

Back East  
By  
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BACK EAST

We start on black. With the downbeat of our opening track we cut to --

INT. BEDROOM - DAWN

At the center of our frame we are looking at WILLIAM's back. William, 24, is framed by the large window he is looking out of. Out the window we can see trees, rooftops, power lines. Los Angeles. William is standing in his boxers and has a large pair of headphones on, the cord of which runs out frame left. We track in extremely slowly, the song ends, William takes off the headphones, lays them down on the bed, turns toward us and exits the frame.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

William showers.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

William, looking in the mirror, tucks a button-down white shirt into his jeans. He looks miscast in his preppie get-up due in some part to his unshaven face. He crosses to the dresser to pick up his keys, wallet, cell phone.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

William's white Chevy Nova pulls into frame. One door is primer grey. William is smoking a cigarette behind the wheel.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

William enters and sits behind a desk facing us. He begins his daily routine of checking voicemail, e-mail. Suzette, a forty something redhead, passes by William's desk.

SUZETTE  
Morning Billy.

William's eyebrows raise in an approximation of interest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

Morning.

Roger, William's boss, enters carrying his briefcase. He waves to William --

ROGER

Billy.

-- and enters his office.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

William walks back and forth across his apartment, staring at the ground, arms folded and, judging from his careful steps, following some pattern on the floor. The phone rings and William, keeping his feet in place, reaches for it --

WILLIAM

Hello?

MOM

Billy?

WILLIAM

Hey Mom.

MOM

What're you doing?

WILLIAM

I'm just, nothing. Sittin' around.

MOM

Watching TV?

WILLIAM

No, just sitting around. What're you guys doing?

MOM

Well I'm just getting your Father's and my new bedroom set up.

WILLIAM

What new bedroom?

MOM

We had to move our bedroom downstairs, I can't get your Father upstairs anymore and every time I'm not with him I'm afraid he's gonna break his neck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

William turns, body going slack, letting the pattern go --

WILLIAM  
Jesus Christ.

MOM  
He's too weak, he just sleeps in his chair downstairs and then he wakes up all stiff, so...we had to move the bedroom downstairs. We had the two Jasper boys from across the street help us bring the bed down. They're nice boys, have you met them?

WILLIAM  
I think.

MOM  
They were at our Christmas party last year.

WILLIAM  
There were lots of people at the Christmas party.

Beat --

MOM  
Anyway, so that's what we've been doing. I'm exhausted, I had to haul all those old clothes down, you would not believe the things I found in our closet. I can't believe we wore some of this stuff, it was kinda fun though to see all that old stuff and sort through it all.

WILLIAM  
Yeah, I'll bet.

MOM  
Oh and I've got to send you, I found the ticket stub from when you were in "King and I" in fifth grade. I found it in one of your Dad's old coats. I've got it on our fridge. I'll scan it, I'll e-mail it to you, how's that?

WILLIAM  
Good.

MOM  
You don't care.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

William rubs at his forehead.

WILLIAM  
I care.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

A different night. William is eating his ramen noodles in his chair, staring at his fish tank. His cell phone vibrates on the counter next to him. He picks it up, it reads: Work Calling. William contemplates the phone for a moment before dropping it in the tank and watching it settle at the bottom where a curious tetra examines it.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

William is tying his trunk shut with a length of rope. We can see through the windows that the car is packed to the brim with all of William's shit.

SUSAN  
Billy!

William turns and looks up to Susan, a middle-aged neighbor of his, who is leaning out the window of his apartment.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
Almost missed ya.

WILLIAM  
Yeah.

SUSAN  
Here!

Susan carefully tosses a small envelope, folded from newspaper. William catches it. He opens it and looks inside -- a joint.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
For the road.

WILLIAM  
Thanks.

SUSAN  
You should save it for some place different.

WILLIAM  
I'll do that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSAN  
Are you leaving right now?

WILLIAM  
I think so.

SUSAN  
Drive safe, honey.

WILLIAM  
I will.

William stands, looking up at Susan for a second, before, concluding that the conversation has resolved adequately, he smiles, raises the envelope to thank her again, turns and gets into his car --

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

-- slamming the door. He sits. It's still. He fastens his seatbelt and takes a deep breath. Now, in this highly anticipated moment, he is stricken by the heat, the light, the quiet and, as he looks at his watch, the ticking away of seconds. He rolls down his window, letting the sound of the street in. He turns the key in the ignition, bringing the engine to life and with it the stereo. Here we go. He checks his mirrors and pulls out of frame.

CUT TO:

OPENING CREDITS

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - MORNING

It's a big place just off the interstate. There is a man at the counter. In a remote corner a family sits, a toddler asleep in the mother's arms, another on the bench seat. A waitress, middle-aged and overweight, saunters through collecting the oversized, laminated menus off the tables. We move down the aisle to a booth where we find William, slumped against the wall, asleep, an uneaten meal from the previous night before him. We can tell from his appearance that the journey so far has not been easy on him. Two waitresses approach the table, both are sixteen years old, pretty and fascinated by William.

STEPHANIE  
Hey honey.

William bubbles awake, surprised by the sudden brightness.

WILLIAM  
Hey, sorry, what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEPHANIE

You looked so peaceful we didn't have the heart to wake you, but we got some morning traffic coming in.

WILLIAM

Oh yeah. What time is it?

STEPHANIE

It's seven.

William extends his arms, stretches.

WILLIAM

Jesus. Sorry.

STEPHANIE

Oh no, take your time, just wanted to wake you. Can I get you anything? You want me to refill that coffee?

William looks down at his coffee cup which is still full.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Didn't get very far last night.

WILLIAM

Please, thank you.

STEPHANIE

All right.

She grabs his cup and heads off. The other waitress stays --

JENNIFER

How come you stayed here?

WILLIAM

I didn't mean to I just fell asleep I guess.

JENNIFER

What are you doing out here?

WILLIAM

I'm driving cross country.

JENNIFER

We're driving out to L.A. after we graduate, me and Stephanie. Stephanie's getting your coffee. I'm Jennifer.

WILLIAM

Ah. Yeah. William.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JENNIFER  
You're going to L.A.?

WILLIAM  
Coming from actually.

JENNIFER  
Oh my god, why would you leave L.A.?

WILLIAM  
It's not for everyone.

She rolls her eyes more from force of habit than anything else.

JENNIFER  
Okay. I can't wait to go to L.A.

Stephanie returns with the coffee.

STEPHANIE  
Here you go.

JENNIFER  
He's leaving L.A. That's why he's here, he's on his way away from L.A.

STEPHANIE  
So.

Jennifer rolls her eyes again.

JENNIFER  
I can't wait to go to L.A.

STEPHANIE  
Do you want to eat that?

William looks at the fiesta scramble he ordered before falling asleep which has, overnight, acquired a fine glaze.

WILLIAM  
No, thank you.

William sips his coffee. The girls don't budge.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
This is good.

Stephanie nods. They remain.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Do you want to sit down?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JENNIFER  
We're not allowed.

Jennifer walks away.

STEPHANIE  
Good luck on your trip.

WILLIAM  
Thank you. Good luck with school.

STEPHANIE  
Thanks.

She stands looking at him for a moment, nurturing her crush, before reaching into her apron and pulling out his check. She places it on the table.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)  
I didn't charge you for the coffee.

WILLIAM  
Thank you.

STEPHANIE  
See ya.

She holds his gaze for a split second before turning and heading back to work.

WILLIAM  
Jesus Christ.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER BATHROOM - MORNING

William splashes water on his face, wets his hair and dries off with paper towels. He brushes his teeth.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

William checks himself out in the rear view mirror. A tow truck pulls past him and stops. William looks over and makes eye contact with the driver, a very old man, maybe eighty. The driver takes a drag of his cigarette, staring at William who, unnerved, takes a deep breath and pulls out of the parking lot.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

The Nova speeds along.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

William addresses a large auditorium of fans.

WILLIAM

The thing you don't realize when you're writing something like that is the impact it is going to have for so many people. You know, you believe it is significant, it is certainly important to you of course but the idea or the thought that it would so affect complete strangers doesn't really occur to you. In the midst of writing it you're so caught up and wrapped up in simply getting it done, getting anyone to read it at all, that the reaction of a wide audience is beyond your realm of consideration. Once you do realize that it is affecting and connecting with people, well it's incredibly flattering and humbling, you know --

The engine dies, goes silent, the steering stiffens. William's arms lock up on the wheel, he looks at the meters for some indication of what is going on --

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Oh Jesus.

The car rolls slowly on and eventually stops entirely in the sand on the side of the road. William turns the key in the ignition a few times, hoping for a change. It sputters briefly.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch.

William gets out --

EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

-- and walks to the front of the car, opens the hood and props it up. He looks around the engine, no clue what anything is.

WILLIAM

Fuck.

He looks around some more.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Goddamnit.

He steps away from the car, frustrated. He stands in the middle of the road and looks both ways, wondering which way he should start walking. Nothing in either direction. He mutters the question to himself --

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
What the fuck do I do now?

Back the way he came he can see a car approaching. He can't believe his luck.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
I'll be damned.

He stands, waving his arms in the middle of the road. As the car gets closer William can see it is a tow truck. He is a bit stunned. It pulls up next to him. The driver, is an old man, the old man from the diner parking lot, his name is Jeffrey.

JEFFREY  
You need a tow?

WILLIAM  
Yeah.

The truck pulls in front of the Nova and backs up to it. Jeffrey gets out of the truck. He has an arch to his posture and moves slow.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
This is amazing luck, I just broke down two minutes ago, I thought -

JEFFREY  
I followed ya.

WILLIAM  
What?

JEFFREY  
From the diner. Looked like you were gonna brake down, followed ya.

WILLIAM  
Oh.

JEFFREY  
You know what's wrong with it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

Um no. It just stopped running, it didn't make any weird noises or anything, it just stalled. I don't really know..about..cars.

JEFFREY

Did the hood pop up?

WILLIAM

What?

JEFFREY

How come the hood's up?

WILLIAM

I opened it up to see what was wrong.

JEFFREY

I thought you didn't know about cars.

WILLIAM

I don't.

JEFFREY

All right. Put your car in neutral.

