.

CONNIE

(lights a cigarette)

What's your name, kid?

TOMMY

Tommy Dawson.

CONNIE

Mine's Connie.

TOMMY

Connie is a girl's name.

CONNIE

My name's Conrad. I have the name
Conrad. It's Darnoc spelt backward,
which sounds like rat poison. So Connie
is short for that.

Connie laughs a little bizarrely.

TOMMY

(puzzled)

Did you name your dog?

CONNIE

(suddenly depressed)

Nope.

TOMMY

Why not?

CONNIE

I dunno. Name it if you want.

DIRT ROAD - CONTINUING

The pickup turns from the dirt road on to a paved road.

BACK IN THE TRUCK CAB

TOMMY

(looking in the other
direction)

Hey, my house is that way.

CONNIE

I know but I gotta go over here a
minute first. So you're a nice kid.
What grade are you in?

TOMMY

(getting worried)

Seventh.

CONNIE

Hey. You want some candy? I got some candy.

TOMMY

Yeah.

Connie reaches under the seat, pulls out a wrinkled paper sack, opens it in his lap, looks inside.

CONNIE

You like O'Henry's?

TOMMY

Yeah.

CONNIE

That's too bad, we ain't got any.

Connie, laughs hard. Then he pulls a bent Hershey bar from the bag and tosses it to Tommy.

CONNIE

That's from Alice in Wonderland. My old lady used to read that to me when I was a kid. You ever read it?

TOMMY

I seen the movie once.

CONNIE

That's my favorite part. This guy asks her, "would you like a glass of wine?" I think it was and Alice says, "yes I would," and the guy says "well that's fucking too bad cause we ain't fucking got none."

Connie laughs hysterically.

Tommy's face has grown a little worried and strained as he stares at Connie and then at the Hershey bar.

CONNIE

So you want to be friends?

TOMMY

I gotta get home. My mom worries a lot
if I'm not home.

CONNIE

(mocking)

Yeah, well, I ain't your mom.

Tommy looks at him in alarm.

Connie winks at him and speeds up.

TOMMY

(growing apprehension)

Mister, I have to go home.

CONNIE

Well, you ain't going home.

Connie back-hands him. Tommy instinctively and
successfully shields himself in the manner of a boy used to
receiving beatings. The puppy yelps.

Connie grabs the puppy by the scruff of the neck and tosses
it out of his open window.

Tommy opens his mouth in astonishment, stifles a scream.

He fumbles to find the door handle. It has been broken
off.

Connie tosses Tommy's books and lunch pail out his window
and tries again to slap him. Tommy deflects the blow.
Connie tries again. Tommy successfully shields himself.
Connie feigns another, fakes Tommy out, and whacks him on
the side of the head. Tommy flinches in pain but makes no
sound.

CONNIE

Just shut up. You don't want to give me
no trouble.

EXT. HELEN'S TRUCKSTOP AND ROADHOUSE - DAY

A 1955 Kenworth tractor and empty flatbed trailer rig pulls
into the parking lot.

Tommy's father MICHAEL DAWSON exits the cab and walks into the roadhouse. He is forty, dark and mean-looking, slight build, unshaven, wears a duck-bill hat.

INT. HELEN'S TRUCKSTOP AND ROADHOUSE - DAY

Television flickers behind a bar showing stock 1950s footage of communist guerrillas fighting in North Viet-Nam. JUKEBOX MUSIC plays.

HELEN is the bartender. CARL is at the bar. A few other PATRONS sit at tables.

Michael enters and walks to an enclosed pay phone in the back, enters and closes the door.

INT. DAWSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

SOUND of the phone ringing. Diana rushes to answer it.

INTERCUT SHOTS. DIANA AND MICHAEL ON PHONE

DIANA
(anxiously)

Tommy?

MICHAEL

It's me.

DIANA
Oh, Hi. Where are you?

MICHAEL
I just dropped those coils in Camden. I should be in by seven.

DIANA
Tommy's not home yet. I'm worried.

MICHAEL
(looks at his
watch).
I'll tan his hide for him when I get home.

DIANA
(irritated)
I don't think he needs his hide tanned.
Did you hear from Weyerhaeuser?

MICHAEL
(guiltily)
I need to call that guy.

DIANA
Damn it, Michael, I can't believe you
haven't called them back!

ON MICHAEL

Michael shakes his head chagrined.

MICHAEL
I made sixty-eight dollars all ready
this week ...

DIANA (phone v.o.)
... and then nothing next week and who
knows how much the week after that, and
you're never home. Your son needs you.
Plus they don't have those meetings on
the road. If you were home every night
and every weekend you could
(unintelligible).

Michael drops his arm with the receiver and gives a
suffering glance at the ceiling.

INT. ROADHOUSE - LATER

Michael stretches and sits on a stool at the bar.
President Eisenhower is on the black-and-white television
over the bar giving a speech, but the sound is off.

Helen the Bartender approaches Michael. Carl is sitting
two stools down.

HELEN
What'll it be?

MICHAEL

Let me get a double shot of CC and a cup of that coffee.

HELEN

Coming up.

MARCUS FINCH, crusty and old, enters bar and takes an empty stool next to Carl while Helen gets and pours Michael's coffee and bourbon.

HELEN

Hi, Marcus.

MARCUS

Gimme an Oly.

CARL

How you doin', Marcus?

MARCUS

Fine, except for them fucking UFOs. You see 'em last night?

CARL

No, I didn't see no UFOs. Where was they?

MARCUS

Coming right up over my barn. Three of 'em. Headed out toward Meadow Lake.

BEGIN FANTASY

EXT. MARCUS'S FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Marcus stands in his underwear on his front porch looking at the night sky.

Three flying saucers flying low with blinking lights disappear behind a grove of trees.

END FANTASY

HELEN

I seen some lights last night. What time was it?

MARCUS
Bout three o'clock.

Helen shakes her head.

CARL
(to Marcus)
You was seeing UFOs two or three weeks ago.

MARCUS
I'm right on their fuckin' whadycalit?
- Flight path.

Another patron stifles a laugh. Carl laughs too.

Michael broods, paying no attention.

CARL
Better watch out, Marcus. They might fly right up your fucking flight path.

Patrons other than Michael laugh.

INT. DAWSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Diana frets, dials the phone, lights a cigarette.

INT. DEPUTY SHERIFF BROOKS' OFFICE - DAY

DEPUTY BROOKS, gaunt, in his 50s is at his desk on the telephone taking notes.

BROOKS
(into phone)
Well, I wouldn't be too concerned, Mrs. Dawson. He is probably playing and just lost track of time. Have you called all of his friends?

DEPUTY RHOADS opens the door and gestures at Brooks. Rhoads is a bear of a man, in his 30s. He is dressed like a cowboy except for the Deputy uniform shirt and badge.

BROOKS

(into phone)

Excuse me Ma'am.

(covers receiver with
his hand - to Rhoads)

What is it?

RHOADS

Tiny Henderson is at it again out at
Ernie's.

BROOKS

(into phone)

I'll ... have to call you back, Mrs.
Dawson. Our officers will be on the
lookout.

He hangs up the phone and stares at Rhoads.

BROOKS

Shit.

BACK ON DIANA

Diana hangs up and goes to the window and looks out.

DIANA'S POV

Empty driveway.

BACK ON DIANA

She frets, smokes.

EXT. REMOTE FORESTED ROADSIDE - DAY

Connie's pickup crosses the empty oncoming traffic lane and
pulls on to the shoulder and stops. That side of the road
is forested. On the other side of the road is an open
field.

INT. CONNIE HAMILTON'S PICKUP

Tommy cowers in the seat on the passenger side.

Connie turns off the engine, looks at Tommy for awhile.
Tommy's tough-guy façade masks his fear fairly well.

CONNIE

I'm gonna get out and take a whiz right over there.

(points)

You just sit right there and don't move. You got it?

Tommy nods.

EXT. TRUCK

Connie gets out, leaves door open, walks to the edge of the ditch and starts peeing, his back to the truck.

Tommy slides under the steering wheel and quietly drops to the ground. Connie doesn't see him leave.

ON CONNIE

Connie finishes peeing and returns to the truck.

Sees Tommy is gone.

CONNIE

Why you little...

He looks for Tommy around and underneath the truck, across the road.

The open area on the other side of the road offers no place to hide, so it appears that Tommy has disappeared into thin air.

Connie walks across the road toward the open area anyway. He pauses at a shallow ditch there, looks up and down the ditch, ventures into the clearing.

EXT. PICKUP TRUCK BED

Tommy crawls out from under a tarp in the bed of the pickup and climbs stealthily out the opposite side of the bed.

He jumps to the ground, making a SOUND when he lands.

ON CONNIE

Connie turns.

CONNIE'S POV

Tommy disappears into the forest.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUING

Tommy runs through pine trees, Connie chasing. Tommy is faster than Connie, and it looks like he might get away but he trips and falls and Connie overtakes him.

EXT. PARKING LOT - ABANDONED COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS - DUSK

A remote stretch of country road - a boarded-up Bar and Grill and gas station, a few deserted outbuildings, an abandoned tractor and car.

TRACE CANTON and BARRY HODGES sit parked in a run-down 1949 Pontiac.

INT. THE PONTIAC

Trace - behind the wheel - is drinking a can of beer and smoking an unfiltered cigarette. Barry eats peanuts, dropping the shells on the floor. They are in their early 30s. Trace - tough and mean-looking - is behind the wheel.

TRACE

(looking at his watch)

I wonder where the fuck he is.

BARRY

Trace, I got something growing on my cock.

TRACE

You got what?

BARRY

I said I got something growing on my cock.

TRACE

Well Holy Jesus Christ don't tell me about it! Why the fuck would you want to tell me about it?

BARRY

I got nobody else to tell about it. I mean, you're my friend, ain't you?

TRACE

Well that don't mean I need to have you tellin' me that you got something growing on your fucking cock!

BARRY

Sorry.

Pause. Trace drinks and smokes.

TRACE

What the fuck is it?

BARRY

I don't know. You want to see it?

Barry reaches for his zipper.

TRACE

Fuck no I don't want to see it!

BARRY

Sorry.

TRACE

You probably got a leach or something on it when you jumped in that irrigation ditch this morning.

BARRY

I don't think it's no leach. I think it's a -- some kind of big fucking type of pimple or something.

TRACE

So, you get a pimple on your goddamned
cock and you tell me about it? Jesus
Christ, Barry, what in God's name is
wrong with you?

BARRY

I dunno, Trace. I'm sorry.

TRACE

Here he comes.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Connie's pickup pulls into the lot.

INT. CONNIE'S PICKUP

Tommy's face is bruised, his hair is disheveled, and his
clothes are dirty. His eyes are glazed, the only chink in
his tough-guy façade.

BACK TO PARKING LOT

Connie drives in a circle and pulls up alongside the
driver's side of the Pontiac heading in the opposite
direction.

Trace rolls his window down as the pickup pulls to a stop
and Connie shuts off the engine.

CONNIE

Howdy.

TRACE

Did you get him?

CONNIE

Nah, there was a problem. So I got
another one.

TRACE

Problem!? What do you mean a "problem"?

CONNIE

Well, he was a tough little fucker,
gave me a hard time. I had to smack
him. I smacked him too hard, I guess.

A stunned silence.

BARRY

Wow. So you killed him? Man O Man!

CONNIE

I never meant to.

TRACE

You killed the kid. I can't fucking
believe it. That was the kid. That was
our kid! What the hell is wrong with
you?

CONNIE

I never meant to.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Trace and Connie stand outside the vehicles, circling,
smoking, trying to solve the problem.

Barry stands in the door of the Pontiac watching them.
Tommy is still in the pickup.

TRACE

Well, if you hid the body real good
maybe it will still work.

Connie doesn't respond.

TRACE

We can call his folks, tell 'em we got
the kid, hope they come through with
the ransom without having to talk to
him.

(pause)

You did hide the body really good.

CONNIE

Uh ... Not too. I mean ...

TRACE

Jesus Christ.

CONNIE

I'm sorry, Trace. Maybe we can go back and hide him.

TRACE

That's a good idea, Connie. Now that everybody and their neighbor and the police and all of their fucking wolfhounds are probably out looking for him. We'll just tool back there and ...

CONNIE

I got this other one. Right here.

He points at Tommy like he is a trophy, holds the pickup door open so Trace can look. Tommy and Trace appraise each other.

CONNIE

He tried to get away, too, but I caught him.

BARRY

(calling to Connie)

We found a house.

Trace and Connie ignore Barry. Trace leans into the pickup on the driver's side, being nice to Tommy.

TRACE

(to Tommy)

I hope Mr. Conrad there didn't hurt you too much.

TOMMY

Did he really kill that other kid?

TRACE

It's you that I'm worried about. What's your name?

TOMMY

Tommy.

TRACE

Well, how do you do? My name is Trace.

TOMMY

Are you kidnapppers?

TRACE

I want you to tell me about your mom
and dad. What does your dad do?

TOMMY

He drives truck. It's a flatbed. What's
it to you?

Trace closes his eyes, bows his head, sighs. He
straightens up and stares at the sky for a moment,
considering what to do.

Then he turns, looks at Barry and jerks his thumb toward
Tommy.

TRACE

Put him in the trunk. I want to show
Connie that thing we found out back.

BARRY

What thing?

TRACE

(glaring at Barry)
Don't let this kid get away.

Trace gestures to Connie to follow him and they walk toward
the abandoned buildings.

EXT. BETWEEN TWO OUTBUILDINGS - CONTINUING

When they are out of sight of the road, Trace stops.
Connie pulls up next to him and stops.

Trace is pulling out a handkerchief. Faces Connie.

