

APPALACHIA

THE SHOOTING SCRIPT
by Michael McGruther

THE BUFFALO NICKEL COMPANY

FADE IN: EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

A quiet, long stretch of rural road running straight through a hilly pass. The sun beats down on sagging trees. Birds soar aimlessly across the morning sky.

In the distance WE SEE a GLIMMER OF LIGHT. Something reflects in the sun. It twinkles and shines brightly.

CLOSER: We now see that it's an old fashioned SILVER BUS, barreling it's way down the road. Driving straight at us until it fills the frame and is all we can see.

MOVING with the BUS as it climbs slowly to a peak in the road.

PULLING UP, while the BUS begins it's descent down the other side, where WE SEE a small, forgotten TOWN deep in the valley below.

HOLD ON: A sign that reads: WELCOME TO SNYDERSVILLE. The BUS turns down an exit ramp, where it rolls along a desolate street.

WE PASS an old abandoned BOWLING ALLEY which looks like it barely survived a raging fire. And a small roadside LIQUOR STORE that could easily be one hundred years old.

Deeper into town, the small homes look cluttered and unkempt.

An old CRAGGY MAN works on a truck that's propped up on cinder blocks on his front lawn. He sees the BUS cruising by and stares blankly as it passes.

WE PASS a 24-hour GAS STATION. And a HIGH SCHOOL that looks more like a small prison: all sharp angles and yellowish colored brick.

As the BUS passes by, WE HOLD at this intersection for a moment, where WE SEE a POOR TEENAGE BOY removing a STOP SIGN from it's pole with a pair of pliers. He's quick and agile about it too, like this is not his first time committing this crime. With the sign under arm, he takes off running down the street and out of sight.

EXT. DOWNTOWN -- MOMENTS LATER

Finally, we're downtown, and there's not much to see here either. A small two story BANK and a few "MOM & POP" stores. But besides that, just a bunch of old worn out buildings with "For Sale" or "Out of Business" signs in the windows.

The BUS pulls up in front of a hole-in-the-wall BARBER SHOP.

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The doors open. The DRIVER announces.

BUS DRIVER
Snydersville!

WE HOLD HERE. Nobody gets on and nobody gets off. After a long moment of idling, the doors hiss closed and the BUS pulls away.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE ON: FAST FEET PEDALING A BICYCLE

A pair of really old, really used, black CONVERSE ALL STARS pump at a dizzying pace. The shoelaces are not even tied.

PULLING BACK: PETE McCLOSKEY, 17, is in a hurry. His backpack is slung over his shoulder. He sees that the road is clear and crosses the street, shooting right in front of the BUS'S path.

NEW SHOT: The HORN BLOWS and tires SCREECH as the BUS breaks hard. PETE hops the curb on the other side and rides all the way up a long sidewalk towards the school - never looking back.

WIDER: The BUS starts to roll again. And when it passes WE HOLD ON the empty pole that used to hold a STOP SIGN.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL -- BIKE RACK

PETE weaves his chain through the front and back tires before securing it with an industrial strength lock that he pulls from his backpack. He closes his backpack and hurries off towards the entrance.

INT: HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

PETE hurries down the hall. He passes a small group of girls who are busy gossiping. When they see PETE, they move away from him, put off by his presence.

PETE ignores them and goes straight to his locker. He spins the combination and opens the door.

PETE'S POV: Painted in bright red letters in the inside of his locker are the words "SCUM BAG".

NEW SHOT: He stares at the words, anger building on his face. He looks both ways down the hall to see who did it. Not quite sure who it was, he slams the door shut.

INT. HOMEROOM

PETE'S sitting down in the back, slumping in his chair, fidgeting with a pen. Kids are hanging out and talking to each other. A portly girl is reading a paperback romance novel.

THE MORNING BELL RINGS

From across the classroom, CHAD PARKES stares at PETE. He bites off the corner of a piece of paper in order to make a spit wad. He's got beady eyes and a tight, short buzz cut.

PETE eyes him back. CHAD loads a straw with his spit wad and mouths this question: "You wanna die?"

WILL CLEVELAND, fat and messy, taps on CHAD's shoulder and points out the window.

WILL
Check it out.

EXT. HIGHWAY

A group of STATE PRISONERS are working under heavy guard. It's a chain gang of rugged men who wield dull gardening tools as they attempt to trim the tall grass that lines the empty highway right across from the school.

INT. HOMEROOM

CHAD spins around and eyes PETE again.

CHAD
Hey, McCloskey. Check out the lifers out there on the highway.

PETE sits up and peers out the window, as does everyone else in the classroom. PETE looks bothered by what he sees.

WILL
Shit. They look like some really tough dudes. I'll bet some of them even killed people before.

CHAD
Hey, Pete. You know what a killer looks like don't cha? Show us all which one of them's the killer, McCloskey.

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Students nervously laugh at CHAD's comment and glance uncomfortably at PETE, who stares down at the pen he's been fiddling with in his hands. His face is now bright red with embarrassment.

MR. TOBIN, the homeroom teacher, moves quickly to the window and pulls the shade.

MR. TOBIN

Alright Mr. Parks that's enough!
One more comment out of you and
you'll be taking a trip right on
down to the office.

The room falls silent. PETE mulls in his embarrassment, shaking his head in disbelief.

PRINCIPAL DAY (O.C.)

Good morning boys and girls.
Please stand for the pledge of
allegiance.

Chairs slide out, throats are cleared. With the Principal, the class begins to recite the pledge.

PETE

I pledge allegiance, to the flag of
the United States of America...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

PRINCIPAL DAY is seated in front of the communications terminal, finishing the morning announcements. In the background WE SEE a beautiful, almost angelic YOUNG GIRL sorting through a stack of papers on the reception desk.

The RECEPTIONIST, an elderly woman with ugly, out-dated, horn-rimmed glasses is busy hammering away at her keyboard.

There's also a poor, scrappy looking BOY, the same one we saw stealing the Stop sign before, seated at a desk which faces a wall with nothing to look at except a silly poster that promotes proper hygiene.

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PRINCIPAL DAY

(Into Microphone)

And remember, if anyone is caught smoking in either the boys or girls lavatory, it's an immediate week of in-school suspension, no questions asked. Thank you and have a productive day.

INSERT: A cartoon poster of a two kids. One is of a messy boy and he's all by himself, with no friends. The other is a clean cut boy, whose squeaky appearance has won him many admirers.

The BOY at the desk stares up at the poster and looks as if he's going to fall asleep at any moment.

PRINCIPAL DAY leans back and runs his hands through his hair as the young girl, MORGAN DOWNER, approaches and sets the stack of papers in front of him.

MORGAN

These are all checked and sorted. I'm going over to Mrs. Wilkens remedial math class now, she said I could help some of her students out. Do you need anything else around here?

PRINCIPAL DAY picks up the papers and fingers through them.

PRINCIPAL DAY

Nope. This was a big help. Thanks again, Morgan.

He holds the papers up in the air.

MORGAN

If there's anything else I can do, just let me know.

MORGAN'S a natural beauty -- long straight hair, smooth skin and soft green eyes. She strides with a certain kind of class that is unusual in people her age.

PRINCIPAL DAY watches as she walks out the door. Then he shoots a quick glance at the BOY facing the wall, then to the RECEPTIONIST.

PRINCIPAL DAY

Why can't they all be like her?

The RECEPTIONIST looks over her ugly glasses and smirks.

INT. REMEDIAL MATH CLASS

There are no windows to look out of and students are busy trying to work out simple equations. The room is quiet. PETE is sitting all alone in the back, staring aimlessly out the door when MORGAN walks in.

His face lights up. He watches as she talks softly to the teacher for a moment. She looks around the room for someone she might be able help. She catches PETE's eye and moves to him.

MORGAN

(Softly)

Hi. Do you need any help? I can help you if you're getting confused.

PETE awkwardly straightens up his papers and books, making like he's got everything under control.

PETE

Uh, no thanks. I'm fine, but thanks anyway.

He pretends to get back to work. MORGAN scans the room for anyone else who might need assistance. PETE eyes her romantically as she walks away.

INT. CAFETERIA -- LATER

A loud busy room filled with noisy kids eating lunch.

PETE walks through the room with his lunch tray in hand and moves to a table near the windows where no one else is seated.

CLOSER: He shakes his chocolate milk carton and opens it up. Out the window, WE SEE a light blue STATE PRISON BUS idling in the school's parking lot. PETE notices and a panicked look crosses his face.

He glances over his shoulder to see if anyone else is looking. They're not. PETE stares out the window again, fixed on the PRISONERS as they are led single file onto the BUS.

EXT. PARKING LOT

An armed GUARD signals for a FEMALE TEACHER to stay back as he makes sure all of his men are loaded on.

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The TEACHER, with a stack of books in hand, waits patiently off to the side. One PRISONER whistles and winks at her while rubbing his crotch. The other PRISONERS laugh. She looks away, disgusted.

Finally, the BUS is loaded up and the GUARD gets back on. The doors close and it slowly pulls away.

INT. CAFETERIA

CLOSE ON: PETE, as he breaths a huge sigh of relief and begins to eat his lunch.

INT. PRINCIPAL DAY'S PRIVATE OFFICE - SAME

PRINCIPAL DAY is eating lunch at his desk. The punished boy, RICKY LARSON, is there too. After PRINCIPAL DAY licks his fingers clean, he pulls a folder out of his filing cabinet. RICKY watches nervously as PRINCIPAL DAY skins through the files.

PRINCIPAL DAY

Do you know what I have here,
Ricky?

RICKY

Would that be...my permanent
record?

PRINCIPAL DAY

That's right. Your permanent
record. And from the looks of it,
you're future's not sounding too
good.

PRINCIPAL DAY begins to read from a long list.

PRINCIPAL DAY

Absent more than you're here,
failing in every class except home
economics, and too much of a class
clown to stay out of my office more
than three days a week. Do you
enjoy facing the wall all day?

RICKY looks indifferent.

RICKY

I've learned it's better to keep
clean or other kids might not wanna
be my friends.

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PRINCIPAL DAY

Now I'm trying to level with you here, son. You can show me a little respect. I'm trying to get you pointed in a direction that's not back here next fall. Because frankly, we don't want you. Maybe you can look into a vocational school. Something in heavy equipment or welding? Small fellas like yourself make good welders.

RICKY lowers his head. He clasps his hands together and then, with mock sincerity, looks back up.

RICKY

I'm real sorry Mr. Day. It's just that my home life is such a wreck. And with a wife and two kids to feed...I just can't find the time to behave in school. This is where I come to relax.

PRINCIPAL DAY stares RICKY down. This is the end of a long on going battle between these two.

PRINCIPAL DAY

Alright Ricky. Have it your way. Keep thinking the whole world is a big stupid joke. Wait and see what it gets you. A bunch of nothing.

(Beat)

Now get out of my office and get back to your chair. I'm through trying to help you.

RICKY stands up and with shoulders slumped, walks back to the chair facing the wall and slides down into it.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN -- AFTERNOON

PETE rides his bike through town. He passes the POST OFFICE, the BANK, the VFW -- and each becomes like the image of a postcard of small town American life. Only a little more grim than we might remember it.

He rides over an old rusty bridge, heading away from the center of town. It's clear he's traveling someplace far.

He rides past middle class homes and a desperate looking trailer park off the side of the highway.

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Finally, he comes to a familiar intersection where he steers toward the old cinder block LIQUOR STORE on the corner.

INT. STILSON'S LIQUOR STORE

OLD MAN STILSON sits behind the counter doing a crossword puzzle. Jazz music plays from a small, cheap radio. When PETE comes in, STILSON peers over his bifocals at him.

STILSON

You're late.

PETE

I know. I'm really sorry. Today's not been one of my better days. And I had detention.

STILSON

Next time just call me. I've got an errand to run and I can't go nowhere until you get here.

PETE

I lost my cell phone too.

STILSON folds up his crossword puzzle. PETE sets his backpack behind the counter in exchange for an apron and some cleaning gloves.

STILSON

So. What did you get detention for this time?

PETE

Being late. Some days I just can't wake up.

PETE heads to the back of the store and returns a moment later with a bucket and a sponge in his hands.

STILSON

You're gonna scrub out the cooler today?

PETE

Isn't that what you wanted me to do?

STILSON

Yeah. Start there and then I need you to re-stock the wine bins.

(MORE)

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STILSON (CONT'D)

We got a shipment coming in next week so I need to clear out some space in the back.

STILSON pulls open the cooler door to get a closer look at the mess.

STILSON

I'm real sorry about this Pete. Some drunk stiff dropped a whole bottle of Red Zin down there last weekend.

TWO SHOT: PETE kneels down and begins pulling out messy bottles one by one. STILSON slips on his jacket and palms his keys.

STILSON

You know, I used to be late for school all the time when I was your age.

PETE

Did they hand out detention for it so freely back then?

STILSON

Worse. I went to a Catholic school back when Snydersville still had one. And if you got caught screwing off, the nuns would make you put out your hands so they could slap them with a ruler. And they hit hard.

PETE

I'm sure glad we don't have any nuns teaching at our school.

STILSON

Ah, you kids got it easy these days. Anything goes. Alright, I gotta run downtown to pick up a prescription. You man the register while I'm gone.

PETE

No problem.

PETE gets back to scrubbing out the cooler. STILSON exits the store.

EXT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE -- NIGHT

A shabby house on a hillside street. Long, crooked, unfinished steps climb to the falling apart porch. The top floor windows are boarded up. The front light is on.

INT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM

TROY McCLOSKEY, 25, is sprawled out on a beat up old leather sectional couch in his underwear, drinking a bottle of beer. A rickety ceiling fan mixes up the cool night air.

CLOSER: He's good looking with a chiseled face. Intense even when he's relaxing. A baseball game is on the small black and white TV set.

RACK TO: PETE comes in the front door.

TROY

Come in here ya little fag.

PETE drops his backpack on the floor. He joins TROY in the living room by plopping down on the matching, tattered BARCA LOUNGER.

PETE

Why do you always have to say that?

TROY

Because. Until I see my little brother with a piece of pussy on his arm he's gonna be a little faggot in my book.

PETE stares at him.

PETE

What do you want?

TROY

Why're you getting home so late?

PETE

Stilson had extra work for me tonight. What do you care anyway?

TROY

That old drunk gonna pay you overtime?

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PETE

Yeah. He's pretty straight about that kind of stuff. And he's not an old drunk either, Troy.

TROY

Good. Cause I have to raise your rent this month.

TROY focuses back on the TV. Swigs his beer.

TROY

From now on you have to give me a hundred and fifty a month instead of a hundred.

PETE stares at TROY helplessly.

PETE

Troy, I only make fifty dollars a week! That'll leave me only fifty a month for myself! That's not even enough for my cell bill!

TROY looks PETE dead in the eyes.

TROY

If you think you can find a better deal anywhere else in town, then you feel free to pack your shit and move on out, bro.

PETE stews in anger for a moment, he knows this is no contest. Without a fight, he gets up to head to the kitchen.

PETE

For this kind of rent maybe I should move out. At least I'd live someplace where I'd be happy. Somewhere far away from you.

TROY guzzles more beer. PETE's words went in one ear and out the other. PETE heads to the back of the house.

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

We come from darkness to light when PETE turns on the light. The kitchen is a mess. PETE opens the fridge in search of food.

PETE'S POV: Beer, beer, beer -- and a few scraps left over from microwave meals and home delivered pizzas.

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PETE takes a cold slice of PIZZA and tosses it in an old, run down oven. He turns the heat up to three hundred, lights the burner and waits.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON: PETE, as he's about to head up the stairs to his bedroom. He looks at Troy who's still in the same position watching the game, drinking another beer. Empties clutter the table.

PETE

If you're raising my rent then the
least you could do is buy some
better food to eat around here.

In one quick movement, TROY lobs his beer bottle clear across the room at PETE. It smashes against the wall into many small pieces. PETE tears up the stairs to his room.

INT. PETE'S ROOM - NIGHT

PETE sits on the edge of his small bed in near darkness and nibbles on the pizza. WE HEAR the baseball game coming to a climax downstairs and TROY yelling at the TV.

TROY

Ah, Fuck! Piece of shit mother
fucker! Catch the God damn ball
will ya!

PETE finishes eating then gets undressed and crawls into bed. He stares at the ceiling with his hands behind his head. Thinking or dreaming. A cool breeze blows his curtains away from the window.

He moves his hands under his sheets. Settles in and closes his eyes. It's clear he's fulfilling some teenage fantasy before dozing off.

DISSOLVE TO:

SUNLIGHT TRICKLING THROUGH THE WINDOW.

