

OF EVERY WICKEDNESS

by

Brian McGreevey and Lee Shipman

PARADIGM

C/O Valarie Phillips & Trevor Astbury
360 North Crescent Drive
North Building
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
310-288-8000

Mad Hatter Entertainment
C/O Michael Connolly
1050 South Crescent Heights Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90035
310-428-8730
mike@madhatterfilms.com

FADE IN:

Darkness. A soft murmur of trickling water.

SUPER: "Between the years 1884 and 1885 a series of killings occurred in Austin, Texas astonishing in their brutality and calculation. There was no precedent: no motive, no connection between the victims, no word to describe this kind of crime - the first recorded serial killings in American history. This is a true story."

The sound of quick breaths approaching, boots slapping stone. And it becomes clearer where this darkness is...

INT. SEWERS - NIGHT

The footsteps come to a halt. Quiet. Shine of dull metal.

The strike of a match reveals a long COLT REVOLVER in the hand of EDMUND HARRISON (35) - tall and lean, with the glacial eyes of a wolf.

He leans against the damp brick, eyes darting, and clicks through the cylinder of the pistol, feeding in two bullets.

He cocks the hammer. Flicks the match hissing into the water at his feet. Darkness again.

MOMENTS LATER

Moonlight shines from small grates in the ceiling, the only light.

Edmund creeps through. Deeper.

He pauses, hearing something. Searches.

A MAN in a long coat bursts from a recess in the wall beside him. The gun FIRES as he slams into Edmund, knocking them both into the water. The pistol spins away.

Flash of a LONG BLADE. Edmund ducks, SPARKS fly as it scrapes the brick where his head was.

They struggle, tooth and nail. The man is an animal. Little can be seen of his face, save the shine of his barred teeth. He drools in anticipation, the knife pressing closer to Edmund's throat.

Edmund gets a boot under the man and kicks him away, then scrambles for the fallen pistol.

He spins back with it, and FIRES, just as the man runs into a side tunnel.

Edmund charges in after him, an animal himself.

SIDE TUNNEL

Edmund races through the darkness.

EDMUND
You think you can run!

BAM - muzzle flash as he fires into the tunnel ahead.

EDMUND
You think there's a place in this
world you can run from me!

Another shot lights up his face, savage and unhinged.

INT. DIRTY ROOM - DAY

SUPER: NEW YORK CITY, 1884

Stone walls with carved graffiti. A gob of tobacco juice spatters the dusty floor...

Three dire-looking THUGS sit around one side of a small table, glancing at their poker hands.

Two of them fold. The final thug wipes his greasy mustache and tosses a few coins into the pot - now revealed to be only a handful of pennies.

THUG
Call.

He slaps down his cards - two pair.

At the other end of the table sits Edmund, a surprising counterpoint of style in his crisp black tuxedo. A wall of IRON BARS behind him.

This is a JAIL CELL.

He fans out his hand on the table - three aces.

The thick body of a POLICEMAN appears at the bars.

POLICEMAN
Harrison. You made bail.

The cell door unlocks with a violent CLANG.

EDMUND
(to thug)
Getting closer there, Bill.

With a wink, Edmund swipes the pennies into his hand and walks out.

INT. JAIL LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

The DESK ATTENDANT slides Edmund's pocket possessions to him - a slim bankroll, flask, pocket watch, and a small ivory-handled knife.

DOLAN, the rigid young reporter who sprung him, flips through the New York Times, waiting. This apparently is nothing new.

DOLAN
So the councilman's affair went well, then? So few end in incarceration.

Edmund checks the flask - empty.

EDMUND
(glances at newspaper headline)
Turns out my father's political exposes don't go over well with the exposed.

DOLAN
(glances at the cuff of Edmund's shirtsleeve)
Or maybe next time you should just leave the aces on the table where they belong.

EDMUND
Another theory.

DOLAN
Well, this reporter has actual reporting to do. But speaking of your father...

He tosses Edmund a necktie and a comb.

DOLAN
The emperor's been hunting for you - he requests an audience.

Edmund holds the items, his countenance sagging a bit, as Dolan walks away.

EDMUND
Does he.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Men in dark overcoats and bowler hats bustling through a dusting of snow in front of the NEW YORK TIMES BUILDING.

INT. NEW YORK TIMES BUILDING, OFFICE - DAY

A lordly editor sits making pencil edits to an article - JAMES B. HARRISON (65), journalistic integrity in a waistcoat.

There is a knock on the door and James beckons to enter without looking up. Edmund, cleaned up, steps in and sits, as though entering a church.

EDMUND
You wanted to see me, Father?

JAMES
(still making edits)
If there is a problem with your watch, I would be pleased to furnish you with another.

EDMUND
My fault entirely. Burning the midnight oil on the zoning commission piece.

JAMES
The time to write and take leave of your wages at the poker dens. How you continue to inspire us all.

That wounds Edmund, but he takes it with a crooked grin.

JAMES
May I see it?

EDMUND
A few touches to make. I'll have it on your desk by five.

James finally looks up at his son. In his eyes - love just under disappointment and pain. He stands and looks out at the flurries of snow in the window.

JAMES

Is that last night's whiskey I
smell on your breath or this
morning's?

Edmund doesn't answer, staring at a PORTRAIT of a frail-looking woman on the wall.

JAMES

Self-destruction, Edmund, is the
lowest form of cowardice.

EDMUND

May we save today's lecture until
after lunch.

JAMES

No. No more lectures.

James tosses a TRAIN TICKET into Edmund's lap.

JAMES

Your train leaves at six.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

(beat)

Excuse me?

JAMES

I'm sending you to Texas. My
friend down at the Austin Statesman
tells me they've broken ground on a
new capitol building that is
evidently quite the historic
undertaking.

EDMUND

So have the Statesman wire you a
story.

JAMES

The arrangements have been made.

EDMUND

For this pablum? You're joking.

James turns to him with a withering glare.

JAMES

Heaven forbid you should learn to
take a thing in this world
seriously. With the loss of your
mother...

James chokes up. Edmund's eyes fall to the floor like a beaten dog's. Something unspoken here.

JAMES

I take responsibility for my
failures as a father. But I have
allowed you to ride my coattails
into negligence and lassitude for
far too long. Your descent is
beyond my understanding, but
perhaps not my influence. Now,
son, you will learn to sing for
your supper or go hungry.

Edmund, silent, stares out at the blur of snow in the window.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Warm lantern light flickers over lace curtains blowing at an open window and young Edmund (8), tucked into bed. His eyes are full of confusion and worry.

He watches his MOTHER (the same from the portrait), sitting beside him - a woman of striking but brittle beauty, hair falling from its pins. A trembling smile and vacant eyes. Her hands work at something (unseen).

MOTHER

(singing)

*...They say I hang for money. But
saying so is funny. I'd hang the
highway robber. I'd hang the
burgler-jobber--*

The tune comes out like a lullaby, despite its grim lyrics.

MOTHER

*--I'd hang the noted liar. I'd
hang the bloated friar--*

EDMUND

Mother, what's wrong?

She pats his leg, eyes still on her work.

MOTHER

*--Come hang, come haul together.
Come hang for finer weather. I'd
hang the brutal mother. I'd hang
her and no other--*

Tears well in Edmund's eyes. She stands.

EDMUND

Mama, stop.

MOTHER

--I'd hang to make things jolly--

She sits on the windowsill, her work now revealed - a NOOSE around her neck. Edmund stares helplessly.

MOTHER

--I'd hang all wrong and folly.

She leans back, falling from the window, and a split-second later the rope SNAPS TAUT. The curtains waft gently.

INT. AFFLUENT BEDROOM - DAY

Edmund (adult) starts awake, slouched in a chair. A nightmare.

Beside him on the bed lies an open suitcase with two liquor bottles and little else. The room is well appointed, but holds a palpable feeling of loneliness.

He picks up the train ticket, looks it over, and glances up at the window.

A distant TRAIN WHISTLE.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

A SCREAM of steam as a massive locomotive comes to a stop beneath a grim, grey sky.

Edmund steps off with others onto the dusty boards, crisp and cool in a black suit.

SUPER: AUSTIN, TEXAS - NEW YEAR'S EVE

He lights a thin cigar, and dodges out of the way as a DIRTY MAN AND WOMAN lead a spooked horse from one of the freight cars.

EDMUND
Learn to control your animal.

DIRTY WOMAN
The fuck did you say?

EDMUND
I wasn't talking to you.

He steps away into the throng as his comment sinks in.

BOY (O.S.)
You Harrison?

He turns to find a teenage BOY in front of a CARRIAGE.

BOY
Compliments of the mayor. C'mon.

EXT. CONGRESS AVENUE - LATER

Horses with haggard riders clomp along the dirt street - then a bell rings as STREETCAR rides by, startling a couple of them. Austin: a rowdy western town emerging as a city.

Edmund's carriage rolls through. The boy sits at the reins, giving him the nickel tour.

BOY
New York Times, huh? You here to write about the new capitol building?

He jerks his head back at a substantial CONSTRUCTION PROJECT at the end of the avenue.

EDMUND
Write's a strong verb.

BOY
Set to be even bigger than the one in Washington D.C.

EDMUND
So I'm told.

BOY
180 shops on Congress Avenue, the University of Texas, Millett's Opera House, gas lighting, new sewer system.
(MORE)

BOY(cont'd)

Why, Mayor Robertson calls Austin
"the Athens of the West."

Edmund sips from a flask, eyeing a toothless old Indian in front of a shop drooling tobacco juice.

EDMUND
Very cultivated.

They pass a cross-street of taverns and suspicious-looking salons.

EDMUND
What's this here?

BOY
Guy Town. A carbuncle on the face of our city, rotten with vice and iniquity. Nothing to interest a gentleman, sir.

Edmund nods, keenly interested.

EDMUND
Of course.

They roll on past the

WEED FUNERAL PARLOR

Where a large black man, HENRY BELL (35), stands on the walkway. He has a powerful frame, but the eyes of a defeated man.

A black woman, REBECCA RAMEY (33), adjusts his collar, to his discomfort. There is an icy love between them, but one of siblings, rather than lovers.

HENRY
Just gonna get mussed again.

REBECCA
You know you ain't gotta keep doing this. Mr. Weed's offered you some good work here with us.

HENRY
Good money ain't in good work.

REBECCA
You and I both know this ain't about any money no more.

A young girl, MARY RAMEY (11), runs up from the alley.

MARY

Uncle Henry, you gonna be back
before midnight? Mama said I can
stay up till midnight tonight.

Henry takes a knee beside her.

HENRY

I don't think so, honey. Uncle
Henry's gotta work late - big
night. But you ring it in with
your mama. And I'll see you in
1885.

He gives her a playful wink, and stands. VALENTINE WEED (70), a kindly white man, steps out of the building wiping his hands. Henry slips on his hat and nods to him.

With one last glance at Rebecca's stone face, Henry heads toward the Guy Town street.

WEED

No luck, huh?

Rebecca takes up a broom and starts to sweep the walkway.

REBECCA

He only believes in the bad kind,
Mr. Weed. Can't help a man whose
only medicine is hurt.

Weed watches

HENRY

walk away, head down, through the street.

INT. DRISKILL HOTEL - LATER

Edmund checks in, beneath a massive buffalo head mounted on the wall, as the boy brings in his bags.

DESK CLERK

Pleased to have you, Mr. Harrison.
And how long will you be with us in
Austin?

EDMUND

Does your watch have a second hand?

MAYOR ROBERTSON (O.S.)

His bill is on me, James.

Edmund turns to find MAYOR ROBERTSON (65), a portly, mustached man, and ALBERT HANCOCK (50) approaching. Robertson shakes Edmund's hand.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
J.W. Robertson.

EDMUND
Mayor. A pleasure. Edmund--

MAYOR ROBERTSON
Harrison. Your father's name needs no introduction.

HANCOCK
(shakes Edmund's hand)
Nor does his paper. Albert Hancock, editor-in-chief - Austin Statesman. I'm a great admirer of your old man. Hell of a legacy, my boy.

These comments cut Edmund, but he holds a placid smile.

EDMUND
It appears the rumors of Texas hospitality are true.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
Press is the fuel that feeds the furnace of a growing city.
(beat)
We are at your disposal, sir, and would love to host you for supper tomorrow - a new day in the new year.

Robertson hands Edmund an ENVELOPE - CASH peeking out.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
For incidentals.

He holds his hands there on Edmund's so there is no mistaking - a bribe. Edmund pockets it.

EDMUND
And what a lovely city it is.

INT. DUST DEVIL - EVENING

A crowded Guy Town saloon and whorehouse, its patrons getting a jumpstart on holiday revelry. On the upstairs railing, PROSTITUTES advertise their goods.

Edmund sits at a table playing poker with four COWBOYS. He doesn't seem to be doing well. The hand is down to him and one of the drunks - lots of cash on the table.

EDMUND
(putting in more cash)
Call.

He lays out his cards, nervously tapping his foot - three Jacks. The cowboy tosses his on top, winks - flush.

DRUNK COWBOY
Maybe dice is your game.

Edmund downs his drink.

EDMUND
Gentlemen. A Happy New Year to you.
(stands)
Choke on it.

He makes his way to the BARTENDER.

EDMUND
Another.

He notices a woman enter - EULA PHILLIPS (32). She has a pale, aching beauty. Their eyes briefly meet as she skirts up the stairs.

His drink arrives, pulling him back. Much of the crowd starts to move to a side door and down stairs there.

EDMUND
(to bartender)
What's the game?

BARTENDER
Fight night.

Edmund checks Robertson's envelope - a couple of bills still there. He slams his drink.

INT. DUST DEVIL, BACKROOM - LATER

Muffled howls and stomps of a raucous crowd filter in from outside. Henry sits shirtless, listening.

A WEDDING RING hangs on a chord around his neck. He watches it swing, catching the lantern light.

He slips it off into his pocket. Stands, spits, and cracks his neck, ready.

INT. DUST DEVIL, BASEMENT - LATER

Sawdust, sweat. An audience barking madly around a makeshift boxing ring and the bareknuckle battle inside -- Henry taking a too-easy beating from a big, ugly GERMAN (intercut between ring and spectators).

Edmund stands in the ringside crush, glancing at the odds board. He winces as Henry takes one across the jaw.

EDMUND

C'mon, hit the flabby fuck!

A viper-ish, mustached lawman, MARSHAL GROOMS LEE (45), tin star on his vest, laughs and claps as Henry takes another hit.

Henry sees this. POW! The German nails him again.

Henry staggers - and delivers a devastating uppercut. The German is knocked back. Henry lays into him. The crowd Hoots. Edmund seizes the man beside him and shakes him in excitement. Henry is oblivious to everything, all animal fury.

Henry is suddenly aware of the pulp of the man's face, the jeering of the crowd, the SALOON KEEPER staring daggers at him.

Henry PANTS. And pants and pants, waiting for the German to deck him.

The German finally delivers the "knock out" punch, SPATTERING Edmund with sweat and blood, and Henry obligingly falls.

The wobbly German holds up his arms and nearly collapses as the REF spits with disgust and erases the name "HENRY BELL" from the chalkboard around his neck.

SPECTATOR

Goddamn it. Every fuckin' time
with this fella. No heart.

Edmund's empty envelope falls to the floor. Spectators head for the door. Edmund lingers, looking at Henry's bleeding face on the wooden floor boards. Henry's defeat.

INT. DUST DEVIL, BACK HALLWAY - LATER

The Saloon Keeper has a chat with Henry.

SALOON KEEPER

What got into you, you dumb son of
a bitch? You was one cunt hair
away from flattening that kraut.

HENRY

I'm sorry, sir. I... overestimated
him.

