

Still Runs  
and original screenplay  
by  
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Copyright

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FADE IN:

OVER BLACK "TEHRAN - ESTEGHLAL HOTEL - 2018"

FOREIGN AFFAIR

INT. HOTEL ROOM, TEHRAN - MORNING

A luxurious hotel room in Tehran lit up with a soft orange light from a rising sun beckoning another hot day. Faint SOUNDS OF A BUSTLING CITY drift through an open window, mingles with the smoke of incense smoldering on a nearby nightstand.

KLEINAU CLEMENT (early 40s), his hardened face softened in the low light, lies on a bed, propped up on one elbow. Beside him is RASHID (30), an Iranian man with tattoos running up his arm, and a quiet intensity in his eyes. They're relaxed, laughing softly over a private joke.

Kleinau's hand bearing a small MALTESE CROSS tattoo, brushes Rashid's thin mustache lightly traces its outline bridging his full lips. His fingers linger for a moment.

KLEINAU  
Are we good, Rashid?

A sudden change of mood. Rashid becomes defensive.

RASHID  
What do you mean?

KLEINAU  
The exchange.

RASHID  
(annoyed)  
Everything is on track. I keep  
telling you that. Why do you keep  
asking?

Kleinau pulls Rashid closer. Rashid first resists until their foreheads nearly touch. A moment. The intimacy returns but just for an instant.

KLEINAU  
I need to know.

Rashid sits up.

RASHID  
I need to go. They'll be suspicious  
if I show up late.

Rashid pulls off the sheet and rises naked from the bed.

Kleinau pulls him back abruptly. Intense eye-to-eye contact.

KLEINAU (STERNLY)  
Nothing can go wrong here. Do you  
understand?

A long extended pause occurs as the two stare through each other's eyes to discern a truth. Rashid brushes the back of his hand against Kleinau's cheek, smiles, and rises from the bed to dress.

RASHID  
Again? You don't trust me? Is that  
what you're saying?

KLEINAU  
No. I'm saying if we can't trust  
each other, we're fucked. And they'll  
have my head if this mission fails.

RASHID (DISAFFECTED)  
Well, it won't. The deal's nearly  
complete.  
(softly)  
Almost.

KLEINAU  
What do you mean?

Rashid buttons down a fine silk shirt. He struggles to get the necktie just right. Kleinau rises from the bed naked and takes up the dangling ends and methodically ties a Full Windsor Knot. He holds the knot a bit too long and tight to Rashid's neck.

KLEINAU (CONT'D)  
We're tied at the knot Rashid. If  
one of us goes down we both go down.

You understand?

RASHID  
You least of all have to worry.  
You're more protected than me. You  
have an out. I don't. Here, heads  
do roll.

A questioning look in both eyes bridge a pregnant pause.

Rashid breaks the stare. There's a LOUD KNOCK on the door.

Both men freeze. Rashid's eyes widen. He quickly puts on a pair of slacks and slips on shoes. Kleinau puts on a robe draped off the foot of the bed.

RASHID (CONT'D)  
(barely a whisper)  
Ahh, finally!

Kleinau hears and is struck with confusion.

KLEINAU  
What was that?

Rashid pushes Kleinau to the side and goes to unlock the door.

KLEINAU (CONT'D)  
What the fuck is going on!?

Now unlocked, the DOOR BURSTS OPEN. Two IRANIAN GUARDS storm into the room, weapons drawn. Kleinau instinctively reaches for a hidden pistol under his pillow. Rashid steps in between Kleinau and the Guards, raising his hands in surrender.

RASHID  
(in Farsi, to guards)  
Don't hurt him.

IRANIAN GUARD  
(in Farsi)  
Shut up, faggot!

The guards seize Kleinau and the pistol, one pinning his arms behind his back. Kleinau struggles against their grip, his face a mix of shock and fury.

Rashid's face falls, guilt flashing in his eyes as he stares at Kleinau, then abruptly turns away cold.

KLEINAU  
You traitor!

Rashid's voice trembles. He turns as he delivers a terse rigid response.

RASHID  
Sadly, your Israeli friends didn't uphold their end of the bargain. Hamas never got all the weapons promised, but we paid for them!  
(slight pause and a sympathetic smile)  
It's not you, Kleinau. You were an easy target. Sad, as lonely as you are, it was easy. Love at first sight to be sure.

Realization hits Kleinau, and his expression darkens.

KLEINAU

You sold me out.

(astounded)

You used me? You betrayed me!

(yelling)

You fucking asshole, Rashid! I hope your head rolls! What you've told me will make Hassan Rouhani shit his pants! And they will know! Be certain of that! They will know! You'll pay for this!

RASHID

Not in this life time.

Rashid turns away finishes dressing. Kleinau wrestles free of the guard's hold, lunges toward Rashid. In doing so, grabs the other guard's gun, spins around and levels it at Rashid.

Rashid takes a frightened step back.

IRANIAN GUARD

(in Farsi)

Stop!

KLEINAU

(voice shaking)

Consider this your payment in full right here and now.

Rashid's eyes fill with tears as he whispers, barely audible.

RASHID

It's country first isn't it? How else could this end?

Both their eyes bead with tears. Kleinau's finger tightens on the trigger, his voice raw with anger mixed with heartbreak.

KLEINAU

I think you know the answer to that.

(beat)

I'm sorry.

Kleinau pulls the trigger. The gunshot reverberates in the room. Rashid collapses, his eyes wide, lifeless.

A Guard takes a crack shot at Kleinau and grazes his cheek. The other tackles Kleinau, wrestles the gun from his hand and slams him to the floor. Kleinau's gaze remains fixed on Rashid's body, his expression hollow as he's dragged out.

SUPER: "5 YEARS LATER - 2023 SOMEWHERE IN APPALACHIA"

CRACKING BRANCH AND SHUFFLING OF FEET

MOON LIGHT PIERCES FOG-DRAPED MOUNTAINOUS HILLS

EXT. GRAVELED DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

FADE IN FROM BLACK

A shadowed, ANONYMOUS figure of a young man walks up a graveled driveway. A vague CONTAINER in his arms sparkles with twinkling lights. Large oak and black walnut trees flank the drive, swaying in a gusty wind. A weathered barn looms in the distance.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

SOUNDS of tree frogs and crickets fill the air. MOONLIGHT casts shadows that dance across the barn's weathered slats.

Tall TREES SCRATCH against the side of the building. A small gabled house stands nearby.

Anonymous creeps up close and peers through the gaping, weathered slats. He holds a large GLASS JAR OF FIREFLIES.

They flit and sparkle.

Suddenly, THUMP! THUMP! Black walnuts fall from the trees, hitting the ground. Anonymous quickly turns to look.

TREES SWAY, WALNUTS DROP. THUMP!

He turns back to peer through the barn slats.

POV - ANONYMOUS

INT. BARN - ALCOHOL DISTILLATION AND MASH ROOM

CLEM (Kleinau Clement, now in his late 40's), sturdy and upright with an aged scar on his cheek. His hand bearing a tattooed Maltese cross firmly grips a large wooden spatula. He stirs a boiling MASH POT of grain. Flames from the burner below lap up the side of the pot. A CIGARETTE smolders between his yellowed fingers. He's focused and silent.

Stationed behind him a GOOSE-NECK STILL trickles out a clear alcohol. Nearby, BARRELS are neatly stacked within a maze of WOOD SLAT HORSE STALLS lining the barn walls.

GUST OF WIND, TREE LIMBS SCRATCH THE WOODEN BARN.

Clem pauses and tracks shafts of moonlight filtering through the open slats.

Shadows scramble over the floor and up the walls, and over the tops of the barrels.

WIND HOWLS. FLAMES FROM MASH BURNER DANCE.

EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Anonymous steps on a brittle branch. CRACK!

BACK TO SCENE

Clem stops, listens, then walks across the planked floor to the wide open barn door. A purring CAT approaches and weaves around his legs, then tracks to outside the barn into the darkness.

Clem offers a slight, knowing smile, then returns to the pot of cooking mash. We linger at the darkened doorway.

CLEM (O.S.)  
Candle, is that you? Come on in  
here, boy. I don't bite.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

CANDLE (Anonymous, now revealed). A curly-headed stuttering 16 y/o, fragile, endlessly curious and shy, walks cautiously into the barn cradling the cat in one arm like an infant, in the other clutching the glass jar of fireflies.

CLEM  
What are doing out this late?

Candle, head down, shuffles his feet. He kicks around bits of corn and grain laying on the barn floor. He looks up at Clem.

GUST OF WIND, tree branches scratch against the side of the barn. The cat jumps from Candle's arms and races outside.

CLEM (CONT'D)  
Come here boy. What you got there?

Candle shyly shuffles up to Clem's side. Clem takes the jar away from Candle, admires it, places it aside, and puts his arm around Candle's shoulder.

CLEM (CONT'D)  
That's quite a collection.

SUPER: "PARTY AT AN ABANDONED TRAILER"

EXT. OLD TRAILER - NIGHT

A battered DOUBLE-WIDE TRAILER off a dirt road in the woods.

Several OLD CARS parked nearby in the overgrown grass and weeds.

HIP-HOP MUSIC, raucous LAUGHTER, and shrills resound from inside the aluminum-clad hulk.

INT. OLD TRAILER

Eight to ten HIGH SCHOOLERS are partying, the air thick with smoke from vapes. Small groups cluster drinking beer and whiskey from old canning jars. TWO GIRLS sit on a couch toking a BLUNT and laughing. Three PRE-TEEN KIDS (12-14 y/o) huddle near the door by themselves on a single overstuffed chair. Wide-eyed, trying to act adult, they take in the scene.

At the center of attention are GARY (20), CHARITY (18), DIANE (17), and DANNY (18) all huddled around a tapped whiskey barrel. Smiling, laughing - high as kites. MASON (27) and TANYA (29), older high school dropouts, hardened just enough to look out of place among the younger crowd. They pass a blunt between themselves, coughing and laughing.

BRIAN (18), stands solitary by himself just off to the side. He fashions a soft and subtle smile.

Charity hands a MOLLY to Diane who welcomes it with a wide grin. She washes it down with a swig of whiskey.

MASON

Hey, let's go check out what the old man has.

GARY

Dude, we were just there the other night. Besides...

Gary crunches eye brows and gestures to Mason to take notice at the Two Girls sitting on the couch.

Brian catches Gary's suggestion and beams.

BRIAN (O.S.)

Don't waste your time.

Mason turns to look at Brian then at the Two Girls on the couch now making out. His jaw drops. He busts out laughing.

GARY

Now, what was that you were sayin'?

The three boys crack up.

CHARITY

What's so funny?

Charity looks at Mason askance then takes Diane around the waist and lays a long, lasting kiss on her lips. Mason pulls Charity away.

MASON

Funny!

DIANE

Dude! We're just shaking your tree!

TANYA

(to Mason)

Aww babe!

Tanya steps in and plants an even longer, lasting kiss on Mason's lips.

DANNY

Yeah, man. They're just shaking your tree.

MASON

Shake this Danny!

Mason grabs his crotch and gives it a shake. They all crack up.

Behind them a couple DRUNK BOYS (16+) at a tapped whiskey barrel yell Your Mamma jokes at each other, taking a swig between each insult.

DRUNK BOY #1

Your momma so big she wears a tent  
for a dress and it fits her like  
Spandex.

DRUNK BOY #2

"Yo momma so ugly, even the mirror  
had to call in sick!"

Suddenly, Diane vomits. Her eyes glassy. Head wobbles side-to-side. About to faint. Gary leads Diane to the sofa where the Two Girls are sitting. Charity and Tanya come up from behind.

TANYA

Can you guys scoot over.

Without waiting, Tanya shimmies the Two Girls over with her hips to find a spot to sit. She Pulls Diane to sit at her side.

TANYA (CONT'D)

You okay sweetie?

CHARITY  
(fearfully, to Diane)  
You think it's the molly?

DIANE (O.S.)  
I hope not. I took one too!

TANYA  
Probably not that. Maybe too much  
to drink, sweet heart?

CHARITY  
I'm feeling weird. I hope that stuff  
wasn't cut with fentanyl or somethin'.

Diane's face takes on a worried look of strained, heightened concern.

DIANE  
Don't say that!

A look of dread drapes over Charity's face. She starts to cry.

TANYA  
You guys takin' that shit? What's  
wrong with you girls?

Across the room, Mason catches the commotion and rushes into scene. A crowd of others quickly forms around the five of them. Gary kneels at Charity's feet.

GARY  
Babe, you okay?

The group grows silent and exchange worried looks among each other.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. CLEM'S HOUSE - MORNING

MORNING SOUNDS - BIRDS - ROOSTER CROWING

The small gabled house nearby the barn is framed by blue skies and puffy clouds. A few chickens scamper around scratching at the dirt. Roosters in chase. The barn stands opened. Cat strays out from inside. At the side of the barn a PILE OF COMPOST and a PIG STY. PIGS root and snort through the debris spent corn mash. FLIES SWARM. MAGGOTS

CRAWL. PIGS SNORT

INT. CLEM'S HOUSE - ART STUDIO

In a large room, an artist studio with images and paintings on the walls, a table with a mound of SOFT CLAY, various SCULPTING TOOLS scattered over the top. A barrage of small sculpted figurines, a look-alike BUST OF CANDLE. Wax relief DEATH MASKS hang from wire armatures atop another work bench.

Others hung on the walls.

Clem sits at the table adding and removing bits of clay to a SCULPTURE OF A HAND. Next to him sits Candle hunched over fighting fatigue, and trying his hardest to keep his hand held up with his middle finger extended.