William nods, turns and does it. He steps back out of the car. Jeffrey is at the controls of the tow winch.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Now I'm gonna back this up to the tires using these controls here and you take them poles over there and stick them in the other side once I've done it.

WILLIAM

Okay.

William takes the pieces off the back of the tow truck. Jeffrey completes his task.

JEFFREY

Now there you go.

William does it.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Now lock them in with these pins.

Jeffrey picks up two pins from the truck. William walks over, grabs the pins, heads back to the car and puts them in place. He looks to Jeffrey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
See them straps in the front there?

William notes straps coming off the part that is pushed up against the wheel. He crouches down and grabs it.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Now take that, wrap it round the wheel and it hooks on to the piece in back.

William does.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Now you can tighten it.

He does.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
All right.

William does the same for the other tire.

WILLIAM  
All right.

JEFFREY  
All right then, on we go..

Jeffrey, using the controls, lifts the car up. He then pulls out the turn signals on long wires and hands them to William.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Put these on the back of your car.

William does.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
My name's Jeffrey now get in my truck  
and I'll take you some place.

INT. TOW TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

William gets in and slams the door. It takes Jeffrey considerably longer to even reach the door. Once he does and opens it, he grabs hold of the door with one hand and the jam with the other. With one foot up on the running board he rocks back and forth working up the momentum which eventually sends him into the cab of the truck. He shifts over and pulls his door shut.

JEFFREY  
Now where'll you go?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

Well, whichever car place is closest  
I guess or I mean is there a car  
repair place nearby?

JEFFREY

Well up ahead a ways I got a shop in  
town or I could take you back to the  
diner at the interstate there.

WILLIAM

I guess just into town then.

JEFFREY

All right, easier for me anyway.

WILLIAM

All right.

The truck pulls away gingerly, slowly picking up speed once  
on the road.

JEFFREY

I missed your name.

WILLIAM

William.

JEFFREY

Well William. What're you doing out  
here?

WILLIAM

I'm moving back to Connecticut  
actually. Driving cross country.

JEFFREY

Never made it out toward Connecticut.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

JEFFREY

My wife went. She went and saw the  
leaves changing colors.

WILLIAM

Yeah, it's beautiful.

JEFFREY

Odd thing she was.

WILLIAM

Hmm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFFREY

Just as crazy a woman as you're like' to find. Where you driving from?

WILLIAM

Los Angeles.

JEFFREY

Never made it there neither. That's two places you been and I ain't.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

JEFFREY

You ever been to Dry Lake?

WILLIAM

No, I don't think so, where's that?

JEFFREY

That's where we're headed and I been there for better part of fifty years. So that's a place I been that you ain't. Not for long I guess though.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

William tries to make himself comfortable as they sit in silence for quite some time. Eventually he clears his throat.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

How much further is Dry Lake?

JEFFREY

Hmmm. About two hours now.

WILLIAM

Big town, Dry Lake?

JEFFREY

No, small town. Was a big town, bigger at least.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEFFREY'S SHOP - LATER

The truck pulls up in front of the building which sits at the entrance of Dry Lake. As far as we can see Dry Lake consists entirely of the buildings lining this two hundred yard drag of the road. Most of the buildings are run down and boarded up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Towards the other end of the strip there is a traffic light and some activity though we can't see exactly what. Jeffrey's shop consists of a very small reception area and convenience store, a repair garage and some gas pumps, though they look long out of service. Attached to the back of the building is Jeffrey's home. It is a one-of-a-kind structure. The roof looks to have gone slack in some places and the white paint is peeling everywhere. William would have assumed this building too was abandoned if it wasn't his destination.

INT. TOW TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

JEFFREY

This is it. Here is a key.

He hands it to William.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Now go unlock the garage and open her up.

EXT. JEFFREY'S SHOP - CONTINUOUS

William hops out and runs to the garage. After removing padlocks on either side, he slides the garage door up which is considerably more difficult than it ought to be. The inside of the garage is a mess. Other than the central space that a car would occupy every inch looks to be used for storage. An earlier attempt at organization, marked by labelled boxes on one side of the garage, has given way to a more haphazard approach on the other. William wonders what he has gotten himself into --

WILLIAM

Jesus.

-- and moves out of the way as Jeffrey backs the Nova into the garage. He lowers the car and William quickly sets about unstrapping it. Once he does he gives the thumbs up to Jeffrey who pulls the truck around the side of the building. William follows him. Jeffrey steps out of the truck.

JEFFREY

Well now it's time for my dinner and then I go to bed.

WILLIAM

Okay.

Jeffrey walks out to the road, William follows.

JEFFREY

Down at the light there is a hotel called The Mariner or you can stay

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
in the garage if you like, makes no  
difference to me.

WILLIAM  
The hotel'll be fine.

JEFFREY  
Okay, just lock up the garage when  
you leave and you can come back  
tomorrow at a reasonable hour.

Jeffrey turns, walks back to the house.

WILLIAM  
How long do you think it'll take to  
fix?

JEFFREY  
I don't know what's wrong with it.

Jeffrey enters the house, screen door slamming shut behind him. William stands looking at the house, then down the road to The Mariner. He shakes his head and walks to the Nova. He grabs a bag, pulls the garage door down and begins walking. Almost all the businesses between Jeffrey's shop and The Mariner are no longer operational. All the windows are boarded, all the painted signs sun-bleached. The town appears to have peaked about forty years earlier. On the far side of the street an abandoned movie theater catches William's eye. The sign above the marquee, which presumably once lit up, reads The Lighthouse Theater. William looks both ways, purely a formality in this town, before crossing the street to The Lighthouse. Through the dirty glass door of the theater, he can barely make out the shape of a concession stand.

WILLIAM  
Huh.

He steps back, takes another look at the sign and keeps walking. As he gets closer to the other side of town and the major intersection there are a few more operating businesses. The Mariner is a small motel with a restaurant/bar at its base. The front of the building features a large anchor, the outline of waves and it's name in cursive. It sits across the street from the functioning gas station which, while much newer than the pump station at Jeffrey's shop, is at least twenty years old itself. William walks into the reception desk which is to the left of the driveway.

## INT. RECEPTION DESK - CONTINUOUS

A man, Avery, sits behind the desk reading the paper, smoking a cigarette. He is in his late thirties, a little chubby, looks a bit like a biker. He is a very genial guy, always happy to have someone new to talk to when a guest arrives and finds most anything anyone says worthy of a chuckle. He accompanies all his own remarks with an amused smile and as a result has never made a bad first impression. Unfortunately, his insecurity about being from such a small town manifests itself in consistent reminders that he has traveled to and lived in big cities and these reminders will often impede the natural progress of a conversation. It takes a moment for William's presence to register with Avery who has been stagnant for a few hours but once it does he is happy to have the distraction.

AVERY

Shit, didn't see you drive in.

WILLIAM

I didn't, my car's down at the shop,  
Jeffrey's.

AVERY

Really.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

AVERY

A room I suppose.

WILLIAM

Yeah, how much is that?

AVERY

39. 29 if you stay four or more.

WILLIAM

I, hopefully, will be just staying  
the one.

AVERY

You wouldn't be the first.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

AVERY

Yeah, not a lot to do in Dry Lake.  
Not a little in fact. I lived in  
Phoenix, now that's a city. Here  
you go --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hands William a key.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
-- room 210. Up top, all the way in back.

WILLIAM  
All right.

AVERY  
We got the restaurant bar right over here, if you want to eat.

WILLIAM  
Cool.

AVERY  
Food's not bad and if you're careless it's pretty much your only option anyway. There's vending machines at the bottom of the stairs, you'll see them. There's a pool in back, you'll see that too.

WILLIAM  
Thank you. Do I pay you now?

AVERY  
Yeah sure.

William takes out his wallet, hands Avery forty dollars.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
Excellent.

Avery scribbles out a receipt, hands it to William.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
There you go.

WILLIAM  
Thanks.

Avery nods to William who turns and exits.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM 210 - MOMENTS LATER

William enters, throws his bag down on the bed, rubs his face.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM 210 - NIGHT

William, freshly showered, sits in a chair arms folded, staring at the ground. He snaps out of it, stands, grabs the key and exits.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MARINER RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The restaurant has a vaguely nautical theme. The wallpaper has illustrations of clipper ships, there is the occasional harpoon and lots of heavy, dark wood. There is a bar on the left and several round wood tables fill the rest. Blues rock is coming from a juke box in the corner. There are a couple of people at the bar and a table or two are occupied. William enters and looks around. The bartender, an older woman named Joan sees William and calls over to him --

JOAN

Dinner?

WILLIAM

Yeah.

JOAN

Sit wherever you like honey.

William takes a seat at one of the tables. Joan comes out from behind the bar, grabs a menu and brings it over to William.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Here you go.

WILLIAM

Thank you.

JOAN

You want something to drink?

WILLIAM

Can I get a beer?

JOAN

We got Bud, Bud Light, Coors, Coors Light, Heineken, Amstel Light, Corona, Corona Light.

WILLIAM

Can I have a Bud?

JOAN

Sure thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She walks back to the bar. Avery enters from the back and heads behind the bar. He says hello to Joan, grabs a beer and, seeing William, heads over.

AVERY  
How's it going?

WILLIAM  
All right.

AVERY  
Mind if I join you?

WILLIAM  
Not at all.

Avery extends his hand.

AVERY  
Avery.

WILLIAM  
William.

They shake.

AVERY  
So what's up with your car?

WILLIAM  
I don't know, it just stopped dead,  
no idea.

AVERY  
Shit, whereabouts?

WILLIAM  
Two hours west.

AVERY  
Jesus.

WILLIAM  
Yeah, lucky for me Jeffrey came by.  
I'd be out there now.

AVERY  
Where are you headed?

WILLIAM  
Connecticut.

AVERY  
Hoo! You got aways to go brother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

Yeah.

AVERY

Christ. Well, welcome to Dry Lake.

Raises his beer, William follows suit.

AVERY (CONT'D)

Connecticut. I drove through once.

WILLIAM

Yeah?

AVERY

Yeah me and my buddies drove to New York for the Final Four in '96.

WILLIAM

Through Connecticut?