SALOON KEEPER

Well I better not see no more
"overestimation." 'Cause I can get
as good a game outta one of them
corn cob niggers out back.

Henry nods, eyes on the floor. Saloon Keeper hands him some cash.

SALOON KEEPER (CONT'D)

Now go work the door and earn my
good goddamn graces.

Saloon Keeper leaves. Henry looks down at the money. Blood drips onto it from a cut on his mouth. He spits and heads into the

SALOON ROOM

Past Edmund at the bar, who pulls out a few coins.

EDMUND

(to bartender)

Bourbon. The bottle.

It arrives. Edmund pours a drink.

EDMUND

You believe in New Year's
resolutions?

BARTENDER
Not in this business.

Edmund drinks. He looks up at himself in the bar mirror. There he sees Eula trying to slip through the bar crowd.

Drunk Cowboy stops her, pulls her close.

DRUNK COWBOY
How 'bout a dance, honey?

EXT. DUST DEVIL - NIGHT

Henry is stationed at the door. He massages his fist. Lee comes lumbering out with his DRUNKEN FRIENDS.

LEE (CONT'D)
Not bad down there, boy. Hell, for a minute I was afraid you'd dusted off some balls.

He pulls a bill from his winnings and tucks it in Henry's pocket.

LEE (CONT'D)
A gratuity.

Henry says nothing. Abruptly there is a change in Lee's demeanor.

LEE (CONT'D)
He beat the manners outta you too?

This could get very ugly very fast.

HENRY
Thank you, sir.

LEE grins with a wink and fans his money.

LEE
(to men)
I don't know about you fairies, but this could be the start to one hell of a year.

They go on their way. Henry glances at a commotion

INSIDE

Where Eula tries to politely fight off the Drunk Cowboy.

EULA

C'mon now, I need to get home.
Plenty of ladies here you can twirl
with.

DRUNK COWBOY

Don't go proper on me, girl. What,
you fuck but don't dance?

EDMUND (O.S.)

I love to.

Cowboy turns just as Edmund spins him hard against the wall.

EDMUND

Have to warn you, though--

Edmund holds a small ivory-handled KNIFE at the man's belly.

EDMUND

--I'm murder on a girl's feet.

Cowboy's eyes raise from the knife to Edmund's face, his hand slowly moving behind him - towards a PISTOL in his belt there.

Edmund is jerked back by Henry.

EXT. DUST DEVIL - CONTINUOUS

Henry pulls Edmund out.

EDMUND

What're you--

HENRY

Walk.

He shoves Edmund into the street.

EDMUND

You're gonna defend that prick?

HENRY

I'm doing my job. Unless you want to find out what happens to the man holding a knife in a gunfight.

EDMUND

And here I thought your job was taking dives.

Edmund sees Eula watching him from inside, and clams up. He tips his hat and heads down the street.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

A young black woman, MOLLIE SMITH (25), walks carrying a bundle of firewood. It is quiet, but distantly there is the whooping and crying of a party.

She is passed by an elderly BLACK MAN driving a carriage.

BLACK MAN

Missing the ball, Molly? Heck
Culler's cousin from Louisiana is
the devil's own fiddler.

MOLLIE SMITH

These bones is tired. The devil
will just have to wait till next
year.

The driver chuckles and canters away. Mollie walks on. A DARK FIGURE watches her from the shadows across the street.

MONTAGE - MIDNIGHT

- 1) Couples in formal wear spin elegantly across a lavish ballroom.
- 2) The man from the street (face unseen) slips into a long tarpaulin coat. TATTOOS visible on his wrists as he pulls on a pair of black gloves.
- 3) Edmund stumbles through revelers with a liquor bottle.
- 4) Prostitutes on a Guy Town balcony share a bottle of rum.
- 5) Crystal champagne glasses come together in a toast.
- 6) The man slowly pushes open a door, revealing a black couple sleeping inside - Mollie. The man stands with his hands to his sides. In one is a HATCHET, in the other a metal SPIKE.
- 7) POP! Champagne plumes from a bottle.
- 8) BLOOD SPRAYS on the wall; the hatchet pulls back and comes down again, harder.
- 9) BLAM! Henry looks up. Gunfire and firecrackers. The party is getting wild. He ignores it.

10) The city. Cheers and laughter in the street, as fireworks burst and sparkle over the Congress Avenue bridge.

EXT. ALLEY - MORNING

Edmund lolls asleep against a building in the blue early morning light. His head bobs back and thuds against the brick, rudely waking him into a monumental hangover.

Henry, turns the corner and heads down the alley. He looks down at Edmund.

EDMUND

Well, if it isn't the cavalier who saved me from certain thrashing.

HENRY

And the asshole who deserved one.

EDMUND

Spare an arm?

Henry reluctantly tugs him up, and continues on his way. Edmund pulls his watch chain - the watch is missing.

EDMUND

(muttering)

An auspicious start.

The RINGING of a police bell around the corner stops him.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

A DEPUTY holds back a small buzzing crowd. Henry and Edmund approach. Henry pauses a moment looking down - his foot in a thin stream of BLOOD running into a sewer grate.

A man in the crowd turns and vomits. Edmund takes his place.

EDMUND

Jesus...

Before them lies the battered, blood-drenched body of Mollie Smith, sprawled awkwardly in the dirt, her nightshirt hiked up to her hips. Her skull is SPLIT OPEN, her ear PUNCTURED.

Edmund stares for a long beat, then quickly regains his senses, sober and sharp. He pads his coat for pencil and paper, and grabs the arm of a nearby black man.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Do you know what happened here?
Were you witness?

The man looks him over suspiciously, the only white man present other than the deputy, then walks off.

Henry looks down at the body - and immediately turns away.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
(to deputy)
You. Were you first on the scene?

The pale deputy can only stare stunned at the corpse. Edmund searches around. He sees Henry slowly backing away.

LEE (O.S.)
Back up, all of you! Get on!

Lee rides up and dismounts. Edmund watches Henry a moment more, then turns to Lee, who coldly surveys the scene.

EDMUND
Marshal, could I get a statement in a moment?

LEE
In a moment you'll be collectin' your dick from the dirt.

Edmund relents. He looks around. Lee has scared off most of the people. A crow on a branch meets Edmund's eye.

Then he spies Henry beyond it, quickly walking away.

EXT. WEED FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

Henry, Weed (in his funeral attire), Mary, and Rebecca, sit on the porch, watching Mollie Smith's family carry her pine COFFIN out to a flatbed wagon.

Mollie's somber FATHER walks up to Weed and shakes his hand.

MOLLIE'S FATHER
I want to thank you again for what you done for us. I wish I could...
Times are tough.

WEED
I know. Not another word on it.

Her father nods, tips his cap to all, and returns to his family.

HENRY
You dressed the body?

Weed nods.

HENRY (CONT'D)
So you seen her. You seen what
they done to her.

WEED
Yeah. I did.

MARY
What did they do to her?

REBECCA
Nothin', honey. C'mon, let's go
get us some of that lemonade.

Mary goes inside.

HENRY
(to Rebecca)
I'm sorry.

REBECCA
It's all right. World's gonna
break her heart some day.

She pats Henry on the shoulder and heads in too.

WEED
I'd like to disagree with her...

They watch as the family follows the slow wagon past a group of NEWSBOYS brazenly selling their latest vulgar headlines. Salt in the wounds.

NEWSBOYS
Bloody Work! A fearful midnight
murder! The New Year's massacre!
Details here!

Weed stands with a sigh and trudges inside. Henry continues to watch the weeping mourners disappear in the dust.

Down the street beyond them stands the...

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A CONTRACTOR gives Edmund a tour of the grounds what at this stage is mainly torn up ground and chunks of foundation. Edmund listens and takes notes with minimal interest.

CONTRACTOR

The first stone screwed us.
Discoloring iron particles all
through it. Unusable. So the
owners of Granite Mountain offered
the state enough red granite for
the job. Problem is it's a much
harder stone to work with and
kicked up the cost all around.
Which is why we're making use of
another of the state's vast natural
resources.

He sweeps his arm at a large assortment of LABORERS you probably wouldn't invite to the opera.

EDMUND

Isn't it dangerous, though,
bringing this much convict labor to
the most populous settlement for
hundreds of miles?

CONTRACTOR

Ain't been trouble yet. Marshal
Lee keeps a close eye on 'em.

He nods to a man on horseback in the distance watching the workers - Lee, his stony face indecipherable.

EDMUND

What about the recent murder? It
would seem you've got a hundred
suspects right here.

CONTRACTOR

Suspects? No, all these fellas is
white.
(beat)
C'mon, I'll show you the plans.

Edmund takes notes, more interested. He follows the man, with a glance back at Lee smoking on his horse.

EXT. NICE NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING

Beautiful, warm homes on a tree-lined street. A very different neighborhood. One particularly nice house stands out...

INT. MAYOR ROBERTSON'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - EVENING

Edmund sits at a grand dinner affair, with Mayor Robertson and wife, Marshal Lee, and Albert Hancock and his wife. Two black servant women stand in the shadows.

From the imported crystal to the carefully waxed point of a mustache, the room breathes with an obsession with appearance and control.

ROBERTSON'S WIFE

We're delighted you could join us,
Mr. Harrison. Your family's
reputation is no stranger even in
these parts.

EDMUND

A pack of lies, I assure you.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

"These parts," really. In five years we'll be the new Pittsburgh. And in ten San Francisco! I'd be interested in the opinion of an outsider. How do you find our little Athens of the West here?

EDMUND

Ah, Athens. Indeed, mayor. It's all Greek to me.

HANCOCK

(chuckles)

Yes, I suppose our frontier edges remain a little raw yet.

Lee down his glass of wine. His careless dress and demeanor stand out from his rigid friends and family.

LEE

I rather like it that way.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

A romantic notion, Grooms, but a doomed one;

(MORE)

MAYOR ROBERTSON (cont'd)

the West and its anarchy are dying.
Progress breeds order, and order,
progress. I would think a lawman
would be the very spearhead for
such advancements.

LEE

I'll leave the spears to the spear-chuckers.

EDMUND

Speaking of raw, I ran across quite
a scene this morning on Pecan
Street.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

(attempting to dismiss)

Hm, yes, a dreadful incident.

ROBERTSON'S WIFE

Pardon?

EDMUND

Mollie Smith.

She chews on the name - nothing.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

The murdered negro woman.

ROBERTSON'S WIFE

Oh! Yes. Ghastly.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

And precisely what I'm talking
about. This is a perfect example
of the kind of negro criminal
element that needs to be dealt with
in order for this city to fully
shed its cloak of frontier
provinciality and elevate us as a
home of industry and culture.

EDMUND

How do you figure?

Lee watches Edmund with thinly veiled contempt.

LEE

You're a university man, Edmund.
Addition through subtraction.
Shouldn't be too hard to figure.

HANCOCK

Cloven right down the middle,
that's what I hear. Something
driven in the ear.

The Mayor gives Hancock a sly but hard look to shut up. He gets the idea.

HANCOCK'S WIFE

Gentlemen, please, can't we find a conversation more suitable than politics and murder.

EDMUND

They do fit so well together,
though, don't they?

HANCOCK

In any case, the matter is finished. They arrested the villain responsible, this Brooks fellow - the woman's husband. Or ex-husband. Who can keep track.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

An isolated trouble.

(changing subject)

I trust your tour of the capitol construction went well? Now there's a story.

Edmund gets the picture as well.

EDMUND

Yes. Quite an undertaking.

INT. SERVANTS' QUARTERS - NIGHT

Still. Quiet. A small black BOY sleeps on a cot. His eyes crack open, then fully. He doesn't move.

The man in the tarpaulin coat stands in the corner, watching him. He is almost invisible in the darkness, except for a GHOSTLY MASK, giving him the appearance of little more than a scarecrow.

The man steps up to the boy and kneels without a sound. Even at this distance, his eyes are hidden in the shadows of the mask. His gloved hand caresses the boy's cheek, then raises to his lips - shh.

He pulls the blanket up over the boy's head. He stands and steps to an open DOORWAY. In the other room sleeps the boy's mother - ELIZA SHELLEY.

The man's hands slip into his coat pockets. He pulls them out holding the SPIKE and HATCHET.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY

Edmund stands beside the gruff TELEGRAPH OPERATOR.

EDMUND
Can you recite that back to me,
please?

The operator tosses down his pencil, frustrated, and reads. Edmund listens, pacing.

TELEGRAPH OPERATOR
"Father, my assignment in Austin
has proved most fruitful. I
believe you'll find my story on
their capitol construction front
page work, and deserving such
placement. Mayor Robertson's
generosity"--
(beat)
You know how long this is gonna
take?

EDMUND
That last bit there... How does
that sound to you?

TELEGRAPH OPERATOR
(beat, turning away)
Grand. He'll swell with pride.

Edmund sighs, conflicted. A COMMOTION outside. Through the window Edmund sees people flocking around the corner.

EXT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Edmund steps outside. A coarse LABORER smokes in the shade.

EDMUND
What's the ruckus?

TELEGRAPH OPERATOR (O.S.)
Hey, New York! You want this sent
or not?

LABORER

Somebody put it to another nigger
wash girl.

EDMUND

(to Telegraph Operator)

Hold that!

He dashes down the street.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Edmund pushes through the muttering crowd. He stops suddenly.

Hanging halfway out of her doorway is the body of Eliza Shelley. Flies buzz around a deep gash over her right eye and a small hole in her forehead.

A PUDGY DEPUTY drapes a blanket over her, which rapidly soaks through with BLOOD.

Edmund takes a knee and closer look.

WOMAN (O.S.)

...no I didn't see him last night,
but he comes through here every day
on his way to work.

DEPUTY (O.S.)

Okay, thank you, ma'am.

Staring down at the blood spreading across the blanket, Edmund pulls a pad and pencil from his coat and begins to take notes.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Mayor Robertson leans at the window, looking down at shocked people in the street crowded around newspapers.

Lee sits smoking behind him. Deputy JOHN CHENNEVILLE, Lee's number two, stands hat in hand, almost at attention - a greasy, conniving man.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

Do you hear that sound?

(beat)

You don't hear it, but I do. Not
much more than a faint buzzing. A
hum in the wires...

He turns to Lee.

MAYOR ROBERTSON (CONT'D)
Thunder.

He picks up a NEWSPAPER from his desk and reads.

MAYOR ROBERTSON (CONT'D)
"The Foul Fiends Keep Up Their
Wicked Work. Another Deed of
Devilry..."

He tosses the paper to Lee.

MAYOR ROBERTSON (CONT'D)
I trust I don't need to go on.

LEE
I don't read the papers.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
How about the goddamn writing on
the wall?
(beat)
As if we're not competing enough
for business with San Antonio and
Houston already. Now this
disgrace?

Lee gets up and pours himself a scotch.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
Fucking Hancock... As we speak
this story is spreading like a
virus across the country. The
blame must fall somewhere, and this
office is not a comfortable spot.
(beat)
Perhaps it was a dream, but I
somehow recollect fair visions of
an arrest and a case closed.

LEE
Wrong man, I reckon.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
Do you!

Robertson paces, trying to calm.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
The past aside, Grooms, we
presently need a satisfying outcome
to this matter. Lest we ALL be
remembered as only footnotes in
the...
(reading headline)
"Crimson Catalogue of Crime."

Robertson pours himself a drink also. Sips.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
I can rein in Hancock and the
press, keep this local. But the
negros responsible, well... You do
what you do.

Lee eyes him and downs his drink. He heads for the door.

CHENNEVILLE
We'll take care of it, sir.

EXT. BLACK NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

A shanty town of shacks and cabins tightly lining a muddy path, where rarely a white face is seen.

Edmund is there with his notepad. He steps up to a black woman dumping dish water.

