

SCRIPT TITLE

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INT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - DAY

PIERCE COUSINS (35), his brother LLOYD (37), and their baby brother DON (20) all sit at one end of their family TOURIST CAVE. RECESSED LIGHTING draws EERIE SHADOWS around them, firming into BLACKNESS deeper in the cave. Three WOODEN SLUICE CHANNELS, set up for tourists to PAN for JEWELS, GURGLE with water at the other end of the room. An ARCHED, ROCK DOORWAY leads to an ENTRANCE and GIFT-SHOP AREA.

Before the men, on the cave floor, lies a FIGURE WRAPPED in ORANGE PONCHOS. The ponchos have a caption on them: COUSINS' JEWEL MINE: COME PAN WITH YOUR COUSINS! The men take turns glancing tensely at the figure.

LLOYD

I fucked a dude once.

Pierce and Don look at Lloyd for a disbelieving second, then start laughing, their tension breaking momentarily.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

I ain't proud of it, but it sure as shit happened.

DON

Good Lord. Were you... I mean, were you the cowboy or the Indian?

LLOYD

That really doesn't make sense, Don, as a metaphor, but I guess I see what you mean. I'll keep that part of the puzzle to myself, bud.

PIERCE

How in the hell did it happen?

LLOYD

You wouldn't believe how high you can get on cocaine. People think they can visualize a binge but it's like shooting your dog: You can't understand it unless you've done it. Step by step you just cut away all these little ropes that keep you tied down to the earth.

(MORE)

LLOYD (CONT'D)

You start out a weekend with a buddy who knows some girls and you go to some clubs and then you're at a beach house for some reason and everybody's naked and hasn't slept in two days and the women, blitzed out their brains, think it'd be funny to refuse sex unless the two of you do it first, you and your buddy. They promise you an orgy that'll go on as long as you want, if you do each other up the butt first. And it does too, another two days of the most raunchy, animal sex I've ever had in my life with three of the hottest women I've ever seen. I mean, it went on and on. But first. First...

PIERCE

First you lost your ass virginity.

Lloyd nods significantly.

LLOYD

Neither of us saw any way around it.

They laugh again but it dies after a little while. Soon, they're back to being tense. Pierce stands and walks beyond the figure to the edge of an UNDERGROUND POOL. Right beside the water, in a CIRCLE of LIGHT, sits an ENORMOUS RUBY.

PIERCE

I want you all to look at the size of this goddamn ruby.

LLOYD

Exactly, little brother. Everything else aside, we've got the opportunity--not the certainty, but the opportunity--to be rich. Do you understand that? The bank won't get your house. All those medical bills... Pfft! Gone. No more money problems at all. Listen. I've had some... stuff happen to me recently.

PIERCE

Oh you always have stuff.

LLOYD

Not like this. Just suffice it to say that it has cleared the scales from my eyes. What I call this whole thing here is an accident. Case closed. Whether we go to the police or just get rid of the poor fucker, it's not gonna change the fact that it's an accident. So we can persecute ourselves about it, turn ourselves in and spend the next twenty years in jail for an accident, OR, we can do the up-the-ass bad business, take that ruby, and get on with the goddamn orgy.

DON

He's right, bro.

PIERCE

I know he is. I knew it better than he did before he laid that speech on us. What I need to know, kiddo, is can you live the rest of your life with this?

DON

Everybody lives with something.

LLOYD

That's a true statement.

Pierce lifts the ruby, stands over the figure on the floor. Lloyd and Don join him, looking down at the body.

DON

They'll be looking for him, won't they? His people. They'll get the law looking.

PIERCE

Let 'em look, little brother. We're the ones they're gonna miss.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: TWO DAYS AGO

INT. DEW DROP INN - EVENING

The Dew Drop Inn is a no-frills local's bar: Spare WOODEN STOOLS, simple CARD TABLES and CHAIRS. It's full of shop-owners, tradesmen, nurses. A JUKE BOX plays CUT ME LOOSE, SET ME FREE by Merle Haggard. Pierce enters and takes a stool next to RONALD (40s) who wears a JANITOR'S UNIFORM.

RONALD
Hey, you heard yet?

PIERCE
What kind of question is that, Ronald? I've heard all kinds of stuff today, most of it horseshit.

RONALD
You know, I'm tired of this attitude, Pierce. It ain't any of us here foreclosing on your house or hounding you with bills. Nobody wants to drink with a self-hater.

PIERCE
Self-hater. Wow. That degree from daytime TV's really paying off, Ron. Dr. Phil say anything about how to talk to a retarded dumbass? Especially if he doesn't know he's both retarded and a dumbass?

The bartender JAN (40s) sets a BEER before Pierce, his usual, which he takes with him to a different stool. He sits next to PETE LAMP (60s) who's smoking a cigarette.

PETE
You heard yet?

PIERCE
Oh, you gotta be kidding me. What? Heard what?

PETE
Your brother's back in town.

Pierce is shocked.

PIERCE
You're shitting me.

PETE
I wouldn't shit you, Pierce, you're my favorite turd.

Pierce can only stare, dumbfounded.

PETE (CONT'D)

You need a shot. Let's you buy us
a shot.

Jan is already there, pouring the SHOTS. Pierce stares in a growing fury as Pete clinks their shot glasses, downs his, then chases it with a sip of beer and a drag of cigarette.

PETE (CONT'D)

Melissa knows. She called up here
looking for you and told Jan.
Guess maybe he stopped by to pay
her another brotherly visit.

Pierce shoots his whiskey, glugs his beer in one long guzzle.

PIERCE

Pete. You can suck my confederate
dick.

He gets up and leaves. Jan walks over.

JAN

You proud of yourself?

PETE

I hear they did anal, too. Pierce
said put another shot on his tab.

JAN

My ass, he did.

EXT. SHADOWMOUNTAIN, VIRGINIA - EVENING

Pierce drives his RATTLETRAP PICKUP through Shadowmountain. MOUNTAINS loom in the background of this tourist-trap village that's full of TOURIST MINES with signs like 'PAN FOR DIAMONDS!' and 'FIND GOLD AND PRECIOUS JEWELS!' Hotels, restaurants and novelty stores make up the other businesses, every one of which is STRUNG WITH AMERICAN FLAGS and PATRIOTIC SIGNS declaring support for the 4TH OF JULY. Pierce passes under a BANNER STRUNG over the street: 4TH OF JULY PARADE. COME SUPPORT OUR COUNTRY AND ITS HEROES!

Pierce enters a TRAILER PARK. He parks in front of a LARGE AIRSTREAM CAMPER. In the GLARE of a LIGHT sits Lloyd, rocking in a ROCKING CHAIR, a FIDDLE on his lap. Pierce gets out and stands beside his truck. After a few seconds, Lloyd stands and approaches. Lloyd's HAIR is STYLED and he wears an ED HARDY SHIRT, DISTRESSED JEANS and FRYE BOOTS.

LLOYD

You and Don couldn't check on my camper at least once while I was gone? I found a goddamn family of squirrels living in the oven.

(beat)

Did you lose some weight?

PIERCE

Don't fuck with me. You couldn't call, let me know you were coming?

Lloyd, disarmed by Pierce's collected tone, holds out his hand. When in range, Pierce HITS him in the jaw. Lloyd backs up, shocked, then lunges at Pierce. They WRESTLE CLUMSILY, two out-of-shape brothers, and finish with Pierce in a FULL-NELSON.

LLOYD

If my tendonitis wasn't so bad I'd put the Kerry Von Erich Iron Claw on you.

PIERCE

(struggling)

Just one inch is all I need, you big orangutang. Gimme one inch.

LLOYD

I'll give you more than an inch.

He begins to HUMP Pierce, forcing an INDIGNANT SHOUT from him. Lloyd lets him go and Pierce jogs a few yards away.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

It's been almost two years, Pierce. You shouldn't still be this upset.

PIERCE

Still upset? Still upset? You fucked my wife, Lloyd.

LLOYD

Yeah. Accidentally.

PIERCE

Acci-... Are you brain dead? What the hell does that even mean, accidentally?

LLOYD

You know what I mean. We didn't sit down and plan it out or anything. Listen, we need to talk.
(MORE)

LLOYD (CONT'D)

This fucking tendonitis has finally put an end to my fiddle-playing. I was thinking about moving back here full-time. Thinking maybe we could turn that tourist trap back into a family operation.

PIERCE

Man, you are unbelievable. I would rather drink hot lava and melt my fucking insides than ever have anything to do with you again.

LLOYD

Pierce. Jesus. We barely even did it. It was mostly just sixty-nine.

Pierce can't believe what he's just heard. He sputters NONSENSE, too angry for words, then gets in his truck and backs out of the driveway. Lloyd calls after him:

LLOYD (CONT'D)

We gotta talk, Pierce!

Pierce tears away, spewing gravel.

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING

The Cousins live in a RANCH HOUSE just outside of town. MELISSA COUSINS (35) sits at the kitchen table, flipping through a MAGAZINE. A few CROSS-STITCHED SQUARES hang on the wall, displaying SAYINGS: "IDLE HANDS ARE THE DEVIL'S PLAY THINGS," "LOVE THY NEIGHBOR." A PAIR of FISH-SHAPED SALT-AND-PEPPER SHAKERS sits at the center of the table. Melissa is dressed in middle-class clothes most likely from Target. Pierce comes suddenly through the back screen door, BEER CAN IN HAND, RED MARKS on his face and neck from his skirmish. Pierce sets the beer can on the counter and washes his hands and face at the sink.

MELISSA

Really? You hear he's in town and the first thing you do is go pick a fight?

Pierce, unresponsive, grabs his beer, gets a FRESH CAN from the refrigerator and takes both back out of the house.

EXT. PIERCE'S HOUSE, BACK STOOP - SAME

Pierce sits on a step. Melissa talks through the screen door.

MELISSA
I thought we'd come to terms with
this, Pierce. Are you drunk?

Pierce lights a CIGARETTE.

PIERCE
Drunk as your alcoholic mother.

MELISSA
Don't get mean, baby.

PIERCE
(stewing)
Fucking family operation.

He's suddenly choked up.

MELISSA
Are you crying?

PIERCE
(trying not to cry)
My momma, on her deathbed, asked
him not to waste the money she was
leaving him. It wasn't much, but
it went back to Grandpa's days, hay
days of the mine, when the Cousins
name meant something. And what did
he do with it? Up his nose and out
his dick. Goddamn grand central
station of cocaine and pussy and
who knows what. And I told daddy,
too, it'd be the same thing if he
gave him half the business. And he
did it anyway because old Lloyd was
the family favorite. Goddamn gift
from God to the goddamn world.
(sniffing)
Family fucking operation.

MELISSA
Why do you keep saying that?

LLOYD
I never said it. Lloyd said it.
About my cave.

MELISSA
Shit, give him the cave if he wants
it. We've lost money on it the
past six years. Let him have it.

PIERCE
Please, for the love of all that's
fucking holy, don't tell me you
actually just suggested that.

Few BEATS as Melissa tries to find common ground.

MELISSA
(to Pierce, hopefully)
I fried shrimps for dinner.

INT. THE DEAD INDIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The RESTAURANT is decorated in FAUX WOOD with lots of garish native American art on the walls. The country song ACHY BREAKY HEART by BILLY RAY CYRUS plays loudly overheard. The place is nearly empty at this late hour. CODY MAPLEWOOD (22), a GORGEOUS WAITRESS dressed in a SHORT SKIRT and an APRON, delivers a plate of steaming food to Pete who's made his way here from the Dew Drop.

PETE
(drunkenly)
I love the way that skirt bounces.

CODY
You know you couldn't handle me,
right? Why do you keep trying?

PETE
I'd split you like damp wood, girl.

CODY
Good Lord that's disgusting. I'll
tell you what would happen. You'd
let out a fart in the middle of it
and it'd be a runny one because
you're old and I'd have to towel
off your butt cheeks like a little
baby. That's probably exactly what
would happen.

She sees Don enter the front and goes to meet him, leaving Pete speechless. A look of SAVAGE JEALOUSY attacks Pete's features, though, when he sees Cody kiss Don on the mouth.

CODY (CONT'D)
You want a beer?

DON
If you think it's safe.

Cody leads him to the bar where one LATE-NIGHT DRINKER sits. She pours a beer into a dark TUMBLER and hands it to Don.

DON (CONT'D)

Can't believe it's legal for me to operate a business but not buy a beer after a hard day's work.

CODY

You hand out pans for kids to run through rusty gravel water and find garnets. How's that hard again?

DON

You know what I mean. Long. It's a shit show at the house, too. Lloyd's back in town.

CODY

He ain't staying at y'all's house, is he?

DON

You crazy? He's at his camper.

CODY

Good. I was gonna tell you not to stand still too long if he was. Might all the sudden find him inside you.

Don nearly spits BEER at this comment.

DON

Good Lord, that mouth of yours. Pierce ain't laughing about it, I tell you that.

CODY

Well I kinda side with Pierce on that one.

DON

You side with him on everything. You've got a crush on him is what I think.

CODY

What if I do? You the crush police? He just hasn't exactly gotten a lot of breaks lately.

DON

Well don't you think he's got something to do with that? You act like he's some kind of innocent pinball in a demon's machine.

CODY

Why can't you just use sayings that already exist instead of trying to invent all these new stupid ones?

DON

That one was awesome. You know, one day I'm gonna put you on the back of a horse and ride us the hell away from all this silliness.

CODY

I'd like to see the horse you could ride. That kiddie one outside the Dollar General maybe. And where you gonna take me anyway?

DON

New York.

CODY

Ha. Somebody'd kill you.

DON

Lloyd could help us. He knows a lot of people up there.

CODY

He sure does. Anorexic coke-heads and embezzlers. Moving just ain't that easy and it sure as hell ain't cheap. Let's just do what we did last time we had this conversation, nestle down for the winter, drink Zinfandel and save money.

She goes into the kitchen on an errand. The other drinker, an older MAN (50s) nursing a scotch, is eyeing her exit.

MAN

Women say be patient, be grounded, but what they find sexy is a man that does what he wants.

DON

I guess you'd know, drinking alone in a shitty bar by yourself.

MAN
Especially a crotch-rocket like
that one.

EXT. PIERCE'S HOUSE, BACK STOOP - NIGHT

Don PARKS in the driveway. Pierce still sits on the back
steps. SIX BEER CANS are piled beside him. Don approaches.

DON
Damn, man, what number beer you on?

PIERCE
(obviously drunk)
Eleventeen fitty. Listen, bud, I's
hoping not to but I got bad news.

DON
The fuck other kind is there in
this family?

PIERCE
We can't afford that truck anymore.
We're upside-down on it.

DON
My truck? But that was a present.

PIERCE
Well it was and then, now it's not.
It's like a Indian gift or
whatever.

DON
Pierce, you do know that Indian
gifts, in general, are considered
bad things, right?

PIERCE
Nuh-uh. That's only when Indians
do them. Listen, we're upside down
on this *house*. You read a
newspaper lately? We gotta cut
costs. Save some corners.

DON
I swear. The horseshit never ends
around here. I'm getting out of
this town.

PIERCE
It's a free country, boy, but it's
an expensive one. Good luck.

Don returns to his truck and drives away. Pierce stands, takes a second to get his balance, then walks into the dark. He URINATES by a tree, zips up and leans against the tree.

PIERCE (CONT'D)
Woo-hoo! Guess it's a party now.
Goddamn party of being broke and
taking trucks and getting
foreclosed on. Whoop! Whoop!

Suddenly FURIOUS, he hurls his BOTTLE at a tree, missing.

PIERCE (CONT'D)
Ain't no sucker like a thumbsucker.

Melissa appears BACKLIT in the house's screen door.

MELISSA
Pierce? You out there?

PIERCE
No.

Pierce sits down beside the tree but pops right back up.

PIERCE (CONT'D)
Ah, goddammit. I sat in my own
piss. Goddammit.

MELISSA
Come inside, Pierce. Come on.

Pierce walks dejectedly toward the house.

INT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - MORNING

Pierce is in the inner part of the tourist cave, watching a FAMILY OF FOUR pan in the sluices. The family consists of a MOM, DAD, LITTLE GIRL (8) and LITTLE BOY (10). The little boy has a RAT TAIL and BIG BLACK-FRAMED GLASSES. He's taken off his BELT and tied it to his pan so he can drag it through the water without getting his hands wet.

PIERCE
(smiling)
You know that's a pan not a puppy.

LITTLE BOY
I hate puppies. I'm a cat person.
This here's my technique. Found a
garnet the size of your head this
way over at the Pirate's Bounty.

PIERCE
That's my competition.

The little boy looks around, appraising the cave.

LITTLE BOY
You got better atmosphere, but they
got you beat on quantity of stones.
I been at this ten minutes and only
found this one little opal.

PIERCE
(still smiling)
Look at the little expert. Might
hafta hire you as my consultant.

The BELL over the front door JANGLES out in the lobby.
Pierce goes to see who it is, finding Lloyd to his dismay.

PIERCE (CONT'D)
Holy god, do you not speak English?
How do you say stay the fuck away
from me in stupid?

Pierce sits behind the desk, looking hungover. Lloyd CHECKS
his HAIR in the reflective front of a FRAMED GEOLOGY POSTER.

LLOYD
Where's Don?

PIERCE
He quit.

LLOYD
Quit?

PIERCE
Yeah, you know, it's when somebody
doesn't wanna work at a place
anymore so they stop working there.

Lloyd walks over and stands by the desk.

LLOYD
You know, all your sarcasm does is
stifle communication. If you want,
I can cover the desk and lock up
later.