PETE rolls around in his bed and slowly opens his eyes. As soon as he realizes it's morning, he hops out of bed like a bolt of lightening and quickly gets dressed. He laces up his sneakers and pulls on a windbreaker.

INT. BATHROOM -- MORNING -- VARIOUS SHOTS

PETE vigorously brushing his teeth. He sprays a large amount of deodorant under his shirt and runs water through his hair.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN -- MORNING

PETE riding his bike through the empty streets of early morning at a very fast pace.

When he gets to STILSON'S LIQUOR STORE, instead of stopping, he zooms right by.

Now he's pedaling hard up the wide, tree-lined country road. The same one the BUS came down before.

PETE pumps to reach the top of the steep hill. He stops and straddles his bike, breathing heavily. He reaches into his backpack and pulls out a small, tarnished, bronze telescope. He looks through it.

TELESCOPE POV: We're looking out at the entire valley below, where we catch the last moments of a startling sunrise. A fantastic vista. He pans left to reveal a PRISON, far off in the distance.

He repacks the scope, gets back on his bike and continues on his journey by coasting down the other side of the hill.

His bike picks up speed before the incline slowly starts to level out. PETE lets go with both hands and stretches them out at his sides like a bird in flight. He closes his eyes and smiles widely at the freedom of the moment, coasting no handed down the road.

WIDER: He passes a sign that reads:

"MAPLETON STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY, 10 MILES."

EXT. MAPLETON STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY -- SAME

PETE rides up to the imposing main gate which has a small guard booth in front. He hops off his bike and speaks to the guard. He chains his bike to the fence before being let through the entrance.

INT. PRISON HALLWAY

An OVER THE SHOULDER SHOT OF PETE, as he's being led by another GUARD down a long hallway towards a door marked "VISITING ROOM"

INT. VISITING ROOM

The door opens and PETE is let inside a brightly lit all white room. There's one chair in the middle that's facing a floor to ceiling glass divider. WE SEE another chair inside a white room on the other side. PETE sits down and waits.

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TWO SHOT: WE SEE THE DOOR OPEN reflected in the glass.

CLOSE ON: A TORSO AND HANDCUFFED WRISTS

An INMATE is let inside the other white room. All WE SEE is his tattooed forearms and the handcuffs that hold them together. The chains clink.

We PAN UP to reveal a handsome face. A tall man with thick black hair and hardened piercing eyes. The INMATE takes his seat. The GUARD undoes the hand cuffs. The INMATE rubs his wrists, sits down.

INMATE

Think you could maybe keep 'em a little looser next time?

PETE stares through the glass.

PETE

Hey Dad.

BILLY

It's good to see you, son.

(Beat)

I think you've grown at least two inches since last time you were here.

PETE smiles.

BILLY

How was the ride up this morning?

PETE

Not too bad. It's pretty nice out today.

(Beat)

How are you doing?

BILLY

Same as always. I make do with what I've got.

BILLY shifts in his seat.

BILLY

I haven't heard from Troy in a while. What's your brother doing these days?

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CONTINUED: (2)

PETE

Well, he raised the rent on me.
But besides that, everything's the
same as usual.

BILLY

He what? He raised the rent on
you?

PETE

Instead of a hundred a month, I now
have to pay one fifty. For those
prices I might as well take off
before school's even out. I'm
failing pretty bad anyway.

BILLY looks upset by PETE'S comment.

BILLY

And where would you go? Huh?

(Beat)

It don't change no matter where you
go, Pete. You still got bills to
pay and promises to keep. It's the
same everywhere.

PETE

I guess.

BILLY

At least you're still holding down
a job. That's more than a lot of
folks can say these days. I do get
to read the paper. I know things
aren't going so well in the world.

PETE

Yeah.

(beat)

I like working for Stilson too.
He's nice. Gives me a lot of
freedom and stuff.

BILLY

You're a very lucky young man,
Pete.

PETE

I put in a request to get some
weekends off so I can come and
visit you more.

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BILLY

If you came to see me more, that's probably be the best news I could get. I get lonely out here. But when you show up it's always a little easier.

PETE

Mr. Stilson said he'd think about it and let me know soon.

BILLY

You just tell old Stilson that after all the money I dumped into his place, the least he can do is give me some more time to visit with my son.

PETE smiles.

BILLY

So. How's the girlfriend situation?

PETE

The usual. Not too good.

BILLY

That's what we need to work on. Maybe you need to clean yourself up a little. Look at you. You look like a mess. If I were still at home you'd never get out the front door like that. Why don't you splurge on some new clothes?

PETE looks down at his faded jeans, worn out T-Shirt. Old crummy sneakers. It's the best he can do right now.

PETE

New clothes are too expensive. And even if I did dress up, there's not that many pretty girls in Snydersville at all.

BILLY

I haven't been in here all my life you know. There's at least a few good looking gals in every town across America. That's a fact.

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CONTINUED: (4)

PETE

OK, maybe there's this one girl.
But it's not like I'd ever have a
chance with her. And it's not like
I have that many options.

BILLY

Look at me Pete.

(Beat)

I'm a man with no options. You
have plenty. Please don't ever
forget that.

PETE slumps a little in his chair.

BILLY

Straighten up.

PETE sits up.

BILLY

Don't slouch. It's the sign of a
weak individual. Someone who's
trying to hide from the world
around him. Someone who'll never
be man enough to win over a real
woman someday.

PETE

Sorry, Dad.

BILLY nods approvingly at PETE.

BILLY

I know you didn't come all the way
up here for nothing. Why don't you
tell me what else is bothering you.

PETE hems and haws for a moment. Trying to find the right
way to articulate his feelings.

PETE

I know I got a good job, and maybe
someday I'll meet the right girl.
But I really don't have that many
friends and there's never anything
to do. I'm getting scared about
what I'm gonna do after school's
over. It seems like there's no
future.

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BILLY

There's lots to do out there, kid. Maybe you just don't know where to look. You're a young man now. Loosen up like one. Damn, Pete, you're too tense for a... How old are you?

PETE

Seventeen...

BILLY

Seventeen years old? My God.

(Beat)

I think it's time you start living a little. That's what people do in the free world. Check out those options life has put before you. Try out some new things.

PETE shifts uncomfortably in his seat.

PETE

Like what? I mean, what is there to do?

BILLY

Let me think. Do you drink yet?

PETE

No.

BILLY

Well, you could start by having a beer already. Do it as sort of a toast to you and me. And next time you come for a visit, you can tell me what it tastes like. How it made you feel.

PETE

Don't you know that already?

BILLY

Pete, how many times do I have to tell you? In here I don't get to be outside when the sun is setting or when you're gonna take a swig of your first beer. So you gotta tell me how it is. Make it real for me.

PETE

That doesn't sound so easy.

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BILLY gets even more animated now.

BILLY

Sure it is. Just open up and use
your mind's eye, your mind's taste.

(Beat)

It's about as real as it will ever
get for me. We can do anything we
put our minds to Pete.

BILLY stares at PETE. PETE returns by putting his hand on
the glass. BILLY follows.

PETE

OK. I'll try, Dad. I'll do it for
us.

BILLY

Now that's more like it. See,
you've got all kinds of new
experiences ahead of you.

WE SEE the TORSO of the GUARD appear behind BILLY.

BILLY

Well, it looks like they need me
back on the job.

(Beat)

You think I'll be seeing you again
anytime soon?

PETE

If I can get another weekend off.
Otherwise it might be a little
while.

BILLY

Good. Then you should have plenty
of stories to tell me all about
when you come back.

PETE

Thanks for the pep talk, Dad. I
needed it.

BILLY

Don't mention it.

BILLY winks and smiles at his son one last time before
standing up. PETE watches as the GUARD handcuffs his
father's hands back together before leading him back to his
cell.

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WE HOLD ON: PETE - he stands up, places his hands deep in his pockets and walks out the door.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL -- DAY

Gym class is in session on the football field on this gray, overcast morning. Teenage boys do squat thrusts in a messy, disorganized fashion. PETE is standing in the front.

ANGLE ON: The girls gym class, which is running laps around the track. They too are not the most attractive bunch with the exception of MORGAN DOWNER, who's a full lap ahead of her classmates. She runs with a smooth, graceful stride. A real athlete.

Back on the field. MR. THUME, a super athletic gym teacher blows his whistle with three short bursts.

MR. THUME

Good! Now you guys are that much closer to actually being in shape.

The boys are sweating profusely. WILL is seriously out of breath. And so is the massive CHAD PARKS, whose face is beet red.

MR. THUME

You can hit the showers after you've all completed one hundred jumping jacks.

Moans and groans all around.

CHAD

What the heck is this? The National Reserves or somethin'?

MR. THUME looks directly at CHAD while squeezing a small hand exercising machine in his right hand.

MR. THUME

You can keep your comments to yourself Mr. Parks. It's my job to get you into shape. And teach you a few good habits before you move into your parents' basement for the rest of your life. I don't get paid to take back talk from the likes of you. Any of you.

(Beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. THUME (CONT'D)

And don't think that just because you fellas are doing the physical training today that you're not doing the distance running next week. Because you are.

More very unhappy sounding groans. Then MR. THUME gives his whistle another long blow.

MR. THUME

Come on ladies, let's get those jumping jacks started. And...One, two, three!

ANGLE ON: The GIRLS GYM TEACHER, who stands off to the side of the track with a stop watch waiting for her runners to finish.

MORGAN is done before all of them. She strides off to the side and stretches on the grass by herself.

GIRLS GYM TEACHER

Great time, Morgan.

PETE watches MORGAN. Sweat beads roll down his face.

INT. BOYS LOCKER ROOM -- LATER

A steam filled shower blasts in the distance. Some boys have already taken their showers and stand around getting dressed. But not PETE, who's still very sweaty and quietly lacing up his shoe on the edge of a bench.

MR. THUME walks through the locker room, patrolling to make sure that everyone has taken a shower. PETE sees him coming and turns to face the lockers. He leans down and pretends to still be tying his shoe.

MR. THUME passes slowly behind him. When PETE turns around, MR. THUME is waiting, standing right in front of him with his arms crossed, looking down.

MR. THUME

Mr. McCloskey. You're still all wet. You need to dry off better next time.

PETE

I am?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. THUME

Look at your hair. It's drenched.
You should dry your hair better
next time.

He reaches down and rubs PETE's sweaty hair.

MR. THUME

This doesn't feel like clean hair
to me.

He runs his fingers through some more. PETE looks up
helplessly and weirded out.

MR. THUME

Come to think of it...

He raises his hand to his nose and sniffs it. Then licks it
a bit. He rubs his finger tips together.

MR. THUME

This hair ain't clean. This is
your filthy sweat!

MR. THUME turns and faces the entire class.

MR. THUME

What did I tell you all about not
taking showers after class? Mr.
McCloskey here seemed to forget
what I had said! Now he's going to
take a shower and then sit in
detention for a night to think
about his mistake.

PETE drops his head in disgust. He stands and begins to
slowly get undressed.

MR. THUME

And that goes for anyone else I
catch trying to skip out on a
shower as well!

PETE begins to unlace his shoes, shaking his head in
disbelief as MR. THUME moves on with his hands clasped behind
his back. A real creep.

INT. SHOWER

CHAD and WILL are showering in the back. A tall SKINNY KID
approaches them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SKINNY KID

Thum's making McCloskey take a shower.

CHAD

He finally busted that little scumbag?

SKINNY KID

Yeah.

CHAD takes his shampoo bottle from the rack and unscrews the cap. He dumps some of the contents out. Then, he lowers it out of frame. It's clear that he's relieving himself in the bottle. WILL laughs while shaking his head.

WILL

You're a sick fuck. You know that?

INT. BOYS LOCKER ROOM -- SAME

Two boys getting dressed close by laugh at PETE and his uncomfortable situation while he walks off, naked, towards the shower.

BOY 1

Fuckin' McCloskey.

BOY 2

What a scum.

INT. SHOWER

CHAD and WILL are showering off when they see PETE meekly enter. PETE finds a shower far away from them. He hits the button and high powered water smashes against his face and chest. He looks extremely uncomfortable.

CHAD approaches PETE and hold out his shampoo bottle.

CHAD

Here. I may not like ya but I don't want to smell ya all day either.

PETE eyes CHAD cautiously.

CHAD

Here. Come on. Take some. It's good for you.

PETE slowly puts out his hand. CHAD shakes the bottle up and squirts a large glob of bright red shampoo into PETE's palm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHAD

Go ahead. Lather up.

CHAD watches as PETE slowly works his hair into a thick, rich lather.

CLOSE ON: PETE, who's hair is very soapy now. Lather and bubbles run down his face, he's got his eyes closed tight. He's not had too many showers in his life.

CHAD and WILL are barely holding in their laughter.

But WE STAY ON PETE, as he rinses all the soap away. And when he opens his eyes, finds that he's the only one left in the shower. The water automatically shuts off. Nothing but a few drips are heard.

PETE leaves the showers and heads back to his locker. The entire GYM CLASS is dressed and waiting for the bell to ring in single file by the door.

CHAD

Hey, how'd you like the shampoo,
McCloskey?

PETE looks at CHAD's face.

PETE

(Sincere)
It was good. Thanks.

WILL

Yeah, it's all natural.

Boys crack up laughing. The BELL rings, PETE'S going to be late for another class.

INT. DETENTION -- LATER

A small classroom hidden away in the back of the school. There are no windows to gaze out of. PETE watches the clock.

ANGLE ON: RICKY LARSON, the skinny, tough looking kid we saw in the principal's office before, tries to pass a note to a friend but it drops on the floor.

RICKY

(Whispering)
Psst. T. Hey.

DETENTION MONITOR

Ricky -- quiet it down or get
another night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The DETENTION MONITOR, a mean old hag with eyes in the back of her head, almost always knows who's goofing off.

PETE scribbles on a sheet of paper, doodling aimlessly, waiting for this silent torture to end.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL

PETE emerges from the front doors with the rest of the punished teens. One kid has a cigarette in his mouth and he lights it as he walks past camera.

The DETENTION MONITOR follows behind. And as she walks towards the parking lot, RICKY LARSON wildly flips her the bird while dancing around.

PETE watches while unlocking his bike. He laughs at RICKY'S antics and wraps his chain round and round his seat post before re-locking it in place. RICKY LARSON, a mere rat of a boy, approaches PETE.

RICKY
Hey, McCloskey.

PETE
Yeah?

RICKY looks PETE up and down.

RICKY
I've been seeing you in detention a lot lately. What's up? Everything OK at home? You and the old lady aren't fighting are you?

PETE
No. I just have a tardy problem.

RICKY
Oh yeah? I used to have a tardy problem too. But now I just need an "attitude adjustment." Or maybe it was a "new attitude" I can never remember.

PETE and RICKY look at each other for a moment before they both crack up laughing. PETE pulls his bike out of the rack and starts to push it down the long sidewalk. RICKY strolls along beside him.

RICKY
You work up to Stilson's Liquor Store right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

For the past three years.

RICKY

You must have a nice stash of stuff at your house? Johnny Walker, JD, Wild Turkey...

PETE

Not really.

RICKY

Are you kidding? If I worked at a liquor store I'd be able to open my own bar by now! Whereabouts' do you live anyway?

PETE

Over on Genesee. Right across the tracks.

RICKY

I live on the wrong side of the tracks too. Adsit Place.

(Beat)

Maybe we should hang out together sometime. Goof around.

They stop at the end of the sidewalk. PETE straddles his bike.

PETE

That could be cool.

RICKY

Me and a friend, we're gonna go spy on Miss. Breyer tonight. You wanna tag along?

PETE

Miss. Breyer?

RICKY cocks his head and looks at PETE for a second.

RICKY

You've never been over to spy on Miss. Breyer before? I thought you lived over on Genesee.

PETE

I never even heard of her. Who is she?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RICKY

What time do you get off work tonight?

PETE

Around eleven, eleven thirty. Depends.

RICKY thinks for a moment.

RICKY

Swing by the middle school playground at eleven thirty. That's where we meet. And bring some booze from Stilson's if you wanna find out.

RICKY starts off down the street. PETE watches him go before getting on his bike and pushing off. RICKY yells to PETE as he rides away.

RICKY

You won't wanna miss it!

EXT. ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL -- EVENING

Nestled on a hill, flanked by a warehouse and a dimly lit Fire Station is where the hospital is located. An ambulance pulls out of the EMERGENCY ROOM EXIT and spins it's LIGHTS. But no siren. It pulls away and speeds down the hill in creepy silence.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY -- EVENING

A tall, slender WOMAN chats with her DOCTOR in the lobby of the empty hospital. She's in her mid-forties and looking a little worn out. Life has been a rough ride.