EDMUND
Excuse me. I'm a reporter, may I
ask you a few questions about the
recent crimes? Do you know--

She walks back into a cabin and shuts the door.

EDMUND
Fuck.

He sips from his flask - this isn't going well. Down the road, he sees several people crowded around the doorway of a small CABIN.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

A group of black men and women excitedly discuss the murders. Henry and Rebecca stand in the rear, just listening.

One BEARDED MAN stands and draws attention.

BEARDED MAN

We can holler all we want about this, but what're we gonna do about it? The law sure as shit ain't gonna do a damn thing, except railroad those they can, like Brooks.

He nods to LEM BROOKS, a bruised man sitting in the corner. Brooks looks away.

BEARDED MAN

This is in our hands, or no one's.

The crowd buzzes again. Rebecca shakes her head and moves for the door. Henry listens a bit longer, looking like he wants to speak, then starts to follow.

BEARDED MAN

Henry. You was cavalry, you hunted Indians all over this state. You can help find these men.

Henry pauses. He looks up at Rebecca, her pleading eyes.

HENRY

(moving on)

That was a long time ago. Just let it go.

BEARDED MAN

Let it go?! After what happened to your wife I woulda thought you of all people would be out for blood.

That stops Henry cold. And sets Rebecca on fire. She steps back inside.

REBECCA

You don't know a fucking thing, least of all about blood!

(beat)

You keep up this hollering, the law's gonna do a hell of a lot more than nothing.

Henry pushes his way out the door - past Edmund, who heard it all.

REBECCA

(to crowd)

Go home.

She follows Henry down the street. Edmund watches them go.

EXT. REBECCA RAMEY'S CABIN - DAY

Henry leans close to a small mirror hanging on the porch post, shaving. The ring dangles around his neck.

Rebecca leans in the doorway.

REBECCA
Talking justice... Those people
got no sense.

HENRY
It ain't about sense.

REBECCA
No, it's about pain. Look for
justice, and that's all they'll
find.

She looks at him in the mirror.

REBECCA
You fighting that Irish fella
tonight?

HENRY
Yeah.

REBECCA
Why? What're you looking for?

Mary steps out, breaking the moment.

MARY
Mama, will you brush my hair?

REBECCA
(beat)
Yeah, baby, go get my brush.

In the mirror Henry sees Lee and Chenneville riding up the path.

He spins, accidentally CUTTING himself, and sending the bowl of shaving water CRASHING to the ground. People slip indoors.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Get inside.

LEE
(to neighborhood)
Henry Bell!

Rebecca freezes, as does Henry.

HENRY
Go.

Rebecca takes Mary inside. Henry shuts the door.

Lee and Chennevile trot up. Chennevile dismounts and steps up to Henry.

CHENNEVILLE
Looks like you got a wild razor
there. Jumped right up and bit ya.

Henry finally notices his tense grip on the razor.

CHENNEVILLE (CONT'D)
Maybe you better put it away.

Henry sees Rebecca watching in the window. He folds the razor up and sets it down. Lee tosses a pair of SHACKLES at Henry's feet.

LEE
Let's have a chat.

EXT. JAIL - CONTINUOUS

Edmund argues with a YOUNG DEPUTY at the door.

YOUNG DEPUTY
No press. No exceptions.

EDMUND
This is absurd! What's the evidence? Is there ANY statement to be had here?

YOUNG DEPUTY
Yeah: Get fucked. End quote.

Edmund gives up and walks away.

ALLEY

He tries to peek in one of the windows, but it's too high. It's then he sees a BRAT KID pissing on the wall.

EDMUND
Hey, kid.
(pulls out a COIN)
Wanna make two bits?

INT. JAIL, CELL - DAY

Henry sits shackled at a table, sweaty, face bloody. SMACK - Chennevile slugs him. Henry takes it, fuming.

LEE
That's enough. Man takes beatings
for a living.

Lee sits across from Henry, rolling a cigarette.

LEE
We got a witness described a man
matches you. Now, you want me
asking the questions, or John here?

Henry just stares him down.

EXT. JAIL - MOMENTS LATER

Young Deputy yawns. A dirt clod nails him in the gut - brat kid flips him off as he scampers away.

YOUNG DEPUTY
You little bastard.

He takes off after the kid. Edmund emerges from the shadows and slips into the building.

INT. JAIL, OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Two POLICEMEN in plain clothes tear open a big paper package. One pulls out a new BLUE POLICE UNIFORM, cringes.

POLICEMAN #1
We gotta wear these things every
day? Chicago fuckin' wool in
Texas?

POLICEMAN #2
Welcome to big city policing.

Edmund skirts past their open door and down the hall.

INT. JAIL, CELL - CONTINUOUS

Lee paces. Chenneville watches Henry with an anxious fist.

LEE

I'll ask you again - where were you
that night?

EDMUND (O.S.)

With me.

They turn to find Edmund in the doorway, lighting a thin cigar. Henry's just as surprised to see him.

CHENNEVILLE

How the hell did you get in here?
Fuckin' Johnny...

EDMUND

We played cards until three. He
took - ten dollars was it?

HENRY

(beat)

Twenty.

EDMUND

Twenty. Then passed out. I had to
see the poor sap home.

(to Henry)

You really should watch your drink,
Henry.

CHENNEVILLE

Bullshit.

Chenneville steps to deal with Edmund.

EDMUND

I think Mayor Robertson will find
me a reliable alibi. Don't you,
Marshal?

Lee studies Edmund, whose posture and drift are unmistakable.

LEE

Turn him loose.

CHENNEVILLE

What?

LEE

Do it. Whole thing's a jerk-off
game anyway.

Lee pushes through them and up the hall. Chenneville reluctantly pulls his keys out, steps to Henry.

CHENNEVILLE

Watch yourself against that Irish
fella tonight.
(pops the handcuffs)
An awful stubborn race, I hear.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Lee watches from a window, as Henry and Edmund step out of the jail and down the street. Edmund smokes, waiting for a word from him.

EDMUND

Please, no need to thank me.

HENRY

There must be, because I don't
recollect you dragging me home or
finding ten bills in my pocket.

EDMUND

Twenty.

HENRY

Well I ain't got any, if that's
what you're after.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

I don't want money. Just a word.
Please.

Edmund motions Henry to a

SIDE ALLEY

He speaks with a new sincerity.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

I'm at an impasse here. I need
this story, but the town is a
mystery, and none of the negros
will talk to me. I need...

(swallowing pride)

Help.

HENRY

And you want me to help you. Get
your own pet nigger and all them
darky gums'll flap, huh?

EDMUND

(you said it, not me)

Yes.

Henry is about to leave.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

I want us to help each other.

(beat)

I was at that meeting. You tried
to mind your business, and look
where it landed you. You just
gonna ignore it all again?

HENRY

And how you gonna help that?

Edmund looks around as if it is completely obvious.

EDMUND

I'm white.

Henry almost bends, then heads down the alley.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

You saw that woman.

Henry pauses, a nerve touched. Edmund talks to his back.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

I see it when I sleep.

(beat)

This is a rough-and-tumble town,
but these aren't any card table
killings or the work of drunken
husbands. They're something else.
And you know it.

Henry forces himself on.

HENRY

I don't know nothin'.

EDMUND

I see, you've been taking dives so
long, you've forgotten how to
fight!

Henry ignores him and turns the corner - gone. Edmund throws his cigar against the wall.

INT. DUST DEVIL, BACKROOM - NIGHT

SMACK. The crowd cries out as a bruised Henry hits the floor. He looks at his blood spattered there, as the ref counts him out - Edmund's words clearly on his mind.

INT. REBECCA RAMEY'S CABIN - NIGHT

Henry sits, rubbing his jaw. Rebecca stands beside him.

REBECCA
Who was he?

HENRY
A reporter.

REBECCA
And I don't imagine he sprung you
outta charity.

HENRY
I told him no, what do you want
from me?

Henry stands and pours a glass of water. He feels at a bleeding cut on his lip. She hands him a cloth.

REBECCA
I want to know you ain't gonna make
this about her.

She holds his gaze a moment, then walks into the back room.

LATER

Rebecca and Mary have long gone to bed. Henry sits in dark thought, fist opening, closing, opening, closing.

He opens his fist to reveal it contains the cord with his wedding ring on it. He puts the chain around his neck, eyes staring hard at a small CHEST in the corner of the room.

CUT TO:

The hinges on the chest creak like it hasn't been opened in years. Henry digs under the folded CAVALRY UNIFORM inside. His hand comes out holding an OILY RAG.

He unfolds it, revealing a long COLT REVOLVER.

INT. DRISKILL HOTEL, BAR - DAY

Edmund sits brooding over a shot, presumably not his first.

Eula, the prostitute he had an encounter with earlier, passes by the window. She pauses, seeing him, then walks on.

Edmund glances up at men playing cards across them room - you can feel his itch - then back down at the drink.

EULA (O.S.)
You look at it any harder you gonna
knock it clean over.

He looks up. Eula.

EULA
Penny for your troubles.

EDMUND
On the house.

He slides her the shot. She drinks it.

EULA
I never got to thank you for the
other night.

Edmund just waves the bartender over for another shot. Around her, his demeanor seems to become shy, guarded.

EULA
Awful kind of you, what your doing.
Tryin' to do right by them girls.

He looks at her, surprised.

EULA
Ain't a locomotive on the rails
half as fast as gossip in Guy Town.
Awful good way to get feathers
ruffled besides. This ain't New
York, you know.

EDMUND
You don't say.

EULA

Things are done one way down here.
The way Mayor Robertson wants it
done. You might find your welcome
frightfully threadbare you try and
test it.

EDMUND

If you're looking for business,
this is a curious way to procure
it.

EULA

Just friendly conversation. Ain't
so often a girl in my line bumps
elbows with bona fide chivalry.

EDMUND

Now there's an accusation I've
never been leveled with.

EULA

Well, Buttons, you stand accused.

They share a brief smile.

EULA

There might not be no chorus of
angels, but you try to do right and
there'll be those on your side.

She notices Henry standing in the saloon doorway.

EULA

Speaking of...

Edmund turns, as she walks out past Henry with a wink. The
bartender sees Henry.

BARTENDER

No negroes allowed.

Edmund and Henry share a look.

EDMUND

He's with me.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Henry and Edmund walk through the black neighborhood. Edmund
looks at the sad sights and suspicious eyes around him,
visibly uncomfortable.

HENRY
You all right?

EDMUND
Fine.

INT. CABIN - LATER

Lem Brooks sits at a small table with Edmund and Henry. His weathered old FATHER polishes boots in a rocking chair by the window.

LEM BROOKS
She was a good woman Mollie.
Better than me, but I guess she
figured that out soon enough.
Mollie...

He trails off, choking on emotion.

HENRY
You know anyone who'd want to hurt
her, hurt her like that?

LEM BROOKS
No. And believe me I've thought on
it. If I knew, I'd surely...

Lem's jaw clenches. Henry watches him with pity and understanding.

LEM BROOKS (CONT'D)
But no -- she were a hellcat, but a
mouth don't bring that on you.

EDMUND
Why did they pick you up as a
suspect?

LEM BROOKS
(shrugs)
I've had words with her husband.
The dumb, drunk kind. That - that
night, he thought I stole her
slippers.

EDMUND
Slippers?

LEM BROOKS
She couldn't find her slippers
afore she went to sleep.
(MORE)

LEM BROOKS(cont'd)

I said, "Now what in the hell use
would I have with her old
slippers?"

Edmund writes "slippers?" on a notepad. Henry gives him a look.

EDMUND

And do you know of any connection
Mollie might have had with Eliza
Shelley? A shared -- admirer,
perhaps?

LEM BROOKS

I never heard of no Eliza Shelley
myself.

Lem's MOTHER enters from a back room with a RED CANDLE.

MOTHER

It wasn't him. It wasn't my boy.

HENRY

We know, ma'am.

She sets the candle in the window and lights it, whispering a prayer, then returns to the back room. Lem shakes his head, nods to the candle.

LEM BROOKS

Ever since the killings she's been
lightin' them things. All the ol'
women have. Bad spirits, they say.

Henry looks at the candle and smiles.

HENRY

Yeah. I used to know someone who
did that too.

FATHER

"Bad spirits." Bullshit. Fuckin'
women... This is a bad MAN. Man
with that kind of stomach, that
kind of hate -- this is a man with
the black fire of perdition in his
soul.

LEM BROOKS

Pa...

FATHER

I seen a man wronged by his woman
do foul, foul things, but I never
seen anything like this kind of
evil. There ain't no reason for
him to do the things he did. No
reason you can hold up in the light
of day.

Lem shakes his head, but the words hold Edmund rapt.

EXT. STREET - MINUTES LATER

Henry and Edmund exit the Brooks' home, and walk. Edmund looks over his notes.

EDMUND

There has to be some connection
with these women. Someone they
wronged.

HENRY

Maybe Shelley's people know more.

Edmund stares quizzically at one note - "Slippers." He looks up at the houses around them - and the red candles burning in the windows.

EDMUND

"Bad spirits."

ACROSS THE STREET

Lee questions a NEIGHBORHOOD MAN.

LEE

...The fellas that done this must
have been covered with blood.
You're telling me you were on the
streets all night of the killing
and saw nobody?

NEIGHBORHOOD MAN

I swear. It was graveyard dead.

LEE

If you're fuckin' lying to me
that's right where you'll be
laying.

Lee turns away to mount his horse, frustrated and stumped. It's then he sees Henry and Edmund walking away.

INT. SERVANTS' CABIN - NIGHT

Steam curling from a tub. A black woman, IRENE CROSS (25), humming, as she pours in a last bucket of hot water.

She removes a RIBBON from her hair and sets it on a table next to a flickering candle, slips off her gown and steps into the tub with a sigh.

IRENE
(eyes closed, sings
softly)
*O my good Lord's done been here /
Blessed my soul and gone away / My
good Lord's done been here /
Blessed my soul and gone...*

There is a breeze and the candle goes out. She opens her eyes and looks around. No one is there. Nor is her ribbon.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Edmund noses around the scene where Eliza Shelley was discovered. He pushes at the door of a nearby warehouse, but it's boarded up. Kneels by a sewer grate, looks into the hissing blackness.

He looks up at the yard and Shelley's cabin, and steps over there.

CRUNCH - broken glass under his boot. He looks up at the gaslight streetlamp above him - SMASHED.

He takes a knee, studying the scene. Dried BLOOD SPATTER on the old picket fence.

Sound of footsteps. Henry.

EDMUND
She was killed here. Then dragged
into the alley, where he...
(beat)
Same as first.

HENRY
I went to Shelley's family, but far
as they knew she didn't have
nothin' to do with Mollie Smith.

Edmund shakes his head, perplexed.

HENRY

But, the day before, her favorite scarf, the one her mama made her in slave times, goes missing. This accordin' to her boy.

EDMUND

That's a strange coincidence.

HENRY

Or a strange system.

Beat, as they ponder that one. Edmund notices something in the dirt - a broken FINGERNAIL.

HENRY

She fought back.

FLASH OF THAT NIGHT:

Eliza struggles with the dark figure, who holds his gloved hand over her mouth. Abject terror and desperation in her wide eyes.

She frees a hand, and rakes her nails across his face, breaking one.

The man recoils, and with a savage hiss swings his ax down - a sickening, wet CRUNCH - blood arcs.

BACK TO SCENE

Edmund stares at the dried blood on the fence.

EDMUND

The force in it all. The anger. How can this not be personal? How can there be no connection between victims?

HENRY

Maybe it ain't about them.

Edmund examines the fingernail, noticing a SMALL BIT OF MATTER under it. His mind turns, staring off at the sun burning down in the west.