He picks up a SET of KEYS from the desk. Pierce snatches at
them but Lloyd's too quick, putting a finger through the KEY-
RING and twirling the keys. Pierce glares at him.

PIERCE
You're unbelievable. I mean, how
do you even look at yourself in the
mirror every day?

LLOYD
Well I only look at my hair in the
mirror, not my face, unless I think
it's bleeding or something.

Another FAMILY comes in.

LLOYD (CONT'D)
Welcome to the Cousins' Jewel Mine!
Come pan with your cousins! Get on
the fast track to gold and precious
jewels!

The family laughs, PAYS and takes their PANS into the cave.

LLOYD (CONT'D)
See? Things're already picking up.

PIERCE
Why come back now, Lloyd?

LLOYD
Well that's what I've been trying
to tell you if you'd let me talk.

PIERCE
You don't get to talk, assface!
Give me back those keys!

LLOYD
Lower your voice. We got customers.

Pierce runs around the desk and SNATCHES at the KEYS. Lloyd
holds them away. Pierce snarls at him, lunging again. Lloyd
swings around so Pierce can't get them.

LLOYD (CONT'D)
Toro! Toro! Come get 'em, you fat
little bull!

Pierce gets furious at the word FAT. He wraps himself around
Lloyd's waist. Lloyd gets him in a HEAD-LOCK, dangling out
the keys. Pierce, despite himself, still SNATCHES at them,
cursing when Lloyd jerks them expertly away.

LLOYD (CONT'D)
You'd rather cause a scene, lose us
business, than act like a grown-up?

Pierce breaks out of the head-lock and returns to the desk.

LLOYD (CONT'D)
Listen, Pierce. Whether you like
it or not, I'm back for good. And
not only that, we're blood and
blood forgives blood, no matter
what. That's a law

Pierce abruptly throws a STAPLER at Lloyd, just missing him.

PIERCE
There's no forgiving what you did.
Get outta my cave.

Lloyd tosses the KEYS onto the desk and leaves.

INT. THE DEAD INDIAN RESTAURANT, KITCHEN - DAY

Don's washing dishes. Cody walks through the back door,
coming on shift for lunch. She stops and stares at Don.

CODY
What the hell're you doing?

DON
Washing these dishes.

CODY
I can see that. What I'm asking is
what the hell you're doing.

DON
I ain't working for that
sonofabitch anymore. I got some
financial schemes of my own I'm
putting into play. I'll live off
those and not have to say two words
to him.

CODY
You live in the same house, Don.

DON
It's a big house.

CODY
Good lord, what a family.

I/E. HOT ROCKET FIREWORKS STAND - DAY

The FIREWORK STAND is a low building of WOOD and CORRUGATED TIN in a LOT that's FULL of CARS because July 4th is two days away. Melissa is hard at work with CLINT (40s) and his TWO HOT DAUGHTERS (late teens).

MELISSA

(to the man)

Yo, Clint, I'm taking lunch. You need any cigarettes?

CLINT

You make one more smoke joke and I'm gonna punch your head.

Melissa leaves, laughing.

EXT. GRINGO'S TACOS - DAY

Gringo's Tacos consists of SIX OUTDOOR PICNIC TABLES in front of a TINY, OLD GAS STATION that has been renovated into a ONE-ROOM, GLASS-FRONTED KITCHEN. TOURISTS, busy over BASKETS of DRIPPING TACOS, occupy all the tables. The window reveals TWO COOKS busy at work. Above the window is a BANNER that reads: OPEN JULY FOURTH!

Melissa parks her TOYOTA CRESSIDA on the street. She gets out, looks furtively around, then hurries forward. She's almost to the order window when Don appears from behind the restaurant. He's wearing his DISHWASHER'S APRON and he has on HEADPHONES attached to a BULKY, METAL BOX which he's WAVING around the building. Melissa pauses, then continues to the order window as Don removes the headphones.

DON

So much for the bag-lunch-to-save-money plan, huh?

MELISSA

You can't have a rule if there's no exceptions, Don.

An EMPLOYEE (30s) has approached the order window.

EMPLOYEE

You want your usual, Melissa?

Melissa looks guiltily at Don who's smiling.

MELISSA

No onions this time, babe.
(nodding at Don's device)
(MORE)

MELISSA (CONT'D)

I can't believe you bought that thing. Can't even pay your truck note and you spend a hundred and sixty dollars on a ghost detector.

DON

It ain't a ghost detector. It's a sub-atomic resonance filter. And how do you know what it is anyway?

MELISSA

You left that gizmo magazine by the commode. I take bowel movements in there just like you. You got a toy vice, is the problem.

Melissa moves to an empty picnic table. Don follows.

DON

I ain't the only one with vices.

Melissa starts to get angry, but quickly deflates.

DON (CONT'D)

I didn't mean that, Mel.

MELISSA

Eat shit. I swear to God I can't take anything else. One more surprise problem and I'll go up like a bag of smoke. Poof.

DON

You know what the problem is, right? Think about Pierce's stories. What was it that one time, with that Mexican girl he knocked up?

MELISSA

Lourdes Gutierrez. And she just accused him of knocking her up.

(smiling at the memory)

He didn't know what to do, had to go to Lloyd and Lloyd forged a form at the clinic for an abortion, made the girl an appointment and they called her momma. That's how they found out it was Jimmy Studlemeyer.

DON

And she got sent to that pregnant-teenager school in Richmond where they sell off babies.

(MORE)

DON (CONT'D)

And this other time, when mom and dad were still alive, mom bought dad language lessons for Christmas, you know, to try to fix his stutter. Probably the rudest present ever given in the history of the world. Dad let the guy come to the house three or four times before firing him. But that dude kept turning up when daddy wasn't around. Turning up to talk to mom, you know what I mean? I must've been ten and she made me swear not to say anything, said she'd handle it. But he kept showing up with stuff, liquor, casseroles, all kinds of shit mom had to throw away. Just persistent and more and more weird, too. Told mom one time he'd invented the negative zero. Like as a math breakthrough. I mean, weird. And he kept getting more and more physical, too, until finally I got scared and told Pierce. Pierce went to Nashville...

MELISSA

I remember all this. He told me Lloyd was in trouble.

DON

You know how this town is. We swore secrecy, for momma's reputation. Anyway, Pierce and Lloyd drove back that night, went out to the guy's house, tied him up, poured gasoline all over him and tossed a lit Zippo back and forth over his head.

MELISSA

Good Jesus.

DON

(laughing)

That motherfucker left town like a lightning bolt, I tell you what.

(beat)

But that's what I'm getting at. If you listen to Pierce's stories, you start picking up a pattern.

(wagging his device)

(MORE)

DON (CONT'D)

Like this thing picks up astral resonances. For all Pierce talks about hating him, Lloyd always saves the day. Since they were kids. But in this case, you and Lloyd... Ain't no Lloyd to run to. It's only old Pierce and himself.

The employee calls from the pick-up window:

EMPLOYEE

Melissa! These tacos ain't gonna eat themselves!

MELISSA

He is stuck, you're right, and I don't know what to do. I don't know if he needs me to kick him in the nuts or just suck on 'em.

DON

Uck, Melissa. God, you talk like a porn-store clerk sometimes. Listen, I gotta find some spirits or Lesley and David ain't gonna give me any tacos. I'll see you.

INT. THE DEAD INDIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Pierce enters the empty bar area of The Dead Indian. Cody's behind the bar, polishing glasses.

CODY

Well look what the cat drug in. Hope you don't wanna go dump oil again because I got an ugly bra on.

PIERCE

No. I just couldn't handle the Dew Drop tonight. This town's too small. You pour me some whiskey?

She pours him some whiskey.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

I thought Don might be here.

CODY

He went with Jason to shoot pool. I'm supposed to meet them after I get off. You wanna come?

PIERCE

No. Be honest, I'm glad he's not here. One less disappointed face I have to look at.

CODY

Wow. Is it self-pity day and nobody told me?

She pours out a second whiskey, comes around the bar and sits on the stool next to him.

PIERCE

How're the two of y'all doing, anyway?

CODY

Me and Don? Fine. I've dated worse. He thinks he's gonna save me.

PIERCE

I bet he does. Twenty's a clusterfuck of a year. I was as useless as him at that age. Nothing could touch me, you know. I could break anything with my bare hands. Rebar, hearts... anything.

CODY

Speaking of how people are doing, how are you and Melissa?

Pierce studies his whiskey for a long few seconds.

PIERCE

You know what they never tell you about getting cheated on when you've been married for a long time? It's like you're not the same person after it. Not like you're less of a man. They tell you that but it's not right. It's like you're just not the same person at all. It's like I want to set my face in the ways I've been setting it for the past twenty-five years but I'm a different person so I don't know how to set it that way anymore. I have to relearn how to set my face and carry my arms and sit on the couch and even take a dump. It's like that.

CODY

Jesus. I'm so sorry, Pierce.

PIERCE

Well it is self-pity day so why not go all the way.

CODY

You like going all the way, don't you?

PIERCE

I've gone all the way to home plate a few times.

They share a long, significant look.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

I need another whiskey.

She pours more drinks, then returns to her seat.

CODY

Well I think Melissa's lucky. It takes a big man to forgive somebody after a thing like that.

PIERCE

People say that to your face but that's not what they tell each other when you're not around. When you're not around they say a real man would've shot both of them after he found out. The shitty truth is, I haven't forgiven her. I'm just not man enough to leave her either. I'm in a bastard of a limbo.

CODY

Well I want you to know I get it. I'm one hundred percent on your side. I told Don, too.

PIERCE

I bet he loved that.

CODY

He said I have a crush on you.

They share a look.

PIERCE

Do you?

CODY
What if I did?

They share a last long look and then they're suddenly kissing. The bar's empty and the scene gets hot and heavy for a few seconds before Pierce abruptly pulls away.

PIERCE
Jesus. Oh God, I'm sorry, Cody.
No offense, baby, but I just can't.
I'm sorry. I gotta go.

He turns and hurries out of the restaurant.

CODY
Could've at least paid for the
whiskey.

INT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - AFTERNOON

It's the next day. Pierce rises from behind the desk at the entrance of KEVIN BRONSON (23) a PRETTY-BOY, wearing a LIME POLO, KHAKI SHORTS, and SEBAGO BOAT SHOES. Kevin is on his PHONE.

KEVIN
(into his phone)
Brittany Spears does have bigger
tits than Hillary Clinton. Look,
we'll finish this argument when you
get to town. I'm gonna pan my ass
off.

He HANGS UP.

PIERCE
Welcome to the Cousins' Jewel Mine.
Come pan with your Cousins.

KEVIN
Right. Listen, let's just get this
out of the way. We both know this
is a tourist trap and that's cool
with me but I gotta know before I
pay: Do people really find stuff?

PIERCE
Well I wouldn't call it a trap.
It's a free country. And yeah, boy
just yesterday found a crystal the
length of a pencil.

KEVIN

What do you do with a crystal?

PIERCE

I don't know. Call the museum?
But really, I've watched folks walk
out of here with knuckle-sized
pieces of gold.

KEVIN

Well. We'll agree to disagree on
the trap thing but I got time to
kill.

He pays, gets his PAN and goes into the cave. Seconds later
the door's bell JANGLES and Melissa enters.

MELISSA

You sleep in your truck last night?

Pierce SHRUGS.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Good. A shrug. You know what I've
been thinking about all last night
and today? Besides wondering where
you were? Rudy Comer.

PIERCE

Rudy Comer. Good lord, why?

MELISSA

Because that's the last time you
acted like anything resembling a
man.

PIERCE

Why don't you just come over here
and kick me in the shin bone.

MELISSA

I should. You need it. Rudy had
you beat back then. He was
handsomer, had a stomach like a
piece of rock. The heir to the
biggest grocery store chain in the
state. And even at nineteen he
could strum a clit like a
guitarist.

PIERCE

Uck, Melissa. Where could you
possibly be going with this?

MELISSA

I'm saying you stepped up to the plate back then. You didn't weasel your way into places I was gonna be or wait for Rudy to leave town so you could move in. You swept me off my feet, Pierce. I don't know if you remember, but you swept me off my goddamn feet right under his nose, right in front of everybody.

They look at each other for a few BEATS.

PIERCE

What do you want me to say?

MELISSA

I want you to get up and hit me, or throw me off a cliff or bend me over that desk. I want you to stop acting like a snot-nosed kid and fucking take me back, or kick me out. Just do something.

Pierce looks away, INFURIATED, SMOLDERING at her words.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Silence again. To hell with it.

She storms out the front door. Pierce looks ANGRILY down at a PICTURE of his DAD in a FRAME on the desk.

PIERCE

I don't think I got another cheek to turn here, dad.

Kevin suddenly erupts from the recesses of the cave.

KEVIN

Holy crap! Holy crap! Look at this thing! Just look at it!

He's holding an impossibly big RUBY. It's smeared with dirt but the light catches on its facets with undeniable purity.

PIERCE

(shocked)

Where did you find that?

KEVIN

Under a rock in that pool in there.
My pan got caught and I had to lift
this rock and it just plopped in
the water like a fish. Look at it.
I'm rich. Or richer anyway.

He's mesmerized with the gem. Pierce is, too.

PIERCE

Well you can't keep it.

KEVIN

What? Isn't that the point of the
whole business?

PIERCE

No no no. You pay to pan in those
sluices back there. The clearly
visible signs say not to go into
the pool. That's the property of
the mine, there. Hand it over.

KEVIN

You're out of your mind. I paid.
I panned. I found the damn thing.

PIERCE

Listen. This is technically my
property. I'll call the police.

KEVIN

The police. Probably your cousin,
right? You lousy hicks. You know
what, fuck you, tubby. I'm taking
this ruby.

He tries to go but Pierce steps in front of him. They have a
face-off, then Kevin lunges for the door. Pierce grabs him
and they WRESTLE. The ruby falls to the ground. They trade
HITS that only make each of them more furious. Finally,
Pierce throws Kevin off him, sending him head-first into a
sharp ROCK. Kevin sits up, hand to his BLEEDING HEAD.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

You fat fuck.

PIERCE

Stop calling me fat.

Kevin leaps to his feet and charges Pierce who stoops, lifts
a ROCK and BRAINS KEVIN when he's in reach. Kevin drops to
the floor, rolls around in pain and looks up at Pierce who's
standing over him.

KEVIN

Oh you piece of fat shit. You're
going to jail now. Do you know who
I am? I'll take everything, every--

Pierce, still FLUSH with adrenaline, understands the reality of Kevin's words. His face contorts into murder and he slams the rock into Kevin's head.

PIERCE

(screaming)

I told you not to call me fat!

Kevin writhes, BLUBBERING, a GORY GASH PUMPING BLOOD from his skull. After a second's pause, Pierce continues to smash home the rock, the sound like a FIST PUNCHING MELON. He finally stops, the rage clearing from his vision so that he sees what he's done.

MOTION by the entrance grabs his attention and he looks at the doors in time to see Melissa backing away from the glass in horror. They stare at each other in disbelief, then Melissa sprints away and Pierce jumps to his feet. He reaches the door and starts to push it open before noticing the BLOODY ROCK in his hand.

He drops it, starts to open the door again but stops at sight of the BLOOD on his ARMS. Melissa PEELS out of the lot.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

(staring after her)

Holy god. Melissa.

He LOCKS the door, returns to the body and looks down at it.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

This was a long time coming.

He moves to the desk and takes out ORANGE PONCHOS from a drawer, then drags Kevin into the deeper cave. The RUBBER SOUND of him wrapping the body echoes from the inner cave. Then he returns to the desk and dials a number on the phone.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

Don, it's Pierce. Find Lloyd and
come to the cave. It's an
emergency. Don't talk to anybody.
Get Lloyd and get down here ASAP.

He hangs up the phone and stares at the BLOOD STAIN on the floor beside the gigantic RUBY.

PIERCE (CONT'D)
Whatever this is was a long time
coming.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - AFTERNOON

Pierce, holding the RUBY, stands with Lloyd and Don around the body wrapped in ORANGE PONCHOS. Recessed lighting draws EERIE SHADOWS all around them. The SLUICE CHANNELS GURGLE; LIGHT filters in from the lobby. The three men FLINCH when a PHONE starts RINGING somewhere on the body. They exchange looks during the time it takes for the phone to stop ringing.

PIERCE
Five times in thirty minutes.
Somebody's already missing him.

LLOYD
And Fourth of July tomorrow, all
this tourist traffic... Fine time
for this shit to happen. Are we
getting on with the orgy or what?

Pierce considers the gem.

PIERCE
How're you gonna move it?

LLOYD
I already told you. The verb is
fencing. You move drugs, you fence
stolen goods.

PIERCE
It ain't stolen.

LLOYD
Well it kind of is. From the
earth.

DON
I don't know why we can't just say
we found it. Do what we gotta do
with the dead boy there then just
kind of tell everybody, hey, look
at this big ass ruby we found.

PIERCE

If we found the biggest ruby in the history of tourist caves, we'd have TV cameras, professors and all kinds of idiots scouring over this place. You want that much scrutiny on a forensic nightmare? It'd only be a matter of time before that boy going missing and us getting rich got connected in somebody's mind. We're doing this my way.

Pierce tosses the ruby to Lloyd.

DON

Well, I still ain't happy about my assigned task.

PIERCE

I can't do everything, bud. You gotta find her. We gotta take care of her.

Don and Lloyd frown at Pierce's last words.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

Not take care of her take care of her. Jesus Christ, I ain't a hit man. At the very least we need to know where she is. The sheriff's department? Her mom's? We gotta know. If it was the most important thing I'd just go do it, but it's only the second most important thing and I'm fixing to take on the first most important task myself.