The DOCTOR finishes writing out a prescription and hands her the paper. She takes it from him and grips his hand a moment too long. He says goodbye and the WOMAN exits through the automatic door.

EXT. HOSPITAL LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

A small, blue CAR is idling by the curb. MORGAN is in the driver's seat. She watches her Mother approach with a concerned look on her face. She leans over and opens the door.

INT. CAR

The WOMAN, JEANNE DOWNER, plops down in the front seat and immediately starts to fix her makeup in the visor mirror. She sets the prescription order down on the seat between them. The back seat is covered with a dirty, quilted blanket.

JEANNE

Thanks for waiting, Hon. Swing by the drugstore on our way home. I really need to get this prescription filled tonight. OK?

MORGAN puts the car in gear and pulls away. The visitor's parking lot is nearly empty.

VARIOUS SHOTS: As they drive through this part of town, WE SEE, almost as a blur, all the barely lit homes and lifeless streets out the windows. Very little traffic is on the road.

MORGAN glances at the prescription paper.

MORGAN

This for another antidepressant?

JEANNE finishes touching up her makeup. She flips the visor back up and looks at MORGAN.

JEANNE

Yes, dear. It's another antidepressant. The other ones made my fingers feel like balloons. These are supposed to be much better. Everything's going to be much better now.

MORGAN

Don't you ever get sick of taking pills all the time?

JEANNE

Are you a doctor?

MORGAN

Not yet.

JEANNE

They make me feel alive again.

(beat)

And you better be careful how you judge me. Depression runs deep in our family you know.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEANNE (CONT'D)

All the way from Great Grandpa John
to Aunt Betty.

MORGAN

So far I feel just fine.

JEANNE

Well, your my daughter and that
makes you just as likely. It's
serious. I wouldn't ever want you
to experience this but you need to
be informed. I need to keep an eye
on you.

MORGAN

(tentatively)

Thanks, Mom.

MORGAN pulls up in front of one of the only stores on main
street: RITE AID DRUGSTORE.

MORGAN

Can you hurry. I'm getting hungry.

JEANNE

I'll be right back and then we'll
go to the grocery store and get
some pancake mix. You want to have
pancakes for dinner?

JEANNE has one foot out the door. MORGAN smiles warmly at
her Mother.

MORGAN

That sounds like fun.

JEANNE

OK, sweetie. Sit tight.

JEANNE bops into the DRUGSTORE, a little too excited about
getting a new drug.

MORGAN looks out, down the empty street. A pick up truck
comes flying down the street. It squeals around a corner and
then it's gone. Near silence once again.

EXT. JESSIE'S LOUNGE -- SAME

On a block near the railroad tracks is JESSIE'S LOUNGE, a
bottom of the barrel BAR/NIGHTCLUB. Loud classic rock pours
out the door. The surrounding streets are dark and shady.
Most of the houses near JESSIE'S are empty and with smashed
out windows.

INT. JESSIE'S LOUNGE

A dimly lit place with a pool table, dart board, and just enough room to raise hell. TROY McCLOSKEY has his head thrown back, downing a pitcher of beer. He wipes his mouth dry and slams the plastic pitcher down on the bar.

The place is hopping. Truckers and ugly women hang around the bar. TROY drinks alone. He orders up another pitcher.

There's a tall, beautiful, RED HAired woman talking to three men at the end of the bar. She's scantily dressed and obviously working the crowd. About forty, maybe forty-five and still very sexy.

TROY wipes his chin and longingly eyes this woman from across the room. He saunters over and interrupts her flirtatious conversation.

TROY

Hey. Baby. What are you doing
wasting your time over here?

The RED HAired WOMAN faces TROY and flashes him eyes that say "Keep away"

TROY

Fine, fine. OK. I can take a hint.

He points to the occupied pool table across the room before moving to it with his pitcher in hand.

INT. STILSON'S LIQUOR STORE -- NIGHT

STILSON stands behind the register counting out money. PETE is sweeping the floor. Most of the lights are out. The store is very dim.

STILSON

Here. Come and get your pay.

PETE leans the broom against a rack of wine bottles and moves to the counter. STILSON hands him a small brown envelope.

STILSON

There's your fifty for the week and
an extra twenty for doing such a
good job cleaning out the cooler
for me. I appreciate it.

STILSON peers over his glasses at PETE, who's fixed on the many liquor bottles lining the wall behind him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STILSON

You looking for something in particular?

PETE snaps out of his stare.

PETE

Oh, sorry. Yeah, um, my brother wanted to know if I could bring home a bottle of Absolute Citron. It's his birthday tomorrow.

STILSON

You know I can't sell alcohol to you, Pete.

PETE

What if I hide it in my bookbag? I'm heading straight home. No one will even know.

STILSON thinks for a minute.

STILSON

Just one bottle of Citron?

PETE

If that's OK.

STILSON turns around and reaches for a bottle. He wraps it up in a brown paper bag. PETE opens his brown envelope and starts to take out some money.

STILSON

Put your money away. It's no good here. This one is on the house. Consider it an a early graduation present.

PETE

Thanks Mr. Stilson. I owe you one.

PETE takes off his apron and puts it away in the closet. He puts the broom away too. He puts on his jacket and backpack, and moves to the front door.

PETE

Floors are all clean, wine racks are all stocked. Anything else before I can go?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STILSON

Yeah, why don't you go ahead and
take the weekend off again.

PETE'S eyes light up.

PETE

Really? The whole weekend?
Thanks!

STILSON closes and locks up the cash register. He steps out
from behind the counter and moves towards PETE. STILSON flips
the light switch off, throwing the scene BLACK.

STILSON

You can take the weekends off from
now on if you want to.

EXT. STILSON'S LIQUOR STORE -- NIGHT

STILSON and PETE come out the door. STILSON gets out his
keys and puts one in the lock.

PETE

From now on, like forever?

STILSON

Sure. If you want to. But there
is one catch.

STILSON locks the door. PETE unchains his bike from a nearby
pole.

PETE

Name it.

STILSON

Stay on and work for me full time
after school lets out.

PETE'S now wrapping his chain around his seat pole. He locks
it together and faces STILSON.

PETE

Full time, like nine to five?

STILSON

No. Like nine to eleven.

(beat)

I'm getting too old for this Pete.
I need some rest. We'll hire
another helper for you, and I'll
work on the weekends.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STILSON (CONT'D)

You're the only one I can trust to run the shop like I do. The whole place would be yours practically.

PETE looks overwhelmed by the offer.

STILSON

You don't have to give me an answer right now. Go, have a good weekend. Let me know on Monday.

PETE

Yeah, OK. On Monday.

PETE hops on his bike. He looks over the old building for a moment. Sizing up the opportunity for it all to be his.

STILSON gets in his pickup truck. He waves to PETE while pulling away.

EXT. DIMLY LIT STREETS -- NIGHT

PETE rounds down a street. He passes various houses, some with lights on - others in total darkness.

PETE'S POV: We can see the MIDDLE SCHOOL up ahead. There's a poorly lit basketball court off to the side.

PETE coasts across the court. It's too dark to tell for sure, but it looks like there are some people sitting on top of a picnic bench near a wooded area in the distance.

PETE slowly pedals closer when a glass beer bottle noisily rolls right at him. He stops. A voice calls out.

VOICE

Who' that?

PETE squints his eyes.

PETE

It's Pete McCloskey.

Silence.

VOICE

What the fuck are you doing here?

PETE

I brought a bottle of Vodka.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A sudden flurry of movement in the distance. Stepping out from the shadows and into the dim glow of a street light comes two faces -- CHAD PARKS and WILL CLEVELAND.

PETE'S horrified when he sees them. He starts to move his bike backwards. WILL reaches out and grabs hold of the handlebars.

WILL
Where you going, shit head?

CHAD
Let me see the Vodka.

CHAD unzips PETE'S bag and starts tossing out his books and papers until he pulls out the paper bag. He opens the bag and slides out the bottle.

CHAD
Citron. Nice.

CHAD hands WILL the bottle. He grabs PETE two handed by the collar.

PETE
What did I do?

CHAD
We don't want your kind hanging around here. We don't like no faggot, scum bag killer's son hanging around our streets.

INT. BUSHES -- SAME

CLOSE ON: RICKY LARSON and LITTLE T hidden in the bushes.

RICKY watches CHAD and WILL harass PETE. LITTLE T, a small, fat, black kid, nervously bites at his finger nails.

RICKY
(Soft)
Shit. There goes our booze.

LITTLE T.
(Soft)
Why'd you invite Pete McCloskey?
He's nothin' but trouble.

RICKY
Don't worry. He's cool.

RICKY studies the situation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICKY'S POV: WE SEE CHAD pushing at PETE'S head and chest in small quick movements.

EXT. PLAYGROUND AREA

CHAD

Little weirdo. Killer's son.
Faggot. You know what I heard
about your Daddy? I heard he was
getting fucked up the ass in
Mapleton by a big Nigger. Now you
got a new Momma. Jo Mamma.

PETE'S struggling to pull his bike away. WILL lets go. PETE
and bike crash to the ground.

WILL

From now on we're gonna call you Jo
Mamma's boy.

CHAD

You got less than one minute to get
out of my sight before I kick your
skinny little ass all over this
place.

(Beat)

If you don't hurry I might have to
kick your teeth in too, pussy.

PETE begins to rapidly collect his books and papers.

INT. BUSHES

RICKY and Little T are watching. Ricky starts to crawl
backwards through the bushes.

RICKY

Shit. Follow me.

EXT. PLAYGROUND AREA

PETE'S back on his bike now. CHAD gives PETE'S tire a hard
kick as he tries to pedal away. CHAD and WILL laugh is up.

NEW SHOT: PETE turns the corner and rides down the street
away from the school when out from behind a tree jumps RICKY
and LITTLE T.

PETE

Arghhhh!

RICKY moves to him and covers his mouth. Little T puts a
finger in front of his own mouth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LITTLE T.

Shhhhh.

PETE'S breathing hard.

PETE

(Soft)

What are you doing jumping out at me like that? What the hell is this?

RICKY leads PETE to a more secluded spot behind a large TREE.

RICKY

I tried to warn you but it was too late. You know Tyrone Hawley, right?

Little T nods at PETE.

LITTLE T.

Wassup.

PETE

What the hell's going on around here?

RICKY

Spying on Miss. Breyer is a popular sport. And the night I invite you is the night Chad and fat Willy decide to swing by for a show. How was I supposed to know?

PETE

A show? Who is she?

RICKY

Just this really foxy woman who likes to get banged with the curtains wide open. You can see everything!

PETE'S eyes pop out of his head.

PETE

No way!

RICKY

Shhhhh. We don't want Chad to hear us out here.

Little T. peeks up and down the street.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LITTLE T.

Yo, Pete, you got a chain on that bike?

PETE

Yeah.

LITTLE T.

Lock it up to the school fence and we'll take you back to our spot.

PETE looks unsure if he should stay or go.

RICKY

Come on. Trust me McCloskey. It'll be worth it.

PETE, RICKY and Little T run across the street. RICKY bounds up ahead, deeper onto the school grounds.

INT. BUSHES -- MOMENTS LATER

RICKY, Little T and PETE huddle in the small wooded area not too far behind the picnic bench.

RICKY

(Whispering)

We usually just hang out on that bench until she comes home. If she's not alone, we sneak up to her house and watch the action unfold.

PETE stares out through the leaves and branches at CHAD and WILL who are each taking giant swigs from the Absolute bottle and getting obviously drunk.

INT. JESSIE'S LOUNGE -- SAME

The crowd is even more dense now as Friday night unfolds at the only bar in town. Now TROY is at the pool table, playing against the attractive RED HAired WOMAN. She's chewing gum. Troy's lining up a shot.

TROY

You're keeping pretty damn busy tonight.

WOMAN

It's Friday after all. Pay day for everyone with a job.

TROY looks up at the WOMAN, who returns his gaze with raised eyebrows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TROY

I was thinkin' maybe we can see
each other tomorrow night?

WOMAN

Professionally?

TROY takes his shot -- slamming a ball into a corner pocket.

TROY

I ain't got that kind of money on
me right now. What about like old
times when it was free?

The WOMAN sits on a stool and watches as TROY makes his way
around the table -- easily sinking balls despite his drunken
state.

WOMAN

You know the weekends are my
busiest time. I like you. But I
gotta keep working, Hon. It's what
I do to pay the bills.

TROY looks at her before making his next shot. The WOMAN
leans next to him and whispers into his ear.

WOMAN

Why did you come down here? If it
hurts you that much then just stay
home, baby.

TROY shakes his head and makes his next shot. And while TROY
shoots, a RUGGED MAN walks by and slaps the WOMAN on her ass.

RUGGED MAN

Hey sweet thing. I'll be ready to
leave real soon. Just gotta go
drain the vein.

WOMAN

Alright, honey. I'll be waiting.

She beams a smile at him as he walks away. TROY is clearly
bothered by this but does nothing in response. He holds his
anger in and continues to slam pool balls around the table.

EXT. PLAYGROUND AREA -- MOMENTS LATER

WILL is bent over the picnic bench yakking his guts out. The
Absolute bottle is half empty now. CHAD looks ill as well.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHAD

Shit. This bitch ain't never coming home.

WILL

I gotta get some water.

WILL stumbles off the table. CHAD follows him, only slightly more composed. Together, they stumble off into the night.

PULLING BACK: RICKY, Little T and PETE are watching CHAD and WILL leave.

RICKY

Well, well, well. Look who's decided to go home and puss out.

(Beat)

I guess that vodka really helped out after all. It still woulda been better if we could have had some.

PETE

Man I hate those two. They're the biggest ass holes in all of Snydersville.

LITTLE T.

I hear that. Someday, I'm gonna get my Daddy's gun and put a bullet right in Chad's fat white ass.

RICKY

Your Daddy don't got any guns.

LITTLE T.

If he did I mean.

A pair of headlights turn down the street. RICKY watches with hopeful anticipation as a small, compact car slowly pulls into a driveway across the street.

PETE

Is that her?

RICK

Yep. Now all we have to do is see if she get's out of the car alone, or with someone.

They watch. WE HEAR one door open and close. Beat. Then ANOTHER.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RICKY
(Soft and giddy)
Jack-pot.

LITTLE T.
Ooh boy, this is gonna be good.

Little T rubs his pudgy hands together.

EXT. MISS. BREYER'S HOUSE -- SAME

MISS. BREYER is THE RED HAired WOMAN from JESSIE'S LOUNGE and A MAN grasps her buttocks and kisses the back of her neck while she's unlocking the front door. The door opens and together they move into the house.

INT. MISS. BREYER'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

WE STAY ON THEM. They kiss passionately in the foyer of her small home. We never see the MAN'S face. MISS. BREYER takes his hand and leads him into the living room. She dims the lights a tiny bit. She sits him down on the couch and kneels before him. Slowly unzipping his pants.

PANNING UP: Finally WE SEE the MAN'S face, he's the same one who slapped her behind in the bar earlier. He pulls a joint from his shirt pocket and lights it. He takes a huge, drawn out hit and holds it in. He leans his head back and blows out some smoke. It's clear what's going on below.

EXT. MISS. BREYER'S HOUSE -- THAT MOMENT

RICKY, Little T and PETE are watching from a side window that offers up a perfect view. They're hidden in the shadows of a large tree. Little T makes funny faces.

LITTLE T.
Yeah. Suck that dick mama.

RICKY jabs Little T in the side.

RICKY
Be quiet, man.

PETE stares through the window with a shocked, intrigued look on his face. A life changing experience for him.

WE HOLD HERE, on these three boys' different reactions. Now they watch in total silence, transfixed by what they're seeing. Wishing it were them.

EXT. RIVERBANK -- DAWN

The sky is just starting to light up with the sun of a new day. RICKY, Little T and PETE all walk together along a riverbank. An old abandon factory with boarded windows is behind them. They've been out all night. PETE is pushing his bike.

RICKY

Maybe next time you'll get to see her go all the way.

PETE

Have you ever seen it?

RICKY

Oh yeah. She's good too. She makes the guy lie on the couch and then just rides him real slow, just like in pornos.

They're heading to the other side of town, back to where they live. RICKY skips rocks across the creek's calm water.

LITTLE T.

And she can ride it all night long too.

PETE

She does this every weekend?

RICKY

Every night probably. She's a pro!

PETE

She has a lot of boyfriends?

LITTLE T.

McCloskey, you have been living under a rock.

PETE

What's that supposed to mean?

RICKY

Do you even know what Miss. Breyer does for a living?

RICKY looks at PETE, who shakes his head "no".