CANDLE  
(whining)  
Are, are you d, d, done yet?

CLEM (O.S.)  
Almost. Hang in there son.

Clem focuses on his work, comparing the sculpted piece to Candle's hand.

Candle's hand starts to go limp.

Just beyond the scene we pick up on someone yet revealed laying on a table with a mound of plaster covering their head with two straws protruding out from their nostril. They utter a slight anxious moan.

CLEM  
(to Candle)  
Hey, hey, hey! Hold steady.

Candle immediately lifts his hand erect for a moment with the assistance of his other - at this point a trying, Herculean task. He then gives up and lets it go limp. He stands abruptly.

CANDLE  
I'm tired, Cuh, Cuh Clem. I'm going  
to, to feed the chickens.

Candle drops his head down and shuffles towards the door.

Candle passes the plaster encased head of the person laying on the table. With a mischievous smile, he stops and puts his fingers over the ends of the breathing straws. Person wiggles him off.

CANDLE (CONT'D)  
I, I think he's done, Clem.

Candle leaves the room. Clem continues his meticulous work adding more detail and refinement. He looks up occasionally at person lying on the table, then up at a GERMAN-FASHIONED CUCKOO CLOCK on the wall

CLEM  
Two more minutes, Brian.

Clem etches an outline of a snake crawling up the middle finger of the sculpture, then fixes his gaze at Brian (the someone on the table).

THROUGH THE WINDOW BEHIND CLEM

Candle throws cooked mash to a brood of scrambling chickens and more at the drove of snorting pigs in the sty.

BACK TO SCENE

Clem carefully loosens and then removes the plaster cast from Brian's head. He sits up abruptly throwing his legs over the edge of the table.

BRIAN  
Damn, Clem! Don't ever ask me to to  
do that again!

INT. OLD TRAILER - NIGHT

SUPER: "ANOTHER NIGHT, ANOTHER PARTY"

Around the barrel stands Danny, Mason, and Tanya. Danny turns the tap on the barrel, pouring whiskey into his cup, spilling more than a few drops onto the floor. He raises his cup high.

DANNY  
To Old Clem, may he never learn to  
count his barrels.

The gang roars with laughter, clicking their plastic cups together. The young crowd around them cheers, sipping from their own cups and Mason jars.

Tanya lights up a joint. Gary approaches.

GARY  
Hey.

TANYA  
Hey.

Tanya offers him a hit. He takes the joint and takes a short puff.

Danny approaches and grabs the jar of booze in Gary's hand.

DANNY  
Here man let me fill you up!

He meets Mason at the tapped barrel.

MASON  
You gotta give it to the old man.  
He knows how to brew. This stuff'll  
knock you on your ass.

Mason reaches out and snatches the joint from Tanya's hand.

TANYA  
Hey!

DANNY  
Don't give him too much credit.  
He's got Candle around all the time  
now.

MASON  
Candle ain't much help. He's clueless  
as a lost puppy.

GARY  
He's a good kid.

MASON  
(a paced declaration)  
And that's why the heist was so  
beautiful! No one around. They  
were probably off trading life advice  
or whatever those two do in the middle  
of the night. Probably didn't even  
notice the barrels missing,

Gary sizes up the gathering of feckless party-goers -his court, with a sly smile of some hidden knowledge.

GARY  
We're good even if we get busted.

Off to the side, the clutch of the three Pre-teen Kids huddle together wide-eyed, impressed, leaning in to hear every detail. One, pushes the others, and stands to be cool, then butts in.

KID #1  
Hey, you guys stole it from that old  
man up on the hill? Huh? He's  
creepy. Huh?

OTHER TWO KIDS  
Yeah! Huh?

Kid #1 turns to his friends, they giggle.

GARY  
Nah, he's straight up a gentleman.  
Brian steps in from being off to the side.

BRIAN  
Yeah, he's cool.

MASON  
(laughing)  
Straight up any gentleman.

DANNY  
Straight!? That's not what's going  
around. He's definitely gay.

TANYA  
And so?

Brian fidgets and frowns at the gay-hate jesting.

DANNY  
It's those soft-spoken ones you gotta  
watch.  
(turns to Kid #1)  
Hear that? You better watch your  
back boy if...

MASON  
(perturbed)  
Hey! Leave the kid alone!

DANNY  
What man? Just joking.

MASON  
That shit ain't funny.

TANYA  
Just stop assholes. You're so fuckin'  
hetero! Both of y'all. You're sick!

DANNY  
I bet Candle doesn't even know good  
whiskey from bad, just wants to play  
grown-up with Clem.

Brian walks away overcome with an awkward self-conscious nervousness.

TANYA  
Where's Clem from anyhow?

GARY  
No clue. I know he ain't from around  
here.

DANNY  
Probably a narc.

On that word, Mason's expression turns from self-assured to scared kid. Then manning-up, offers the joint to Kid #1 and waits, straight faced, for a reaction.

Pre-Teen Kid #1 shakes his head. Waves Mason off and rejoins his friends who shower him with praise for all his coolness.

Mason laughs, then passes the joint to Danny. He takes a toke and chokes on the smoke.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
(coughing)  
Yeah, who cares what Clem does as  
long as he keeps making this stuff.

MASON  
Yeah! We've got the barrel. We've  
got the night. Let's make the most  
of it.

Danny raises his cup. The party-goers cheer, and drink deeply. Whiskey spills down their chins as they revel in their stolen prize.

The scene intensifies, MUSIC BLASTS louder, some start dancing. A sense of reckless abandon fills the space, the Pre-Teen Kids punch each other kiddingly, savoring the taste of danger and rebellion. Shadows cast wildly on the veneered walls of the trailer.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Shadows shape-shift against the walls, beams, and stalls. Moon beams sift through the slats gusts of wind -- tree branches scratch the sides of the barn

MICE skitter over the floor, freezing for a split second in the beam of a flashlight before darting away, their tiny claws SCRATCH against the wood.

SUPER: "THE HEIST"

EXT. BOTTOM OF GRAVEL DRIVEWAY DOWN FROM THE BARN - 2:00 A.M.

An old, rusty, beige-colored VAN crawls up the graveled driveway, headlights cutting out before it reaches the crest where stands the barn and Clem's house.

The car rolls to a silent stop. The doors open. One by one Gary, Danny, Mason, and Tanya step out, bundled in dark jackets, hoods pulled up tight, faces tense with nervous excitement.

They gather beside the van, exchanging quiet, smiling nods.

Their breaths visible in the cool night air.

Just beyond, the barn stands surrounded by large trees, partially illuminated by the moon lit sky. A faint light spills out from within through the wooden slats beckoning them to enter.

They move up in a single file, crouched low, inching up the hill, their figures blending into the shadows.

NIGHT FOREST SOUNDS pierce the quiet air. The barn looms closer, each step intensifying the eerie silence. Every SNAP of a twig or rustle of grass underfoot draws a quick glance over their shoulders.

Eerily, background music emanates from inside barn  
"Khachaturian - Masquerade Walz"

Now several steps away from the barn doors Gary raises his hand and motions everyone to stop. Unnoticed by the others, Gary glances up to a window in Clem's house. The others search for danger hidden in the night air around them.

A dark figure flashes a light out from the upstairs window.

GARY

Okay, guys. Come on. Let's go.

They nod, hearts racing. Gary creeps up to the weather-beaten barn door, its hinges barely holding. He slowly presses against it, and the door gives way with a soft CREAK. Their eyes dart around. Danny panics.

DANNY

Hey, I'm out of here!

MASON  
C'mon, man. We're here we got to go  
in. Don't get cold feet now.

TANYA  
Let him go.  
(to Danny)  
No worries, Danny. You go on if you  
want.

MASON  
Well, he ain't going to get any of  
our stuff.

DANNY  
Clem's a nice guy. We shouldn't be  
stealing from him anyhow any more.  
I mean c'mon guys.

MASON  
Sure he is. What do you two got  
going on?

DANNY  
Nothing.

MASON  
Sure don't seem like it.

TANYA  
Shut up, Mason.

Danny challenged by the stark stares of Mason and Gary,  
reconsiders.

One by one, they worm their way into the barn to the barrel  
stalls. Moonlight pierces through the slats. EERIE SHADOWS  
cut across their faces and each footstep on the planked floor.

BEAMS FROM FLASHLIGHTS slice through the dust-laden air.

INT. CLEM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

In a dark room lit only by the moon, we see standing at the  
window the figure of Brian with a FLASHLIGHT, shirtless,  
wearing boxer shorts. He turns around. A large tattoo of a  
snake trails up and around a six-pack abdomen.

CLEM (O.S.)  
What do you see out there?

Brian puts the flashlight down on a nightstand next to a  
SMALL SCULPTURE of THE DYING GALATIAN. He crawls into bed  
close to Clem.

CLEM (CONT'D)  
You heard something out there?

BRIAN  
Nothin' Probably a raccoon or coyote.

Brian pulls a sheet over himself and inches closer to Clem.

CLEM  
(quietly)  
All's good?

Brian turns and looks into Clem's eyes and smiles.

BRIAN  
Yeah, we're good, man.

He reaches to touch the scar on Clem's cheek.

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
You still haven't told me how you  
got that.

CLEM  
Nothing to tell, really.

BRIAN  
Ahh, c'mon man, break out with  
something.

The room falls silent and lit only by the light of the moon.

MOMENTS PASS

Clem turns to see Brian fast asleep. He looks at a CLOCK on the nightstand.

CLOCK LED display: 2:30 (time lapses) 2:40 (time lapse) 3:00  
Brian shuffles and turns on to his side. Clem stares  
restlessly at the ceiling.

RASHID (V.O.)  
It's country first isn't it? How  
else could this end?

KLEINAU (V.O.)  
I think you know the answer to that.  
I'm sorry.

Clem turns his head to where Brian lies asleep and sees  
Rashid.

## FLASHBACK

Clem plays back the event at the Tehran hotel some 10 years earlier, recreating a different ending.

INT. HOTEL ROOM, TEHRAN 2018 - NIGHT

Rashid, bare chest under a sheet. His tattoos on full display.

Kleinau turns to embrace Rashid in his arms.

KLEINAU  
Rashid, are you awake?

RASHID  
Yes.

KLEINAU  
We need to talk.

Rashid rubs his eyes and turns to Kleinau and smiles. Their eyes lock face-to-face.

RASHID  
Sure. What is it?

KLEINAU  
When this all ends, you're still coming to the U.S.? Right? Both of us, together?

Rashid looks deeply into Kleinau's eyes searching for the 'why' of the looming question.

RASHID  
(pause)  
That's my hope, but I don't see this ever being over. Once the arms are delivered, we're done.  
(beat)  
But you know this situation with the U.S. and Iran will never end. At its core, it's a holy war, and they never end. You know that.

KLEINAU  
That's what I'm thinking too. I think we need to get out now. Right now. Tonight.

Rashid takes a long pause and contemplates the prospect of abandoning an otherwise covert operation.

RASHID

I don't think we can. If the operation collapses we'll both be left out to dry, I'd be executed as a traitor. And they'd likely cut off both our heads.

KLEINAU

The Agency will look out for us. We'll get a place far way in the States and find a new life. I don't want to lose you, ever.

The two embrace.

RASHID

Nor I, you.  
(pause)  
I just don't know.

KLEINAU

You'll leave with me now. We'll go tonight. Come.

Kleinau pulls off the sheet and rises naked out of bed.

Rashid grabs him by his arm and pulls him back down. They embrace, their eyes lock.

RASHID

(long pause)  
Not just now.  
(pause)  
We have time. Plenty of time.

BACK TO SCENE

Clem's eyes flooded in tears.

Brian turns toward Clem and throws his arm over his bare chest. He pulls himself in closer. Clem looks over at his young companion. Clem's hard exterior softens, his furrowed forehead smooths out. A slight smile comes over his face.

CLEM

(quiet whisper)  
Good night sweet friend. Thy love  
ne'er alter till thy sweet life ends.

EXT. BARN - THE NEXT DAY - AFTERNOON

The van pulls up and parks outside the barn. Puffs of blue smoke and laughter spew out the windows.

Gary, Mason, Danny, and Brian pour out of the van higher than kites, eyes squinting at the blaring sun. They stop outside the barn door and peer in.

INT. BARN - STILL AND MASH ROOM

Clem stands alongside Candle near the copper still, his arm stretched around Candle's shoulders. They both watch intently the crystal clear moonshine stream off the still head.

PUFFS OF VAPOR MIST BLOOM OUT FROM THE PIPING

Clem checks the temperature gauges and a floating HYDROMETER bobbling in the proofing parrot.

Muffled chatter from the gang outside.

Candle freezes. His eyes open wide and shift to the barn doors. His timidity turns to fear.

CANDLE

Hear that?

Clem too busy adjusting the still.

CLEM

What?

CANDLE

Suh, suh, someone's outside.

Clem, picking up on the muffled chatter, toys with Candle a moment and feigns alarm and panic.

CLEM

Serious!? Oh, oh! What should we do? What should we do, Candle?

CANDLE

Get, your, your gun!

CLEM

Yes! Yes! Good idea! We got to protect ourselves! Not to worry, son!

Clem calmly reaches for a SHOTGUN leaned against an OAK BARREL.

EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

DANNY

Shit man, the old man has a gun!  
He's coming this way!

MASON  
 (quietly)  
 Shut the fuck up. He'll hear ya!