AVERY

We were coming from Chicago. I went to school up there.

WILLIAM

Ah. That's a long way from here.

AVERY

Fuckin' A. Wanted to get as far from this place as possible.

WILLIAM

So you grew up here?

AVERY

Oh yeah, my Mom and Dad were running this place before I was born. They'll never leave.

He looks around the restaurant.

AVERY (CONT'D)

This is my Mom's decorative touch.

WILLIAM

Oh yeah?

AVERY

Yeah, she loves this boat shit, place used to be The Desert Inn.

WILLIAM

Very nice. And they're still here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AVERY  
Shit, that's my Mom over there, Joan.  
Here she comes.

Joan arrives with William's beer and a bowl of peanuts.

JOAN  
Hey honey.

AVERY  
Hey.

JOAN  
(to William)  
He bothering you?

WILLIAM  
Not at all. I like what you done  
with the place.

JOAN  
Thank you. This jerk doesn't.

AVERY  
Nah.

JOAN  
Well, he bothers you, let me know or  
just tell him to get lost.

WILLIAM  
All right.

JOAN  
You guys know what you want?

WILLIAM  
Uh.

AVERY  
You like burgers?

WILLIAM  
Yeah.

AVERY  
Have the burger. It's the best thing  
here.

WILLIAM  
There you go.

AVERY  
Me too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

I'm not waiting on your lazy butt.

AVERY

Why don't you bring Billy here two  
burgers then?

JOAN

Smart ass.

She grabs William's menu and walks away.

AVERY

Yeah so they've been here forever.  
I had to get away. I been mostly  
living in Phoenix, just been back  
here about a year or so. I'll  
probably move back to Phoenix soon  
or maybe somewhere in Texas, San  
Antonio maybe.

WILLIAM

Yeah. Nice I guess to get away from  
it all though, quiet town like this.

AVERY

A little too quiet for me. I been  
around you know? Once you've seen  
the country it's hard to be very  
interested in Dry Lake.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

AVERY

See that guy over there?

Avery subtly points to an old man, deep into his eighties,  
sitting at the bar. He is staring past his beer, which he  
occasionally sips.

AVERY (CONT'D)

That's Old Pete. Pete I don't even  
know his last name, he's been Old  
Pete since I was a kid. Never left  
Dry Lake supposedly.

WILLIAM

Really.

AVERY

Ever. Never seen a river.

WILLIAM

Wow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AVERY

There's a river twenty minutes that way.

He points.

AVERY (CONT'D)

He's never seen a river.

WILLIAM

Jesus.

AVERY

Shit, he's proud of it too.

WILLIAM

It's quite an accomplishment.

AVERY

No kidding. So that's why I had to get out as soon as possible. Didn't want to end up like Old Pete.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

AVERY

He's here every night.

William nods, embarrassed a bit by his lack of anything to contribute to the conversation --

WILLIAM

Yeah, damn.

They sit.

AVERY

Hey Pete!

Old Pete, very slowly turns to look at Avery who holds a hand up as the author of the salutation. Pete nods an acknowledgement and turns back.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL HALLWAY - LATER

William walks back to his room, noting the swimming pool which, lit up, looks very inviting.

CUT TO:

## INT. ROOM 210 - MOMENTS LATER

William takes off his shoes and socks and lies down on the bed. Two people jump in the pool outside. William rolls onto his side and stares at the curtains which are lit up by the cool green light from the water. He sighs, frustrated he hasn't made it further by now, and closes his eyes, hoping that his car will be ready when he wakes up the next day.

CUT TO:

## INT. ROOM 210 - MORNING

William's position has changed but he is still fully clothed. He slowly writhes to life and looks at the alarm clock which tells him it's eleven thirty.

He curls into a fetal position with his back to the window and holds it for a moment before he admits to himself that he isn't going to fall back to sleep, lets his eyes open and sits up.

CUT TO:

## EXT. MOTEL HALLWAY - DAY

William, freshly showered, walks down the hallway. He notes a dark-green Jeep Grand Cherokee in the parking lot.

CUT TO:

## INT. THE MARINER RESTAURANT - DAY

William sits at the bar. Joan is working. A girl, Tamara, sits down at the bar a few stools down from William. He glances over ever so quickly to confirm that she is as beautiful as his peripheral view had led him to believe. Yep.

JOAN  
What can I get you Honey?

TAMARA  
Can I have an iced tea in the largest glass you have?

JOAN  
Iced tea, large.

TAMARA  
Thank you.

Joan retreats to the kitchen. Tamara takes her sunglasses off her head and twirls them in her hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

William wishing he had his food or a drink to occupy him, begins folding his napkin. Tamara looks over at him --

TAMARA (CONT'D)

Hello.

William looks up, "Hmm?"

TAMARA (CONT'D)

Hey. Hi.

This takes a second longer than normal to compute for William, who stares, eyebrows raised in curious wonder while it does. It does.

WILLIAM

Hel-

Not having properly calibrated his voice, William's first attempt at speech is soft and guttural. He clears his throat.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Excuse me. Hello.

TAMARA

Tamara.

WILLIAM

William.

TAMARA

Nice to meet you William.

WILLIAM

Likewise. You'll have to excuse me if my conversation skills are a bit rusty.

TAMARA

Not at all.

WILLIAM

I've been driving for awhile.

TAMARA

Yeah. Me too.

(beat)

I'm with my boyfriend though so it's not the same quite. You look like you been through it, William.

William squints and adds a little gravel to his voice.

WILLIAM

The road'll do that to a man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tamara chuckles as Joan returns carrying a large beer stein filled with iced tea. She sets it down. Tamara's eyes go wide.

JOAN

That's the biggest we got honey.

TAMARA

It's perfect.

She takes a sip.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

How long you been driving?

WILLIAM

Four.. Four? Five days.

TAMARA

Cross country?

WILLIAM

Yeah.

TAMARA

Me too.

WILLIAM

Which way you headed?

TAMARA

West.

WILLIAM

East.

TAMARA

You haven't made it very far.

William smiles, looks down at the bar.

WILLIAM

I've been having some trouble.

TAMARA

That sounds true.

William nods.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

TAMARA

So what's the story, how come the  
journey?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM  
I'm just going to Connecticut.

TAMARA  
Fuck. I was hoping you were doing some photo essay on the heart of America or something. Amber waves of grain and shit.

WILLIAM  
Black boys in pickup trucks?

TAMARA  
Exactly.

WILLIAM  
No such luck. Much more practical journey.

TAMARA  
How tedious.

WILLIAM  
My sincerest.

Joan drops a BLT in front of William.

JOAN  
BLT.

WILLIAM  
Thank you. And yours?

TAMARA  
My?

WILLIAM  
Journey?

TAMARA  
Ah, practical also but more interesting than yours.

WILLIAM  
Very good.

Tamara's boyfriend, Evan, walks up from behind her and puts his hands on her shoulders. He is a half hippy, too wealthy to go all the way with it, but very eco-friendly. He is wearing socks and sandals and that's all it takes for William to hate him. He looks at William skeptically, wondering who his girlfriend is talking to and gives her a kiss to make their relationship clear. Tamara picks it up quickly --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA

Evan, this is William. William,  
Evan.

They shake.

EVAN

Hey.

William turns back to his food.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Let's go unload the car.

TAMARA

All right.

Evan turns and walks off. Tamara downs her iced tea quickly and stands.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

See you later William.

WILLIAM

See you later.

Evan stands in the doorway, impatient.

TAMARA

It was nice to meet you.

WILLIAM

It was nice to meet you.

She turns and runs off. William turns back to his food, replays the interaction in his head a few times. Smirks.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

William walks down towards Jeffrey's shop.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEFFREY'S SHOP - DAY

William walks up and stops, made uneasy by the closed garage door. He glances around. No activity. William walks around to the side of the garage, opens the door and looks in at his car which is just as he left it. He goes to the door of the house and knocks. There is no response.

WILLIAM

Hello?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He enters slowly.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Hello, Jeffrey? Hello hello hello.

Nothing. William continues on through a small kitchen to the living room. It's a small room with a sofa chair facing an old television. William walks down a short hallway, past a bathroom --

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Hello?

-- to the last room, Jeffrey's bedroom. He slowly pushes open the door --

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Hello?

-- there is no one inside, just a single bed and dresser. William steps in and walks to the back window. Out in back of the house he can see Jeffrey, sitting on a bench with his back to the house. There is a chain link fence marking the boundaries of the backyard, just beyond which there is an old car on cinder blocks and a small junk pile and beyond that, desert.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEFFREY'S SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

William steps out of the house and walks around back. He walks up to Jeffrey.

WILLIAM  
Hello. Jeffrey?

Once along side him Jeffrey looks up at him.

JEFFREY  
Hello.

WILLIAM  
Hey.

Jeffrey turns back to his view. William considers that he might be talking to a man whose memory has been compromised by old age.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
I left my car here yesterday.

JEFFREY  
I know that.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

That was yesterday for God's sake.  
I can remember yesterday. It's one  
thirty in the afternoon, I said get  
here at a reasonable hour.

WILLIAM

Yeah, did you get a chance to look  
at it?

JEFFREY

Look at it?

WILLIAM

Yeah, you think you can fix it?

JEFFREY

I'm 79 years old, son. I don't fix  
shit anymore.

WILLIAM

What?

JEFFREY

I been retired for ten years. You're  
a young man.

He throws the last of his rocks, stands and begins walking  
back to the house.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Follow me.

Jeffrey leads him around to the front of the garage.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Now open her up.

William looks at him for a second, then goes to the door,  
unlocks it and slides it up. Jeffrey walks to a series of  
book shelves inside the garage and begins examining the spines  
of the hundreds of booklets that fill them. He pulls one  
out, dusts it off and walks back to William. He hands it to  
him. It is the Haynes Automotive Repair Manual, Chevrolet  
Nova 1969 thru 1979.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Here you go. Everything we need to  
know should be in there. I got all  
my tools over in that big red  
sonofabitch right there --

He points to his tool chest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

-- and we can start as early or late as you like but we stop by seven o'clock, cuz that's when I eat and turn in.

WILLIAM

I don't know anything about cars.

JEFFREY

Well I can do all the thinking and you can do all the working.