RICKY

She's a hooker. You can pay her and she'll have sex with you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

I can?

RICKY

If you had enough money.

WE STAY ON THE BOYS as they walk along the river bank silently together.

RICKY

Who do you think is the hottest girl in our grade?

LITTLE T.

LaChandra White!

RICKY stops walking and puts his arms on his sides. PETE and Little T stop and look back at him.

RICKY

T? Why do you always say LaChandra White? She doesn't even go to our school. We don't even know for sure if she really exists.

Little T shakes his head. PETE laughs.

LITTLE T.

She lives up in Belmont. You'll see. One day she's gonna come down here and visit me and you'll see how my girl is the hottest there ever was.

They start to walk again.

RICKY

Who do you think's the hottest, McCloskey?

PETE pretends to be thinking hard about his answer.

PETE

I'd have to say...Morgan Downer. She's my idea of the perfect girl.

RICKY smirks and shakes his index finger at PETE.

RICKY

I knew there was something I liked about you. We have the same taste in women.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LITTLE T.
I'm telling you, fools. LaChandra
White is the most sexiest girl in
the world.

RICKY stops again. PETE and Little T look back at him.

RICKY
Who am I?

RICKY rolls his eyes into the back of his head and starts to
convulse as if he were having the worlds best orgasm.

RICKY
Ooh. Ooh yeah. Right there little
lady!

PETE, LITTLE T and RICKY burst into laughter.

LITTLE T.
No. He was more like: Suck it!
Suck that dick mama!

EXT. GAS STATION -- MOMENTS LATER

A few customers come and go with steaming coffees in their
hands. RICKY leads them to the side of the building, out of
sight from the entrance. He points his index finger at
LITTLE T.

RICKY
Ding dong or Ho Ho?

LITTLE T.
Ho Ho.

PETE
What?

RICKY
What do you want for breakfast? A
Ding Dong or a Ho Ho?

PETE reaches into his pocket for some cash.

PETE
I'll take a blueberry muffin.

RICKY
Put away your money. If you're
gonna hang with us then you're
gonna take part in our rituals.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICKY (CONT'D)

Breakfast is always on me because I got the skills.

LITTLE T.

He's real smooth.

PETE

What if you get caught?

RICKY

I'll never get caught here because I got this place all mapped out. I can only get Ding Dongs and Ho Ho's because they keep 'em in the back of the store where the mirrors can't see me. Now which do you want? I suggest Ho Ho's personally. They're one-hundred percent man-made and give the biggest sugar high.

PETE considers for a moment.

PETE

I really want a blueberry muffin, and I need a large black coffee because I have to do stuff later today. So this time breakfast is gonna be on me. Ding dong, T?

Little T looks between PETE'S cash and RICKY'S reaction.

LITTLE T.

Uh, instead lemme just get a apple pie, a Snickers bar and a Cherry Coke.

RICKY

This is breaking rules you know.

PETE

Some rules need to be broken. You don't want anything?

RICKY looks uncomfortable by being upstaged by PETE.

PETE

I'm treating because you guys showed me Miss. Breyer. How's that?

RICKY

Just this time?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PETE
Just this time.

RICKY
Alright. Get me a box of Fruit
Loops and a quart of milk.

PETE
Hold my bike.

RICKY
And don't forget to bring me a
spoon!

PETE walks into the store.

LITTLE T.
I thought he was one of us.

RICKY
He's got a job.

EXT. GAS STATION -- MORNING

PETE, RICKY and LITTLE T walk down the street with a small grocery bag in hand. RICKY looks up at the new STOP SIGN that's been replaced on the corner.

EXT. SCHOOL LAWN -- MOMENTS LATER

They move to giant tree on the school's front lawn. They sit under it. Little T rips open his Snickers bar and bites off a huge piece. He washes it down with Cherry Coke.

RICKY, still standing, pours a generous amount of milk into the ground. Next, he opens the cereal box and dumps some into the milk container. He holds the lid closed and shakes it all around. He sits back down and opens the milk container. He pulls a plastic spoon from the bag and digs in.

PETE, while sipping his coffee, looks out across the street towards the GAS STATION, when the BUS rolls into frame and stops at the STOP SIGN.

CLOSE ON: THE BUS

PETE stares at it with real interest before it pulls away and heads further into town.

WE HOLD HERE, for a brief moment as these three boys enjoy their early morning breakfast. And PETE is clearly thinking about the BUS and where it might take him someday.

INT. DOWNER HOME -- SAME

JEANNE DOWNER is sitting on the couch in her bathrobe drinking a cup of coffee. A medicated smile across her face as she watches a morning television program. There are various pictures on the wall above a faux fireplace. Pictures of a younger JEANNE dressed in a dancer outfit. And a picture of her downtown, about to get on the BUS. She's waving to camera and wearing a T-shirt that reads: "BROADWAY BOUND!"

MORGAN comes bounding down the stairs in a hurry. She's dressed in a pair of shorts and a small tank top which shows off her developed figure.

JEANNE
Good Morning!

MORGAN stops and looks at her Mom, who is obviously forcing a smile.

MORGAN
Those pills sure work fast.
(Beat)
Why didn't you tell me we were out
of tampons?

JEANNE
Oh, I forgot. Sorry.

MORGAN
I need some money so I can go get
some more at the store.

JEANNE
Sure sweetie. Get my purse.

MORGAN opens a closet door and fishes through her Mother's purse which is hanging from a hook. She hands over the wallet. JEANNE pulls out a booklet of FOOD STAMPS and hands it to MORGAN. MORGAN picks up the car keys out of a small glass dish on a table by the door.

MORGAN
I'll be right back.

MORGAN swings open the screen door and lets it slam behind her.

JEANNE
Pick up some bread and milk too!

INT. CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

MORGAN drives down her street listening to music on the radio. She has the windows rolled down and a breeze blows around her hair. She sings along with the music and flips the signal to turn right.

Cruising down a the long road she passes the SCHOOL. WE SEE PETE McCLOSKEY sitting on a curb, cradling one of his knees, rocking back and forth.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN

PETE is in pain. He holds his knee tightly. He's squinting his eyes and gritting his teeth. Blood runs from between his fingers. MORGAN'S car pulls up. There is no one else in sight. MORGAN gets out of her car.

MORGAN

Hey. Are you alright?

PETE looks over. Surprised that anyone would stop to help.

PETE

I'll be OK. I just slipped and scraped my knee on my pedal.

MORGAN approaches and kneels next to PETE. She gently places her hand on his. He's still gripping his wound.

MORGAN

Let me take a look.

PETE looks at MORGAN. This is his lucky day.

MORGAN

Well? Are you going to let me look at it or are you going to keep it a big secret all day.

PETE relaxes his grip and MORGAN gently lifts away his hands, revealing a long, deep, bloody scratch. PETE is doing the best he can to act "the man", hiding all of his pain.

MORGAN

Ouch. We need to get this cleaned out. Come with me.

PETE weakly stands up. His shin is throbbing.

MORGAN

Does anyone at your house know how to properly clean a wound?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE stares down at his leg.

PETE
I don't think so.

MORGAN walks to her car and unlocks the trunk. Then, she walks back and grabs PETE's bike.

PETE
Hey, what are you doing?

MORGAN
Taking you to my house so you can get cleaned up. I worked as a nurse's aid last summer. If there's one thing I really know how to do, it's clean a wound so it can heal.

With MORGAN, PETE reluctantly lifts his BIKE into the trunk of the car. It's too big and the trunk won't close. But it's not like they have much traffic to be on the look out for either.

MORGAN and PETE get in the car.

MORGAN
But first I need to stop at the store for a second.

INT. DOWNER HOME - BATHROOM -- LATER

PETE sucks in air between clenched teeth as JEANNE dabs at his wound. It's almost all clean and MORGAN stands by with gauze. She kneels before PETE and affixes the gauze, gently, to his shin.

MORGAN
There. Now you're all fixed.

PETE
Thanks. Thanks a lot you guys.

MRS. DOWNER hands PETE a tall glass of water. He looks at both of them before sipping.

JEANNE
Why don't you two come out to the backyard and I'll make you some sandwiches for lunch?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MORGAN
That'd be great, Mom.
(Beat)
If that's OK with you, Pete?

PETE can hardly believe that he's even here to begin with.

PETE
Sure. I'd love it.

EXT. DOWNER HOME - BACKYARD

MORGAN and PETE sit at a small picnic table in a tiny backyard. Plastic munchkin figurines run through a well-tended garden. PETE sips his tea and nibbles on a PB&J sandwich.

PETE
Why'd you stop and help me today?

MORGAN
Because you looked like you needed some. You'd stop and help me wouldn't you?

MORGAN sips her tea and brushes some hair away from her face.

PETE
Yes.
(Beat)
This is a nice house.

MORGAN
I like it. Me and Mom have been here for about fifteen years now. Some day it'll probably be mine.

PETE
Can I ask you something funny?

MORGAN
Yeah.

PETE
What's it like getting good grades all the time?

MORGAN looks at PETE. She smiles sweetly.

MORGAN
About as hard as anything. I really hate it to be honest with you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MORGAN (CONT'D)

But after a while you get used to having no life. Just study, study, study.

PETE looks around at the small peaceful garden.

PETE

What are you gonna do after school?

MORGAN

Go learn to be a Vet -- an animal doctor.

PETE

I know what a vet is.

MORGAN

Sorry.

PETE

Where are you going to school?

MORGAN

Hopefully a school in New York City. I can't really go too far from Mom because she needs to keep an eye on me. Depression runs in our family and at any time I could fall into a dark slump.

PETE

It can just hit you out of nowhere?

MORGAN

I guess so. I don't really know. It hasn't happened yet. It don't happen until you get older.

PETE

That would suck.

MORGAN

I'm not looking forward to it.

(Beat)

What about you? What are your plans?

PETE sits back and slides his hands behind his back. Real confident. Real cool.

PETE

I'll be running Stilson's full time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MORGAN

Is that what you want to do for the rest of your life? Sell booze to drunks?

PETE

Are you kidding? It's a great job. And, I'll be the main guy. In charge of ordering, stocking, making deposits at night. Everything.

MORGAN takes another bite from her sandwich.

MORGAN

Want to go out sometime? Ya know, for a date?

PETE can't believe what he's hearing.

PETE

Yeah, anytime. I mean, I'm free just about anytime you want.

INT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE -- LATER

PETE quietly comes in the front door. He takes off his shoes and sets his backpack on the floor. He heads towards the stairs and tip toes to the top.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

PETE turns on the hot and cold water knobs until the water is just the right temperature. He pulls a lever which turns the running water into a high-powered shower. He gets undressed and studies himself in the mirror. He flexes one time.

He climbs into the shower but leaves the bandaged leg sticking out. Water begins to collect on the floor.

INT. SHOWER

PETE picks small hairs out of a bar of soap before washing every single part of his body thoroughly. He squirts a large amount of shampoo into his hands and lathers up his hair.

EXT. SHOWER

PETE pulls the curtain back and grabs a towel from off the floor. The bathroom is quite messy. A place where dirty clothes build up. After drying himself off, he lays the towel on the floor to soak up the excess water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Squeezing the toothpaste so that he can get enough, he vigorously brushes his teeth in the mirror.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

PETE, looking cleaner and fresher than we've ever seen him before is barreling down the lush country road again. He's wearing a pair of clean pants and a bright red T-shirt.

INT. VISITING ROOM -- DAY

PETE anxiously waits in the white room for his father to appear on the other side. A familiar set of tattooed arms enters the frame, this time with no cuffs. BILLY sits down. Smiles.

PETE

Where's the handcuffs?

BILLY raises his hands into sight.

BILLY

No more. They moved me to a lower security wing for model prisoners. I've been good. How about you?

PETE smiles. BILLY eyes him curiously.

BILLY

You're looking a little better. More like the son of Billy McCloskey.

PETE raises his leg into the air so BILLY can see his bandage.

BILLY

What happened?

PETE

I did it on my bike. It's just a deep scrape.

After giving BILLY ample time to inspect his leg, PETE lowers it back out of frame. Then he leans back and slides his hands into his pockets. Mr. Cool.

PETE

I made some new friends too. Tried some new things.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BILLY

Oh yeah? Tell me about your adventures.

PETE

I met this kid Ricky in detention and we hung out all night. He showed me some things, we goofed. Almost got in a brawl. It was cool.

BILLY

Were you drunk?

PETE

No. But Ricky likes to drink so were planning on it.

(Beat)

And I have a date with a girl.

BILLY

Hot Damn! You really hit the jackpot. I should'a told you what life was all about a long time ago. What's her name?

PETE

Morgan.

BILLY

Morgan, huh? That's a pretty name. Rolls off the lips. What's she like?

PETE

She's the prettiest girl in the school. The prettiest in town too.

BILLY studies PETE for a moment - he's drifting off to another place.

BILLY

It's been so long, I can hardly remember what a woman is like. The touch of her hair, the smell of her skin. The taste of her lips. Did you kiss her?

PETE

Not yet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BILLY

The day you really experience your first woman is the day your life changes forever.

PETE

What do you mean?

BILLY

Nothing will be the same again. The whole world, everything around you is going to be different. Life's all perception, Pete. And after you've been to that place where life begins...everything looks easier, more in your control. It's hard to explain.

PETE

You're talking about doing it?

BILLY

Yes sir. It's the most wonderful experience their is. But the first time is the best. Only catch is: you can only do it once.

PETE looks lost in his own imagination.

BILLY

Think you're ready to cross that road?

PETE

Not with this girl. I'm not even positive she'll remember me come Monday. But how can you tell when you are?

BILLY

You just can. It creeps up on you and your girl and you just can't fight the feeling anymore. You'll know.

BILLY eyes PETE as he hangs on his father's words. Their own twisted version of the "Birds and the Bees" talk.

PETE

Mr. Stilson offered me a full time job. I think he's planning on retiring soon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BILLY

Are you going to take him up on that offer?

PETE

I'm not sure yet. I don't know what to do really. Work full time for Stilson...or maybe try and find something else. Something not around here. I was thinking about the Army or something.

BILLY looks at PETE: He would be of no use to the ARMY.

BILLY

How many times do I have to tell you? You got a good thing going. To be running a successful business right out of high school like that. What more could a guy your age ask for? Boy. I've never seen someone so lucky who didn't know it before.

PETE stares at his father's hand, the one that grips the receiver. A mean looking scar disfigures one of the knuckles, a centipede of raised white flesh. As he speaks, the SCAR begins to disappear. When it's gone, we...

EXT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

BILLY (V.O.)

If I could take it back, I would.

We're in the past, now. As we PULL BACK from BILLY'S hand, we see BILLY is standing in the street in front of his house, standing over a badly beaten VICTIM, lying on the asphalt. Rain comes down in sheets. BILLY is holding one of the mans arms, but with his right, he's viciously pounding the downed opponent with his fist.

BILLY

Son of a bitch! Son of a fucking bitch!

VICTIM'S POV: We see BILLY as if we're below him, as if we're the VICTIM. His face is contorted, his fist keeps coming down, destroying the man below, he wants to shatter the guy. We hear MOANS, PAIN, as BILLY beats the man senseless.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANOTHER ANGLE: BILLY lets go of the VICTIM'S arm and the man turns over, pathetically attempting to crawl away on all fours. BILLY is so insanely enraged, he charges, then kicks the VICTIM in the ribs, the head. Again and again.

CLOSE SHOT: When the VICTIM tries to get to his feet, BILLY hauls off with one final, horrible shot, and cracks the VICTIM across the face with his right fist.

The VICTIM'S features are bloodied and distorted as he falls TOWARD CAMERA and makes the scene go DARK.

INT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE -- SAME NIGHT

From the darkness of the house, there's only the slightest crack of light as BILLY MCCLOSKEY opens the door and enters.

BILLY (V.O.)

It's OK, Pete, take a look at my hand. You know how I got it. Sometimes I gotta remind myself that it's real.

ANOTHER ANGLE

BILLY is obviously drunk, swaying slightly as he enters his home.

NEW ANGLE: The silhouette of another man, the VICTIM we saw earlier, standing there in BILLY'S darkened living room. He seems to be robbing the place, going through some drawers in the room, as if he's looking for something.

BILLY

Who the hell are you?

The VICTIM makes a run for it. He tries to charge past BILLY, who blocks his way. The two of them grapple, grunting, hitting when they can.

BILLY

Lynda! Lynda! Are you all right?

NEW ANGLE: LYNDA MCCLOSKEY runs down the stairs, she's been up in bed. She freezes, seeing the two men struggling.