GARY  
 You all are assholes. C'mon, now we  
 got to go in. Act natural! Come  
 on!

Gary and Mason swagger into the barn, feigning laughter of a  
 joke not told. Brian and Danny tag along behind.

Mason pops Danny on the arm.

MASON  
 C'mon!

DANNY  
 Hey!

The four meet up with Clem and Candle.

GARY  
 Hey pops!

CLEM  
 Boys! Up early today, aren't you?

GARY  
 We're just out kickin' it. Didn't  
 have much to do, being Sunday, you  
 know.

The others laugh.

MASON  
 We thought we'd pop in and see what's  
 cookin'.

Clem walks back to the mash pot. He hands a CORN MASHER to  
 Candle and goes back to the still to check on progress,  
 adjusting water flow valves, eyes temperature gauge, and the  
 slow drip of high proof spilling out of the parrot.

CLEM  
 What can I do for you?

GARY  
 Nothing. Just want to see the old  
 man doing his thing.

CLEM  
 (nodding toward Gary)  
 'The old man'. I like that. He  
 must be the smart one of the group.

The boys laugh.

Clem looks to Brian and smiles. Brian reacts nervously.  
Clem pushes the point.

CLEM (CONT'D)  
Who's your friend there? The shy  
one.

Brian plays along.

BRIAN  
Brian.

DANNY  
(interjecting)  
You're not from around here are you?

CLEM  
(laughs)  
I'm from a long way from here son.  
What's your name, son?

DANNY  
Danny.

Candle looks up to see Brian and Clem exchange guarded smiles.

Clem decides to push the envelope a bit further. His eyes  
fix on a TATTOO on Brian's middle finger.

TATTOO OF A SNAKE

Clem's continued attention to Brian gives Candle pause until  
he catches himself gawking and returns to stirring the mash.

Oblivious to the exchange, Gary, Mason, and Danny take  
positions around the bubbling pot.

CLEM  
I like the tattoo. Got any more?

Brian plays along nonchalant. He lifts up his T-shirt to  
show off a TATTOO on his abdomen. He looks to see that the  
others are stuck on the still, then licks his finger and  
traces the tattoo with a smile.

Candle takes note. Others take note of Candle. Caught  
gawking goes to stir the boiling mash.

The charade stops.

MASON  
He likes your tattoo, Brian.

Brian flashes the snaked middle finger at Mason.

CLEM  
(to Candle)  
Mash it while you stir, son. That's  
why they call it mash.

The other boys break out laughing.

MASON  
Yeah, Candle. What's wrong with  
you? Don't ya know how to mash?

DANNY  
(to Candle)  
Hey, let me show you.

GARY  
Oh yeah, you show him, Danny. You  
know all about making whisky.

MASON  
He sure knows how to drink it!

Mason pulls a BOWIE KNIFE from the sheath at his side to  
clean his finger nails. He watches and offers weak guidance.

MASON (CONT'D)  
Slowly does it.

CLEM  
(to Danny)  
You like whiskey? Do you know the  
difference between whiskey and  
bourbon?

DANNY  
No,

CANDLE  
I, I do Clem.

Mason points at Candle and mocks him.

MASON  
(laughing)  
I, I do. He knows!

Candle drops his head and mutters (inaudible).

Clem shoots Mason an angered look.

CLEM  
Candle knows the difference. You'd  
be surprised just how much he knows.

Candle beams for a moment until his shyness kicks in. He drops his head in embarrassment and continues to stir and mash the pot.

Clem crosses to the barrel stalls lining the inside walls of the barn.

Gary motions to Mason to check out the stash of barrels.

They both smile and share a nod - almost a giddiness, as they watch Clem.

Clem looks over neatly stacked barrels. He surveys the stock and then lands on an OPEN SPACE ON THE RACK. He cocks his head, puzzled as if something is missing - *wasn't there a barrel there before?* He looks back at the boys with suspicion. Clem scans the labels on the barrels on either side of the empty space.

He selects a nearby SMALL CASK of Whisky and carries it back to the boys. He plops the small cask on to a counter top.

CLEM (CONT'D)  
Here's one for you all to try out.  
Now I have to ask you all one thing.

(BEAT)  
You're all over 21 aren't you?

The boys shoot nervous glances to each other then a beat.

GARY  
Hell yeah, we are!

All but Brian nod and laugh.

CLEM  
Yeah, I thought you would all agree.  
(laughs)  
How about you, Brian?

Brian looks momentarily perplexed then realizes the pretense.

BRIAN  
Oh yeah, I am. Twenty-one for sure.

Mason snickers.

Candle turns down the heat on the boiling mash pot and steps up to the counter.

CANDLE  
(stuttering)  
Leh, leh, let me o, o, open it, Cle,  
Clem.

CLEM  
Sure son. Have at it.

Candle hastily snatches a set of SHOT GLASSES on a nearby shelf and opens the spigot to fill the shots with the amber-colored whiskey. He hands a shot to Clem.

CANDLE  
Here... Here... Here, Clem.

Clem hands the shot over to Gary.

CLEM  
Here's yours, boy.

Danny and Mason snatch theirs from Candle. Clem picks up remaining shot and hands it to Brian with an inviting smile.

Gary, Danny, and Mason take note to the brief exchange, then raise their shot glasses and toast. CLING!

Candle quickly shoots down a shot of his own with a grimace, then just as quickly refills his shot glass.

DANNY  
(to Candle)  
How about me, Candle? Don't I get any more?

MASON  
(jokingly)  
No, dude.

Clem notices Candle taking several shots in a row. He snatches the shot glass out of his hand and hands it over to Danny.

CLEM  
Here you are, boy. Drink up.

Clem shoots Candle a disappointing look. Candle drops his head in shame.

CLEM (CONT'D)  
No, no. You go ahead, Candle, pour yourself another... If you want.

CANDLE  
N, n, no, no I, I , I'm good.

GARY  
Here's to Clem.

Clem and the others raise their glasses and toast. Candle watches, sporting a look of a chastised puppy.

FESTIVE ATMOSPHERE -- MORE AND MORE SHOTS

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. BARN - NIGHT - A FEW HOURS LATER

FADE IN FROM BLACK Clem walks out the barn door into the night looking back at the boys living it up. He crosses the drive and enters his house.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. THE STILL AND MASH ROOM - MUCH LATER

FADE IN FROM BLACK

A dizzying, blurred, and warped time lapse scene follows

Boys daring each other to have another shot. They continue.

MASH POT BOILS OVER

DANNY  
(out loud)  
Whoa!

INT. CLEM'S HOUSE - LIBRARY

Clem sits at a DESK in front of a COMPUTER. The MONITOR glows with the activity going on in the barn. He looks agitated at the mess of boiled-over mash. He offers up a slight smile at the drunk boys and their feeble attempts to remedy the situation. He zooms in to see Candle sitting alone feverishly petting the cat, watching the others. Clem's smile turns downward. He zooms in on Brian. A smile slowly returns.

In stark contrast to the rustic scene in the barn, the trimmed walls of the library are lined with book cases, paintings, a small NICARAGUA FLAG, and ARTIFACTS from Iran among others pieces from far off places.

FLASH BACK

SUPER: "AUGUST 2018 - CIA HEADQUARTERS, LANGLEY, MCCLEAN, VIRGINIA"

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT - CIA HEADQUARTERS - DAY

INT. CIA OFFICE - SPECIAL SECTION

FADE IN FROM BLACK reveals a sterile, fluorescent-lit office.

KLEINAU CLEMENT, Clem of a decade ago, fit and sharp as he was in Tehran, sits stoic.

An unflinching rugged face hints at a lifetime of secrets. A scar running down his cheek, his only trophy from a botched operation. He's tense.

He tries to stay composed as he faces two stern CIA OFFICIALS in their 50's, both wearing suits.

OFFICIAL #2 at Clem's side, OFFICIAL #1 sits behind a desk scanning a computer screen while paging through a PORTFOLIO, slipping photos and official documents into it and finally a PHOTO ID bearing Kleinau's face with the name, CLEMENT SWANSKY.

CIA OFFICIAL #1 closes the portfolio and looks up at Kleinau.

Kleinau shifts in his chair, the weight of unspoken tension pressing down on him. His eyes flicker with a mixture of defiance and worry.

OFFICIAL #1 slides the portfolio over the desk to Kleinau.

CIA OFFICIAL #1  
Kleinau, you've done some impressive work. No one's denying that. But it's the methods that bring us to this point.

KLEINAU  
(measured)  
I got the intel, didn't I?

The question falls flat.

KLEINAU (CONT'D)  
Well, didn't I?

Official #2 leans forward from his chair, turns to Kleinau and speaks sternly.

CIA OFFICIAL #2  
It's not about the risks you took, it's about the liability you created.

We've gone over the reports. That "informal rendezvous" in Tehran last year? You compromised more than the mission.

The Officials exchange a look of exasperation. Official #2 stands and picks the portfolio off the desk and hands it to Kleinau.

CIA OFFICIAL #1  
Given the delicate nature of what you acquired - and the attention you attracted, we're prepared to offer you a way out.

Kleinau stares blankly at the portfolio.

PORTFOLIO COVER EMBLAZONED WITH SEAL OF U.S. MARSHAL OFFICE -  
"WITNESS PROTECTION PROTOCOL"

CIA OFFICIAL #2  
WITSEC handles these affairs. From  
here on out this office is  
disassociated with you, and you from  
us. There is to be no communication  
between you and this office  
whatsoever. Understood?

Kleinau nods his head in remorseful regret.

CIA OFFICIAL #1  
And there are protocols with them as  
there are with us that you'll have  
to follow. WITSEC will explain all  
that to you.

A long awkward pause elapses. Kleinau stands. The three  
men shake hands and Kleinau goes to exit. Halting him...

CIA OFFICIAL #2  
Kleinau.  
(pause)  
Breaching any of their protocols,  
especially of the nature which you  
violated with this office, if it  
comes to public light, will leave  
you dangling like a piece of flesh  
above a bowl of piranhas. You have  
enemies out there. You know that.

CIA OFFICIAL #1  
In other words, no indiscretions on  
your part. WITSEC will likely assign  
you to a local authority to warrant  
your actions.

CIA OFFICIAL #2  
Likely a local marshal or sheriff.

CIA OFFICIAL #1  
My advice to you Kleinau, is to not  
get involved personally with any  
folks in your new locale in ways  
that might compromise your identity.

KLEINAU  
Of course, understood.

CIA OFFICIAL #2  
(with a snide smile)  
No strange bedfellows! If you get  
my meaning.

Clement Swansky delivers a disgusted glare, then walks out the door.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. CLEM'S HOUSE - NEXT DAY - EARLY MORNING

The sun breaks into a clear, blue-sky day. BIRDS CHIRP, the cat sits waiting at the front door. The door opens and the cat runs in. Brian steps out with BOOTS in hand. He sits on the stoop, struggles to get boots on. Tucks in his shirt. Rakes fingers through a messy crop of hair.

Clem's voice calls from inside.

CLEM (V.O.)  
Brian.

Brian hastens his actions. Heads down the gravel drive. Looking back over his shoulder.

Clem steps out of the house searching. Shakes his head, smiles, and retreats back into the house.

Brian disappears down the drive.

INT. BARN - SAME MORNING - LATER

Large barn doors slowly slide open. Casters. The scene outside pours in.

EXT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

Clem at the door slides the barn doors open. Casters creak.

INT. BARN - SAME MORNING - CONTINUOUS

CLEM  
Brian you here?

Clem sees Mason, Danny, and Gary stretched out asleep on a set of old sofas. Candle curled up asleep in a chair.

SPIILLED MASH covers the planked floor, an OLD MOP, BROOM AND DUSTPAN lay alongside of the mess. A TRASH CAN half full of spent mash stands nearby.

CLEM (CONT'D)  
(under his breath)  
What a fuckin' mess.  
(loudly)  
Okay, boys. Rise and shine!

The boys are startled awake. They yawn, moan and groan. They rise unsteady on their feet, looking a bit green.

Clem shakes Candle awake.

CLEM (CONT'D)  
Need you all to clean up in here  
before you get on your way. It's  
Monday. I'm sure you all got  
somewhere to be. Jobs, maybe?

MASON  
(sarcastically)  
Yeah, right?

CLEM  
Candle, come with me.

The boys exchange curious and puzzled looks.

GARY  
Come on you guys let's get this place  
cleaned up.

EXT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

Clem and Candle walk out from the barn into the bright sunlight. Candle lags behind with trepidation.

CLEM  
Come on. Let's take a walk. We need  
to talk.

Candle looks up at Clem with a frightened, worried look.

The two walk off into the woods surrounding the barn.

BACK TO SCENE

Tired from the night before, the boys struggle to clean up the mess. Each one stopping at more frequent intervals to complain or make jokes about the night's folly.

DANNY  
Candle should be helping with this.

MASON  
Clem's little helper.

GARY  
At least he wasn't puking like that  
one.

Gary points to Danny sitting on the sofa holding his head.

VOMIT ON FLOOR NEXT TO SOFA

DANNY  
That wasn't me. It was Candle.

MASON  
Bull shit. He hardly drank an ounce  
all night.

GARY  
Especially after Clem got on his  
ass.

MASON  
Did you see that boy guzzle those  
shots!

DANNY  
Like I said, it wasn't me.

MASON  
No, I saw you puke like this...

Mason reaches into the trash can and grabs a scoop of MASH,  
puts it into his mouth, and sprays it at Danny. Breaks out  
laughing

DANNY  
You fucking asshole!

Danny fumes.