WILLIAM

I can't fix that car.

JEFFREY

Well it makes absolutely no difference to me whether you fix the thing or not. I got no burning desire to spend days instructing you on how to fix your car, so don't ask me to convince you. I'll be inside.

Jeffrey turns and walks back to the house.

WILLIAM

Jesus Christ.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MARINER RESTAURANT - NIGHT

William is sitting at the bar, drinking and feeling sorry for himself. Tamara enters, spots William at the bar and pops into the seat next to him. She is considerably more energetic than William who is just getting started on the road to drunkenness.

TAMARA

Hey Will.

WILLIAM

Hey.

JOAN

Hey honey, what can I get ya?

TAMARA

Bourbon, neat?

WILLIAM

Wow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA

I know, right? Pretty hardcore.

WILLIAM

Fucking A. Make that two, Joan.

TAMARA

All right. How you doing, Will?

WILLIAM

Just another day in Dry Lake.

TAMARA

Something wrong?

WILLIAM

No, I don't know, no.

TAMARA

I don't believe you. You know why?

WILLIAM

Why?

TAMARA

Because you seem really sad and depressed.

WILLIAM

That's just my natural demeanor these days.

TAMARA

There's no great tragic seed from which all your woes spring?

WILLIAM

Well.

He leans back.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I don't know if you want to get into this or if you're just making small talk.

He looks at her trying to gauge which it is and her open expression indicates she's actually interested. He turns back to his drink.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

This is a crazy thing to talk about.

He takes a deep breath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
My little brother killed himself.

TAMARA  
Oh Jesus, I'm so sorry.

WILLIAM  
Oh, it's okay it was a long time ago. We were really close though. I just, I think about it sometimes.

TAMARA  
I'm sorry, Will.

WILLIAM  
Yeah, It's unbelievable, he cut off one of his hands, bled to death.

TAMARA  
Jesus.

WILLIAM  
Yeah.

TAMARA  
That's not really a cry for help.

WILLIAM  
No.

TAMARA  
Oh my god. I can't believe a person could even do that you know? I've never even heard of that.

WILLIAM  
Yeah, that's not true.

TAMARA  
What?

WILLIAM  
I never had a brother. I'm an only child.

She slaps him.

TAMARA  
You dick. You piece of shit.

WILLIAM  
What? Sorry. Jesus.

TAMARA  
You're such an asshole.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

It's embarrassing. I have no reason to be depressed. I wish I did have a dead little brother. There's something pathetic about living the relative life of luxury that I do and still moping around all the time.

TAMARA

Everybody gets depressed, everyone. You don't need a dead little brother to justify it. I get depressed all the time. What the fuck do I have to complain about. Evan thinks I should go to a shrink.

WILLIAM

Your boyfriend's a prick.

She slaps his hand.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, that was... Shrinks aren't that bad.

TAMARA

You go?

WILLIAM

I did.

TAMARA

When?

WILLIAM

When I was five.

TAMARA

What? How come?

WILLIAM

This is gonna creep you out.

TAMARA

No.

WILLIAM

I didn't even know what I was doing.

TAMARA

What?

WILLIAM

I killed a cat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA  
You're kidding.

Shakes his head no.

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
How?

WILLIAM  
I drowned it in the bathtub.

TAMARA  
Oh my god.

She covers her mouth.

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
Really?

WILLIAM  
No, c'mon.

TAMARA  
Oh!

She hits him again.

WILLIAM  
I've never killed anything. I stomped on a field mouse's head once to put it out of its misery. I'd run over it with the lawn mower. I threw a rock at a beehive once maybe killed some bees. Killed a few million ants. I like to kill ants.

TAMARA  
Yes, I too am an ant menace. Little ant children have little ant nightmares about me.

She raises her glass.

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
We're downing these.

She tosses it back. William follows her lead, wincing as he swallows.

WILLIAM  
Jesus. Why bourbon?

TAMARA  
I don't know.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA (CONT'D)

All other alcohol tastes like poison to me. Bourbon I can't get enough of, it's like mother's milk. Joan?

Joan looks and Tamara gestures to their two empty glasses. Joan comes over and fills them up.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

Have you ever gotten drunk and gone swimming?

WILLIAM

No.

TAMARA

It's fun and it's dangerous.

She raises her glass, and William his.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MARINER POOL - NIGHT

William and Tamara are in the pool. Each has a glass in hand.

TAMARA

Did you tell me why you're in Dry Lake?

WILLIAM

No.

TAMARA

Am I gonna have to beat it out of you?

WILLIAM

Car trouble.

TAMARA

Ahhh. It's all making sense now.

WILLIAM

Yeah. And you know what's funny about it?

TAMARA

What?

WILLIAM

Well, my car is in an auto repair shop that is no longer operational nor has it been for ten years.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA

That is funny.

WILLIAM

I guess it's not ha ha funny. Anyway, my options are thus: Fix my own car with the help of an old crazy person, keep in mind that I have never fixed nor do I know even the most basic information about my car, or wait here in Dry Lake two more days until I can tow it someplace else on Monday.

TAMARA

Dry Lake has a lot to offer.

WILLIAM

Either way, that's at least another couple days of no driving which will make my grand total for seven days less than 1500 miles.

TAMARA

That's slow.

WILLIAM

Yes.

TAMARA

We've covered that in two.

WILLIAM

Wow.

TAMARA

Evan seems to be in a rush.

WILLIAM

Where is he?

TAMARA

He's been sleeping all day. He drove all night. He wanted to go the whole way through straight, alternating driving and sleeping. I insisted we stop at least once for some sight seeing.

WILLIAM

Dry Lake is an obvious choice.

TAMARA

Did you know, William, that this whole area is filled with old west ghost towns?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM  
No.

TAMARA  
Yes, old mining towns and things,  
several. Tomorrow I will explore  
them and take pictures and have fun.  
I like ghost towns. I've never been  
to one but I think they are fantastic.

WILLIAM  
The decay of the frontier dream?

TAMARA  
Perhaps a rotting wagon wheel?

WILLIAM  
Cheers.

They drink.

AVERY  
Cannonball!

He is mid-air before they even see him. His splash fills  
their glasses with pool water. He pops up.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
What's up guys?

WILLIAM  
Tamara have you met Avery?

AVERY  
Hey. Sorry, grand entrance.

TAMARA  
Avery.

AVERY  
What are you guys drinking?

TAMARA  
Bourbon.

AVERY  
I'm on it.

Avery pops out of the pool and runs off.

WILLIAM  
That's Avery. Parents own and run  
The Mariner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA

William. I want you to get out of this pool and go over there and pretend you're dying and then fall into the pool in some creative fashion, now if you don't want to go first, fine, I will.

She hoists herself out of the pool and walks to the end. She stands composing herself. She speaks very seriously.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

Stabbed in the stomach, guts spilling everywhere.

She suddenly doubles over in pain, grabbing at her abdomen, trying to stuff the innards that are pouring out of her back into her body. She stumbles toward the pool, lets out a groan and falls in. She pops up smiling, extremely proud.

WILLIAM

Very nice.

She gestures to the stage. William climbs out and walks to the end of the pool. He takes a moment.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Multiple gunshot wounds. In the style of Charlie Sheen, Young Guns Part One.

He takes a deep breath. His holds out two pistols, firing away as his body convulses with the impact of the bullets. He falls to his knees at the edge of the pool, head nodding back and forth in the manner of Charlie Sheen in Young Guns Part One and ultimately falls face first into the pool. He emerges, just as Evan walks up to the pool.

EVAN

Hey.

TAMARA

Hey baby. You're awake. Come swimming with us.

Evan smiles and doesn't budge. Tamara climbs out of the pool, wraps her arms around Evan.

EVAN

You're all wet.

TAMARA

Come swimming with us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EVAN

Now I'm all wet.

TAMARA

You love me. We got my friend William here and --

WILLIAM

Avery.

TAMARA

-- Avery's on his way back with -- here he is now.

Avery, wet and cold, scampers up from behind holding the bottle from the bar.

AVERY

Hey buddy, Avery.

EVAN

Evan.

AVERY

You coming in?

EVAN

Yeah I guess.

TAMARA

Yay.

Avery jumps in the pool. Tamara kisses Evan then pulls away, looking at him confused. Her eyes go wide, her body freezes, the life drains from her face. She stumbles back, turning towards the pool.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

He...poisoned...me.

She falls in.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MARINER - MORNING

As William wanders down the stairs he sees Tamara come out of her room. She's got sunglasses on, a large hat and carries her camera. Their paths intersect at the bottom of the stairs.

WILLIAM

Hey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA

Hey.

She wraps an arm around his waist.

WILLIAM

You having breakfast?

TAMARA

I'm off to the ghost towns.

She points to the Jeep Grand Cherokee, which is running. Evan's hand waves from the driver window. William waves back.

WILLIAM

All right.

TAMARA

Last night was fun huh?

WILLIAM

Most fun ever.

TAMARA

That's what I like to hear. I'll see you later, young man.

WILLIAM

See you later.

She walks off to the car. William watches her as she goes.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

William walks down the sidewalk, kicking stones as he goes. He stops outside the abandoned movie theater again. Goes up to the window to look inside again, backs away and continues on.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEFFREY'S AUTO SHOP - DAY

William walks to the side door of the house and knocks.

WILLIAM

Hello.

JEFFREY

Come in.

William enters.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jeffrey is standing in the kitchen, rinsing out a pan in the sink. William walks in.

WILLIAM

Hey.

JEFFREY

This is a more reasonable hour.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

JEFFREY

You want to get started on that car?

WILLIAM

Yeah, give it a shot.

JEFFREY

All right. Take this pan and wash it.

He hands it to William.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

I'll go put shoes on.

He walks out. William goes to the sink and starts washing the pan. He notes pictures of a younger Jeffrey on the wall. Some of him with a woman and a child. Jeffrey returns.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Are you done with the pan?

WILLIAM

Yeah.

JEFFREY

Put it on the counter.

William does.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Let's go to the car. You open the garage.

Jeffrey heads to the garage and William follows.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFFREY'S AUTO SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

William lifts up the garage door. Light pours into the garage.