LYNDA

Oh my God! BILLY NO!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

In the darkened home, it's a terrible moment of chaos. BILLY and the VICTIM fight, staying close, punching, gouging one another. BILLY keeps grunting, "Who are you? Who are you?" as he hits the man. LYNDA SCREAMS.

BILLY (V.O.)

There's not a day that goes by when
I don't think about what happened.

The fight goes on until the two men burst through the front door and roll down the front steps of the house, OUTSIDE.

EXT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The VICTIM gets up. BILLY is kneeling, shaking his head. The VICTIM tries to run, but BILL is up and following, running the man down in the middle of the street. LYNDA comes out of the house, stands on the front steps shouting.

LYNDA

BILLY, DON'T! OH GOD DON'T!

That's when we see what happened before: BILLY mercilessly beating the VICTIM in the street, kicking him, snarling, "Who are you? Who are you?" He's an enraged animal.

FOCUS ON: BILLY'S last punch again. From the VICTIM'S POV, the berserk face of BILLY as he sends his fist for the last time into the man's face.

EXTREME CLOSE SHOT. SLO MO: As the VICTIM falls to the pavement, his face a mess, his head striking the hard surface. Over this, we hear the sound of what is obviously a LAST BREATH. Like the VICTIM'S consciousness itself, the scene slowly FADES TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

ANGLE ON: PETE, who eyes his father as A GUARD approaches from behind.

GUARD

Gotta cut your time short,
McCloskey. We need that seat.
Let's go.

PETE and BILLY match hands on the glass divider. BILLY stands.

BILLY

Sorry, buddy. Saturdays are always
busy around here. So maybe I'll
see you next week?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE
Yeah, next week.

BILLY
Keep living son. Don't make the
same mistakes as your old man.

BILLY is led back to his cell. PETE shakes his head with a smile on his face. He watches BILLY as long as he can.

INT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE -- DAY

TROY wakes up face down on the leather couch. He lifts himself up and walks back into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

TROY takes one look at the large pile of messy pots and pans in the sink.

TROY
Goddamit, Pete.

TROY opens the fridge and pulls out a beer. He pops the top off and takes a huge swallow. He drags his ass all the way back through the house and up the stairs.

INT. SHOWER

TROY sleepily shaves.

EXT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE -- DAY

TROY gets the mail. He fingers through the envelopes looking desperately for a letter that's not there. Irritated, he checks the mailbox two more times before heading back into the house.

INT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

TROY flops back down on the couch and sips on his beer. There's a desperate look in his eyes. He dials a number on his cell phone. WE HEAR A FEMALE voice answer on the other line.

FEMALE PHONE VOICE
Hello? Hello? Who is this? Who's
calling?

He hangs up and tosses the phone across the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frustrated and lost, TROY rubs his eyes a few times. He looks around the messy living room, summing up the place he calls home. He gets up and moves through the house, towards the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

He opens the kitchen door and walks out to the backyard where he stops at a door in the ground that leads to the basement. He swigs on his beer then he reaches down and pulls open the door. A dark stairway awaits. He descends into the basement.

INT. BASEMENT

With only the light from outside shining in, WE SEE boxes and boxes of junk piled all around the musty little room. Old memories and forgotten pasts. TROY pulls on a chain and a dim light bulb brightens the scene.

He moves to a box and dusts it off with his hands. The box is marked "Mom's Clothes". He leans down and dusts off another box. This one is marked "Thanksgiving Dishes".

He takes a powerful swig of his beer this time. The memories this place is bringing up is clearly too much. He pulls the chain, turning off the light. He back-steps up the stairs and lets the door slam shut, throwing the screen BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. STILSON'S LIQUOR STORE -- DAY

PETE walks through the door. STILSON is ringing up a customer. PETE leans on the counter and waits for the customer to leave.

STILSON

Hey there, Pete. What brings you in on your day off?

PETE

I just came to tell you that I've thought it through and although I'm a man with many options - I accept the offer. I'll work full time.

STILSON

That's great news! So you'll start the new schedule right after graduation. I'll put an ad in the paper tomorrow and we'll hire you a helper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

I might know just the right person
if you're interested?

STILSON

Great. Send him in to see me when
he has a chance.

PETE fiddles with his hands nervously.

STILSON

Is there something else?

PETE

I was wondering. Do you think I
could get a small advance on my
salary? I need to get a couple of
things for around the house. It's
real important.

STILSON

How much?

PETE

Two hundred.

STILSON peers over his glasses.

STILSON

I'd love to, Pete, but how do I
know you're not going to change
your mind about the job over the
next few weeks?

PETE

Because I won't. You have my word.

STILSON

Your word is good but I don't know.
This time you're gonna have to let
me think about it.

PETE looks around, nods slowly in understanding.

PETE

Alright.

PETE slaps the counter twice and points at MR. STILSON before
heading out the door.

STILSON

See you Monday night.

(Beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STILSON (CONT'D)

And make sure you send your friend
in to see me!

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN - MOMENTS LATER

PETE is approaching downtown now and WE SEE MORGAN'S car parked in front of the BARBER SHOP. The hazard lights are blinking. PETE rolls up next to her car and looks in. She's not there. He looks to the BARBER SHOP, where MORGAN is talking with the BARBER about something. She comes out the door reading a small pamphlet.

PETE

Hi Morgan.

MORGAN

Hey Pete. How's your knee doing?

PETE taps the bandage lightly.

PETE

Great. Thanks for your help
before. I know I forgot to say
thank you.

MORGAN

Are you kidding? All you said was
thank you. Did anyone ever tell
you that you're cute when you get
nervous.

MORGAN looks PETE over, noticing how clean and together he looks. All except for his terribly old shoes.

PETE

I didn't know girls got their hair
cut at a barber shop.

MORGAN

We don't. I was just picking up a
bus schedule.

PETE

What kind of schedule?

MORGAN

For the bus. Silver Lines. They
come through about four times a
week.

She hands PETE the schedule. He studies it like it's a document of the highest importance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

Are you going someplace on the bus?

MORGAN

College silly. In the fall. I can't drive there because Mom needs the car.

PETE

Your leaving in the fall?

MORGAN

Yeah. What's with you today?

PETE hands MORGAN the schedule.

PETE

I've been running around for like two days. I gotta go home and get some sleep.

PETE moves to the curb and starts to ride away. WE HOLD ON MORGAN, who watches PETE go.

MORGAN

Lets do something this week!

INT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE - PETE'S ROOM -- DAY

TROY is turning the place upside down -- pulling out drawers, tossing around clothes. PETE opens the door.

PETE

What are you doing in here?

TROY faces PETE, irritated and pissed off.

TROY

I'm sick of waiting around for you! It's the second of the month already and your rent is late. I need that money!

PETE

Jesus, Troy. What's wrong with you?

TROY

Just give me the money, Pete, and I won't kill you right here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

You don't have to talk to me like that, ya know. I'm not stupid. I know you're hard up for money. Everyone is.

TROY gives PETE a deadly look.

TROY

You don't know shit about being hard up. All you have to worry about is getting to school and your stupid little pussy job on time. You think you're cool cause you work up to Stilson's?

PETE

No...

TROY

I hear old man Stilson likes to fuck little boys like you right up the ass. That's what he did to Bryce Wayland back when I was in school. You'll see.

They look at each other for a long, intense moment.

PETE

That's not true. He's not like that. You shouldn't say stuff about people you don't even know.

TROY

You should cough over the rent if you know what's good for you.

PETE is again stuck with no options.

PETE

Will you at least get out of my room so I can get it. Please.

TROY moves to the doorway. Faces PETE and points right at him.

TROY

One fifty. No less.

TROY walks out of PETE'S room and slams the door. PETE locks it from behind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He looks around at the even more cluttered mess his room has become. He sits on the edge of his bed and takes off one of his shoes. From under his shoe's sole he pulls out some cash and counts out one fifty and looks at the rest: Fifty dollars left to last the whole month. He opens the door and hands TROY the money.

PETE

Here, one hundred and fifty dollars.

TROY pockets the cash and begins to head down the stairs. He stops half way and turns back around.

TROY

And clean up the fuckin' dishes in the sink before you go anywhere tonight.

TROY bounds back down the stairs. PETE watches him go. He leans in his doorway with his arms crossed. Tired. Tired of everything.

INT. PETE'S ROOM

PETE walks back into his room and shuts the door. He squats down and starts to pick up his dirty clothes. Inspecting them one by one with a look of personal disgust on his face. He moves to a wall mirror and inspects himself in it. He does look good, except for the bandage across his knee.

He leans down to tie one of his rotten, beat up old shoes but the lace snaps in his hand.

PETE

FUCK! SHIT!

He stands up and starts kicking and bashing things just like TROY did before. This is it. He's had enough. Finally, out of breath, PETE relaxes on his bed. He reaches into a deep gash in the dirty mattress and pulls out a small envelope.

CLOSER: Inside the envelope is a picture of LYNDA McCLOSKEY alone, leaning against a park bench. PETE looks at it and begins to sob.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SNYDERSVILLE -- MORNING

Dead as usual. The lifeless streets are a barren wasteland except for the SILVER BUS, which is idling with it's doors open in front of the BARBER SHOP.

CLOSE ON: The BUS DOORS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUS DRIVER
Snydersville!

Nobody gets on and nobody gets off. And just like before, the BUS slowly pulls away.

That's when WE SEE PETE on the other side of the street, sitting on the stoop of an abandoned building, watching the BUS go.

INT. JESSIE'S LOUNGE -- DAY

Flush with cash TROY sits at the bar getting drunk. He's the only customer in the place. It's a sad and lonely picture of a way to spend the day. The BARTENDER approaches.

BARTENDER
Feels like summer's gonna be a
bitch this year.

TROY glances out the door at the blinding white sunny street.

TROY
That's what they're saying. But
who really knows. Right?

BARTENDER
Right.
(Beat)
I hear they're planning on bringing
freight trains through again.
That'll be something to see.

TROY
Yeah. A noisy pain in my ass.
That's what it'll be. My house is
right by the damn tracks.

The BARTENDER slides the thin local paper across the bar to TROY.

BARTENDER
It says here it'll create a bunch
of new jobs. Give this town a real
boost. Hell, I might even consider
going to work for the railroad
instead of tending to this shit
hole.

The BARTENDER looks around at the dank, ugly bar. TROY finishes his drink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TROY

Let me get another beer, will ya?

The BARTENDER pours TROY another beer from the tap while talking.

BARTENDER

All this part of America, they call it the rust belt.

TROY

Oh yeah?

BARTENDER

Back in the day, we did things like steel, manufacturing, good old American specialties. Now you'd have to move all the way down to damn Mexico for one of them jobs.

TROY

What's the hell's that have to do with a rusty belt?

BARTENDER

Don't ya get it? The industries all died. They rusted up and fell apart. There's nothing left for guys like us to do.

An old WAR VET, probably served in KOREA, slides into a seat at the bar. The BARTENDER moves to him and pours out another drink. He walks back to TROY.

BARTENDER

Today, it's all high tech. They don't need people anymore. I knew I should have learned computers when I was in the Guard.

TROY

But the railroad is coming back you said.

BARTENDER

I don't know why and I ain't asking questions. I just hope it don't fall through. There's been lots of talk like this before.

TROY lifts the remainder of his drink into the air.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TROY
Here's to the rust belt. America's
forgotten land.

WAR VET
Ah men to that.

TROY finishes the beer, wipes his mouth and pays the bill.
He slides his stool back and heads for the door.

EXT. JESSIE'S LOUNGE -- DAY

Now with a little buzz on, TROY walks through town. He looks
at the old railroad tracks that run parallel to the street
he's on. They're rusty and worn out. There's an old train
station the looks like it used to be a busy place. A medium-
sized, red wooden building with boarded up windows and junk
piled around. Someone has spray painted across the side of
the building "EAT MORE PUSSY."

EXT. MISS. BREYER'S HOUSE -- LATER

The street is quiet. A next door neighbors lawn is being
automatically watered by a small, sputtering sprinkler. TROY
stands banging loudly on the front door.

TROY
Come on. I know you're home! Open
up!

He moves to the side of the porch and double checks to see
her car is there. Back to the door for more pounding when
MISS. BREYER opens the door in a bathrobe.

MISS. BREYER
What in the hell are you doing
banging on my door like that!? Are
you drunk!? Get in here.

INT. MISS. BREYER'S HOUSE

TROY walks straight into the living room and plops down on
the couch. MISS. BREYER closes the door and leans in the
living room doorway with her arms crossed. She eyes TROY
silently for a minute.

MISS. BREYER
What's this all about?

TROY shifts in his seat and unbuttons his fly. He smiles
mischievously. Almost as if he's trying to turn her on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TROY

Don't tell me you're not working right now. Because I got a pocket full of cash and a fully loaded weapon.

Miss. Breyer shakes her head.

MISS. BREYER

No. I'm not working right now. So you're shit out of luck. Jesus Troy. Why can't you just accept no for an answer?

TROY

I need you, baby. You're the only pretty thing left in the world.

MISS. BREYER unclasps her arms and moves to the kitchen. TROY stands up and follows her.

INT. KITCHEN

MISS. BREYER pours water from the sink to a small coffee kettle. She sets it on the stove and fires up a burner. She yawns. TROY sits at the small kitchen table.

MISS. BREYER

You can't keep doing this to yourself. It's not healthy.

TROY

What you do for a living is not healthy. Why can't we just get back together? The railroads coming back to town. I'm gonna get a job. I'll be able to take care of you and everything.

MISS. BREYER takes two mugs from the cupboard and spoons instant coffee into them. She pours hot water in and stirs with a spoon, joins TROY at the table.

MISS. BREYER

And what kind of life is that going to support? A Double Wide mobile home up at McKinley Court? No thanks. I've got bigger plans for myself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TROY

I would get you anything you could ever want. I just want to be with you.

SHE sips her coffee, leans back.

MISS. BREYER

You don't want to be with me. You couldn't be with me. It's the illusion that you want. We should have never crossed the that line in the first place. I'm sorry we got involved.

TROY sips his coffee. Nods his head like he might understand.

TROY

So that's it. After all the fun we had together, I'm just supposed to forget and walk away. Like it never happened.

MISS. BREYER

What I do for a living, that's not going to change any time soon. I can barely keep afloat as it is. I've got plans, Troy. Plans that don't involve you.

TROY

What? You gonna start accepting credit cards or something?

She glares at TROY from across the table.

MISS. BREYER

I'm getting out of Snyder'sville. As soon as I have enough money saved up, I'm gone. Heading down to New York City, where I might be able to finally get my life started.

TROY

This is bull-shit, you know that? That's a bull-shit dream. What's out there that you can't get here?

MISS. BREYER

Let me think about that one.

(Beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MISS. BREYER (CONT'D)

I know! People who aren't like you. People who are busy living and not drowning in their beer. The world has changed, Troy and it's time you accept that.

TROY

You're a whore. Probably like sucking dick too much so you need to get to a bigger city where you can get some fresh meat!

MISS. BREYER has had enough. She stands up and marches to the front door and holds it open.

MISS. BREYER

Get out! Get out of my house and never come back in here Troy McCloskey!

TROY looks devastated. He stares into his coffee for a long time. Finally he moves to the door and looks at MISS. BREYER.

TROY

Why did you mess with me then?

MISS. BREYER

I already told you. It was a mistake. I'm sorry.

TROY walks out onto the porch and turns around. MISS. BREYER is standing behind the screen.

TROY

Have a nice life.

TROY steps off the porch and heads down the street with both hands tucked deep into his pockets.

MISS. BREYER

At least I'm trying to get one.

INT. GROCERY STORE -- LATER

TROY wheels a cart down the isle and selects a few staples for survival. Peanut Butter, Jelly, Mayo, Cheese, bread. He stops at the courtesy counter and buys some scratch off instant lottery tickets from a machine. He quickly rubs them off. No freaking luck.

TROY

Fuck me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At the checkout counter, a bland, portly woman sees TROY approach her register.

CHECKOUT LADY

You best be paying with cash. I don't got time for no bad checks in my drawer.

TROY unloads his cart. WE SEE a list taped to the side of the register of people whom NOT to accept checks from. TROY'S name is at the very top of the long list.

TROY

Don't you worry little lady. I got plenty of money today.

CHECKOUT LADY

What did you do? Rob the Bank.

While she rings up his food. TROY sneaks a pack of gum from the isle side rack into his back pocket.

CHECKOUT LADY

Twenty dollars and fifty two cents.

She holds out her chubby little hand. TROY pays. The CHECKOUT LADY hands him his change. TROY waits for her to bag his groceries but she's already on to reading her NATIONAL ENQUIRER.

TROY

Excuse me.

CHECKOUT LADY

Yes?