They all consider the body.

LLOYD

You could blow it up. You know, like we used to do to frogs when we were little? Put M80 firecrackers in their mouth.

DON

That'd take a shit-ton of M80s. Probably like thirty-five.

LLOYD

Such a sweet kid. Thirty-five M80s wouldn't crack his jaw bone.

They look at Pierce, find him staring at the body.

PIERCE

Conroy out at the landfill told me that year it caught fire it got so hot the hubcaps melted. You know what the melting point on aluminum is? A lot more than bone.

(to Don)

Go find Melissa, bud.

(to Lloyd)

And you. Fence the fucking ruby. Let me worry about me.

Don and Lloyd give Pierce one last look.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

Well. Go on. Shoo.

Lloyd leads Don out of the cave. Pierce crouches next to the body and pulls the ponchos back. The GASH in Kevin's head is HORRIBLE, EXPOSING BRAINS AND BONE.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

Holy damn, that's horrific.

He covers the body then stands up. He doesn't flinch when Kevin's PHONE begins to RING again.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

I don't know who you are. But you better not get in my way.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - AFTERNOON

A TRAIN THUNDERS toward a RAILROAD CROSSING, blasting its HORN. The DESERTED COUNTRY ROAD that crosses the tracks has only one vehicle on it, a YELLOW HUMMER that is BOMBING ALONG in an obvious effort to beat the locomotive.

INT. BAIN BRONSON'S HUMMER - SAME

BAIN BRONSON (23), Kevin Bronson's IDENTICAL TWIN, is driving the Hummer. He's dressed in a SALMON POLO, CHINOS, and SEBAGO SHOES. He's got a CELL PHONE to his ear.

BAIN

Answer the fucking phone, bro.

(to the train)

Come on, boondocks! I beat your hay trucks and log trucks! This train ain't got shit!

The RIDICULOUSLY LONG TRAIN continues to BLAST its HUGE HORN.

BAIN (CONT'D)
Yeah! Get some!

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - SAME

The Hummer flies through the unprotected crossing mere YARDS before the train, HORN BLASTING, cruises by.

INT. BAIN BRONSON'S HUMMER - SAME

Bain slams his FIST into the Hummer's ceiling. He HOOTS.

BAIN
Yeah! Eat shit, bitches!

EXT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE, PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

The cave's parking lot consists of a SWEEP of GRAVEL bounded by FOREST. A STORAGE SHED the size of a small garage stands on the lot's eastern edge. Pierce exits from the cave, scans the area then locks the door. The only TWO CARS in the lot are Pierce's PICKUP and Kevin's RANGE ROVER. Pierce uses a KEY, presumably from Kevin's body, to get in the RANGE ROVER. He starts it, reverses, and drives it toward the shed. He gets out, unlocks the shed door and swings it open, then drives the Range Rover inside.

Just as the RANGE ROVER DISAPPEARS inside the shed, BAIN BLASTS BY on the MAIN ROAD in his YELLOW HUMMER.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SHADOWMOUNTAIN, BEAR STATUE - AFTERNOON

Bain stands impatiently beside a STATUE of a BEAR that's rearing on its hind legs making it ten feet tall. He glances at his watch, checks his cell phone, finally dials a number.

INT. TREY STOKES' CAR - SAME

TREY STOKES (22) drives a DODGE VIPER down a BUSY INTERSTATE. SMALL CARS and CAMPERS ZIP by him. He's sitting in a HIP-HOP LEAN, low in the seat, steering with only a wrist. He lowers BLASTING RAP MUSIC to answer his PHONE.

TREY
Yo. Talk to me.

THE CONVERSATION JUMPS BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN TREY'S VIPER
AND BAIN BESIDE THE STATUE.

BAIN

Trey, where the fuck is Kevin?

TREY

What? I don't know. Guess who was
on the plane from Miami?

(sing-songy)

Gloria Estefan. I wanted her on
deeeezze nuuuuutts.

BAIN

You are not black, Trey. Listen,
Kevin was supposed to meet me under
this stupid bear statue thirty
minutes ago and he's never late.

TREY

Relax. He's probably at the cabin
chilling.

BAIN

(getting angry)

He's not at your tiny step-daddy's
fucking cabin. I already checked.

TREY

Okay, rule one for this weekend:
No talking shit about Salvatore.
He can't help being short. He had
malnutrition as a kid.

BAIN

I'm getting mad, Trey. I talked to
Kevin forty-five minutes ago. He
was already here, fucking around in
some tourist trap and now he's not
answering his phone. He's always
on time and he always answers his
phone.

TREY

What're you talking about always?
There's no alwayses with people.
Listen, he probably already scored
some tail. Go chill at the cabin
or eat a hamburger or something.

He hangs up.

TREY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Told Kevin not to invite that
psychopath. Ruin the whole
weekend.

EXT. SHADOWMOUNTAIN DOWNTOWN, STATUE - AFTERNOON

Bain stares at the phone, angry and disbelieving. He looks around at the CROWDS of people, checks his watch, then dials Kevin's number again. No answer. He kicks a ROCK.

INT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - AFTERNOON

Pierce enters and locks the door behind him. He surveys what is obviously his WORK of the PAST HOUR: The lobby area CLEAN and ORDERLY; the BLOOD STAIN scrubbed so that what remains could easily be a SHADE of the GRANITE. He goes to the desk, gets a PINT of WHISKEY from a drawer, then moves to the panning area and the dead body.

PIERCE
All right, I'll admit it: I've
been wondering who you are. Like I
was wondering if you maybe owned a
small business. Or had a baby out
of wed-lock. Or knew karate. And
goddammit I even wondered who your
people might be, your parents, and
brothers and sisters and, I don't
know, your grandma. You most
likely made them proud, didn't you?
Like in sports or the boy scouts or
something.

He takes another pull from the bottle.

PIERCE (CONT'D)
I haven't made anybody proud in so
fucking long I don't even remember
what it feels like.

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Don moves through the various rooms of the house, looking for Caley. He dials her cell phone number. No answer.

INT. THE DEAD INDIAN RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

Don approaches the bar where Cody stands opposite of JASON (19). Jason is dressed in a BAGGY SHIRT, CUT-OFF KHAKIS, and SANDALS. He and Cody are laughing as Cody picks up a piece of CHOCOLATE BROWNIE from a plate and pops it in her mouth. Without finishing chewing, she SMILES, the CHOCOLATEY MESS COVERING HER TEETH and TONGUE. She sees Don and aims the CHOCOLATEY BLACK SMILE at him.

CODY

Hey Don, look: I gotta shit so bad
I can taste it.

DON

That's hilarious. Can I talk to
you over here?

Cody frowns at his abruptness but walks down the bar.

DON (CONT'D)

Listen, has Melissa been in here?
With Milly or that Mylanta-drinking
friend of hers?

CODY

(to herself)

Hello, Cody. Boy, you get prettier
every time I see you. How's your
day been going?

DON

I don't have time for sass. Have
you seen her or not?

Cody finally sees that Don's REALLY RATTLED.

CODY

Why do you look so flea-bitten?
What's going on?

They stare at each other, Don on the verge of telling her what happened at the cave. He decides against it.

DON

I just gotta find her goddammit.

CODY

Take it easy. She came in an hour
ago. Went straight to a stool,
knocked back a shot of tequila like
a Mexican then got right back up
and left. That's it. Now what the
hell's going on?

Don sees that this could get tricky. He fakes a smile.

DON

It's family shit, Cody. Seriously.
Not life and death or anything.
I'll tell you later, okay?

CODY

One day I'm gonna build a booth
around you and your brothers and
start charging admission. Watch
me. Did you check at the house?

DON

Of course I did. And she won't
answer her phone either.

CODY

Then she's probably already at the
firecracker stand.

DON

Shit. Right. You know, you get
prettier every time I see you.

CODY

Get the hell outta here.

Don leaves, Cody returns to Jason.

JASON

This whole town is still trying to
figure out why you date that nerd.

CODY

Because getting in my pants is only
half the reason he's with me. You
know how refreshing that is?

JASON

I know how gay it is.

She looks pensively at the front door.

CODY

I did something stupid, Jason.

JASON

Well that ain't new.

CODY

No, but I feel bad about it.
That's new.

EXT. DEW DROP INN, PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

SIX VEHICLES occupy the bar's lot. On the street, Lloyd idles to a stop and nods at one of the lot's PICKUPS. He waits for cars to pass, then pulls in next to the OLD PICKUP.

LLOYD

He ain't one to quit on an
automobile, is he?

As he's looking at the pickup, a MASSIVE ROTTWEILER rises slowly up above the edge of the truck bed. Lloyd FLINCHES at the ghostliness of the dog's appearance.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

Fucking devil hound, good God.

Lloyd looks down at the RUBY on his lap. He shoves it into the pocket of his TIGHT JEANS but it looks stupidly conspicuous so he takes it back out. He considers the truck, the GLOVE COMPARTMENT, UNDER the SEAT... No place seems safe. Then he looks back at the Rottweiler. Lloyd picks up an EMPTY FAST FOOD BAG from the floorboard, drops the RUBY in it, and gets out of his truck. The Rottweiler tracks his movements with unblinking eyes.

He takes two steps forward and the Rottweiler COMES ALIVE with HUGE, SALIVATING BARKS. Lloyd steps back and the dog quiets into a LOW GROWL.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

All right. You'll do.

Lloyd turns on his heel and jogs right out into the slow-moving traffic toward a FOOD STAND called CHEESEBURGER KING that's BUSY with TOURISTS.

BAIN, in his YELLOW HUMMER, has to STOP SUDDENLY to avoid hitting him. Bain GESTICULATES MADLY. Lloyd doesn't notice.

EXT. DEW DROP INN, PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Lloyd is back beside the pickup, staring at the Rottweiler. He takes a BURGER from a SACK in his hand.

LLOYD

One now, one later. Who don't like
hamburgers?

Lloyd steps forward and the Rottweiler GROWLS. Lloyd takes another step and the GROWL INCREASES. Finally, in one quick movement, Lloyd tosses the burger toward the dog and shoves the other BAG--the one holding the RUBY--into the TRUCK BED.

The dog is incredibly fast, though, SNATCHING the burger, GULPING it down, and still having enough time to nearly take a bite out of Lloyd's retreating arm. Lloyd hops away just in time. The Rottweiler LICKS its CHOPS. Lloyd puts the REMAINING BURGER in his truck.

INT. DEW DROP INN - MOMENTS LATER

FIVE DRINKERS are spread out among the bar's tables. WAYLON JENNINGS sings T'S FOR TEXAS from the juke box. Pete Lamp sits at the bar, nursing a BEER. Lloyd enters.

PETE

Well look who it is: Mr. Specimen, manners from the goat farm and clothes from the habe-douchery.

LLOYD

(to Jan)

Pour us out a round here, darlin'.

(to Pete)

I met your pooch out there in the parking lot.

PETE

That's Lori. She's a sweetheart.

LLOYD

She's the missing head from that three-headed dog that guards hell, that's what she is.

PETE

You just ain't her type. What're you doing back, anyway? Fiddle playing dry up in Nashville?

LLOYD

My tendonitis has gotten so bad I can't bow worth a damn. Look, I got something I need to ask you.

A BEAT as Lloyd considers his approach.

PETE

Are you using your mind to ask me or what?

LLOYD

I might need some help, getting rid of something.

PETE

Well there's a landfill down Route Twelve.

LLOYD

Take it serious, now. I can go out of town with it.

PETE

Well who could take it serious with all these specifics?

LLOYD

I know the kind of people you know, Pete, so quit acting like you ain't a rattlesnake. I'll pick you up as carefully as I damn well please.

(beat)

I found something. It ain't hot or lost or anything. Nobody's looking for it. I just found it.

Pete waits a few seconds, then says:

PETE

That's what you consider specifics? I feel like I'm surrounded by autistics sometimes.

LLOYD

I need to sell it quietly.

PETE

Thought you said nobody's looking for it.

LLOYD

And we'll pay you.

PETE

Yes you will. And who's 'we'?

Lloyd pauses for a few seconds, then finally says:

LLOYD

We need somebody to appraise it and have the contacts to sell it without any questions. I'm pretty sure they'd have to be a jeweler.

PETE

Finally. Like pulling teeth over here. That's easy, Lloyd.

LLOYD

It is?

PETE

I got a fella in Richmond who's helped me out with shiny things before.

LLOYD

Well gimme his name.

PETE

Uh-uh. That's not how he works. He's a house call kind of guy and I'd hafta vouch for you. I'll call him and see if he's interested. I can tell you this, he'll charge you just to look at it. Probably a hundred or so. Plus gas money.

LLOYD

I can do that. He discreet?

PETE

He's dangerous, what he is.

LLOYD

Sounds right. I'm serious about keeping your mouth shut, Pete.

PETE

All right, tough guy, take it easy. What number can I reach you at?

EXT. TREY STOKES' TINY STEP-DADDY'S CABIN - AFTERNOON

Bain's Hummer sits in the driveway of this SMALL CABIN which is separated from SIMILAR SUMMER CABINS by FIFTEEN YARDS of LANDSCAPED YARD. A WRAP-AROUND WOODEN DECK has on it POTTED PLANTS, a SWING and BIRD FEEDERS. Bain sits on the front steps and dials a number on his CELL PHONE, letting it ring for a while before snapping it shut again.

BAIN

Okay, this is getting ridiculous, Kevin. Seriously.

EXT. HOT ROCKETS FIREWORK STAND - AFTERNOON

Don approaches from where he had to park far down the road because of all the holiday shoppers.

He skirts the stand and sees immediately that Melissa isn't working. One of the HOT DAUGHTERS notices Don. She pops out of a side door.

HOT DAUGHTER
What the hell did y'all do to
Melissa? She ran in here, stole
some Roman candles and ran out.
She coming back for her shift?

DON
I'll pay for them. How long ago
was that?

HOT DAUGHTER
Thirty minutes. Is there some kind
of trouble? She looked like shit.
I offered her my lip gloss.

Don hands over some MONEY.

DON
Naw. Family shit. What's your
deal on M80s?

INT. DON'S FLASHY PICKUP - EVENING

Don's on his cell phone. He hangs up.

DON
Dammit, Melissa. I'm running out
of places to go.

EXT. DEW DROP INN, PARKING LOT - EVENING

Lloyd stands with the burger BAG back in his hands. Lori the Rottweiler stares at him from her place in Pete's truck bed.

LLOYD
That whiskey's gonna give you an
edge, ain't it?

Lori's eyes shift down to the bag in Lloyd's hand.

INT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - EVENING

Pierce is sitting in the chair behind the desk, SNORING. Behind him, a loud CREAK ECHOES from the PANNING AREA. He FLINCHES awake, jumps to his feet looking around wildly. He moves to the doorway of the panning area and peeks in.

One of the BODY'S HANDS has stiffened, pushing up tautly against the poncho that covers it.

PIERCE

Okay, that's pretty freaky.

Pierce goes back to the desk, takes the last pull from the bottle of whiskey, then steps back to the panning area.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

And I don't care who you were, you hear me? No matter how much my mind fucks with me, I don't care. I've killed just about everything before you. Bobcats and squirrels and skunks and a bear one time. You're just an animal like them. And even if you were more than an animal, even if you were supernatural, like a leprechaun or a Romulan or something, and you kept coming back, getting in my way, I'd smash your head in every fucking time.

INT. PIRATE'S BOUNTY TOURIST CAVE - EVENING

Bain stands behind a FAMILY of FOUR that's paying at the front desk to PAN for GOLD. The ATTENDANT (25) is a CHUBBY MALE WEARING OVERALLS and a MINING HELMET complete with a LIGHT on its front. The family moves to an AREA of several SLUICE CHANNELS around which OTHER TOURISTS already PAN in the slow-moving water.

ATTENDANT

Welcome to the Pirate's Bounty where our booty is bigger than any other cave's in town.

BAIN

Yeah, I saw your sign outside and I didn't get it then, either. Pirates are ocean criminals.

ATTENDANT

Not here in the Pirate's Bounty. Legend tells of old One-eyed Brian and his band of...

BAIN

Wait. Brian is your pirate's name?

Thrown off his SPIEL, the attendant becomes flustered.

ATTENDANT

No. I mean, yeah. I mean...
(clearing his throat)
Legend tells of old One-eyed...

BAIN

Stop. I don't care. God are you people for real out here? Listen, I'm not here to pan. I'm looking for my brother. He might be in trouble. I was supposed to meet him and he hasn't shown up and he won't answer his phone. Last I talked to him he was going into a place like this. About three hours ago. We're identical twins so he'd look exactly like me.

ATTENDANT

Don't remember anybody that looked like you. Maybe he's still panning, though.

He looks over at the DOZEN or so people in plain sight.

BAIN

Oh my god, there he is in plain fucking sight this whole time.

ATTENDANT

Really? Which one?

BAIN

I'm being sarcastic. You know not to look up when it's raining, right? Because you'll drown?

ATTENDANT

Turkeys do that.

A SECOND MAN in OVERALLS and MINING HAT appears from a RECESS of the cave. He and the attendant are obviously related.

MANAGER

Nicky, is there a problem?

BAIN

Oh I'm in luck. There's two of you. Maybe we can rummage up a single brain cell.

MANAGER

Sir, take her easy, there. There's no call for rude behavior.

ATTENDANT

He's been kind of rude this whole time.

MANAGER

What else he say?

ATTENDANT

Well he compared me to a turkey.

MANAGER

(to Bain)

Is that true, sir?