JEFFREY

Put her in neutral and push it out a bit so we can get some room in here.

William does.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Now what happened exactly?

WILLIAM

The car just stopped, stalled and I couldn't get it started again.

JEFFREY

Any smoke or steam?

WILLIAM

No.

JEFFREY

Open the sonofabitch up.

William does and Jeffrey stands in front of the car.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Try and start it.

William turns the key, it starts for a second and dies.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Try it again pumping the gas some.

William does to the same effect.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

All right. Could be the fuel pump's busted or there's a block in there some place.

WILLIAM

All right.

JEFFREY

You're gonna want to run a test on it.

WILLIAM

Okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFFREY

So better set about it then. You  
got that book I gave you?

WILLIAM

Yeah, right here.

JEFFREY

I'll be in back.

He walks off. William goes slack a bit.

WILLIAM

Fuck.

He walks outside and sits in the dirt with the manual. He  
flips through it for a minute.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Fuel pump?

He flips some more. Reading aloud --

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

"Fuel pump - Check and replacement"  
All right. "If a faulty pump is  
suspected", it is, "detach the  
ignition coil primary leads and detach  
the fuel line at the carburetor.  
Position a container to catch any  
fuel and have an assistant crank the  
engine over. If little or no fuel  
flows out, the pump is defective or  
the pipe is clogged." Excellent.  
Clear as day.

He leans back, looks out at the street.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Balls.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFFREY'S AUTO SHOP - LATER

William is hunched over the engine. He consults the book.

WILLIAM

"Detach the ignition coil primary  
leads" Where the fuck is the ignition  
coil?

He flips through the book.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Ignition coil. Okay.

William hunches down into the car.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
There you are. Remove the primary  
leads.

He looks back at the book.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
What the fuck is a lead?

William throws the manual at the engine.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

William walks in and finds Jeffrey sitting in his recliner  
smoking.

JEFFREY  
Hello.

WILLIAM  
What's a lead?

JEFFREY  
A lead?

WILLIAM  
"Remove the ignition coil primary  
leads", what's a lead?

JEFFREY  
A wire in that case.

WILLIAM  
Thank you.

He storms out.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFFREY'S AUTO SHOP - LATER

William is hunched over the engine, he glances back and forth  
from the book to the engine.

WILLIAM  
I'm pretty sure this is the fuel  
line.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

"When loosening the fuel line fitting at the carburetor, always use the correct size wrenches, preferably a "flare-nut" wrench to avoid rounding-off the corners of the tube fitting, and another wrench to keep the carburetor inlet fitting from turning." Okay.

William turns to the tool chest and picks out a handful of wrenches. He tests a few out on the fuel line fitting until he gets the right size. He twists it off. He has triumphed. He turns and runs back into the house.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

William runs into the kitchen where Jeffrey is standing, making a sandwich.

WILLIAM

I got the fuel line off and the leads and we can do the test now.

JEFFREY

All right. You like bologna sandwiches?

WILLIAM

Sure.

JEFFREY

After we do the test we can eat some. I made a batch here.

WILLIAM

Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFFREY'S AUTO SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey is standing holding a bowl under the carburetor. William has his hand on the crank.

JEFFREY

Whenever you're ready turn the sonofabitch bitch a few times.

William cranks it over once.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Do it again.

William does it again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Do it two more times.

He does.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Yeah that's the problem. See this?

He holds the bowl up to William.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Hardly any fuel came out.

WILLIAM  
Uh huh.

JEFFREY  
Faulty pump or clogged filter.

WILLIAM  
Okay.

JEFFREY  
So we'll eat some bologna sandwiches now.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - DAY

Jeffrey and William are sitting at his table eating sandwiches.

WILLIAM  
So next thing is to check the fuel filter?

JEFFREY  
Yeah, get that sonofabitch out and check it. If it's not that then the pump's busted.

WILLIAM  
Is that an expensive thing to replace?

JEFFREY  
Not too expensive. It's been a while since I bought one.

They eat in silence.

WILLIAM  
How long have you been in Dry Lake?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFFREY  
1960 moved here.

WILLIAM  
Wow.

JEFFREY  
Town's changed a bit since then.

WILLIAM  
Yeah.

JEFFREY  
Not as lively as it once was but  
it's all right. Has everything a  
town needs to I guess.

WILLIAM  
Yeah.

JEFFREY  
How's your sandwich?

WILLIAM  
It's good, thank you.

JEFFREY  
You want another one?

WILLIAM  
This'll be fine. Thanks for helping  
me out with the car.

JEFFREY  
Yes, well. That's all right. You're  
doing the work. Are you finished?

WILLIAM  
Yeah. Thank you.

JEFFREY  
Well, you can get back to it if you  
want. I'll be around, once you got  
that filter out, want me to look at  
it.

WILLIAM  
Thanks.

William gets up from the table and heads back to the garage.  
Jeffrey sits finishing his lunch.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFFREY'S AUTO SHOP - AFTERNOON

William unscrews the fuel filter nut and taps the filter out into his hand.

WILLIAM

That was easy.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

William walks around back to where Jeffrey is sitting on his bench. William walks up next to him.

WILLIAM

Hey Jeffrey, hey Jeffrey.

JEFFREY

Yup.

WILLIAM

I got the filter out.

JEFFREY

The which?

WILLIAM

The fuel filter, I got it out if you want to check it.

JEFFREY

Okay.

William hands it to him.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

All right. Looks all right to me.

WILLIAM

So you think it's the pump then?

JEFFREY

I suppose. Could be so many things.

WILLIAM

But the pump should definitely be replaced right?

JEFFREY

Did you crank it over to see if fuel came out?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

Again or do you mean what we did earlier?

JEFFREY

Nevermind. None came out it's the fuel pump that's broken.

WILLIAM

Okay.

JEFFREY

Might as well replace this too in case.

He hands it back to William.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

You can toss it into the junk if you like. Call some folks see where you can get a replacement pump and filter. I'm going inside.

Jeffrey gets up and walks away. William tosses the fuel filter into the junk yard.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - LATER

William enters, looks around, heads back to the bedroom. Jeffrey is sitting on the edge of his bed.

WILLIAM

Jeffrey?

JEFFREY

Yeah.

WILLIAM

I found a place in Sandford that has the right pump. They're open tomorrow from ten until five.

JEFFREY

Okay.

WILLIAM

I just need to find a ride out there and I can pick it up.

JEFFREY

I can go get it. No need for you to go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

Um, all right, are you sure?

JEFFREY

Yeah, I'm sure. I said the fucking words.

WILLIAM

Okay, I already paid for it over the phone so...you should be all set.

JEFFREY

Did you get the old pump off of there?

WILLIAM

Yeah.

JEFFREY

Okey doke. Leave that and the address in my truck so I don't leave without them.

WILLIAM

Sure.

JEFFREY

You want to stay for dinner?

WILLIAM

That's all right I was going to head back to the hotel.

JEFFREY

Fine by me. I'll see you tomorrow then.

WILLIAM

I'll see you tomorrow.

William turns and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEFFREY'S AUTO SHOP - EVENING

The sun is setting as William walks back to The Mariner.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MARINER HOTEL LOBBY - EVENING.

William walks in. Avery is working the desk.

WILLIAM

Hey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Avery notes William's grease covered hands.

AVERY

Hey. Get some work done today?

WILLIAM

Yeah, I think we got it figured out.

AVERY

I'll be damned.

WILLIAM

Yeah. You seen Tamara?

AVERY

Nah, they're not back yet I don't think. I passed out for a little while, I'm fucking exhausted.

WILLIAM

Yeah. Cool, I'll see you later.

AVERY

Cool.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MARINER RESTAURANT - NIGHT

William sits at a table alone, the remnants of a burger before him. He tosses his napkin onto his plate and leans back. He grabs his beer, finishes it off as Joan walks up with another. She grabs his plate.

JOAN

How was it?

WILLIAM

Good. Thank you.

JOAN

You want the check?

WILLIAM

I'm gonna hang out for a minute.

She takes the empty bottle and walks away. He sits nursing his beer. Tamara enters, William sits up, expecting a greeting. She heads to the bar, orders a bourbon from Joan. William contemplates heading to the bar or screaming at the top of his lungs as she turns around and heads toward him.

TAMARA

Are you drinking alone William?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM  
It's not what it looks like.

TAMARA  
Mind if I join you?

WILLIAM  
Please do.

She sits. She rests her head on the table.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Tired?

TAMARA  
No. I need a straw to drink from  
here.

WILLIAM  
Unhappy?

She sits up.

TAMARA  
No. How are you?

WILLIAM  
Well.

TAMARA  
Car?

WILLIAM  
Almost fixed.

TAMARA  
I'm impressed.

WILLIAM  
As I intended.

She raises her glass to him.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
How were your ghost towns?

TAMARA  
Wonderful.

She puts her head back on the table.

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
I took really good pictures.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

Oh yeah?

TAMARA

Oh yeah. Actually, I might win the Pulitzer Prize for the pictures I took today and the Nobel Peace Prize and strangely the Nobel Prize for chemistry which even I was surprised to learn.

WILLIAM

Yeah that hasn't gone to a photographer in quite some time.

She sits up.

TAMARA

It's nice to joke with you after a long day.

WILLIAM

Yeah, what's wrong?

TAMARA

Nothing.

William raises his fists.

WILLIAM

Lie to me again and it's nothing but uppercuts.

TAMARA

Let's go for a walk in the desert.

WILLIAM

All right.

He stands.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

William and Tamara are arm in arm walking out into the desert. In the background we can see The Mariner lit up.

TAMARA

You wanna see something weird?

WILLIAM

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA  
Touch the ground.

WILLIAM  
I don't want to.

TAMARA  
Do it.

WILLIAM  
It's dark, I might be feeding my  
hand to some desert beast.

She tugs on his arm. He leans over and presses his hand  
against the dirt.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
It's warm.

TAMARA  
Weird, right?

WILLIAM  
Sort of.

TAMARA  
It's weird.

WILLIAM  
It's taking all the power of my  
imagination to convince myself it  
wasn't a dry dog turd I touched down  
there.

TAMARA  
That's gross.

They walk a bit.