TRACE

(quietly, calmly)
I want to show you something. Lemme
have your piece a second.

CONNIE

My piece?

TRACE

Just for a second. You got it?

CONNIE

Yeah, I got it.

Connie pulls a snub-nose revolver out of his pants and hands it to Trace. Trace takes it carefully in the handkerchief in order to keep from getting fingerprints on it.

TRACE

Is it loaded?

CONNIE

Yeah, it's loaded. Be careful.

INT. THE TRUNK OF THE PONTIAC

Tommy blinks at the muffled far-away SOUND of a gunshot.

INT. PONTIAC

Barry hardly has time to react to the shot when it is followed by the SOUND of a second shot. He reacts with alarm and concern.

EXT. BETWEEN TWO OUTBUILDINGS - A SECOND LATER

Connie has fallen backward on the ground, dead, blood on his shirt.

Barry tosses the pistol on top of the body, leans over and pulls a wallet from Connie's back pocket, walks back toward the vehicles, folding the handkerchief and putting it with the wallet in his pocket.

BACK AT THE PONTIAC

Trace gets in the driver's seat of the Pontiac.

INT. PONTIAC

Trace starts the car, revs the engine.

BARRY

Where's Connie? What was that shot?
What happened?

TRACE

I hope we got that kid in the trunk.

BARRY

I got him in the trunk. Where's Connie?

Trace doesn't answer.

EXT. PARKING LOT

The Pontiac pulls out of the parking lot.

EXT. 2-LANE HIGHWAY - DAY

Following the Pontiac.

BACK IN THE PONTIAC

Trace and Barry ride in silence for a moment.

BARRY

Man O Man. Old Connie.

(pause)

Did you shoot him in the head?

TRACE

In the heart.

BARRY

Cause he brought the wrong kid?

Trace nods. Then, after a long pause, he becomes like a teacher, carefully explaining things to a child.

TRACE

And because he killed the other one,
they're going to be hard on his trail.
Probably already are. So I did what you
call "breaking the trail" so it can't
lead to us.

Barry nods appreciatively, taking it in - then shakes his head.

BARRY

Man O man. Old Connie.

Trace's eyes are fixed on the road ahead

EXT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Dark and dilapidated farmhouse on a dirt road. The Pontiac approaches.

There is a 1949 Ford pickup parked in front. Trace parks along side of it and turns off the engine.

Trace gets out, leaving the headlights on. Barry gets out the passenger side. Trace tosses him the car keys.

TRACE

There's rope and that cable and padlock we got in the glove box. Better tie him up.

Trace crosses the porch and disappears into the house.

A light comes on in the window.

INT. THE PONTIAC - NIGHT

Barry gets the rope, cable, and padlock out of the glove compartment.

BACK OUTSIDE THE PONTIAC

Barry opens the trunk. The moment the trunk pops open, Tommy leaps out.

Barry cries out in surprise.

Tommy bowls him over and runs off into the darkness. Barry makes it to his feet and starts out after him.

ON THE PORCH

Trace steps leisurely out on the porch with a beer and watches Barry and Tommy disappear into the darkness. He sits down on a chair on the porch and lights a cigarette.

EXT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE DRIVEWAY IN THE DARKNESS

Barry tackles Tommy, forces him onto his stomach, manages to tie his wrists with the rope while he talks to him.

BARRY

(soothing, comforting)

Hey, hey, hey, settle down, little guy. You gotta watch out that Trace don't shoot you. He ain't all that happy having you 'cause you're the wrong kid, so you gotta' mind yourself cause he'd just as soon kill you as look at you. He's real mean, I can tell you that.

Tommy begins to cease struggling. His tough façade is melting.

INT. DAWSON HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Diana Dawson is in the living room frantic, pacing back and forth from the phone to the window, looking out into the darkness, smoking, looking at the clock. It reads 8:30.

She picks up the phone and dials.

INTERCUT. DIANA'S LIVING ROOM AND ROSE'S FOYER - PHONE CALL

DIANA

Mrs. McManus. It's me again - Diana Dawson. I'm so sorry to bother you again, but Tommy's not home yet...

ROSE

Ricky hasn't come home either.

DIANA

He hasn't? My stars. What do you suppose happened to them?

ROSE

I am really getting worried. Mr. McManus went down to the Sheriff's station. He's going to make them send out a search party. He is very upset.

DIANA

I would go out and look myself but I can't leave here. He might try to call and I'd ...

(stifles a tear)

... miss him.

(pause)

My husband was supposed to be home an hour ago.

ROSE

My little Ricky is easily led sometimes. Your Tommy is a pretty strong influence on him I'm afraid.

Diana pauses a moment to take in what she has just heard.

DIANA

Are you suggesting..? What are you suggesting?

There is a coolness and strength in Diana's response that puts Rose off stroke.

ROSE

I'm suggesting ... I'm not suggesting anything. I'm sorry. Our children are missing. I'm sorry.

DIANA

Well ... you call me if you hear anything.

INT. DAWSON HOUSE LIVING ROOM - CONTINUING

Diana hangs up the phone. She walks to the window and looks out into the darkness.

DIANA

GOD DAMNIT!

She takes a deep breath, clenches her fists, then returns to the phone with determination and dials a number, waits for it to ring.

DIANA

(in phone)

Yes, Deputy Brooks, please.

(pause)

He went home? There are two children missing. How could he go home?

(pause)

Look, I understand a search party is being formed, and...

(pause)

You don't? Well, may I speak with someone who would know something about that?

While she is waiting she strains to look out the window as though she heard something.

DIANA

Yes, hello, this is Mrs. Michael Dawson speaking. I want to know what is being done to find my son, Tommy Dawson. He has been missing all night.

(pause)

When it gets light?

She slams down the phone, walks back to the window and looks out, lights a cigarette, then grinds it out in an ashtray and opens the door and walks outside.

EXT. DAWSON HOUSE - NIGHT

SOUND of crickets. Diana calls into the darkness.

DIANA

Tommy? Tommy!

Silence. She calls again, louder.

DIANA

TOMMY!

Silence except for CRICKETS.

EXT. DESERTED HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Michael Dawson's truck and trailer are parked off the road. Michael staggers drunkenly in the darkness carrying a half-filled whiskey bottle and glass. He is soft, gentle in his manner.

MICHAEL

(looking at the bottle)

O. I beg your pardon! Would you care for another?

He holds up the empty glass and looks at it.

MICHAEL

O. Why yes. Thank-you. I would.

Pours. Drinks.

MICHAEL

Screaming Jesus, woman.

He LAUGHS at the image.

MICHAEL

I'm all right now.

(pauses, drinks)

Daddy didn't raise no ... COMPANY MAN!!

The last phrase is screamed at the sky in profound rage.

Then, softly again:

MICHAEL

My Daddy raised an ... (screaming again) INDEPENDENT TRUCKER ... fucking

...

He takes a constricted haymaker swing at the sky - at God - and spills his whiskey.

MICHAEL

(quietly, courteously)

A dedicated run, you say? Oh. A dedicated run. More time at home? Well,

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CON'T)
 sir, you can take your decimated run
 and (screaming) drive trees through the
 ... (trails off into gibberish)

He settles down. Then, with variations in tone:

MICHAEL
 I'm all right now. (pause) I'm all
 right now. (pause) I'm all right now.
 (pause) I'M ALL RIGHT NOW.

He throws the empty glass as far as he can and takes a
 drink directly from the bottle. Opens his pants and starts
 pissing.

MICHAEL
 My old man would rather cuss that place
 than quit it, stubborn old sonofabitch.

INT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Trace, Barry, and Tommy sit in straight chairs watching
OZZIE AND HARRIET on a flickering black-and-white TV. The
 two men are eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

Tommy's hands are free. There is a sandwich on a plate in
 front of him. He is subdued but vigilant. He
 surreptitiously studies his two captors.

ANGLE ON TOMMY'S CHAIR

A short length of cable, looped on both ends, runs through
 the belt loop on the back of Tommy's pants and then through
 the rungs of the chair where the loops are padlocked
 together.

BACK TO SCENE

BARRY
 (to Tommy)
 You ought to have some. It's good.
 Grape jelly.

Tommy shakes his head.

BARRY

I made these myself.

TRACE

Shut up. I'm trying to watch the
fucking show.

Tommy toys with the belt loop in the back of his pants where the cable passes through.

INT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE BATHROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Trace and Tommy enter. Tommy is untied but his feet are hobbled with the cable.

Trace looks around the bathroom for any loose objects, then checks the one window. It seems too high and small for Tommy to use to escape. Satisfied, Trace leaves, closing the door behind him.

Tommy searches the room, opening and closing all the empty drawers. He tries to jump up and peek out the window. It's too high.

INT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Tommy, still in his clothes, is lying on the bed.

There's a lamp on a bed-side table. The walls are bare except for a large ancient cheesy velvet painting of a big angry grizzly bear.

Barry is finishing putting a padlock on a chain that is looped around the brass head rail. Tommy's right hand is handcuffed, with the other cuff linked to the chain.

Barry finishes securing him, puts the keys to the padlock and handcuffs in his pocket, and sits on the edge of the bed. He is genuinely enthused, acting more like a kid having a friend for a sleep-over than a kidnapper. This begins to have a soothing effect on Tommy.

BARRY

Can I get you anything? You sure you
don't want a peanut butter sandwich?

Tommy looks away, sullen.

BARRY
A glass of water?

Tommy doesn't answer.

BARRY
I'll be right back.

Barry leaves the room. Tommy studies the security arrangement, pulling tentatively at the handcuffs. He studies the room, looks at the bear picture.

Barry returns with the sandwich and a glass of water and puts them on the side table. Tommy eyes them.

Barry looks around the room as if seeing it for the first time.

BARRY
You think you're gonna be okay in here?

TOMMY
I miss my dog.

BARRY
I had a dog once. What kind is yours?

TOMMY
I don't know. My ma calls him a
"neighborhood breed."

BARRY
I had a mutt of some kind when I was
growing up. He got hit by a logging
truck. That truck never even stopped.
Probably never knew he had killed my
dog.

TOMMY
What was his name?

BARRY
(it's too painful to
remember)
I forget.

Barry offers Tommy the plate with the sandwich.

BARRY

Here

Tommy takes it, takes a bite.

TOMMY

I usually read comic books before I go to sleep.

BARRY

I've got some comic books! What ones do you like?

TOMMY

Nancy and Sluggo are okay. Captain Marvel.

BARRY

Shazam! Hold on.

Barry leaves the room. Tommy looks around some more. He is more relaxed. He eats the sandwich.

Barry returns with a stack of comic books. Hands them to Tommy as Tommy puts the empty plate aside.

Tommy goes through the stack. Comes to a Lone Ranger. Barry points to it.

BARRY

That one is my favorite.

Tommy opens it.

TOMMY

The Lone Ranger.

BARRY

You like him?

TOMMY

He's okay.

Barry pulls out a revolver that was stuck in the back of his pants.

BARRY

I want to get me some silver bullets
for this.

TOMMY

Wow. Is that a real gun?

BARRY

Yep.

Barry kisses the tip of the barrel.

TOMMY

Did that other guy get shot?

BARRY

Connie?

TOMMY

Yeah.

BARRY

Trace smoked him ...with a silver
bullet.

(laughs)

Shot him right through the heart.

TOMMY

How come?

BARRY

You don't want to mess with Trace,
that's all.

TOMMY

What kind of name is that? Trace?

BARRY

No kinda' name. He just calls hisself
that. He's got lots of names.

TOMMY

(nodding at Barry's
gun)

Is that the gun he killed Connie with?

BARRY

Nah. He killed him with Connie's own gun.

TOMMY

Wow. So can I see yours?

Tommy nods toward Barry's revolver and holds out his hand. Barry starts to hand it to him, then remembers that Tommy is a captive. He smiles slyly and pulls it back.

BARRY

You're a crafty one, I can tell. Look, kid, you enjoy those comic books. You can turn that lamp out when you're through. Or leave it on if you want. I don't care.

Barry goes to the door, replacing the pistol in the back of his pants. Turns.

BARRY

(from the door)

Goodnight.

TOMMY

You ever kill anybody with that?

BARRY

Just a few kids like you, is all.
(winks)

Barry leaves the room. Tommy stares after him, trying to figure out if he was joking or not.

INT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Trace, Barry, and Tommy sit at the kitchen table eating cereal.

Tommy is secured to the chair with the cable looped through his pants. He is reading the side of the cereal box as he eats.

Trace finishes first and wipes his mouth on a paper napkin.

TRACE

(to Barry)

You watch him. I'm going down to that filling station and make the call from the pay phone.

BARRY

Too bad we don't have a phone here. Maybe we could get one.

Trace stands up and fumbles in a desk drawer for paper and pencil

TRACE

(patiently)

We won't be here long enough for a phone, Barry. And we wouldn't want a phone anyway because they can trace the calls later. They are getting really good at tracing calls now days in case you didn't know.

BARRY

Man. How do they do that?

TRACE

Fuck if I know. I just know they can, that's all.

Trace puts paper and pencil in front of Tommy.

TRACE

(to Tommy)

Write down your phone number.

Tommy ignores him.

BARRY

(gently)

Do it.

Tommy writes on the paper. Trace takes the paper.

TRACE

(to Barry)

You just make sure he doesn't get away.
That 30:30 is by the door. If he tries
to run away, shoot him in the ankles.

Trace leaves.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Trace in the Pontiac on the road leading from the
farmhouse. ANGLE reveals the remoteness of the farmhouse.
It is more than a mile from the main road.

EXT. DAWSON HOUSE - DAY

Diana stands in the driveway talking to Deputy Brooks and
Deputy Rhoads. Brooks is taking notes. Sheriff's cruiser
is parked nearby.