Bain can't believe the slow-coachness he's witnessing. Finally, his temper breaks: He takes a BASEBALL-SIZED GEODE off the desk and HURLS it at a GLASS DISPLAY CASE. The case SHATTERS while Nicky, the Manager and customers all stare.

BAIN

(yelling)

You can't be this stupid! One-eyed fucking Brian?! I'll take it easy, all right, on your stupid faces!

He turns on his heel and leaves the cave.

EXT. PIRATE'S BOUNTY TOURIST CAVE, PARKING LOT - EVENING

The Hummer PEELS out of the parking lot, barely missing the a sign that reads: PIRATE'S BOUNTY COME FIND YOUR BOOTY!

INT. BAIN BRONSON'S HUMMER - EVENING

Bain picks up a TOURIST MAP of Shadowmountain from the passenger seat. He's CIRCLED all the TOURIST CAVES marked on the map. He gets out his PHONE and dials Kevin's number, letting it ring and ring before finally snapping it shut.

EXT. LLOYD'S TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Lloyd's ARM is BANDAGED, presumably from a bite from Lori. He enters the JUNK-FILLED backyard of his neighbor's trailer and heads directly to a SUIT OF ARMOR, glancing toward the trailer from which a LOUD TV plays. He grabs hold of ONE of the armor's GAUNTLETS and WRENCHES it free. It makes a LOUD NOISE and Lloyd hurries away with his prize.

EXT. POND BEHIND LLOYD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lloyd, one HAND inside the GAUNTLET, walks around the edge of the POND. He carries a BUCKET FULL OF ROCKS, the RUBY perched on top. He stops after a while and kneels over a ROPE that's STAKED to the ground. Lloyd grabs the rope and follows it into the pond. He WADES up to his knees, then stops and begins to pull on the rope. Whatever's attached to it is HEAVY because he strains to bring it up. Finally, a CAGE appears, dripping with MUD and holding inside TWO ENORMOUS SNAPPING TURTLES. Lloyd backs up onto the shore with the cage, breathing hard.

LLOYD
Good little haul, Yates.

The TURTLES THRASH around inside. Lloyd rolls the RUBY in the mud, then UNLATCHES the CAGE'S GATE and carefully LOWERS the RUBY INSIDE. The turtles SNAP at him, their beaks CLACKING on the metal GAUNTLET. Lloyd lowers in THREE ROCKS that are similar in size to the ruby, then closes the gate. Relieved of most of its clinging mud and slime, it's light enough for him to heave it deep into the pond's middle. He stands on shore for a moment, catching his breath.

LLOYD (CONT'D)
Shouldn't be doing all this shit in my condition.

INT. TREY STOKES' TINY STEP-DADDY'S CABIN, DEN - NIGHT

The inside of the SWANK cabin is furnished with a BLACK LEATHER SECTIONAL, a FLAT-SCREEN TV, and GAUDY KNICKKNACKS such as BRONZE STATUETTES, BIG GLASS BOWLS OF DECORATIVE BALLS, and ZEBRA-PRINT TAPESTRIES on the walls. Trey sits on the sectional, watching a PORNO. Bain BURSTS through the front door and Trey covers his BONER with a PILLOW.

TREY
Yo, man. Where you been? Where's Kevin? He won't answer his phone.

BAIN
Oh my god, I'm gonna kill you.
Where's Kevin? Yeah, Trey, where the fuck is Kevin?
(lifting a PILLOW)
Kevin? You under there, big guy?

TREY
Bain. Slow down. What's going on?

Bain HURLS the PILLOW at Trey.

BAIN

I'm out looking for my missing brother and you're watching a goddamn porno!

TREY

We're on vacation.

Bain rushes at Trey who tries vainly to protect himself. Bain throws back the PILLOW on Trey's lap and PUNCHES Trey's STILL ERECT PENIS. Trey can't make words for a few seconds, his face turning BRIGHT RED. Then, all of a sudden, he VOMITS into the coffee table's BOWL OF DECORATIVE BALLS.

BAIN

Oh shit, that's gross.

Trey stumbles to the kitchen. Bain follows him.

INT. TREY STOKES' TINY STEP-DADDY'S CABIN, KITCHEN - SAME

The GAUDINESS continues here: A ZEN WATER FOUNTAIN GURGLES in the corner, a GLASS-TOPPED TABLE and ANGULAR CHAIRS occupy another corner and a MARBLE PREP ISLAND dominates the room's center. Trey RINSES his mouth at the sink.

TREY

You asshole. Oh, it's all pulsing down to my feet. Holy hell.

BAIN

Look, I'm not apologizing. This shit is serious. Kevin beat me here this afternoon, said he was going in some tourist trap. A cave. I've been to five caves. They're all stupid and nobody remembers him. There's two more and we're gonna go to those, too, because something ain't right.

Trey has recovered enough to consider Bain's words.

TREY

You know Kevin. He probably found some drunk trailer-trash ass and is balls deep in it.

BAIN

You're right, I do know my own goddamn twin brother. If he was screwing somebody, he'd be texting us. Probably pictures.

(MORE)

BAIN (CONT'D)

Not ignoring calls. And mom's already called, too, because he won't answer his phone and she's having a hysterectomy.

TREY

I'm pretty sure that's not how you use that word.

BAIN

Say something else smart, Trey. I dare you. Now put on your stupid Sauconys. We're gonna go check these caves.

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Don's watching TV on the sofa, FINGERS BLACK from FIRECRACKERS. The BACK DOOR OPENS and he shuts off the TV.

DON

Melissa?

Lloyd appears in the doorway, shirtless, MUDDY up to his KNEES and holding a BEER in his still GAUNTLETED HAND.

DON (CONT'D)

Why're you wearing armor?

LLOYD

I got a big joust contest later. I'm guessing you didn't find her.

DON

I drove by the only two friends' houses she ever goes to and neither of them had heard from her. And her drunk-ass momma told me to go fuck myself. You know what Melissa told me a few days ago? She said if one more thing happened she'd go up in smoke. Poof. I thought you coming back would be it till Pierce killed somebody. Why did you come back anyway?

LLOYD

I told you already. My tendonitis has gotten so bad I can barely hold a fucking fiddle.

(beat)

And I guess...

(MORE)

LLOYD (CONT'D)

I guess I had something to tell
Pierce. I just ain't figured out
how to do it yet.

DON

You're the first person he asked
for when all this shit happened.

LLOYD

I know. I've been thinking about
that.

EXT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Pierce's TRUCK is BACKED UP to the front door, the bed lined
with a BLUE TARP. Pierce exits the front door and his
movement ACTIVATES a MOTION-LIGHT. He climbs on the LOWERED
TAILGATE and TURNS OFF the light, then surveys the lot and
the empty road beyond. He NODS then HURRIES inside the cave.

Moments later he BACKS through the door, DRAGGING the CORPSE.
He props the body on the tailgate, gets up behind it and
HOISTS it onto the TARP. He SPILLS BACKWARD with the effort,
the CORPSE FALLING ON HIM. He SCRAMBLES out from beneath it
and sits for a second, catching his breath. He DUCKS as a
CAR PASSES out on the road, then QUICKLY ROLLS the TARP
around the body, SECURING IT with TWINE. He DUCKS ONE MORE
TIME as another CAR PASSES going the other way.

Pierce turns the motion-light back ON, shuts the tailgate,
then drives the truck away from the door.

INT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - NIGHT

Inside, Pierce goes to the DESK, picks up a WALKY-TALKY and
PUTS IT IN HIS POCKET. He turns toward the front door...
when he FREEZES: HEADLIGHTS SWEEP into the lot outside.
Pierce TURNS OFF all the lights. The vehicle comes to a
stop; its headlights go dark. Pierce ducks behind a SOUVENIR
TABLE as TWO FIGURES exit the vehicle and stand by it for a
few seconds, obviously deliberating.

EXT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Trey and Bain stand by Pierce's truck.

BAIN

(motioning to the truck)

See. Somebody's in there. And the
lights went off when we pulled up.

They lean on the truck, look casually in the back at the blue tarp that holds Kevin's dead body.

TREY
What is it with red necks and
keeping trash in their pickups?

Bain picks up an EMPTY CAN and tosses it on the tarp. It THUDS into his dead brother's body. Then he moves toward the door, activating the MOTION-LIGHT.

INT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - NIGHT

In the SUDDEN LIGHT, Pierce is so SHOCKED at what he thinks is the dead kid at the door that he STEPS BACKWARD, upsetting a table so that some ROCKS CLATTER to the ground.

EXT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Trey and Bain hear the CLATTERING SOUND from inside.

BAIN
See, told you somebody's in there.

He tries the door but it's locked. He puts his face to the glass but can't see anything. He BANGS on the glass.

BAIN (CONT'D)
Hello! Hello!

TREY
Come on, Bain. They're closed.

Bain points to a SIGN on the door that reads: SPECIAL FOURTH OF JULY HOURS! OPEN TILL TEN P.M.!

BAIN
(BANGING HARDER)
Hey in there! It's an emergency!

Still there's no movement inside. Bain steps back and looks as if he's about to KICK the door in. Trey grabs his arm.

TREY
Bain! Jesus. Nobody's in there.
Let's make some good decisions.

Bain shakes free his arm and walks away from the door.

BAIN
Something's wrong, Trey. Like
really wrong. I can feel it.

TREY

Listen, I agree, this is unlike Kevin, but let's not lose perspective here. It's not like we're in Papua New Guinea and the natives are cooking him in some big pot. Something stupid happened, okay? He dropped his phone in a toilet. I've done that. And he couldn't find the cabin and got pissed--which is a Bronson family trait--and did something retarded like driving down the interstate looking for a phone store.

This logic of this softens Bain a little.

BAIN

You don't get it. I've been trying to ignore it but this was like that one time, the only time I didn't, you know, feel him.

TREY

Feel him?

BAIN

You can't know. It's a twin thing, like a worm hole between us. One time, he got knocked out in a lacrosse game. I was at the mall, in Spencer's Gifts, and all the lights in the whole place just went off. All of them. People were stealing, looting but I just stood there, blinking, and said out loud, "Kevin's hurt." Those two words. I called mom and sure enough, she was already on the sidelines with the trainers trying to get him conscious, screaming he was dead. All the lights, Trey. Not just one or two. The whole city block. At the exact same minute he got hurt. I counted back.

TREY

Look, if it'll make you feel better, let's call some hospitals. That'll rule out real quick some accident or wreck. But I'm telling you, we're gonna laugh about this when he shows up with panties on his head. I swear.

Bain relents, and the two get in the Hummer and drive off.

EXT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Pierce stands ten yards from his truck, eyeing it in fear. He moves forward slowly, peeking into the bed. He LAUGHS NERVOUSLY, then reaches a CANE POLE from the truck's trash and pokes the tarp. Then he uses the tip of the pole to pull back the TARP. There's just enough ambient light to reveal the DEAD, IDENTICAL FEATURES of the boy who just left.

PIERCE

Son Of A Bitch. Fucking twin.
Okay. Touche, motherfucker.

INT. SHERIFF TEETLE MEYER'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen is SPARELY FURNISHED, a simple law-man's house. SHERIFF TEETLE MEYER (60s) and his granddaughter PENELOPE (10) sit at the TABLE playing MONOPOLY. The PHONE RINGS, Teetle rises to answer it, his BACK TO PENELOPE.

TEETLE

This Teetle.

DISPATCH (O.S.)

Sorry to bug you at home, Sheriff
but I got a young man on the other
line who's called six times in the
past hour asking for the manager.

TEETLE

The manager, huh? All right, patch
him through.

(to Penelope without
turning)

You take another five-hundred
dollar bill from that bank and I'm
gonna cuff you.

Penelope FREEZES for a second, then takes the BILL anyway.

PENELOPE

(mocking him under her
breath)

Take another bill I'll cuff you.

INT. TREY STOKES' TINY STEP-DADDY'S CABIN, DEN - NIGHT

Trey sits on the sofa again. The BOWL of DECORATIVE BALLS that he threw up in is gone and has been replaced by a BOTTLE OF SCOTCH and TWO GLASSES. Bain's on his CELL PHONE.

THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN BAIN AND TEETLE GOES BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN TEETLE'S KITCHEN AND THE CABIN.

BAIN

Hello, Sheriff. My name's Bainbridge Bronson. My brother is missing. Your people tell me he needs to be missing twenty-four hours before he's considered missing but my own personal time limit is six hours, which has passed. Let me just say up front, my mom knows a senator, so do I need to call him? Or the FBI?

TEETLE

I'll look into it.

BAIN

You'll... Really?

TEETLE

I'll alert the deputy I got down there to keep an eye out tonight and I'm headed down there personally to monitor the parade tomorrow. Will that do?

BAIN

Your people told me over and over--

TEETLE

Well you're talking to me now, aren't you? I'll get the specifics you gave 'my people' and look into it. Is that all?

BAIN

Um. Yeah.

TEETLE

Good night, Mr. Bronson.

He hangs up and sees Penelope eyeing him.

PENELOPE

We get to work a case, grandpa?

TEETLE

You sure are fired up for crime.
It ain't that romantic, little
girl. We're gonna have a five-
minute interview with the town
gossip in the morning. That's it.
Anybody knows anything, it'll be
him. Then I'll have done my duty.

PENELOPE

I'm putting another hotel on St.
James Place. Your ass is grass.

INT. TREY STOKES' TINY STEP-DADDY'S CABIN, DEN - NIGHT

Bain closes his phone.

BAIN

Finally. Results.

TREY

This is five-hundred dollar scotch.
We should save some for Kevin.

BAIN

The worst part is I had to beg you
two to let me come up here this
weekend and mom'll still blame me
for all this.

TREY

You didn't beg, drama queen. We
weren't even sure Kevin could get
away from that stupid internship.

BAIN

We we we. You two have always been
an army of we.

TREY

That's the scotch talking.

BAIN

Probably. I do feel a little bit
relaxed but don't think I'm going
to sleep until he gets here.

He downs it, GASPS, then pours himself a fresh one.

TREY

What the hell're we gonna do till
then?

MONTAGE

1. Trey and Bain are playing GRAND THEFT AUTO on a PLAYSTATION hooked up to the flat screen.
2. Trey is DRAPED in one of the ZEBRA-PRINT TAPESTRIES. Bain is "hunting" him with a CURTAIN ROD "shotgun."
3. Trey and Bain are DANCING with DRINKS IN HAND at opposite ends of the room to KELIS' MILKSHAKE.

END OF MONTAGE.

EXT. AUTO SHOP - NIGHT

The CLOSED SHOP is dark. Pierce's TRUCK is PARKED next to a GROUP of BARRELS. He lets a FEW CARS pass on the road, then gets out and lowers the tailgate. He disappears behind the GARAGE and returns with a HYDRAULIC JACK that he parks by the BARRELS. He ducks, letting MORE CARS PASS, then works TWO of the OBVIOUSLY HEAVY BARRELS onto the jack, JACKING them up even with the tailgate. He gets on the tailgate and works the BARRELS into the truck. He hops down, closes the tailgate and hurries the jack around the garage. MORE CARS PASS on the road, then he hurries to his truck.

EXT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - NIGHT

Pierce has the shed door open and BACKS his TRUCK so that it nearly touches the BACK of KEVIN'S RANGE ROVER. He gets out, lowers the tailgate, opens the back of the Range Rover and MANEUVERS one of the BARRELS out of his pickup and into the Range Rover, leaving the other in his truck.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE DEAD INDIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Pierce is parked in the DARK ALLEY. Cody exits the back door, lighting a CIGARETTE.

PIERCE
(out of his window)
Psst. Hey.

Cody STARTLES, then sees him and walks over.

PIERCE (CONT'D)
I need help dumping some motor oil.

CODY

What the hell's going on? First Don comes in skittish as all shit, looking for your wife. Now you're playing creepy stalker out here in the alley.

PIERCE

Listen, me and Melissa got into it today and Don was playing fix up. That's it. And I'm not stalking. This shit is illegal. I upped my fee with Bates, too. Your cut's a cool hundred now.

CODY

You Cousins are gonna be the death of me.

INT. PIERCE'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Pierce and Cody drive in the truck on a DARK BACK ROAD.

PIERCE

Listen, Cody. About the other night... You know...

Beat while Cody looks at him.

CODY

Is that it?

PIERCE

I was hoping you'd finish the sentence.

CODY

I don't finish those kind of sentences.

EXT. ATTOTOC COUNTY LANDFILL - NIGHT

The LANDFILL is outside of SHADOWMOUNTAIN. Its gate is monitored by CONROY (50s) who sits in a PLASTIC CHAIR inside a SHED who's SLIDING DOOR is open to the entrance road. He's reading a PAPERBACK that he splits over a knee as Pierce's truck arrives. Pierce and Cody have changed positions: Cody's driving now and she's pulled down her already PLUNGING BLOUSE to EXPOSE more CLEAVAGE.

CONROY
(openly staring at her
breasts)
Aw come on. This shit is gonna
cost me my job.

CODY
Conroy, just look at these things.
It's a win-win for everybody.

CONROY
There's a reason oil disposal is
monitored. It's bad for the
ecosystem.

CODY
(moving her boobs)
Who's system are we worried about?
The eco's or Conroy's?

Conroy LICKS HIS LIPS.

CONROY
Assholes. This is the last time.

CODY
So was last time.

Cody gets out and Conroy pushes a BUTTON that opens the GATE.
Pierce slides over behind the wheel and drives forward.