EXT. CITY - SUNSET

The sky bleeding over the skeleton of the capitol. Windows latch and doors lock throughout the black neighborhood.

INT. DINGY ROOM - EVENING

Two thick hands clasped in desperate prayer. On his forearms are two tattoos of Tahitian dancers with X's for eyes.

The man mumbles inaudible Latin. The intensity of his prayer devolves into a feeble whimper...

Threaded around his fingers is the stolen RIBBON, so taut the tips bulge white.

INT. DRISKILL HOTEL, EDMUND'S ROOM - NIGHT

Edmund sleeping fitfully. Starts awake - bad dreams, bad memories.

He turns up the lamp, and rubs his face. His eyes fall on the bloody fingernail resting on his handkerchief on the desk.

EXT. DRISKILL HOTEL, EDMUND'S BALCONY - NIGHT

Edmund leans on the railing with a bottle of bouron. The things he's dealing with are clearly disturbing him deeply. He lifts the bottle to his lips, just as--

A woman's SCREAM penetrates the night.

SIDEWALK

Edmund's bottle hits and SHATTERS.

EXT. ALLEY - MINUTES LATER

Growing commotion. Edmund races through the muck. A horrified black WOMAN runs away past him, back the way he came.

WOMAN

Not another. My God, not again.

He runs on, seeing the petrified figure of a TEENAGE BOY ahead. He reaches him and turns the

CORNER

To find the bloody body of Irene Cross lying in the mud, skirt hiked up around her hips. Her head a mess of gore, hacked and gouged.

Edmund drops to his knees beside her.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
(to teenage boy)
Doctor! Now!

The boy finally breaks his spell and runs.

Edmund attempts to check her pulse, then pulls back, hand covered with blood.

A crowd is gathering. Henry bursts through them, panting from a sprint. Edmund looks up at him in shock.

She GASPS. Her swollen eyes snap open, wild.

IRENE
Esau, have I hated...

Her words are choked out as she coughs up blood. Henry breaks his stunned trance, pushes Edmund out of the way, and scoops her up.

He runs with her down the alley.

HENRY
Stay with me, stay with me, stay
with me...

There is a pain more personal in his eyes and words. Edmund, still frozen, watches him run, then looks down at the blood covering him.

EXT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

A haggard Edmund and Henry watch a HEARSE CARRIAGE roll away down the street. The citizens buzz with talk of the new murder. Everyone rattled, stunned.

EDMUND
What is this?

Henry's eyes haven't left the hearse. He walks away.

EDMUND
Henry?

No response. Edmund turns back to the hospital. Behind him...

ACROSS THE STREET

There is a soft WHISTLING - a sea shanty. A tattooed hand flips through the newspaper, as though searching for something.

The whistling stops, as the shadowy figure watches Edmund enter the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL, NURSE'S DESK - DAY

Edmund, buttoning his coat over his bloody shirt, approaches a severe-looking NURSE.

EDMUND
Excuse me, could you direct me to
the coroner?

NURSE
Your business?

EDMUND
My name is Edmund Harrison. I'm
with the New York Times.

NURSE
Dr. Knight doesn't speak with
newspapers.

Edmund nods, turns a

CORNER

and approaches an ORDERLY.

EDMUND
Excuse, I'm Harrison with the Texas
Physio-Medical Journal. Do you
know where I might find Dr. Knight?

INT. LAB - CONTINUOUS

DR. EDGAR KNIGHT, a portly, imperious man, dissecting a little gross chunk of indeterminate something. There is a knock on the door. Knight stops, annoyed.

KNIGHT
Yes?

The orderly enters with Edmund.

ORDERLY
A Mr. Harrison with the Texas
Physio-Medical Journal.

Beat.

KNIGHT
Very well. Shut the door behind
you.

The orderly leaves. Knight returns to his work.

KNIGHT (CONT'D)
How intriguing that your
publication would take an interest
in me after refusing to print my
treatise on paleo-encephaly and the
American negroid.

EDMUND
Dr. Knight, you hold the post of
Travis County Coroner, correct?

KNIGHT
Correct.

EDMUND
Then you saw her.

KNIGHT
If by "her" I may presume you are
referring to the unfortunate Miss
Irene Cross, then yes, though I
must confess curiosity over what
your esteemed journal might have in
so lurid an affair, not to mention
how you would come to be inquiring
before even the dailies.

EDMUND
Dr. Knight, I apologize for the
subterfuge, but I was wondering if
there are any consistencies worthy
of note in the attacks on Irene
Cross, Eliza Shelley, and Mollie
Smith. In your professional
opinion, is this the work of a
single culprit?

KNIGHT

It is my considered opinion, Mr. Harrison, that one who has invited such a degree of unfavorable attention in such a short span of time may consider respectfully removing himself from this city before one night he finds a pen knife plunged somewhere in his thoracic region by the same common nigger he has styled himself the champion. Now please kindly leave myself and my intracranial tumor in peace.

EDMUND

Sorry to trouble you.

As Edmund leaves, he spies a small MICROSCOPE - and swipes it into his coat.

Knight waits until his is gone, then removes his gloves.

INT. MAYOR ROBERTSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Robertson standing with a snifter of brandy. Lee and Chennevile sit across from him.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

Well?

LEE

We ran in a chicken thief name of Mack, known to woo the deceased.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

And might this chicken thief provide an adequate prosecution?

LEE

(lights cigarette)

Well cousin, I suppose that would depend on a jury of his peers.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

Grooms, as useful as your impolitic nature has been in the past, allow me a brief civics lesson. Every time the Great Northern Railroad adds a new line it makes us a new enemy.

(MORE)

MAYOR ROBERTSON(cont'd)

But do you know what it is that our city has to distinguish it from its peers? Goddamn class. And the loss of this reputation will result in a commensurate loss of revenue. So it is our responsibility to uphold this reputation - at all costs. Now does this permeate the soft grey material between those lopsided ears?

Lee nibbles his fingertip, winces.

LEE

You ever get a hangnail? Stings like the dickens.

Robertson hurls his glass against the wall.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

This is an election year! Get me a conviction or I'll find someone who will.

LEE

(rises)

You'll get your conviction. Shit, might even give us the elbow room to find the right man.

Lee walks out. Chennevile hesitates, then grabs his hat and starts to follow.

Just then the mayor's ASSISTANT ushers in Dr. Knight.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

Yes, Edgar, what is it? Those vagrants still stealing laudanum?

KNIGHT

Had a curious inquiry this afternoon.

Robertson immediately knows.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

John. Wait.

Chenneville pauses at the door.

INT. DUST DEVIL - NIGHT

Edmund stands at the bar, paying for a bottle, when a WOMAN wrapped in a shawl comes down the stairs. Her head turns briefly to Edmund - it's Eula.

She hurries to exit. He follows.

EXT. DUST DEVIL - CONTINUOUS

Her pace quickens on the street.

EDMUND
(catching up)
Hey. Hey. I could use a friendly--

She turns to face him. There is a STITCHED CUT on her cheek.

EDMUND
(eyes narrow)
Who?

She pushes past him. He stops her.

EDMUND
Who did this?

EULA
Just leave it.

EDMUND
Fucking animals.

EULA
Animals in my experience rarely
carry shaving razors.

EDMUND
Tell me.

EULA
(waves her arm to the
street)
Take your fucking pick. What do
you want to hear, Edmund? I'm
not...
(beat, tearing up)
I ain't one of them girls, Edmund.
I ain't your concern.

She moves on, disappearing past the red lanterns that demarcate Guy Town.

INT. DRISKILL HOTEL, EDMUND'S ROOM - NIGHT

A thick medical text. Edmund sets a whiskey bottle on it, and wipes his mouth. A deep breath. Puts a belt in his teeth.

He takes his knife and cuts into his hand, shaving off a small piece of SKIN.

He sets it on the handkerchief beside the fingernail, then slumps back, spitting out the belt. He takes a long drink, and pants, staring at the two bloody bits.

EDMUND

You and your fucking hunches.

He grabs the microscope and sets it beside them.

EXT. WEED FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

Rebecca washes the windows. Henry steps up and sets a bundle of firewood down.

HENRY

Don't say it.

Rebecca sees something behind him, and starts to leave.

REBECCA

Would you listen if I did?

Henry turns - Edmund walking up.

EDMUND

He's white.

MOMENTS LATER

Edmund and Henry sitting on the steps; grim discussion.

EDMUND

The police are chasing their tails.
(beat)

Three so far. I'm starting to feel
that Brooks was right, that this is
some kind of hunger no motive we
understand can contain.

(MORE)

EDMUND (cont'd)

I thought maybe the coroner could
shed some light on the pathology at
work, but he was not what you would
describe as forthcoming.

WEED (O.S.)

Then why not ask the assistant
coroner?

They turn to find Weed standing in the doorway.

INT. WEED FUNERAL PARLOR, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Weed leads Edmund and Henry toward a door.

WEED

Family's coming for the body in an
hour. What I'm about to show
you...

(glances back at them)
Man's gotta say it.

EDMUND

We saw her.

WEED

Not really.

He unlocks the door and ushers them into the

BACKROOM

A sheet lies over IRENE'S BODY on the table. Weed locks the door.

WEED

The main qualification for an
official post in the city of Austin
is how efficiently you can look
after Robertson's interests.

And those interests are served in
no way if news gets out that in our
"City of the Violet Crown" some
wild bedlamite is lobotomizing his
victims before they're raped.

He pulls back the sheet and indicates a small round hole on
the forehead.

WEED

Further--

He lifts the sheet to reveal the torso. Edmund steels himself. Weed indicates SLICE MARKS on her ribs.

WEED (CONT'D)

In both cases there were cuts made to the thoracic cage of unusual delicacy compared to the rest, as though performed afterwards.

EDMUND

(green)

Implying what?

WEED

My educated guess: he wants to remove the hearts, doesn't have the stomach.

EDMUND

But after all this, what's stopping him from hacking right through?

HENRY

(beat)

Because he's afraid to.

EDMUND

Afraid?

HENRY

When an Indian warrior takes a heart, it's to possess the man's soul. There's ritual here. He's scared.

EDMUND

(it all sinking in)

What is this man?

WEED

I have been trading in death for fifty years encompassing two wars and the annexation of this proud and wild land and I have seen many of the devastations man is capable of inflicting on his fellow man but I have yet to encounter a precedent for this corruption.

EDMUND

A killer working in a serial fashion without apparent motive or profit.

WEED

I have never been one to oppose the changing of times, the different faces civilization comes to wear as it treads from age to age, but I fear if such an affliction is peculiar to this condition of modernity, I finally find myself a relic.

He picks up a needle and thread and starts attending to the gash on her scalp.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Edmund and Henry walking, both shaken.

EDMUND

A "serial" killer. But if this is just an answer to his compulsion and he has no real connection to his victims, how do we find him?

HENRY

Tracker has to know what he's trackin'. What do we know from the trail he's left so far?

EDMUND

(thinks)

He's targeting women, negroes, to whom he does great violence, both pre and post death. He brutalizes the face and debases the body. He uses a particular... toolkit, including hatchet, knife, and metal rod. He clearly stalks his victims in advance, stealing some personal effect before the actual act. What do you suppose is the purpose of that?

Beat.

HENRY

He's fuckin' crazy.

They pass a small crowd mobbing a GUN STORE.

GUN STORE OWNER

That's it, I told ya! I'm sold out!

Someone breaks the gun store window.

GUN STORE OWNER
(waves shotgun)
Back the fuck up!

He BLASTS a shot into the air. A flock of blackbirds scatters from a telegraph wire.

Edmund and Henry turn from the chaos and walk on.

EDMUND
We have to do something.

INT. AUSTIN AMERICAN STATESMAN, EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Edmund sitting across from Hancock.

HANCOCK
I give it to you, Harrison, a hell of a theory, but what exactly do you expect me to do with it?

EDMUND
Print it.

HANCOCK
And cause a panic, because you've been reading too many penny dreadfuls?

EDMUND
Cause a panic? Have you been in the streets?

HANCOCK
I am assured by the mayor's office that putting an end to this menace is their highest priority. Tell me in what way that's aided by convincing an already spooked, not to mention armed, populace that there is some bloodsucking fiend stalking the streets at night?

EDMUND
And by priority he means railroading the nearest negro with a strong arm and weak alibi. This man is white and isn't finished.
(MORE)

EDMUND (cont'd)

Now perhaps my father instilled me with some eccentric ideas on the subject of the free press but it seems to me we have some obligation to tell the people the goddamn truth.

HANCOCK

Your truth, Edmund. Your truth, and you are a stranger, a long way from home. This ain't New York. We are a frontier town on the verge of a city. Progress, industry - you think Robertson is gonna let a few dead niggers stand in the way? News spreads of what this really is, and it'll be the end of them, of all of it, so it ain't news. Period.

EDMUND

It's your duty to--

HANCOCK

It's my duty to keep my job, and no disgrace to the name on his monogrammed fucking handkerchiefs who wants to crawl out of his daddy's shadow and call it a crusade is going to lecture me on the free fucking press in my office.

Beat. Edmund rises, reaches into his breast pocket, and pulls out his HANDKERCHIEF. It's saturated with Irene Cross's BLOOD. He drops it on Hancock's blotter.

EDMUND

Sir.

EXT. NEWSPAPER BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Edmund storms out, carelessly bumping into a MAN coming the opposite way on the sidewalk.

MAN

Watch it.

EDMUND

Fuck off.

INT. DRISKILL HOTEL, LOBBY - NIGHT

Edmund marches past the CLERK, dusting off his coat.

HOTEL CLERK

Mr. Harrison. Telegram from New York.

He hands Edmund the paper, who reads it, a little thrown off. A few phrases leap out: "reckless sensationalism" and "pandering filth."

MAYOR ROBERTSON (O.S.)

Edmund!

Edmund looks up. Mayor Roberson and a group of stuffed suits sit at a table in the hotel saloon playing cards.

Mayor Robertson waves him over.

SALOON

Edmund walks up to their table.

MAYOR ROBERTSON (CONT'D)

Thought you'd be long departed by now. I told you our fair town would grow on you.

EDMUND

How are you?

MAYOR ROBERTSON

Well. Please, join us.

He does, running over his telegram again.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

Bad news?

EDMUND

Questions from my father about my return.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

(dealing him in)

Must miss you terribly.

Edmund takes his cards and the challenge.

EDMUND

We're a tender-hearted lot.

Game play begins and continues through the conversation.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

What delays you, if I may ask? Not this recent savagery, I hope.

EDMUND

You'll have to be more specific these days.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

I hope, because it is of course your right as a journalist, but I don't mind saying you'd be doing us a great service focusing on more positive aspects of our city. A service we wouldn't soon forget.

(beat)

If that is the case at all.

EDMUND

Of course. If.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

I'd think you'd find larger interests here more attractive over a tabloid piece. And lucrative.

EDMUND

It's all just a curiosity, really.

STUFFED SUIT

Fingers crossed you fare better than the cat.

EDMUND

I'm sure your Marshal Lee has things well in hand.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

And all our confidence.

The men lay their cards out. Edmund appears happy with his.

MAYOR ROBERTSON

(polite smile gone)

And we'd be happy to connect you with a more suitable guide than you seem to have acquired.

Edmund's taken aback a bit by this. Stuffed Suit fans out his winning hand over Edmund's.

STUFFED SUIT

(to Edmund)

Sorry, friend. But yankee luck
don't cross Kentucky.

INT. REBECCA RAMEY'S CABIN - NIGHT

Henry takes a step in and stops. Deputy Chenneville stands inside thumbing through Rebecca's Bible.

CHENNEVILLE

"We are troubled on every side, but
not distressed; we are perplexed,
but not in despair..."