WILLIAM  
You're a cool girl Tamara, I like  
you.

TAMARA  
I like you too.

WILLIAM  
It's too bad you're a figment of my  
imagination.

TAMARA  
It really is. It's sad.

WILLIAM  
I know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA

It wouldn't be so bad if you didn't talk out loud to me.

WILLIAM

Tell me about it.

TAMARA

Everyone at the bar thinks you're crazy.

WILLIAM

If they only knew they'd be envious.

Tamara looks up at the sky for a distraction from this bit of sincerity.

TAMARA

Geez. Look at all the stars.

William doesn't.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

Tamara looks at him.

TAMARA

You're not looking.

He looks up at her for a second, then up to the sky.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

TAMARA

Isn't that beautiful?

WILLIAM

It is.

Beat.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Isn't this weird?

TAMARA

What?

WILLIAM

Isn't it weird that you're out wandering in the desert with me. Doesn't that bother your boyfriend?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA

If it bothers him, fine, he was a jerk today.

WILLIAM

Am I an instrument of revenge then?

TAMARA

You're not only an instrument of revenge.

He smirks.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

I'm just kidding William. This isn't to push his buttons or anything. I like you. You're refreshing.

WILLIAM

And if his buttons get pushed his buttons get pushed.

TAMARA

Exactly, an unintentional and glorious by-product of my primary objective.

WILLIAM

Very good.

They keep walking.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

How was he a jerk?

TAMARA

Just a stick in the mud because he didn't want to stop at all.

WILLIAM

That is jerky. When are you guys leaving?

TAMARA

Tomorrow, which is a totally awful idea because we've been in a car together for three days and we're driving each other nuts.

WILLIAM

Why don't you stay and hang out with me until my car's done?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA

He can't wait to get to L.A., that's where he's from and all his friends are there and everything.

WILLIAM

And you?

TAMARA

I'm dreading it. You want to know something about me William? I don't give a shit about ghost towns. Fuck ghost towns but when I reach L.A. I'm not going to know anybody. I'm not gonna know where anything is. I'm gonna have to find a job and get a place and start my life.

WILLIAM

No fun is what you're saying.

TAMARA

None at all. I'm intimidated by it William. The idea intimidates me.

WILLIAM

I liked that you liked ghost towns.

TAMARA

Hey, fuck, I like ghost towns as much as the next girl I'm just not an enthusiast.

WILLIAM

I've always believed that "enthusiast" and "psychopath" were closer to synonymous than people allowed.

TAMARA

Thank you for walking in the desert with me William.

WILLIAM

You're welcome.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MARINER HOTEL - LATER

William and Tamara walk up to the hotel. Tamara stops at a room downstairs.

TAMARA

End of the road.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM  
All right.

TAMARA  
Good night William.

WILLIAM  
Good night. Come find me before you leave tomorrow.

TAMARA  
I will.

She turns and goes to her room, William turns and heads upstairs. He walks down the hallway and finds Evan leaning against his door. William stops.

EVAN  
Hey.

WILLIAM  
Hey.

EVAN  
Are you in love with my girlfriend?

William's face freezes momentarily, eyebrows raised, politely asking what the question had been, though he knows exactly what it was and is using the pause to formulate a believable response to the negative, but he is just too damn tired.

WILLIAM  
Yes.

EVAN  
You think you have a shot?

He considers it.

WILLIAM  
No.

EVAN  
Good. 'Cuz you don't.

William nods.

EVAN (CONT'D)  
You're not her type. You're too negative.

WILLIAM  
(Sincerely)  
I am negative.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Evan hesitates before leaving.

EVAN

I love her.

WILLIAM

You should.

EVAN

Good night.

WILLIAM

Good night.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MARINER HOTEL ROOM 210 - NIGHT

William lies in bed, fully clothed, staring up at the ceiling. He looks over at the alarm clock. It turns to 2:45 am. William looks back to the ceiling then rises and quietly exits the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEFFREY'S AUTO SHOP - LATER

William carefully pulls up the garage door and enters. We see a flashlight go on inside. Moments later William emerges, puts the flashlight and another object on the ground and pulls the garage shut.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MARINER HOTEL - LATER

We follow William as he scampers up to the Jeep Grand Cherokee in the parking lot, eyes darting everywhere. He quickly slips a Slim Jim under the weather stripping on the driver's door. He yanks it up, popping the lock. He opens the door, reaches under the dash and pops the hood. He lifts the hood, reaches into the engine and yanks out the serpentine drive belt. He pulls the hood down carefully, closes it, then hoists his weight onto it to shut it. He glances around, no one. He rolls up the belt, hurls it over the fence out into the desert and stuffs the flashlight and slim jim into his pants, making sure his shirt covers them sufficiently. The deed done, William tries to drop the posture of a lurking criminal and comport himself as anyone would in a motel parking lot. He heads back to his room.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MARINER ROOM 210 - MORNING

Knock on the door, William opens it. Tamara is standing there smiling.

TAMARA  
Our car broke down.

WILLIAM  
You're kidding.

TAMARA  
Nope, broken.

WILLIAM  
What's wrong?

Tamara pushes past him and walks into his room.

TAMARA  
I don't know, nothing works.

WILLIAM  
Wouldn't start?

TAMARA  
No it started but it overheated real fast and the, I mean nothing worked. The steering, the air. It's fucked. You keep a nice room.

WILLIAM  
Thank you.

She opens the curtains.

TAMARA  
Some light.

WILLIAM  
What're you gonna do now?

TAMARA  
Evan's calling places, I don't think anyone's going to tow it until tomorrow. So we'll go then I guess. Evan's pissed though.

WILLIAM  
Really?

TAMARA  
So pissed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM  
Yeah, It's frustrating.

TAMARA  
I got my day though.

WILLIAM  
Yes you did.

TAMARA  
What're you doing now?

WILLIAM  
I was gonna eat lunch and then  
hopefully finish my car. Would you  
like to come? You could meet Jeffrey.

TAMARA  
I've got to help Evan try and find a  
place, he's going crazy, but find me  
when you're done.

WILLIAM  
You got it.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFFREY'S AUTO SHOP GARAGE - DAY

William pulls up the garage door and enters. A new fuel  
pump and fuel filter are sitting on top of the car.

EXT. JEFFREY'S AUTO SHOP GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

William walks around the side to the back. He sees Jeffrey  
sitting on his bench and stops. He turns and heads back.

INT. JEFFREY'S AUTO SHOP GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

William opens up the boxes and gets to work.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFFREY'S AUTO SHOP GARAGE - AFTERNOON

William is tightening one of the mounting bolts on the fuel  
filter. Jeffrey enters.

JEFFREY  
How are we doing there?

WILLIAM  
Pretty good. I think I'm close.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFFREY  
Did you put in the new filter?

WILLIAM  
Yeah.

JEFFREY  
All right.

WILLIAM  
Yeah, just got to attach the fuel lines and I think I'm done.

JEFFREY  
Good for you. I'll check it when you're done, make sure you're not killing anybody.

Jeffrey smiles, amused by his own remark. William smiles, at the discovery of Jeffrey's sense of humor.

WILLIAM  
All right.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - LATER

William enters the kitchen to find Jeffrey busy making a batch of bologna sandwiches.

WILLIAM  
Jeffrey?

JEFFREY  
Right here.

WILLIAM  
Yeah, I think I'm done.

JEFFREY  
Okey doke. Just making sandwiches here. I'll check it out, all's well, we'll eat some sandwiches.

WILLIAM  
Sounds good.

Jeffrey puts down his task and follows William out to the garage.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFFREY'S AUTO SHOP GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey checks some connections under the hood. William stands by anxiously.

JEFFREY

You still got the ignition coil open here.

WILLIAM

Oh right just a second.

William hurries over, reattaches the ignition coil wires, puts on the cover and steps back. Jeffrey continues to look around.

JEFFREY

Well it all looks okay to me.

WILLIAM

All right.

JEFFREY

Should we give her a go?

WILLIAM

Let's do it.

JEFFREY

Okay.

William climbs into the driver's seat, puts the key in the ignition and looks to Jeffrey.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Whenever you're ready.

William turns the key, the car sputters. He tries again and the car rumbles to life. William gives it a second to die but it doesn't.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Sounds good.

WILLIAM

Oh my god.

William rests his head on the steering wheel.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ.

JEFFREY

Leave it running, I'll check for leaks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

William steps out of the car in complete awe.

WILLIAM

I did it.

JEFFREY

Looks like.

WILLIAM

I can't believe I did it. I fixed my car. That is amazing.

William stands watching.

JEFFREY

You can turn her off now, I don't think she's leaking.

William gets back in and turns it off.

WILLIAM

Incredible.

He gets out.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Thank you. Thank you so much.

JEFFREY

That's okay.

WILLIAM

I can't believe it.

JEFFREY

Well, you ought to. Bologna sandwiches.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey enters followed by William. Jeffrey sits at the table, William follows. Jeffrey raises a sandwich.

JEFFREY

Job well done.

WILLIAM

I guess you don't really understand the thrill for me. I just, I don't know how to do that kind of thing.

JEFFREY

Well you don't just know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

What?

JEFFREY

You got to learn how to do something to know how to do it. The only things you're going to do without learning how first is waking up and breathing, after that it's up to you.

WILLIAM

Yeah. I guess so. Well, thanks for helping me.

JEFFREY

My pleasure.

WILLIAM

How did you learn?

JEFFREY

My dad.

WILLIAM

Mmm. So how much do I owe you?

JEFFREY

You don't owe me nothing.

WILLIAM

Are you sure?

JEFFREY

You paid for the parts and did all the work. I don't know what you'd pay me for.

WILLIAM

Are you sure?

JEFFREY

Yes. Drop it.

WILLIAM

All right.

William finishes his sandwich. He takes the plate over to the sink. There is a picture of Jeffrey at William's age, with a young woman. William looks at it. Jeffrey's happy.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Who's this?

JEFFREY

Who?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM  
In this picture here with you?

Jeffrey rises and stands behind William looking at the picture.

JEFFREY  
Well that's your mother and me on our first date. We went to a fair and got our picture taken.

William nearly drops the plate.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
That was a good night. Shit, we had fun. She was a bullshitter, your Mom.