Brian enters.

Unseen by the others, Gary gives a quiet nod to Brian as  
their eyes meet.

MASON  
Boy did you miss out. Where did you  
take off too?

DANNY  
Yeah dude. Where did you disappear?

MASON  
Hey, you wanna help clean up?

BRIAN  
How about, no?

MASON  
You missed all the fun. We had a  
blast!

Brian spots the pile of vomit on the floor.

BRIAN  
Really? Looks like it.

Mason and Danny both point at each other. Then together  
proclaim, "It was Candle" and laugh.

DANNY  
Where did you go last night?

BRIAN  
None of your business.

Brian crosses to the sink and grabs an old rag. Gary, Danny  
and Mason stare and track his movements. Brian on hands and  
knees wipe up mash on the planked floor.

MASON  
I like that position. Did you assume  
that one last night?

Brian pauses, shakes his head, keeps cleaning.

MASON (CONT'D)  
(facetiously)  
That's awful nice of you to do that.  
Clem will appreciate it.

Brian stands, throws the rag at Mason.

BRIAN  
You do it. It's not my mess.

MASON  
Whoa! She's mad.

Danny reluctantly picks up where Brian left off using the  
broom and dustpan.

Gary leaves the bantering and moved to examine the cache of  
barrels in the stalls.

MASON (CONT'D)  
Hey, did you bunk up with Clem? I  
mean, it's okay if you did. I'm  
sure his bed was much better than  
these old musty couches.

BRIAN  
Oh, it was great. Should've been  
there.

Mason and Danny laugh.

DANNY  
Nice.

MASON  
How was he?

Brian looks up at Mason. A long pause ensues.

BRIAN  
(facetiously)  
Oh, it was sweet. Like I said you  
should have been there.

GARY (O.S.)  
Hey guys. Check this out.

DANNY  
(to Mason)  
Wait, was he actually with him last  
night?

MASON  
Tsk! Shut up.

Danny and Mason drop what they're doing and go to join Gary.

Brian, reluctantly follows them to the stalls.

GARY  
Look! Check out the barrels back  
here.

DANNY  
Man look at the dates on those!

GARY  
Yeah, 'better older is the better  
bourbon', they say.

MASON  
Yeah, let's check them out.

Danny, Mason, and Gary go deeper onto the stall. More barrels  
neatly stacked. They peruse the offerings.

DANNY  
I say we come back tonight and try  
for one of these really old ones.

MASON  
Now looks who's talking. The other  
night you were chickening out.

GARY  
Here's one from 1996.

MASON  
You know how much that shit goes for  
in the store?

GARY  
How much?

MASON  
(laughs)  
I don't know.

DANNY  
You're stupid.

MASON  
Shut up, man.

Brian stands at a short distance watching his friends while nervously looking over his shoulders thinking Clem might walk in.

Gary searches the racks for another. He spots it! A barrel labeled "SPECIAL RESERVE 2019".

GARY  
Bingo! Hey, Mason, grab this one.

Mason heaves the barrel on to the floor and rolls it forward.

GARY (CONT'D)  
Here, put it up front there. It'll  
be easier to grab later.

Mason rolls barrel to front of stall.

MASON  
(to Danny)  
You're a lot of help.

While Brian watches, the three hoist the barrel onto the top of the rack and slide it into the open space -the same spot noticed earlier by Clem.

GARY  
We'll get it later. Let's go!

BRIAN  
Hey! Come on, guys. This isn't  
right.

As the would-be thieves walk to leave the barn.

MASON  
Holy crap! What a find!

DANNY  
Dude! We struck gold!

BRIAN  
Guys! I don't think we should be  
stealing this stuff from Clem.

Gary, Mason, and Danny shoot Brian a confused look.

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
He's a good guy.

MASON  
(sarcastically)  
I'm sure he is. But this stuff is  
even gooder.

DANNY  
(laughs)  
Gooder!?

BRIAN  
No, I'm serious. Let's just go.  
How many times we going keep doing  
this. Eventually he's goin' find  
out.

MASON  
Lots?

BRIAN  
Lots?

DANNY  
Lot's more times!

GARY  
(beat)  
No. You're right, man. This'll be  
the last time.

BRIAN  
Yeah, I mean, He shares his stuff  
with us all the time.

MASON  
He probably shared a little extra of  
his stuff with you, Brian.

BRIAN  
Funny, and NOT!

GARY  
Okay, knock it off Mason.  
(contemplative pause)  
Yeah, you're right, Brian. This  
will be the last take. I promise.  
(to Mason)  
And Tanya's right. You are an  
asshole. Come on let's go.

Danny speaks quietly to Brian.

DANNY  
You and Clem got something going on?

BRIAN  
Why are you asking?

DANNY  
Just curious.  
(beat)  
No man, I think it's cool. You can  
learn a lot from old timers.

BRIAN  
He really isn't all that old.

GARY  
Danny, Brian, come on. Let's go.

DANNY  
Yep.

GARY  
Brian you coming?

MASON  
Nah, he already did that last night,

BRIAN  
Real funny.

Mason and Danny head out of the barn.

GARY  
(quietly to Brian)  
Can you flag again tonight? The  
last time. I swear.  
(MORE)

GARY (CONT'D)  
I mean you don't have to hook up  
with the dude if you don't want to.  
Not that he ain't bad looking.

Brian looks up at Gary, pauses and relents.

BRIAN  
Last time.

GARY  
Yeah, yeah, and no judgment, man.  
You're cool with me. Just stay up  
again and let us know when it's safe.  
And hey, and if he's knocked out,  
come on out. He won't know.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

The beige van rolls down a tree-lined country road. Gary is at the wheel.

INT. VAN - MOMENTS LATER

BLUE LIGHTS FLASH AT SIDE VIEW MIRROR

GARY  
Shit!

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The van slows to a stop. Out of Sheriff's car steps SHERIFF (40). He approaches the van. Gary rolls down the window.

SHERIFF  
Boys.

INTERCUT - INTERIOR OF VAN

Sheriff surveys the inside of the van making eye contact with each of the boys one at a time. He stalls slightly longer gazing upon the eyes of Mason. Sheriff smiles. Mason snarls. Sheriff turns his attention to Brian, delivering a sinister, knowing-something-more, smile.

GARY  
Hey. Why the stop.

SHERIFF  
You want to step out of the car?

Gary mutters to himself and then to the others.

GARY  
Tsk! Hold on. I'll be right back.

Mason, Danny, and Brian crane their heads to see Gary walk back to the patrol car with the Sheriff. They take in a quick, silent transaction going on between the two.

Moments later, Gary steps into the van.

MASON  
What'd he say?

Without a word, Gary produces a small bag of pills and delivers it into Mason's hand.

MASON (CONT'D)  
Party! Let's roll.

Gary glances out the side view mirror. The Sheriff gets back into the patrol car and pulls away ahead of them.

Blue lights turn off. Sheriff's car passes van. Red tail lights disappear around a bend in the road

EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - AT A POND - SAME

Clem sits with Candle on a bench alongside a dark pond surrounded by willows and cattails.

Candle watches WATER SPIDERS walking the surface of the pond, and FISH SWIMMING just under the surface. He mutters to Clem.

CANDLE  
(stuttering)  
I, I don't think they'd, they'd do  
that Clem. It's, it's, it's stealing.  
  
They're not like that. They, they  
wouldn't do that. No, no.

CLEM  
Barrels keep missing, Candle. Who  
do you think is stealing them?

CANDLE  
I, I, I dunno.

CLEM  
Listen, son. You need to back me on  
this. I have proof. All I need to  
know is if you were in on it Candle.  
It's important that I know whose  
side you're on. Are you being  
disloyal, Candle?

Candle strikes a frozen frightened look.

CANDLE

I, I, I'd never steal from you, Clem.  
Never. Ever! I, I don't do those  
things. I mean, I, I never do, never!

CLEM

You're sure about that? Don't betray  
me now, son. I could never forgive  
you.

A dark hue comes over Clem's face. His eyes piercing  
Candle's.

CLEM (CONT'D)

That's something I can't abide. You  
understand?

Candle overcome with fear, stunned to hear or understand  
anything at this point.

CANDLE

A, a, abide?

CLEM

Listen, I trust you. If you know  
something you need to tell me.

CANDLE

I love you.

(pause)

I, I never would do, do that.

His eyes tear up. Clem's eyes soften. Clem smiles.

CLEM

I know you love me, and I love you  
too.

CANDLE

I'd never do, do anything like, like  
steal from you or, or do, do nothing  
to make you mad.

Clem puts his arm over Candle's shoulder. He leans into his  
ear and speaks quietly.

CLEM

One of those boys aren't playing  
straight with me.

CANDLE

And, and, and that's not right.

CLEM

No. That's not right. It isn't right. I'm going to catch them and teach them a lesson. I'm going to find out who the traitor is.

CANDLE

The tray, tray, traitor. Yes. Ga, Ga, Gary's pretty smart. Maybe he, he did it?

CLEM

Oh yeah, very smart boy. I can tell he's the ring leader. They are all thieves. But that isn't what gets me upset.

CANDLE

It isn't me, Cle...Cle..Clem. I, I, swear!

CLEM

(sinisterly suggestive)  
You think those fish down there are holding their breath?

Candle stares into the dark pool. Shooting fearful looks back and forth to Clem. Their eyes linger. Candle's eyes shift again and fix on the dark, brackish pool of water.

SUPER: "THE LAST HEIST"

EXT. BARN - 2:00 A.M. - NIGHT

A FULL MOON rests close to the western horizon. Nearby, a light signals from the second floor window of Clem's house.

Gary, Mason, Danny, and Tanya gather near the barn. They pull on black hoodies.

Moments later Brian sprints out from the house. He races up behind, breathless.

BRIAN

Hey, I'm here.

MASON

I knew it! You're bunking up with the dude.

GARY

You don't know shit man. Let's go.  
(to Brian)  
Is he asleep?

BRIAN

Yeah.

TANYA

(to Mason)

Can't you just stop!

The team steps into the dark barn. Its entrance lit only by the moon.

INT. CLEM'S HOUSE - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Clem wears a robe and sits in the dark room lit up only by the screen of the computer. He watches the thieves in the barn. He switches between cameras looking for Brian. He spots him standing alone behind the rest. A menacing frown comes over Clem's face. He zooms in and scowls. He stands up abruptly.

INT. CLEM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Clem enters the bedroom. An empty bed where Brian's impression is shaped by sheets thrown to the side.

He grabs a set of clothes, a pair of shoes, and a PISTOL from a dresser drawer.

Clem now fully dressed walks down the stairs into a short hall. To his right the art studio. He turns to look in and spots an opened ANATOMY BOOK on the sculpting table. He sees Candle wrapped in a light sheet asleep on the sofa, hands dirty with bits of clay under his fingernails.

Under his arm rests a FUZZY STUFFED TOY RABBIT.

Clem goes out the front door closing it quietly behind him.

EXT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Clem peers in through the door left open by the intruders.

He spots Brian standing alone in the dark with his flashlight pointing down at the floor. Brian turns quickly and shines the light at the barn door. No one there. He flashes the light to shine on the others whereabouts.

Mason calls back a hushed command to Brian.

MASON

Turn that off, fagot!

GARY

(whispering)

Quiet!

Brian's flashlight beam goes dark.

CLEM (O.S.)  
(hushed)  
Brian!

STARTLED, Brian turns. He flashes the light at Clem who stands directly behind him. Clem snags the flashlight away from Brian.

CLEM (CONT'D)  
(angrily)  
Be still.

TANYA (V.O.)  
Just grab one. Come on! I'm freaked  
out here.

At the stall, with flashlights honed on their prized barrel, they pull it free from the stack straining to keep it from hitting the floor. They lay it on its side and ease it forward. The barrel wobbles slightly.

They keep it on a steady course rolling it forward toward the barn entrance.

Gary is momentarily caught up in scanning the other barrels lining the stalls. He turns back to his posse, then radically searches the barn with his flashlight.

GARY  
Where's Brian?

MASON  
What a cunt. He probably pissed his  
pants and ran back to daddy.

In a dark corner on the other side of the barrel stall, Clem holds Brian's arm tightly up behind his back. Brian struggles to break free.

Clem talks softly into Brian's ear.

CLEM  
Stop squirming, or I'll break your  
arm. You betrayed me. You call  
them your friends? He just call you  
a cunt.

Clem slowly lets go of his hold and turns Brian toward him.

CLEM (CONT'D)  
Why?

Tears well up in Brian's eyes.

BRIAN  
(pleading)  
I don't know!  
(pause)  
I really don't know why, Clem.

A long pause. Their eyes lock, both searching for resolve. Moments pass. Clem's hardened face loosens. A look of loss in his eyes is slowly replaced with one of forgiveness. A soft smile replaces his thin stiffened lips.

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry.

BACK TO SCENE

The thieves roll the barrel toward the gaping barn door, each movement deliberate. CREAKS AND GROANS. The thieves wince and hold their breaths each time the barrel bumps over a loose floorboard.

EXT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

The trees sway wildly in the wind as the thieves enter the open air. They navigate the barrel over uneven ground down the gravel driveway. The barrel lurches with each bump, rolling faster as the slope steepens. Suddenly it breaks from their hold and barrels down the hill. Gary and Mason run after it.

TANYA  
Hurry!

DANNY  
Don't let it bust open!

Gary and Mason manage to get ahead of it and bring the barrel to a halt. They struggle to keep it steady, hands slipping slightly as they near the van.