EXT. ATTOTOC COUNTY LANDFILL - NIGHT

Pierce DRAGS the TARP-WRAPPED CORPSE up a MOUNTAIN of
GARBAGE. His truck IDLES, HEADLIGHTS STARING, at the base of
the hill. He reaches a PLATEAU of trash and drags the corpse
to its middle. He KNEELS, out of breath, and INSERTS a WALKY-
TALKY from the cave into the TARP. He clears a SHALLOW HOLE
in the trash and ROLLS the BODY into it, then covers it up.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATTOTOC COUNTY LANDFILL - SAME

Cody stands outside the SHED, BOOBS EXPOSED over her BRA.
Conroy has a POLAROID CAMERA AIMED at them.

CODY
Remember. No face.

CONROY
(breathless)
They're so beautiful.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATTOTOC COUNTY LANDFILL - NIGHT

Pierce ROLLS the BARREL up the hill of trash. He COLLAPSES at the top in near exhaustion. He doesn't sit for long, though, standing the BARREL upright, POPPING the RING around the top and dumping MOTOR OIL around the buried body. Then he rolls the BARREL down the hill, rushing after it.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATTOTOC COUNTY LANDFILL - NIGHT

Pierce pulls back through the front gate. Conroy is staring at a POLAROID. Cody hops in the truck and they drive off.

CONROY
I should rent a car and just drive
off with these titties.

INT. PIERCE'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Cody and Pierce drive in silence. Finally Pierce blurts out:

PIERCE
It was awesome the other night
kissing you but you and Don belong
together, like for real together,
and there's enough inbred-ass crap
going on in this family as it is.
I didn't do anything I didn't want
to, though, starting or stopping.
I wanted you to know that.

Cody's CELL PHONE starts to ring. She pulls the phone out of a pocket on her skirt and looks at its FACEPLATE.

CODY
Speak of the devil.
(silencing the call)
I hate agreeing with any of you
Cousins but you're right. I think
that little shit's got to me.

INT. TREY STOKES' TINY STEP-DADDY'S CABIN, DEN - NIGHT

The PORNO is playing again. Trey is PASSED OUT on the sofa. Bain lies on the chaise-longue, idly watching the screen. He sits up and finishes the last of the SCOTCH and looks down at the MAP of Shadowmountain laid out on the COFFEE TABLE. The COUSINS' JEWEL MINE is CIRCLED in BLACK INK.

BAIN

(drunk)

Why the hell were they closed,
Trey? All the others were open.
Doin bidness. Holiday hours. Not
the Cousins.

He looks back at the TV, then puts his HAND DOWN HIS PANTS.

BAIN (CONT'D)

You better really be asleep, T
Dog, or you're gonna witness the
self-love consequences.

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lloyd and Don are watching TV, drinking BEERS. They sit up when they hear the BACK DOOR OPEN. Pierce appears in the doorway to the living room, CLOTHES DISHEVELED and STAINED from the LANDFILL. The three brothers consider one another.

LLOYD

Hey, bud. How'd it go?

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lloyd sits at the TABLE with a BEER. Pierce, FRESHLY SHOWERED, wearing a ROBE, leans against the counter.

LLOYD

Okay, so he's got a twin. It's
weird, sure, but it's a small town
and he's probably driving all over
it, that's why he found the cave.
If he knew more he would've had
cops with him. We just gotta be
careful.

PIERCE

You mean like hiding a thousand
karat gemstone in a turtle trap?

LLOYD

You act like you don't know Pete. I mentioned jewelry and his eyes narrowed like a leopard's. Man would take a dime from Jesus Christ's pocket if he thought nobody was looking.

PIERCE

Well lets hope Yates doesn't run his traps.

LLOYD

You just refuse to see how brilliant I am. Yates is in charge of the parade tomorrow. The last thing in the world he's gonna do in the next twenty-four hours is run his stupid turtle traps. My plan's the one that's foolproof. Yours is just kind of fool-*stumpy*.

Don walks in SLEEPY-EYED and wearing PYJAMAS.

DON

I've decided it: I'm not going to work tomorrow. It's just stupid.

PIERCE

No, not finding Melissa was stupid.

Don turns and leaves the room abruptly.

LLOYD

Take it easy on him. He's trying to get his head around all this.

PIERCE

Shit who ain't? I hauled a kid up a trash hill tonight and buried him in it. I killed him with a rock. My wife saw me. She saw me, Lloyd. Saw me do it. I can still see her in that doorway. Her face was kind of like a mask. Just horrified. My whole brain was frozen, too, except for this one thought. You know what it was? She won't touch me now. Ever.

LLOYD

Hold it together, buddy.

Long BEAT as Pierce gathers himself.

PIERCE

I'm gonna try to sleep. If she shows up with sirens behind her at least we won't hafta do all this shit tomorrow.

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE, DON'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Don sits in his bed, READING THE HOBBIT. His room is full of GIZMOS, the GHOST DETECTOR, TOY ROBOTS, a HAM RADIO, ETC.

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Don comes into the kitchen for a glass of water and sees Pierce seated outside the screen door, smoking. It's still FULL DARK OUTSIDE. Don goes out the door.

EXT. PIERCE'S HOUSE, BACK STOOP - SAME

Don lights a CIGARETTE from a PACK beside Pierce's feet.

DON

Can't sleep?

PIERCE

Nope. I feel... focused like I haven't been in years. Feel like I'm on speed, like I got these lasers behind my eyes, just kind of aimed at all the details.

DON

That's good because I feel like a bag of scattered marbles. I think it's eating at me that somebody, you know, had to get sacrificed.

PIERCE

Listen, Don, I understand that. I do. But you gotta understand that that's how it all works. Banks and lawyers and HMOs and the stock market... They pretty it up by having somebody else pull the trigger but somebody's always getting sacrificed and I'm goddamn sick of it being me.

(MORE)

PIERCE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry for that kid, and you should be too, but it's a dog-piss world out there and I will not be the fire hydrant this time. We're gonna be okay. I'm gonna handle it. I promise.

A LOUD CRACK comes from the TREES that border the house.

DON

You hear that?

All of a sudden, a BRIGHT LIGHT BURSTS to life on the edge of the woods and a BALL of RED FLAME SHOOTS TOWARD the house. Both men fall sideways to avoid the missile but another one, this one GREEN, follows the first and HITS DON in the CHEST.

DON (CONT'D)

What the hell is it? Pierce!

The BALLS of FLAME continue to POP and HISS toward them, YELLOW, BLUE, GREEN and RED. They SMACK into the HOUSE like GOLF BALLS. One of them catches PIERCE in the ARM.

PIERCE

Get inside, Don. We're under attack.

Pierce CHARGES the FLAME which is on the MOVE.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

(calling out)

You better run, fucker!

A YELLOW BALL HITS him right in the FOREHEAD and he SCREAMS. The BALLS continue to FLY. Don has not gone inside. Instead, he's FLANKED what is now obviously a SMALL FIGURE who's trying to round the house. The figure doesn't see him and, although Don's intention is to TACKLE IT, he instead gets BULLDOZED, the FIGURE ROLLING over him and springing back to its feet. It has a WAND of BURNING LIGHT in either hand and AIMS THEM BOTH at Don's CHEST, letting the BALLS THUMP MERCILESSLY into him. Don's rolling around, SCREAMING, CRAWLING AWAY so that one of the balls hits him in the ASS. Suddenly, the FIGURE is lifted off its feet by a set of BEAR-HUGGING ARMS. Pierce arrives, sees that the figure is HIS WIFE Melissa and grabs the WANDS from her hands.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

Let her go, Lloyd.

LLOYD

Let her go? Tie her up is more like it.

MELISSA

You assholes. I want my house back.

Melissa SLUMPS suddenly, the long night catching up to her. Don sits yards away, inspecting his burned shirt. The Roman Candles, aimed at the ground, finally STOP SHOOTING.

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Melissa sits on the sofa with a CAN of BEER. Pierce and Lloyd stand. Don is absent, presumably doctoring his wounds.

PIERCE

You wanna explain how shooting firecrackers at us seemed like the right way to approach this?

MELISSA

Me explain to you? I drove around for twelve hours, stopping at people's houses and not going in because what was I gonna tell them? My husband killed a person? And then I drove by this place, my own fucking house, and couldn't stop because what was I gonna do, walk in the front door like it was a normal day? There was no getting into anywhere normally so yeah, motherfucker, that approach seemed about as right as I was gonna get.

PIERCE

I'm sorry, Melissa.

MELISSA

Don't be. I went to the sheriff's.

LLOYD

Shit.

MELISSA

I didn't say I went in, just sat in the parking lot. Even opened the door twice, put a foot on the blacktop.

(MORE)

MELISSA (CONT'D)

But both times I did that I kept seeing that dead kid's Range Rover, brand new, parked in the cave's lot right next to your nineteen ninety-two, busted-ass Ford and I knew that self-defense or not, and regardless of what's right and wrong, in this country, money like that will do whatever it wants to us. It ain't right or fair what you did. But neither is scratching out seasonal money from a goddamn fireworks stand.

Pierce KNEELS before her.

PIERCE

Baby. I've been pure shit for a long time, I know it. As a husband and as a person. But you stood in that cave and told me to do something and I know you didn't mean this but this is what came up. I'll go to the cops right now if you say so. I'll turn myself in and serve my time without blinking an eyelash if that's what you want. But it's like you say, it ain't the road we deserve, not after the shit they've made us eat for ten years.

MELISSA

You think you can just sell this ruby, play dumb about a human being you killed and live happily ever after? There's like twenty CSI shows on TV, baby. They catch everybody nowadays.

PIERCE

I've never thought this was gonna be simple. I still don't. That's why I'm the one they're gonna miss.

They stare at each other for a few significant seconds.

LLOYD

Well, since we're all sharing...

They turn to Lloyd.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

I've got a bad piece of news. I've been waiting for the right time but, hell, there really ain't one.

MELISSA

Do we hafta hear it right this second? I'm kind of already dealing with a lot, Lloyd.

LLOYD

I think you probably should.

(beat)

It's weird. The three of us haven't been in a room together for a long time.

PIERCE

Well now I wonder why, Lloyd.

LLOYD

See, that's the sarcasm that's been stopping me from telling you what I came back to tell you. I lied to you about my fiddle playing being over. It's not tendonitis I got. It's the HIV.

Shocked silence ensues as the implications settle in. Don enters the room SHIRTLESS with a BANDAGE on his nipple.

DON

You hit me in the nipple, Melissa.

(noticing the silence)

What the hell's going on now?

PIERCE

Did you... I can't even fucking believe I have to ask this question out loud in my life. Did you and my wife use a condom when you screwed?

MELISSA

Yes, Pierce. Yes. Holy god.

LLOYD

But condoms ain't fool-proof.

Pierce FLIES at Lloyd, hitting him in the FACE. Lloyd rolls with the impact and gets Pierce in a FULL-NELSON.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

Come on, bud. Hold it together.
We're still on the same side.

PIERCE

The same side? We're not on the same side. I'm on the human side and you're on, like, the mutant side. Like an X-man who's super power is to turn everything into piles of shit.

Lloyd heaves him across the room.

LLOYD

That's funny coming from you, Mr. Forbes 500. Your cave's on the brink of bankruptcy, Don thinks you're a pansy and your wife can't even remember why she married you.

MELISSA

Lloyd, you got no right.

LLOYD

Don't Lloyd me. He wants to have it out on the fucking carpet so be it. I've been thinking about it, especially in light of recent developments, and you know what it is, this news of mine? This is the negative ruby. We got the positive one that's gonna make us rich but this one, this is the balancer.

Pierce isn't listening. He's looking at Melissa.

MELISSA

Baby, I'm...

PIERCE

No. Don't. We start apologizing for everything we're both sorry for we'll be here till Christmas. I gotta finish all of it, baby. You can see that, right?

MELISSA

I don't know what I see. I'm too tired to think. I'm gonna go throw up, then try to get some sleep.

Lloyd takes a MEDICINE BOTTLE from the pocket of his jeans and tosses it onto the sofa beside Melissa.

LLOYD

That's prescription narcotic right there. You finish your beer with two of those little babies and an earthquake won't wake you up.

Melissa GLARES at him, but takes the bottle. They all sit in a moment of silence that's interrupted by the RINGING PHONE.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

I'll get it.

He goes into the kitchen where the phone is.

MELISSA

What's gonna happen, Pierce?

PIERCE

I'm gonna handle it. I know I haven't handled anything the past ten years but the tide has turned. When you wake up, I promise all this'll be over.

She exits the room as Lloyd comes back in.

LLOYD

That was Pete. We're supposed to meet him over at his place in a little while. By God, this is a helluva start to this day. Y'all wanna get some breakfast?

PIERCE

If I wasn't dealing with my own responsibility pushing that woman into your arms, I'd break your neck right now.

LLOYD

Let me get some eggs and bacon in me then you can give it a try.

FEW BEATS of SILENCE.

DON

I'm starting to be real glad I'm ten years behind you two. I've never even heard of this level of dysfunction.

INT. SHERIFF TEETLE MEYER'S CRUISER - MORNING

Teetle and PENELOPE (12) sit quietly in the cruiser, following a SLOW-MOVING HAY TRUCK.

PENELOPE
This dang truck's taking years off
my life, pop. Pass it.

TEETLE
It's uncanny hearing your momma's
sayings come out of your mouth.
And what if there's just another
one waiting on the other side?

PENELOPE
Pass it, too.

TEETLE
Youth is hasty. Hasty's how messes
get made.

PENELOPE
Don't get philosophical on me. And
stopping to see this gossip better
not make me miss the parade.

TEETLE
That parade's hours away. Relax.

EXT. TREY STOKES' TINY STEP-DADDY'S CABIN - MORNING

Bain paces on the porch anxiously, his cell phone ringing.
Finally he picks it up.

BAIN
(cheerfully)
Oh hey mom, it's Kevin!
(pause)
No, my phone's broke and you know
Bain, forgot to charge his and he's
still sleeping!
(pause)
Seriously mine fell in a toilet.
Calm down, mom.

Trey opens the front door, hungover eyes squinted at Bain.
Bain flips him off.

BAIN (CONT'D)
No, Bain didn't do anything stupid.
I actually did this time.
(MORE)

BAIN (CONT'D)

Yeah, for the first time ever in the history of the world I messed up, hahahah.

(pause)

It's a beautiful cabin and Trey's been an awesome host.

He makes a murderously angry face at Trey who shuts the door.

BAIN (CONT'D)

Oh we're gonna have fun. This town doesn't know what fun is yet. You want me to tell Bain hello or anything?

(pause)

Okay. Instead of talking to him yourself, I'll just tell him.

(pause)

I'm sorry. I am being a shit. Love you!

He hangs up and rushes inside.

INT. TREY STOKES' TINY STEP-DADDY'S CABIN, DEN - MORNING

Bain rushes in the house, CHASING and SLAPPING Trey.

TREY

Ow. God. Get the fuck off me.

BAIN

Where's Kevin, Trey? All night long I heard about how everything's okay, how we're gonna laugh and laugh when he shows up in the morning with panties on his head.

He SLAPS Trey again. Trey hops off the couch to flee but Bain follows him, SLAPPING the BACK of HIS HEAD.

BAIN (CONT'D)

Wanna play some more video games? Watch another porn? How else can we pretend everything's okay?

TREY

Bain. Please don't go psycho here.

BAIN

Psycho? Psycho?

He slaps Trey again on the back of the head.

BAIN (CONT'D)

That's me, huh? You and Kevin always shaking your heads at old psycho Bain. Barely even telling me you were coming up here to this stupid cabin and now you don't even care that he's NOT HERE!

He continues to SLAP Trey. Trey defends himself poorly with upraised hands until Bain finally stops.

BAIN (CONT'D)

Now listen to me. I just faked my brother's voice to my mother. Her own offspring, Trey, who, incidentally, she likes more than she likes me. That's always boggled my mind because genetically we're pretty much identical but what do I know about the mysteries of a mother's love? All I know is something hugely fucked up is going on here and I listened to you yesterday, played it sane, but the time for sanity has passed. Now I need to know, are you gonna posse up or pussy out? Which is it?

A FEW LONG BEATS.

TREY

Posse. I'm gonna posse up.

BAIN

Good. Now put on your big-girl panties because we're about to mount a goddamn insurrection on this town.

I/E. PETE'S GARAGE - MORNING

Pete lives in a ONE-ROOM HOUSE in THICK WOODS. A LOW-ROOFED GARAGE stands beside the house, its DOORS open to reveal on one side ROWS of ORGANIZED JUNK such as TUBS, ROOFING PAPER, FISHING TACKLE, HALF AN ESCALATOR ETC. The other side contains a CARD TABLE, CHAIRS and a REFRIGERATOR. The grounds around the house include a WELL-TENDED GARDEN and FLOWERING FLOWER BEDS. Pete sits at the CARD TABLE inside the garage, drinking COFFEE and watching Lloyd's TRUCK wend up a long GRAVEL DRIVE. Lloyd and Pierce get out of the truck and approach the garage. Both look TIRED already.

PETE

You boys have a long night?

Lloyd FLINCHES as Lori the Rottweiler GLIDES around the edge of the garage, approaches Pete, and lays her head on his leg.

LLOYD

Sweet Mary, that dog's creepy.

PIERCE

Where's this contact of yours?

PETE

All business, this one. Don't you worry about Ichabod. He'll be here exactly when he means to be. Where's this piece of jewelry that's brought us all together?

LLOYD

Just wait your patience. I'll get it if and when your man shows up.

Pete fills TWO MUGS with COFFEE from an URN and sets them on the table. Lloyd sits; Pierce remains standing.

PETE

This is some secret you two got going. If we're gonna be in business together I think I should know the details.

PIERCE

Business together? Maybe you'll get a finder's fee.

PETE

That's it huh? Let's wait till we know what we're talking about.