Jeffrey pats William on the shoulder and walks to the living room. William puts down the dish in the sink. He looks up at the ceiling, eyes darting nervously, then turns and heads into the living room where Jeffrey is seated. Jeffrey is smiling.

WILLIAM  
Well, I should probably go back to the hotel, The Mariner, where I'm staying.

JEFFREY  
You're sure you don't want to stay here? I can set up a bed for you.

WILLIAM  
I should get back there.

JEFFREY  
Okay.

William crosses to Jeffrey and extends his hand. Jeffrey seems for a moment hurt by the formality of the gesture and then embarrassed by his expectation of something more personal. He shakes William's hand. William speaks with a clarity he usually reserves for those hard of hearing or not of our nation, though in this case his directness is used to express his level of sincerity.

WILLIAM  
Thank you very much, Jeffrey. For all your help on my car and everything else.

JEFFREY  
Okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM  
I'll get out of your way now.

JEFFREY  
That's fine.

WILLIAM  
I'll be leaving tomorrow morning.  
Maybe I'll stop by and say goodbye  
before I do.

JEFFREY  
Whichever's fine.

WILLIAM  
Okay.

William turns and walks out.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - EVENING

The sun is setting as William walks back to the hotel.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MARINER HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

William wanders into the parking lot and to the stairs where Tamara is sitting.

TAMARA  
William.

WILLIAM  
Tamara, right?

TAMARA  
How's your car?

WILLIAM  
I fixed it. It's fixed.

TAMARA  
How come you walked?

William looks over his shoulder, trying to catch a glimpse of what his reasoning had been. He looks back to Tamara.

WILLIAM  
I don't know.

TAMARA  
Force of habit?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

Maybe.

TAMARA

Well, congratulations.

WILLIAM

Thank you. It's good to see you.

TAMARA

You too.

There is silence, Tamara stands.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

We found someone to come tow us  
tomorrow.

WILLIAM

That's good.

More silence. Tamara brushes the hair away from William's  
brow with her hand.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I had a weird day.

TAMARA

Yeah.

WILLIAM

You want to see something?

TAMARA

Sure.

WILLIAM

Hold on.

William heads upstairs to his room. He's inside for a second,  
comes back out with a flashlight. He comes back down the  
stairs stopping at Tamara.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Follow me.

They walk out of the parking lot to Main Street.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

They begin heading down the street in the direction of  
Jeffrey's.

WILLIAM

What happened to this town you think?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA

Halfway point between two silver towns. Main hub for commerce for both. One dies out, town loses business. The other dies out, town loses all it's business aside from people passing through on the highway. Interstate gets built, falls apart completely.

WILLIAM

Is that real?

TAMARA

Yeah. It's in a book I got on ghost towns.

WILLIAM

That mystery is solved.

TAMARA

Dry Lake is actually listed in this book as a ghost town.

WILLIAM

Getting ahead of themselves there.

TAMARA

Not by much.

WILLIAM

No. Maybe I'll just stay in Dry Lake.

TAMARA

Yeah?

WILLIAM

Work at The Mariner. Make sure the town lasts that much longer. I could reopen Jeffrey's auto shop. "As long as it's the fuel pump, we can fix it."

TAMARA

That's a good idea. I see you and a geriatric Avery lounging by an empty pool.

WILLIAM

I've changed my mind.

They come up on the movie theater.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Check this out.

William walks up to the door and shines the flashlight through the window. Tamara looks inside. The light wanders over the dusty concession stand.

TAMARA  
Wow. I love this shit.

WILLIAM  
Isn't this awesome?

TAMARA  
Can we go inside?

WILLIAM  
Inside?

TAMARA  
Yeah.

WILLIAM  
Isn't that --

He looks around.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
-- won't we get in trouble?

TAMARA  
I'm not even sure this town has cops.

WILLIAM  
Yeah I guess not.

TAMARA  
And I'm not sure they'd care if there were.

Tamara walks around the side of the building. There is a door at the back. It is warped and wedged open. They walk up to it and both have to yank on it to open it enough to squeeze through

WILLIAM  
All right.

They enter.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - CONTINUOUS

It's a small auditorium. Tamara and William enter from the back, right next to the screen. The flashlight wanders all over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM  
I love this.

They walk up the aisle to the entrance. They enter the lobby and look around.

TAMARA  
Here's a light switch.

She flips it.

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
Nothing.

Tamara goes behind the counter, starts looking around. We follow William as he goes up a couple of stairs to a door. He opens it and enters the projection booth.

TAMARA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
There's still candy in here.

WILLIAM  
Don't eat it.

William finds a fuse box, flips all the switches and flips them back.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Try the lights now.

We hear her fumble around in the lobby.

TAMARA (O.S.)  
Yeah.

William examines the projector. Tamara enters.

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
Does it work?

WILLIAM  
I don't know. Here we go.

He flips a switch and the projector starts running, spraying flickering white light onto the screen which has gone slack in the middle.

TAMARA  
I'll be damned.

WILLIAM  
Look at that. Shall we take in a movie?

William offers his arm. She takes it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA

Let's.

They leave the booth and walk through the lobby into the theater. They move down the back row to the middle and sit.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

What's playing?

WILLIAM

It's called Adventure in Dry Lake.

They watch the flickering screen for a moment.

TAMARA

So far it's boring.

WILLIAM

It gets better.

William sits up on the back of his seat and reaches up, casting a crude shadow puppet on the screen. For some reason he adopts a fake voice reminiscent of W.C. Fields.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Hello my name is William. I'm stuck  
in Dry Lake.

He does the two finger walking motion.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Oh look! A Hotel! I'll stay there.  
Excuse me sir.

He holds up another hand to talk to.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Name's Avery, this here is my hotel,  
The Mariner it's called.

Tamara sits up on the back of her seat. She raises a hand and too adopts the W.C. Fields voice.

TAMARA

Pardon me, name's Tamara, You must  
be William.

WILLIAM

That I am.

TAMARA

Ya look sad, kiddo.

WILLIAM

Not at all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA  
Horseshit.

WILLIAM  
Ya got me there, I'm miserable!

TAMARA  
I knew it! What'll cheer you up  
then?

WILLIAM  
How 'bout a walk in the ol' desert.

TAMARA  
Doesn't sound bad.

They both do walking fingers.

WILLIAM  
Beautiful night.

TAMARA  
The ground is warm.

WILLIAM  
So it is.

TAMARA  
Thanks for walking.

WILLIAM  
My pleasure. See you tomorrow?

TAMARA  
Not if I see you first.

WILLIAM  
Doesn't make sense but I like it.

TAMARA  
Off we go then.

The bulb blows on the projector, the theater goes dark.

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
Awww, come on.

They both drop down into their seats.

WILLIAM  
What a gyp.

TAMARA  
Don't even get to see how it ends.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

It's a shitty ending.

TAMARA

Oh?

WILLIAM

The girl moves to L.A. the guy moves to Connecticut, they never see each other again.

TAMARA

That is sad. Maybe they meet up in the sequel.

William doesn't respond. He's too busy considering how terrible an idea it would be to tell Tamara that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with her.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

William?

WILLIAM

Yeah.

TAMARA

Maybe they meet up in the sequel.

WILLIAM

That'll be a good movie.

TAMARA

Yeah.

They sit for a moment.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

We should go.

They go to the lobby and turn off the lights. They wander, led by the flashlight, down to the back of the theater and exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

They walk back.

TAMARA

What're you thinking, Will?

WILLIAM

It's strange that we met here, in Dry Lake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA

Yeah.

WILLIAM

Yeah, if I had stayed in L.A. where you're going, I probably never would have met you even though we were in the same city. But traveling across country, I meet you here, in this small soon to be ghost town. Or if we did meet, I would have said ten words to you maybe.

TAMARA

We might have hit it off.

WILLIAM

Yeah, I don't know.

TAMARA

I'm sure of it.

They walk into the parking lot of The Mariner. They stop at the stairs.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

I'm gonna go back to my room. The tow truck's coming early tomorrow. I'm gonna try and sleep.

WILLIAM

Yeah big day.

TAMARA

Yeah. I'll come say goodbye in the morning.

WILLIAM

Okay.

TAMARA

Good night.

She turns and walks back to her room. He watches her go.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MARINER HOTEL ROOM 210 - LATER

William lies in bed staring up at the ceiling. His eyes dart around, his mind clearly busy with something. He grabs his forehead. He pops up.

CUT TO:

## EXT. THE MARINER HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

William walks hurriedly downstairs and to the door of Tamara's room. He holds up his fist to knock, pauses, then knocks. He steps away. A few moments later Tamara opens the door, squinting through sleepy eyes at the light. William waves her towards him.

WILLIAM  
(Whispering)  
Come here.

She looks confused. She steps out, careful not to wake Evan with the closing of the door. She steps toward him.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
I feel like I said the wrong thing.

TAMARA  
What?

WILLIAM  
I feel like I was supposed to say something else.

TAMARA  
What?

WILLIAM  
When you said maybe we'd meet up in the sequel, I feel like I was supposed to say something else.

She just looks at him.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Why don't you come with me?

She's awake now.

TAMARA  
What?

WILLIAM  
Come with me.

TAMARA  
Go to Connecticut?

WILLIAM  
Yeah.

TAMARA  
That's the direction I came from.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMARA (CONT'D)

I'm going to L.A. What would I be doing in Connecticut? You're talking crazy.

WILLIAM

I'm feeling crazy.

TAMARA

Walks like a duck, talks like a duck.

He deflates slightly.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

It must seem simple to you but I love Evan. He's my boyfriend, I love him.

Entirely.

WILLIAM

I'm sorry. I don't know.

He looks back at her.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I don't know what I'm thinking. I'm so fucked up right now.

TAMARA

Will.

WILLIAM

I'm such a fucking weirdo. Jesus.

TAMARA

Will.

WILLIAM

Forget I said all that shit. Fuck. Ahh, Jesus. I'm sorry. Go back to sleep. I'm sorry.

He turns and walks back to his room, picking up speed at the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MARINER RESTAURANT - MORNING

William, freshly showered, finishes a cup of coffee.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - MORNING

William walks down the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEFFREY'S AUTO SHOP - LATER

William walks around the side of the building and as he expected sees Jeffrey sitting on his bench in back. He walks up to him.