TROY

Aren't you forgetting something?

She looks around, then back to TROY.

CHECKOUT LADY

No. Did you?

TROY

You forgot to bag my groceries.

TROY points at the pile clustered at the end of the counter.

CHECKOUT LADY

You mean you didn't hear? It was the talk of the town. We don't do that anymore.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHECKOUT LADY (CONT'D)

That's the bag boy's job. Take a look around and tell me if you see any bag boys around here.

Then, out of the corner of her mouth.

CHECKOUT LADY

Bag them yourself.

TROY looks at his groceries gathered at the end of the counter.

TROY

I have to bag them myself? Great. Why don't I just ring myself up next time too. And then maybe I'll come in late at night and mop the fuckin' floors! And after that, how about I stock the shelves too!

The CHECKOUT LADY grabs hold of her mic and calls out.

CHECKOUT LADY

Manager to register 4. Manager to register 4.

TROY moves to the end of the counter and starts to bag his own groceries. He slams them into the bag one by one, muttering to himself.

TROY

Fuckin' place can suck my dick. Bag your own groceries? Where the fuck did all the God damn bag boys go? And I'll tell you something else you fat, ugly bitch...

The MANAGER appears. A small, compact, FAT MAN with greasy hair and sweat stained arm pits.

MANAGER

What seems to be the problem over here?

TROY is finished bagging and begins to walking towards the door. The CHECKOUT LADY points to TROY and makes a motion like he's crazy.

MANAGER

You better watch yourself in here Troy McCloskey! I will not hesitate to call the police if I have to!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

As TROY walks out the automatic door he raises his hand over his head and flips them both the bird.

INT. PETE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

PETE'S sound asleep on his bed, still dressed in his clothes. He turns onto his side and opens his eyes. The alarm clock says 9:30 P.M. He slowly gets out of bed and turns on the light.

WIDER: WE SEE that he's cleaned his entire room. It's organized and well kept. No more piles of dirty clothes on the floor. His paperback books are neatly stacked on the desk. He smooths his hair over and rubs the sleep off his face before heading out the door.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

PETE is surprised to see a few new things on the counter to eat. He makes himself a Peanut Butter sandwich and eats it in very few bites. He leans against the sink and drinks water right out of the tap.

Before leaving, he opens the fridge and pulls out two bottles of beer. He looks out the doorway to see if the coast is clear before stuffing them neatly into his backpack.

EXT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE - FRONT PORCH -- NIGHT

TROY is sitting on the crooked front steps smoking a cigarette and staring off into space. He ashes on the front lawn without moving an inch. PETE comes out the door with his backpack on. He unchains his bike from the porch railing and wheels it down the steps.

TROY

Where you off to at this hour?

PETE

Over to a friend's house.

PETE straddles his bike, ready to take off.

TROY

What time you plan on coming back tonight?

PETE

I dunno. When I get here.

TROY spits out into the lawn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TROY

I got some chores for you to do tomorrow. We gotta clean out the basement and get rid of a bunch of old junk that's been piling up.

PETE

What time you planning on getting started?

TROY

After you sort through all the shit and tell me what's down there. I'm selling all of it. And anything that don't sell I'm burnin'

(Beat)

You can keep half of what we make.

PETE

You bought all that food today?

TROY

You said you wanted to eat better didn't you?

PETE

Thanks.

PETE starts to move his bike into the street.

TROY

I wanna get that basement started tomorrow. We've been putting it off for too long you know.

PETE nods before pushing off.

PETE

I know.

WE STAY ON TROY as he watches PETE disappear down the street.

EXT. MISS. BREYER'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

PETE is all alone leaning against the fence with a bottle of beer in his hand. He's staring intently into the window. WE HEAR the muffled sounds of lovemaking going on in the house.

PETE takes his first sip and makes an awful face. He looks from the window to the bottle, sizing it up, feeling it in his hand. The sounds in the house grow louder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE marvels at what he's seeing. He sips the beer a few more times before eventually dumping it out. It's not for him. When it's clear that the show is over, PETE watches as a MAN walks off the front porch, comically whistling a tune.

PETE moves to the front of the house. He stands there looking at the door for a long time. It's almost as if we can see his little brain trying to gather the courage to go up.

Then, MISS. BREYER comes out the door fully dressed, with her makeup done nicely again. She sees PETE and freezes in her tracks. She slowly walks to the end of her porch. She looks cautiously both ways down the empty street, then stares down at him.

MISS. BREYER
Can I help you little man?

PETE is mesmerized. He can barely move. There she is right in front of him. Tall, leggy, the smell of perfume wafting out into the night.

PETE
Uh...hi.

MISS. BREYER
Hi.

PETE is nearly motionless. Like a stray dog you find on your front steps in the rain.

MISS. BREYER
I cancelled my paper subscription a long time ago.

PETE
I'm not the paperboy.

MISS. BREYER catches on. She tilts her head and messes with her hair a bit.

MISS. BREYER
Then what brings you by here at this hour, Hon? Are you looking for something?

PETE
I was wondering if...if I could...

A dog barks violently in the distance. It breaks the uncomfortable mood.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MISS. BREYER

Why don't you come on inside and we can talk?

MISS. BREYER turns and walks back into her house leaving the front door wide open for PETE to follow if he chooses.

PETE lets out a long held breath before sprinting across the street, jumping on his bike and pedaling away at a furious pace.

ANGLE ON: MISS. BREYER, who comes back onto the porch and catches a glimpse of PETE tearing down the street. She shrugs her shoulders, locks the front door, and heads back out for the night.

EXT. TRAILER PARK -- NIGHT

Actually it's just one poorly kept MOBILE HOME on a dirt road on the bad side of the tracks. A mangy old dog is tied to the front steps with a rope. It's sleeping with one eye open and on the watch. There's a rusty old pickup truck in front. A sign on it says "LARSON PLUMBING"

ANGLE ON: A steel garbage can with fire blazing out of it off to the side. A MAN stands over it with a poker that he jabs at the fire with. PETE rolls up on his bike and steps off. He lies it down on the ground and heads towards the small wooden steps.

The MAN at the fire turns around. He's ugly and mean looking. A scar runs across his right cheek.

MAN

What do you want?

PETE'S startled by the man's gruesome appearance.

PETE

I'm one of Ricky's friends from school. Is he home?

MAN

He's in the house.

PETE cautiously heads for the door. The DOG'S growl grows louder.

MAN

Shut it, Macon!

The DOG stops his growl and watches as PETE enters the trailer.

INT. TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

RICKY is seated in a tattered Barca lounge style chair in a tiny living room. The TV light flickers across him. He laughs at the show on the TV. On the wall there are various pictures of his father with dead animals that he's hunted over the years. A DOUBLE BARREL SHOTGUN is casually leaning in the far corner.

PETE

Hey Ricky?

RICKY looks up and is taken off guard by PETE'S presence. He jumps out of the chair to greet him.

RICKY

Hey, Pete! Shit, man! What are you doing here?

He stands up and high five's PETE. He points for him to sit down on the couch which is covered with clothes.

PETE

I thought you might want to hang out or something. Is that your Dad out there?

RICKY

Yeah. Don't let him scare you. He's really nice and all.

PETE

He was nice. But I don't think your dog likes me too much.

RICKY

Macon don't like anyone.

(Beat)

So, what do you wanna do?

PETE

I dunno. Goof off. Anything.

RICKY'S FATHER comes back into the house. He takes one look at PETE sitting on the clothes -- on the couch.

MR. LARSON

Ricky. It's not nice to have the company sitting on the clean laundry. Come on now, get it folded.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. LARSON moves through the trailer towards a room in the back. PETE gets up and switches seats with RICKY. RICKY begins to fold the laundry while PETE rocks in the lounge.

RICKY

I gotta stay close to home. My Dad doesn't want me running around again all night.

PETE

Did you get in trouble for the other night?

RICKY

Heck no. My Dad lets me do just about anything. He just thinks I'm getting too old for it and that if I get caught goofing off or doing something illegal, that the cops would probably send me to a Juvee home.

PETE

Why? Hanging out ain't against the law.

RICKY finishes folding the clothes. MR. LARSON moves back through the trailer, into the living room. He's carrying a large stack of old magazines and newspapers.

RICKY

Dad. Can Pete and I at least go and walk the tracks for a little bit?

MR. LARSON

Only if you don't go any further than I told you. Boy, if you get yourself into trouble again there'll be nothing I can do.

RICKY

Don't worry. I'm not gonna. We'll just be skipping rocks and talkin' about pretty girls.

MR. LARSON

Alright. But you come back before too long. I don't like you staying out all hours of the night.

MR. LARSON heads out the door. RICKY puts out his hand for PETE to give him five. And when PETE does, RICKY pulls away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

One of the oldest and lamest jokes. But somehow, RICKY makes it seem cool again.

RICKY

Too slow.

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS -- MOMENTS LATER

PETE and RICKY stroll along empty tree-lined railroad tracks under the clear, starry sky. The moon is full and bright. It hangs low. RICKY, always with nervous energy, skips rocks off the rails.

RICKY

I got caught stealing down at Shop Rite last month. And when the cops brought me home they said that it was a warning and next time I'd be sent to a boys home.

PETE

Did you ever get caught before?

RICKY stops and looks up at the stars and points.

RICKY

Orion.

PETE gazes up too.

RICKY

Man, I used to steal everything. Candy, books, tools, you name it. When the cops brought me home they found all my stuff in my bedroom and took it back. Now I don't have jack shit.

PETE and RICKY move to a track and sit on it. PETE slaps his leg where a mosquito just landed.

RICKY

Remember the big article in the newspaper about all the missing stop signs around town? And everyone was talking about it like it was this big thing.

PETE

Yeah.

RICKY

That was me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE picks up a rock and tosses it into the trees across the tracks.

PETE

Why don't you just get a job so you can buy stuff? That's what I do. I buy all my own stuff.

RICKY

Who would hire me? I'm Ricky Larson, the thief of Snyder'sville. Besides, there's no place to work around here. Even my Dad's having a hard time and he's the only plumber for miles.

PETE

Yeah.

RICKY

Your turn.

PETE

My turn what?

RICKY

You gotta tell me something about you. Isn't that how we become best friends -- by sharing secrets?

PETE looks at RICKY.

PETE

Well, I can trust you, right? You're not going to take it against me or anything and stop being my friend?

RICKY puts up his hand and points out his pinkie. PETE matches his and they become blood brothers without the blood.

RICKY

I swear.

PETE

OK. Well, you know all about my Dad, don't you?

RICKY

He killed someone.

PETE

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RICKY

With his bare hands, right?

PETE

Yep. He caught a guy in my house when I was a little kid. I guess my Mom was having an affair or something.

(Beat)

Well - I've been visiting with my Dad whenever I get a chance for about two years now.

RICKY

Up at the prison? No way!

PETE

Yeah.

RICKY

What's that like? Is it scary?

PETE

It's not too creepy once you get used to it. Some of the guards know me and stuff. Mainly it's just like hanging out with you except we'd be separated by a glass divider.

RICKY

What about your Mom. Where is she?

PETE looks back up at the stars. Almost as if he's searching for his Mother up there.

PETE

I'm not really sure. Where do people go when they leave Snydersville? She took off after the whole thing happened. I was just a baby. I used to dream that someday she'd come back here looking for me. And that she lived in a nice town, in a big house, with lots of food and a I'd go live with her. It would be perfect.

RICKY

Have you ever thought about looking for her yourself?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PETE

Yeah. But the world is such a big place ya know. I wouldn't even know where to start. She probably wouldn't recognize me.

RICKY

My Mom died of cancer a few years ago. She was thirty-five.

PETE

I'm sorry about that.

PETE and RICKY are silently gazing up at the stars together for a moment before PETE stands and slaps another bug from his leg. PETE reaches into his back pack and pulls out the second beer. He hands it to RICKY.

RICKY

Thanks man.

RICKY pops the top on the tracks and starts to drink.

RICKY

Hey, what happened to your knee?

PETE

I slipped on my bike. It's just a scrape. Morgan Downer saw me on the side of the road and took me to her house and put this bandage on.

RICKY

You lucky bastard. I always thought she looked real nice.

PETE

And sweet.

RICKY

And beautiful.

RICKY and PETE begin to stroll further down the tracks.

RICKY

Pete, do you ever wonder where you're gonna be five years from now?

PETE

All the time. It drives me crazy too, because I always see myself exactly the same as I am now.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

PETE (CONT'D)

(Beat)

And I really don't want to be like
this for the rest of my life.
There's got to be something else.

RICKY

In my dream, I never change either.
I'm always stuck in-between.
Skipping rocks down the tracks for
the rest of my life.

A large raccoon scurries across the tracks. RICKY doesn't even think, he just starts shelling the animal in rapid fire. PETE grabs a handful of rocks as well. But the animal is long gone and the bushes and trees are too thick to try and find it.

RICKY

Damn! They're quick.

PETE

I think you hit him at least once.

RICKY

Nah. My aims all off. I haven't
nailed anything in a good long
time. Got a bird with my pellet
gun last week though.

PETE

I think Morgan Downer likes me.

RICKY

How can you tell?

Suddenly, PETE turns around and peers down the tracks. He squinting to see something.

PETE

(Whispering)

Hey.

RICKY

(Whispering)

What?

PETE and RICKY crouch down and look down the tracks together. They whisper to each other.

PETE

Did you just hear something?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

RICKY

No. What was it?

PETE

Some voices. I heard some voices
coming from down that way.

That's when they see the silhouette of a large man slowly walking down the tracks. A closer look shows us that he's holding a rifle loosely at his side.

Then, another man steps out from behind the first one and together they walk along the tracks on opposite sides, like soldiers on patrol with their weapons pointed out.

CLOSE ON: PETE and RICKY, terrified. They crawl to the side of the tracks, near the woods where they're hidden in the shadows of some brush. Bugs begin to eat them alive.

The two men are real close now. WE HEAR the squawk of one of their radios. They're cops and they're out searching for someone.

RICKY

Don't move an inch.

PETE is breathing real heavy now. He's nervous and upset, because cops out on a search can only mean one thing in these parts.

PETE

Shit.

The TWO cops stop and look in their direction. Waiting and listening for a good reason to open fire.

RICKY'S face glistens with sweat. PETE can hardly control himself from going into full panic mode. The moment is terrifying and intense.

The two cops stare in their direction for a very long time. We can't see their faces, but their calm is unnerving as they listen to the wood. Then, the cops begin to move silently down the tracks, continuing their search.

As soon as the coast is clear, RICKY and PETE crawl out of their hiding spot and tear off down the tracks back towards RICKY'S house as fast as they can.

EXT. LARSON TRAILER -- MOMENTS LATER

MR. LARSON has all the lights turned on and is standing on the porch with the SHOTGUN in his hands. He sees RICKY and PETE running over the tracks towards him.

MR. LARSON
Get your tails over here boys! We
got big trouble!

PETE and RICKY are totally out of breath. They lean against the stairs breathing hard. Now, a Helicopter with a spotlight is circling around up above. It flies down the railroad tracks shining it's spotlight into the woods along the way.

MR. LARSON
You boys got back here just in
time. I thought I was gonna go
have to go look for you myself.

RICKY
What's going on, Dad?

MR. LARSON
Prison break up in Mapleton. The
cops want everyone in their houses
because they spotted him running
around in this area.

PETE looks like all the blood has drained from his face.

PETE
Aww, man.

MR. LARSON opens the door, signaling for PETE and RICKY to get in the house.

MR. LARSON
Get inside.

INT. TRAILER

All the lights are on in here too. The walls may be thin but they'll have to do. MR. LARSON moves to the other side of the tiny room and closes the window, locking it in place.

MR. LARSON
You two stay in here and listen to
the radio. I'll keep a watch of
the front door.

MR. LARSON is almost out the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

Mr. Larson. Did they say who it was that escaped?

MR. LARSON keeps spying out the door while he answers a nerve wrecked PETE.

MR. LARSON

A fellow named Huntley. Danny Huntley. They said he's been missing about three hours now. Said he's real dangerous too. He's killed people before.

MR. LARSON goes back to the front porch. PETE and RICKY listen to the radio as the newscaster gives updates as to the manhunt's progress.

RICKY

Hey. You OK?

PETE lets out a huge sigh of relief.

PETE

Now I am. I'll be fine.

RICKY

It's been a long time since they've had a breakout up to Mapleton.

PETE

Two years and fifteen days to be exact. I hate when stuff like this happens. It means my life is gonna really suck in school tomorrow.

RICKY gets a glass of water for himself.

RICKY

You want water or something? I can cook us some food.

PETE

No thanks.