EXT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - MORNING

Bain's YELLOW HUMMER enters the parking lot and parks next to the SHED inside of which, unseen, is KEVIN'S RANGE ROVER. Bain and Trey get out of the Hummer.

BAIN

See? Fucking called it. All those other mines are open and busy and this one's still closed.

He goes to the door and peers inside.

TREY
Let's call that sheriff and tell
him.

BAIN
No. I don't want him to know who
did this--

Bain lifts a HUGE ROCK from beside the entrance and HURLS IT
THROUGH THE GLASS DOOR.

TREY
Jesus Christ, Bain.

Bain reaches through the SHATTERED DOOR and UNLOCKS it. He
goes inside. Trey checks the road, then follows him in.

INT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - MORNING

Bain turns on the LIGHTS. Everything is neat except for the
GEODES that Pierce knocked off the table the night before.
Bain picks one up and HEFTS it in the air casually.

TREY
If he came in yesterday maybe
there's a receipt book.

Trey RIFLES the DESK DRAWERS while Bain looks over a TRIPLE
SET of PHOTOGRAPHS on top of the desk. The three frames
contain a PHOTO of PIERCE and MELISSA at their WEDDING, ONE
of LLOYD FISHING and DON'S HIGH SCHOOL PICTURE.

Trey lifts a CHEESEBURGER KING BAG out of a TRASH CAN.

TREY (CONT'D)
This town's tiny. I bet these
burger people know our cave owners.
Where they live and stuff.

BAIN
Part of the posse. My boy.

I/E. PETE'S GARAGE - MORNING

Pete and Lloyd are playing DOMINOES. Pierce leans in the
garage's shade. He comes out of his lean at the APPROACH of
a TOYOTA PRIUS up the driveway. The car parks behind Lloyd's
truck and the TWO MEN inside stare at the three men in the
garage. The men in the car share a few words then the driver
ICHABOD RAKUHN (60s), a SLIM, BESPECTACLED man in SLACKS and
a VEST, gets out. He carries a SMALL BLACK BAG to the garage
and looks around at those assembled. Lori GROWLS.

PETE

Hello, Ichabod. How's tricks?

ICHABOD

You boys got my fee and gas money?
One sixty should do it.

Pierce hands MONEY to Ichabod who COUNTS it.

LLOYD

(smiling at the man in the
Prius)

Who's that? Your muscle?

Ichabod glances back at the WHITE-HAIRED, SCAR-FACED man in the Prius.

ICHABOD

Jessup? Yeah. That's exactly what he is. Now where's the piece?

Lloyd rises from the table.

LLOYD

We wanted to make sure you were coming. I gotta go get it. Shouldn't take more than an hour.

ICHABOD

Oh that's unacceptable. I've got three other appointments today.

PIERCE

You'll wanna stay, Mr. Ichabod. I promise you you never seen anything like this.

Ichabod considers Pierce's gravity.

ICHABOD

You do have something interesting, don't you? All right. One hour.

Lloyd hustles to his truck. Ichabod turns toward the Prius.

PETE

Hey, where you going? Why don't you get your muscle up here and we'll play some dominoes?

ICHABOD

I've got twenty-five irons in the fire, Peter. Nobody ever stayed rich shooting the breeze.

He returns to the Prius.

CUT TO:

I/E. PETE'S GARAGE - ONE HOUR LATER

A LONG ANTENNAE sticks out of the Prius' window and inside the car, Ichabod and JESSUP (50s) both TYPE on LAP-TOPS. The two men get out, however, at the approach of Lloyd's TRUCK up the drive. Lloyd exits his truck, feet COVERED IN MUD, GAUNTLET on his arm and SHIRT DAMP. He heads directly to a SPIGOT beside the garage, lifts the HOSE attached to it and SPRAYS OFF first his feet, then the RUBY in his hand.

PETE

You hide it in the mud?

JESSUP

No. Some sort of underwater animal trap.

Lloyd and Pierce both look surprised at this guess.

ICHABOD

Jessup's a noticer.

Lloyd approaches, BOOTS SLOSHING, and sets the RUBY on the table. Pete, Ichabod, and Jessup GAWK at it.

ICHABOD (CONT'D)

Look at that fucking thing.

He opens his BLACK BAG and takes out JEWELER'S INSTRUMENTS. The men wait in silence as Ichabod studies the ruby. After a while, he replaces the instruments in the bag and takes out a DIGITAL CAMERA. He takes the RUBY into the sunlight, sets it on the WHITE GRAVEL, and PHOTOGRAPHS it from different angles. Finally, he returns the ruby to the table and puts the camera back in his bag before zipping the bag shut.

ICHABOD (CONT'D)

You were right, this was worth waiting for. Karat for karat it's the biggest gemstone I've ever even heard of. And it's flawless. Where did you find it?

PIERCE

How much is it worth?

ICHABOD

Right. I don't often get side-tracked but I'm not sure you understand what you've got. On the open market it'd probably fetch three, four-hundred thousand. But this thing... I know collectors who will bid each other into the stratosphere for it. Easily four or five million dollars.

Pierce, Lloyd and Pete try to swallow this information, sharing complicated GLANCES of HOPE and GUARDEDNESS.

ICHABOD (CONT'D)

I take twenty percent, of course.

The NOISE of an APPROACHING VEHICLE interrupts them. The men turn to see a SHERIFF'S CRUISER on the driveway. Pierce quickly SHOVES the RUBY DOWN HIS PANTS. Jessup lifts his LONG SHIRT to reveal a GLOCK. He COCKS its HAMMER, then drops his shirt.

JESSUP

We were told the object was found.

PETE

So was I.

Pete, Ichabod and Jessup turn stares on Pierce and Lloyd.

PIERCE

(looking at Jessup's shirt)

Take it easy, man. Jesus. This is pure coincidence.

The cruiser parks and out climbs Teetle Meyer. He moseys into the garage door's shade.

TEETLE

Looks like I'm crashing a party.

PETE

Not one I organized. Looks like it's drop-in-to-see-Pete day. I don't see no candy so I guess yours ain't a social call.

Teetle looks at the disused dominoes on the table, at Lloyd's MUDDY, GAUNTLETED APPEARANCE, at Ichabod. His gaze lingers on Jessup.

TEETLE

Listen Pete, I just had a question for you but, Pierce, you and Lloyd might not be bad sources either. I got a tourist in town looking for his brother, says the brother got in yesterday then vanished, won't answer his phone, nothing.

Pierce and Lloyd shrug, shake their heads but say nothing.

PETE

I ain't heard nothing.

TEETLE

Nothing? No stupid kid trying to buy meth from your nephew? Fights over girls, drag races, anything?

Pierce and Lloyd only shake their heads again, mouths shut.

PETE

You know I avoid these July fourth crowds. I've mostly been at the Dew Drop or out here. Sorry.

TEETLE

Okay. Told the boy I'd ask around. Keep your ears open, huh?

He nods at everybody, eyes still lingering on Jessup, then returns to his cruiser.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF TEETLE MEYER'S CRUISER - NOON

Teetle closes his door and looks back at the men.

TEETLE

I believe if you tried to cram one more suspicious thing into that garage it might pop.

PENELOPE

Are those bad guys?

TEETLE

You can bet your britches that white-haired fella is. Jessup Zdunkowitz. And he's expensive, too. It ain't Sunday school they're discussing up there.

PENELOPE

What're you gonna do?

TEETLE

Do? It's a free country, little girl. No law against acting suspicious on private property. My meter's running now, though.

I/E. PETE'S GARAGE - NOON

The four men watch the cruiser disappear down the drive.

ICHABOD

(to Pete)

Is there an internet cafe in town?

PETE

Yeah, down from the Cheeseburger King on Main Street, but don't you two got a computer bank in your eco-car out there?

ICHABOD

I'll need a land-line for what I need to do. We might lose a couple hundred thousand moving fast but I'm sensing this ruby is the tip of a bad iceberg.

PIERCE

I told you we found it.

JESSUP

Ha. This is their first square-dance, Ichy.

ICHABOD

I can see that. Pay attention, kids. I will sell that ruby in the next few hours. It might take till tonight to get the cash wired but it will be tonight and when I come back, that gemstone better be here. Not buried somewhere, or in the hands of some cop or curator. If that happens, and any of you are still around, Jessup will find you. And anybody you happen to like.

(to Pete)

Your house is compromised, Peter. We ain't coming back here.

(MORE)

ICHABOD (CONT'D)

Get these boys, yourself and that gemstone on the move and I'll call you in a few hours.

Bag in hand, he and Jessup return to the Prius. The three men watch the car disappear down the drive.

PETE

You all wanna tell me exactly what's going on?

PIERCE

You got all the information you need.

PETE

Horseshit. How come the cat got both y'all's tongues the minute old Teetle starting asking about a missing kid?

Pierce and Lloyd exchange a quick glance.

PETE (CONT'D)

I want half.

LLOYD

For what? A referral?

PETE

Poker went up, boys. I want half or we can go chase down Teetle and have another little chat.

There's a HEAVY FEW BEATS of SILENCE.

PIERCE

You fucking squirrel. All right. Half.

PETE

You didn't sound sincere. Guess you didn't notice Ichy not looking at me when he was talking about first square-dances. This ain't a garage sale, son, so you better catch up. I got big fucking eyes and I'm quicker than shit through a goose. You hear me?

Pierce takes the RUBY out of his pants.

PIERCE

I said half and I meant it.

Again, there's a HEAVY FEW BEATS of SILENCE.

LLOYD

Well if we can't stay here, let's go some place that's got beer at least.

PIERCE

I got a sixer in the fridge at the cave.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SHADOWMOUNTAIN - AFTERNOON

MAIN STREET has been CORDONED OFF and is PACKED with TOURISTS. The only car on the entire street is Teetle's CRUISER, parked in front of an ICE CREAM PARLOR. Teetle and Penelope come out of the shop, carrying ICE CREAM CONES. They stop on the sidewalk to take a few licks when Teetle glances down the street to his left. He narrows his eyes at Ichabod and Jessup entering the INTERNET CAFE. He starts to steer Penelope in that direction when a glance in the other direction reveals THIS TABLEAU: BAIN at the OUTSIDE COUNTER of CHEESEBURGER KING has DRAGGED the FEMALE CASHIER (40s) halfway through the ORDER WINDOW and is YELLING at her while Trey tries to break up the altercation.

TEETLE

Pen. Hold my cone and hop in the car. Stay put this time, you hear?

PENELOPE

That's all I do is hear.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHEESEBURGER KING - AFTERNOON

Bain has the BLUBBERING woman by her UNIFORM'S LAPELS.

BAIN

I said Cousins, bitch!

Bain lets her go when Teetle hurries up beside him.

TEETLE

What the hell is going on?

ANDY MOODY (40s), the burger stand's MANAGER, erupts ANGRILY through a side door, WAGGLING a finger at Bain.

MOODY

I want him arrested, Sheriff.
Assault and battery. Obstruction
of business. Loitering.

TEETLE

Easy. Take it down a notch, Moody.
I'm handling it.

MOODY

Handle his ass to jail. Mary's in
there crying her eyes out. My
whole line's in chaos. I'm
pressing charges.

TEETLE

Now, Moody. When your boy beat the
hell out of that Sanders kid over a
girl, and please, correct me if I'm
wrong, what you said was 'kids lose
their head, Teetle. Come on. He
who's without sin can throw the
first stone.' Something like that,
wasn't it?

Moody considers all this, finally shakes his head, WAGGLES
his finger at Bain one more time, then retreats back inside.
Bain is PACING, full of energy. Trey looks at the ground.

TEETLE (CONT'D)

Let me guess. You're Bain Bronson.

Bain glances at him but doesn't reply.

TREY

(nodding at Bain)

Sir, officer sir, we're looking for
his brother, my friend. I guess
we're upset. We're pretty sure he
went in a tourist cave...

BAIN

We know he did.

TREY

...and the only one not open to ask
at is run by somebody called
Cousins. We're just... looking for
them, to ask. I guess the stress
got to us. Sorry about the lady.

Teetle looks sympathetic until Bain says:

BAIN

What we're trying to do is impersonate competent law enforcement. Don't guess you got any ideas.

TEETLE

Wow. You're a piece of work. You know Mary in there was a friend of my dead wife and I'd just as soon bust your pretty face as help you. But I think that might just piss you off more so here's what's gonna happen. You two are walking down this street to a restaurant called the Dead Indian. You're ordering the chicken-fried bison because it's the best thing on the menu, and you're staying put while I go ask the Cousins about your brother. And if you don't stay put, or I get a radio call about any other hotspur activity, I'll haul you to the county line, give you a backwoods, law-enforcement ass whuppin and dump you in a ditch. You got it?

Bain stares at him for a few beats, then finally walks down the sidewalk, Trey following. Teetle turns to watch them and FLINCHES to find Penelope behind him with their ice cream.

TEETLE (CONT'D)

This jack-in-the-boxing out of the car's gotta stop. Come on, we got a new lead to chase, deputy.

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Melissa's sleeping like a log. The ALARM goes off and her hand shoots out from under the blankets like a snake, grabbing the clock and SMASHING IT against the wall.

EXT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - AFTERNOON

Pierce gets out of his pickup. Lloyd and Pete get out of Lloyd's pickup. Pierce stands in front of the cave's SHATTERED front door. The other two men join him.

PETE

And you still want me to believe y'all just found this ruby.

PIERCE
I still want you to shut the fuck
up. Y'all get the beer. I'll get
some shit to fix this.

INT. THE DEAD INDIAN RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

Bain and Trey sit at the BAR with STEAMING PLATES of CHICKEN-FRIED BISON before them.

TREY
(to the bison)
This doesn't look good at all.

BAIN
Law enforcement ass whuppin. I'd
like to see him try.

TREY
Bain, I think you need some cool
down time.

Don PUSHES through a pair of SWINGING DOORS that lead to the kitchen. He's carrying a RACK of glasses that he begins to unload close to where Bain and Trey are sitting.

BAIN
(getting angry)
Don't start faltering, Trey Bird.

TREY
Take it easy. Things just feel
ramped up too much.

BAIN
(loudly)
Don't start that either. My
fucking brother dropped off the
edge of the earth. I'll take it as
hard as I fucking please.

He SLAMS his FORK down on his plate, SPLATTERING GRAVY. That's when he notices Don STARING AT HIM. They meet eyes before Don looks away and hurries through the swinging doors.

TREY
Goddammit. Look at this mess.

BAIN
That's him.

TREY
Who?

BAIN
That skinny-ass kid. That was his
picture on the desk back at that
cave. We found us a Cousins.

Cody is passing by with DIRTY PLATES, headed to the dish pit.

BAIN (CONT'D)
(to Cody)
Hey. Hey waitress.

CODY
Hay's for horses. You can call me
Miss if you need something.

BAIN
Everybody's a critic in this town.
Listen, who's that dishwasher?
What's his name?

CODY
Why?

BAIN
He looks like a guy I used to know.
It'd be a small world. Sorry I
called you waitress.

CODY
It'd hafta be a small world because
he's never been six miles past the
county line. His name's Don
Cousins.

BAIN
Nope. Not him. Thanks, miss.

She exits through the swinging doors. Trey does a poor job
hiding his surprise.

TREY
Holy shit. Holy shit. Cousins.
What're we gonna do?

BAIN
We're gonna do what you said and
calm down, Trey Gun. Just eat your
buffalo and be cool.

INT. THE DEAD INDIAN RESTAURANT, DISH PIT - AFTERNOON

Cody's unloading the DIRTY DISHES into the dish pit where ORTIZ (40s) sprays them and loads them in a RACK. Don is pacing back and forth to one side.

CODY

Don, you look like Rain Man doing that.

Don leads her by the elbow through the back door.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE DEAD INDIAN RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

CODY

What the hell's going on?

DON

Listen, I gotta go. I can't be here anymore.

CODY

Okay this shit ends right now. You tell me what's going on or I'm gonna smack you in the face.

DON

I'll tell you but not here.

CODY

No. Here. Now.

DON

(forcefully)

Goddammit you're gonna listen to me this time, Cody. I ain't your fucking son, I'm your man.

Cody's taken aback by the force of this outburst.

CODY

Well, Don Cousins. You just got me a little wet. Let me transfer my tables. Lenny's gonna shit. It's Grand Central Station in there.

INT. JENNIFER'S INTERNET CAFE - AFTERNOON

A low counter and TEN DESKS with COMPUTERS occupy the small cafe. Ichabod and Jessup are the only customers at the desks, sipping coffee. JENNIFER (30s) the owner approaches.

JENNIFER
How y'all enjoying y'all's Fourth?

JESSUP
Oh that's kind of funny: You've mistaken us for patriots.

JENNIFER
(uncertainly)
I'm sorry?

JESSUP
We're not patriotic. We're...
(to Ichabod)
What's the opposite of patriotic?

ICHABOD
I don't know. Well-read?

JENNIFER
I was just being polite. Sorry if you thought I assumed...

ICHABOD
Don't blame your assumptions on us. If you want a proper answer to your question, here it is: Today is just another day. One more in a long line of days where I find myself molested at all points by the smaller vision of satisfied people. In fact the only holiday I ever observe is Halloween because at least on that day everybody else sees this country like I do all the time.

(motioning to himself)
Full of a few candymen.
(motioning to Jessup)
Their monsters.
(and finally at Jennifer)
And a whole bunch of fools.

Jennifer, after a few speechless beats, walks quietly away.

JESSUP
You feel better?

ICHABOD
My IQ's dropping every second I spend in this town.
(motioning to the computer)
(MORE)

ICHABOD (CONT'D)
At least these zeros keep
multiplying.