They guide the barrel to the rear doors of the van and ease it into the back. A collective sigh of relief, their faces break into wide grins as the adrenaline subsides.

Tanya and Danny run up from behind.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
(grinning)  
Let's get out of here.

GARY  
Where's Brian?

MASON  
He's a cunt. Let's go!

TANYA  
You are an asshole, Mason!

SUPER: "ANOTHER NIGHT, ANOTHER PARTY ONE WEEK LATER"

EXT. OLD TRAILER - EVENING

Now a closer look at the dated trailer shows broken windows, scrawled graffiti, and rusted metal siding barely holding it together. Several cars parked among the weeds haphazardly around the rusty hulk. Piercing the thin walls, the music blares, dim lights escape from torn window covers.

The Sheriff, drunk, staggers to the front door. He reaches forward and knocks. He tries the door. It's locked. He pounds on the door, waits a moment and pounds again. The door opens.

Sheriff looks down to Pre-Teen Kid standing in front of him. A malicious, sinister smile comes over his face.

Pre-Teen Kid flashes a look of fear.

SHERIFF  
Well hi there, son. What's going on  
here, boy?

Gary comes up behind Pre-Teen Kid and pulls him back and off to the side.

GARY  
Just a Friday night get together,  
Doug.

SHERIFF  
Brian Cummings happens to be in there?  
You seen him lately?

GARY  
Nope.

Gary turns around to take in the smoke filled hovel. Sheriff follows his gaze.

SHERIFF  
You all smoking weed? Don't let me  
have to write you all up.

GARY  
Yes, sir.

Sheriff smiles. He looks over Gary's shoulder. Glances back at Pre-Teen Kid salaciously, and again deep into the smoky room.

SHERIFF  
Any other minors in there?

GARY  
No minors, Sheriff.

SHERIFF  
What about this one?

Gary puts his hand on Pre-Teen Kid's shoulder.

GARY  
My cousin.

SHERIFF  
Just curious.  
(pause)  
Nice looking boy.  
(beat)  
Wondering, the last time you saw  
Brian.

GARY  
We haven't hung out together lately.

SHERIFF  
About how long ago was that?

GARY  
Maybe a week ago. I don't know.

Tanya comes up behind Gary.

TANYA  
Hey, Doug. What's wrong?

Tanya turns to Gary and under her breath asks...

TANYA (CONT'D)  
You paid him, didn't you?

SHERIFF  
Nothing wrong besides you all smoking  
weed in there, and that Brian Cummings  
hasn't been home for nearly a week.  
His mom is worried.

Sheriff issues a malignant smile. Tanya shoots a worried  
glance at Gary.

TANYA  
Can't imagine why? She must be off  
her drugs to even know he's been  
gone. Right?

SHERIFF

Maybe. Point is he hasn't showed up at school either. Principal Jackson reported him truant. We just don't know his whereabouts.

TANYA

Well that's not good.

GARY

No, that ain't good.

SHERIFF

You mind if I come in and take look see at your gathering here? See who's who and what's what?

GARY

Well.. sure. I don't see why not. But he's not here.

SHERIFF

So you say.

(beat)

I tell you what. I will take a look... in a bit. Does that work?

He looks again at the kid and smiles.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Mean time I'm just going take a little drive up the road here a bit and when I come back I hope I don't catch any minors in there with you all and better not be any drugs. Hear me, Gary? Tanya?

GARY

Yes sir.

TANYA

Thanks, Doug.

SHERIFF

I'll be back.

The door closes on the Sheriff.

TANYA

What's that all about? Looking for Brian?

GARY

I don't know.

(MORE)

GARY (CONT'D)  
He was with us when we snagged that  
last barrel. I haven't seen him  
since.

The two turn inward to the party scene. They spot Mason and  
Danny and at the whiskey barrel and weave their way through  
the merry-makers to reach the two boys.

Charity and Diane join in from across the room.

GARY (CONT'D)  
Hey, you guys seen Brian?

Danny squints and scans the room. He sways, his eyes crossed  
with having too much to drink.

DANNY  
I don't see him. Probably at Clem's.

MASON  
He definitely got something going on  
there.

DANNY  
(sarcastically)  
You think?

Danny and Mason share a laugh together. Gary and Tanya  
exchange worried looks. Diane and Charity take on the  
concern.

CHARITY  
Why? What's up?

EXT. BARN - MINUTES LATER

The Sheriff's car pulls up the gravel drive to the top of  
the hill. Just ahead, he spots Clem and Candle cleaning out  
the mash pot and some barrels with a hose and scrub brushes.

Sheriff gets out of the patrol car, pulls up his sagging  
trousers, and swaggers up to Clem.

SHERIFF  
(facetiously)  
Hello Mr. Swansky. Candle. Looking  
for Brian Cummings. Seems I saw him  
a few nights back, but haven't seen  
or heard from him since. You know  
his whereabouts?

Sheriff shoots Clem a mischievous smile.

CLEM  
Can't say I have Sheriff. You,  
Candle?

CANDLE  
No sir.

Candle leans over into the mash pot with a METAL SCOOP in hand.

CANDLE (CONT'D)  
Boss, there, there are a, a, lot of  
fly worms in the mash.

CLEM  
They're maggots. Been sitting dirty  
too long. It's okay son. Just scoop  
it out. We'll give it to the pigs.

CANDLE  
But, but..

CLEM  
It's okay. Just clean it out.

Candle scoops out the dredges and fills a SMALL BUCKET sitting on the ground.

MAGGOTS CRAWL OUT OF THE MASH

Candle mumbles nonstop to himself about not knowing anything anyhow, why he wouldn't do anything like this or that, about all the maggots, the gooey mash, yada, yada all the while head down inside the barrel, occasionally surfacing with a worried, anxious expression...

CANDLE  
(muffled)  
I haven't seen nothing. It's going  
be bad, real bad. I feel like it's  
real bad. I, I don't know.

Candle pulls out handfuls of gooey mash with his bare hands and throws it in the bucket, maggots and all.

SHERIFF  
I think we're going be in for some  
trouble here, Clem.

GARY  
Why do you say that, Doug?

SHERIFF  
Folks are asking about Brian. Even  
his mother's been calling every day.

CLEM  
She must of ran out of her supply to  
be worried about anything but her  
drugs.

A sinister smile breaks from the Sheriff's stoic look. He  
glances up at a window near the top of the barn. A dim lights  
shines from within.

SHERIFF  
No, I'm not worried too much about  
his ma. I got a little stuff to  
settle her back down.

Sheriff produces a small baggy of white powder from an inside  
pocket.

CLEM  
What's that?

SHERIFF  
Just some fentanyl.

CLEM  
Where did you come by that?

SHERIFF  
Confiscated.

CLEM  
I think this is going on too far.

SHERIFF  
You mind your business and we'll  
both be fine. You got that, Clem?

Emanating from somewhere inside the barn, a distant pleading  
voice.

CLEM  
You can't keep him asking hiom to do  
what you want. You're taking  
advantage of him. You know that,  
don't you?

Candle looks worriedly Up at the barn window and then to  
Clem.

SHERIFF  
Like I said about your business and  
my business.

Candle with a look of fear buries his head back in the barrel.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Now, we got our little understanding here, Mr. Swansky. Don't you forget that. Kind of like, don't ask, don't tell. Works for both of us. Don't ya think? That boy is for me Clem. You got that?

Sheriff motions to Candle, still head down in the barrel.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

He belongs to you, don't he? See that one doesn't blab.

CLEM

He's my boy. We're tight on that front. I wouldn't worry.

Sheriff surveys the surroundings nodding his head.

SHERIFF

Yep. Got to hand it to you. You got a nice setup here.

CLEM

I think so.

SHERIFF

I'll be back tonight! You see Brian, you let him know I expect him to see him.

Sheriff staggers over to Candle who is still jabbering about loyalty, not being a rat, and how well he'll get "this damn barrel cleaned right". Sheriff rubs Candle's back. He leans in to tell something quietly to Candle.

Clem's arm abruptly clasps Sheriff's shoulder.

CLEM (O.S.)

Hands off. Leave him be, Doug.

Long stand off.

SHERIFF

Sure thing. I got my own.

INT. OLD TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

The crowd now much more somber stands around Gary, Mason, and Tanya. Diane and Charity stand at Gary's side, Tanya at Mason's.

The room has taken on an eerie silence. The cheery laughter and cigarette and weed smoke, from just a little earlier, is

nearly absent. Pre-Teen Kid #1 and Pre-Teen Kid #2 stand trying to discern the mood from a short distance.

GARY

He didn't come back with us.

MASON

He's probably stoned out somewhere.

Boppin' to Katy Perry with Clem.

TANYA

You are so stupid.

CHARITY

You guys said he was with you when you got the barrels. Was he?

MASON

Yeah, well, he turned chicken and split.

DIANE

He's your best friend. You should've been watching out for him. And you Danny, aren't y'all cousins?

MASON

Hey, this isn't on me. He's Danny's cousin. I'm telling you, he's probably lodged up with that fag.

CHARITY

Who's that?

MASON

Clem. Clem Slivyesky.

GARY

Swansky.

MASON

Whatever.

A LOUD KNOCK on the door and the room goes quiet. Pre-Teen Kid #3 sitting near the door stands and calls out to Gary.

PRE-TEEN KID #3

Should I open it?

GARY

Open it!

Pre-Teen Kid #3 overwhelmed doesn't take in the command.

Others yell out in unison "Open it". He feigns being all grown up and unlocks the door.

Danny, out of breath, rushes in.

DANNY  
The Sheriff is up at Clem's place!

GARY  
Brian up there?

DANNY  
I dunno. I just saw his car up there.  
I think they know we stole the  
barrels.

GARY  
You don't have to worry about that.  
I keep telling you guys we aren't  
going to get busted.

CHARITY  
Clem could lose his license if the  
Sheriff busts him for selling alcohol  
to you guys.

MASON  
No worries. Gary's got it rigged.

DIANE  
(to Gary)  
What does he mean you got it rigged?

GARY  
Never mind. I'll tell you later.  
Don't worry.

Gary and Tanya exchange knowing glances.

The listening-on crowd grows more curious. Chatter picks up among the same.

MASON  
(loudly)  
So we're all cool here, everybody?  
Gary's got this. Let's party.

Now standing at the barrel, Danny tilts the oak cask to drain out what's left into a Mason jar. A thin stream of the amber juice ushers forth from the spigot into a half-filled followed by bits of char.

MASON (CONT'D)  
Pour me some.

DANNY  
We're out. It's empty.

A resounding disappointing "Awww" fills the space.

MASON  
Well, we'll just have to go get some more.

GARY  
We'll go tonight.

Jubilant yells of approval well up from the small crowd.

Gary turns to confer quietly with Diane.

MUSIC is cranked up. BLUNTS are lit.

On the other side of the room, the make-out couch is contested by TWO BOYS (both 18) and the Two Girls. They meet at the cushions, laugh at the confrontation, then split the sofa with each of their other halves taking a seat at their sides.

SUPER "THE FINAL HEIST"

EXT. BOTTOM OF DRIVEWAY DOWN FROM THE BARN - 2:00 A.M. - NIGHT

The beige van sits, lights off, at the bottom of the gravel drive. High winds sway trees.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Diane is at the wheel. Danny straddles the console with Gary to his right. In the back seats are Tanya, Mason, Charity, and Danny. They're donning dark hoodies.

DIANE  
This is the last time guys. You're not using my van for your getaway car on any more runs.

GARY  
I swear babe this is the last time. I swear!

CHARITY  
I'm with Diane. I'm thinking our luck's about to run out and I don't need the stress.

DANNY  
She's right.

MASON  
Cluck, cluck, cluck. You're all  
just a bunch of chicken. What do  
you think, Danny?

DANNY  
I dunno.

MASON  
Guess no worries there! I'm down.  
I want that vintage shit. Babe,  
you're down?

Tanya glances out the window.

TANYA  
Not really but since we're here,

GARY  
That's the plan. This is our last  
one.

Gary turns and looks at each one of his conspirators.

GARY (CONT'D)  
You all in?

A round of unspoken nods from all but Danny who fidgets  
looking out the window staring into the darkness.

GARY (CONT'D)  
Danny? You in?

DANNY  
(hesitantly)  
Yeah, yeah, I'm in.

GARY  
The rest of you guys?  
(to Diane)  
Babe?

Diane looks annoyed and a little pissed. She stares straight  
forward.

DIANE  
I'm here aren't I? But I'm not going  
up there.

CHARITY  
Me neither!

GARY  
No, no, no. You guys stay here.  
(MORE)

GARY (CONT'D)  
Keep the motor running. This won't  
take long.

(PAUSE)  
And no necking!

Charity and Diane smirk and roll their eyes.

GARY  
Okay. Let's go.

The adrenaline-pumped team of thieves get out of the old van and trek up the hill toward the barn. Walking in a tight cluster, they halt in unison at each FOREST SOUND coming out of the surrounding woods. As they reach the top of the hill in sight of the barn and Clem's house, Gary holds up a hand signaling them to stop.

In forced whispers...

MASON  
What are we stopping for? Let's get  
in there, get it and get out.

TANYA  
Yeah, Gary. Come on. Let's go.

DANNY  
What are we waiting for? Come on!

Gary stands resolute, patiently eyeing the upstairs window of Clem's house.

MASON  
What's wrong?

GARY  
Just waiting for the signal.

Mason, Tanya, and Danny exchange confused looks.

DANNY  
Signal? What signal?

MASON  
Come on. Let's go!

GARY  
Just wait.