RICKY gets a set of playing cards out of a drawer and deals out two poker hands. Here they will sit until the escaped convict is apprehended. PETE rubs his forehead, clearly very shaken up by the whole incident.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY -- DAY

A typical Monday morning. The halls are busy with kids. Teachers cruise the halls with cups of coffee and lesson books in hand. PRINCIPAL DAY chats with some teachers near the front office. His arms are crossed and he looks upset.

PRINCIPAL DAY

It's getting worse and worse around here. I'm not even installing screens next summer. With prisoners in your backyard, it's hard to relax.

TEACHER #1

Where'd they finally catch him?

PRINCIPAL DAY

On the news they said over by the tracks. He was going to hop a freight train to Canada.

MR. TOBIN

I'm just glad it's over.

At that moment, CHAD PARKS and WILL CLEVELAND go walking by. CHAD lets out a giant burp. He glances at the little teacher conference.

CHAD

Excuuuse me.

CHAD and WILL continue on their way down the hall.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - BIKE RACK -- SAME

PETE is chaining up his bike to the rack. RICKY leans against the rack eating a Ho Ho.

RICKY

If anyone says anything about the breakout, just remember that school's almost over and soon you won't have to see these ass holes ever again.

PETE

Last time we had a break out someone through a brick through my front window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICKY

So. What are you gonna do? Don't be stupid. Coming from me that should mean something.

PETE

Thanks. But I'm not gonna just sit around and take anything either.

RICKY

Try not to get into trouble, Pete. We've got long boring lives ahead of us.

PETE, already getting upset by what he expects will be a day of razzing, looks at RICKY and smiles.

PETE

I'm glad we're friends.

RICKY

Me too.

PETE and RICKY head for the entrance now. And when they walk in the door, DAY and his TEACHERS watch the boys go down the hall. RICKY makes a comical sharp turn and marches into the office.

RICKY

Private Larson reporting for wall guard duty!

PETE continues down the hall.

PRINCIPAL DAY

It's kids like that, that are our main problem.

TEACHER #1

That Ricky Larson is some piece of work I'll tell ya.

MR. TOBIN

Pete McCloskey, too. But the thing about him, I wonder, is under different circumstances how his grades might be. He's not a dumb kid. At least not what I've seen.

PRINCIPAL DAY

That whole family is messed up. The kid has no chance.

(Beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PRINCIPAL DAY (CONT'D)

Alright. You two better get to class before I ring the bell.

INT. HOMEROOM

PETE is slumping at his desk in the back. Waiting for the comments and teases to come. The room is mostly silent until...

CHAD

Hey McCloskey. I heard your Daddy tried to come visit you this weekend.

Nervous laughter. PETE'S face begins to redden.

WILL

We all had to stay in our houses because of it. Tell Jo Mamma to stay in prison where he belongs next time.

CHAD

Yeah, McCloskey. Why don't you stand up and apologize to everyone for ruining the whole weekend.

PETE can't hold his anger in any longer. He stands up from his chair and walks stiffly to the front of the classroom. The students fall silent all of the sudden.

PETE stares CHAD right in the eyes. There's an anger building in him like we've never seen before. The look of a kid who's used to taking a lot of crap and has just been pushed too far.

CLOSE ON: CHAD leaning back in his chair, sucking on a pen.

CHAD

Any day McCloskey. If you say you're sorry then I'll promise not to write any more in your locker. Or piss in your shampoo.

PETE

I'm sorry, Chad.

PETE lets out a deep breath, and then, without warning, he lunges at CHAD and clobbers him right in the face with both hands clasped together. PETE'S small and quick.

Blood squirts from CHAD'S nose as he falls to the floor on his back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The classroom erupts in chaos as PETE annihilates CHAD with rapid pounding blows to his face. Smashing him repeatedly like a deranged lunatic.

NEW SHOT: WILL runs out of the room, yelling down the halls for a teacher to come and help. CHAD covers his face. But PETE'S too fast. His eyes burn with pent up anger. A shadow of his father coming out. CHAD is helpless against PETE'S fury.

PETE
I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!

MR. TOBIN comes running into the room. He pulls PETE off and pushes him against the blackboard.

CHAD lies on the floor in a pile of his own blood. Gasping for breath.

CHAD
My nose! My nose!

WILL helps CHAD up.

MR. TOBIN
Get him to the nurse's office!

CHAD, wobbly on his feet, uses WILL as support as he's led out of the room. PETE crushed him.

MR. TOBIN turns to PETE, who is now crying with his arms wrapped around himself in the corner. The rest of the class looks on in horror.

MR. TOBIN
Come with me Mr. McCloskey. We're going to take a little trip down to the office.

He grabs PETE roughly by the collar and almost pushes him out the door. He turns to face his class before walking out the door.

MR. TOBIN
Just go to your classes when the bell rings.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

PETE, sobbing in tears, is led down the hall. WE HEAR the PRINCIPAL'S morning announcements over the school PA.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As PETE and MR. TOBIN walk down the empty hall, students peer out of their classrooms and gawk. PETE passes one room and MORGAN comes running out of it.

MORGAN

Pete! What happened?

PETE turns around, tears still running down his face. He looks at MORGAN and just shakes his head as if he doesn't quite know himself.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

When PRINCIPAL DAY sees PETE and the TEACHER come in the office, he cuts the morning announcements short. RICKY is facing the wall. He sneaks a quick look at PETE.

PRINCIPAL DAY

Sit him down over there.

MR. TOBIN sits PETE at another chair that faces the wall. He and RICKY are side by side.

RICKY

Hey? You okay, man?

PETE just sobs.

PRINCIPAL DAY

What happened?

MR. TOBIN

He attacked Chad Parks while I was on my way back from our meeting.

PRINCIPAL DAY

What did I tell you about him? Who started it?

MR. TOBIN

I'm not sure. I wasn't there. I'll have to check with the other students.

PRINCIPAL DAY

How's Chad doing?

MR. TOBIN

Bloody nose. Really bloody. I sent him to the nurse. It might even be broken for all I know.

DAY and MR. TOBIN eye PETE while shaking their heads.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRINCIPAL DAY

(Softly)

I always thought that kid might be
a loose cannon.

MORGAN walks past them and goes to PETE with a paper cup
filled with water.

PRINCIPAL DAY

Morgan. What do you think you're
doing?

MORGAN taps PETE on his shoulder. He turns around, face all
red. She hands him the water.

MORGAN

Here. You look like you need a
drink.

PETE smiles weakly at MORGAN, who smiles back and hands him
the drink. He rubs his nose and eyes before drinking the
water in one gulp.

MORGAN

You want some more?

PETE shakes his head "no".

PRINCIPAL DAY

OK. That's enough Morgan. I'll
take it from here if you don't
mind.

MORGAN moves to a stack of papers and starts sorting them
out.

PRINCIPAL DAY

In my office McCloskey. Now.

PETE stands up and heads to the private office. DAY joins him
and closes the door.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S PRIVATE OFFICE

PETE sits with his head down, nervously fiddling with his
hands while DAY flips through his student files and pulls
PETE'S out. It's thicker than most and has "Handle with
Care" written on the side.

PRINCIPAL DAY

You wanna explain what happened?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY -- LATER

PETE comes out of the OFFICE with his shoulders slumped and his head down. He walks down the hall aimlessly. MORGAN has been waiting for him. She walks up beside him.

MORGAN

Hey.

PETE looks up, surprised. He stops walking and faces MORGAN.

PETE

You always see me like this.

MORGAN

I hope he wasn't too much of a jerk to you.

PETE

He's always a jerk.

MORGAN

Are you going to be OK?

PETE

I just got suspended for the rest of the year. I can't graduate or go to summer school.

MORGAN

Oh, Pete. I'm sorry. What are you going to do?

PETE

Just work up to Stilson's and put this whole high school thing behind me.

MORGAN

Can you still go out with me tonight? Texas Cafe?

PETE

That place is still open?

MORGAN

Seven o'clock good?

PETE

Yeah. Seven o'clock. I'll be there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MORGAN

Great.

PETE

Good.

INT. CAFETERIA -- LATER

PETE, RICKY and LITTLE T are eating lunch together at a table. LITTLE T is so engrossed in his food that he hardly ever looks up.

RICKY

You really smashed Chad up, huh?

PETE

I guess.

LITTLE T.

I didn't know you had it in you.

PETE

Me neither. How does it feel to be free?

RICKY

I must say it feels quite good. Day said that since there's only a few weeks left I can just have regular detention every night as long as I behave. He never wants to see my face again.

PETE

I got suspended. I'm leaving after lunch.

RICKY

What?

PETE

Day suspended me and said that I could graduate only if I currently had a passing average. And I don't.

RICKY

Damn, Pete. You get all the lucky breaks.

PETE doesn't laugh. He just glances around the room at four wasted years of his life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHAD
Hey McCloskey!

PETE and RICKY turn around. There's CHAD, standing at the end of the lunch line, holding a food drenched tray. He's less menacing looking with his nose all bandaged up.

PETE
What!

CHAD
Come here! I wanna talk to you!

RICKY looks at PETE, then back at CHAD. Some students start to take notice.

RICKY
Think this is an ambush?

PETE
Not with everyone in here. No way.
I'll be right back.

PETE gets up and starts walking towards CHAD. RICKY is following behind.

CHAD
I wanna talk alone!

RICKY sits back down. But he's actually crouching on his seat. That way it will be easier to spring into action.

RICKY
Just yell if you need any help.

RICKY comically flexes one of his arms in CHAD's direction. PETE walks up to CHAD. WE STAY WITH HIM all the way.

CHAD looks over PETE'S shoulder at RICKY, who has quietly inched forward.

CHAD
I said stay back Larson! This is
between me and McCloskey.

RICKY stops. For the first time we get to see CHAD'S face up close. His eyes are purple and swollen. And it's not just a bandage, there's a thin piece of metal attached to the bridge of his nose too.

PETE
What do you want?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHAD

I wanna call a truce.

PETE

We were never at war, Chad. You're the one who didn't like me.

CHAD

I don't want any more trouble between us then. How's that?

PETE

That's fine by me. I never wanted any in the first place.

Beat.

CHAD

Why'd he do it?

PETE

Why'd who do what?

CHAD

Why did your Dad kill that man?

PETE eyes CHAD very curiously.

PETE

Because he didn't like him. Rage runs in my family. I just choose to keep it bottled up.

CHAD

Would you have killed me if the teacher didn't pull you off?

PETE

Most likely.

PETE looks him over for a moment longer before heading back to a waiting RICKY. He sits down and starts to eat in a rough, manly fashion.

RICKY

What was that all about?

PETE

He wants to be my friend now.

RICKY

Punk.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL -- DAY

PETE and RICKY come walking out the front door. The lawn is empty. Classes are still in session. PETE and RICKY stroll silently together. PETE's pushing his bike. PRINCIPAL DAY comes out the front door and stands there holding it open.

PRINCIPAL DAY

If you leave with him Ricky, you're not invited back. You won't graduate!

RICKY and PETE turn around and face DAY.

RICKY

I appreciate the concern Stew!
Don't worry about us, we're going
to open our own vocational school.
Clownin' Tech!

As PETE and RICKY stroll along, DAY mutters to himself.

PRINCIPAL DAY

You'll both end up in prison.
That's where you'll be.

INT. STILSON'S LIQUOR STORE -- DAY

STILSON finishes ringing up a customer at the counter when the bell rings signaling another customer has entered.

RICKY LARSON strolls into the store with his hands casually in his pockets. He looks around, summing up the place. A MAN leaves with a large shopping bag full of booze. Another is poking through the cooler looking for his poison.

STILSON

Can I help you young man?

RICKY moves to the counter and leans against it, scanning the store curiously.

RICKY

I was told you might have some work
for a guy like me.

STILSON

Did Pete send you?

RICKY faces STILSON and folds his hands together, almost as if he's about to negotiate a salary.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICKY

Yes Sir. As a matter of fact, he said you needed someone with exactly my expertise.

EXT. MAPLETON STATE PRISON -- DAY

ANGLE ON: PETE'S BIKE chained up near the front entrance.

INT. VISITING ROOM

PETE is seated at a booth. BILLY is on the other side. We're behind the divider with BILLY, looking out at PETE.

PETE

Close one yesterday.

BILLY

Yeah. Last time someone broke out, all hell broke loose in here. Not this time, though. Now they got him locked up in solitary.

PETE

I had a beer.

BILLY

Oh, yeah? Did you look like it? How'd it make you feel?

PETE

It taste like crap so I poured it out.

BILLY

At least you're honest.

PETE

I think I have a girlfriend.

Back to PETE'S side of the divider. BILLY lowers the receiver from his ear and looks around before continuing the conversation.

BILLY

You actually found someone who meets your high standards? I'm impressed.

PETE

That girl I told you about, Morgan, she stopped to help me when I fell from my bike the other day.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE (CONT'D)

She took me to her house and we had lunch. Tonight we're going on a date.

BILLY beams a smile at PETE.

BILLY

Was her mother home? Did you get anywhere?

PETE is slightly taken aback.

PETE

Yeah, her Mom was home. She made us the sandwiches. They're real nice but Morgan's going to New York City for school while I'll be running Stilson's and who knows...one thing could lead to another when she comes back.

BILLY

You have been on a non-stop lucky streak, huh? Making new friends, meeting a girl, securing a future. What haven't you done?

PETE

Oh! I almost forgot! I got kicked out of school for good today. And you know what? I don't really care because, like you said, I'm setting up a nice little life for myself. And that's all that really matters. Right? Did I tell you about Miss. Breyer?

BILLY shakes his head "no"

FLASHFORWARD: BILLY is sitting wide-eyed as PETE finishes the story about MISS. BREYER

PETE

And just about everyone in town goes and checks out the show once and a while. But after me and Morgan get closer, I won't ever go back there.

BILLY

I've had my share of professional women when I was your age.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PETE looks up at his father.

PETE

Oh, I never had sex with her, I just watched other people do it.

BILLY

If you want to impress this Morgan gal you'd better consider getting a little experience under your belt, if you know what I mean?

PETE

I think Morgan's a virgin too, Dad.

BILLY

It don't matter, Pete. Girls like a man who knows what he's doing. You can't fumble with them. It's a big turn off.

The GUARD appears behind BILLY. Times up.

BILLY

I guess I'll be seeing you soon then, huh? You'll have more to tell?

PETE

Every weekend from now on. And you can count on it.

BILLY stands to be led away.

BILLY

Life is for the living, Pete. Never forget that. Take that last step into manhood. It'll make me proud.

PETE watches as his father goes.

INT. STILSON'S LIQUOR STORE - DAY

PETE is standing behind the register teaching RICKY how to ring up items. RICKY looks more serious about getting something right than we've ever seen him before.

PETE

You're going to have to memorize all the prices.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE (CONT'D)

But I'll be running the register most of the time so don't stress over it just yet.

RICKY

I'm so lousy at math.

PETE

Me too. But somehow, that's never been a problem for me up here.

RICKY walks around the store writing down prices of items on a notebook. PETE watches him from behind the counter.

RICKY

Hey. Look Pete. For the first time in my life I'm actually putting pen to paper.

PETE

And getting paid for it too.

PULLING BACK, as RICKY learns how to run the store. PETE looks like a miniature STILSON, standing behind the counter. Two young boys working in an adult's depressing world.

A glimmer of light catches his eye, PETE looks up to see THE BUS rolling by and into town. He moves from behind the counter and goes to the door. He watches as the SILVER BUS rolls along, leaving a black cloud of smoke in it's wake.

INT. TEXAS CAFE -- NIGHT

PETE and MORGAN are sitting at a booth in a small, hole-in-the-wall restaurant. A few ceiling fans mix up the smell of fried hot dogs.

PETE sips a COKE from a bottle. MORGAN is drinking coffee.

MORGAN

I'm so hungry.

PETE

Yeah, we ordered about an hour ago.

Just then, a rail skinny WAITRESS starts to set down plates. Two chili dogs overflowing with chili sauce. Two plain dogs with relish and onions. PETE and MORGAN dig in.

VARIOUS SHOTS OF THEM EATING. PETE licks his fingers. MORGAN burps. They laugh and have a great time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

I haven't had a Texas dog in a long time. That was really good.

MORGAN

That was amazing.

PETE looks across the table from MORGAN. He's happy to be here with her.

MORGAN

Chad's always been real mean to you?

PETE

Ever since fourth grade when he found out my Dad killed someone. He's been on me since then.

MORGAN

I would have punched him out a long time ago. You really kept it bottled up.

PETE

Why do you like me?

MORGAN stares into PETE. Tilts her head, leans back. Girlish.