INT. THE DEAD INDIAN RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Cody rushes through the swinging doors and hurries into the busy dining room. She's too distracted to notice Bain and Trey's avid interest as she reaches LENNY (40s), a MANAGER, and the two have what looks like an ARGUMENT.

BAIN
Look at that, Trey Bird.

Cody then hurries to a SERVER (20s) and hands over a STACK of TICKETS. Then she takes off her APRON, and exits the room.

TREY
Oh, now she's suddenly leaving.
Coincidence? In a pig's eye.

Bain puts MONEY on the counter and they hurry out the door.

EXT. THE DEAD INDIAN RESTAURANT, PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Bain and Trey pop out the front door in time to see Cody crossing the street toward a FLASHY PICKUP. Bain and Trey sprint in the opposite direction where the HUMMER is parked.

INT. SHERIFF TEETLE MEYER'S CRUISER - AFTERNOON

Teetle parks in the Cousins' cave's lot. He sees the shattered door now covered with PLYWOOD, and Pierce measuring some BLUE PLASTIC to further weather-proof the wood. Lloyd and Pete stand idly by with beers, looking back at Teetle.

PENELOPE
You call that a chase? We didn't
do more than thirty miles an hour.

TEETLE
You get out of the car this time
and I will physically spank you.

EXT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - AFTERNOON

Teetle approaches the men.

TEETLE
Your place get a little boring,
Pete?
(MORE)

TEETLE (CONT'D)
(motioning to the door)
What happened there?

PIERCE
Me and Melissa had a fight.

TEETLE
Must have exhausted her. I just
stopped by your house. Her car's
in the driveway but she didn't
answer the door.

PIERCE
We had a long night.

A long BEAT as they all consider each other.

TEETLE
(to Pete)
Saw your friends going into the
cafe downtown. Guess they're
having internet problems in
Richmond.

PETE
Maybe they wanna watch the parade.

TEETLE
(shaking his head)
I need to find that goddamn truck,
I guess.

PIERCE
What truck?

TEETLE
The turnip truck that you all think
I fell off of yesterday.

PIERCE
Look, Sheriff. I had a falling out
with Don, okay? He quit and I
guess he got mad and did this last
night and I don't need him in
trouble with you. That's why we're
over here, me, Lloyd and Pete, to
fix it. That's it. No mysteries.

TEETLE
Well I guess I'll talk to him to
verify that. Where is he now?

PIERCE

Got a job washing dishes at the Dead Indian. He's probably there.

TEETLE

Shit. He don't wear a name tag does he?

PIERCE

(confused)

I don't know.

TEETLE

I'm fixing to ask you something. You ready?

PIERCE

(tentatively)

Yessss...?

TEETLE

You remember a kid in his early twenties dressed like a dandy and probably as smart-assed as they come coming in your cave yesterday?

PIERCE

No. I closed up at three o'clock.

TEETLE

Say that again. Be careful, now.

PIERCE

I closed up at three o'clock.

They stare at one another. Teetle checks behind him to make sure Penelope hasn't snuck out of the car.

TEETLE

I'm gonna be straight with you all. My law-man's suspicious dick is hard as a rock right now. I know one of those sonsofabitches at that cafe and he's about as bad as they come. I ain't above janitorial work. Part of the job. But you all get on the wrong side of that fella and I'm not sure there's gonna be a lot left to clean up.

PIERCE

We just met those two, Sheriff. Really. We ain't doing nothing but fixing this door.

Teetle looks to the others. They nod; he shakes his head.

TEETLE

All right. You buttered your
bread, you'll hafta lie in it.

He walks back to his cruiser, gets in and leaves.

INT. BAIN BRONSON'S HUMMER - AFTERNOON

The Hummer is parked out on the ROAD in view of Pierce's house. Don's flashy pickup is in the driveway.

BAIN

Fuck it. I'm going in.

TREY

Going in? This is the back woods,
Bain. Those fuckers have guns,
with licenses probably.

Bain SLAMS the STEERING WHEEL with his fist.

BAIN

Fuck fuck fuck!

TREY

Don't freak out when I say this,
okay, Bain? But seriously, I think
we're in over our heads here. We
need to go find that sheriff.

Bain doesn't answer. His face is full of EMOTION.

TREY (CONT'D)

Bain? Hey, don't look like that.

Bain gets out of the Hummer.

BAIN

(through the open window)
Like what? Like I know what's
happened? Because I do. That time
at the mall when the lights went
out? When Kevin got knocked out?
I felt cold like a camp fire that
still has a few coals in the
morning. But this... This is
empty, Trey. Like I'm a cup and
somebody's poured me out. Kevin's
not all right. I've been trying to
stay mad so I wouldn't have to
admit it but I can't anymore.

(MORE)

BAIN (CONT'D)

And you can't do what needs doing.
You're weak and that's cool because
if everybody was like me, the world
would be a shithole. Go find the
sheriff or go back to Miami or
whatever. You can't go with me
anymore.

TREY

You're scaring me, Bain.

BAIN

As usual. Bye, Trey.

He pats Trey's shoulder, then crosses the road. Trey has no response. He starts to get out, then doesn't. He starts to call after Bain, then doesn't. Finally, he just drives away.

EXT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - LATE AFTERNOON

The light is fading fast amid the crowding woods as Teetle drives out of the lot. Pierce, Lloyd and Pete share looks.

A PHONE RINGS in Pete's pocket, breaking the silence. Pete takes out an IPHONE and smiles at the face-plate.

PETE

(smiling)

Little less than three hours.
Ichy's good.

He answers the call and listens for a few seconds during which Pierce and Lloyd wait expectantly. Then he hangs up.

PIERCE

Well?

PETE

We got an issue. Ichabod's Prius
won't start.

PIERCE

What the hell did he say?

PETE

Said it's probably the fuel cell.

PIERCE

Don't make me slap you.

PETE

My half equals two point two
million.

FEW LONG BEATS of shocked and disbelieving silence.

PIERCE
Get the hell outta here.

PETE
Well we kinda have to. He needs to
get to some clearing depository
over in Carlton.

PIERCE
A depository? On July fourth? On
a Saturday?

PETE
These people don't bank like you.

Pierce looks at his watch.

PIERCE
Gonna be dark in a few hours.
Lloyd, go drive him wherever he
needs to go. You know why I can't.

PETE
I'll go with you.

PIERCE
I think you should stay right here.

PETE
And let them exchange everything
when I'm not around. Fuck you.

LLOYD
Let him come with me, Pierce. You
two are as paranoid as pot smokers.
You gotta follow me in Pierce's
truck, though. We ain't getting
stranded downtown in that 4th of
July crap with no vehicle.

Pierce takes the RUBY from his pocket and tosses it to Lloyd.

PIERCE
Keep it safe till he brings the
money. And you gotta come get me,
remember? Right after dark.

PETE
Boy, I hope y'all know what you're
doing.

EXT. PIERCE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Bain skirts the house and stops at the back door. He puts his ear to the door and FROWNS at muffled noise coming from the house. He tries the door, finds it open and walks in.

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE - EVENING

MONTAGE

1. Bain in the kitchen pulling a BUTCHER KNIFE out of a knife block on the counter.

2. Bain in the living room, frowning at the middle-class furniture.

3. Bain quietly opening the door of Melissa's room, seeing her on the bed STILL ASLEEP, then shutting the door.

4. Bain growing furious at the unmistakable NOISE of SEX behind the door at the end of the hallway.

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE, DON'S ROOM - EVENING

Cody is STRADDLED on Don, her BRA half on, ROCKING AWAY in ENERGETIC SEX.

CODY
(out of breath)
Ride it in, cowboy. Finish.

Don finishes and so does Cody. They collapse, panting next to each other. A HALF-FULL bottle of RED WINE and TWO WINE-STAINED PLASTIC CUPS sit on the night stand. Their CLOTHES are scattered over chairs, evidence of a rushed undressing.

DON
We're bad, ain't we? Doing that
after what I just told you.

CODY
No, baby. You needed that. You're
carrying to much. And if we're
being buck-ass honest, it turned me
on a little.
(bouncing up)
Not to mention you're rich. We're
going the opposite direction from
New York. Fuck New York.
Everybody I ever met from there
couldn't do nothing but talk about
cross streets.

DON

Moving away on my money. Guess we should talk about the future.

CODY

Don't even think about proposing. I'll tell your skinny ass no so fast you'll think I slapped you.

The playful look on her face changes right after she says this, replaced by pensiveness. Don notices.

DON

What? What's the matter?

She starts to answer but the door to the bedroom comes flying open, crashing into the small TABLE that holds the GHOST DETECTOR. It drops to the floor, hitting its ON SWITCH right next to Bain who stands in the doorway, BUTCHER KNIFE in hand.

The GHOST DETECTOR begins a HIGH BUZZ that signals the absolute presence of a ghost. Don looks in horror at the device, then at Bain.

BAIN

It smells like privates in here.

Don leaps to his feet, naked, but Bain's too fast. He jumps over the bed and SLAMS Don bodily into the wall, knocking him senseless. Cody, naked as well, jumps on Bain's back, tearing at his eyes. He lunges backward, landing on top of her on the bed, knocking the breath out of her. She releases him and he rolls over and puts the knife to her throat, his EYE RED and BLEEDING.

CUT TO:

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Bain sits on the coffee table, facing Cody and Don who are TIED to TWO CHAIRS with ELECTRIC CORD. They have DUCT TAPE over their mouths, too. Don is in his BOXER SHORTS; Cody is back in her BLACK DRESS. Bain has the BOTTLE of WINE in one hand and a PLASTIC CUP full of WINE in the other. He throws the wine in the cup into Don's face, waking him up.

BAIN

Have a nice nap?

INT. SHERIFF TEETLE MEYER'S CRUISER - AFTERNOON

The cruiser is parked in the parking lot of the Dead Indian. Penelope sits alone inside the car, HANDCUFFED to the door. Teetle exits the restaurant and gets back in the car.

PENELOPE

Those boys figure out that dishwasher was a Cousins?

TEETLE

It looks like it. None of the parties concerned are still here.

He UNLOCKS her HANDCUFFS.

PENELOPE

I could've slipped out of 'em. Didn't wanna hurt your feelings. What's our next move?

TEETLE

Radio a look-out for that yellow Hummer, I guess. Good luck in all this holiday traffic.

PENELOPE

That's it?

TEETLE

I ain't batman, Pen. Can't go chasing down people who ain't done nothing because I think they might.

PENELOPE

You gotta wait till they do something? That seems stupid.

TEETLE

From the mouth of babes.

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Bain abruptly HITS Don in the face. Cody surges against the tape over her mouth and her bonds.

BAIN

Don't like that, huh?

(grabbing Don's chin)

Back on me, big boy. I'm about to fuck you up.

He PUNCHES Don in the STOMACH, then SMACKS CODY across the face, then sits on the COFFEE TABLE and takes a SWIG of WINE.

BAIN (CONT'D)

What the hell kind of people are you? Fucking on top of a crime. I heard you through that door. Are you like natural born killers?

He SLAPS Cody again.

BAIN (CONT'D)

But enough about us. Let's talk about Kevin. You know who he is? He's only a fucking prince. He's only my best fucking friend. The funny thing is, I should hate him. He's better at everything, sports, grades, girls. But guess what? You'd never know it from talking to him. Humble as your middle-class house here. And funny, and fucking smart. And when I went out for drama in college, when everybody else tried to talk me out of it, when everybody else knew the real reason I was signing up was to have something that Kevin couldn't have, or at least wouldn't... even then, you know who the only person was that told me he admired me for taking on the starving life of the theater? It was Kev-bo. The Big Kevination. Kevin fucking Bronson.

He SLAPS Cody across the face REPEATEDLY until Don, finally revived from his beating, strains against his tape and bonds.

Bain puts the KNIFE to Cody's throat.

BAIN (CONT'D)

I'm gonna take that tape off and you're gonna tell me where my fucking brother is, bitch? Or I slit your pretty throat.

He rips off the tape.

CODY

Look, he stopped by the Dead Indian, okay? He hit on me, and Don got in a fight with him.

(MORE)

CODY (CONT'D)

I thought you and him were gonna
attack us or something for revenge.
That's why we left earlier so fast.

Bain studies her for a second, then STABS DON IN THE LEG.
BLOOD SQUIRTS OUT and Don SHOUTS WITH PAIN.

BAIN

That was pretty quick, given the
extreme circumstances, but the next
lie earns him a stab in the cock.

Cody takes a few moments to gather herself.

CODY

Can I have some wine?

Bain frowns, then pours wine into his cup and clumsily holds
it to Cody's mouth. She SPITS it back out into Bain's face.

CODY (CONT'D)

Suck my dick, you crazy bastard.

Bain wipes wine from his face and YANKS the KNIFE out of
Don's leg. Don HOWLS.

BAIN

I can't tell which one of you is
the bigger bitch. Let's find out.

He moves toward Cody with the KNIFE.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SHADOWMOUNTAIN - EVENING

The PARADE moves along Main Street. People line the
SIDEWALKS, WAVING FLAGS, SNAPPING PICTURES.

INT. SHERIFF TEETLE MEYER'S CRUISER - NIGHT

Teetle and Penelope sit inside the cruiser in the bank's
parking lot. A CROWD has GATHERED for the imminent FIREWORKS
SHOW. They both FLINCH when there's a KNOCK on Teetle's
window. Teetle rolls down the window to find Trey FIDGETING
just outside the car, obviously scared.

TEETLE

What's the matter, son?

TREY

I think you should go to the
Cousins house. I think something
bad's gonna happen.

EXT. PARKING LOT BEHIND THE INTERNET CAFE - EVENING

Lloyd, Pete, Ichabod and Jessup stand around the Prius in the cafe's small back lot. Lloyd holds out his KEYS.

LLOYD

I can probably fix your Coupe de
Jap if you give me half an hour.

Jessup takes the keys and gets in the truck.

ICHABOD

Or we could waste that half hour
discovering you can't.

He gets in Lloyd's truck and looks back at Lloyd and Pete.
Then he takes a CARD from his pocket and hands it to Lloyd.

PETE

What the hell's that?

ICHABOD

My phone number.

Lloyd looks at the card. All that's on it is a PICTURE of a
RACCOON and a PHONE NUMBER.

PETE

Now just a minute.

ICHABOD

Easy, Peter. I've smelled the wide-
eyed stink before so I'll just
repeat myself: I don't care what
you do to each other but that ruby
better be here when we get back.
Should be only a few hours.

They drive off. Lloyd and Pete consider one another.

PETE

I'm just after my half. That's it.

LLOYD

He's trying to fuck with us. Let
me buy you a drink while we wait.

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Bain's approaching Cody with the knife.

DON

Promise you won't hurt her.

BAIN
(stopping)
I'll do whatever the fuck I want,
redneck. You got two seconds.

DON
Your brother. He came into our
cave, our tourist cave where you
can pan for precious jewels and
gold and he found one, a jewel, and
my brother wouldn't let him keep it
and they got in a fight and he hit
his head, your brother, and he, he
didn't, you know, make it.

Bain's in shock for a few seconds, blinking, trying to catch
up to what he's just heard.

BAIN
(without turning)
Jesus. I didn't think... I thought
he was just maybe...

He moves into the kitchen. The BACK DOOR OPENS and CLOSES.

DON
Can you get loose?

CODY
They're too tight. I been trying.
Are you okay?

DON
Stabs fucking hurt. It's like an
atomic wasp.

Cody has begun to cry.

DON (CONT'D)
Easy, sweetheart. Take it easy.

CODY
I French-kissed Pierce.

DON
You what?

CODY
I'm so fucking sorry. I've never
felt so bad about anything in my
whole life. It just kind of
happened, baby. It was just like
ten seconds, maybe twelve, then we
knew it was stupid and stopped.
(MORE)

CODY (CONT'D)

But how bad I feel... I think I'm
in love with you, goddammit.

A conflicting mix of emotions seizes Don's face, confusion,
jealousy, anger and, finally, delight, despite the situation.

DON

Finally.

The back door BANGS and Bain rushes back into the room.

BAIN

What are the rules to your cave,
fuck face?

DON

What? Um, you buy a pan and use it
in these sluices we set up. We put
some stuff in there for people to
find and they get to keep them.

BAIN

So the rule is if you pay and find
something, you get to keep it?

DON

Look, I see what you're saying.
It's kind of beside the point now.

Bain lifts the FRONT LEGS of Don's chair and TIPS it over.

BAIN

Beside the point? Beside the
point?

He KICKS Don savagely. Cody SCREAMS CURSES at him.

BAIN (CONT'D)

Beside the fucking point?!

He stops. Don wheezes on the carpet, COUGHING UP BLOOD.
Bain catches his breath, then kneels, putting the KNIFE to
Don's THROAT. Cody CONTINUES TO SCREAM so that Bain has to
put his MOUTH to Don's ear to be heard under the YELLING.

BAIN (CONT'D)

Where is my good brother Kevin?
What did you and your goddamn
brother do with him?

Don wheezes, BLUBBERING through BLOOD.

BAIN (CONT'D)

Find your tongue, son.

DON
(blubbering)
The dump. The landfill off Route
Twelve. South.

BAIN
You put him in a dump?

Bain stares in RAGE for a second, then he SLITS DON'S THROAT.
BLOOD GUSHES over the floor and Cody, HORRIFIED, finally
STOPS SCREAMING. Bain looks at her.

BAIN (CONT'D)
(to Cody)
Now you can live with it, too.

He leaves the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. PIERCE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Teetle is walking cautiously toward the back door of the house. When he gets close, the door flies open and Bain stands there, BLOODY BUTCHER KNIFE in hand, wildly staring back at him. They're frozen for a few seconds, then Teetle goes for his GUN.