The group holds still, wide-eyed, not saying a word, watching Gary intently.

Then...

DANNY  
Up there. Look!

Danny points to the upper window of the house.

AT THE WINDOW - A DARK FIGURE BEAMS A FLASHLIGHT

Gary smiles a sigh of relief.

GARY  
We're good, let's go. Brian's here.

MASON  
What the fuck!

DANNY  
What's he doing up there?

MASON  
Of course, he's here! You know what they're doing.

TANYA  
(to Mason)  
You know what they say about guys obsessed over gay shit, don't you?

MASON  
No, tell me.

Tanya sloughs him off and catches up with Gary as he heads to the barn door.

DANNY  
Dude! She's calling you gay.

MASON  
What?

DANNY  
In the closet long?

Danny catches up with Gary, leaving Mason pondering.

INT. BARN - THE BARREL STALL - MOMENTS LATER

With flashlight on, the team makes it way to a new barrel.

INT. VAN - SAME

Sitting in the front seat, Diane and Charity watch the dark figures of their friends at the top of the hill sweep flashlights through dancing shadows of the swaying trees.

DIANE  
I'm really getting tired of this.

CHARITY  
Me too. I'm done! These hill boys  
got nothing better to do than to  
steal from that old man.

A long pause. Diane stares out the window. Without looking  
at Diane

CHARITY (CONT'D)  
Mason's got some real issues.

DIANE  
I know! You see how much he drinks!

CHARITY  
Not that.

DIANE  
What do you mean?

CHARITY  
I think something happened to him as  
a boy.

DIANE  
Like what?

CHARITY  
Well, something. You know his dad  
used to beat him.

DIANE  
No way!

CHARITY  
And his mom. She's a piece of work  
is what my mom says.

Diane now distracted.

DIANE  
Hey look! They're going in!

Up the hill their flashing lights disappear into the barn.

INT. BARN - SAME

Gary steps up to the barrel marked "Special Reserve 2019."

GARY  
Come on let's grab it and go.

Gary turns the barrel on its side, he hands it off to Mason and Danny. They each take a turn rolling the barrel out from the stall.

WIND GUSTS -- TREES WHIP THE SIDE OF THE BARN

Barrel rolls over bits of wood chips and mice droppings.

Mice scatter out of the way.

CRACKS AND CRUNCHES ON THE WOODEN PLANKS

Danny, overcome with nervousness, trips and falls.

Mason turns back to see Danny getting up. His figure distorts and blends into SHAPE-SHIFTING SHADOWS likened to PHANTOMS, taking on a life of their own, dancing to GUSTS OF WIND from outside, highlighted by SHARDS OF MOONLIGHT piercing through the wooden building.

Danny turns to the others further ahead. The phantoms behind him surge past and gain on his friends.

DANNY

(yells)

Hey! Watch out! Behind you!

Gary comes up behind Danny, slaps him on the back and races to the barn door.

Danny JUMPS out of his skin.

GARY

Come on!

DANNY

Shit man. Don't do that!

Gary coaches Mason and Danny.

GARY

Hurry up... watch it!

Tanya sees a phantom-like figure shadowed by a full moon lurking near the stalls.

TANYA

(to Gary)

Who's that back there?

Gary looks behind him.

GARY

Where?

Tanya shines her flashlight past them at the rows of stalls to see... Nothing.

TANYA  
There was someone standing back in  
the stall! You didn't see him?

GARY  
I don't see anybody. Come on.

Tanya's eyes dart wildly at the moon-drawn shadows in the barn and sees myriad phantom figures coming up out from the stalls behind them.

TANYA  
Look!

STARTLED Mason, Danny stop and look every which way.

Gary takes command.

GARY  
What the hell? Help me out here  
guys!

A rhythmic THUMPING NOISE permeates the air.

GARY (CONT'D)  
Hey hold up!

SUDDENLY the wind stops. All is silent.

GARY (CONT'D)  
(long pause)  
Brian!?

Gary calls out loudly.

GARY (CONT'D)  
Brian!

BRIAN (V.O.)  
(muffled)  
Help...

Tanya points her flashlight to a boarded up room on a loft above the stalls.

TANYA  
It's coming from up there.

DANNY  
I'm out of here!

He starts to run out. Mason grabs him.

MASON  
Stop, dude! We got to check it out.  
What if it's Brian?

DANNY  
Oh, now you care.

MASON  
He's your cousin! He could be hurt  
or something.

Danny stops, reflects and realizes his own callousness,  
responds in a repented voice.

DANNY  
Yeah... you're right.

Gary shines a flashlight against a set of stairs rising above  
the stalls leading to a BOARDED UP DOOR at the top of the  
loft.

GARY  
Come on guys. Follow me.

Mason turns to Danny.

MASON  
You chicken shit!

Climbing the stairs in single file with Gary at the lead  
they reach the boarded up door to a room. A beating thumping  
sound grows louder and more intense. Gary pulls on the boards  
to get to the door only to find that they aren't nailed to  
the wall after all. He easily opens the creaking door, boards  
still attached. Dust flies.

He steps into the dark room alone, flashlight on. A DEAD  
SILENCE fills the space. The light catches on small filaments  
of dust. Against the back wall is another door held closed  
with an unlocked PADLOCK. The flashlight pans the room  
revealing what looks like a makeshift butchery. A WOODEN  
SLAB WORK BENCH. Deeply wedged CLEAVER MARKS lace its top,  
the crevasses stained in deep red.

Hanging on hooks at its edge is a serrated saw, a BUTCHER  
KNIFE AND MEAT HOOKS. A HAND dangles attached to an iron  
cuff hanging from a chain bolted to the wall. ON ITS MIDDLE  
FINGER A TATTOOED SNAKE runs its length.

Stalled outside the room in line at the top of the stairs  
Mason, Tanya, and Danny suddenly react hearing Gary's voice.

GARY (V.O.)  
What the!

Mason pushes Tanya, and Danny aside. He enters the room then calls back to the others.

MASON (O.S.)  
Come on you chickens!  
(pause)  
Shit! Shit! Shit! Oh my god!

Tanya and Danny follow his steps in. Their jaws drop. Their eyes fall upon the scene and the dangling hand on the hook.

TANYA  
Holy crap! Let's get the fuck out  
of here!

GARY  
Go! Go! Go! Come on!

Gary quickly ushers the others out of the room. Danny lags behind petrified. Jaw dropped. He's fixated on the hand.

GARY (CONT'D)  
Danny! Come on!

The others charge out on to the landing nearly tumbling over each other to get down the stairs.

Danny, frozen at the sight of the hand, stands alone in the room.

INT. BARN - THE BARREL STALLS - SAME

Gary, Mason, and Tanya race down the row of wooden stalls passing the stock of barrels. Gary stops while the others run ahead. He turns and yells back.

GARY  
Danny! Danny Come on!

Mason runs up to the barrel they left behind, starts it rolling, and races toward the barn door guiding its way.

BACK TO SCENE

Danny snaps out of it and turns to run. A hand from behind with a tattoo of a Maltese Cross caps his mouth. Danny freezes, then struggles and tries to scream.

EXT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

In a panic, Tanya races out of the barn. Gary and Mason follow, rolling the barrel.

THEY HALT at the sight of the Sheriff's car unnoticed before parked alongside near the backside of Clem's house.

MASON  
Shit man. We're busted.

GARY  
No we aren't. Doug's got our back.

MASON  
What!?

GARY  
Come on! We'll stash the barrel and  
come back to get tell him.

They race down the drive, guiding the rolling barrel as it  
picks up speed down the hill.

INT. BARN - BOARDED UP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clem slowly takes his hand away from Danny's mouth. Danny  
submits in sheer panic.

DANNY  
I'm not going to say anything Clem.  
I mean it. I, I just want to go!  
I'll never say a word.

Clem places a finger over Danny's lip to silence him.

CLEM  
Quiet! Come with me.

DANNY  
Please, please don't hurt me. I'll  
do anything.

CLEM  
Anything?

DANNY  
Why sure. Anything you want Clem.

CLEM  
Good to know, Danny. Come with me.  
Straight this way. I have a surprise  
waiting for you.

Danny begs to be let go. Clem rests his tattooed hand tightly  
on Danny's shoulder and leads him to the door at the opposite  
side of the room. He unlashes the padlock.

INT. BARN - SECOND BOARDED UP ROOM

Inside a 12x12 space Danny fearfully surveys the room and  
sees Brian lying stiff on the bed wearing boxer briefs, a  
blind over his eyes.

His foot fidgeting, rocking the bedframe thumbing the all Loose leather restraints hang from his wrists and ankles.

SEX TOYS and SOFT LEATHER RESTRAINTS lay nearby on a night stand. At the opposite side of the room is a large monitor connected to a PC that displays blurred pornography.

Clem and Danny rush in.

DANNY

What the...

Brian quickly pulls the blind off his now wide open eyes. A brief look of terror, then an audible sigh of relief relief.

BRIAN

Aww, fuck, man. I thought you were him!

Danny backs up. Brian undoes the restraints, and quickly pulls on blue jeans draped over the chair.

DANNY

What the fuck is this?

Clem stops him. Danny frantically looks back and forth between Clem and Brian, the restraints, the objects on the night stand, the movie screen.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I, I, uh. No. I'm not really in to this sort of stuff.

BRIAN

It ain't what you think.

CLEM

Sit down.

DANNY

No, no, no I mean. I'll still do whatever you guys want. Just let me go.

BRIAN

Why are you afraid?

DANNY

Your hand! I saw it!

CLEM

I can't explain the hand, but I'm guessing Candle put it there.

DANNY  
What?

BRIAN  
It's fake.

Brian holds up his left hand still attached which Danny too frantic to have noticed earlier. He laughs. Raises his middle finger showing the emblazoned tattooed snake.

Danny, confused and baffled, takes a seat on the bed next to Brian. Brian puts his hand over his shoulder then lightly massages his neck. Danny glares at him and anxiously pulls away.

DANNY  
Hey man.

BRIAN  
Dude, I'm so glad you're here. Clem needs our help.

DANNY  
(incredulous)  
What?  
(shallow laugh)  
I don't get what's going on.

CLEM  
Look. There's a problem.

DANNY  
If it's the booze, we'll pay you back. It wasn't my idea. I was just going along with it. I don't know why. It was just for kicks.

Clem and Brian exchange a knowing smile.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Just something to do.

CLEM  
No, no, no. I get that. I did my dirty pranks as a kid too. I got something else on my mind for you.

Danny looks anxiously at the smiling Brian and Clem.

DANNY  
Sorry. I'm not into it.

BRIAN  
No dude.  
(MORE)

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
I'm telling you it's not what you  
think.  
(pause)  
It's about Doug.

DANNY  
The Sheriff?

BRIAN  
Yeah.

A look of instant guilt and shame falls over Danny's face.

DANNY  
I didn't do nothing with him. He  
wanted me to but I couldn't do it.

BRIAN  
No. Now it's me he's got his hooks  
into. And he's threatening my mom.  
She's strung out again.  
(beat)  
It's the Sheriff.

Brian looks up to Clem, then casts his eyes downward. His  
lips tremble slightly. His eyes swell with tears.

CLEM  
(to Brian)  
It's okay, Brian. This all going to  
be over.

BRIAN  
He's givin' Mom meth and fentanyl.  
She knows I'm here. He told her  
she'd never see me again if she told  
any one. Or if I tell anyone what's  
going on.

CLEM  
She's not well. The drugs are her  
priority, not Brian.

On that note, Brian slowly surrenders his stronger emotions  
mute and begins to whimper softly. Clem goes to his side.

CLEM (CONT'D)  
It's okay son. I'm telling you,  
this nightmare is about to end. I  
promise.

BRIAN  
It's kinky shit.

Danny stands and charges at Clem in anger.

DANNY  
Why are you doing this to my cousin,  
man! You fucker! And you're in on  
it!

CLEM  
No, I'm not. Here's what it is.

The scene goes silent as Clem gestures the arbitrage that  
went down in his past.

CIA OFFICIAL #1 (V.O.)  
In other words, no indiscretions on  
your part. WITSEC will have you  
check in with a local legal authority  
assigned by them.

CIA OFFICIAL #2 (V.O.)  
Likely a local marshal or sheriff.

CIA OFFICIAL #1 (V.O.)  
Main thing I think for you Kleinau,  
is to not get involved personally  
with any folks in your new locale in  
ways that might compromise your  
identity.

KLEINAU (V.O.)  
Of course, understood.

CIA OFFICIAL #2 (V.O.)  
No strange bedfellows! If you get  
my meaning.

RESUME

CLEM  
It was a mistake on my part. Bad  
judgment.

DANNY  
So you're a spy or somethin'?

CLEM  
Was. I'm living here on Witness  
Protection.

DANNY  
Sounds like a you problem to me.  
Come on Brian let's get out of here.

BRIAN  
I can't do that, Danny. It's a little  
more than that. Me and Clem are  
like partners.

Danny stands baffled.

DANNY  
You mean you guys really are together?

CLEM  
You can't let this get out.

Danny shifts his eyes back and forth between the two.

DANNY  
Yeah. I guess. It's your business  
what y'all do. Besides, it's not  
that nobody know you're gay, Brian.

CLEM  
If this gets out I lose my protection  
and will be on the run from national  
enemies.

BRIAN  
Yeah, Clem stands to be taken out

DANNY  
Killed?

No response from Clem or Brian just their steady eyes upon  
him.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Okay, okay. It's cool dude.

BRIAN  
Just don't say nothin'.