(beat)

You ever find anything in this?

He finally looks up at the silent statue of Henry.

CHENNEVILLE (CONT'D)

Yeah, me either. Distressed has
always been my natural born state.

He strolls about, thumbing through the book.

CHENNEVILLE (CONT'D)

But I'm rarely perplexed. A life
of purpose and intention. That's
about the only gospel my daddy ever
taught me.

HENRY

What do you want?

CHENNEVILLE

Oh, just making the rounds. Burden
of the law. I don't often get out
to the dark side of town.

(beat)

More often these days.

He chuckles at something he reads.

CHENNEVILLE (CONT'D)

Resurrection. Now that's for me.
I'm law, but I always loved that
about this town. A man can always
disappear here, try to start fresh.

(beat)

Ain't that right, Henry?

HENRY

If you say so.

CHENNEVILLE

It don't trifle me none. Unless
they find disappearing's not
suiting 'em. And they start
thinking on old ways. Start
stepping out.

He glances down at the pistol tucked in Henry's waistband.

CHENNEVILLE (CONT'D)

I gotta protect the citizens. And
I will protect them, you believe
that, don't you?

Henry just stares him down.

CHENNEVILLE (CONT'D)

That's good to know. Cuz we're
awful busy doing just that.

Chenneville hands him the bible at the doorway.

CHENNEVILLE (CONT'D)

But not that busy.

Chenneville mounts his horse and fits his hat back on.

CHENNEVILLE (CONT'D)

You might should take another look
in that thing. I hear there's
something for everybody.

He trots away, just as Rebecca and Mary walk up from the
other way with a canvas sack of groceries.

Rebecca's eyes add up the situation as they move in past
Henry.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Edmund jogs through the narrow lane. He passes a horseman
heading the other way - Chennevile. He points his trigger
finger at Edmund, cocks his thumb - pow - then tips his hat
and trots on.

Edmund watches a moment, then continues on, now at a run.

INT. REBECCA RAMEY'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca shoves the groceries into the pantry.

REBECCA

For a man who doesn't want to
attract attention from law, you're
getting an awful lot of it.

Henry just looks down at the Bible in his hands. Mary comes back in.

MARY

Mama, will you brush my hair?

Rebecca watches Henry's back for a moment, waiting for a response.

REBECCA

Sure, baby. Go find my brush.

Mary runs off to the back room. Rebecca goes still.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

My sister was a good woman, Henry,
and she loved you. I miss her
every day.

(beat)

And that man that...

Rebecca's jaw clenches as she holds back tears.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Ain't no one to blame but him. And
ain't no fixing it.

MARY (O.S.)

Where is it?

Rebecca takes a calming, controlling breath.

REBECCA

I don't know if you're looking for
punishment or forgiveness. But I
do know you don't need either.

Edmund appears in the open front door. He caught some of that.

Rebecca notices him, and heads to the back room. Henry just stares at the book.

EXT. REBECCA RAMEY'S CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Henry and Edmund stand on the porch, as rain begins to tap the tin roof. Edmund drinks from his flask.

EDMUND
We're on our own.

HENRY
Always were.

They look out at the passers-by shrouded under coats and hats. Shady cowboys and dead-eyed laborers. He could be any one of them.

EDMUND
Henry, if you want to stop this...

Henry takes Edmund's flask and a long drink.

HENRY
Knew I shoulda let that cowboy
drill you.

He hands it back. They share a small grin.

Edmund pockets the flask, feels something. Pulls out a NOTE, looks. Then it hits him--

EDMUND
My God.

QUICK FLASHBACK

Edmund walking away from the Austin Statesman office, colliding with a man (face unseen). The man's hand brushes Edmund's pocket. Glimpse of a grimy smile...

MAN
Watch it.

BACK TO SCENE

HENRY
What.

Edmund hands him the note.

EDMUND
It was him.

Henry takes a look. Written in BLOOD: "Reporter, do you want to know what I am?" With a CRUDE MAP scrawled at the bottom.

EDMUND

(beat)

Do you know where this is?

HENRY

No place we want to go.

EXT. HILLSIDE - EVENING

A light rain falls over the rocky thicket of mesquite trees and scrub brush.

Henry and Edmund on horseback trotting along a narrow path there.

HENRY

(hushed)

The Bee Caves is where brigands nest like rattlers. Law don't even come out here. But we leave them alone they leave us alone.

Crack of a twig up on the low hill -- Two ratty BANDITS at camp, eyeing them riding by.

Henry adjusts the pistol in his belt.

HENRY

Long as we don't stick our hand down the wrong hole.

They ride deeper in.

EXT. TRAIL - LATER

Henry and Edmund clomp through, wary. Edmund examines the note, trying to comprehend the man behind it.

OLD MAN (O.S.)

Pst. Hey, cowboy.

They turn to find a scrawny OLD MAN emerging from a campsite in a small clearing.

OLD MAN

You boys lookin' for company?

He cocks his head back to his campsite - and the young COMANCHE WOMAN tied to a tree there.

OLD MAN
Keep ya warm on the trail. Twenty
bucks.

Edmund stares at the frightened woman.

HENRY
You see any man come up alone ahead
of us?

OLD MAN
You want a boy, I can get you a
boy.

Henry pulls his coat back, revealing the gun. The old man gets the hint.

OLD MAN
No. I ain't seen any man.

Henry trots on. Edmund lingers. He reaches into his pocket, and tosses a wad of CASH at the old man's feet.

EDMUND
Turn her loose.

He eyes the old man hard, then glance back up at the woman, old wounds opening again. He spurs his horse on.

EXT. CAVE - LATER

Henry and Edmund dismount. Henry consults the map.

HENRY
This should be it.

EDMUND
Do we pray that we're right or
wrong?

Henry takes out his gun and pulls back the hammer.

HENRY
Prayin's a bug never did bite me.

INT. CAVE - MOMENTS LATER

They cautiously enter, Edmund carrying a lantern, the only sound the patter of rain outside.

HENRY

You smell that?

EDMUND

What?

HENRY

Smoke.

They descend a few yards and notice something coming from a side tunnel: faint dancing light.

Henry gesticulates at Edmund, and he douses the lantern.

SIDE TUNNEL

Their dark shapes approaching the glow at the end wall.

EDMUND

My God...

A kind of SHRINE there. Two red candles flickering beneath TWO HUGE, OUTSTRETCHED ARMS fashioned out of bone bolted to the rock.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

What is this?

HENRY

Him.

Edmund looks over the cave walls - nailed there are dozens of little OBJECTS from all over the world - gloves, earring, bonnet, burka, etc. He sees Mollie's SLIPPER. Beside it, Eliza's scarf. He runs his finger along a carved jade ring.

EDMUND

This is from China. Christ, there must be dozens.

Henry sees a piece of dark CLOTH between the candles. He uncocks the pistol and hands it to Edmund, transfixed.

He takes a knee there. Unfolds the cloth.

HENRY
(soft)
No.

He backs away.

EDMUND
What?

Henry bolts back up the tunnel.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Henry!

Edmund steps up to the shrine, takes another look, then runs after him.

There between the candles lies a HAIRBRUSH.

EXT. TRAIL - NIGHT

THUNDERING HOOFBEATS, as Henry rides recklessly in the dark. Edmund is not far behind.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Henry rides with everything in him. His face contorts with dread, seeing Rebecca's cabin ahead and the lamplight from the OPEN DOOR.

INT. REBECCA RAMEY'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Henry bursts in, a quick look, then runs to the
BEDROOM

He falls to his knees beside Rebecca on the floor.

HENRY
Rebecca. Oh Christ, please, no.

He cradles her in his lap. BLOOD POURS from a gash in her head.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Edmund dismounts, panting, and runs towards Rebecca's cabin. He slips in the mud and falls. He looks up through the downpour at something across the street.

INT. REBECCA RAMEY'S CABIN - SAME

Rebecca's eyes flutter open. Henry bursts into tears, smiling.

HENRY
God, thank you.

Her bloody hand CLAMPS onto his shirt. She stares wildly at him through her haze.

REBECCA
It's not me he wanted.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Edmund kneels frozen in the muck, eyes locked on an alley across the street.

ALLEY

A dark figure rises over the BUTCHERED BODY OF MARY - the man in the tarpaulin coat. He looks at Edmund behind the plain, expressionless MASK.

STREET (INTERCUT)

Edmund remembers Henry's pistol. He fumbles with it, finally raising it at the man.

The man turns around - another MASK, this one GRINNING - we were looking at his back.

He stands over Mary, now truly looking at Edmund, and opens his long coat, revealing his chest and a large TATTOO OF BLACK THORNS, "ESAU" ON ONE SIDE, "JACOB" THE OTHER, as though inviting Edmund to kill him.

Edmund is paralyzed with shock and terror as though face to face with the devil incarnate. The man waits terribly, arms outstretched.

Edmund at last takes a breath, aims -- as a TEAM OF HORSES AND A WAGON move between him and the man.

Edmund, senses regained, searches through the legs of the horses and wheel spokes.

Henry bursts out of the cabin to Edmund, just as it passes. The man, running away, disappears down the darkness of the alley.

Henry sees Mary's body. It holds him for a moment, then rage overtakes him.

He snatches the gun from Edmund's hand and runs after him.

Edmund remains on his knees in the mud. Drenched. A child.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Henry - all fury - slams through old crates, tearing after the dark figure ahead, who disappears in and out of the shadows and moonlight.

Henry rounds a corner -- and is SLAMMED with a board. Hits the mud hard, bleeding from the head. The figure dashes away down a side alley.

Henry grits through the pain and fog of the hit, and scrambles after him.

SIDE ALLEY

He FIRES a shot, striking part of the mask, just as the man rounds another corner.

Henry stumbles up and swings around the same corner, pistol ready. A dead end -- and empty.

He stands there, searching. No way out. Only the man's two-faced mask, cracked in the corner, lying in the muck. He picks it up, the blood from his wound dripping down onto it's smiling face.

EXT. REBECCA RAMEY'S CABIN - DAWN

A crowd whispers around the crime scene. Edmund, trying to hold it together, talks to two BEMUSED DEPUTIES. Henry to the side, stone silent.

EDMUND

He appeared to be slightly below average height, sturdy build...

(beat)

Why isn't this being written down?

The deputies exchange looks.

DEPUTY

I'm sorry, sir.

(produces pencil and pad)

(MORE)

DEPUTY (cont'd)

Now if you got such a good luck at
our boy why was it you didn't shoot
him?

EDMUND

Seeing him, he was...

Helpless, he looks at Henry nursing his head wound, but Henry
does not look at him - perhaps wondering the same thing.

LEE (O.S.)

Write it down.

The deputies look to Lee, sitting on horseback nearby. They
obey.

Edmund can only stare at Henry. Lee watches them, then trots
away.

EXT. GRAVEYARD HILL - DAY

A field of weeds and dirt spiked with faded wooden grave
markers. Three fresh graves stand out.

PREACHER (O.S.)

O God, who brought us to birth, and
in whose arms we die...

A gallery of mournful faces. The black PREACHER with a small
prayer book continues, struggling with the words.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

In our grief and shock, contain and
comfort us...

Henry stands next to Rebecca, her head bandaged. They could
be carved from ice.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

Embrace us with your love, give us
hope in our time of confusion...

A small CASKET is lowered.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

We thank you that Mary is in that
embrace, far from the cruelty of
our world...

Weed clasps his hands in front of him.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

When trouble was near, we could not
understand how you seemed to remain
far away...

Edmund looks away in grief and shame. He notices someone standing at the outskirts of the cemetery. Eula, watching him.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

And yet it is to you we turn, for
in life and death it is you alone
we can trust...

She holds his gaze like an embrace - tender, understanding. He looks away, unable to face her.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

We pray that justice may be done.
Come alongside your people, and
give them your comfort and
strength.

Henry's arms hang at his side. Fists CLENCHED to break walnuts.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

Through Jesus we pray. Amen.

Henry's lips remain a tight line.

MOURNERS

Amen.

INT. REBECCA RAMEY'S CABIN - LATER

The wake. People milling about, cooking, whispering.

Rebecca sits in her rocking chair. Abruptly, the room falls silent. She looks up. Edmund stands in the doorway. He goes to her, eyes red with disgrace and sadness.

EDMUND

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, Mrs.
Ramey. I--

She rises and regards him, face utterly impassive. Beat.

SLAP! She cracks him across the face and he wheels back. Henry takes an arm to guide him out.

HENRY
(gently)
Not today, Edmund. Not today.

SLAP! Henry's head whips as Rebecca gets him too.

She walks out of room.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Edmund, looking like the living dead, sits at the bar, several drinks into a potential bender. The bartender fills his glass.

EDMUND
Leave the bottle, please.

The bartender looks him over. It's a request that would have at one time been easily obliged, but in his present state...

Edmund pulls out a dollar and lays it on the bar. Bartender exchanges it for the bottle.

BARTENDER
Have a ball.

EDMUND
Thank you.

He takes a drink. Sits in dark thought. Finishes the drink and pours another.

He looks up at his sad reflection in the bar mirror.

Outside, a VENDOR hawking papers, catches his attention.

VENDOR
Town meeting tonight! City hall!
The Mayor speaks out on the foul
fiends! Town meeting!

The bartender dries mugs. He looks up, hearing the door swing shut.

Edmund's bottle and full glass on the bar. He's gone.

INT. CITY HALL - NIGHT

The aisles overflowing with restless townspeople. The back section all black. Mayor Robertson stands at the podium, flanked by Lee and Chenneville. Lee looks uncomfortable.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
(barely speaking over the
crowd)

...These terrible crimes must, and will, come to an end. Marshal Lee and myself will work tirelessly until the evil prowling these streets is swinging in the gallows. We are making every effort here--

VOICE (O.S.)
To cover your own asses!

MAYOR ROBERTSON
To bring safety and order back to the city we all love. Justice must, and will, prevail.

ANOTHER VOICE (O.S.)
You can't even spell the word!

Chenneville, livid, steps forward.

CHENNEVILLE
Next smart-ass opens his fat mouth
can meet me outside!

Lee shoots him a shut-the-fuck-up look that may have once worked, but this time Chenneville stares back with equal venom.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
In the meantime we welcome your suggestions on how we might best unite against this dark tide.
Orderly, now.

LOUD CRACKPOT
Sharpshooters! We need sharpshooters all around the city!
No one gets in or out!

LOUDER CRACKPOT
Round up all the niggers, spics, and Injuns, take 'em out to the Bee Caves, and--

EVEN LOUDER CRACKPOT
We must erect lampposts so tall and so bright to keep the town illuminated every hour of the--

Clamor uprising. Robertson BANGS the podium.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
Order! Order! I will have ORDER!

The hubbub dies down.

MAYOR ROBERTSON (CONT'D)
Thank you. Now if anyone--

EDMUND (O.S.)
What if you start telling the
truth?

The mob, which we now see includes Eula, looks at Edmund standing in the doorway.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
Sir, please have a seat. As I was
saying--

EDMUND
What if you tell the people that
there is a serial murderer whose
dementia will not permit him to
stop that you jackals are not
simply incapable but not interested
in apprehending?

Rabbling response. The mayor doesn't know what to do. He looks to Lee for help, who simply stares down with shame. Chenneville steps forward once more.

CHENNEVILLE
Hey Eddie - what if you'd done
something to help that little girl?

Beat. Edmund's jaw clenches and he exits. Mayor returns to quieting the crowd. He leans close to Lee.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
(sotto, an order)
Deal with him.

LEE
What if he's right?

Lee pulls a rolled cigarette out and walks away, just as Eula slips through the crowd toward the door.