BROOKS

I'm sure sorry I don't have something
to tell you, Mrs. Dawson. Are there any
other friends where he might've gone
to, or are those all you know of?

DIANA

That's all I can think of. My word,
here comes Michael. About time.

Michael's Kenworth tractor and flatbed pull off the two-
lane and into Dawson's driveway.

Michael parks the rig by a shed, gets out and walks over
towards the group. His face is red.

DIANA

Where have you been?

MICHAEL

(to the officers)

Howdy.

(to Diana)

I broke down. There wasn't no phone.
What's going on?

Diana knows he's lying. She glares at him.

DIANA

Your son is missing. He never came home last night.

Michael looks like she thinks it's his fault.

MICHAEL

(to Brooks)

So where do you think he is?

BROOKS

I wish I could say, I surely do. That McManus boy's gone missing, too. We figure they might have run off somewheres together.

MICHAEL

Well, why would they want to do that? Where would they run off to?

BROOKS

That's just what we're working on.

(to Diana)

We appreciate this list you gave us, Mrs. Dawson. We're going to start checking all these names right away.

He tips his hat and he and Rhoads get in the cruiser and drive away.

Diana looks at Michael expecting some explanation. She is on the verge of tears.

DIANA

Where were you?

EXT. COUNTRY STORE AND GAS STATION - DAY

The Pontiac is parked beside a phone booth. Trace steps into the phone booth

EXT. DAWSON HOUSE - DAY

PREVIOUS SCENE CONTINUES

SOUND of telephone ring from inside the house.

DIANA

Oh my God. Maybe that's him calling.

She rushes into the house, Michael following.

INT. DAWSON HOUSE LIVING ROOM - CONTINUING

Diana rushes to the phone and picks it up, Michael right behind her.

DIANA

(in phone)

Tommy?

INTERCUT DAWSON HOUSE AND PHONE BOOTH

TRACE

No, it ain't Tommy. Is this Tommy's ma?

DIANA

(hesitation)

Yes. Why? Who is this?

TRACE

Well, Mrs. Tommy's-Mommy, we have your little boysy woysy. He's still alive. The thing is, he's going to meet with a very bad accident unless you do exactly what I tell you.

DIANA

I'm ... Oh my word ... Are you sure he's okay?

MICHAEL

Who is it?

Diana waves for Michael to be quiet.

TRACE

Yes, he's okay. He's just having a little vacation.

DIANA

A vacation? What do you want?

TRACE

Money, Mrs. Tommy's Mommy. Lots of money.

MICHAEL

Who is it!

DIANA

Money? We don't have any money. We're just working folks!

TRACE

(slaps his head)

Well, I need ... twenty-four thousand five-hundred dollars. You have to come up with twenty-four thousand five-hundred dollars.

DIANA

(incredulous)

What!!?

TRACE

Twenty-four thousand five-hundred dollars. You have to figure out how to get it somewhere. That's the thing. Maybe you can ...I don't know ...sell your house.

MICHAEL

Who is it? Are they kidnappers? Lemme talk to them.

She waves him away.

DIANA

Sell the house? We can't sell the house. It ain't even worth the mortgage!

TRACE

Is your husband there?

Diana hands the phone to Michael.

MICHAEL

This is Michael Dawson. Who is this?

TRACE

Are you the truck driver?

MICHAEL

Yes, I am. Who are you?

TRACE

Listen. Mister, we have your son, and we're going to kill him if we don't get ... twenty-five thousand dollars.

MICHAEL

Twenty-five thousand dollars? Jesus.
(Laughs nervously)

DIANA

He told me twenty-four something.

TRACE

You've got twenty-four hours to come up with the money.

MICHAEL

(to Diana)

Hours. It's twenty-four hours.

(in the phone)

Mister, I couldn't come up with that much if you give me twenty-four years.

TRACE

(long pause)

Maybe you can raise some of it if you sell your truck.

MICHAEL

That truck ain't even paid for.

TRACE

What is it?

MICHAEL

It's a '55 KW.

TRACE

What you got in it?

MICHAEL

Two-twenty-Cummins, 8000-series 5 and 3.

TRACE

Not bad. What do you owe on it?

MICHAEL

I don't know. Four thousand, I think.

TRACE

Shit. How 'bout your folks? They got any money?

MICHAEL

(Laughs again)

Well, Pa still has the farm, but it ain't very big, and not much grows on it no more. Actually, it never was worth shit. He could have had any land he wanted around here, and instead he got that piece of shit. Floods every fucking winter.

Diana looks on incredulous.

TRACE

How much you reckon it's worth?

MICHAEL

Well, let me see, I don't know. With the land, maybe six thousand - if you could get it, I mean. I don't know who'd want it.

TRACE

How about your wife's family. They got any money?

Michael snorts into the receiver. Diana takes the phone away from him.

DIANA

Now you listen, you better just let him go. Why did you go kidnapping him in the first place? He ain't done nothin' and we ain't got nothin'.

TRACE

(angrily)

Listen, don't holler at me! It ain't my fault, lady. It ain't my fault it ain't that other kid.

DIANA

What?

TRACE

Never mind. You just better shut up and come up with the money like I said.

DIANA

We will. We'll figure out something. Just don't you hurt him or I'll ...

TRACE

And you better not call the police neither or I'll shoot him dead for you. You got 24 hours!

Trace slams the phone and leaves the booth.

INT. DAWSON HOUSE

Diana looks at Michael.

DIANA

He said we got 24 hours or he'll shoot Tommy.

She starts crying and he looks at her awkwardly, then clumsily takes her in his arms -

DIANA

(crying into his shoulder)

Why did they take Tommy?

He pats her helplessly.

EXT. COUNTRY STORE AND GAS STATION - DAY

Trace emerges from the filling station with a can of beer. Pops the top, takes a swig, gets in the Pontiac.

EXT. DIRT ROADSIDE - DAY

A FARMER is pulling a plow behind a tractor in the field across the dirt road from Ricky McManus's body.

The tractor comes in along the barbed wire fence along the road and the farmer sees the body across the road. He slows and then stops the tractor, idling beside the fence, staring across the road.

FARMER'S POV - SITE OF RICKY'S BODY

BACK TO SCENE

The farmer is squinting to make sure it is what he thinks it is.

LATER

The Farmer and a STATE PATROL OFFICER are standing around the body while 2 MEDICS stand by with a stretcher. A state patrol cruiser and an ambulance are parked, red light flashing.

A Sheriff's cruiser pulls up with Brooks and Rhoads.

INT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - DAY

Barry and Tommy sit in chairs on the front porch of the farmhouse. Tommy is tied to his chair in back through his belt loop as before.

They look out over a large meadow. They are listening to a MOURNING DOVE. It is a peaceful, pastoral scene. An occasional ground squirrel sticks its head up from its hole and calls.

There is a small reservoir in the middle of the meadow. A deer comes and drinks. Tommy is deeply morose until he sees the deer. It lifts his spirits.

The 30:30 rifle leans against the wall next to Barry. Barry looks at the deer.

TOMMY
(of rifle)
Would you really shoot me in the ankles
with that?

BARRY
I'd probably just use my pistol
(pats his pants)
You best not try and run no more.

TOMMY
What are you going to do with me? You
gonna let me go?

Barry doesn't answer. Looks wistfully out at the meadow.

TOMMY
Are you?

BARRY
I don't know, kid. It's up to Trace, I
reckon. It's always up to Trace.

TOMMY
So what do you mean you got the wrong
kid?

BARRY
Well, Connie was supposed to nab this
other kid but I guess he accidentally
killed him so he nabbed you instead.

TOMMY
So this other kid was the kid you
really wanted?

BARRY
Yeah.

TOMMY
How come?

BARRY
I guess Connie was casing him out for
awhile and everything.

TOMMY

Casing him out?

BARRY

His folks was really rich or something
I think.

TOMMY

(alarmed)

What was this kid's name?

BARRY

I don't know. I don't think I ever
heard it.

TOMMY

Was it Ricky? Ricky McManus?

BARRY

I don't know what his name was.

TOMMY

(fear rising)

Oh, fuck, I bet it was Ricky.

BARRY

Maybe it was. I don't know what his
name was. A kid your age oughtn't to
say "fuck" anyway.

TOMMY

I bet it was Ricky. I got to find out.
He's my best friend.

BARRY

Well, I hope it ain't him. I had a best
friend got killed one time. It's a hard
thing.

TOMMY

When was that?

BARRY

1938.

TOMMY

I need to find out if that was Ricky. You reckon we can go into town so I can call his house and find out?

BARRY

Oh, I don't think Trace is going to be too excited about you goin' into town. You run away too much to suit him, I think.

TOMMY

I won't run away. You can keep me tied up. Maybe hobble my legs or something.

BARRY

Well, we can ask Trace when he comes back.

TOMMY

Maybe it was somebody else, some other kid. He ain't the only kid around whose folks is rich.

BARRY

I wish I knew his name, but I surely don't.

Long pause.

BARRY

My friend's name was Loren.

(pauses, recollecting)

I always called him "Butch" though. Old Butch. He was something. We come up together. He was always one to look out for me. I never had no older brother or nothing, but Butch seemed like he was always right there. Sometimes I think everything started going bad when Butch died, I swear.

TOMMY

How'd he die?

BARRY

Got stabbed.

TOMMY

Stabbed?

BARRY

Yep. It was bad all right.

TOMMY

What happened?

BARRY

We was coming out of this movie show. We'd been to see the movie - I think it was Jezebel. We was just heading out to get us something to drink and these old boys jumped us. There was four of them. They just wanted our money, I reckon. Old Butch, he fought 'em back and they stabbed him, stabbed him and run off.

TOMMY

They ever find them?

BARRY

Nope. Never did. Not that I know of.

TOMMY

They stab you, too?

BARRY

Oh, yeah. They got me pretty good.

Barry lifts his shirt and reveals a long scar on his belly.

TOMMY

Wow.

The deer hears something and runs away.

ANGLE ON THE ROAD

The Pontiac comes up the road, parks. Trace gets out.

BACK ON THE PORCH

Barry rises to greet Trace.

BARRY

How'd it go?

TRACE

Went for shit

Trace disappears in the house. Barry sits down again. He looks at Tommy and grimaces.

Trace returns with a beer. Opens it and stands on the porch and stares out at the meadow. A couple of ground squirrels raise their heads more than fifty yards out.

Trace sets his beer on a railing and picks up the 30:30 and cocks it.

TRACE

I don't think this kid is worth a goddamn to us.

He lifts the rifle and shoots at a ground squirrel.

BARRY

You mean they ain't gonna pay the ransom?

TRACE

No, they ain't got shit. Goddamn that Connie.

He shoots at another squirrel.

BARRY

Say, Trace, by the way, what was that other kid's name? The one that's dead.

TRACE

Goddamned if I know what his name was. Connie never said and I never thought to ask him.

BARRY

Well, Tommy here thinks it might have been his best friend.

(to Tommy)

What did you say your friend's name was?

TOMMY

Ricky McManus.

BARRY

(to Trace)

Ricky McManus.

TRACE

Well, I'm sure I have no fucking idea.

BARRY

Tommy wants to know if we can take him into town so he can call up and see if that was his friend. Says we can hobble him if we want.

Trace looks at the two of them incredulously.

TRACE

You goddamned right we can hobble him. We can do any goddamn thing we want with him.

He points the 30:30 at Tommy. Tommy shrinks.

Trace moves the rifle down, drinks some beer, looks back out at the field.

TRACE

You be better off fixin' us up some lunch, Barry. I'm about ready to have you fry up them steaks I bought. Then we got to think about going out and hitting a market or road house or one of them State liquor stores or some goddamned thing because our cash is just about gone. All we got left after paying rent on this shit hole is eighteen dollars that Connie had in his wallet and another seven that I got. Hey kid, you got any money?

TOMMY

I got around seventy-five cents.

TRACE

Well, that's good.

BARRY

I still got that ten dollar bill and
some change.

(of Tommy)

You gonna kill him because there ain't
no ransom?

TRACE

May as well.

He shoots at another ground squirrel.

EXT. MCMANUS HOUSE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

INT. MCMANUS HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Floor-to-ceiling windows command a view of rolling hills.
There is a glass showcase of guns against the wall. Beside
it is another expensive glass-enclosed gun rack with
rifles.

Jason is making a phone call, standing looking out the
window, surveying his kingdom. He wears a linen suit and
tie.

Rose stands at the door as though awaiting instructions.
He is oblivious to her.

JASON

(into phone)

Yes, this is Jason McManus. I need to
speak with the Governor.

EXT. OREGON STATE CAPITAL - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

INT. OREGON STATE CAPITAL - GOVERNOR RECEPTION AREA - DAY

GOVERNOR'S RECEPTIONIST is typing. Several VISITORS are
seated in the waiting area.

INSERT: LETTERS ON CLOSED OFFICE DOOR: "OFFICE OF THE
GOVERNOR"

INT. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE - DAY

GOVERNOR JONES is at his desk on the phone.

GOVERNOR

Sure.

(pause)

Oh, I know it.

(pause)

Of course. Right away.

(pause)

Good enough. Talk to you soon, Jason.
Take care. And thanks for taking care
of that other thing.

(pause)

Mm hm. Bye.

Disconnects the phone with his finger, dials an extension,
waits.

GOVERNOR

Hello, Charlie. How are things going
over there?

(pause)

Good. Look, Charlie, I need a special
favor. They got a missing person down
at Meadow Lake - County jurisdiction -
a youngster. I need your best detective
down there.

(pause)

Well, get him on a plane and get his
ass down there pronto.