DANNY  
I won't.

CLEM  
Hope so, or I'll have to kill you.

A fearful look quickly falls over Danny's face. Brian and  
Clem exchange smiles.

BRIAN  
He's kidding. He doesn't do that  
stuff any more.

CLEM  
But we need your help.

Danny, bewildered, paces the floor.

DANNY  
Yeah! Yeah, Okay. What do I have to do?

CLEM  
We need to catch the Sheriff in the act. There has to be a witness and it can't be me.

DANNY  
Why not just call the cops?

CLEM  
Because it's my word against the badge. Pretty risky, right?

DANNY  
You knew we were taking your stuff?

BRIAN  
It was bait, bro.

Danny ponders the setup.

DANNY  
(beat)  
Yeah, yeah. Okay. I can do whatever.

Danny holds his breath in anticipation, bites his lower lip, then casts teary eyes to his cousin. He throws his arm around him.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Dude! I'm sorry I wasn't here for you, man. I'm sorry! I love you.  
(beat)  
And you're not dead.

Clem lets their sentiments finish.

CLEM  
Here's the plan --

BRIAN  
Oh, just got to warn you bro, you're going see me full monty.

DANNY  
It won't be the first time.

BRIAN  
Yea, well, that was a long time ago. We had our fun. This is serious.

INT. CLEM'S HOUSE - ART STUDIO - SAME TIME

The room is lit only by the light of the moon. Through the window to the outside we see the panicky crew of Gary, Mason and Tanya trying to steer the barrel down the hill. They argue among themselves each time it goes off course.

Sheriff sits on a couch. Candle is on his lap rocking. The sheriff caresses Candle's face with his one hand, while the other clenches Candle's restless leg.

EXT. GRAVEL DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Gary and Mason guide the rolling barrel further down the gravel drive. Tanya trips over a rock and falls. She's hurt. Grabs her ankle and yells. Mason comes to her side.

MASON

Shit!

Further down the hill, Gary steers the wobbling barrel trying to keep it on a straight course.

TANYA

My ankle! Mason! Don't just stand there. Damn it! Help me up!

The two amble down the slope together.

MASON

Come on. Hurry!

They hobble down the dive.

TANYA

God damn it! Slow down!

GARY (V.O.)

Come on you guys!

Just then, Gary loses control of the barrel and it's in a free roll down the hill. He takes after it but slips and falls on the loose gravel.

GARY (CONT'D)

Fuck!

MASON

God damn it!

Mason leaves Tanya behind and races down the hill. He flies by Gary. Gary follows.

The two speed up to save the barrel from running off the drive into the woods.

BARREL HITS A TREE -- STAVES SPLIT OPEN

The boys reach the busted barrel. The split steel rings and staves lay to the side drenched in a DARK RED LIQUID slowly streaming down the slope carrying along with it some indistinguishable fleshy red matter.

SCATTERED GUTS AND CHUNKS OF A RED MEAT LAY AT THEIR FEET.

A swath of what looks to be a SEVERED FACE lies inches away.

HEADLIGHTS from the waiting van just yards down the drive light up the scene.

Mason glares at a bloody caricature of Brian's face.

MASON (CONT'D)

It's Brian!

GARY

Stop! You don't know that!

MASON

Look at it!

Gary takes a quick glance then just as quick looks up the hill and sees Tanya limping down the drive. He yells up to her.

GARY

Stop! Don't come down here!

(to Mason)

Come on! We got to go back.

MASON

What!?

Charity and Diane yell out.

CHARITY (V.O.)

Hey you guys, come on. We've been waiting forever. Let's go!

DIANE (V.O.)

Come on!

Gary and Mason stop and turn to see the dark figures of Charity and Diane standing in front of the headlights, their shadows cast forward. Mason starts toward the van.

Gary grabs his arm.

GARY  
(to Mason)  
No, man. We got to go back and get  
the Sheriff.

Mason looks back at the broken barrel and bloody mess. He's stunned and immobilized. Gary grabs his arm and yanks him out of his shock to follow him.

They race up the hill. Out of breath, Gary and Mason reach Tanya. They manage to regroup next to the Sheriff's patrol car.

GARY (CONT'D)  
(huffing and puffing)  
He must be inside.

Gary looks around.

GARY (CONT'D)  
Where's Danny?

They frantically look in all directions.

Tanya looks up to the window in the barn and sees shadows of figures.

TANYA  
Someone's up there.

INTERCUT WITH

INT. BARN - SECOND BOARDED UP ROOM

Clem stands near the window and peers through some loose barn slats to the others outside the barn.

Brian coughs and clears his throat, jostles the bed and calls out.

BRIAN  
Help!

DANNY  
What are you doing?

BRIAN  
He gets off on me calling for help.

CLEM (O.S.)  
BDSM.

DANNY  
B what? That's creepy!

BACK TO SCENE

TANYA  
That was Brian's voice!

MASON  
It can't be.

GARY  
You guys wait here. I'm going for  
the Sheriff. We got to tell him.

TANYA  
(to Mason)  
It was him. I know his voice.

MASON  
Can't be.

Mason stares blankly between the house and barn window.  
then fixes on the driveway.

MASON (CONT'D)  
He's down there.

Gary sprints to the front door of the house. He knocks wildly  
on the door. He bangs on the door again, then turns to look  
back at Mason. He sees him describing the scene at the bottom  
of the drive with wild gesticulation.

Tanya's body language reactively tells it all. Mason's arms  
flail describing the scene.

Gary, crawling out of his skin to find help, looks frantically  
up at a light shining out from the upstairs bedroom window.

He calls out.

GARY  
Clem! Are you up there?

Hearing no response he tries to open the front door but it's  
locked. Quickly, he walks around to the side of the house  
looking for another entrance. He sees the window of the  
artist workshop.

A MUFFLED PLEA FOR HELP comes from inside.

Gary looks in through the window and sees the backside of  
the Sheriff sitting on the couch and what looks like Candle  
directly in front of him at the same level rocking frantically  
back and forth. Gary tries the window. He raises it slowly.

MUFFLED PLEA TURNS INTO A WAILING SIREN FOR HELP.

Gary yells at the top of his lungs.

GARY (CONT'D)

Hey!

The Sheriff abruptly stands up and turns around to look.

Candle drops to the floor in front of him and cries.

GARY (CONT'D)

What the fuck!

SHERIFF

You get on and get out of here boy.

You and me have a deal here.

GARY

We might have deal for the booze but  
this is ain't no deal you fucking  
perv!

Gary slams the window shut and runs back to his crew.

TANYA

What's going on!?

GARY

The Sheriff is in their with Candle,  
doing stuff.

MASON

What do you mean.

GARY

He's molesting him!

Mason flares with instant anger.

MASON

What the fuck!

TANYA

(in disbelief)

He's fucking Candle?

MASON

Come on man! We're going in there  
and take care of this shit right  
now!

SHERIFF STORMS OUT the front door zipping up his fly and  
buckles his belt.

SHERIFF  
Gary! Get your ass over here!

Gary steams up to the sheriff with clenched fists. Mason follows ferociously.

GARY  
What do you have to say!

SHERIFF  
(smugly)  
Now you all know that you've been stealing liquor from Clem. He's told me all about it.  
(smiling)  
Now, further, you been serving up alcohol to minors. And ain't you one of them?  
(beat)  
Now, if you don't want to get yourselves in trouble with the law, you best all get on your way!

A tightening glare fills Mason's eyes. He grabs the Sheriff by the collar pushing him back on his heels. He leans in with fire in his eyes.

MASON  
Still at it are you, you son of fuck.

SHERIFF  
Didn't hurt you none did it. You grew up, got over it. Candle will too.

No longer able to hold back his rage, Mason cold cocks the Sheriff.

Sheriff stumbles and falls to the ground then reaches for his REVOLVER.

GARY  
Run!

Mason walks backwards shaking his finger at the Sheriff.

MASON  
You'll get yours!

Gary and Mason take hold of Tanya and turn quickly to run down the hill.

Sheriff staggers to his feet, and takes chase. Midway he stops, points his gun in the air and fires. BANG! BANG!

He smiles as he watches the three duck and dodge as they rush headlong down the hill.

SHERIFF  
(under his breath)  
Little shits.

A muffled "Help" emanates from the Barn.

Sheriff looks over to the barn and heads to its entrance.

EXT. BOTTOM OF DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Diane and Charity jump out of the van and watch the team run up to them. Tanya, Mason, and Gary turn to see the Sheriff retreat into the barn.

A long delayed pause. The crew catching their breath while looking back up the hill.

GARY  
We've got to go back!

INT. BARN - SAME

Just inside the doorway, a long shadow of the Sheriff, cast by the light of the moon, stretches across the planked floor.

Around the corner in a dark recess, Clem quietly lifts his cell phone to his mouth.

CLEM  
(whispering)  
He's coming in, heading to the stairs.  
Are you ready up there?

INT. BARN - SECOND BOARDED UP ROOM

Danny with phone at his ear watches a near naked Brian on the bed tying leather restraints around his wrists and ankles.

DANNY  
(to Clem)  
Almost. He's putting on straps.  
This is too freaky.

CLEM (V.O.)  
Okay. When he's set, you hide under the bed. Do nothing. Don't try to be any kind of hero. You got me?

DANNY  
(to Brian)  
He's on his way up here.

CLEM (V.O.)  
You got that, Danny? No heroism!  
He's got a gun.

DANNY  
And he's got a gun.

BRIAN  
What!? Shit. Don't leave me.

DANNY  
I ain't.

Brian's motions become strained and rigid. Danny helps him attach the wrist restraints on his hands to WOODEN PEGS sunk into the wall above the bed. He loosely ties the ankle straps to the corner of the bed frame.

Brian reconsidering the predicament, starts to panic and wrestles with the straps.

BRIAN  
I don't think I can do this!

DANNY  
You have to! Clem said he'll be right behind him.

BRIAN  
Fuck this! We don't have to go through with this plan. Untie me! Untie me!

DANNY  
Shhh! No! We have to catch this shit head.

BRIAN  
Why is it so important for you?

DANNY  
(pause)  
You're my cuz, my fam. And he was doing the same things to me when I was a kid. And-  
(long pause)  
And my, my drugged-out mom too, she just watched in a fuckin' stupor!  
(beat)  
Like yours!

He gives Brian a hug and scrambles under the bed.

EXT. VAN AT BOTTOM OF DRIVEWAY

Now in the van, the entire crew are in speechless jitters.

Suddenly, Diane starts the engine, turns on the headlights.

CHARITY  
Good call! Let's get out of here!

TANYA  
Yeah, girl let's go!

Diane floors it... And heads UP the hill.

Gary and Mason shocked and surprised look at each other with a smile and nod their heads.

MASON  
This isn't going to end well.

Gary cranes his head to the others in back.

GARY  
We got this.

EXT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

The van comes to an abrupt stop at the top of the hill outside the barn. A plume of dust from the tires rises up from behind and blows past them as they all step out.

They huddle at the front of the van. Muffled yells of "Stop.", "Please stop." come from inside the barn.

GARY  
That sounds like Brian!

MASON  
But he's dead!

Gary shakes Mason.

GARY  
Shut up, man! We don't know that for sure.

MASON  
His body parts were in that barrel!

CHARITY  
We saw it too, Gary! It was Brian!

TANYA  
And his hand hanging on that chain.

GARY  
Maybe you're all right, but someone  
needs help in there.

DIANE  
What hand?

CHARITY  
What do you mean his hand?

GARY  
(to Diane and Charity)  
We'll tell you later. You guys go  
into the house. See if you can't  
find a gun. Mason, come on!

TANYA  
What am I supposed to do?

Gary tosses Tanya his cell phone.

GARY  
Call the police.

TANYA  
They're town cops. They don't come  
out this way! They'll just call the  
fuckin' Sheriff.

GARY  
Try it! Dial 911, tell 'em it's  
emergency. Someone's hurt bad.  
They won't be able to get the Sheriff.  
They'll send somebody.

Gary and Mason start for the barn. Diane and Charity run up  
to the house. The front door still wide open.

INT. BARN - SAME

The pleading sound of Brian's voice is louder.

BRIAN (V.O.)  
(muffled)  
Somebody help!

Gary and Mason reach the stalls. Just then, a figure jumps  
out ahead of them.

CLEM  
(quietly)  
Just stop where you are.

GARY  
Where is he, asshole?

MASON  
What the fuck did you do!

CLEM  
Watch who you call an asshole. It  
reflects on you badly.

More cries of help from the room above pierce the dank air.  
Their attention is redirected to the top of the stairs.  
Mason breaks from the stand-off and starts up the stairway.  
Clem grabs his leg and pulls him down.

MASON  
Let me go, you fucker!

CLEM  
Stop and listen. The Sheriff is up  
there right now.

GARY  
The Sheriff! Come on Mason, we got  
to get up there!

Clem puts his arm out in front of their advance.

CLEM  
I told you stop and listen.

GARY  
You know what he's doing up there!?  
He's a monster. We just caught him  
fucking with Candle.

Clem's heart stalls. His face turns to stone. Pupils now  
solid black, his eyes go dead cold. Not a second passes and  
Clem barrels up the stairs. He stops midway and turns back.

CLEM  
Stay there!

They ignore his command and start up after him. Clem turns  
violently.

GARY  
I said, stay the fuck there!

Clem pulls out a GLOCK from the back of his pants. They  
momentarily retreat. He continues to the top of the stairs.

After a second, Gary and Mason immediately follow in his  
tracks.