EXT. CONGRESS AVENUE BRIDGE - EVENING

A red Austin sunset. Edmund, the worse for wear, sits propped against the bridge wall with a bottle of booze.

Beside him is a large piece of graffiti - a caricature of a grotesque figure with a hatchet.

Eula walks up, stops.

EULA
Hey there, Buttons.

He doesn't look up. She squats down, searching for words. Sees the drawing on the wall.

EULA (CONT'D)
Not much of a likeness to these
eyes.

Edmund just gives her a glazed look.

EULA (CONT'D)
Come on. Give me your arm.

She helps him to his feet.

EXT. DRISKILL HOTEL, EDMUND'S ROOM - LATER

She walks Edmund in and sits him on the bed.

EULA
Here you go.

EDMUND
Thank you.

EULA
No thanks needed.

She spies the bottle in his coat pocket, and pulls it out.

EULA
Though clearer heads are.

She sets it on the desk, and goes to pour him a glass of water from the pitcher on the dresser.

EDMUND
You don't have to do this--

EULA
I am not often these days given opportunity to perform acts the world would name good, so if you can tolerate it, please allow me this small charity.

He lets a small grin slip, as she hands it to him. He drinks and she pulls the blanket up around him.

A GOLD CHARM around her neck catches his attention. She notices.

EULA (CONT'D)

California.

(beat)

My father gave it to me when I was just a little one. "A piece of real California gold," he said, dangling it over me like a magical thing...

(beat)

You been to California?

EDMUND

My mother once showed me its ocean in a photograph.

A sad smile flutters on his face. She sits beside him, examining the charm. Both drifting to those private, painful memories.

EULA

I always wanted to. Made me want to go there so bad - this golden thing from this golden place.

(beat)

Wasn't until a few years later I chipped it and found it was just a piece of painted tin. Seems father also cultivated similar misconceptions about his bank account before he judged it necessary to relocate himself to the Yukon.

She studies her hands, lost in those thoughts.

EULA

Not many places in this world for a woman. Widows, orphans...

(beat)

I know a thing or two of guilt. It can be a hell of a force, deserved or not.

She sees him staring at the killer's cracked mask on his desk. She stands and raises his chin to look at her.

EULA (CONT'D)
Here it's not.

EDMUND
(looks down, more to
himself)
Sometimes - watching is as great a
crime.

EULA
Edmund, that's not true. You
can't...

Edmund roughly stands and looks away.

EDMUND
You don't know a thing about it!

Eula is stunned and hurt. She steps to the door. Edmund
squeezes his eyes shut and grinds his teeth.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Wait.

She stops.

EULA
(vicious)
I know what I am, Edmund, and I
thank you very much for reminding--

She trails off, seeing he is on the cusp of tears.

EDMUND
I'm not who you think I am.

EULA
And who do I think you are?

Edmund can't look at her. Unspoken: "Someone who deserves
you." The same in the eyes of Eula, who holds at the door.

Both are frozen, though clearly wanting to reach for the
other.

EULA
Tell me to go. If you tell me to
go I will.

Painful beat. She wipes a tear and reaches for the doorknob.

EDMUND
Stay.

He finally looks up at her. Neither moves. Silent, save the muffled music of a fiddle and piano wafting in from somewhere across the street.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The music spills out of a saloon entrance across the street, at full, violent volume now. It plays intermittently over following:

INT. SERVANT'S CABIN - SAME

Dark Two beds. There is a shuffle, followed by a THUD and a woman's stunned GROAN.

LUCINDA BODY, a middle-aged black woman, wakes with a start, searching the darkness.

INT. EDMUND'S ROOM - SAME

Edmund and Eula kissing hungrily.

INT. SERVANT'S CABIN

The cabin: chaos. Lucinda hyperventilates. She can make out nothing on the other bed other than faint moonlight highlighting sweat on a moving body. Only sound.

GRACIE VANCE, another servant (who was hit), struggles there with the man in the tarpaulin coat.

Lucinda SCREAMS.

INT. EDMUND'S ROOM

Eula moans, clutching Edmund's neck.

INT. SERVANT'S CABIN

The axe swings down again and again on Gracie.

Blood spatters Lucinda's face, who is only now coming to her senses, terrified. She fumbles into the dark toward the door.

She's jerked back, the man grabbing her hair. She doesn't even have time to scream, as the axe CRACKS down against her skull.

INT. EDMUND'S ROOM

Eula and Edmund, bodies wracking, approaching climax.

INT. SERVANT'S CABIN

Lucinda fading in and out of consciousness:

Heavy breathing and animal-like grunts just behind her. She blinks awake, bent over the bed, her body racked with rhythmic thrusts. On the wall - the faint shadow of the man pinning her down.

Through the window she can see the nearby HOUSE. Her swollen eyes flutter shut...

A moment later, Gracie's twitching body is dragged across the floor and out the door.

INT. EDMUND'S ROOM

Eula, back arched, CRYING OUT.

INT. SERVANT'S CABIN

Shaking, Lucinda's hand reaches out and turns the knob on a kerosene lamp. Warm light fills the room.

She pulls herself to her feet, covered in blood, and looks around, sucking in small gasps of breath.

Blood-soaked sheets. A clump of hair. Her eyes track a trail of blood to the doorway - where the silhouette of the man appears.

INT. HOUSE, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A SCREAM outside awakens their employer, MAJOR DUNHAM.

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Dunham bursts from the door with a rifle.

In the grass outside the servant's cabin, Lucinda and the man struggle. The man looks up at Dunham and bolts into the night.

INT. EDMUND'S ROOM

Eula lies in bed watching Edmund sleep.

EXT. HOUSE

Dunham jogs up to Lucinda, who stares catatonic out into nothing.

DUNHAM
Jesus.

LUCINDA
(sotto)
We're all dead. We're all dead.
We're all dead.

INT. EDMUND'S ROOM - LATER

Edmund in bed. He stirs awake, sees Eula's not there. Rolls over.

EDMUND
Eula?

A dark figure standing over his bed - wearing the mask.

As Edmund starts to leap up, the killer's gloved hand CLAMPS down on his mouth. The masked face hangs over him. In his other hand: the bloody HATCHET. Holds it at Edmund's throat.

KILLER
(disturbing whisper)
If you make a sound, I will take
off your head like a cock's.

Edmund breathes quickly through his nose, eyes burning with anger. The killer removes his hand.

KILLER (CONT'D)
I want you to make them see.

Edmund's hand creeps down to the bottom of the mattress.

EDMUND
They won't listen.

He shoves his hand under it for his knife - not there. THUD - the killer stabs it into the headboard next to Edmund's ear.

KILLER

They won't now because it isn't finished. They are too small and it is too vast. Your job is not to convince this fetid place, it is to make the world understand.

EDMUND

But - I don't understand.

KILLER

That's because it's isn't finished.

(beat)

You will.

The man flicks the hatchet up, slicing Edmund's other ear. And in a blink he's gone.

Edmund rolls out of bed in pain, clutching his bleeding ear. Then he jerks his knife free and in a rage dashes out into the

HOTEL HALLWAY

Searches - empty. An open window at the end of the hall, curtains blowing in the night breeze.

He runs up there, looks down into the dark, empty street.

INT. LEE'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - DAYBREAK

Lee sips a cup of coffee, looking in on his two DAUGHTERS asleep in bed. In this quite moment all his hardness falls away, and his thoughts are clear: *what if it was them?*

LEE'S WIFE (O.S.)

What's wrong?

Lee glance down the hall at his wife shaking sleep in their bedroom doorway.

LEE

Nothing.

LEE'S WIFE

Did you sleep at all?

Lee turns back to his daughters. He freezes - the sound of footsteps on gravel approaching outside the house. A shadow passes the window.

Lee's head sinks. His wife watches with pity as he pulls his hat from a hook on the wall.

A loud KNOCK at the front door.

INT. REBECCA RAMEY'S CABIN - MORNING

Henry picks up the Bible lying on the floor. Drops of dried blood on the cover.

In the distance, the BAYING of bloodhounds. He sits, wearily holds his head in his hands.

Ghostlike, Rebecca emerges, wrapped in a robe.

Neither speak.

EXT. SERVANTS' CABIN - LATER

Grey early morning.

A wagon pulls away with a BODY wrapped in bloody sheets, revealing a small crowd standing in the drizzle with grave expressions. They are muted no longer by the shock of these crimes, but by sheer incomprehension, the weight of it all adding up.

Lee and Chenneville sit on horseback at the edge of the lawn. Lee's gaze turns from the crime scene to the BLACK CARRIAGE beside it - and Roberson inside watching.

A Young Deputy steps up to onlookers.

YOUNG DEPUTY

All right, all of you get on. You seen it, now we got work to do, and so do you. Go on now.

A distant roll of thunder. The crowd begins to tear its eyes from the scene and disperse.

CROWD MAN

Devil's in this town.

Lee's attention is drawn to a commotion at the nearby

STABLE

Where policemen haul out two struggling BLACK MEN out.

BLACK MAN
Murder?! I didn't do a thing!

CHENNEVILLE
(to policemen)
Put that buck in irons!

Lee looks to the lingering crowd. The blacks, and even some of the whites, stare at him with fear and hatred. They slowly slink away into the drizzle.

The suspect that spoke bumps into Lee's horse as the police shackle him.

BLACK MAN
(to Lee)
Why don't you just get a fucking rope?

CHENNEVILLE
Sass us again, and you bet I will.

The cops pull the two men off. Lee reins his horse away.

CHENNEVILLE
Where you goin'? We got business here.

LEE
No we don't.

Chenneville stares at Lee's back, then spits tobacco and turns back to the matter at hand.

MARSHAL LEE

Trots on. He pauses at Robertson's carriage.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
Grooms. What can you--

Lee pulls his MARSHAL STAR from his vest and slings into Robertson's lap.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
What's this?

LEE
(spurring his horse on)
To go sideways up your ass.

MAYOR ROBERTSON
Grooms? Grooms!

Lee adjusts his hat and heads on, never looking back.

EXT. WEED FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

Weed and Edmund watch Gracie's body being unloaded.

WEED
He's getting reckless. Losing
control.

EDMUND
Approaching climax.

Weed looks down at his thick, weathered hands. Rubs a thumb along his wedding ring.

WEED
Things can never be the same after
this. I'm lucky. I'm old.
(turns to door)
If I may offer you some advice:
God's gift to man is cunning, not
happiness. Never let a good thing
in this world go. Never.

He goes inside. Edmund broods. Distantly, there is a train whistle. He turns his head toward it.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE ROOM - DAY

Eula looks at herself in the mirror. The wear of her life starting to show around her eyes. With a precision that is almost elegant, she raises the edge of her charm to her nose and sniffs a small amount of cocaine.

There is a KNOCK on her door. Startled, she goes and answers. Edmund.

EXT. SMALL PARK - DAY

Edmund and Eula stand at a weathered gazebo, overlooking the dark river sliding by.

EDMUND
Not exactly the Pacific Ocean.

EULA

This ain't exactly sunny
California.

EDMUND

No. It's not.

(beat, searches)

Life... can feel like its own sort
of prison. Hopeless. I've seen
what that can do. But the easiest
thing in the world to forget is
that we are our jailers.

EULA

If this is where you plead for me
to change my wicked ways, please do
me the kindness of saving it for
the next whore.

EDMUND

I came to make no such argument.

Slowly, he hands an envelope to her. She takes it
suspiciously.

EULA

What's this?

She opens it. It's a TRAIN TICKET to San Francisco. She
gawks at it.

EULA

This leaves tomorrow morning.

EDMUND

There were none sooner.

EULA

I - I would have no place to go.

EDMUND

There is a young gentleman named
Lucius Cummings who has been
telegrammed to expect you. With
specific instructions to keep his
paws to himself. His man will meet
you at the station.

EULA

You're not coming.

EDMUND

I am coming. One way or another,
I'll be finished here soon.

EULA

What if there is no finishing? You
don't have to do this.

She studies him, then turns away, eyes welling with tears.

EULA

But if this is something else...
We're not kids, Edmund. I've lived
with painful truths long enough to
take this one too. So just tell me
and let me get on with--

EDMUND

I could have stopped him. I could
have stopped a lot of things. But
I didn't.

(beat)

My father is a great man, in a long
line of great men. But there's no
greatness in here, I know. Just a
drunk, and a gambler, and a bully.
If I leave now, that's all that'll
ever be.

EULA

You look hard in your inner heart
and make sure you ain't confusing
me for nothing else. I told you
before it ain't on you to save me.

Edmund smiles sardonically.

EULA

What?

EDMUND

You've got it backwards. I need
you to save me.

She leans into him and he pulls her close.

EXT. SERVANT'S CABIN - EVENING

A stiff wind rattles the window panes. Inside - dark and
empty, bloodstains on the walls.

Lee stands holding the reins of his horse, looking in. He searches the ground for anything, some scrap of hope.

He kneels and feels at a bloody patch of grass. There's nothing here. The horse snorts.

LEE

Okay, girl.

With one last glance at the cabin, he mounts the horse around and begins to trot off.

Something catches his eye and he stops. He stares at something on the ground (unseen). Steam.

INT. REBECCA RAMEY'S CABIN - EVENING

Henry slips into his coat, grabs his hat. Behind him, Rebecca slowly sweeps a broom across the floor without purpose. Tense silence.

HENRY

Lacey Mitchell's gonna come by and check on you.

She watches him check that the pistol is loaded and stick it in his waistband.

He pauses at the door. Feels her eyes on his back.

HENRY

Tell me to do this, Rebecca. Tell me to send this devil to hell.

REBECCA

(beat)

Ain't no devilry - man is eternally capable of every wickedness.

(beat)

You kill him under open sky. I want Mary to see.

Beat. He leaves with the Bible. She holds there, clutching the broom tight.

INT. SEEDY SALOON - NIGHT

Smoke. This joint makes the Dust Devil look like the Ritz. Edmund drinks at a corner table.

The Bible drops on the table - Henry standing beside him.

EDMUND

The bug finally bite?

HENRY

(sitting)

Maybe. According to Genesis the twins Esau and Jacob wrestled in their mother's womb. Eventually they came to found two nations: Jacob was a dweller of tents, Esau a brutal hunter. The two-faced mask, the tattoo - I think we're dealing with a mind that's split in two: a man who walks in the sun, a man with a job or family, who you could tip your hat to on the street and be none the wiser, and the one beneath it.

Edmund takes a big drink, lost in his glass.

HENRY

Look at me.

He does.

HENRY

Not bein' quick to pull the trigger on another man - ain't no shame in that.

Edmund nods gratefully, but Henry's sees he hasn't reached him. Henry, takes a deep breath, seeming to steel himself for something painful, and reaches into his coat pocket.

HENRY

Show you something.

He produces a weathered tin-type PHOTOGRAPH of a black woman in a bonnet. She vaguely resembles Rebecca.

EDMUND

Was this your--

HENRY

Louisa Ramey Simms. Wife to Sergeant Henry Simms of the 9th United States cavalry, 24th infantry. Weren't no fairy tale...
(pained beat)

But it was good. What they had was good. Till one day it was different.

(MORE)

HENRY (cont'd)

Something changed, it was plain in her eyes, but-- you know how it is with women, they can look you in the face and tell you the sky is a green and you'll half believe it. She said it was all in his head, she was fine, fine... Till four months later she took a nap on the train tracks. But she weren't alone.

Henry taps her stomach. In Edmund's eyes - pain and total sympathy. He knows that hurt like his own name.

HENRY

Now here was a mystery to be solved, and Henry Simms, believe it or not, had a habit of solving problems with his fists. Several busted jaws later and Simms has the story: she couldn't bring herself to get rid of it, but couldn't face bringing into the world neither, not knowing if the father was the husband or the captain who'd taken a shine to her-- the white field marshal's son who got out of drills one afternoon and wasn't used to taking no for an answer.