INT. MCMANUS HOUSE - THE FOYER - DAY

Rose faces Jason.

ROSE

I told him he could work an extra two
hours to finish that pruning. After
all, it's Spring and ...

JASON

You are so gullible! I want you to cut
him back two hours this week, and I
want you to cut the household budget,
too. You were over your allowance again

(MORE)

JASON (CON'T)

last month. And cancel that silly tea on Sunday. We shouldn't be entertaining anyway with Ricky missing. It's not good form.

She cowers.

ROSE

Yes dear.

There is the SOUND of a car outside in the driveway. Jason opens the front door and steps outside.

EXT. MCMANUS HOUSE - CONTINUING

Jason comes out the front door to a walkway with brick steps leading down to the driveway and garage. Rose steps out into the walkway to follow him.

EXT. MCMANUS DRIVEWAY - CONTINUING

Sherriff's cruiser parks in the driveway and Deputy Brooks and Deputy Rhoads get out. Jason comes down brick steps, Rose following.

Jason calls to them in a strong booming voice.

JASON

Morning, Deputies. Ready to get started with that search party?

Brooks doesn't respond until he reaches them, Rhoads trailing.

BROOKS

(touching his hat)

Good morning, Ma'am. Mr. McManus.

ROSE

Have you gentlemen found out anything at all?

BROOKS

I am sorry, Ma'am, I'm afraid we have.

JASON

Well, what is it?

BROOKS

I think we found your son. I am just so sorry.

JASON

Where is he?

ROSE

Oh, my God, he's dead, isn't he?

Jason looks at her aghast.

BROOKS

We are fairly sure it is your son. We found his name in some of his schoolbooks nearby. I'll need to ask you to come into town and identify the body so we can be certain.

ROSE

I knew he was dead. I had a dream.

She erupts in grief, but it is constrained and repressed.

Jason reacts with bristling and frightening rage.

JASON

What were the circumstances? I need to know the circumstances.

BROOKS

His neck was broke. And one of his arms.

Rose begins moaning.

JASON

This is completely unacceptable. Who did this?

BROOKS

We don't know. We have detectives on the scene right now. We'll find him.

Rose gathers herself.

ROSE

I'll go.

Jason looks at her not comprehending. He has forgotten about identifying the body, is momentarily frozen between denial and anger.

ROSE

It's all right, Dear. You go back into your study. I'll take care of this.

Jason looks at her stupidly but appreciatively. Their roles have abruptly reversed - she is the protector of him against things that are emotional and messy.

BROOKS

(to Rose)

We'll take you now if you feel up to it.

Rose nods.

JASON

(under his breath)

Unacceptable.

Brooks looks at him sympathetically.

ROSE

(to Brooks)

One moment. I need a hat.

She heads back to the house. Jason looks after her, appearing lost. He has become small and childlike.

IN THE DRIVEWAY - A MOMENT LATER

Rose returns wearing a small black pillbox hat and veil. She and the deputies get in the cruiser. They drive away, Jason watching them go.

INT. MCMANUS HOUSE - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Jason enters, walks woodenly to his study.

INT. MCMANUS HOUSE - STUDY - CONTINUING

The gun cases in the study are prominent in our view as Jason walks to the window. He looks out, his eyes dull.

JASON'S POV

A long rail fence runs along the side of the house separating an expanse of lawn from a field beyond. There is a wooden gate in the fence about fifty yards away. The McManus GARDENER opens the gate from the other side and begins coming through.

BEGIN HALLUCINATION SEQUENCE

JASON'S POV

Same scene as previous, but it is JESUS CHRIST and not the gardener coming through the gate.

END HALLUCINATION SEQUENCE

INT. JASON'S STUDY - CONTINUING

Jason blinks, rubs his eyes, looks again.

BACK ON THE GATE

It's the gardener.

BACK ON JASON

Jason stares at the gardener for a moment, then returns to the center of the room, pausing as though trying to recall where he left something.

He goes to the desk. It is impeccably clean. He re-aligns a writing pad and note pad with the corners of the desk.

He looks up at the gun cabinets. Reflects for a moment, then gets a key from the desk drawer and walks to the cabinets and unlocks the one with the pistols on display.

At last finding a purpose, he unlocks and opens a door in the bottom of the cabinet. He takes gun oil and cloth from a shelf inside.

On one side of the shelf is a stash of cash - tens of thousands of dollars - very neatly stacked.

He takes out a German luger and brings it - along with the gun cloth and gun oil - to his desk.

He spreads out one of the pieces of gun cloth, sits down and begins fastidiously cleaning the weapon.

INT. COUNTY MORGUE - MEADOW LAKE - DAY

CORONER lifts sheet to uncover Ricky McManus's head. Rose watches, Deputy Sheriff Brooks looking on.

Rose breaks into suppressed tears.

INT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - DAY

Barry and Trace are sitting on the couch drinking beer and eating steaks and engrossed in watching QUEEN FOR A DAY on the television. The 30:30 leans against the couch beside Trace.

Tommy sits tied to a straight-back chair at the table. There is an empty dinner plate in front of him. He is watching his captors. One hand is surreptitiously behind his back.

ANGLE ON BACK OF CHAIR

Tommy has managed to loosen some threads on the belt loop in the back of his trousers through which the cable passes. He tugs the belt loop back and forth methodically, trying to loosen it more.

INT./EXT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - DAY

Deputy Rhoads is driving Rose back home. She stares out the window at the countryside as they drive, deep in her own process. We see her veiled face reflected in the window.

BEGIN DAYDREAM SEQUENCE

-- Rose 12 years younger in the hospital giving birth, screams in pain. Doctor and nurses attending.

-- Rose 8 years younger and a four-year-old Ricky playing at an ocean beach on some driftwood. Jason sits nearby in a beach chair paying no attention, looking out to sea, smoking a pipe.

-- Rose and Jason and ten-year-old Ricky elk hunting in a snow-covered clearing in a forest. Rose and Jason carry hunting rifles, and Ricky has an air rifle. There has been some altercation, and Jason is stomping away, leaving them.

-- Rose and Jason and twelve-year-old Ricky at a dinner table. Ricky fades away. Rose looks at Jason. A dread comes over her.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

Rose touches her reflection in the glass. She screams but no sound comes out.

INT. DAWSON HOUSE - DINING AREA - DAY

Diana and Michael Dawson are sitting at the kitchen table. There is a long silence.

DIANA

What are we going to do? What are we going to tell that man when he calls back?

MICHAEL

Twenty-five thousand dollars. My Lord.

DIANA

We've got about twelve-hundred in the bank. If we sold everything we could get thirty-five hundred more - maybe.

They are quiet another moment, thinking.

MICHAEL

Okay, I was in Oklahoma City, about a month ago, talking to this guy in a bar.

BEGIN FANTASY SEQUENCE

INT. BAR - TRUCK STOP - NIGHT

Michael and another patron sitting at the bar talking to the bartender (unintelligible).

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Me and him was talking to this bartender - and this guy was telling about this fella who made over ten thousand dollars in a single run.

EXT. COOS BAY, OREGON WATERFRONT - 1950S - DAY

Truck trailers are being loaded from cargo containers. There is a foreign freighter in the harbor.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

It was some kind of illegal thing - something coming from Japan or some place - some kind of military deal. This guy was supposed to haul it to someplace in Virginia.

EXT. 1950S INTERSTATE COMMERCE INSPECTION STATION - DAY

Trucks in line being weighed at the inspection station.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

He had this complete map of how to avoid all the inspection stations all the way cross country.

EXT. FARM - DAY

A farmer is holding a gate open for a semi-truck traveling on a dirt road.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

This map shows detours through farmer's fields and shit ...

END FANTASY SEQUENCE

DIANA

Stop, stop, stop! That would take you weeks. You don't even know what you are talking about.

MICHAEL

You're right about that.

DIANA

Besides, it's only ten thousand dollars. We need twenty-five thousand. Why don't we just rob the First Federal and Loan.

MICHAEL

Rob the First Federal and Loan.

DIANA

We've got to do something!

MICHAEL

I know, but, Diana, everybody knows us at the First Federal and Loan.

DIANA

Crestview.

MICHAEL

Crestview?

DIANA

It's thirty miles away. Let's rob the bank in Crestview. Nobody knows us in Crestview.

They think about it.

MICHAEL

I think it's too risky.

DIANA

Risky? That man said he would shoot Tommy. Tommy will be dead. You'll have to remember him for the rest of your life like he was the last time you seen him. Do you remember the last time you seen him?

Michael closes his eyes.

BEGIN MEMORY SEQUENCE

INT. DAWSON EGG-CLEANING SHED - DAY

Michael is grabbing Tommy by the arm. Tommy struggles to get away and Michael pushes him hard. Tommy falls against the floor next to the egg-cleaning machine. Michael unbuckles his belt and pulls it off.

END MEMORY SEQUENCE

MICHAEL
(very softly)
I remember.

DIANA
Well, we got to think of something, and it has to be good, and it has to be soon.

Long pause.

MICHAEL
What about Ricky's folks?

Diana looks at him, paying attention.

MICHAEL
Those same people must have Ricky too. His folks got the dough. Maybe they could ... I don't know.

DIANA
Maybe they could. Maybe they could.

INT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - DAY

Tommy, in his chair, still tugs at the belt loop.

Trace and Barry are still on the couch watching QUEEN FOR A DAY on TV. They have finished eating.

Trace picks up the 30:30 and SHOOTs out the television screen.

Both Barry and Tommy CRY OUT, startled.

BARRY

Man, oh Man, Trace. Jesus Christ, why did you do that?

TRACE

I hate that fucking shit, man.

BARRY

Well, now we can't even watch television.

TRACE

It don't matter. I got an idea.

He puts the rifle down.

TRACE

(to Tommy)

Hey, kid. You said you think this other kid was a friend of yours?

TOMMY

The kid that was killed?

TRACE

Well, who the fuck else would I be talking about?

TOMMY

Maybe he was, yeah.

TRACE

You said his folks was rich?

TOMMY

They're rich all right.

TRACE

You know his phone number?

TOMMY

Yeah.

TRACE

Barry, untie the kid. Let's go for a ride.

EXT. SALEM OREGON MUNICIPAL AIRSTRIP - DAY

DETECTIVE TROY LARKIN boarding a small plane that says "Office of the Governor" on it with an Oregon State seal.

Larkin wears a suit and tie and hat. He is a bureaucratic cop, a "Joe Friday wannabe." He is also gay but keeps it pretty well hidden.

EXT. MCMANUS HOUSE - DAY

Sheriff cruiser with Rose and Rhoads comes in circular driveway and stops. Rhoads gets out and hurries to open the back door for Rose.

She gets out and walks to her front door. He looks on sadly.

INT. MCMANUS HOUSE FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Rose enters foyer. She moves slowly toward Jason's study. Silence greets her. Then Jason's voice is gradually heard from the study. He is on the phone.

Rose reaches the door and leans there to watch Jason as he talks.

INT. MCMANUS HOUSE - STUDY - CONTINUING

An array of pistols lie on Jason's desk. He fingers the luger as he talks on the phone. We see Rose at the door but Jason doesn't notice her. She eyes the guns with some amazement.

JASON

(in the phone)

I know, but Mark. Listen. We can't afford any problems like that at this hearing. We just have to make sure that the question doesn't come up.

(pause)

Well, what about Curtis? Can we get to him?

(pause)

I know he is but if he doesn't like it tell him that we will make sure that

(MORE)

JASON (CON'T)

Mitchell gets another firm for that project in Willow Bend. You know what I'm talking about?

(pause)

Well, then call Jack.

There's a long pause. Jason puts his fingers and thumb to his temples and bows his head for a moment. Then he snaps out of it.

JASON

... Never mind. I'll call him myself in the morning. I'll talk to you later.

He hangs up, takes out a pen and writes something on a note pad by the telephone. He looks out the window.

ROSE

(softly)

Jason?

Jason is at first startled that she is standing there, then becomes perfunctory.

JASON

Yes, Dear.

ROSE

Are you all right?

JASON

Yes, yes. Fine.

Long pause while she waits for him to ask if the body was Ricky's.

ROSE

It was Ricky.

JASON

Sorry?

ROSE

The body. I was at the morgue. It was Ricky.

He stares at her for a moment, then walks to the window and stares out for a long time, musing.

ROSE

What are we going to do?

JASON

(softly)

We . . . are going to make sure we find out who killed my son and get the sonofabitch. That's what we are going to do, Rose.

Rose takes a deep breath.

JASON

You know, this wouldn't have happened if you had been a little less coddling of him.

She shakes her head, opens her mouth to speak but nothing comes out.

JASON

Coddling makes one vulnerable, and the vulnerable are preyed upon. That's the way the world works, Rose.

ROSE

(deeply stung)

Noo...

JASON

Weak.

Rose wilts, turns, walks from the study to the foyer.

IN THE FOYER

She stands staring into space blushing with shame and anger.

EXT. COUNTRY STORE AND GAS STATION - DAY

The Pontiac pulls into the parking lot and stops in front of a phone booth. Trace gets out of the driver's side, opens the back door and lets Tommy out.

The length of looped cable and padlock that tied Tommy to the chair now hobble his ankles.

Trace escorts him to the payphone, digs out a dime, and hands it to Tommy. Barry steps out of the car and leans in the door watching.

INT. MCMANUS HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

The phone RINGS in the McManus foyer and Rose picks it up.

ROSE
(gathering composure)

Hello.

INTERCUT JASON'S STUDY

Jason picks up his phone - an extension - a second later.

BACK ON PHONE BOOTH

Tommy on the phone in the phone booth. Trace hovers so he can hear over the receiver.

TOMMY
Hello, Mrs. McManus, it's Tommy. May I
please speak to Ricky?