Bain's fast, though: He LEAPS off the stoop and TACKLES Teetle, punching him with his free hand.

BAIN
Ass whuppin, huh? This what you
meant?

He punches him twice more then freezes at a SCREAM right in front of him. Penelope's once again gotten out of the car and is SCREECHING at the top of her lungs at the sight of her granddad taking a beating.

Bain jumps up and runs to Don's pickup. Penelope kneels next to Teetle whose head lolls in a daze.

PENELOPE
Sit tight, pop. I'll go radio.

She runs back to the cruiser.

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Melissa enters the living room from the hallway, groggy-eyed.

MELISSA
What the hell's all this noise?
What did y'all--

She stops, CHOKING back a YELP at the GORY SIGHT of Don, DEAD in a POOL OF BLOOD, and Cody dull-eyed, slumped in a chair. She rushes to Cody and UNTIES her.

MELISSA (CONT'D)
Cody, what happened?

Cody goes to Don, kneels over him, smooths his hair.

CODY
I watched his throat open. It opened so easy, like raw chicken.

MELISSA
Oh god. Oh these stupid, idiot men. What did they do?

She kneels by Cody, hugs her. Cody's not even crying, still in shock.

MELISSA (CONT'D)
Cody. We should an ambulance.

CODY
For what.

EXT. ATTOTOC COUNTY LANDFILL - NIGHT

Pierce passes the landfill's UNATTENDED GATE and pulls off the road a quarter-mile after it. He revs the Range Rover's engine and GUNS it at the CHAIN-LINK FENCE that surrounds the landfill's perimeter. The FENCE SPRINGS apart at the IMPACT.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATTOTOC COUNTY LANDFILL - NIGHT

The Range Rover JOUNCES up the hill where Pierce buried the body. Pierce parks and gets out with a WALKY-TALKY in his hand. He pushes the device's PAGE BUTTON and a MUFFLED SERIES OF BEEPS erupts from the trash. He repeats this, following the resulting BEEPS from the WALKY-TALKY buried with the corpse. Finally he finds it. He STANDS UP some DEBRIS to mark the spot, then goes to the Range Rover and drives it over. He gets out, opens the back and DUMPS the other BARREL INSIDE the Range Rover and OVER the area. Even in the dark, it's obvious from its thickness that the liquid in this barrel isn't motor oil, but GASOLINE.

Pierce moves off to the edge of the TRASH HILL and looks back to the road, waiting to see LIGHTS before lighting the fire.

EXT. DON'S FLASHY PICKUP - NIGHT

Bain drives Don's truck down Route Twelve to the landfill.

INT. DEW DROP INN - NIGHT

Pete and Lloyd sit at the bar with EMPTY SHOT GLASSES AND BEER BOTTLES before them. Jan brings them a fresh round.

PETE

Boy, you were some piece of sonofabitch back in them days. What was that nickname you had in high school?

LLOYD

The Hymen Buster. I forget who started that one.

(beat)

But those days are over. You know, I told Pierce I moved back to be a part of the family and I guess I haven't really thought a whole lot about what that might mean.

PETE

You mean like not boning his wife?

LLOYD

I'm talking about looking at how I treated the man for thirty years. How I treated everybody in my family. Which isn't really something I've ever done. Thing is, when I decided to move back, I thought about it like I always do. Just gotta put my head down and keep asking until whoever it is gets tired of listening to you and just says fuck it, okay. It's sad to be a grown-ass man and realize that's your philosophy on life.

PETE

Well it works don't it?

LLOYD

So does killing, Pete, but that don't mean it's right.

PETE
Now who said anything about
killing.

LLOYD
I just meant hypothetically. I'm
talking about sacrifice in general.
That's the problem with Pierce and
my mom and dad and, shit, everybody
I've ever known. I've never
sacrificed anything so somebody
else could benefit. I guess that's
what's been on my mind.

EXT. ATTOTOC COUNTY LANDFILL - NIGHT

Pierce sees HEAD-LIGHTS nearing the landfill.

PIERCE
Finally.

He IGNITES a PIECE of TRASH as a SIGNAL.

INT. DON'S FLASHY PICKUP - NIGHT

Bain stops at the GATE to the landfill, sees it's heavily pad-
locked and then catches sight of Pierce's SIGNAL.

BAIN
Oh I'm coming, motherfucker.

He drives down the road and spots the BROKEN FENCE.

EXT. ATTOTOC COUNTY LANDFILL - NIGHT

Pierce continues to WAVE the BURNING BRAND as the VEHICLE
LIGHTS WEND through the HILLS and DELLS of TRASH. The truck
stops at the base of Pierce's hill. All its LIGHTS go off.

PIERCE
(mistaking it for Don)
Hurry up, Don! We ain't got all
night!

Bain doesn't answer of course. He CLIMBS SLOWLY up the
hillside. Gradually, Pierce can tell from the SILHOUETTE who
it is. Bain enters the LIGHT from Pierce's TORCH.

BAIN
Don? Was that his name?

Pierce notices the BLOODY KNIFE in Bain's hand.

PIERCE
What did you do?

BAIN
Me? Oh I don't know. Justice?
Lead the way to my brother, you
sonofabitch.

Pierce considers the knife, then leads Bain to the Range Rover. He points to the BAG OF TRASH that marks the body.

PIERCE
It was all an accident.

BAIN
Well this isn't.

Bain SLASHES at Pierce but Pierce anticipates it, dodging to the side and only receiving a SMALL CUT on the shoulder. Bain CHASES Pierce around the Range Rover and Pierce TOSSES his BURNING BRAND into the GAS-SOAKED VEHICLE. It ERUPTS in a WHOOSH of FLAME. The BALL OF FIRE SINGES BAIN and he goes to his HANDS and KNEES, COUGHING and BLINKING. Pierce comes around the BURNING VEHICLE WITH a DULL LAWN-MOWER BLADE in his hand but as he takes a swing, Bain rolls with the impact, pinning the blade under his arm and STABBING PIERCE in the SHOULDER. Pierce falls backward, COUGHING at the BLOW.

The fire from the Range Rover has caught the GAS and OIL beneath it. Pierce sits down heavily, KNIFE PROTRUDING from his arm, as Bain sprints into the fire and DRAGS KEVIN'S CORPSE out of the flames.

BAIN (CONT'D)
Bury him at the dump, huh
motherfucker. Just like that.
Like a piece of trash.

EXT. PARKING LOT BEHIND THE CAFE - NIGHT

Lloyd and Pete approach Pierce's truck, both acting more drunk than they are. When they get close to the truck, Pete suddenly puts Lloyd in a HEAD-LOCK.

LLOYD
What the hell're you doing?

PETE
You think I was born yesterday?
You think I ain't had somebody try
to ambush me before?

Pete BANGS Lloyd's HEAD into the door of Pierce's truck.

LLOYD

Let me go, you old bastard. You
mess up my hair, I'll kill you.

Pete BANGS Lloyd's HEAD into the door again.

PETE

Sitting there talking about
sacrifice and killing being okay.
You think I'm an idiot?

Pete BANGS Lloyd's HEAD into the door a third time.

LLOYD

That's enough, grandpa. I'm
holding back because you're old but
I'm fixing to suplex you.

PETE

Try it.

Pete tries to bang Lloyd again into the truck but Lloyd's had enough. In a feat of wrestling mastery, he lifts Pete over his head in a classic suplex, dropping him backwards onto the hard cement of the parking lot. Pete lands with a HORRID NOISE of CRACKING BONES. Lloyd gets to his feet slowly, a little dazed himself from the impact. He leans over Pete but leaps backward as Pete COUGHS up a SPOUT of BLOOD.

PETE (CONT'D)

(whispery)

I can't feel my face.

He coughs up a second, gurgling mess of blood.

PETE (CONT'D)

(whispery)

Where's Lori? Where's my pup?

Pete suddenly DIES. Lloyd bends over him, checks his pulse.

LLOYD

Stupid fucking idiot. Jesus.

He digs Pete's IPHONE out of his pocket, then gets in Pierce's truck and drives away.

EXT. ATTOTOC COUNTY LANDFILL - NIGHT

Bain has dragged his brother's corpse clear of the flames. He stands over him with the lawn-mower blade Pierce dropped.

Pierce is nowhere to be seen.

BAIN

Come out, murderer. We both know
neither of us is running.

Pierce FLIES from the dark, the KNIFE from his shoulder now in his hand, stabbing at Bain's face. Bain's fast, though, dodging it and rolling with Pierce's impact. They WRESTLE, Bain blocking the knife from his throat with the lawn-mower blade.

BAIN (CONT'D)

You took my brother, I took yours.
You picked the wrong twin, man.

PIERCE

I didn't pick anything.

Bain lunges suddenly, kicking Pierce off of him.

INT. PIERCE'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Lloyd BARRELS up to the broken fence at the landfill, the fire blazing in the distance. He launches the truck through the ditch and fence.

EXT. ATTOTOC COUNTY LANDFILL - NIGHT

Pierce swings the knife at Bain. Bain ducks it and smacks Pierce in the face with the flat part of the lawn-mower blade. Pierce goes down. He FEELS something HARD under his good shoulder and rolls, FAKING PAIN, to grab it: It's a BOWLING BALL.

BAIN

I never killed before.

Bain LUNGES at Pierce with the BLADE. Pierce rolls up and HEAVES the BOWLING BALL at Bain, hitting him in the face. Bain's NOSE CRACKS and BLOOD SPURTS out in a JET. He backpedals and sits down hard, clutching his face. Pierce YANKS the KNIFE from his shoulder and moves toward Bain. He hasn't noticed the approach of another vehicle nor the FIGURE mounting the hill of trash.

LLOYD

Pierce!

Pierce FREEZES, then turns to find Lloyd approaching him.

PIERCE
He's dead, ain't he? Don?

LLOYD
What? Pierce, people are gonna be coming. We gotta go.

PIERCE
Not before this piece of shit dies.

LLOYD
Pierce. It's time to stop. Come on. You ain't evil.

PIERCE
Not totally. But about thirty-five percent and that's enough to get this job done.

While they've been talking, Bain has collected himself enough to raise the bowling ball and LEAP to his feet.

LLOYD
Pierce!

He's too late: Pierce takes a BLOW to the head and drops like a bag of rocks. Lloyd lunges at Bain and sends him backwards into the MASSIVE RANGE ROVER FIRE. Bain BURSTS into FLAMES. HE STUMBLES over the OIL- and GASOLINE-SATURATED ground, increasing the fire, A SHRIEKING, BURNING MESS OF MELTING FLESH.

Lloyd CHECKS PIERCE'S PULSE and NODS in RELIEF. He drapes Pierce over his shoulder and his half-way down the hillside of trash when an EXPLOSION sends FIERY RUBBISH in a shower around him and the pickups at the base. The TRASH in the bed of Pierce's truck erupts into flame. Lloyd dodges the meteors, gets Pierce into Don's truck and barrels away as his Pierce's truck EXPLODES.

EXT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - NIGHT

Lloyd parks Don's truck in the lot, Pierce still passed out in the passenger seat.

LLOYD
It's a crying shame I can't say this to your waking face, but I'm sorry, buddy. I've never had the right words.

He uses the dome light to see the face of the IPHONE. It's password encoded.

Lloyd thinks for a minute, then enter L O R I. The phone unlocks and he dials Ichabod's number from the card he got. The action brings to mind the ruby and LLOYD'S FACE COLLAPSES with HORRIBLE APPREHENSION. He bangs his hands all over his jeans pockets but in vain.

The RUBY FELL OUT at some point. He stares wide-eyed back at the FIRE BLAZING in the distance.

ICHABOD (O.S.)
 (from the iphone)
 Good timing. We just got back.
 Where are you?

EXT. PIERCE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Penelope's in Teetle's CRUISER. Cody lies on the back seat of a SECOND CRUISER. Melissa stands with Teetle, whose face is BRUISED PURPLE, and DEPUTY FITZHUGH (20s).

FITZHUGH
 It's a four alarm, no doubt. I could see it from downtown. And the fire trucks and patrol cars are all snagged in the parade lot, fireworks fixing to start. Crowds. It's a shit-show, pardon my French.

TEETLE
 (touching his nose)
 I guess I got mine for playing this thing passive. Lambert's on his way. Nobody goes in but him, you got it?
 (to Melissa)
 You still gonna tell me you don't know what this mess is all about?

Melissa looks away.

EXT. THE COUSINS' TOURIST CAVE - NIGHT

Lloyd's truck, driven by Jessup, Ichabod riding shotgun, pulls into the parking lot, shining its high-beams on Lloyd who stands a few yards from his truck, hands in his pockets.

Jessup and Ichabod dismount, leaving the headlights on. The three men consider each other.

LLOYD
 I ain't got it.

ICHABOD

You could've told me that on the phone.

LLOYD

And then what? Run? I bet your muscle there is faster than me.

JESSUP

I am.

ICHABOD

Where is it?

Lloyd points in the direction of the now VAST GLOW from the landfill fire, coloring the night sky.

LLOYD

It's a dump fire. Might burn for a week. Do rubies melt?

ICHABOD

Oh Jesus. It should've been criminals who found it. They're so much more reliable.

He reaches back into the truck, takes out his BLACK BAG and gets the DIGITAL CAMERA out of it.

LLOYD

You gonna take my picture?

ICHABOD

Yes. Once you're dead. They'll want proof, the people whose money I have to return. There are reputations involved. I warned you this wasn't Sesame Street.

Jessup has produced his GUN while nobody was looking.

LLOYD

Hey, slow down. We'll find it.

ICHABOD

Find it? You can't be that stupid. It would take a decade. And it'll be so cauterized with every scrap of plastic, metal and chemical around it that it might as well be invisible.

LLOYD

We could at least try.

Jessup SHOOTs LLOYD. He stumbles backward, collapses to the ground.

ICHABOD

Novices.

Jessup walks forward, stands over Lloyd and SHOOTs him twice more.

Ichabod approaches, fiddling with the camera. Jessup looks toward Don's pickup and sees PIERCE, AWAKE, staring back at him from inside. Pierce ducks instinctively as Jessup fires his gun, shattering the window. Jessup rushes to the truck, throws open the door to find the cab empty, the passenger door open on the other side. He races around the truck to find the lot empty as well. He looks out at the trees. Then suddenly he looks down, realizing his mistake.

JESSUP

Shit.

A TIRE IRON slams into his leg from underneath the truck, CRACKING his SHIN BONE so violently it RIPS HIS PANTS. Jessup collapses, gun clattering over the gravel as Pierce crawls out from under the truck. Jessup sits up but Pierce slams the tire iron in his face, CRUSHING HIS NOSE in a spray of blood. Jessup falls backward, not getting up this time.

Pierce turns to find Ichabod aiming Jessup's pistol at him.

PIERCE

Well. Go on. Do it.

ICHABOD

I'm not gonna shoot you.

(holding up the camera)

I've got what I need to make things right with my people.

PIERCE

Oh just shoot me. I'm sure you know a dozen guys like your friend there and I don't wanna sit around and wait for them.

ICHABOD

Friend? Who are you people? I'm a businessman. You keep my name out of it and we'll be right as the fucking rain with each other.

Suddenly, above distant SHADOWMOUNTAIN, a FIREWORK SIZZLES INTO THE NIGHT SKY AND BURSTS into a MILLION PIECES of BEAUTIFUL RED, WHITE AND BLUE. More FIREWORKS FOLLOW, POPPING ONE AFTER ANOTHER.

Ichabod starts to get in Lloyd's truck.

PIERCE
Hey! What if I find it?

ICHABOD
(nodding at Lloyd)
Jesus. Were you related to that idiot?

PIERCE
Yeah. But what if I do find it?

ICHABOD
Wow. Unbelievable. Um, give me a call then? He's got my card still.

He drives off. Pierce goes to Lloyd and finds Ichabod's CARD in his shirt pocket. He stands above his dead brother, TIRE IRON dangling from his hand, and ONE SOB ESCAPES him. He bites down the others that try to follow, then looks at the sky. The FIREWORKS GO ON AND ON above him.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. SHADOWMOUNTAIN - DAY

BRIGHT SUNSHINE coats the GREEN and PURPLE mountain in the distance. It's a BEAUTIFUL DAY. OUR VIEWPOINT PULLS BACK AND LOWERS to reveal the Attotoc County landfill, or what's left of it, a barren moon-scape of powder and heaped debris. PIERCE and MELISSA trudge through the mess with SHOVELS. FACE-MASKS cover their mouths and noses.

Melissa suddenly throws her mask off, drops her shovel and plods over to their truck. She gets in it and stares out the windshield. Pierce watches her for a second, then takes off his mask and goes to the truck.

PIERCE
I told you. You don't have to be out here. You don't have to stay with me at all.

MELISSA

Yes I do because that's my goddamn penance. And I know we're gonna find it, too. Not finding it and giving up would let us off the hook.

(she starts to cry)

We're gonna find it and get a shit ton of money for it and then sit in our nice home with all our nice things and try not to look at each other so we don't have to remember everybody's that fucking gone.

She cries for a few seconds, then says bitterly:

MELISSA (CONT'D)

That's gonna be our goddamn penance, Pierce.

Pierce shakes his head, trying not to cry.

They share a few seconds of silence, then Pierce says:

PIERCE

I want you to look at that.

Melissa looks up to where he's pointing.

MELISSA

What?

PIERCE

You can see that whole fucking mountain from here.

They gaze at the BEAUTIFUL, WOODED mountain rearing in the distance.

FADE OUT.

THE END