Henry can't help dig his nails into his hand. Pain.

EDMUND

What did you do to him?

HENRY

(exhales wearily)

Nothin'. Rebecca made me promise on my wife's fresh dug grave I wouldn't try to honor her with my own death warrant. So I took a new name, made myself to all parties' satisfaction, and last I heard the boy was in a sanitorium, half-rotted with syphilis. And I may regret that decision every goddamn day, but here you are with the pleasure of my company.

Edmund looks up at him, and there is an unspoken understanding.

EDMUND

He came to me last night. You may be right. Those eyes... He wasn't a man. And he's not finished.

(beat)

I just want another chance.

HENRY

The one who walks in the sun. He wants to be found, wants to kill the other.

Edmund's mind turns on Henry's words. Something strikes him.

EDMUND

"The one beneath it."

He jumps to his feet.

EXT. DEAD-END ALLEY - NIGHT

Henry and Edmund stand in the trashy alley where Henry lost the killer. Edmund searches around.

EDMUND

This is where it ended? Where you lost him?

HENRY

Yeah. What're you looking for?

Edmund shoves over an old crate, revealing a SEWER GRATE. They look into hushed black beneath it.

INT. SEWERS - NIGHT

Darkness is washed away as a lantern comes to life in Edmund's hand. He and Henry, gun drawn, stand on the small walkway ledge of the a narrow tunnel beside a stream of sewage and water. Edmund holds back a gag.

EDMUND

There was a grate at the first murder scene.

HENRY

Shelley's too.

They look both ways down the tunnel, unsure. Henry squats down and Edmund shines the light there. BOOTPRINTS in the grime.

Henry cocks the pistol, and they head in.

LATER

They cautiously press forward. Rats squeak in the dark.

EDMUND

There must be two dozen of these
grate openings throughout the city.

LEE (O.S.)

Thirty-five.

They freeze, pistol pointed. A match strikes ahead of them and lights a cigarette - Lee. He rubs his boot on the muck.

LEE

Rains washed away most of the
bootprints.

He looks up at them through his smoke.

LEE

What do you know.

Henry glances at Edmund, lowers his gun.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Edmund, Henry, and Lee stand in the shadowy shelter of a cluttered alley.

Henry studies a SEWER SYSTEM MAP on a barrel head. Edmund and Lee huddle around him.

EDMUND

(to Lee)

What do you think?

LEE

A solitary white man with access to
the whole of the city? We'll have
as good of luck selling Christ as
the killer.

HENRY

You wanted to know.

LEE

And I'm telling you -- it can't be
done. You'd need dozens of men to
cover every grate.

(MORE)

LEE (cont'd)

If the town catches a whiff of that
it'll explode, and Robertson won't
allow that.

HENRY

Even if it means another dead
woman?

Edmund looks up at them - knows they're both right.

EDMUND

Dead negro, yes. He's targeting
the black community because he can.
This cocksucker knows how to tow
the line.

Tense stare between Henry and Lee.

HENRY

What're you trying to do?

LEE

(beat)

My job.

Lee tosses his smoke. Edmund steps back, thinking.

EDMUND

We don't need the men. His victims
may be random, but his methods
aren't. These killings - like you
said, there's ritual to it all,
meaning.

LEE

And?

EDMUND

He'll use the same entrance every
time. Some place deserted at
night, but central.

Something strikes Edmund. He looks at Henry standing over
the map.

EDMUND

Where does that tunnel terminate?

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING CONSTRUCTION - NIGHT

A SIGN with an artist's rendition of the completed capitol
building. Above it: "THE FUTURE OF AUSTIN".

Behind the sign, sprawl the messy pieces of that picture -
stone blocks, wooden beams, and PIPES leading to a

HOLE IN THE GROUND

And the open sewer tunnel there. Edmund, Henry, and Lee stand around it.

Lee takes a knee. He looks around at the wide chaos of the construction then up at the sky. A rain drop hits the brow of his hat, then another.

He picks up his Winchester rifle and checks a shell is loaded. Adjusts his hat.

LEE

Gentlemen. Let's kill this motherless fuck.

LATER

Light drizzle. Edmund, Henry, and Lee sit hidden by granite blocks within view of the sewer entrance. They pass Edmund's flask.

Lee watches Edmund pull his collar up.

LEE

First night in the elements?

EDMUND

First conscious one.

Edmund starts to light a cigar.

HENRY

Don't. The wind - he'll smell it.

Edmund puts it away. Lee studies Henry.

LEE

You work the warpath?

HENRY

What?

LEE

Tracker's instincts. I'm guessing Indian hunter.

HENRY

Blake's 9th cavalry.

LEE

Rangers. Fifteen years. I crossed paths with a couple of them colored companies, though. Good soldiers, sharp. You get far enough out there for long enough, and that's all you have - instincts. Skin don't matter. Everybody just animals in the dirt.

HENRY

If you say so.

LEE

(looks up at the sky)
But I do miss the stars. Probably spent more nights under them than a roof.

(beat)

Fifteen years. Too fuckin' long.
It changes you.

HENRY

Yes it does.

Henry's mind appears to drift to darker thoughts. Lee's rough, scarred hand picks at rocks in the dirt.

LEE

I've worked a lot of places 'round the country, but Texas... You cross that Red River, there's no going back. Out there in that nothin', the things you see - You learn fast that four walls and a soft pillow is all that separates a charitable Christian from a savage bathing in the blood of his enemy. But here I am. I guess in a way the city is just a great big promise we all enter into to keep that savage caged up.

(beat)

Now this fellas... Ain't known nothin' like this before. Maybe ain't no man at all, may be a spirit like all them old niggers say. A ghost.

(sad chuckle)

Might as well be. A man like that...

(beat)

(MORE)

LEE (cont'd)

You know how it feels to kill a
thing?

Henry doesn't respond - yes.

LEE (CONT'D)

Cut down all manner in my time.
Killin's hard, ain't no fucking
doubt. Not nearly as hard, though,
as living with what you took. And
once you stepped over that slope
ain't nothin' much to do for
yourself but roll. But this...
The stomach it takes to do
something like this, the goddamn
patience. This fella lives for it.
It's bigger than he is. Running
him like a locomotive.

(beat)

Whole town looking for him.
Nothing. Man like that...

(beat)

How can you stop something can't
even stop itself?

Lee becomes aware of his openness.

LEE

Fuckin' booze.

He passes the flask and stands.

LEE

I gotta take a shit.

He grabs his rifle, and walks off a few paces, stomps to make
a crow on the ground fly off.

LEE

Hateful fuckin' things.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE ROOM - NIGHT

Eula humming as she packs. She picks up a nice dress and
holds it up to herself in the mirror -- heartbreakin' smile.
She notices a small hole by the armpit, puts a finger through
it.

She picks up a sewing kit and sits with the dress on her lap.

EXT. CAPITOL CONSTRUCTION - NIGHT

Henry glances up as thunder rolls in the distance.

HENRY
Getting closer.

A PEBBLE hits Edmund's boot. He looks up and sees Lee standing off in the dark, nodding toward the sewer entrance.

Edmund and Henry freeze and look - the man in the tarpaulin coat there, descending.

Two CLICKS as Henry and Lee cock their guns.

INT. SEWERS - MOMENTS LATER

Edmund's boots hit the water, as he drops down beside Henry and Lee.

Henry strides forward with his gun, no attempt at stealth. Lee and Edmund follow.

Henry comes to a cross tunnel, listens. Marches forward.

He spies a hint of movement ahead, and breaks into a run.

The man with his back to him. Henry SLAMS him into the wall, knocking the man's hat off. Smack and thud - It's all a chaotic blur in the dark.

EDMUND
Henry!

Henry crushes the man's throat and presses the barrel against his temple.

MAN
Oh God, no!

Henry now catches a look at the man's face, or rather the TEENAGE BOY'S - his terrified eyes. Edmund and Lee run up.

TEENAGE BOY
Please don't. I'm sorry.

Edmund and Lee share a confused look.

EDMUND
Who are you? What're you doing down here?

TEENAGE BOY
(still terrified)
I just-- This fella gimme five
dollars come down here with his
coat. I don't know why. When I
asked him, he just gimme five more.

Henry still holds his gun at the kid's head, eye's burning.

EDMUND
Henry.

Henry ignores him until Edmund puts a hand on his shoulder.
He lowers the pistol.

TEENAGE BOY
Are you the reporter?

Edmund looks back at the kid - oh fuck.

TEENAGE BOY
Man told me to give you this.

He hands Edmund EULA'S NECKLACE. They all know what this
means.

TEENAGE BOY
Please, I just want to go home. I
just want to go home...

Edmund takes a stunned step back.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Edmund charging through the drizzle like a madman. Henry and
Lee race behind him.

A RIDER on horseback crosses Edmund's path. He rips the man
down.

RIDER
The fuck're you doin'?!

Edmund springs into the saddle. The man pulls a small pistol
from his coat, aims-- And is slammed by Henry.

Edmund spurs the horse, oblivious.

HENRY
Edmund!

But he's already tearing off through the mud.

EDMUND

Whips the horse into a froth.

FLASH FROM EARLIER--

Long shot of Edmund clasping Eula's hand by the creek. Back view of a short, sturdy man observing them.

STREET - PRESENT

Edmund rounds a corner. Hooves hammer the road.

ANOTHER FLASH--

Edmund leaving Eula's. He passes a sewer grate.

PARK - PRESENT

Edmund tears across the park, ducking branches.

ANOTHER FLASH--

Eula, in bed, stirs.

EULA

Edmund?

In the dark, a figure is kneeling on the floor, facing the other direction, as though in prayer.

She sits up, confused.

The leering MASK turns.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - PRESENT (MOMENTS LATER)

Edmund pulls up reins and leaps from the horse.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

SMASH - Edmund shoulders the door open, stumbles, scrambles around the corner to

EULA'S ROOM

It's empty. Edmund pants. It's then he sees a smear of BLOOD on the door frame. A soft CREAK...

He looks down the hall - and the open SIDE DOOR slowly swaying in the breeze.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Edmund bursts out of the side door. He gasps and winces as though sucker-punched --

Beneath a tree stands the man in the mask, Eula slumped on her knees before him. Her nightgown is torn and bloody, and her face a battered mess.

The man looks up at Edmund. He tugs Eula up by her hair. Holds the knife to her throat and the ax in his other hand.

Edmund drops to his knees, almost in tears.

EDMUND
Oh please, God, no.

Eula does her best to struggle, but it's all been beaten out of her. Her swollen eyes lock on Edmund - her desperation, helplessness.

KILLER
(to Edmund)
How does this feel?

Edmund can only stare.

The killer presses knife harder against her throat, raises the ax to her cheek. She squirms.

Edmund clenches his jaw, full of fury and pain, but completely impotent. It is all he can do to say in one piece.

EDMUND
Don't. I'm begging you. I'll do
whatever you want. Anything.

The killer is impassive. A LIGHT comes on in one of the upper boarding house windows. He glances that way, then back at Edmund.

KILLER
Yes...

Beneath the mask, Edmund can see the man's mouth stretch into a shining grin...

EULA
(barely a whisper)
Edmund.

KILLER
That's what they do to you.

Edmund's eyes go wide.

EDMUND
NO!

He leaps forward -- just as the man, in one powerful, fluid motion, cuts her throat and hacks her with the ax.

The man spins and darts into the night.

Edmund catches Eula just as she falls. She clutches at his coat. Blood sheets down her chest.

He presses his hand to the wound, but it's no use. Her eyes search his for help, terrified. Her mouth moves as though gasping for air.

EDMUND
No, no, no. I'm right here.
You're okay, it's okay...

Tears run down her pale cheeks. She shakes, tries to speak, but can't. Coughs blood.

Edmund pushes all his fear and anger down, and tries to calm for her, knowing there's no hope.

He takes her bloody, shaking hand in his. Brushes her hair back.

EDMUND
Look at me. It's okay. We're
okay, we're okay, we're okay...

He continues to mumble the words as she fades away. Her grip goes weak, and her hand falls.

Dimly, a few bars of Edmund's mother HUMMING.

Two more short gasps for air. And Eula's gone.

Edmund's words break apart into a SOB. Pulls her close.

He buries his face in her shoulder, and lets out a muffled yell of utter fucking anguish.

Henry and Lee jog up panting, guns ready. They see.

Lee puts a hand on his gut, turns away. A WOMAN screams up in the window.

LEE
(to woman)
Get inside and lock your door!

Henry takes a step up to Edmund. Reaches out.

Edmund looks up to the building - and a curtain gently wafting there. Before our eyes his face becomes pure burning hate. He stands, looking into the darkness ahead.

EXT. RIVERFRONT - MOMENTS LATER

Trees give way to rotting lumber and rusting refuse of the mills and small factories along the river.

Edmund crashes through the brush and scrambles around and over the debris in a mad dash after the killer.

Henry hot on his heels. Lee lags behind, pauses, and veers off for the road.

The man in the mask can barely be seen - flashes of movement ahead. He zips into the decrepit half-collapsed wreckage of an old

WAREHOUSE

Edmund and Henry right in after him, still sprinting - pure adrenaline.

Henry FIRES a shot. Splinters fly from a board beside the man's head, just as he leaps out of a small opening at the other side of the building.

Groans of CATTLE ahead. Edmund dives through the same opening

OUTSIDE

And slams and rolls over an old flatbed wagon - and immediately back to a run through the weeds.

Ahead, the man disappears into a small CATTLE PEN attached to a two story brick building.

Edmund glance back at Henry, point toward the back of the building.

EDMUND
Go!

Henry branches off that way. Edmund vaults over the fence into the

CATTLE PEN

Two dozen cattle mill about with big snorts of foggy breath. Edmund creeps quickly through them. Quiet, save his panting breaths and the low moans and wet stomps of the cattle.

He draws his knife, crouched, eyes searching through the lumbering bodies.

Ahead - the busted latch and open gate to the narrow cattle shoot heading inside. A SLAUGHTERHOUSE.

EXT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE, FRONT - SAME

Lee falls back against the brick, winded. He takes a few breaths, then BASHES in the front door with his rifle butt.

Swings the gun up to the darkness inside. A short hall. Stairs. Still and quiet.

INT. CATTLE SHOOT - CONTINUOUS

Edmund's boots pound the muddy boards, as he races through into the

SLAUGHTERHOUSE

Slides to a stop in the blood of the sunken killing floor. It's a sprawling, semi-divided room. Chains and hooks swing from the ceiling - someone's come through there.

He moves up the steps into the main floor. Somewhere O.S. the distant sound of a machine and a periodic GRINDING noise.

Little light. Flies buzz. Floor slick with blood. You can smell the stench.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE, FRONT - STAIRS (INTERCUT WITH EDMUND)

Lee slowly moves up the stairs, rifle ready.

Below, Edmund approaches a HEAVY DOOR across the room. The grinding sound coming from behind it.

He spies Henry at the dirty back window. Henry shakes his head - nothing.

Upstairs, Lee swings around a corner, aims at nothing. Halls and compartments of equipment. Not a sound except the light rain tapping the roof.

Edmund grips the door handle and his knife. Shoves into the
COLD STORAGE ROOM

Carcasses hang from hooks. Crushed ice packs the floors and rear wall.

He steps further in. A fierce GRINDING-- He spins around, sees a square HOLE in the wall spit out crushed ice. Calms.

Lee turns down a hall. A window, and the killer silhouetted against it in the first light of dawn.

Edmund jumps at GUNFIRE upstairs.

Lee ejects the shell, stares quizzically through the curling gunsmoke. He reaches out -- and pulls the man's coat from a pair of hooks.