Long pause.

ON ROSE

ROSE
Tommy. Are you at home?

ON TOMMY

TOMMY
No ... I'm ... I'm ...

Trace jostles him in a warning.

ON ROSE

ROSE
Tommy, Ricky is ... dead, honey.

ON TOMMY

Tommy slowly erupts into tears at the news. Trace grabs the phone and puts it to his ear.

Tommy walks out of the phone booth, crying.

EXT. COUNTRY STORE AND GAS STATION - DAY

Barry - touched by Tommy's grief - goes to him to comfort him, but he is inconsolable.

BACK TO PHONE CALL - INTERCUTS

TRACE

(into phone)

Miss Misstannis?

ROSE

"McManus." Who is this?

TRACE

Never you fucking mind who this is.
I'll tell you who this is. This is the person who is going to cut this little boy's heart out if you don't come up with ... twenty-thousand dollars in the next twenty-four hours.

Rose screams.

JASON

(into phone)

Who is this!!?

TRACE

Who the fuck is this?

JASON

This is Jason McManus.

TRACE

You the rich guy, eh?

JASON

I said, who is this?

TRACE

Oh, well, pardon me, Mr. Rich sonofabitch, this is the gentleman who is holding captive one Tommy Dawson whom I believe is a friend of the deceased Ricky. He is also the one whom is going to soon join his friend Ricky as fucking dead as a doornail if you do not pay me a reward of twenty thousand dollars. Actually, let's make that thirty thousand.

JASON

You ... killed my boy.

TRACE

That don't matter, Mr. rich mother-fucker. Because life is for the living, and we are going to kill this one here, too, if you don't come up with those greenbacks. Now I am going to call you tomorrow morning early and give you instructions about how to deliver the cash. You better have it, and you better not involve the cops in any way or this kid's head will end up on your doorstep.

JASON

Listen, you asshole. That kid is not my problem. You are my problem, and I am going to leave no stone unturned until I find you and send you to hell.

TRACE

Why don't you rethink that? I'll call back in the morning. Have the money.

Trace hangs up.

JASON

Hello?!!

Jason pauses, then slams down the phone and walks into the foyer.

EXT. MCMANUS HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUING

Rose hangs up, shaken, and looks at Jason incredulously.

ROSE

You ... you're not going to ... pay him
to not kill the Dawson boy?

JASON

Why would I pay him, Rose? That boy
isn't our problem.

ROSE

You have a lot more money than what he
is asking for right in that room
(points to his
study)
that you are happy to give those dirty,
politicians in Salem and ...

Jason looks at her in astonishment. He seethes, stammers.

JASON

How did you ...know ...? That's an
entirely diff ...

SOUND of door chimes. They both stand in silence for a
moment as if suspended.

Rose goes and opens the door.

Michael and Diana Dawson stand outside. Michael takes his
hat off and holds it in both hands, fidgeting. Both
McManus's are stunned to see them.

DIANA

I'm so sorry. I hope we aren't
intruding. We ... I was just wondering
if you ... if there was any news about
Ricky.

ROSE

He's dead.

Jason looks at Rose as though this is the first time he has
heard the news. Diana breaks into tears. Michael seems to
be offering them his hat.

DIANA
(recovering)
Where ... what happened?

JASON
Somebody broke his neck.

Rose looks at him in distaste. Then she slowly regains composure, her sense of propriety and class rising back to the surface.

ROSE
Won't you ... come in? It's getting a little chilly out there, I think.

They step inside. Jason becomes a knee-jerk host the moment the Dawson's cross the threshold.

JASON
(belatedly)
Yes, please come in.

ROSE
It should be getting warmer soon now that it's spring. We have had a very long winter, it seems.

MICHAEL
Yes, we have.

Jason leads them into a posh living room, also with commanding views. The Dawsons are directed to a davenport behind a large glass coffee table. There are two easy chairs facing, but Jason and Rose remain standing.

Jason looks at Michael and rubs his hands together.

JASON
How about a scotch?

Michael half rises, nodding. Diana flashes him a look but he pretends to miss it.

Jason exits, on his way to his study.

DIANA
(to Rose)
How are you?

ROSE
It's such a shame. May I get you a cup
of tea?

DIANA
Oh, no thank you.

ROSE
I think we need some tea. It will just
be a minute.

Rose leaves.

DIANA
O, my Lord, God.

Michael shakes his head.

DIANA
I can't believe that nice little boy is
dead.

She begins weeping softly.

DIANA
They're going to kill Tommy too!

Michael pats her.

MICHAEL
Is it just me or do they not seem all
that ... I don't know...

DIANA
...Upset. I know. Maybe they're still
in shock.

MICHAEL
Remember when we was kids and Rose's
folks all burnt up in that fire? Maybe
she's just still in shock all the time
and that's what's wrong with her.

Diana finds Kleenex in her pocket and blows her nose.

DIANA

Well, I don't know what's wrong with him. I have to go to the bathroom.

She gets up

She leaves the living room, passing Jason on his way back with a bottle of White Horse scotch and two glasses. He sits in one of the facing chairs and puts the bottle and glasses on the coffee table. He carefully pours two glasses half full and hands one to Michael.

Michael takes it, smells it appreciatively, and then sets it down on the table in front of him and stares at it.

JASON

I believe you are in trucking.

MICHAEL

(surprised that Jason
would know)

Yes, yes I am.

JASON

The life blood of commerce! I salute
you!

Jason lifts his glass in a toast and drinks, not noticing that his toast is not answered.

Diana returns, blowing her nose again, and sits beside Michael.

JASON

You know, when the very first settlers came to this country, and found the place where they were going to stop and put down roots, do you know what the first thing was they had to do?

MICHAEL

No.

Diana stares at him.

JASON

Somebody had to go back for supplies.
The freight business was born that
instant.

Jason salutes Jason with his glass and drains it.

DIANA

Where was your son found?

JASON

Do you know the road to the Meadow Lake
Ranch?

DIANA

Yes, I do.

JASON

I'm not sure, exactly...

Jason drifts off.

Rose is standing in the entry to the living room carrying a
tray with tea service. She heard Jason.

ROSE

Jason of course would have no way of
knowing this, but Ricky often took a
short-cut through the pine trees there
over to our road.

She comes in and sets the tea tray on the coffee table,
sits and serves tea to Diana.

Jason is vacillating between pseudo-commanding and
helpless. He pours himself another three fingers of scotch,
which Michael studies closely.

ROSE

Ricky loved your Tommy so much. He was
always talking about him. He always
thought that Tommy was such a good
baseball pitcher. "He can throw the
ball so fast!" he used to say. I
remember when they were five years old
and Tommy would come to visit and he

(MORE)

ROSE (CON'T)

would walk from your house up through the sagebrush, and he wore that cute little stocking cap - I don't know if you remember it - with the red ball on the top, and I always knew he was coming because I could see that little red ball bobbing up and down through the sage brush. I couldn't see Tommy, he was so short, but I could see that little red ball, bobbing up and down, up and down in the sage brush.

A silence falls. Michael stares at his untouched scotch. Jason drains his glass and pours himself another. Looks at Rose as if she has gone mad.

ROSE

The years go by. But then when you look back, it's as if no time has passed at all.

Diana takes a very deep breath and lets it out slowly.

DIANA

Michael and I received a very upsetting telephone call this morning. A man, who wouldn't give us his name, told us that they have Tommy, and that they will kill him if we don't give them twenty-five thousand dollars by tomorrow.

Jason downs his drink.

DIANA

Since this ... horrible news about Ricky, I can only believe that they mean what they say - that they will surely kill him if we don't give them the money or if we call the police.

She straightens her spine a bit.

DIANA

We have no idea why they picked Tommy, why they picked us. We haven't any money. We just don't know what to do.

Michael interrupts her. She looks at him with appreciation and surprise. She had not expected any help from him.

MICHAEL

(to Jason)

So we came to you. I know we've got no right. No right at all asking anything. It's from not knowin' what to do that we come here - and from ...

(bows his head)

loving our boy. Mr. McManus, I can tell you this, that if you would find it in your heart to help us out - and I know this is a lot of money that I'm asking for - a lot of money - but if you would help us out I would pay you back every cent, with interest, right up to my dying day if need be.

DIANA

I feel so bad about Ricky. We probably wouldn't have had the courage to come here if we had known of your loss. Or if we knew any other way. I think now they will kill Tommy for sure, just like Ricky, if we don't pay.

JASON

(blurting)

We don't know these are the same people.

ROSE

(facetiously)

Well, we surely don't.

Rose sips some tea. Jason pours another drink and gets up and carries the drink to a window nearby and looks out over his land.

A semblance of the commanding presence returns, but he's getting a little tipsy.

JASON

Well, I tell you, I have read about cases such as this, and I have to tell you that the chances of the victim being returned unharmed do not increase with the payment of the extortion - the ransom - whatever you want to call it.

(he turns to
face the Dawsons)

The only thing that increases those chances is to call the police and turn all of this over to them. Now, I know the Governor of this state personally, and I telephoned him this morning and asked him to dispatch their best detectives to work on this case, and he did just that, so now we just need to wait and let them do their job.

Rose turns in her chair, looks at Jason and smiles.

ROSE

It's true. Jason and the Governor are friends - old hunting pals. They went for elk together just last fall and brought one of the monsters home and hung its carcass right out there in our garage, isn't that right, Love?

(turning to the
Dawsons, smiling)

You can still see the bloodstains on the concrete. Guted it on the mountain and brought it into our garage to skin it and behead it and cut off its hooves and cut its liver out and hang it up to dry.

(to Jason)

I don't know which makes Jason feel more like a man: murdering an elk or telephoning the Governor.

Jason looks at her in disbelief.

ROSE

(to the Dawsons)

I know killing and dressing that elk
(MORE)

ROSE (CON'T)

gave him a ... Well, I won't say it in polite company. He's impotent, you know.

(to Jason)

By the way, the Governor got that railroad bill passed that you had Marvin Cameron write, didn't he, Sweetheart? How much money did that finally amount to for us, Darling?

JASON

(whispering hoarsely)

That's private business, Rose.

ROSE

Enough to get those two new cars in the garage, and God knows how many of those filthy, stinking cows you keep out there.

(to the Dawsons)

Jason raises all those cows for show in the State Fair. If he had given our son Ricky one tenth of the time and attention he gives those brainless bovines...

She pours herself some more tea, shaking her head. Jason is seething and speechless.

ROSE

So, how long have you two been married?

MICHAEL

Thirteen years.

DIANA

We should probably go now.

ROSE

Sixteen for us.

(looks at Jason)

Seems like forever, doesn't it, Darling?

(to Diana)

It is so amazing to me how you can live

(MORE)

ROSE (CON'T)

with someone for that many years - nearly a third of ones entire life - and think you know them but not know the first thing about them. Isn't that something?

JASON

(hoarse and weak)

I think the stress of today has worn her down. You two will have to excuse her. She goes a little crazy sometimes.

ROSE

Yes, indeed, excuse me! It has been a stressful day. I had to go into town and identify the body of our child. And when I got home, Jason was on the phone with his office doing some of his dirty business. He didn't have time for Ricky when Ricky was alive, and hasn't any respect for him now that he is dead. How can a father do that, do you suppose? I honestly don't think he likes children at all.

Diana rises from the davenport, then Michael.

DIANA

I am ... so, so sorry for your loss.

ROSE

Well, I'm sorry we can't help you. We seem to be helpless as babies, here, ourselves. And Jason is so peculiar with money. It comes from being so insecure about being a man, I think. Of course, I don't have a cent of my own. He has always seen to that.

(to Michael)

Have you ever seen Jason's cows?

MICHAEL

No, Ma'am, I have not.

ROSE

I'm sure he would love to take you out there and show them to you. He has forty or fifty or sixty or God knows how many of them. They cost a small fortune, of course. He loves showing them off.

(to Jason)

Honey, why don't you take Mr. Dawson out and show him all of your expensive cows?

(to Michael)

He grows the hay for them himself, right here on our ranch.

Jason is showing his teeth. He picks up the scotch bottle and storms out of the room. His study DOOR SLAMS (O.S.).

ROSE

Oh, I guess not tonight.

Diana and Michael walk to the door, Rose following.

ROSE

Maybe Jason is right. Maybe I've gone a little crazy.

Diana stops and turns, facing Rose. Michael continues on out the front door. Diana speaks to rose in low, steady, and earnest tones.

DIANA

You listen to me, Rose McManus. You ... are... not ... going ... crazy. I know you, I see you, and there is nothing wrong with you. Do you understand me?

Rose shudders slightly, tears up, nods at Diana.

Diana reaches up a and lightly caresses Rose's cheek, then turns and walks out the front door

EXT. MCMANUS HOUSE - THE DAWSON'S CAR - A MOMENT LATER

Diana and Michael get in Diana's Chevy Pickup, she on the driver's side.

INT. CAR

DIANA

My word.

Michael shakes his head. Diana turns and looks at him.

DIANA

Michael, you acted like a ... a real man in there. I love you so much.

She reaches over to embrace him. He returns the embrace. She sheds a tear.

MICHAEL

I love you, too, Baby.

She sobs quietly in his shoulder.

DIANA

What are we going to do now?

INT. DEPUTY SHERIFF BROOKS' OFFICE - DAY

Deputy Brooks is at his desk on the phone. Deputy Rhoads stands near the door.

BROOKS

(to Rhoads - hand covering receiver)

The state guy is here.

(in the phone)

Send him in.

Brooks hangs up. Detective Troy Larkin opens the door and walks in. Brooks gets up from his desk to greet him. Rhoads scrutinizes Larkin.

BROOKS

Glad you're here. I'm Brooks. This is Rhoads. He'll be riding with you.

Larkin shakes Brooks' hand.

LARKIN

Detective Troy Larkin.

Larkin turns to Rhoads. He is very attracted to him, tries to hide it.

Rhoads nods his greeting.

EXT. DIRT ROAD NEAR WHERE RICKY WAS FOUND - DAY

Black Ford driving toward crime scene. Rhoads is driving, Larkin in the passenger's seat.

INT. BLACK FORD - DAY

Larkin takes out a pack of cigarettes and offers one to Rhoads. Rhoads takes it.

RHOADS

Thanks.

Rhoads takes a Zippo lighter out of his pocket and lights both their cigarettes.

LARKIN

You got a family?

RHOADS

Yep. Four kids. You?

LARKIN

Nope.

RHOADS

So you fly down this morning?

LARKIN

Yep.

RHOADS

You been with the State long?

LARKIN

Three years. I was a Sergeant over in Cornersville PD before that.

RHOADS

It's just up ahead.

EXT. DIRT ROADSIDE - DAY

Cordoned off crime scene where Ricky was found. Rhoads and Larkin pull up in the Ford and get out and begin looking around.

Rhoads notices BRAD AND JOHN, two teenage boys on the other side of the barbed wire fence across the road near a thicket of plum brush.

When the kids see that they are noticed, they begin to scurry away. Larkin calls out to them.

LARKIN

Hey, you! Come here.

They keep running. Rhoads takes out his pistol and fires it in the air. The kids stop.

Larkin starts at the noise and moves into a crouch, turning toward Rhoads and reaching for his own weapon.

LARKIN

Jesus Christ! You scared the shit out of me!

RHOADS

Sorry.

Rhoads re-holsters his gun as the two officers walk up the road to where the boys have stopped.

The boys look terrified. They are fourteen or fifteen years old. They have identical D.A. haircuts.

Larkin flashes a badge.

LARKIN

What are you boys doing around here?

BOYS

(in unison)

Nothing.

LARKIN

Were you around here doing nothing yesterday by any chance?

They answer at the same time.

JOHN
No.

BRAD
Yes.

LARKIN
Which is it?

BRAD
We ... this here is our ... fort.

He points at the thicket.

LARKIN
Your fort?

JOHN
It's nothin.

LARKIN
I think I'd like to take a look.

Larkin looks at Rhoads. Rhoads nods and steps to the barbed-wire fence and climbs through.

Larkin follows him and gets his suit jacket caught on a barb. It takes Rhoads a few seconds to untangle him because he keeps getting re-caught.

BRAD
We heard a kid was killed yesterday.

RHOADS
Right up there.
(points)
Did you know him?

BRAD
I dunno. Who was it? Ricky McManus?

LARKIN

They haven't released his name yet. You see anything suspicious yesterday, any vehicles around here?

JOHN

Just that Chevy pickup.

LARKIN

Chevy pickup? What color?

BRAD

Green.

LARKIN

What time was that?

BRAD

Around 3:00.

RHOADS

Wasn't you in school?

JOHN

We got here at 3:00.

LARKIN

Here meaning your fort.

JOHN

Yeah.

LARKIN

Wouldn't mind taking a look inside.

The two boys look at each other with apprehension as Larkin stoops down and walks through a narrow opening in the brush.

INT. BOYS FORT

A clearing inside the plum brush thicket - 10 x 10 feet or so. There is a worn out blanket spread on the ground and a large tin box. Larkin and Rhoads and the 2 boys enter.

LARKIN

This is it? Your "fort?"

BRAD
(a bit defensive)
Yeah. Why? What's wrong with it?

RHOADS
What's in the box?

JOHN
Nothing.

LARKIN
Let's have a look.

BRAD
Don't you need a search warrant?

Larkin gives him a "smart-ass" look. He opens the tin box. Inside are a half-dozen packs of cigarettes, two unopened, various brands. Loose in the bottom are thirty or so cigarette butts and some rolling papers.

RHOADS
(of the cigarettes)
Where did you get these?

The boys don't answer.

LARKIN
You steal these?

BRAD
We found them. They were already here.

LARKIN
You got some Kools in here. You smoke Kools?

JOHN
Those ain't ours.

RHOADS
Whose are they?

JOHN
I dunno.

LARKIN

Where did these butts come from?

JOHN

Nowhere.

BRAD

We save 'em.

RHOADS

You got some rolling papers here. You re-roll these butts? Take the tobacco out and re-roll them?

JOHN

So what?

LARKIN

Somebody buy these Viceroy's for you?

RHOADS

Are you guys eighteen?

JOHN

No.

BRAD

(at the same time)

Almost.

RHOADS

Emil didn't sell these to you, did he?

JOHN

(fessing up)

Some older kids bought 'em for us.

LARKIN

All these?

JOHN

Yes.

BRAD

Except the Viceroy's. I got them from my mom's purse.

JOHN
(to BRAD)

Shut up.

RHOADS
Guess your mom would like to know about that. Smoking stunts your growth, you know. We might have to arrest you for this.

Larkin is tired of giving them a bad time.

LARKIN
Let's go back outside. I want you to tell me about the green Chevy.

EXT. FORT

The four emerge.

LARKIN
What year was it?

JOHN AND BRAD
(in unison)
Nineteen-fifty.

RHOADS
You see who was in it?

JOHN
Just this guy.

LARKIN
Notice anything unusual.

BRAD
I'm pretty sure he was a bad guy. We figured he was one of the dognappers.

LARKIN
One of the dognappers.

JOHN
Yeah. There's a whole ring of them. They got a hide-out right up there.

JOHN points.

JOHN'S POV - IN THE FOOTHILLS

A half mile distant is a large wooden gate and some corrals and a fire break that disappears into a draw.

BACK TO SCENE

RHOADS

A hide-out, eh?

LARKIN

You ever seen this hide-out?

JOHN

Nah. They got a big lock on the gate and a "No Trespassing" sign.

BEGIN FANTASY SEQUENCE

EXT. FIRE ROAD AND GATE - DAY

A panel truck, engine running, is parked at a locked gate on a dirt road. There are corrals and a loading chute behind the gate, and a "No Trespassing" sign.

The DRIVER, rough and mean looking, gets out to unlock and open the gate.

In the back of the truck another ROUGH-LOOKING MAN lies low, keeping out of sight, pinning a collie to the bed of the truck.

BRAD (V.O.)

They been stealing dogs around here for a long time.

JOHN (V.O.)

Five years, at least.

BRAD (V.O.)

Or six.

JOHN (V.O.)

They stole my brother's dog last year. A German Shepherd. His name was Rocky.

BRAD (V.O.)
 We seen 'em a week ago. There was a
 panel truck up at that gate.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOGNAPPERS HIDE-OUT - DAY

An encampment in a remote, hilly area. A couple of
 outbuildings, tents.

Several outlaw-looking MEN mill around a fire. There are a
 dozen cages on the ground with all kinds of dogs in them.
 Several more cages - some with dogs in them - are stacked
 on the back of a flat-bed truck.

A MAN is lifting a German Shepherd into one of the cages.

BRAD (V.O. -
 continuous)
 I'm sure that guy in the Chevy was one
 of 'em. He had a little dog with him.

Connie Hamilton's pickup is parked nearby.

Connie is holding the little dog that he threw out of his
 truck. He hands it to another man who puts it in a cage on
 the back of the truck.

JOHN (V.O.)
 Yeah. He was a big, mean-looking guy.

END FANTASY SEQUENCE

LARKIN
 We're going to have to check that out.
 Rhoads, make a note.

Larkin delivers these lines in such a straight manner that
 we don't know if he is playing along with the kids or
 taking them seriously.

Rhoads looks at Larkin suspiciously and takes out a note
 pad and writes something down.

LARKIN

Which way was that green truck heading yesterday on this road here?

BRAD

(points)

That way.

RHOADS

Don't imagine you got a license plate number.

JOHN

It was an Oregon plate. It had a "JB" in it. "JB" something, and a "6."

LARKIN

(impressed)

That's good. Very good. You might make a detective some day.

JOHN

Thanks

Larkin and Rhoads climb through the barbed-wire fence again and return to their car. Light cigarettes. Larkin looks for tracks.

LARKIN

(nodding)

Where does this road end up?

RHOADS

Get in. I'll show you. I been thinking, there's an abandoned farmhouse up there. It might be worth checking out.

INT CAR

Larkin and RHOADS drive along the dirt road through scattered pine trees and sage and plum brush.

They pass some loading corrals.

LARKIN

You like being married?

RHOADS

It's all right.

LARKIN

Yeah, I was married once. It's just too bad that women don't like sex after they're married.

RHOADS

(chuckles)

Boy, I know what you mean.

LARKIN

I used to love it when my wife would go down on me, but that was before we got married. She only did it once or twice, and as soon as we were married ...

Larkin makes a gesture of fleeing with his hand.

LARKIN

How about you? Your wife go down on you?

RHOADS

(blushing a little)

Not any more.

They come up to a locked gate. Rhoads parks.

EXT. END OF THE DIRT ROAD - DAY

Rhoads and Larkin get out of the cruiser. On the gate is a sign: MEADOW LAKE RANCH: NO TRESPASSING.

RHOADS

That abandoned house used to be right over there. Guess they tore it down.

They lean on the gate looking out across a serene expanse of sage and scrub juniper on the other side. There are corrals across the gate and loading chutes.

Roads takes out a cigarette. Larkin lights it for him, then lights one for himself.

LARKIN

What's out there?

RHOADS

Open range. It's all part of the Meadow Lake ranch. Owned by the Longs. I did a little cowboying for them when I was a kid.

LARKIN

Sounds nice.

RHOADS

I gotta whiz.

LARKIN

Me too.

They open their trousers and begin peeing (O.S.).

The Police RADIO CRACKLES.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

Seven-nineteen.

RHOADS hurries to zip up and runs to the cruiser and reaches through the window and grabs the mike.

RHOADS

(into mike)

Seven nineteen.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

Ten thirty-five, state officers at scene, four miles South of Milpond Store on 34.

RHOADS

Seven-nineteen Roger.

EXT. DOWNTOWN MEADOW LAKE - DAY

Trace and Barry are in the Pontiac, cruising.

INT. PONTIAC

BARRY

I hate to leave him locked up in the trunk like that.

TRACE

Did you gag him good?

BARRY

I gagged him.

TRACE

That's good because I don't want the little fucker crying out at the wrong time. Look, there's a market. We could probably hit that pretty easy.

BARRY

There's a bank over there.

TRACE

Too much risk. We only need a little cash to tide us over.

BARRY

How about that appliance store. We could get another television.

TRACE

I don't want another television, Barry.

BARRY

I just don't know what we're going to do tonight if we don't have a television.

TRACE

We aren't going to have one when we get to Alberta. I mean, out in the back country like that there probably won't even be no reception.

BARRY

Yeah, but that'll be different, because we'll have the farm, and we'll have the cow to milk and different things to do. And chickens. Man oh man.

TRACE

You want some chickens, we can rob a feed store.

BARRY

You mean right now?

TRACE

I'm joking with you, you stupid shit.

BARRY

(smiles)

Oh. Sorry. I still think the appliance store is a good idea. All them appliances cost a lot of money so they're sure to have a lot of cash.

TRACE

You think people pay cash for them things?

BARRY

I know I would. If I went in there to buy a TV, I'd give 'em the cash. Or one of them washer machines?

TRACE

(patiently)

Barry, people don't pay cash for those. They charge 'em, or they write a check for 'em.

BARRY

Well, then, we'll steal the checks and cash 'em.

TRACE

You really are a stupid shit, aren't you. You have no idea how anything works.

BARRY

I'm sorry. I never had no one to teach me that stuff.

TRACE

It's okay. Don't worry about it.
Everything will be okay.

INT. OREGON STATE LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Trace and Barry come in wearing masks, carrying pistols. There is a CUSTOMER and a CLERK. Trace comes up to the counter. Points the gun at the clerk. Barry points his gun at the customer, who quickly puts his hands up.

TRACE

(to clerk)

Where do you want to be shot? - The belly or between the eyes?

CLERK

P ... Please...

TRACE

Then give me all the money in that drawer.

The clerk frantically opens the drawer and hands the currency to Trace.

BARRY

(to customer)

You got any money?

CUSTOMER

Yeah ... sure.

The customer takes out his wallet and hands Barry some currency.

BARRY

Thanks.

TRACE

(to clerk)

And a couple of bottles of Wild Turkey, there behind you. Make it three. Put 'em in a bag.

Clerk bags the three bottles and hands in to Trace. Trace puts the currency in the bag.

TRACE

Now, I want both of you to lie down on
your stomachs.

The two men lie down.

TRACE

Now, do we need to shoot you in the
back of your heads? - or are you going
to stay there with your eyes closed and
count to 25?

CLERK AND CUSTOMER

(in unison)

One...two...three...

INT. OREGON STATE LIQUOR STORE - CONTINUING

Trace and Barry surreptitiously hide their pistols and remove
their masks as they exit the store.

They walk to the Pontiac a half a block away.

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - DAY

The Pontiac heading back to the farmhouse.

INT. PONTIAC

Barry and Trace are energized.

BARRY

We can get some more of those steaks!

TRACE

Shit, we can get some fucking top
sirloin, man.

BARRY

Fucking A.

INT. PONTIAC - MOMENTS LATER

BARRY

So tomorrow after you go and get the ransom, what are we going to do with him?

INT. TRUNK

Tommy, scrunched up, gagged, and tied, can hear the conversation through the seats.

TRACE (muffled O.S.)

We may need him as a hostage until we're safe out of the County.

BARRY (muffled O.S.)

Then what?

TRACE (muffled O.S.)

I figure we won't need him once we cross into Idaho.

BACK IN THE PONTIAC

BARRY

We going to kill him?

TRACE

May as well. You want to do it?

Barry has now bonded with Tommy and could as easily fly to the moon.

BARRY

Nah, you can do it.

Silence.

INT. TRUNK

Tommy's face. The tough guy façade is gone. He is afraid.

EXT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - DAY

The Pontiac drives up, Trace and Barry get out. Trace moves toward the porch. Barry calls him. He stops. Barry comes over to him.

BARRY

(quietly)

Hey, Trace. Maybe we can take him on up to Alberta with us. We could use a kid to help around the farm. He'd probably like it and not try to run away after awhile.

Trace looks at him long and hard.

TRACE

Okay. That's a good idea, Barry. Why not? We'll take him with us to Alberta.

Barry goes back and opens the trunk to get Tommy.

Tommy has changed, looks more grown up, more serious, resolute.

EXT. CRESTVIEW HIGHWAY - DAY

INSERT. ROAD SIGN: "CRESTVIEW - 37 MILES"

Michael's truck and trailer on the highway. Trailer is empty.

INT. MICHAEL'S TRUCK CAB - DAY

Michael driving and Diana in passenger seat.

MICHAEL

This is fucking crazy.

DIANA

(smokes)

I know it is. We should have taken the Ford. It would be faster.

MICHAEL

I mean the whole idea. But the truck is better. No one is going to be suspicious of a truck after a bank robbery.

DIANA

How are you going to park this in town?

MICHAEL

We'll drop the trailer this side of town and bob-tail in. There's got to be an alley or something.

Diana looks down between the seats.

ANGLE ON a 12-guage shotgun on the floor.

BACK ON DIANA

She shakes her head, closes her eyes.

EXT. PARKING LOT - ABANDONED COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS - DAY

Scene of Connie Hamilton's murder. The green pickup truck is parked where it was left. Two State Patrol cruisers are parked nearby. An officer is examining the truck.

BEHIND THE BUILDINGS - ANGLE ON CONNIE'S BODY

Connie's body behind the buildings, three more officers attending the crime scene.

FRONT OF BUILDINGS

Larkin and Rhoads arrive in their car. They get out. Larkin notes license plate of pickup. The license plate has the letters "JB" and a "6."

BACK BEHIND THE BUILDINGS

Larkin and Rhoads approach Connie's body.

LARKIN

(of the body)

Anybody here know this guy?

The other officers shake their heads. One of them approaches Larkin with a small piece of paper.

OFFICER

We found this in the glove box of the truck. Looks like a rent receipt.

Larkin takes it, looks at it, hands it to Rhoads.

LARKIN

He got a wallet? Any I.D.?

2ND OFFICER

We didn't want to move him to find out.

LARKIN

That's good.

Larkin squats down and goes through Connie's pockets. Cigarettes, a Zippo, a pencil.

LARKIN

Is there a registration in that Chevy.

OFFICER

No, sir. We did find this in the cab, though.

The officer tosses Larkin a baseball. Larkin looks at it, tosses it to Rhoads.

LARKIN

Looks like whoever shot him took his wallet.

RHOADS

Not a surprise. Wonder where the dog is.

LARKIN

The dog?

RHOADS

Those kids said he had a dog with him.

LARKIN

Maybe the dognappers got him.

RHOADS

(bare hint of a smile)
Maybe they did.

LARKIN

Okay, somebody, we need to dust
(MORE)

LARKIN (CON'T)

everything here and inside that truck.
Give me a photo of him. Anybody got a
Polaroid?

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - MEADOW LAKE - DAY

Sign on big house says "Thomas Boarding House." Larkin and Rhoads pull up in the cruiser, get out and go up to the door, knock and then push the door open.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - CONTINUING

MRS. THOMAS comes down the hall to greet them, wiping her hands on a dish towel.

MRS. THOMAS

You'd have to share. I'm near full up
with the Spring Round Up. You folks
here for the Round Up?

Larkin shows his badge.

LARKIN

Detective Troy Larkin, from Salem. This
is Deputy Sheriff Tim Rhoads. And your
name?

MRS. THOMAS

Oh, My. I'm Beth Thomas. I run this
place.

LARKIN

You the owner?

MRS. THOMAS

I am.

LARKIN

This man a tenant of yours?

He hands her a Polaroid print of Conrad. She takes it.

MRS. THOMAS

Looks dead to me.

LARKIN

He is dead, Mrs. Thomas. He had a receipt from this establishment in his vehicle.

MRS. THOMAS

That was probably from me. He was a boarder here.

LARKIN

Had he lived here long?

MRS. THOMAS

Three weeks. Three weeks Monday. Conrad Hamilton was his name.

LARKIN

That's what the receipt said, too. Did he say where he was from?

MRS. THOMAS

Portland. Said he was from Portland. Looking for work. They're all looking for work.

LARKIN

What kind of work?

MRS. THOMAS

Said he was a house painter. But he didn't look like no house painter I ever saw.

LARKIN

Have any friends or acquaintances ever come around?

MRS. THOMAS

Nope. Stayed to himself. Didn't say much, neither.

LARKIN

Mind if we have a look in his room?

MRS. THOMAS

Not a'tall. Was he a criminal?

LARKIN

We're not sure, Mrs. Thomas. We're just trying to find out who he was.

INT. CONRAD'S ROOM

Mrs. Thomas looks on from the door as Larkin and Rhoads rifle through drawers and the closet. Conrad didn't have much stuff. Rhoads finds a book of matches.

RHOADS

Here's some matches from the tavern down the street. Guess he drank there.

MRS. THOMAS

What do you want me to do with his things?

They look at her and then at each other. They could care less.

EXT. PASTIME TAVERN - DOWNTOWN MEADOW LAKE - DAY

Larkin and Rhoads enter.

INT. PASTIME TAVERN - CONTINUING

Several PATRONS at tables and the bar. Larkin and Rhoads go to the bar and sit on stools. BARTENDER approaches.

BARTENDER

What'll it be?

Rhoads and Larkin look at each other. Larkin looks at his watch for permission to start drinking.

LARKIN

Oly.

RHOADS

Draft.

BARTENDER

You got it.

Bartender gets their drinks as they look around the bar.

When the bartender returns with the beers Larkin puts Conrad's photo on the bar.

LARKIN

This guy ever come in here?

BARTENDER

He looks dead.

LARKIN

He is.

Larkin shows the Bartender his badge.

BARTENDER

Yeah, he was in and out the past two or three weeks.

RHOADS

What did you know about him?

BARTENDER

He didn't leave no calling card.

LARKIN

Ever see anybody with him?

BARTENDER

Yeah, once or twice he was with two other guys.

RHOADS

Names?

BARTENDER

One they called Trace. Never heard the other one called anything. He was kind of dumb.

LARKIN

Trace?

BARTENDER

No, the other one.

LARKIN

Any idea where we could find them?

BARTENDER

Trace and the dumb one come in a week ago. Trace said they needed a place out of the way for a couple of weeks. I gave them a couple of leads.

RHOADS

And what were those?

BARTENDER

Fellow named Jim Scheider. Has an old cabin up at Lake of the Woods. Likes to rent it out.

LARKIN

Where is this Jim Scheider?

BARTENDER

Owens a garage on 7th just off Main.

LARKIN

The other lead?

BARTENDER

The old Forman ranch up on 76. Cal Forman works at the feed store on Western Avenue. He drinks in here and said he was looking for some extra cash.

Larkin puts some money down for the beers. Looks at Rhoads.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CRESTVIEW - DAY

Michael's tractor without the trailer sits parked at an odd angle in a small parking lot off an alley.

Across the street is the Crestview Bank and Trust.

INT. MICHAEL'S TRUCK CAB - DAY

Michael and Diana look across at the bank.

DIANA

This damned truck sticks out like a sore thumb. We should have brought the Chevy.

MICHAEL

Maybe you're right.

INT. MICHAEL'S TRUCK CAB - MOMENTS LATER

Michael and Diana are in the sleeper berth. She is pulling a nylon stocking over his head.

MICHAEL

I can't see shit.

DIANA

We gotta' cut eye holes in it.

INT. MICHAEL'S TRUCK CAB - MOMENTS LATER

Michael and Diana in the sleeper berth. Diana cuts eyeholes in a pair of nylon stockings while Michael loads the shotgun and works a shell into the chamber.

INT. MICHAEL'S TRUCK CAB - MOMENTS LATER

Michael and Diana sit in the cab holding nylon stockings in their laps. Michael is wearing a long dark rain slicker.

DIANA

You ready?

MICHAEL

This is for Tommy.

DIANA

For Tommy.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CRESTVIEW - DAY

Michael and Diana walking away from Michael's tractor across the street toward the bank. He has the shotgun somewhat hidden under the rain slicker.

They reach the entryway to the bank. They lean back against the wall, trembling with fright.

An ALARM SOUNDS, very loud, coming from the bank. Two SHOTS are FIRED. Michael and Diana both cry out.

Two BANK ROBBERS run from the bank right past Michael and Diana.

Someone inside the bank SCREAMS. Someone else shouts from inside the bank.

VOICE (O.S.)

Stop them!

SIRENS sound and a police car approaches.

Michael and Diana, terrified, freeze and try to disappear back into the wall.

INT. MICHAEL'S TRUCK CAB - MOMENTS LATER

Michael and Diana sit in the cab, breathing heavily, perspiring. They look at each other.

EXT. MEADOW LAKE FEED AND GRAIN - DAY

Larkin and Rhoads park in front of the feed store and walk in.

INT. MEADOW LAKE FEED AND GRAIN - CONTINUING

Larkin and Rhoads enter the store. Approach CLERK behind the counter. Show their badges.

LARKIN

Are you Mr. Cal Forman?

CLERK

No sir, I'm not. Cal went home already.

RHOADS

We need to contact him.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Larkin is holding the store's phone to his ear.

LARKIN

No answer.

CLERK

I can give you his address.

EXT. FORMAN HOUSE - DAY

A small bungalow. Larkin and Rhoads stand at the front door, knocking. There is no response.

Forman NEIGHBOR - an older woman - steps out of her front door in the adjacent bungalow.

NEIGHBOR

You looking for Cal Forman?

RHOADS

Yes, Ma'am, we are.

NEIGHBOR

Well, you won't find him in there. He lit out a half hour ago.

LARKIN

Where to?

NEIGHBOR

Drinkin', I s'pect. That's where he lights off too every other afternoon.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Michael driving his semi and trailer, Diana beside him. They both stare straight ahead in shock.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Michael's rig is parked off the highway.

INT. THE TRUCK CAB

Michael and Diana are in the sleeper of the cab desperately making love.

EXT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Establishing shot.

INT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Trace and Barry play cards and eat steaks and drink Wild Turkey in the living room on the coffee table. Two pistols lie on the coffee table. The 30:30 leans against the end of the couch.

Tommy is tied in the chair nearby. He seems anesthetized. Barry looks at him.

BARRY

Hey, Tommy. You want anything else to eat?

TOMMY

(very subdued)

No. But I've got to go to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

Barry waits while Tommy pees. Tommy finishes, zips up, and turns.

BARRY

Tommy, I want to give you something. It's like a present, you know, from me to you.

TOMMY

How come?

BARRY

I don't know. I swear I don't. You remember I told you about my friend Butch?

TOMMY

Yeah.

BARRY

He give me this.

Barry offers Tommy a small, worn pocket knife. Tommy takes it. Looks at Barry.

BARRY

If Trace finds it, you know he'll kill me.

TOMMY

How come you're givin' it to me?

BARRY

Cause he's gonna' kill you no matter what after tomorrow.

Tommy looks at the knife. Slides it in his pocket.

TOMMY

Trace won't find it. I promise. Don't worry.

BARRY

You take care of yourself.

Barry turns and opens the door.

BACK IN THE LIVING ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Barry secures the cable behind Tommy.

During the following, Tommy gets the pocket knife out and opens it and begins sawing through his belt loop where the cable is.

BARRY

When you get back with the ransom in the morning and we head out, are we gonna take the Pontiac or my truck?

TRACE

We gotta lose the Pontiac. Even though we changed the plates, the State police gotta be looking for it by now. We'll take your pickup, and since its legal we can trade it in on a nice car, how's that?

BARRY

Yeah! I want one of them new Bel Aires.
You seen 'em?

TRACE

We can get whatever kind you want,
Barry.

BARRY

It'll be mine?

TRACE

You bet. But once we get up there and
get the farm, we'll probably want to
get another truck, for hauling feed and
such.

BARRY

Yeah. I bet it's pretty nice up there
right now.

TRACE

Will be soon, with springtime coming
on.

BARRY

Gets cold in the winter, though.

TRACE

You don't farm up there in the winter.
When winter comes, we'll head out for
Florida. Like real people.

INT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Barry and Trace are drunk, trying to play cards.

TRACE

How come I never get no fucking eights?

Tommy cuts through the belt loop with the knife. He
freezes with apprehension when the loop gives and the cable
falls away.

INT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Trace and Barry are passed out on the couch.

Tommy gingerly stands up and tiptoes toward them.

TOMMY'S POV

The pistols on the coffee table.

BACK ON TOMMY

As Tommy nears the coffee table, Trace stirs.

Tommy backs off and silently heads out through the front door.

EXT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Tommy checks both vehicles for ignition keys. There are none, so he heads off down the road into the darkness at a trot.

INTERCUT SHOTS

Tommy jogging down the dirt road.

BACK AT THE HOUSE

Trace comes to. Finds Tommy missing. Grabs one of the pistols and runs outside.

EXT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Trace jumps in the Pontiac and peels out down the road.

EXT. ROAD TO THE FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Tommy hears the Pontiac coming, sees the lights, runs to some boulders beside the road and hides.

INT. THE PONTIAC - NIGHT

Trace's POV - headlights on the empty dirt road ahead. Speeds past the spot where Tommy hides.

EXT. ROAD TO THE FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Trace slows on the dirt road, stops.

BACK IN THE CAR

Trace thinks. Turns the car around and parks by the side of the road and turns off the headlights.

BACK ON THE ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Tommy trotting down the road in the darkness.

Becoming visible in the darkness ahead is the parked Pontiac. He sees it too late. Its headlights come on and he is momentarily blinded.

Trace steps out of the car and shoots at Tommy with his pistol, aiming low. He's still drunk. Dirt spits at Tommy's feet, and Tommy turns and runs up an embankment.

Trace fires at him again, kicking up dirt on either side of Tommy's ankles as Tommy scrambles up the embankment and disappears over the top.

TRACE

(under his breath)

Little bastard.

Trace climbs the embankment after Tommy.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - NIGHT - INTERCUT SHOTS

Tommy is stealthy and sure-footed in the darkness. He has become like a warrior.

He pauses now and then to listen for sounds of Trace behind him. There are none.

He climbs through some large rocks and finds a shallow lava cave.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Tommy crawls inside and sits crouched, staring out, listening. All is silent.

Some bats scurry out but he pays them no mind. He doesn't blink as he stares out.

EXT. CAVE - FIRST LIGHT

It doesn't look like Tommy has moved all night.

He slowly eases himself out of the cave, looking in all directions.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - DAY - INTERCUT SHOTS

Tommy slowly works his way down through the rocks.

He comes to a clearing and begins to cross.

Trace steps from behind a boulder across the clearing a little below Tommy and levels the pistol at him.

Tommy leaps back behind a boulder just as Trace fires. The bullet ricochets off the rock.

Tommy is frozen, his back against the rock. He hears Trace walking in the clearing.

He sees a grove of trees parallel to where he is but higher up. More boulders provide cover and he breaks into a sprint in that direction.

Trace fires once and misses. He tries for a second shot but he is out of shells. He reaches in his pocket for more and curses.

Tommy settles in behind an outcropping of rocks. He has picked up some height advantage. On the ground is a bed of lava rocks.

Tommy selects three good-sized rocks and steps out from behind the boulders. Trace is moving toward him, thirty feet away.

Tommy pitches a rock at him, hard. Trace ducks but Tommy has thrown another. Trace successfully shields his face with his forearms, but the rock hits him hard in the wrist. He yelps in pain and a third rock smashes into his thigh.

Tommy darts behind the outcropping and gets three more rocks. The lava has sharp edges and his hand is bleeding.

This time he emerges on the other side of the outcropping. Trace doesn't see him right away.

Tommy winds up and pitches and the stone hits Trace in the chest. Tommy pitches the second and misses, but the third hits Trace in the head and he goes down.

Tommy goes behind the outcropping and gets three more rocks. He is breathing hard. He steps out on the other side again ready to throw.

But Trace is on his feet, blood streaming down his face. He has picked up one of the rocks and flings it at Tommy. It hits Tommy in the leg and Tommy falls, dropping the rocks, CRYING out in pain.

Tommy struggles to his feet, picks up the three rocks, and limps back out into the open with increased resolve.

Trace deflects Tommy's first pitch with his arms. The next one hits him in the chest, and the third in the head. He goes down, a SCREAM of pain.

Tommy steps back behind the boulder, picks up a rock. His hand is bleeding badly. He steps back into the open.

Trace is on his hands and knees, trying to get up. Tommy winds up and pitches. The rock hits Trace in the head with a thud.

Trace, stunned, goes down.

ANGLE ON TOMMY

Tommy gathers his strength and limps further back up into the foothills.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Trace struggles slowly to his feet. His face and head are bleeding.

He limps toward the boulders where Tommy was. Then continues on up the hill a short distance. He has a view of a small valley beyond.

TRACE'S POV

There is no sign of Tommy.

BACK ON TRACE

Trace looks at his watch. Then turns and hurries back down the hill.

INT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - DAY

Trace enters. Barry is still asleep on the couch.

Trace washes his face in the kitchen sink. Presses a dishtowel to his head.

He shuffles through some papers on the desk, puts a piece of paper in his pocket.

He turns toward the couch and watches Barry sleeping for a moment.

He walks to the couch, picks up Barry's pistol from the coffee table using the towel to hold it to avoid finger prints, points it at Barry's head.

EXT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - CONTINUING

The deer drinks at the reservoir in the middle of the meadow. SOUND of two PISTOL SHOTS, close together. The deer raises its head at the noise.

EXT. KIDNAPPERS' FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Trace comes out of the farmhouse carrying a suitcase. He tosses it in the bed of Barry's pickup, gets in the cab.

The motor turns over several times. It won't start, losing the battery.

Trace gets out of the pickup, gets his suitcase, and gets in the Pontiac and drives away.

INT. DAWSON HOUSE - DAY

Michael and Diana are in the living room. Telephone RINGS. It is on a long extension cord on the floor beside Diana. She picks it up.

ROSE (V.O.)
Mrs. Dawson, It's Rose McManus.

DIANA
(cool)
Yes?

ROSE (V.O.)
I just wanted to let you know that Jason had a change of heart. If those kidnappers call you back, you can tell them you can give them the money. We can get it for you right away.

Diana looks at Michael registering disbelief.

DIANA
I ... I don't know what to say.

ROSE (V.O.)
Never you mind. Just let me know as soon as you hear.

DIANA
I will. I will! Thank you.

She gently puts the phone back in the cradle, looking at Michael.

EXT. FILLING STATION PAY PHONE - DAY

Trace is on the pay phone, the Pontiac parked nearby. We can see him talking on the phone, animated, but can't hear him.

He hangs up and gets in the Pontiac.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - DAY

Tommy, limping, comes over a rise. Scans the horizon.

TOMMY'S POV

A 2-lane highway lies across a valley, a mile away.

BACK ON TOMMY

Tommy, moving slowly, starts toward the highway.

EXT. ROAD ABOVE STATE PARK COMFORT STATION - DAY

A mountainous road through heavy forest. Trace stands beside the Pontiac on a shoulder of the road. He looks down 50 yards or so to where the road switches back beneath him. There is a State Park comfort station there with a rest room.

A car goes by the comfort station below, and in a moment it passes Trace. He ducks down out of sight.

EXT. ROAD ABOVE STATE PARK COMFORT STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Trace looks down. Rose McManus pulls into the Comfort Station parking area below in her Oldsmobile.

TRACE'S POV - THROUGH BINOCULARS

Rose gets out of her car carrying a brief case, looks around, and then disappears into the men's room.

BACK ON TRACE

Trace removes the binoculars, watches the scene below.

BACK TO TRACE'S POV

Rose comes out empty handed, looks around again, gets back in her Olds and drives away back in the same direction she came.

BACK ON TRACE

Trace waits a moment, scouring the areas for police with his binoculars, and then gets in the Pontiac and drives off down the hill.

EXT. STATE PARK COMFORT STATION - DAY

Trace drives into the comfort station parking area in the Pontiac, parks and gets out, looks around, and walks into the men's room.

INT. STATE PARK COMFORT STATION MENS ROOM - CONTINUING

Trace looks around, goes into the last stall, closes the door behind him.

INT. STATE PARK COMFORT STATION MENS ROOM TOILET STALL - CONTINUING

He reaches up to the ledge and brings down the brief case. Sits down on the commode, opens the briefcase. Lots of money.

He smiles, closes the briefcase, gets up, opens the door of the stall.

INT. STATE PARK COMFORT STATION MENS ROOM - CONTINUING

Trace walks from the stall to a urinal, pees.

He finishes peeing, turns and opens the door to leave.

BACK OUTSIDE

Rose McManus is standing waiting for Trace with a large hand gun. She SHOTS him in the stomach.

BACK INSIDE

Trace collapses back into the rest room into a urinal.

Rose steps into the restroom.

ROSE

Where's the boy?

He doesn't respond right away so she SHOTS him in the thigh.

ROSE

Where's the boy?

TRACE

Route 3 Box 707 in Meadow Lake. A mile
back up a dirt road.

ROSE

You killed my little boy.

TRACE

No ...

Rose SHOOTS him twice in the face and twice in the chest.
She shoots again but the gun CLICKS that it is out of
shells. She reaches down and picks up the briefcase and
leaves the restroom.

BACK OUTSIDE

Rose gets in the Olds and drives away.

EXT. STATE PARK ENTRANCE - DAY

Rose's Olds pulls up and parks. She gets out and goes to a
pay phone. She dials the operator.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Operator

ROSE

Yes, near Meadow Lake a boy named Tommy
Dawson was abducted. He is being held
at Route 3 Box 707 in Meadow Lake. A
mile off the main road. Did you get
that?

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Yes. Who's calling, please?

She hangs up, gets back in the olds, and drives away.

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - DAY

Tommy - near collapse - reaches the highway. He gets to
the shoulder.

A pickup approaches. Tommy sticks his thumb out.

The truck slows. Stops next to Tommy.

Marcus Finch is driving, leans over and pushes opens the passenger door.

Tommy looks at him, wary, then climbs into the truck.

INT. MARCUS FINCH PICKUP - CONTINUING

MARCUS

Where you heading?

TOMMY

South of Meadow Lake a couple of miles.

MARCUS

Meadow Lake's where I'm heading. Gonna' report them flying saucers. You see 'em?

TOMMY

Saucers? Where was they?

MARCUS

They come up from over my barn down near Chester. Damn near every night.

TOMMY

Wow. I been kidnapped. I just got away.

MARCUS

Who kidnapped you? Aliens?

TOMMY

Nah, just a couple of old guys.

Marcus looks hard at him for the first time.

MARCUS

You look a sorry mess, all right. Good thing you got away. At least it warn't aliens.

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - CONTINUING

Two highway patrol cruisers and one sheriff department cruiser with lights flashing pass Marcus's pickup going the opposite direction.

BACK IN THE CAB - ON MARCUS

MARCUS

(of the police cars
passing)

Oh, oh. Looks like trouble back up the
road.

Marcus looks over at Tommy.

ON TOMMY

Tommy has fallen asleep.

EXT. MEADOW LAKE - DAY

Marcus's pickup drives down the main street.

BACK IN THE CAB

Marcus and Tommy. Marcus nudges Tommy awake.

MARCUS

Where bouts you say you was goin'?

TOMMY

I live a couple of miles south on 47.

MARCUS

I may as well take you out there.

TOMMY

Thanks. So what did these flying
saucers look like?

EXT. DAWSON HOUSE - DAY

Marcus's pulls over on the shoulder by some mailboxes.

Tommy gets out, waves at Marcus, begins limping up his
driveway.

Marcus turns around and drives away.

EXT. DAWSON HOUSE - THE FRONT YARD - DAY

Tommy's dog lies under a tree. He lifts his head, rises, BARKS, and trots toward the driveway.

INT. DAWSON HOUSE - DINING AREA - DAY

Michael and Diana sit at the kitchen table, their telephone on a long extension cord on the table between them.

Diana rises to look out the window when the dog BARKS again.

They rise to look outside.

BACK OUT IN THE DRIVEWAY

Dog BARKS and runs down the driveway to meet Tommy.

Michael and Diana run outside.

DIANA

Tommy!!

The dog reaches Tommy. Tommy stops to bend over and hug him and then limps into the arms of his mother. They embrace. Tommy turns and faces his father. Michael kneels, holds out his arms, and embraces his son.

FADE TO:

EXT. MCMANUS HOUSE - DAY

Sheriff's cruiser drives into the driveway and parks.

Deputies Brooks and Rhoads get out and walk to the front door and RING the bell.

Rose answers the door. The Deputies take off their hats.

BROOKS

Ma'am.

ROSE

He's in here.

INT. MCMANUS HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Brooks, and Rhoads enter through the front door and follow Rose to Jason's study. The door is open.

INT. MCMANUS HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Jason McManus is slumped over his desk, dead, a dried pool of blood near his head.

There are several pistols on the desk, some partially disassembled. His fingers rest on a fully assembled HK45. A tin of gun oil has been tipped over and gun cloth is nearby.

Also on the desk is an empty glass and the White Horse Scotch bottle with only a little left in the bottom.

The cabinet doors on the bottom of the gun case are ajar enough that we can see the money that was there before is gone.

Brooks puts his hand on Jason's wrist.

BROOKS

He's been dead quite awhile. When did you find him?

ROSE

Less than an hour ago - when I called you. He was in here all night. We had a ... very difficult evening with the news about Ricky. Do you think he ...?

RHOADS

Looks like an accident to me. Did he always keep these loaded?

ROSE

Always.

BROOKS

You didn't hear the shot?

ROSE

No. I was in my room upstairs with the door closed. Jason often stayed in here all night, and slept on the sofa there. I tried the door this morning when it got late and he didn't come out. It was locked, so I went around outside and saw him ... through the window.

BROOKS

We'll take care of this, Ma'am. Do you have somewhere to go? Someone you can stay with?

ROSE

My sister. She lives in Ashland. I may go to Ashland for a few days. This has all been so ...

BROOKS

Yes Ma'am.

ROSE

Has there been any news on the men who shot my boy?

RHOADS

We have some ... leads, but we haven't sorted everything out yet. We'll let you know. The other boy who was kidnapped did get home safely, though.

ROSE

Oh, good. That good.

(pause)

Well, I'll be in the parlor resting if you need me.

BROOKS

Certainly.

She leaves the room. The deputies return their attention to the body.

FADE OUT