WILLIAM

Hey, Jeffrey.

JEFFREY

Hello.

William sits on the bench.

WILLIAM

I'm taking off today. Going home.

JEFFREY

To Connecticut.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

JEFFREY

I know you're not my boy. I got confused yesterday. I got mixed up.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

JEFFREY

Your car's all ready to go.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

William stands. Extends his hand.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

It was nice to know you Jeffrey.

Jeffrey takes it.

JEFFREY

Nice to know you too.

William turns and walks away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Drive safe.

WILLIAM  
I will.

William walks around to the front. Tamara is looking in the window of the garage.

TAMARA  
There you are.

WILLIAM  
Hey.

TAMARA  
Is that your car in there?

WILLIAM  
Yeah.

TAMARA  
It's not how I pictured it.

They look at each other.

WILLIAM  
I'm sorry about last night.

TAMARA  
Please don't be.

WILLIAM  
I'll give that a whirl.

She takes him in for a second.

TAMARA  
Bye Will.

She hugs him.

WILLIAM  
Bye. Too bad we didn't meet someplace else.

TAMARA  
Ah well, I'm not real anyway --

She taps his temple.

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
-- just up here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

No. If I made you up you'd stay.

Tamara looks at the ground, uncomfortable.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

And you'd have much bigger tits.

She slaps his arm. They look at each other for a moment, aware that whatever has been between them for the past few days mustn't end on that note. Tamara smirks. She turns starts to walk, stops and turns back.

TAMARA

You know, for people that have only known each other a few days, we sure have said goodbye a lot.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

TAMARA

I'll see you, Will.

WILLIAM

I'll see ya'.

She turns and walks off. William stands there for a moment before turning to open the garage. He pulls out his car and closes the garage. The Nova pulls out to Main Street, as it does the tow truck with the Jeep Grand Cherokee attached drives by, headed west. Tamara's arm waves to William from the passenger window as it passes. The Nova turns and heads east past The Mariner.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR - DAY

We watch from the roof of the Nova as it travels out of the desert, east, back onto the interstate. Driving through farm country, the surroundings begin to flatten and green.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

William gets gas at a rest stop. He watches the traffic screaming past just beyond a chain link fence.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR - DAWN

The Nova winds through the Smoky Mountains.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR - DAY

The Nova is pulled over on a Pennsylvania highway. William is rummaging through the back seat. He pulls out a jacket and puts it on, fastening all the buttons. Rubbing his hands together for warmth, he gets back in the car and pulls away.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR - EVENING

The sun has just set as the Nova crosses over the Tappanze Bridge into Connecticut.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

The Nova cruises down a rural road. At a stop sign it turns right. The Nova slows now and eventually turns into the gravel driveway of William's home.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME - NIGHT

William enters through the front door and drops his bag. He wanders into the kitchen where he finds his Mom at the stove and his Dad sitting at the kitchen table. William's Mom is a warm, little, clinically-depressed, oval of a person.

WILLIAM

Hey guys.

They turn and light up.

DAD

Hey!

MOM

Oh!

She rushes over and hugs him, then takes a step back to catalog any changes in appearance. She brushes at his hair.

MOM (CONT'D)

Your hair is long.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

Yeah.

DAD

You look like a Jim Henson creation.

MOM

Oh now.

William looks to his father who struggles up from his seat to a walker standing by.

WILLIAM

What the fuck is this?

MOM

That's your Dad's new walker.

WILLIAM

What the fuck?

DAD

One of the many gifts of old age.

WILLIAM

Jesus, Dad.

William does his best to hug his father around the awkward metal contraption.

DAD

It's great, now I can move about freely without having to rely on my pesky legs which are untrustworthy and prone to malfunction.

WILLIAM

Yeah, this a great step we've taken.

DAD

Or in my case a great shuffle.

William is unable to find the humor in his father's physical deterioration and presses his palm to his forehead. He forces a close-lipped smile.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME - NIGHT

William is clearing the table, taking dishes to the sink where he rinses them off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOM

I've got the upstairs all squared away for you Honey.

WILLIAM

Okay.

MOM

I'm going to bed.

WILLIAM

Okay.

He turns and hugs her.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Good night.

MOM

It's so good to see you.

WILLIAM

You too.

She turns and wanders away to bed. William finishes rinsing the dishes. His father sits at the kitchen table. William walks past him and as he passes, pats him on the shoulder. He grabs his coat and walks out the back door.

EXT. HOME - CONTINUOUS

William walks out onto the back porch and leans on the railing looking out at his backyard. He runs his finger along the railing and holds it up for inspection. Frost. He wipes it off on his jeans. William turns at the sound of his father who, having seen the sadness in William at his first encounter with the walker, is now carefully and with the help of the doorway walking out onto the porch of his own power.

WILLIAM

Do you need your thing?

DAD

No, I don't always use it, it just makes certain things a little easier.

William watches as his dad navigates his way to the railing which once he arrives takes a significant amount of his weight. They look out at the yard.

DAD (CONT'D)

How does it look?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

It looks good. You got rid of the jungle gym.

DAD

Yes, after fifteen years of neglect I thought it was about time. Your Mother of course cried for two weeks.

WILLIAM

Did she?

DAD

Yes.

WILLIAM

Christ.

They look. Snow starts to fall.

DAD

Here we go.

As snow lands in his open palm --

WILLIAM

I was in the desert three days ago.

DAD

The trip was tough.

WILLIAM

Yeah. It was really...really hard.

DAD

Well, I'm sorry.

William shrugs.

DAD (CONT'D)

It's great to see you.

WILLIAM

You too.

DAD

I was surprised when you told us you were coming back.

He looks to William who has no response.

DAD (CONT'D)

Thought your whole plan, everything you wanted to do was out there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

It was.

DAD

But that changed.

William sighs.

WILLIAM

No, not really.

DAD

At the risk of sounding insensitive,  
why did you come back?

WILLIAM

It didn't really work out like I  
thought it would.

DAD

Well things rarely do.

William looks at his Dad.

WILLIAM

Okay.

DAD

Work out like you, anyone expects, I  
mean. They work out though, in some  
way. Or maybe they don't but coming  
here, you know, you never really  
find out.

WILLIAM

Right.

DAD

This place doesn't exactly have a  
lot in the plus column for you.

WILLIAM

Well I feel like I should be here.  
Mom can't do this by herself or she  
can maybe but she shouldn't have to.

DAD

What are we talking about here, are  
we talking about me?

William shrugs.

DAD (CONT'D)

Yeah? That's fine.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAD (CONT'D)

I love your Mother very much but she entered into a 'til death do we part pact with me. That was stupid. Any inconveniences that come along with the deal she signed up for. I'm no great catch but there wasn't anyone twisting her arm.

William looks at him.

DAD (CONT'D)

William, don't make it about me. I couldn't live with it, you couldn't live with it. This is my life and this part isn't as much fun as the before part but you shouldn't make it yours because you feel guilty or something. Your Mother I'm sure feels differently, if it were up to her you'd still be breast feeding --

WILLIAM

Jesus.

DAD

-- She doesn't care if your a neurotic mess fucking serial killer. I do.

WILLIAM

Thanks, Dad.

DAD

I joke around but scattered in there are some gems of fucking wisdom and sincerity.

WILLIAM

I'm gettin' 'em.

DAD

Good.

William presses his head on the railing, staring at his feet.

DAD (CONT'D)

Do whatever you want obviously. It'll make me endlessly happy to have you here. I just want to make sure you know what you're doing and that you're doing it for the right reasons.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

I have no idea. I have no idea what I'm doing.

His dad reaches over and squeezes his shoulder. William shakes his head.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

What a jerk.

DAD

Who.

WILLIAM

Me.

DAD

Nah. You're a good guy.

WILLIAM

We could have had this conversation over the telephone you know.

His dad chuckles. William, straightens up, reaches into his coat pocket, pulls out the small newspaper envelope that Susan gave him. He opens it, takes out the joint.

DAD

What's that?

WILLIAM

It's a joint.

They look at each other.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

You wanna smoke it?

William's father pauses, looking at the joint, changing his mind repeatedly. He settles.

DAD

Sure.

William lights it and passes it to his father, who smokes it tentatively and passes it back to his son.

DAD (CONT'D)

This is a good idea. This is smart. See you never know shit. It's what you don't know that changes. An example, I don't know if it's a good idea to smoke a joint with my son right now, probably not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

It's fine.

DAD

You weren't just sitting around  
smoking pot in L.A. were you?

WILLIAM

No.

DAD

Good.

They look out at the yard for a moment.

DAD (CONT'D)

All right, buddy. It's good to see  
you.

They hug.

WILLIAM

You too.

DAD

I'm gonna go pick a fight with your  
mother.

William watches as his father gingerly makes his way back to the doorway and into the house. He turns and looks out at the backyard, drags the joint along the railing, extinguishing it. He turns and looks back inside the house where he sees his father clumsily navigating a step with his walker. He grimaces at the pain and exertion involved. William turns away, shaken.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME - BEDROOM - LATER

William unpacks his bag on the bed. The room has been preserved, just as he left it when he graduated from high school. He throws his clothes out onto the dresser. William sees something strange at the bottom of the bag. He reaches in and pulls out the Jeep Grand Cherokee's serpentine drive belt, all rolled up. It unravels, there is a note attached to the end, he looks at it. "Thank You. - T"

CUT TO:

EXT. HOME - DAY

William is packing a cooler into his back seat. His Mom and Dad are standing at the front of the house. William gets out of the car and walks to them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hugs each of them goodbye. His Mom looks like she's sending him off to war. He turns and walks back to the driveway. He opens the door to the Nova and begins to step in. He pauses looking over the roof of the car down the road. In that moment William can see every mile of highway between himself and the west coast, every hour of sitting alone, every potential mishap and the unknown that waits for him at the other end. He takes a deep breath and lets it out.

WILLIAM

Here we go.

He gets in, slams the door, starts her up. The Nova backs out of the driveway onto the road, shifts into drive and pulls out of frame right.

THE END.