THUD - Lee winces and goes rigid, as the man buries his knife into his lower back.

Lee grits his teeth, reaches back and grabs a hold of the man's neck. Brings the man's head forward to look him in the eye. He's not going down easy.

LEE
Look at me, you bitch's bastard.

The man twists the knife. Lee buckles and falls to the floor.

His head lolls back against the wall. He looks up as the man produces his ax.

Lee hacks spit on the man's boot. The man raises the ax.

RUNNING FOOTSTEPS. He turns just as Edmund SLAMS into him, and both go crashing through the window.

EXT. ICE FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

In a shower of glass, the two tumble, SMASHING down through a tin tube (where the ice was coming from) and the shingled roof, finally - CRUNCH - falling hard onto a stack of ICE BLOCKS stacked on the wagon loading dock.

Two WORKERS scamper away from the melee. Ice explodes in Edmund's face as he dodges the swinging ax blade.

Edmund stabs back - but the killer catches his knife with his. The man raises up to take another swing, then suddenly rolls back--

BOOM-BOOM - two pistol shots crack into the wall where he was, from Henry standing in the shattered window.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE

Henry offers his hand to Lee - who slaps his rifle into it.

Henry hesitates, then runs down the hall. Lee looks at the blood on his hand, more frustrated than anything.

LEE
Goddamn it.

ICE FACTORY LOADING DOCK

Edmund leaps after the man into the

ICE FACTORY

Wheels and pistons churn on a massive ICE MACHINE. Edmund charges like some unleashed beast.

He tackles the killer into the machine - ax goes spinning away. Edmund cracks him in the face. Slices his arm.

The two go at it, close and ferocious, with fists and blades. This is no movie knife fight. Both get licks in - stabbed, sliced, broken ribs, nose - but there's no stopping them.

Edmund catches the man's stabbing knife an inch from his gut. Barely holds it off. Closer - then spins and the knife shoves into the gearworks of the machine and is jerked from the man's hand.

They roll and slam into a stack of ice blocks, knocking a few down. Edmund slashes with his knife - blood spatters the ice.

The man smacks Edmund to the ground. Edmund narrowly dodges as an ice block SMASHES down beside his head. He grabs an ICE HOOK and pulls the man's leg out from under him.

Edmund rears up with the knife - just as the man's hand falls on his ax in the slush.

Edmund ducks, but it clips his head. He goes down hard, groggy and bleeding, as the man finds his feet and runs for the

LONG DOCK

And the ice-loaded STERN WHEEL RIVER BOAT shoving off there.

ICE FACTORY

Blood runs down Edmund's face. He slowly rises to his hands and knees. Takes in air, and looks up at the man leaping onto the steamboat.

LONG DOCK

Edmund runs with everything he has. The boat moving off.

He jumps...

EXT. STERN WHEEL RIVER BOAT - CONTINUOUS

...and catches the railing. Pulls himself up.

He staggers forward. Sees a thin trail of blood on the deck.

Ahead, a SHIPWORKER stumbles out of a door, hand pressed to a gash on his head, and drops to the ground.

Edmund, moves toward the door, back pressed to the wall - leaving a long smear of blood along it.

Throws open the door. An empty hall.

He catches a flash of movement above him, and jumps back just as a POLE HOOK swings down and stabs into the door frame - the killer on the upper deck.

Edmund somersaults back over the railing, but clamps on before falling.

The killer hops down to the deck and wrenches the hook free. Edmund's bloody hands struggle to hold.

The hook swings up - BAM - the wood bursts in splinters and the killer's hand pours blood. He drops to his knee in pain. Another bullet SMASHES into the wall beside him.

RIVERFRONT

Henry jacks the rifle lever and aims again.

RIVER BOAT

A distant TRAIN WHISTLE. The killer sees a RAIL BRIDGE approaching ahead, and makes a dash for the stairs, another SHOT narrowly missing him.

Edmund summons some strength and pulls.

RIVERFRONT

Henry aims - CLICK. Empty. He drops the rifle, whips out his revolver, and empties the last three shots at the killer. No good.

Henry sees him making his way to the ship wheelhouse. Sees the black plume of smoke from the FREIGHT TRAIN nearing the bridge.

He takes off in that direction.

RIVER BOAT

The killer clammers up, desperation killing all pain. He reaches the wheelhouse roof, and stands waiting for the bridge and its train a few yards ahead.

A hand grabs his ankle - Edmund. He tugs the man down and slugs him. Smack - again.

Flash of the ax--

RIVER BOAT WHEELHOUSE (INTERCUT)

The CAPTAIN at the wheel looks up at the noise. The ax blade cracks through the ceiling.

WHEELHOUSE ROOF

Edmund holds off the ax, trading blows with him. The bridge only a few feet off now, and the train almost across it.

BOOM! A huge hole blows through the roof - the captain below with a double-barrel hammer shotgun.

Edmund rolls off the roof, dodging the second barrel's shot.

The killer lunges up - and catches the I-beam of the bridge, the slow train thundering above him. Starts to climb.

Edmund, on his back, looks up at the bridge passing over him. He pulls himself up.

EXT. RAIL BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The river boat moves below. Edmund's hands slap onto an I-beam on the other side of the bridge.

Slow climb. He sees the last train car approaching. He searches through the beams and wheels for the killer.

His arms shake with fatigue. Foot slips, catches.

The final car passes, just as he makes a dive for it.

Misses.

And the killer is gone.

Edmund pants, staring through blood and sweat at the train clacking away toward the railyard.

Breathes harder, finding energy.

EXT. RAILYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Blue light of dawn over a muddy maze of hulking rail cars on and off tracks.

The freight train hisses to a stop, and the killer drops to the ground from between cars. Searches - a TRAIN WHISTLE blows across the yard.

Boots drop from the train and hit the mud behind him.

The killer turns - and catches Henry's fist in the face.

The killer reels. Henry seizes him and SLAMS his head into the boxcar. The killer falls to all fours, spitting blood. Henry KICKS him in the mouth.

The killer sprawls onto his back. Henry crouches over him, pulls the hatchet from the man's coat, raises it--

Henry gasps and falls back against the train. The killer's spike buried in his side.

The killer drags to his feet, stands before him. He takes off toward the sound of the whistle.

With muffled grunt, Henry pulls the spike out. Drops it.

He grips the ax and is after him. His eyes - savage, unstoppable.

The killer jumps up and through an old rail car. Across tracks. Henry right behind him.

INT. RAILYARD SHACK - CONTINUOUS

A RAIL WORKER lounges in a SHACK. He sees the bloody killer whiz by the open door, followed by Henry with the ax.

RAIL WORKER
(sitting up)
Holy shit...

EXT. RAILYARD - CONTINUOUS

The killer and Henry charge deeper into the maze of tracks and cars.

The killer vanishes behind a boxcar. Once again, TRAIN WHISTLE, now closer.

Henry slows as he approaches the shadows.

He surges around the boxcar, but no one is there. Turns, and the killer BASHERS him with a rock. The hatchet goes skidding to the ground, and Henry falls, heavy, like there's no getting up this time.

The killer drops the rock and leaves Henry lying there.

Henry dives after the killer on all fours, seizing his pant leg. The killer kicks at him, but Henry grips his foot and twists brutally. The killer SHRIEKS and falls.

Henry headbutts him once, twice. Wrests himself on top of him.

A train rolling away close by. The killer regards Henry without apology or enmity -- he is defeated but gives no ground.

Henry wraps a hand on his throat, starts to squeeze.

BAM! - a gunshot.

TRAIN TRACKS - SAME

Edmund follows the tracks at a limping run. He freezes, hearing the gunshot ahead.

Runs on, faster.

RAILYARD

Dark BLOOD pumps from Henry's chest.

Several yards behind him stands the Rail Worker with a smoking RIFLE.

RAIL WORKER
I got him. I got him!

Henry continues to squeeze the killer's neck, then slowly looks off, middle-distance, at the dawn, fading.

His grip loosens and he slumps over.

The perplexed killer crawls from under him. Grabs the ax, shakily stands. Henry, barely conscious, looks up at him. The killer once more regards him clinically, before racing off to the train as it gains speed.

Edmund shoves the Rail Worker out of the way, sees Henry.

EDMUND
No...

He takes a few more steps, stumbles. Gets to his feet and moves on - the walking dead. He's losing it.

He drops to his knees beside Henry, who lies on his side, glassy eyes staring off at the sunrise. On his face - a smile?

Edmund looks up half-eyed. In the distance, the killer drags himself up on the caboose ladder of the rolling train.

Edmund raises his weak arm - with Henry's pistol.

Shaky aim. Thumbs back the hammer...CLICK.

Hammer...CLICK. Again. And again. The killer watches him. Two broken men.

The killer fades away in the rain.

Edmund lowers the gun. Stares out at nothing.

Elegiac fiddle takes us into...

MONTAGE - AFTERMATH

1) The town humming with the news - "a white woman."

- 2) The cold, empty alley where the first victim, Mollie Smith, was found.
- 3) Mayor Robertson trying to maintain order at a chaotic town meeting. Chenneville, now marshal, squirms at his side.
- 4) The muddy corner where Eliza Shelley was found.
- 5) Edmund, stitched and bandaged, stands at Rebecca's door. It opens.
- 6) Irene Cross's dark doorway.
- 7) A familiar back walks up a ship gangplank.
- 8) A wagon rolls by Mary Ramey's murder site.
- 9) Graveyard. Edmund, Weed, Rebecca, and others watch as Henry is laid to rest beside Mary.
- 10) The empty lawn and cabin where Gracie Vance was murdered.
- 11) Lee sits shirtless and bandaged on his porch, watching his wife and daughters play in the yard. He smiles but it can't cover the look in his eyes - haunted.
- 12) The tree and grassy patch between buildings where Eula was killed.
- 13) Eula's necklace hanging from Edmund's bruised hand.
- 14) Edmund standing in the observation car of a train, watching Austin go by. Clack-clack...Clack-clack...Clack-clack...

BLACK

That sharp heartbeat of the train gives way to the light clack-clack-clack of a typewriter...

INT. EDMUND'S OFFICE - DAY

Edmund at a desk, typing fitfully, absorbed.

SUPER: New York 1888

New York Times and Austin Statesman ARTICLES pinned to the walls: CITY SCANDAL... NY TIMES EXPOSE... ROBERTSON DISGRACED...

Also, violent crime reports from across the country: HEADLESS BODY FOUND IN IOWA HOTEL... WOMAN FATALLY BEATEN... TWO SCHOOL GIRLS STRANGLED...

There is a stack of radical new books on CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY on his desk. He has become a man consumed.

His father, James, knocks softly and steps in. He glances at what Edmund is typing, Freudian terms leaping out like "totenism," "erotogenicity," "death instinct." It's clear this is for personal reference, not an article.

JAMES

A few of the men and I are stepping out for supper, if you'd like to join us.

EDMUND

(never looking up)

Maybe next time.

James nods resignedly, expecting this response - a very different sort of concern on his face than before. He leaves.

Edmund types away, then stops, rubs his face. His eyes fall on an open drawer - and Eula's necklace inside.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE, WASHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Edmund wipes water from his face at the basin. He pulls out a flask and drinks.

He starts to screw the top back on, then viciously hurls it across the room and kicks the trash can. Leans against the wall - frustration and old open wounds getting to him.

INT. EDMUND'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Edmund slumps back down into his chair, and looks over his work.

James steps back in.

JAMES

Almost forgot. London paper's just in.

He sets a NEWSPAPER on Edmund's desk.

JAMES
Good night, son.

He pats Edmund's shoulder and leaves. Edmund takes up the paper and looks it over - routine.

He stares frozen a moment, then leaps to his feet.

INSERT: LONDON NEWSPAPER HEADLINE: "EAST END DEMON! HORROR WITHOUT PRECEDENT!"

EXT. LONDON - NIGHT

An indigo sky over the Thames. A fog rolling in.

SUPER: London

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A cheap, sparse room with a large MAP lying on the bed. It is a grid of the London sewer system with lines drawn over it - murder sites. At the confluence of these lines there is a circle.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A lighted window across the street - a voyeur's view inside, where a matronly WOMAN kisses a small GIRL and sends her upstairs.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The woman hums a hymn as she tidies up the room. From a dark doorway behind her steps a figure in a long tarpaulin coat.

She sees him - and smiles.

WOMAN
They got you working another night shift?

MAN
The docks sleep for no man.

This is his home, his life.

She gives him a peck on the cheek.

WOMAN
Be safe, love.

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The man walks out, buttoning his coat, and heads down the side alley.

And all seems still a moment - until Edmund emerges from the shadows across the street and follows.

EXT. ALLEY - LATER

Edmund stands against a building a block away from the man, who lowers himself into a sewer opening.

Edmund pulls out Henry's revolver, checks the cylinder, and cocks it.

INT. SEWERS - NIGHT

Edmund drops down onto a trashed, wet NEWSPAPER - headline: "Ripper Strikes Again! More Whitechapel Butchery!"

He quickly steps out of the moonlight from the opening above, and leans against the damp brick, eyes adjusting and darting around like a predator's.

Moonlight shines from small grates in the ceiling, the only light. He looks down the tunnel both ways, listening close. No sign of movement. The only sound is that of the trickle of water at his feet. Something's not right. He was just here.

Edmund finally pushes off the wall and creeps forward--

The man BURSTS from a recess in the wall beside him. The gun FIRES as he slams into Edmund, knocking them both into the water. The pistol spins away.

Flash of a LONG BLADE. Edmund ducks, sparks fly as it scrapes the brick where his head was.

They struggle, tooth and nail. The man is an animal. Little can be seen of his face, save the shine of his barred teeth. He drools in anticipation, the knife pressing closer to Edmund's throat.

Edmund gets a boot under the man and kicks him away, then scrambles for the fallen pistol.

He spins back with it, and FIRES, just as the man runs into a side tunnel.

Edmund charges in after him, an animal himself.

SIDE TUNNEL

Edmund races through the darkness.

EDMUND
You think you can run!

BAM - muzzle flash as he fires into the tunnel ahead.

EDMUND
You think there's a place in this
world you can run from me!

Another shot lights up his face, savage and unhinged.

EXT. RIVER, DRAINAGE PIPE - MOMENTS LATER

The killer emerges, climbs up a concrete embankment, and runs into a

PARK

Breathing raggedly, he darts across the lawn to a tall fence, on the other side of which is some kind of pavilion.

He desperately climbs the fence and leaps to the other side, but there is a TEARING NOISE and he jerks in mid-air -- his long coat has snagged and he is suspended a foot or two over the ground.

He kicks at the fence violently, ripping the coat free, and continues to run.

BAM! He falls in front of some kind of CIRCUS TENT. Edmund, on the other side of the fence, has shot him squarely in the back.

PAVILION

The killer lies on his face RASPING. Edmund approaches, kicks him over.

Edmund aims without responding. The killer looks at him with chilling calm.

KILLER
Now I will never be forgotten.

Edmund pulls back the revolver hammer.

EDMUND
People forget everything
eventually.

A SHOT rings out across the park as he shoots him in the head.

EXT. BRIDGE - LATER

Soft sound of boots approaching. Edmund's dark figure emerges from the night fog.

He casually tosses the gun into the river, then pulls his coat tight, and walk on, vanishing back into the fog.

EXT. PAVILION - SUN-UP

Two MEN in suits approach the tent. One is wearing an ostentatious cowboy hat, the other a Native American with tribal face makeup. A sign on the tent advertises TEXAS TATUM'S WILD WEST EXTRAVAGANZA.

Both men stop and stare: a bloody man on the ground with his torn coat fallen around him almost like black wings.

FADE OUT.