Clem slowly opens the outside boarded doors and heads directly to the other door of the second room.

The unlocked padlock hangs on its latch. About to open it, Clem stops cold at hearing PORN MOANS AND GROANS mashed with muttering of the Sheriffs voice.

MASON (O.S.)  
Why the hold up, old man? You in on this?

Clem issues a perturbed look.

GARY  
Come on Mason. We'll get this done!

FOOTSTEPS RACING UP THE STAIRS

Tanya reaches them out of breath.

TANYA  
They're on their way!

DIANE (V.O.)  
Gary! Mason! You guys up there.

GARY  
(calling back to Diane)  
Babe, stay there. Just stay there!

Ignoring the command Diane runs up the stairs joining the hold up outside the door.

DIANE  
(out of breath)  
Charity's got Candle.

BRIAN (V.O.)  
(pleading)  
Stop. Please!

CLEM  
You all ready?

MASON  
(dumfounded)  
What do you mean ready? Open the god damn door!

TANYA  
It's a trap!

MOANS AND GROANS

GARY  
Move out of the way!

Tanya shoves Clem aside.

MASON  
Stand out of the way, Clem.

Diane reveals a GUN and points it at Clem.

DIANE  
Don't. You. Move.

Clem raises his hands up slightly and displays his own gun.

GARY  
Come on Mason. Let's blow this door open.

The two of them power slam the door with their shoulders.

DOOR BREAKS OPEN

The Sheriff, his back to the intruders, is knelt on the floor at the side of the bed and looks to be performing fellatio on Brian. Stunned, he turns to the shocked and wide-eyed heroes.

BRIAN  
(embarrassed)  
Jeez! What took you guys so long?  
(pause)  
Don't just gawk! Untie me! Jeez!

SHERIFF  
(screaming)  
What are y'all doing here!?

GARY  
Putting an end to all of this bullshit.

MASON  
Twice in one night? You're a sick fuck, Dougy!

TANYA  
(screaming)  
You fuckin' pervert!

Tanya lunges at the Sheriff. Mason restrains her.

SHERIFF

You all best leave and take this one  
with you. Now you all get. We're  
done here!

The Sheriff reaches for the gun resting on the nightstand.

MASON

No we ain't yet done with you.

Diane walks in from behind and points the gun at the Sheriff.

DIANE

Remember that sharp shooter badge  
you pinned on me? I'm a dead aim.

Sheriff lifts his revolver and points it at Diane. About to  
pull on the trigger, Danny grabs his ankles from beneath the  
bed toppling him to the floor.

The gun goes off grazing Diane's ear.

Clem enters the mix about to pounce when he sees Gary and  
Mason jump on top of Sheriff. They struggle to hold him  
down.

Danny quickly leaves the room and returns with some leather  
ties. He throws them at Gary and Mason.

They tie the Sheriff's arm behind his back. Danny hustles  
to untie Brian.

RED LIGHTS AND SIRENS FROM OUTSIDE THE BARN find their way  
through the slats of the wooden building.

The team manhandles the Sheriff hauling him down the stairs.

Mason directly behind him gives him a final push to the floor  
at the last step. Danny comes up behind the Sheriff and  
takes hold of the restraints tied to his hands behind his  
back.

FLASH BACK - SEQUENCE #1

EXT. BARN - PIG STY - MORNING

FADE IN FROM BLACK

Clem approaches the pig sty with a rope in hand. He snags a  
young SOW around the neck with the rope and hauls it out of  
the sty. PIG SQUEALS

FADE IN FROM BLACK

INT. BARN - BOARDED UP ROOM

The SOW LIES LIFELESS on the butcher table. Clem levels the cleaver on it. The HEAD ROLLS off to the floor. BLOOD FLOWS.

He reaches for a serrated saw and starts to dismember its body.

CLEM  
I'm sorry old girl.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. BARN -

Swirling red and white lights from an AMBULANCE strobe the scene. Shadows cast against the barn.

The EMT crew administers care to Candle at the side of the ambulance. Candle rocks back and forth. Charity, at his side, tries to comfort him.

Out from the barn steps the posse pushing the captive Sheriff ahead of themselves.

Mason gets out ahead of the rest and stops them in their tracks. He puts his snarled angry face up to the Sheriff's and stares violently into his eyes.

Sheriff struggles. Danny pulls the leather straps tighter. Sheriff winces.

VOICES from the ambulance radio issue updates and broadcast alerts.

SUDDENLY the air grows silently still. NO WIND - NO SOUND.

Surrounding scene turns dark. NO FLASHING RED LIGHTS.

A dark looming SHADOWED PHANTOM rises up behind Mason and Sheriff. EERIE, HOLLOWED AUDIO AFFECTS.

Mason issues a deep, hollow glare at the Sheriff.

MASON  
You got your rocks off, did ya?

The Sheriff, hands tied behind his back and held fast by the others, leans in nearly nose-to-nose with a conceited smile.

SHERIFF  
Many times. Remember?

MASON  
Oh, I do.

With that, Mason grabs the Bowie knife at his side, drops to his knees.

SHERIFF SCREAMS BLOODY MURDER!

Mason glares up at the Sheriff's face twisted in pain.

MASON (CONT'D)  
Guessin' tonight will be the last!  
You fucking, fucking piece of shit!

BLOOD GUSHES FROM SHERIFF'S GROIN

Mason stands. In his hand he clasps what looks to be a wrinkled mass of blood-oozing organ meat. In an instant, he stuffs it in the Sheriff's mouth.

Shocked! EMT PERSON #1 at the Ambulance, caught what just went down. She pulls at EMT #2 who runs to grab stores of bandages. The two race over to the WAILING Sheriff.

EMT #1 administers care to Sheriff. EMT #2 attends to Diane's grazed ear.

Just then Mason's arms are forcefully drawn behind his back by two DEPUTY SHERIFFS. They restrain Mason as he screams endless profanities at the Sheriff. He finally collapses in a flood of tears. Deputy Sheriffs drag him back on to his feet and lead him off to a waiting patrol car.

At the Ambulance, Clem has Candle wrapped in his arms. Candle stares blankly in shock at the scene around him, clutching the fuzzy stuffed toy rabbit. Charity sits alongside, softly rubbing Candle's back and whispers calming words in his ear.

Brian walks up and kneels down in front of the them. He places his hand on Clem's knee gripping it tightly. They exchange a look of fulfilled satisfaction and usher sighs of relief. Clem turns his attention to Candle.

CLEM  
(softly)  
Candle.  
(pause)  
Candle. I'm here, son. You're okay.

CHARITY  
Candle, sweetie. You're okay now.  
You're safe. No one is going to  
hurt you ever again.

Candle slowly comes around and reacts to their voices. He turns his head slowly to Clem and looks worriedly at him, sobbing.

CANDLE

I, I, I'm sorry, Clem. I, I, didn't mean any trouble. I, I really didn't.

CLEM

What trouble, Candle. What trouble did you cause?

CANDLE

I, I stole my finger hand you, you, you made and, and, and hung it there to, to to scare him away from Bruh, Brian. I wanted to, to scare him away so he wouldn't do that to him no more!

Brian's eyes tear up. He takes Candle's hand.

BRIAN

(softly)

You did good, Candle. It worked! You scared him. You scared him really good.

Gary with his arm around Diane, along with Tanya walk toward the ambulance to join in.

Mason caged inside the back seat, looks out the back window where the others stand. He issues a guarded smile.

Tanya's eyes well-up with tears.

The three stand speechless watching their friend driven away down the gravel drive, a bloom of dust follows the car.

RED TAIL LIGHTS DISAPPEAR INTO THE DARK

Moments later HEADLIGHTS APPEAR OUT OF THE DARK coming up the driveway.

A BLACK SUV bears a SEAL on the side of the car door: U.S. MARSHAL. The car door opens.

SHOES HIT THE GROUND

U.S. MARSHAL (50's) in uniform stands outside his car. He has a portfolio in his hand - the same Clem saw pushed across the desk to him years ago. He patiently peruses the scene, appears to be looking for someone in particular. He scans the crowd huddled near the ambulance.

POV - U.S. MARSHAL

- AMBULANCE AND EMTS.
- SHERIFF WRITHING IN PAIN STRAPPED TO A GURNEY.
- GROUP OF HORRIFIED YOUNG PEOPLE HUDDLED TOGETHER
- A TRAUMATIZED BOY AND A YOUNG GIRL NEXT TO HIM.
- AN OLDER KLEINAU

Clem sees the U.S. Marshal approach in his direction. He stands and meets him half way.

Not hearing the conversation for the noise and commotion around them, Brian and Candle, and others, watch a silent exchange develop between the two men. Clem and U.S. Marshal assume different anxious stances as Clem relates a set of occurrences.

SEQUENCE #2 - FLASH BACK

FADE IN FROM BLACK

At the side of the table lies a slab of clay bearing the SCULPTED FACE OF BRIAN. Blood splatters on to the sculpted artifact as Clem continues to butcher the pig.

On the planked floor at Clem's side rests an open OAK BARREL.

He scoops ENTRAILS and chunks of MEAT off the table with a large cleaver into the barrel. He picks up Brian's sculpted face and drops it into the vat, resets the wooden lid emblazoned with the words, "SPECIAL RESERVE 2019", and secures it with a round metal band.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO SCENE

POV - BRIAN AND CANDLE

Clem flails his arms and points toward the barn, the huddled group of kids, the house, the Sheriff.

The U.S. Marshal looks to be explaining something to Clem. Clem reacts taking a defensive stance and closes in. He seems to enumerate what must be the events, touching one finger after, and appears to accentuate each.

SEQUENCE #3 - FLASHBACK

FADE IN FROM BLACK

INT. CLEM'S HOUSE - ART STUDIO

Candle cautiously enters the room, looking about for any sign of Clem. He carefully lifts the sculpted hand off the workbench and tucks it under his over-sized sweat shirt. He sneaks the piece out of the room.

EXT. BARN - PIG STY - DAY

Candle, at the pig sty near heaps of manure. He reaches up under his sweat shirt and produces the clay hand. He quickly grabs a handful of rotting dung and debris CRAWLING WITH MAGGOTS and smears it over the sculpted piece.

INT. BARN - BOARDED UP ROOM - AFTERNOON

Brian's voice sifts in from the second boarded up room.

BRIAN (V.O.)  
Help me! Please help!

FADE IN FROM BLACK reveals Candle. He shakes at hearing Brian's voice. Cautiously and meticulously he hangs the filthy soft clay hand on a hook and chain attached to the wooden wall.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO SCENE

A long pause ensues, the U.S. Marshal looks down and shakes his head. Places the portfolio on his vehicle. Hands on his hips.

FULL SOUND RETURNS

U.S. MARSHAL  
To what end, Clem?

CLEM  
I couldn't risk direct intervention,  
Marshal. I knew there was abuse,  
drug peddling, everything.  
(beat)  
Self-preservation? I don't know.

The Marshal weighs it all out.

U.S. MARSHAL  
Okay. I get it. But WITSEC is not  
immune to having to report sexual  
abuse and the peddling illicit drugs  
to minors -not to mention your loose  
handling of distilled spirits. Jesus!  
What were you thinking?

The voice of Rashid echoes in Clem's mind.

RASHID (V.O.)  
Sad, as lonely as you are...

Clem, admonished, turns his attention to the others, seemingly checking in on each. An expression of deep empathy shines out from within.

U.S. Marshal seeing his distress.

U.S. MARSHAL  
You need to stop pandering to the  
tribes out here. Got it?

CLEM  
Yes.

A longer extended pause. A withered handshake.

U.S. Marshal looks over the scene one more time, shakes his head at Clem, opens the car door and slides in.

Clem returns to the others.

U.S. Marshal car turns about and heads down the gravel drive. A plume of dust follows.

At a distance, Gary, Danny, Tanya, and Diane walk up to Clem, their eyes begging to hear him tell them something, anything, to help them make sense of everything that happened.

They gather around Clem. It is clear through their motions that one after the other throw questions at him. And in his actions a reiteration of the set of events. Danny and Tanya react angrily. Tanya breaks down crying. Diane holds Gary close and buries her head in his chest.

Danny steps away from the group to join Brian and Charity still nursing Candle. He puts his arm over his cousin's shoulder pulling him in close.

Clem, Gary and Tanya join the others near the ambulance.

INT. CLEM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A full moon beams through an open window. Night sounds are softened in the din of the moonlit room.

BRIAN (O.S.)  
It's family first isn't it?

CLEM (O.S.)  
I would say, yes. Always.

Brian lies close to Clem on a dressed down bed. The two stare up at a whirling fan on the ceiling.

SUDDEN SOUND OF HOGS SNORTING

Clem sits up quickly to hear Candle's voice outside the window.

CANDLE (V.O.)  
Da, da, Daisy?

BRIAN (O.S.)  
It's just Candle, Clem.

At the window Clem sees Candle searching frantically for the old sow. His figure illuminated by a yard light now showering the wooden slats of the barn.

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
You didn't tell him.

CLEM  
It's better he doesn't know.

Clem lies back down alongside Brian and stares up to the ceiling.

Brian, content with eyes closed and a slight smile, his head braced against Clem's shoulder.

POV - CLEM

FAN SWIRLING OVERHEAD

RASHID (V.O.)  
(of distant past)  
Are we still good?

BRIAN (O.S.)  
Clem, we're still good aren't we?

CUT BACK

Clem's eyes turn from a cold distant stare to calm contentment.

FADE TO BLACK

CLEM  
Yeah, we are.

FADE OUT