MORGAN

Oh, I don't know. Because you're cute, innocent, and a little dirty, like a boy.

(Beat)

We're more alike than you know. No one talks to me besides teachers. It's like I don't even exist to people my own age.

The expression on PETE's face is one of complete admiration.

PETE

The first time you spoke to me I could hardly breath.

MORGAN

(Real serious)

I have that effect on most people.

PETE

You do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MORGAN laughs and PETE joins her.

MORGAN
Relax, Pete. You have to know when
someone is messing with you.

PETE
I can't ever tell. Especially with
you.

MORGAN
Want to go for a walk?

PETE
I could give you a ride on my bike.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- EVENING

The long lonely street is completely empty except for PETE and MORGAN who ride double, shakily down the street. MORGAN is laughing. PETE yells for her to hold on. She balancing on the handle bar. They coast off to the side of the road and MORGAN hops off. She's quite athletic.

PETE hops off too and they sit down on the curb.

PETE
I thought I was gonna lose you back
there.

MORGAN
Me too. That was scary!

MORGAN faces PETE and looks in his eyes. WE know she'd like a kiss. PETE has no clue. MORGAN doesn't give up too quick, she waits a second longer.

MORGAN
You don't have much experience do
you?

PETE
What's that supposed to mean?

MORGAN
I'm waiting right here for you to
kiss me and you don't even make a
move.

PETE feels like a big jerk.

PETE
You had onions on your Texas dogs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MORGAN

You had chilli.

PETE reaches over and takes MORGAN'S hand. She leans against a street sign and together they watch a brilliant orange and red sunset against a barren store front wasteland.

INT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE -- NIGHT

TROY, seated on the couch as usual, drinking a beer, stands up when he hears PETE come in the front door. PETE almost runs into TROY as he moves to the living room.

TROY

What did I tell you about cleaning out that basement?

PETE

I'm sorry. I forgot all about it. Can't we do it next weekend?

TROY

Sure. But I need your help with something else right now.

TROY heads to the kitchen. PETE follows.

INT. KITCHEN

On the table is a piece of paper that looks like a job application. Across the top is a company logo with three letters: CSX. TROY pulls out a seat for PETE.

PETE

What's this?

TROY

A job application. The railroad's coming back to town.

PETE looks at TROY, who's showing the slightest bit of a smile.

PETE

That's great, Troy! Are you gonna apply?

TROY

No. You are. My handwriting's for shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE sits down and with a pen TROY has left on the table, begins to fill it out. TROY sips on his beer over PETE'S shoulder. Nodding his head up and down.

TROY

Yep. I'm gonna get myself a job,
maybe fix up this house.

INT. PETE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

PETE is laying on top of his blankets, fully dressed. His hands clasped behind his head. The sounds of the nighttime coming through the open window. He rolls to one side, staring out at the clear, starry sky. Something is on his mind. Something that's keeping him awake.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN -- CONTINUOUS

PETE is riding his bike through town. He rides with a free spirit. A sense of better things to come. He rounds a familiar corner and heads towards MISS. BREYER'S house.

EXT. MISS. BREYER'S HOUSE

PETE is standing on the dark front porch. A faint light comes from inside. He checks his watch: 11:00 o'clock. Then, quietly, he knocks on the door. Waiting.

The porch light comes on. A curtain is pulled back. MISS. BREYER eyes PETE before opening the door. She's dressed only in underwear and a small T-shirt.

PETE'S eyes pop out of his head.

MISS. BREYER

What do you want?

PETE

Is it too late? I won't run away
this time.

MISS. BREYER looks PETE up and down.

MISS. BREYER

It'll cost you double.

PETE

No problem.

She opens the door and PETE walks in.

INT. MISS. BREYER'S HOUSE

She walks to the couch where she's been watching TV. The room is already quite dim. Only a small lamp is on in the corner. She turns the TV off with the remote and signals for PETE to sit down on the couch. She sits on a chair across from him, yawns and rubs her face.

PETE watches her closely. She looks smaller, less mysterious up close. But still a real life woman who's practically naked.

MISS. BREYER
Why did you run away the other night?

PETE
I wasn't ready.

MISS. BREYER
Can I get you a drink? Beer?
Soda?

PETE
I'm fine.

MISS. BREYER
What's your name?

PETE
Pete.

MISS. BREYER
You look kinda young. How old are you?

PETE
Seventeen.

MISS. BREYER stands up and crosses the room. She leans over and pulls out a small blanket. She opens it on the floor.

PETE
What's that for?

MISS. BREYER
You and me. I don't want to mess up the couch. Just got it cleaned.

PETE looks around the room. He notices packed boxes lining the staircase. Some are marked "Kitchen" others "Bathroom".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MISS. BREYER sits on the floor and pulls off her shirt. She adjusts her breasts in her bra. PETE looks down at his pants. Then looks up at MISS. BREYER with a very red face.

MISS. BREYER
Don't be afraid, Hon, I don't bite.
Come. Sit next to me.

She pats her hand on a spot next to her. PETE slowly gets up. Mature for his age. He kneels next to her.

PETE
How much is it exactly?

MISS. BREYER
I usually only charge fifty, but
tonight it's a hundred. I was
practically ready for bed.

PETE pulls off his shoe and the cash from out of the sole. He hands her the entire wad. She takes it and counts. Exactly one hundred. She turns away from PETE and moves her hair out of the way.

MISS. BREYER
Would you mind unhooking my bra for
me, sweetie?

PETE, hands beginning to shake, takes MISS. BREYER'S bra and fiddles with it until it comes undone. He lets it fall to the ground. She slowly turns around revealing large round breasts.

PETE is breathing very slowly now. Staring at her breasts. Lost in his own head.

MISS. BREYER
(Quietly)
You gotta get undressed too, baby.

PETE slowly pulls off his shirt. His young, skinny body is innocent in every way. Quickly, he moves across the room to pull down the window shade. He lies down on his back.

MISS. BREYER undoes his belt buckle for him. She pulls his pants off.

WE STAY ON PETE'S EYES as MISS. BREYER pulls off his underwear too. PETE is frozen. Then it happens. The room starts to spin.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BILLY'S CELL - NIGHT

BILLY'S sitting in the corner of his cell, sweating and nervous, gripping a t-shirt in his hands. He looks unbound, like his demented side is getting the best of him.

BILLY'S POV: Through his cell door we can see another inmate peering back at BILLY from his top bunk across the hall.

PEERING INMATE

(Whispering)

You gonna do it, McCloskey? You gonna set yourself free?

CLOSE ON: BILLY'S FACE. Tears well in his eyes. He wipes them away. His demons and fears have him backed into a corner. He starts to tremble. He stands up and paces wildly around his tiny cell.

IN A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS: BILLY rips his shirt in two. He digs out all of his shirts now and begins ripping them in half, crying as he does it.

CUT TO:

INT. POST OFFICE -- DAY

There's a long line of men waiting to be interviewed for a job. Inside a small office WE SEE TROY sitting at a desk. On the other side is a CSX representative, who holds his application in his hand.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

PETE rides down the hill towards the prison at a break neck pace. He's determined to reach his destination in record time.

EXT. MAPLETON STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY -- MOMENTS LATER

PETE coasts up to the main gate and hops off his bike. The GUARD recognizes him and lets him pass.

INT. MAIN ENTRANCE

An OFFICER waves PETE through the metal detector. When he gets to the other side OK the OFFICER takes him aside.

OFFICER

You McCloskey's kid?

PETE

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFICER

The Warden needs to see you. Hold tight and I'll let him know you're here.

PETE waits there. The OFFICER picks up a phone and speaks quietly to someone. A door opens down the hall. THE WARDEN exits and starts walking towards him. PETE can tell by the look on his face that something's gone wrong.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE

PETE is sitting across from the WARDEN, who's leaning back in his chair, arms crossed.

WARDEN

Last night your father hung himself.

ANGLE ON: PETE. He blinks once.

PETE

Pardon me?

WARDEN

Billy died this morning. We tried to save him but he was real quiet about it.

PETE is in shock. He's motionless. Numb.

WARDEN

You're father was a bad man, Pete. But everyone knows he loved you.

PETE starts to cry. The WARDEN picks up a plastic baggie from beside his desk and hands it to PETE. PETE picks through it.

WARDEN

It's all the stuff you're father had when he came here.

PETE starts to bawl as he holds up an old Timex watch and looks at it.

WARDEN (O.C.)

I'm real sorry, Pete.

EXT. MAPLETON STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY -- MOMENTS LATER

PETE, still in tears, unchains his bike from the fence. He walks it out to the road and gets on. He rides away.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- LATER

PETE is straddling his bike and looking out at the valley. He scans the horizon. A look of confusion and deep sadness on his face. He wipes his face before riding on.

EXT. STILSON'S LIQUOR STORE -- DAY

Through the window we see RICKY behind the counter ringing up a customer. PETE and MR. STILSON are seated on a small bench in front of the store.

STILSON

Now I know you didn't graduate. And although I don't approve of you not wanting to go back and give it another try, I've decided to get you a present anyway. Something I've been thinking about for a long time.

STILSON hands PETE a brown manila envelope. PETE opens it up and looks inside. HE pulls out a small stack of documents -- the Deed and Title to the liquor store.

PETE stands up and hugs STILSON tightly.

PETE

Thank you Mr. Stilson. You have no idea how much this means to me. You're like the father I never had.

STILSON

You deserve it Kid. You're a good boy. I know you'll do well.

PETE and STILSON hold in this embrace for a long time.

STILSON

I'm sorry about what happened to your Father, Pete.

EXT. LARSON TRAILER -- DAY

RICKY and PETE use his BB gun to take out TIN CANS set atop a wooden fence. RICKY has deadly aim.

RICKY

Does this mean I can get a raise?

RICKY'S shot sends a can flying off the fence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

Maybe. Depends on how you do over the summer.

RICKY

Well I ain't ever calling you Mr. McCloskey, that's for sure.

PETE

Don't worry. You don't have to.

RICKY

What time you goin' to meet Morgan?

PETE

In about an hour. She's taking the morning bus tomorrow. I'm gonna go see her off.

RICKY

You guys goin' steady now or what?

PETE

We're taking it day by day.

(Beat)

She'll be back after her first semester and then we'll spend more time together.

RICKY hands PETE the BB gun and PETE takes aim.

RICKY

You better not let her get too far away. She might forget you.

INT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE -- DAY

The living room is slightly more clean than we've ever seen it before. TROY is on the couch with a beer in hand when PETE comes in the front door.

TROY

Get in here hot shot.

PETE leans in the doorway.

PETE

You know I don't have to take your crap any more.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TROY

Easy little man. I just wanted to make sure you were gonna stay true to that promise that you'd sort out the basement for me.

PETE

Why can't you do it? It's not like you have a job or anything.

TROY sits up and looks right at PETE.

TROY

I can still break you're fuckin' neck. And I ain't afraid to do it either.

PETE

You better do it soon, cause I'm probably moving out you know.

TROY

Well until then you still live here. So get going on the basement.

PETE

You should go up and visit Dad sometime.

PETE heads to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

Then straight out the door and into the backyard. He pulls open the basement doors. He descends into the dark room.

INT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE - BASEMENT -- DAY

PETE is surrounded by old boxes that are filled with forgotten memories and long hidden pasts. He's sitting Indian style on the floor looking through a stack of old photographs. He holds one photo for a long time and stares at it with real interest.

INSERT: OLD MCCLOSKEY FAMILY PHOTO

A picture of a younger BILLY MCCLOSKEY with his arm around his beautiful wife. There's a young boy between them with his arms crossed, making an angry, squashed up face. The woman, LYNDA MCCLOSKEY, is holding a newborn baby tightly wrapped in a soft blue blanket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE stares at the picture for a long time before tossing it back into the pile and getting another one. His face is looking more and more upset with every photo he sees.

Looking at another photo, this one only has BILLY, LYNDA and the boy, all hugging each other affectionately. The YOUNG BOY looks uncomfortable to be hugging his parents.

PETE

This isn't my real life. This is some ghost family that I don't even know.

Another PHOTO. This one of BILLY, sitting on the couch with a beer in his hand. Flipping off the camera. PETE's eyes burn as he stares. He stands up and dusts himself off. He takes a deep breath and heads up the stairs.

INT. MCCLOSKEY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- DAY

TROY is doing push ups on the floor with a glass of beer and a straw where his face is. Each time he comes down he takes another sip from the straw.

PETE comes into the room. TROY strains to do one last push up before standing up and flexing a little in the half broken wall mirror.

TROY

You get the basement all sorted out? That was quick.

PETE

No. And I'm not gonna do it either.

TROY

What?

PETE looks upset.

PETE

You heard me. I started sorting out the stuff down there and guess what I realized?

TROY

That you're a dead man in a few seconds...

PETE

All that junk down there has nothing to do with me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE (CONT'D)

It's all crap from your old life.
Your old family. Everything around
here. It has nothing to do with
who I am or who I'll be.

TROY

And who will you be, Pete?

PETE

Not a loser who's lost in the past
like you. And not some weakling
like Dad. You're just like him you
know.

TROY lunges at PETE and grabs him by the throat. He pushes
him into the half broken mirror, smashing it into many
pieces.

TROY

Listen here you little fucker! I
don't have to take any of your
shit. Never have either. You
should thank me for looking after
you all these years, you ungrateful
little piece of shit!

TROY lets PETE fall to the ground. He stands over him like
he's going to punch him right in the face.

PETE

You don't like me! You never liked
me!

TROY

That's right asshole! I never did!
You stole my fuckin' life!

TROY backs away. PETE looks up at his bright red face. The
anger floods the room.

PETE

Fuck you Troy! I'm not staying
here anymore. You can pay your own
bills from now on. I'm leaving!

PETE storms up to his room and slams his door shut. TROY
fumes by himself. He punches the wall, leaving a fist sized
hole in it.

CUT TO:

EXT. LARSON TRAILER -- DAWN

RICKY comes out the door to take MACON, the dog, for a walk. There's a package on the front steps. He leans down and grabs it.

He walks with MACON on his rope leash down the road. While MACON relieves himself, RICKY opens the envelope and pulls out a small stack of papers.

On top is a letter from PETE. WE HEAR PETE'S VOICE as RICKY reads.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SNYDERSVILLE -- SAME

Standing in front of the BARBER SHOP is MISS. BREYER, looking less like a pro and more like a woman on the move. Boxes are piled all around her. She sits on one smoking a cigarette.

EXT. DOWNER HOME

MORGAN and JEANNE embrace as PETE lifts her luggage into the trunk.

PETE

Dear Ricky, I hope this letter doesn't upset you or catch you by too much of a surprise, But I've decided to go on an adventure. I've been existing in Snyder'sville for too long. It's time I start to live, or at least give it a good try. Enclosed you should find all the papers making you the full owner of Stilson's Liquor store. I already told Stilson and he called me a damn fool. He was really upset. But I can't think of anyone who deserves it more than you.

MORGAN, PETE and JEANNE get in the car. PETE gets on his bike. And like a processional, they make their way for the BUS STOP.

PETE

I know it sounds strange, but I'm just going to see where life takes me. Maybe I'll cross paths with my Mom. Or maybe I'll just wander the country until I find someplace that I feel comfortable in. Hopefully I can stay with Morgan for a little while and see how we do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Now, coming down the street WE SEE MORGAN'S CAR and PETE'S BIKE. JEANNE pulls up across the street.

PETE leans his bike against a street sign. The trunk pops and PETE unloads MORGAN'S luggage. He runs it across the street.

PETE

Until I met you I had no real friends. But now I finally feel like myself and it's time for a change of scenery.

Finally, THE BUS pulls up. The doors open and the DRIVER steps off.

MISS. BREYER loads all of her boxes under the BUS. MORGAN has a long goodbye with JEANNE while PETE stares down the street at the lifeless downtown.

The BUS DRIVER takes a ticket from MISS. BREYER, MORGAN and finally, PETE. They all get on. PETE has no luggage, no memories of his ghost life to take with him. Just a pocket full of hard earned cash.

The doors close and the BUS pulls away, leaving it's awful thick black smoke to fill the frame. JEANNE waves goodbye.

And once the smoke clears, WE SEE PETE'S BIKE, alone and unchained against the streetlight.

PETE

So take care, my true friend. I can't be certain if we'll ever meet again. I have died just once but Pete McCloskey wants to live again.

The BUS is far down the street now. A mere silver reflection of sunlight and hope as it rolls along down empty streets.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- MOMENTS LATER

The BUS climbing the hill, then descending down the other side, away from Snydersville.

In the back window, WE SEE PETE, face pressed against the glass, looking at the world he's leaving behind.

The End.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: