

"DEMO REEL"

By
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FADE IN:

EXT: SMALL TOWN - MUSCLE SHOALS, ALABAMA - DAY

The sun rises in a partly cloudy sky over a small downtown.

SUPER: MUSCLE SHOALS, ALABAMA

EXT: RECORDING STUDIO

The two-story building is saturated from overnight rain. Nearby, is a green dumpster with wet plaster and beams sticking out.

MR. WEBB (40) steps out of a RED PORSCHE and rushes into the recording studio.

INT: FOYER - RECORDING STUDIO

He leaves wet shoe prints as he passes a homemade sign that reads "Fresh Paint, Don't Touch Walls."

HALL

Mr. Webb finds his door. He kicks a painter's drop cloth aside, enters, and shuts the door behind him.

The door's window reads "AARON WEBB." Under that in smaller letters reads "PRODUCER."

NEW OFFICE

He approaches a beat-up box on the new desk. He flips up a flap to peek inside.

At the bottom is an aged reel canister. The aged label reads "Sunny Boy Fuller, 76 Greenleaf RD Clarksdale MISS, Song of Descent, July 1969, Demo Reel."

He takes his phone out and dials a number, then places it on the desk as we hear it ring.

The PAINTER, A middle-aged male answers.

PAINTER (O.S.)

Hello.

MR. WEBB

Hey, this Aaron you're on speaker.

PAINTER (O.S.)

Yeah, your name shows up on the phone.

MR. WEBB

This box on my desk wasn't here when you started. It has a reel in it, do you know anything about it?

PAINTER (O.S.)

Ya'll got you a piece of history with that place. Finding it was neat.

MR. WEBB

We bought the building and the contents. Someone must have missed this.

Webb looks at it again at the bottom of the box.

PAINTER (O.S.)

I found it in the attic. I went looking for an old rag or something. I left my bucket of rags in the back of the truck wide open. Dang rain.

MR. WEBB

Thank you for putting this aside.

PAINTER (O.S.)

No problem, man.

Mr. Webb ends the call. He puts another number into his phone. After a couple of rings someone answers.

MR. WEBB

Wendy, you're on speaker. Pull up that list of artists, we acquired with the Muscle Shoals studio.

(beat)

Look up an artist's name with an "F". The name is Fuller.

WENDY (O.S.)

I'm pulling up the info now.

We hear FAINT TYPING coming from the phone.

WENDY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

We have no Fuller.

MR. WEBB

Are you sure?

With hands on the desk, he hunkers over the phone.

WENDY (O.S.)

I'm sure Mr. Webb. There is no Fuller.

MR. WEBB

Thanks, Wendy. I'm guessing it may not have been mastered yet.

(beat)

I'll get back to you.

Mr. Webb disconnects with the tap of his finger.

HALL

Mr. Webb goes to a door and opens it.

UTILITY CLOSET

He spots a TEAC 1966 REEL TO REEL TWO-TRACK RECORDER PLAYER, on a bottom shelf. He bends down and drags it off.

He takes the HEADPHONES off the top and puts them around his neck.

HALL

Mr. Webb carries the heavy portable recorder into his office.

NEW OFFICE

The "Demo Reel" canister is opened and placed on the recorder's spool pin. He feeds it through to an empty take-up reel.

He plugs the headset into the REEL-TO-REEL, then puts it on, and PRESSES PLAY. The take-up reel jerks, and the analog tape begins feeding through mechanisms. We hear NO MUSIC.

Mr. Webb's head tilts back. He suddenly slouches and brings his hands up to his face as his body dramatically lurches.

EXT. MEMPHIS - NIGHT

The city pulses its electric humming into the lights over the oil-stained streets.

SUPER: "MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE"

INT. LIVING ROOM - DARIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

DARIN MORGAN (36) cleans a camera. The cell phone rings until voicemail picks up. He smears a dry cloth across a lens until no spots remain.

Checking his phone, he sees who called. It reads "MR. WEBB." Darin listens to voicemail on speaker.

MR. WEBB (V.O.)

Meet me tomorrow evening around six at Memphis Records. Text me back as soon as you get this and let me know something. We need the best; I need the best. Bye.

Darin texts him back.

SUPER TEXT AS TYPED: "See you tomorrow."

He sets his phone on the coffee table and rises from the sofa with the camera. He steps past A child's yellow dump truck with a few dolls around it.

INT. CAMERA COLLECTION ROOM

Darin places it neatly on a shelf with other older-model cameras.

EXT: MEMPHIS RECORDS - RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Streetlights flick on along a busy street, its sidewalks speckled with pedestrians dressed for the evening's cool air.

Towering above is a building backdropped by evening's reddening sky.

INT: CONVENTION ROOM

RICHARD FIELDMAN (60) stands off scanning the dimly lit room as fifteen people mingle near a wet bar. They get a drinking glass from a stack, ice from a bucket, and serve themselves whiskey.

Mr. Webb, tense, finishes attaching the demo reel's leader to the take-up spool on the 1966 REEL-TO-REEL.

MR. WEBB

I've heard a few of you say that you're glad I didn't have you drinking out of plastic cups. I personally, don't like my alcohol served in plastic cups. I thought you may feel the same way.

A few clap.

MR. WEBB (CONT'D)

I will not waste time and go over the e-mail I sent. We're going to get on with the show.

(beat)

Stan has volunteered to help with this demonstration. You know he's an honest guy, and his reaction, I believe you will trust.

Webb looks around the room for feedback. When his eyes meet Richard Fieldman's piercing gaze, Mr. Webb's eyes stutter a moment.

STAN (39), sits at the table backdropped by the evening's red sky. A slight grin forms as his eyes dart from the recorder to Mr. Webb who is about to start it.

STAN

You know you could have made a digital recording.

Mr. Webb addresses the room.

MR. WEBB

I'm sorry, I set this meeting up while I was still in Alabama. I just got back yesterday. You'll see how powerful this song is, and how producing this song will move Memphis Records into the position of being one of the most successful recording companies out there, if not the best. That's why I called this meeting as soon as possible.

STAN

Lighten up, Aaron.

Stan puts the headphones on and nods. Webb presses "play". The take-up spool jerks as it pulls the reel through mechanisms.

Stan's hands clutch the chair's arm rests. A tear falls as he looks beyond this world into a deepening bliss of sorrow.

EXT: MEMPHIS RECORDS

The sky turns blood black as the sun dips lower.

INT: CONVENTION ROOM

Webb is amazed as he watches Stan being transformed into an emotional mess.

Stan cries as fellow executives surround him placing comforting hands on his shoulders.

Richard Fieldman comes forward with a look of concern.

RICAHRD F.
Do Something Mr. Webb you're the
host.

Mr. Webb snaps out of his amazement and goes to switch off the reel but Stan jolts forward grabbing his arm.

Others hesitate from shock but then try to pry Stan's grip off Webb's arm. As they viscously struggle Richard Fieldman SWIPES OFF Stan's headphones.

Stan suddenly releases Mr. Webb and directs his anger at everyone.

STAN
(Yelling)
Turn it back on. You fucking
idiots. You have no idea what you
are doing! None!

Those holding him tighten their grip.

RICHARD F.
Take him out.

Stan is no match for them and yells as he is carried out.

STAN
Just let me hear one more time.
Please, I miss him!

RICHARD F.
When he settles down guys, take him
Home! And everyone out, but Webb!
Everyone!

Those left, exit.

MR. WEBB
See how he wanted more! This song
is gold. And we can use it to help
draw attention to our blues library
that's just gathering dust. Look
Richard I bet-

RICHARD F.

There is nothing you will say that will get me to okay this.

Richard realizes Webb is a lost cause.

RICHARD F. (CONT'D)

That song does not need to see the light of day.

MR. WEBB

How many times did you listen to that one song that everyone kept requesting on the radio? Just like it, this is going do the same.

Richard Fieldman paces.

RICHARD F.

That song takes you into a pit of despair. Blues music is not like that. It's different for everybody, but it has a fundamental job. To let you know that there is someone out there who has gone through something as dreadful or as hard as you. It lets you know you're not alone in the world. Which in turn helps you heal. That's my experience.

MR. WEBB

Stan would have done that.

RICHARD F.

Heal? He already was healed. Have you ever seen him beg for anything? Swear worse than a sailor?

(beat)

And look at you, you're ignoring all that. What you just saw, you know that's not Stan.

MR. WEBB

Those were private moments.

(beat)

Listen to it yourself. Feel it. I'm still able to function, I'm not in despair unable to eat. It's been two days and I'm not putting a gun to my head.

RICHARD F.
 This is not the up-lifting Aaron
 that left here to go check on
 things in Alabama.

Mr. Webb takes a bottle of whiskey.

MR. WEBB
 I'll do it myself.

He takes a swig from the bottle and sits it back on the bar.

RICHARD F.
 Don't quit your job over this. We
 just can't be linked to this song
 Aaron.

(beat)
 Did you see anyone else say 'wait,
 I want to hear it?' No, because
 none of this excited them.

MR. WEBB
 I'll leave.

RICHARD F.
 Come on.

MR. WEBB
 With this song I'll launch my own
 label.

RICHJARD F.
 (Hangs head)
 Okay, I'll get with accounting. We
 will be generous.

Webb begins packing away things as Richard nears the doorway.

MR. WEBB
 I'd appreciate that.

RICHARD F.
 I'm going to check on Stan.

MR. WEBB
 Tell Stan my apologies.

With sadness, Richard pauses in the doorway.

RICHARD F.
 (Somber)
 Ok, Aaron.

Richard leaves the room passing Darin who stops in the doorway.

DARIN
Congrats on cutting your own path.

Putting the reel back into the canister, Webb glances at Darin.

MR. WEBB
You heard all that?

DARIN
Everything from when they opened
the door to carry that guy away.
(beat)
When are you releasing it?

MR. WEBB
When you find the artist and write
me the best fluff piece you've ever
written is when.

DARIN
(Dry)
Thanks.

Mr. Webb finishes wrapping the cord up to the 1969 REEL-TO-REEL.

MR. WEBB
All I got on his location is from
the label itself. And it's from
nineteen-sixty-nine.

Webb gestures to the recorder.

MR. WEBB (CONT'D)
Oh, and you can take this with you.
If you find him, you'll need
something to jar his memory.

He gives Darin the tin reel canister.

Darin reads its label.

DARIN
A lot of stuff has happened since
this was recorded.

MR. WEBB
He could be a little older. If he's
dead, find his next of kin.

Darin rests on the bar, making sure he faces away from the alcohol set-up.

DARIN

The song must be pretty good for you to be going through all this trouble.

Webb raises his eyebrows at Darin, then walks around picking up little bits of trash, like napkins and used glasses, left behind.

MR. WEBB

Your pay?

DARIN

You want my best work?

MR. WEBB

I was going to pay the normal plus, a bonus for inflation.

DARIN

Kick it up a little if you can. When Rose died, I didn't get much work.

Webb stacks the used glasses next to the clean ones. He returns to cleaning up.

MR. WEBB

I remember. I talked you into checking yourself in. You wouldn't eat and your house was a pig's pen.

DARIN

Thanks for that.

(beat)

I'm working a full-time job with benefits but nothing like before. A little extra money will get me caught up.

MR. WEBB

I'll be honest I thought the studio would be forking over the bill, but I have a little in my budget I could spare. If I want the best, I need to pay for it, right?

DARIN

That's right.

MR. WEBB
How much are we looking at?

DARIN
Do the same as before but with the
inflation rate you mentioned, plus
include my costs.

Webb puts a few more used glasses on the bar.

MR. WEBB
Of course.

DARIN
Then add five grand to it.

Mr. Webb stops picking up trash and looks at Darin.

MR. WEBB
(Haggling)
Three grand?

DARIN
I need four.

MR. WEBB
For your best, right?

Webb continues to pick up used napkins.

DARIN
I'll fluff the dickens out of it
and make it logical. I don't want
it to be laughed at. My name's on
it.

MR. WEBB
I'll work out a contract for you
but get started as soon as you can.

DARIN
I can get a couple days off next
week. Plus, I have that weekend.

Webb tosses the dirty napkins in the trash.

MR. WEBB
And Darin please don't take this as
a challenge. I highly advise you
not to listen to it.

Darin holds the canister in his hand looking at it as if it
should be special.

MR. WEBB (CONT'D)

If you don't like it, you may lose
that fire in your belly for this
job.

Darin shrugs.

DARIN

The money puts fire in my belly.
(beat)
You have a copy, don't you?

MR. WEBB

Two copies in a safe. I was not
about to bring a digital copy here
and have them get Richard to let
them hold onto it. I'm no fool.
(beat)
Still, make sure to keep that one
in the hotel room and don't take it
out unless you meet the artist.

DARIN

I Got you.

Darin gestures to the 1966 recorder.

DARIN (CONT'D)

Now you want to help me?

MR. WEBB

I'm paying you, so that's a hard
no.

Darin shakes his head, slips the canister under an arm then
picks up the recorder.

Webb takes the canister from under Darin's arm.

MR. WEBB (CONT'D)

I'm just kidding.
(beat)
But you do the heavy stuff. I did
bring it all the way here.

Darin, burdened with the recorder, walks with Mr. Webb toward
the open door.

DARIN

If I was still a drinking man, I'd
have you throw in those bottles and
a couple of glasses.

MR. WEBB
Screw this place.

EXT. DARIN'S PARENT'S HOME - DAY

Wearing his road department uniform, Darin removes a box of toys from the trunk. He walks up the steps as his mother, NANCY (65), opens the front door.

NANCY
Wipe your feet.

INT. KITCHEN

Nancy cleans dishes placing them on a folded towel next to the sink to dry.

NANCY
You said your days of traveling
were over Darin.

She faces the kitchen table where Darin sits.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Don't start dropping your kids off
every week then eventually just
leave them here.

DARIN
What?

Nancy becomes frustrated.

NANCY
I want to see them all of the time.
But you're their father, and their
mother is gone.

DARIN
Hold on a minute mom.

NANCY
They almost lost two parents Darin.
Rose and you. You laid up in bed
for weeks and if you were not in
bed you were out drunk or pacing in
the bedroom on God-who-knows-what.

Darin goes to his mother. Their hug turns into an embrace.

DARIN

Trust me mom. A couple of weeks at the most.

NANCY

(Frustrated)

Stop talking like you're sixteen. Stop it!

DARIN

I didn't mean it to sound that way. Look what I've done. When I got better, I took this job with the road department, and I'm simply taking a trip down to Clarksdale Mississippi for a few days; for pictures and interviews. That's all. I'll do the writing at home.

NANCY

And if something else comes along?

DARIN

It ain't.

NANCY

(Correcting him)

Isn't or is not.

DARIN

This one will do it. It's only to pay off the braces and maybe catch the car up. I'll still have a little left over.

NANCY

Same plans then?

DARIN

Yes. I'm keeping the full-time job. Next week, after the rain that comes in, you'll see me out there filling in new potholes.

NANCY

Your uncle wants a culvert in on that land he got. They're putting a shed on it.

DARIN

I don't have any say over that, but I'll pass the word along.

She turns and leans forward, opening the kitchen window above the sink. The SOUND OF TWO YOUNG CHILDREN PLAYING filters in. A boy (5) and girl (6).

NANCY
They need you.

DARIN
I know. I am here mom. This is not like before.

He kisses her on the cheek.

NANCY
Your birthday is in a couple of days.

DARIN
I've already told them we would celebrate when I get back.

NANCY
We always celebrate birthdays.

DARIN
We do. And we've postponed birthdays before mom.

NANCY
I know, merely making sure.

She squeezes him as they both continue to look out of the kitchen window at the children playing.

EXT. DARIN'S PARENT'S HOME - DAY

The sun sets and his car is still in the driveway.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The two children sleep nestled with their father, Darin.

MONTAGE: MEMPHIS TN TO CLARKSDALE MS DRIVE

Darin Drives with towering city buildings in the background.

He drives between forests on rolling hills.

He passes a "Welcome To MISSISSIPPI" sign.

The highway bends through forests of pine.

Darrin drives up a small hill but drives down a deeper backside that bottoms out into the VERY FLAT delta plain.

The fields on the left and right are full of white bulbs of cotton.

Darin passes a "Clarksdale" sign.

Darin drives through downtown Clarksdale. It's a flat country with most buildings one story and showing years of age.

SUPER: "CLARKSDALE MISSISSIPPI"

His car slows as he nears his hotel.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. HOTEL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Darin exits his car, stretches, and opens the trunk.

INT. LOBBY - HOTEL

Darin sits the old reel to reel recorder on the countertop with his luggage at his feet. A clerk with special needs named STEVEN (16), approaches the counter.

STEVEN

Do you have reservations?

DARIN

My name's Darin Morgan.

Steven checks the register.

STEVEN

Here you are. You're in room two-oh-eight.

Steven grabs A SET of room keys.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Do you need help with your bags?

DARIN

No thanks. I'll come back for the them.

Steven passes the room keys to Darin.

DARIN (CONT'D)

My room is on the second floor?

STEVEN
 (Pointing)
 Yes sir, it is. That way sir.

DARIN
 Thank you?

Darin looks at Steven's name tag.

DARIN (CONT'D)
 Thank you, Steven. I'm Darin; wait
 just a second Steven.

Darin reaches into his camera bag for his CANON AE-1 film camera.

DARIN (CONT'D)
 I hope you don't mind if I get a
 quick picture of you?

STEVEN
 Let me ask my boss.

Steven disappears into the back as Darin makes camera adjustments. The hotel MANAGER (34) returns followed by Steven.

MANAGER
 May I help you?

DARIN
 I'm here doing a story for a
 recording company interested in one
 of your local artists. I'm getting
 some shots of the community. Would
 it be okay if I take a picture of
 Steven behind the counter?

MANAGER
 Do you have a card?

Darin hands over a business card from his wallet.

DARIN
 That's the recording company you
 can call. The person there is Aaron
 Webb.

MANAGER
 To be honest we're not some big
 corporation. I just don't want
 there to be any negative press.

Steven interrupts.

STEVEN

My sister takes pictures of me all the time.

MANAGER

But I can hand this back and if you were just a tourist, and we never met, I don't see an issue.

Darin takes the card back.

DARIN

Thank you.

The Manager walks away.

STEVEN

I don't mind.

DARIN

Great, thank you.

Darin slides the recorder away, positions Steven for the photo.

DARIN (CONT'D)

Okay, move a little bit to your right. A tad more.

(beat)

I'm going to count to three and you give me a smile. One. Two. Three and smile.

Darin clicks the shutter a few times.

DARIN (CONT'D)

That's got it, thank you.

STEVEN

You're welcome, sir.

DARIN

Nice meeting you.

STEVEN

You too.

Darin slings his camera over his shoulder and grabs the recorder.

DARIN

I'll come back for the rest.

STEVEN
I'll bring it!

Before Darin can say anything, Steven is already rushing around.

DARIN
You're getting a tip.

Steven carries his bags alongside him entering the elevator.

INT. DARIN'S HOTEL ROOM

The coffee freshly drips as Darin puts the canister with Sonny Boy Fuller's address facing up beside his phone on the bed.

He writes the address into his phone's navigation app.

He grabs his car keys next to the REMOTE control on the television stand.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Darin's car travels between cotton fields. The car slows as it nears a vine-covered mailbox belonging to a dilapidated home.

INT. DARIN'S CAR

Darin looks out of the window at the crooked house number on the old mailbox. He steers into the dirt-driveway.

EXT. DARIN'S CAR - PARKED

Darin exits with his camera slung across his shoulder.

GARAGE

Inquisitive, he walks around the garage stopping at a window where he peeks inside.

Inside is a 1960's FADED BLUE GMC STEP-SIDE TRUCK. It's dark and at first glance someone would not notice the make or model.

He adjusts the settings on the camera and presses it to the window. He takes a couple of photos.

FRONT PORCH

At the front of the house, he steps back to take a few pictures. He then slings the camera back on his shoulder and climbs up the front paint-peeled porch.

He knocks on the door.

There is no answer.

He peeks through the dingy windows.

INT: LIVING ROOM

Nothing but ragged furniture and crooked framed paintings.

EXT: FRONT PORCH

He knocks again and walks to the edge of the porch noticing a lone tree in the distance.

He takes a quick picture of it.

SUNROOM

At the side of the house, he stops at a row of dirty windows. He looks inside.

INT: SUNROOM

Against a wall is a collection of guitars dimly lit by dirty window light. Some have designs on them with one having a SLOPPILY CRAFTED LIGHTENING BOLT on it.

EXT: SUNROOM

He adjusts his camera, presses it against a window, and snaps a picture.

CELLAR

Darin walks through tall grass and comes upon the wooden double doors of the cellar. He leans down and knocks.

DARIN

(Loud)

I tried knocking on your front
Door.

He takes a picture of the door's old lumber with an IRON LOCK CONFIGURATION and hinges.

INT. CELLAR - DILAPIDATED HOUSE

Through a crack in the cellar's doors Darin can be seen outside walking away.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CLARKSDALE - DAY

Darin drives between the squatty buildings.

EXT. DINER - DAY

Darin parks, gets out with his camera. Passing through the patio dining area, he reaches for the entrance door.

SADE (22) rushes out with a full cup holder and a couple of food bags. She smacks into Darin spilling some drink on his shirt.

SADE
Oh, I'm sorry.

DARIN
That's okay.

She tries to wipe his shirt, but her hands are too full.

DARIN (CONT'D)
I got it. You must have something
with bacon in there I can smell it.

He grabs a napkin from her bag and wipes his shirt.

SADE
Oh yes, we all got a BLT.

DARIN
I'm so freaking hungry.

He fists the used napkin as Sade sees his camera.

SADE
Taking pics of the crossroads?

DARIN
I'm here to do a piece on a local
artist.

He starts to grab the door handle.

DARIN (CONT'D)

Have you heard of a blues singer named Sunny Boy Fuller? Probably in his seventies?

SADE

A little too young for that. Try the local museum up that way.

(Points)

I better go. I'm having to make the lunch run today.

DARIN

Thanks for your help.

She rushes away as he enters the diner.

INT. DARIN'S CAR - PARKED - BLUES MUSEUM - DAY

Darin packs the half-eaten BLT away in the bag; he wipes his mouth and hands.

He pulls a handheld TASCAM digital recorder, pen, and reporter's notebook from the glove department.

EXT. BLUES MUSEUM

With camera and flash slung, he sits the other items on the roof of the car and checks his appearance in the driver's mirror.

Satisfied, he gathers his journalism tools.

INT. FOYER - BLUES MUSEUM

The curator, Kalisha, (50) approaches Darin taking a photo of blues memorabilia.

KALISHA

Finding everything okay?

He shoulders the camera.

DARIN

Yes, thank you, but I'm here to see the Curator.

KALISHA

(Smile)

That's me, how may I help you?

DARIN

I'm a freelance writer doing a piece on a reel of blues music that was discovered recently.

KALISHA

Oh, exciting.

DARIN

(Smile)

My exact same feelings.

He brings the TASCAM HANDHELD RECORDER up and hits record.

KALISHA

And what do you need my help for?

DARIN

Do you mind if I record you?

KALISHA

I don't mind, but I'm not really prepared.

DARIN

Oh, no. It's nothing like that. I just need info on local stuff. A bit of education. I'm only recording this, so I make sure I don't miss anything.

KALISHA

Okay. You want to sit down somewhere.

DARIN

We can.

As he follows her, he continues the interview.

DARIN (CONT'D)

The artist is from here.

(beat)

I've been hired to write about him by a recording company out of Memphis. They like a song he did they found and want to release it.

KALISHA

The singer's name.

DARIN

Sunny Boy Fuller?

She pauses at a small table with a few seats.

KALISHA

That name has been thrown around by some of the old-school artists.

(beat)

If you end up quoting me, make it sound good.

With a grin he places the recorder on the table and readies to write.

DARIN

What did you hear about him?

KALISHA

Not much but come with me.

Not having a chance to sit, he grabs the recorder off the table as he is led away.

OVAL ROOM

She leads him into the center of the room where blues singer portraits are on the wall. They're oil paintings and have deep saturated earth tones.

KALISHA (CONT'D)

These are the greats in blues, you may recognize a few of them. From what I heard about Sunny Boy Fuller, is that he was in step with these men. But the stories about Fuller never venture past the 70's.

DARIN

You don't know why do you?

KALISHA (CONT'D)

Not exactly, but they've joked that he lived in some fantasy world. He believed in the sell-your-soul-to-the-devil folklore.

DARIN

Like the lore of the German doctor who sold his soul for knowledge.

KALISHA

Right, only blues men sell it for the gift of being the greatest.

(beat)

(MORE)

KALISHA (CONT'D)

It's assumed the devil killed him to collect his soul in payment for fame. But honestly, I've never heard of him outside of Clarksdale. So I didn't put too much stock in that. Anyway, it's a little different than the German tale, instead of conjuring him up from hell, Fuller went to meet the devil with offerings of fingernail clippings and chicken bones.

DARIN

Chicken bones?

Kalisha leads him to a mock display of chicken bones and a pile of fingernail clippings on a patch of sod in the center of the room.

KALISHA

You lay the offerings at the base of the tree, then tune your guitar and kneel. You close your eyes and wait for a howl from the wind. The devil takes the offerings while the musician's eyes remain closed, and then, the devil tunes the guitar and gives it back with the gift of perfection.

Darin brings his camera up.

DARIN

Don't move. Give me a bit of a smile.

She touches her hair to make sure she is presentable.

KALISHA

Do I look alright?

DARIN

Yes, I'm sorry. I realized with the portraits back dropping you a nice wide shot would look great.

Darin zooms out his lens as Kalisha poses.

DARIN (CONT'D)

You look great, cross your arms in front of you.

She does so.

DARIN (CONT'D)

Perfect, and hold it. I'm going to use a little fill light from the flash.

Darin snaps the shutter. Flash, flash. He brings the camera down.

DARIN (CONT'D)

And Little Boy Fuller believed in this?

KALISHA

That's the rumor that has stuck around. But like I said there are no stories of him after the seventies.

DARIN

Stories?

KALISHA

When I was researching, the people alive and kicking around with him then, said they never saw him out past around nine-teen seventy when he went to county jail.

DARIN

Jail?

KALISHA

You'll have to see the Sheriff for that information.

DARIN

I'll stop by there, thanks.

KALISHA

I believe that Fuller, not being financially successful, and I say that because his music is totally unknown, may have gone searching for an alternative method to gain finances. And that may have led him out of town into a different profession.

Darin smiles, slings the camera over a shoulder.

DARIN

You ever try to look him up?

KALISHA

Somewhat. He wasn't in any local hospitals. No military background that I found. He did get that county jail time.

DARIN

You mentioned the crossroads. Do you know where this crossroads, is at?

KALISHA

It's said to be near where old Highway forty-nine meets old Highway sixty-one, but I truly think it's where you make it.

DARIN

Do you think Fuller went there?

KALISHA

It's possible, his parent's home was a few hundred yards away.

DARIN

I stopped by his last address that was on the recording label, but the home was in disrepair.

KALISHA

That's his family home. The old highway runs by there. You probably saw the tree out there.

DARIN

Off to the right if you're facing the house?

KALISHA

Yeah.

KALISHA (CONT'D)

There are some old graves around that tree. Now that will make some interesting photos for your article.

DARIN

Thanks for the tip.

KALISHA

Glad I could help. When is the article coming out?

They walk slowly toward the front door.

DARIN

It all depends on if we find him or his relatives.

KALISHA

His parents' death may have been the catalyst for him leaving. He may have used that money and moved. A lot of blues singers relocate from here.

DARIN

Thank you again.

KALISHA

You're welcome.

(beat)

Is that a film camera?

DARIN

Yes, with my pictures on negatives no one can contest their existence. They could say, 'well you photoshopped it' or 'used AI'. With film I can show the negative as proof it's real.

KALISHA

Is it black and white?

DARIN

It is.

KALISHA

We use the old dark room in the newspaper on some art projects.

FOYER

Kalisha hands him a business card.

KALISHA

Give me a call when the story comes out. We could display it in the museum.

DARIN

I'll do that.

They move closer to the door.

DARIN (CONT'D)

Hey, is there anyone around who you spoke to about Fuller?

KALISHA

Well, it's been a while. I'm sure there are, but I can't remember who. Back then he was just someone I heard about. There's a caretaker about his age I see when I visit my husband's grave.

DARIN

Where is it?

KALISHA

Behind the courthouse a few blocks. Can't miss it.

(beat)

Your name?

DARIN

Darin Morgan.

He finds a card to give her.

DARIN (CONT'D)

This is the recording studio I'm working with.

Grabbing a pen from his stained pocket, he writes his hotel number on the back of the card.

SUPER: "ROOM 208"

DARIN

(Gesturing to stain)

A young lady spilled a drink on me at the diner.

This is my room number you can reach me there if you remember anything.

She takes the card.

KALISHA

Please mention the museum and our location.

DARIN

I will.

Turning his TASCAM HANDHELD recorder off, they part ways smiling.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

The old blue GMC STEP-SIDE truck parks by a shed at the edge of the cemetery.

INT. OLD GMC TRUCK'S CAB

A silhouette of a man, THE CARETAKER (late 70's) watches out of his windshield as Darin moves toward the angel monument.

GRAVEYARD

Darin ponders over the angel's detail. He steps back and takes a couple of photos.

The Caretaker wearing an aged jacket, appears behind him.

CARETAKER
(Firmly)
What are you doing?

Darin turns.

DARIN
Oh, you the caretaker?

CARETAKER
(Rough)
Yes. Can I help you?

DARIN
Kalisha at the museum said you may know a guy they call Sunny Boy Fuller.

CARETAKER
Did she?

DARIN
You are the caretaker?

CARETAKER
Yes, but I don't know him.

DARIN
She only said she's seen you around, and figured since you were about the same age...

CARETAKER

Well, I don't know him. And be careful with flashing expensive items. We may be a small town, but we have our share of crime.

DARIN

You can find these cheap online. There's a million of them.

(Grin)

You've been out of the know for a while.

The older man looks him up and down.

CARETAKER

You're touring Clarksdale?

Darin shoulders the camera.

DARIN

Sort of. I'm looking for that blues singer for a write-up on a song.

CARETAKER

These pictures you take will they be printed?

Darin gives a quizzical look.

DARIN

Sure, if there's room in the article.

Abruptly, the Caretaker leaves. Darin stands motionless then turns to the angel monument, shrugs, and goes to his car.

EXT. HOTEL - CLARKSDALE - DAY

Darin, with interview tools, heads toward the hotel entrance.

INT: DARIN'S HOTEL ROOM

He makes notes as he mines the information gathered. A half-drunk cup of coffee sits on the floor at Darin's feet. The TASCAM HANDHELD DIGITAL RECORDER plays.

KALISHA (V.O.)

..instead of conjuring him up from hell, Fuller went to meet the devil with offerings of finger-nail clippings and chicken bones.

DARIN (V.O)
Chicken bones?

KALISHA (V.O.)
You lay the offerings at the base
of the tree, then tune your guitar
and kneel. You close your eyes and
wait for a howl from the wind.

He hits stop on the TASCAM HANDHELD DIGITAL RECORDING.
Rubbing his tired face, he glances at the 1966 TEAC REEL-TO-
REEL on the floor by the TV.

He rakes his palms across his knees, hits play on his TASCAM
HANDHELD DIGITAL RECORDING, and goes back to his work.

KALISHA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The devil takes the offerings while
the musician's eyes remain closed,
and then, the devil tunes the
guitar and gives it back with the
gift of perfection.

Darin's cell phone buzzes: he checks it. Then he hits stop on
the interview and answers the video call from a professional
peer, BILL GLOVER (40).

BILL
(VIDEO CHAT)
Happy birthday bro!

Darin smiles a little when he sees Bill on the call.

DARIN
Thanks man, you're a day early but
all the same. How are you?

BILL
(VIDEO CHAT)
I've been thinking about you
lately, wanted to check in on you.
I know it got rough for a minute
there.

DARIN
I'm doing good Bill, honestly.
Working a regular job now with the
county and I'm home nights. Well,
other than this last gig.

BILL
(VIDEO CHAT)
Awesome Darin.
(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

Guess who I heard from a couple of weeks back? You'll never guess.

DARIN

You got me. Who?

BILL

(VIDEO CHAT)

None other than Mr. Webb himself. He was trying to get me to do a job for him. He was lathering me up in butter awful bad. Telling me I was the best, that I was the only one that could do the job bla, bla, bla.

DARIN

(Deadpan)

Really?

Again, Darin glances at the TEAC REEL-TO-REEL near the T.V.

BILL

(VIDEO CHAT)

Hell yeah!

(beat)

Anyway, watch out for him. He may be giving you a call too.

DARIN

Already has.

BILL

(VIDEO CHAT)

I can tell by your face you took that job, didn't you?

DARIN

I admit it, I did. But it's only for a few days. Look, he's never done me wrong.

BILL

(VIDEO CHAT)

That you know of. I thought the same thing for a while when I'd hear shit about him. Just keep your guard up.

(beat)

He feed you the same lines as I got?

DARIN
(Deadpan)
More or less, yeah.

BILL
(VIDEO CHAT)
Well count that as red flag one
bro. Good to see you're in the game
still.

DARIN
It pays good and it's only for a
few days.

BILL
(VIDEO CHAT)
No judgment, you got to get your
grind on you know. Anyway, happy
birthday. keep in touch.

DARIN
Will do.

Darin disconnects and plops his phone down on the bed.

MONTAGE PREPARING THE DEMO REEL

The canister is opened, and "Song of Descent" is removed.

The Reel is fed through the 1966 reel-to-reel player.

Darin removes headphones from his luggage.

A headphone jack is plugged into the player.

The "play" button is hit but we hear no music.

The tape runs through the player's guides.

END MONTAGE

BACK TO SCENE:

With headphones on, Darin sits in the chair waiting for the music that we never hear, but he does. His face tenses and his head JERKS backward; his body VIBRATES.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A car dodges a deer and smashes into a tree.

INT. ROSE'S CAR

The driver, ROSE (33), is squeezed between the deployed but DEFLATED AIRBAG and her seat.

A mammoth branch came through the windshield and jammed her against the damaged seat. Her body is broken, and her face is badly cut.

She gurgles blood with each dying breath.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Sade nears the counter as her younger brother Steven cleans.

SADE
Are you ready?

STEVEN
Almost, I got to empty the trash.

SADE
Well, I'll be over there.

She points to a lobby sofa as Steven bundles the trash.

SADE (CONT'D)
Wait!

STEVEN
What?

SADE
That writer is staying here, isn't he?

STEVEN
Yes, where else would he stay?

SADE
He could have a relative.

He rests the bag on the edge of the trash can.

STEVEN
He doesn't.

SADE
How do you know?

STEVEN
Because he's staying here.

SADE

Funny.

STEVEN

How is that funny?

SADE

Never mind, what room is he in?

STEVEN

Two-oh-eight.

Steven lifts the trash bag.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Let me get this trash out.

With the bag, he goes to the back and Sade walks toward the elevator.

DARIN'S HOTEL ROOM

Darin sits slumped forward.

DARIN

(Tearful)

I thought I could do it. After the wreck, and you were gone, for the kids I put it behind me. But I can't Rose.

Rose DISSOLVES INTO EXISTENCE on his right side and kneels next to him.

ROSE

In your heart, I'm still dying. I will always hurt Darin.

She takes Darin's arm and caresses it, rubbing her face along it. She mimics the actions of love, but it has yet to show on her face.

DARIN

If I'm with them always I can fill your spot.

ROSE

And have you, Darin? You're here instead of there.

Taking his hand, she stands and tugs at it.

He stands and looks back at his chair and sees he is still in it weeping with the headphones on.

DARIN
 (Shaking head)
 Here I am and they are not here.

With the television in front of him, she WHISPERS IN HIS EAR. He looks at the TV and turns it on. Her wreck plays out across it.

ROSE
 If you stay you will fail them. You have no idea what waits for you my love.
 (beat)
 You will never be with them, go home.

She punches the television with superhuman speed and strength. The glass SHATTERS. She takes a SLIVER of it.

DARIN
 I know. I'm making a choice and the choice leads me away. But not for long Rose. We're drowning, it will all be taken away. I lose the car, I lose my job, then who is to take care of them, My mother?

She caresses his head with her palm. Her eyes looking into his with endearment as she slices his right wrist with the SLIVER.

ROSE
 If you stay, this song will never reach the public and you'll never get back home. You can't see that from where you're from Darin. But I can. You will fail yourself, me, and the children. Find something else to chase.

DARIN
 (Anguish)
 Don't say that Rose. Why would you say these things?

He weeps in her arms as he bleeds.

ROSE
 Forget all this and come live with me forever. Right now, choose me.

CORRIDOR

Sade walks toward Darin's room rehearsing what she will ask.

SADE

(Humble)

Hey I'm Sade. We met at lunch. I'm a stringer at the newspaper. I was wondering if you could give me some photography tips.

(beat)

Remember me? I spilled the drink on you.

She hesitates at his door, gathers courage, and KNOCKS.

DARIN'S HOTEL ROOM

Darin's eyes are closed, and he appears pale as we hear loud KNOCKS at the door.

Darin is laid back in the chair with arms dangling at his side. His right wrist drips blood into the carpet.

He shifts and the headphones fall backward off his tilting head.

His eyes open. Bewildered, he pulls his bleeding right arm in.

There are more KNOCKS at the door as Darin grips his wrist to suppress its spilling of blood.

DARIN

(Weak)

Hold on.

CORRIDOR

Sade leans into the closed door and tries to speak past it.

SADE

Sir, it's Sade!

(beat)

We met at lunch today, well I ran into you. Literally.

There's no reply from Darin.

DARIN'S BATHROOM

Darin's reflection in the mirror is bloody and pale as he pulls a white hand towel off a rack. Blood transfers to the towel.

We hear a distant Sade from off-screen.

SADE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Could you show me some stuff about
 photography. Give me some pointers
 is all I was wondering.

Darin tightly wraps the hand towel around his wrist.

CORRIDOR

Sade begins to ramble nervously.

SADE
 I'm sorry if I'm bothering you. I
 didn't think it was too late. But
 you may be from a different time
 zone. I didn't think of that.
 (beat)
 I'll try to catch you tomorrow.

She turns away from the door when she HEARS IT CRACK OPEN.
 Darin peeks out.

DARIN
 Wait. I may need to go to the
 emergency room.
 (beat)
 Do you have a car here? Can you
 drive?

SADE
 Um yeah, yeah, I can drive.

DARIN
 Okay, let me get ready.

Darin goes back into the room, and she pushes the door open.

DARIN'S HOTEL ROOM

Darin has the bloody hand towel tied around his right wrist
 as he slumps on the edge of the bed trying to put a shoe on.

Sade is aghast.

SADE
 What happened?

DARIN
 I was putting the recorder up on a
 shelf and it slipped.

SADE

A shelf? You want me to call an ambulance?

DARIN

I don't need it. Please. Thank you.

(beat)

Hold on.

He fumbles for his wallet, the contents fall out, he tries to give her some bloody cash.

SADE

It's okay I don't need it.

DARIN

You're in your twenties.

SADE

It's too bloody Sir. I think you're going into shock.

She takes HER BELT off and ties it just below his elbow. She takes the television REMOTE control off the stand and places it on the belt's tie. She ties a knot over the remote control and twists it hard.

SADE (CONT'D)

(Grunting)

Shit this leather.

She puts Darin's other hand on the remote control.

SADE (CONT'D)

Hold this here. It will keep the belt tight.

Steven enters the room.

STEVEN

I'm ready.

(beat)

Oh my god, oh my god.

SADE

Steven! Listen to me. Hold this towel onto his hand. Hold it tight, Steven.

Steven looks at her and then at the bloody towel on Darin's wrist.

SADE (CONT'D)

Do it Steven. It will help. He will hold the belt, you hold the towel. It's that simple Steven. Hold the towel tight.

Steven puts his hands tightly on the towel. Sade snatches up Darin's blood-smudged wallet and stuffs it in his pocket.

Sade leads Darin and Steven through the door into the corridor.

INT. SADE'S CAR - NIGHT

Sade drives. Her brother Steven holds pressure on the towel around Darin's wrist in the backseat.

DARIN

Where'd you learn to do a tourniquet..

He faints and slowly rests his head.

STEVEN

(Slowly)
I think he died.

SADE

He ain't dead. Watch his chest.

Steven stares at his chest. It heaves slowly up and down.

STEVEN

It's moving or the car is making it move.

Sade grips the wheel tighter and speeds up.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Darin, in a hospital gown, awakens groggy and is slow to sit up. Checking himself over he notices stitches in his right wrist and that he still has IV's running into his arm.

A nurse peeks into his room.

NURSE

He's up!

The nurse enters and starts removing IVs as DOCTOR KERRY (48) enters.

DOCTOR KERRY
Hello, I'm Doctor Kerry.

DARIN
I'm Darin.

DOCTOR KERRY
Yes, I already know, my daughter
and son brought you in.

DARIN
They're your kids?

DOCTOR KERRY
They are. And we will save THAT
discussion after your diagnosis.

The nurse leaves.

DARIN
Okay.

DOCTOR KERRY
You lost a lot of blood so we had
to do a blood transfusion, but
don't panic. It was very routine.

DARIN
I'm okay?

DOCTOR KERRY
So far, yes. I haven't seen any
visual reactions and you're sitting
up. There will be some bruising.
You can expect that. And you
obviously have stitches.

DARIN
How long have I been here?

DOCTOR KERRY
About four hours.

DARIN
Oh wow.

DOCTOR KERRY
You'll need to see about getting
the stitches out in ten days and do
some follow-up blood work. But
you're good to go.

DARIN
Where are my keys, my wallet?

DOCTOR KERRY

They're with your clothes over
there folded neatly in the chair.

He tries to stand.

DARIN

Thank you.

Unable to balance well, he sits on the bed's edge.

She flips up a sheet on her clipboard.

DOCTOR KERRY

Now, some major things you need to
watch out for over the next few
days are hives, fever, chills, pain
around the loin, chest, or any back
pain, pain around the transfusion
site, distress, changes in heart
rhythm, jaundice, dark or red
urine, nausea, vomiting, or both,
difficulty breathing, faintness, or
weakness.

DARIN

That's a lot.

DOCTOR KERRY

Don't worry we will give you a list
along with some prescriptions.
Speaking of which, I looked at your
history and I noticed you were
clinically held for depression.

DARIN

Yes Mam.

DOCTOR KERRY

Your wrist is cut. Tell me what
happened.

DARIN

I was putting this large old
recording machine up when it fell
and cut me.

DOCTOR KERRY

Well, what I'm going to do is
prescribe the same thing they did.
It will be a less dosage, but
you've been released and given a
bill of good health from them.

(MORE)

DOCTOR KERRY (CONT'D)

I advise you to talk to someone soon, or get your doctor to prescribe it again should you feel the need for more medication.

(beat)

There's a Twenty-four-hour pharmacy at the end of the parking lot to get this prescription filled.

DARIN

Thanks.

DOCTOR KERRY

Now let me cut to the chase. I'm taking off my doctor hat and putting on my momma hat. You understand?

DARIN

Yeah, I got two kids of my own.

DOCTOR KERRY

My kids are not driving you back. That's a big no. Chief Gunn is.

Darin nods.

DOCTOR KERRY (CONT'D)

My daughter did not explain a lot, so I found your card. They want you to call right away.

DARIN

Did you tell him what happened?

DOCTOR KERRY

No, I did not. I did tell them where you were. Because I explained who I was. But that's it.

Darin rubs his stitches.

DOCTOR KERRY (CONT'D)

When you get home, please see someone.

(beat)

My son works in the hotel so all you get from him is professional contact, that's it.

DARIN

I understand.

DOCTOR KERRY

They have your bill at the desk.

DARIN

Okay, give me a second. I have to make that call.

DOCTOR KERRY

The front desk will work with you on the bill. And the Chief is waiting at the desk, I'll let him know you have to make a phone call and you'll be out in a minute.

DARIN

Appreciate it.

Doctor Kerry steps out into the central area of the emergency room and leaves Darin alone in his bed. She pulls the curtain to his emergency room.

CENTRAL EMERGENCY AREA

After Doctor Kerry pulls the curtain shut, she turns around to a pill cart nearby. She pulls it close and begins arranging pill bottles in what seems like some order, as she listens.

DARIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You answered quickly, thanks.

DARIN'S EMERGENCY ROOM

With the phone on the bed, Darin weakly walks over to his clothes in the chair as he talks with his phone on speaker.

He sits his keys and remote control aside, unfolds his pants and PATS his pocket making sure his wallet is there.

MR. WEBB (O.S.)

What happened?

DARIN

A question first.

MR. WEBB (O.S.)

Go ahead.

DARIN

My insurance should cover this, but I'll need you to make up the difference.

Darin slips his pants on, then takes the gown off.

MR. WEBB (O.S.)
Text the amount you need, and I'll
pay.

DARIN
When I get the information.

Darin puts his shirt on.

MR WEBB (O.S.)
Be honest with me, are you okay?

He puts his socks and shoes on.

DARIN
I needed a blood transfusion.

MR. WEBB (O.S.)
A what!

DARIN
Not right now, I don't want to get
into it. I'm getting dressed and
there's an officer waiting to take
me back to the hotel.

MR. WEBB (O.S.)
Don't listen to that sad music. You
can't handle it.

DARIN
I promise I'm okay.

MR. WEBB (O.S.)
You have to stay away from things
that can take you back to those old
feelings like that.

DARIN
I was blind-sided. I didn't realize
I was still so vulnerable.

MR. WEBB (O.S.)
We all are, I think.

CENTRAL EMERGENCY AREA

Doctor Kerry slowly lifts her arms from resting on the cart.
She leaves the cart where it is and walks off.

MR. WEBB (O.S.)
What room you in?

DARIN'S EMERGENCY ROOM

Darin has foggy recollection.

DARIN
Umm, room two-oh-eight, why?

MR. WEBB (O.S.)
I'm going to swing down and check
on you.

DARIN
I'll leave an extra key at the desk
in case I'm not there.

MR. WEBB (O.S.)
That'll work. Stay safe.

Darin ends his call, checking himself in the mirror.

BILLING AREA

Doctor Kerry comes in with the clipboard of paperwork. Seeing her, CHIEF DEPUTY GUNN, (50's) with a cup of coffee, stands up.

DOCTOR KERRY
Just a few more minutes.
(beat)
How's my nephew doing?

CHIEF GUNN
Andrew? He's on day shift, but he's
doing great. No worries with him.

DOCTOR KERRY
Tell him I'll wash his mouth out
with soap if he messes up any.

Gunn laughs as he sits back down.

CHIEF GUNN
I'll tell him doctor.

She speaks to the lady behind the protective glass.

DOCTOR KERRY
Go ahead and get Morgan Darin's
paperwork together if you haven't.

Gunn interrupts her.

CHIEF GUNN
Hey! See if he likes coffee.

DOCTOR KERRY
You getting soft?

CHIEF GUNN
Nah, kindness gets more
information.

DOCTOR KERRY
Got you.

She walks away with her clipboard.

INT: PATROL CAR - IN MOTION - NIGHT

Chief Deputy Gunn looks to Darin in the passenger's seat
sipping coffee.

CHIEF GUNN
I guess it's not too bad huh?

Darin looks at him.

DARIN
What?

CHIEF GUNN
Doctor Kerry said you liked just
cream no sugar.

DARIN
It's the right amount of cream.
Thanks.

There's only the hum of the motor.

CHIEF GUNN
I know I'm a stranger and I try not
to butt in on someone's business,
but you don't have any family down
here. If you need someone to talk
to about what happened, I'll
listen.

Darin looks down at his coffee.

CHIEF GUNN (CONT'D)

I've listened to a lot of stuff from a lot of people in this line of business. You'll get no judgement from me.

Darin sips his coffee.

DARIN

I was institutionalized for depression. Last night I think I relapsed. But I did not cut myself. I never would do that.

(beat)

The recorder was on the floor when I came too. And I had the cut. I must have tried to put it on the tv stand, and it cut me when it fell. I admit it was on the floor before, but how I got the cut I don't know.

(beat)

It's the only thing I can think of.

CHIEF GUNN

Were you drunk?

DARIN

I gave up drinking.

CHIEF GUNN

If you need someone to talk to, you know where I am. And the Sheriff is coming on next shift.

DARIN

I do need to see him tomorrow.

CHIEF GUNN

I'll let him know.

DARIN

Thanks.

Darin sips coffee.

DARIN (CONT'D)

Oh, it's not about what happened. It's the story I'm working on. This blues singer I'm researching.

CHIEF GUNN

Which one?

DARIN
 Sonny Boy Fuller, you heard of him?

CHIEF GUNN
 Sounds familiar. I'll pass it
 along. If there are any files he
 can have them ready.

EXT: HOTEL - NIGHT

A bandaged Darin, with his white bag of prescription and remote in hand, exits the county patrol car.

INT: DARIN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

In his underwear, Darin removes the DEMO REEL from the 1966 recorder and places it into its canister. Even though his right wrist is stitched and bandaged he uses it well.

The closed canister is placed on top of the UNSHATTERED television.

He switches the lights off.

INT. LOBBY - SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - DAY

Darin, holding his TASCAM HANDHELD DIGITAL RECORDER in his bandaged hand, passes the receptionist's desk and approaches a counter. He goes around it.

OFFICE AREA - SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

SHERIFF JONES (40) thumbs through a file as he sits at his desk making notes. He looks at Darin moving closer and sees the bandage on the wrist holding the recorder.

SHERIFF JONES
 You kept the Chief busy last night.

DARIN
 Let him know I appreciate the ride
 back.

SHERIFF JONES
 I'm Sheriff Jones. I take it you're
 the writer.

DARIN
 Yes sir.

Darin turns the TASCAM HANDHLED tape recorder on and places it on the desk without asking. Cops can't say, 'no'.

SHERIFF JONES

When Gunn told me who you were looking for, I thought Fuller's name sounded familiar. I looked over the file and I can give you a quick rundown.

He looks at his notes beside the open file.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)

Anthony Fuller. Otherwise known As Sunny Boy Fuller. He was arrested on March fifth in seventy for assault.

DARIN

Assault?

The Sheriff looks closer at his notes.

SHERIFF JONES

He was having sex with her, a tourist from Arkansas. He forced a pillow over her face. She kneed him in the nuts and got away. In late July there was a trial. He said that the devil wanted him to do it when arrested. He lost the case.

(beat)

There's some more on down.

(beat)

After three years they put him in a hospital and treated him for schizophrenia.

(To Darin)

You still want to do an article on him?

DARIN

(Shrugs)

He served his time for what he did. If he got better, why not.

(beat)

It's up to the recording company if they want to promote that part of him.

SHERIFF JONES

You media people have different morals than we do.

DARIN

If I was younger that might hurt my feelings.

The sheriff looks coldly at him.

DARIN (CONT'D)
 (Gestures to the file)
 You got a picture?

SHERIFF JONES
 It might have fallen out of the
 file somewhere through the years.

The Sheriff goes to a file cabinet, three are side by side.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)
 Sit tight. I got three cabinets to
 go through.

The Sheriff searches through the first cabinet.

Darin's attention drifts toward a wall of portraits and a
 BULLETIN BOARD.

DARIN
 In all seriousness, I get what
 you're saying about glossing things
 over. As a journalist I'll write
 everything up respectfully.
 (beat)
 But they're paying me to sell a
 product, it's not like news. It's
 like the press releases you guys
 put out. All glossed over.

SHERIFF
 (Irritated)
 I have to help you cause it's the
 law.

DARIN
 I didn't mean any offense.

Darin's eyes stop on an area of the BULLETIN BOARD with a
 dozen or so pictures under the heading "MISSING."

DARIN (CONT'D)
 What are these?

The Sheriff looks up from searching the second file cabinet.

SHERIFF JONES
 They're musicians that came up
 missing.

DARIN
 Pretty young.

SHERIFF JONES

They came to Clarksdale just like the rest do: they wanted the quick fix.

DARIN

You referring to the lore?

Darin looks at each of their young faces.

SHERIFF JONES

More of a myth. Most of those are the last photos their parents had. Their senior portrait, going off to college, their last birthday. And that band picture.

His eyes go to the band picture the Sheriff mentioned. The guitarist is in focus up front and has a guitar with a SLOPPILY PAINTED LIGHTENING BOLT.

DARIN

You wouldn't think so many people would come up missing in this small town.

Kneeling at the bottom of the second file cabinet the Sheriff pauses his search.

SHERIFF JONES

This was the first place they told their parents they were headed. To check out the myth and see the devil at the crossroads.

DARIN

I see.

SHERIFF JONES

Their parents came here when they never heard from them. They thought we might have had them in our hospital or jail. We keep their pictures up out of respect.

DARIN

Ever check them out. Their cases?

The Sheriff shuts the bottom drawer of the second file cabinet and begins his search of the third.

SHERIFF JONES

Sure, we looked, and put out info. But they're all adults, who straight out of high school, left home. I remember I joined the army and didn't call home for 6 months.

DARIN

There's a story here you know; a sad one at that.

SHERIFF JONES

The kid in the band I mentioned, we checked him out hard. He's local. He was going to California. Los Angeles. We worked with them, and we did an investigation here, but nothing turned up. Every town has this. We just get more because of the crossroads.

The Sheriff stops searching the third cabinet and goes to his desk.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)

No photo to be found. Check the newspaper. There may be an article.

Darin nears the Sheriff.

DARIN

May I borrow that file a second?

The Sheriff hands him the file.

DARIN (CONT'D)

Printer?

SHERIFF JONES

Over there.

He points to a cubby with a printer.

Darin shuts off the TASCAM RECORDER as he takes it off the Sheriff's desk. With the file he walks toward the printer's cubby.

DARIN

Where's your newspaper?

SHERIFF JONES

On Main Street about two blocks East from the diner.

PRINTER'S CUBBY

Darin places the file's sheets to be scanned in the printer. He hovers a finger over the printer's digital control panel. He hits print. It delivers copies and Darin's bandaged hand takes them.

EXT: NEWSPAPER - CLARKSDALE - DAY

Darin's car is parked in front.

INT. LOBBY - NEWSPAPER

Upon entering, Darin meets a male SECRETARY (30).

DARIN

I was wondering if I could look through your morgue.

SECRETARY

Sure thing, let me get the key.

The secretary grabs the door key.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

Right down this hall.

The Secretary walks to a hall. Darin follows.

HALL

The Secretary leads as Darin shifts his film camera, with flash, to his side.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

I see you've been around a newspaper before. Most people wouldn't call our archives a morgue.

DARIN

I've been in a few over the years.

MORGUE

The secretary holds the door open for Darin. It's a large room with shelves of large hardbound books. Each one is labeled with the year and month on their black spine and cover.

SECRETARY

What year you looking for? Each of our daily newspapers and Sunday's print are bound into a large hardback for that month.

DARIN

nineteen-seventy.

He gestures to the bound books at right.

SECRETARY

Have at it.

DARIN

Thanks.

Darin browses the spines of the books in the section he was directed towards.

LOBBY

Sade walks up to the secretary who's playing solitaire on the computer. He doesn't look away from the computer.

SADE

I'm finished with obituaries. No one is in the newsroom. I'm supposed to see if you need anything.

SECRETARY

Okay, you can help the writer guy search old papers in the morgue.

SADE

On my way.

MORGUE

There are TWO of the monthly bound editions for the year 1970 on the center table. MARCH and JULY. Darin thumbs through March's book.

Sade enters.

DARIN

(Shocked a bit)

You.

SADE

(Grins)

I work here. Do you need some help?

Darin focuses back on the March edition. He scans the pages and lifts one to turn it but pauses.

DARIN

I'm looking for a story on that Anthony Fuller, I spoke to you about when you spilled that drink on me.

SADE

Oh, sorry again.

DARIN

He went by the name Sunny Boy Fuller. There should be an article on his court case. It's an assault case.

DARIN (CONT'D)

Search the last two weeks of July. That's during the trial.

He finishes turning the page in March's book.

DARIN (CONT'D)

Mainly, we want a picture of what he looks like.

She removes her coat, slings it over the back of a chair at the table.

She comes over to his side and grabs July's book and opens it. She thumbs to the middle of it.

They flip pages relatively quickly, as they scan the headlines.

SADE

How's your arm?

DARIN

It's not bad with the medication.

(beat)

When it wears off it's really sore, but I can still use it fine.

Sade flips a page and stops at a HEADLINE that READS: "Blues Man Found Guilty!" Underneath is the article with a photo of ANTHONY FULLER (20) facing towards us. His hands are behind his back as courtroom officers obviously handcuff him.

SADE

Found it!

Darin looks to her book at the ANQUISHED face of Anthony fuller in the newsprint being handcuffed.

Darin looks to Sade.

DARIN
I can't place him.

SADE
You think you know him?

DARIN
No. I've seen him before though.

Darin turns on his flash rather easily, even with the bandage on, as he raises his camera.

He leans over July's page, adjusts the lens, focuses, and takes a couple of pictures. The flash goes off twice.

He closes his book, and she does the same.

DARIN (CONT'D)
(Complaining)
These dusty books are killing me.

SADE
Lunch time? Maybe It'll help jar your memory.

They carry the large books to the 1970's section.

DARIN
Yeah, maybe.

SADE
I'll get a chance to ask you a favor.

They slide their large bound books back into location.

DARIN
I do owe you for driving me to the hospital.

Darin stops in his tracks.

DARIN (CONT'D)
Your mother.

SADE
It's cool. I talked to her when she got home.

DARIN
What do you mean?

SADE
For one, I reminded her that I'm
twenty-two. I'll tell you about it
over lunch when I ask that favor.

DARIN
She was pretty serious when she
spoke to me.

She retrieves a photo out of her purse and holds it so Darin
can see it.

SADE
This is my older brother, Jerome.
He's almost my age at the time of
the picture.

DARIN
(Squinting)
I've seen that picture before.

SADE
Really?

DARIN
It's at the Sheriff's.

SADE
Yeah, they made copies for us.
(beat)
We thought, if people were going to
recognize him, it would be with him
playing his guitar.

DARIN
How long has he been missing?

SADE
A little over two years now. That
guitar in the picture is Miss
Lightening. He said 'Lightening'
was a cool name but with 'Miss'
everyone would know it was a lady.

Darin smiles then his face settles into thought.

SADE (CONT'D)
So yes, my mother is
overprotective.

DARIN

It never crossed my mind she lost a child.

SADE

Do you think he is dead?

DARIN

No, I'm sorry that's not what I meant.

SADE

We have a lot of hope, but after two years he would have contacted us by now. He went off to Los Angeles, but there is no record of him getting there. We made copies of pictures and posted them in every pub. No one saw or heard him play. He would have played. He was good too.

DARIN

And the police here?

SADE

Nothing. We tried to tell them he never made it. They did some looking into it, but I don't know how much. They clumped him up with all the other musicians that had come up missing.

DARIN

Those who said they were coming to the crossroads.

SADE

Yes. It's a musician's pit stop.

Darin gives a small smile of understanding as she puts the picture back into the purse.

DARIN

So, your mother said for me to call her?

SADE

Yes.

(beat)

I'm hungry and I don't want to have to get these guys' orders. So, let's go while they still think I'm up here helping.

EXT. DINER - MAIN STREET - DAY

Darin's car and Sade's car park near the Sheriff's.

INT: DARIN'S CAR

Darin shuts the car off. He reaches for his camera bag and stops; suddenly taken back by a thought.

He closes his eyes and lowers his head, pinching the upper bridge of his nose with intensity.

FLASHBACK GARAGE: The garage window at the dilapidated house. We see a 1960's GMC BLUE STEP-SIDE truck.

FLASHBACK CEMETERY: The 1960's BLUE STEP-SIDE GMC TRUCK at the cemetery.

BACK TO SCENE:

Darin opens his eyes.

DARIN
(To himself)
He's the one in the article.
(beat)
I'm stupid.

Grabbing his camera bag, he gets out of the car.

EXT. DINER - MAIN STREET - DAY

Darin, with bandage still on, is walking quickly to Sade. He looks into the restaurant patio area at people as if he is searching for someone.

SADE
What is it?

DARIN
I'm looking for the Sheriff. I think our guy is the caretaker.

SADE
Caretaker?

DARIN
Yeah, at the cemetery.

Darin hands her the camera bag.

DARIN (CONT'D)

Grab us a table out here. I'm going to see the Sheriff for a second. I'll be right back.

(beat)

Oh, I'll take a sweet tea and a BLT with everything if they show up to take our order.

SADE

Got it.

Darin goes ahead of Sade.

INT: DINER

Enjoying their meal at a table are Sheriff Jones and DEPUTY JOHNSON (30), DEPUTY ANDREWS (22), and DEPUTY MORGAN (27).

DEPUTY JOHNSON

As soon as they'd come down to the altar, we'd line up behind the women.

DEPUTY ANDREWS

When I saw a pretty one, I'd try to get up there first.

DEPUTY JOHNSON

Yeah, he would. He beat us down there about every time. We'd end up fighting over who got stuck with the fat ones.

DEPUTY MORGAN

In church? Really?

DEPUTY ANDREWS

I didn't have a girlfriend.

DEPUTY JOHNSON

We were young.

(beat)

Anyway, I was trying not to get behind the fat ones. If I did, I'd grab a chair and push it behind them. They'd plop down like this...

Deputy Johnson illustrates how they would fall into the chair with their arms spread out. He makes a crying face.

They chuckle and Sheriff Jones shakes his head.

Darin walks up to the table.

DARIN
Sheriff.

SHERIFF JONES
How's the hunting going?

DARIN
I think he's still living in the house.

SHERIFF JONES
That dilapidated one out by the old crossroads?

DARIN
That's the one.

Jones asks a hypothetical question.

SHERIFF JONES
Someone live there?

DARIN
Could you find out what vehicle Anthony Fuller has registered.

SHERIFF JONES
I'm eating right now, but when I get back I'll look into it.

DARIN
That's fine, no rush, thanks.

SHERIFF JONES
Don't mention it.

INT. DINER - DAY

A man in BALCK HOODIE reading his cell phone passes Sade as Darin joins her at the table.

SADE
You are ordered for.

DARIN
Thanks, the guy I'm looking for...

SADE
Fuller.

DARIN

Yeah, the lady at the museum said he was into the legend of the crossroads.

SADE

Maybe we should go there for your story. You can bring a guitar and some offerings.

DARIN

Yeah, we're gonna need to fill some time until he gets me the vehicle registration.

(beat)

First, what did your mom say?

SADE

I told her more about last night. That I was going to ask you to let me shadow you when I could. She said that when I see you to tell you to call her.

DARIN

Shadow?

SADE

Tag along. It's like interning but only for a short while.

DARIN

Can you develop black and white film?

SADE

Yeah, I do it for the museum sometimes in our old dark room.

DARIN

Okay, you'll be my developer and I'll give you some pointers.

SADE

Thank You!

DARIN

Don't mention it.

SADE

We can start this evening, I'll take you to the spot, the real spot.

DARIN

I do need art for the story.

The waitress puts their food down.

DARIN (CONT'D)

I don't have a musical instrument.

SADE

Use your camera.

DARIN

That's an idea.

They both take their first bites.

DARIN (CONT'D)

Best BLT ever here.

(beat)

The curator said that we would need fingernails and some chicken bones.

SADE

Put that BLT in your story.

(beat)

You can borrow my fingernails.

Sade nibbles her food.

DARIN

They're painted. He'd know they're not mine and think we were swindling him.

SADE

You really believe there's a devil?

DARIN

If we use yours when he comes back to collect, he might take your soul instead of mine.

Darin takes a big bite.

SADE

(Smirk)

Funny, it doesn't state whose fingernails it has to be. We just want art anyway, right?

DARIN

(Clears throat)

That's right.

(MORE)

DARIN (CONT'D)

(beat)

Now let's dig in.

POV: The guy wearing a BLACK HOODIE sits before a half-eaten plate of food reading his cell phone that has a black screen. He glances up from the phone to look at Darin, eating, then to the camera bag he has on the table.

BACK TO SCENE:

Sade smiles glancing at Darin's bare plate.

SADE

I'm surprised you didn't choke.

DARIN

I won though.

SADE

I'll go to the restroom and clip my nails. Oh, and I'll get the waitress to bring us some chicken bones.

DARIN

Add it to my ticket.

POV: The guy wearing a BLACK HOODIE looks up again from his inoperable cell phone to see the waitress coming out onto the patio. She looks to Darin as she hands him a little take home box.

BACK TO SCENE:

At Darin's table the waitress finishes handing him the take home box.

WAITRESS

Here's your ticket. You were paying for both right?

DARIN

Yes ma'am.

(beat)

I'll put your tip on the card.

WAITRESS

Thank you, sir.

The waitress leaves as Sade returns.

Sade plops down and opens the take home box. She empties her cupped hand of painted fingernails into it. They pile beside the chicken bones.

INT. MUSEUM - DAY

The last patron, with a shopping bag, stops at the door before exiting.

PATRON
They're going to love these
postcards.

KALISHA
(Smiles)
Have a nice evening.

PATRON
You too.

The patron exits and the bell rings above the door as it opens and closes.

Kalisha LOCKS THE DOOR.

Kalisha empties the cash from the register and takes it to the back in a bank bag.

INT. OFFICE

Kalisha lays the cash on a desk. She bends down, unlocks the safe, and opens it.

She counts out a stack of money and stops when she hears GLASS BREAK from a distant room.

She grabs the money and puts it into the safe; she shuts it.

KALISHA
(Looking to door)
Hello!

She goes to the office door.

KALISHA (CONT'D)
Hello? Anyone there?

Kalisha looks out of the office door into the museum area.

There's no one there.

She looks on her desk.

There is no cell phone on the desk.

KALISHA (CONT'D)
(whispers)
My phone.

She eases out into the hall.

MUSEUM

Kalisha moves slowly out of the hall into the museum.

She looks around and spots her phone on a countertop near the register.

Kalisha rushes for the phone. A DARK FIGURE, the size of the Caretaker, grabs her from the back. He whispers to her.

CARETAKER
The man who came in here yesterday,
what did he want?

KALISHA
(Scared)
Which man?

CARETAKER
The man not from these parts.

KALISHA
He was looking for a musician.

CARETAKER
What for?

KALISHA
He found a lost recording and
wanted to interview him.
(Pleading)
Please, I have his room number!
Please, I'll give it to you, let me
go.

CARETAKER
Where is it?

KALISHA
(Hurried)
In my pocket.

CARETAKER
Let me have it.

Frantically, she digs it out of her pocket, he takes it.

KALISHA

Flip it over.

He does and finds the hotel info on it.

INSERT: Close up to the back of the card with "Room 208".

The dark figure snaps her neck quickly and with great speed.

INT: DINER - DAY

Darin flips the bill over next to the small white take home box.

DARIN

Not a bad price.

(beat)

Okay no sense in making this complicated, You can take a picture, right?

SADE

Yes.

DARIN

When we get there, I'll do the selling of my soul thing and you stand back and snap the pictures. That means wide shots. Also, we will get some close-ups of the bones and fingernails.

(beat)

And yes, even if the devil doesn't show.

He puts the payment card on the bill receipt and pushes it to the side of the table to be picked up.

SADE

(Smiles)

Okay.

DARIN

Take a series you know.

The waitress picks up the bill.

SADE

Okay, got it.

DARIN

Make sure after you roll the film on, you snap a couple first to make sure any light leaks are already past the gate. Unless you want them, but we don't in this case.

SADE

Okay, so that leaves about thirty-four frames.

The bill is brought back and Darin signs the receipt and takes the copy and folds it into his wallet.

Sade pulls out a five-dollar bill.

SADE (CONT'D)

I'll leave the tip.

DARIN

I put it on my card already.

SADE

I'll leave it anyway.

DARIN

That's a good tip.

Darin reaches for his Camera bag just as it is snatched at by the thief in DARK HOODIE that was stalking them earlier.

Darin quickens his grasp, clutches it in time. The thief is pulled off balance, regains it, and tries pulling harder.

Sade stands up and grabs the camera strap as well, helping Darin pull.

The Sheriff and deputies exit from the front door in a rush.

The thief in DARK HOODIE releases the strap and is dashing away. Sade sees Sheriff Jones and Deputy Johnson, who have stopped nearby.

SADE

Go after them!

The sheriff holds a hand up.

SADE (CONT'D)

(Upset)

What, what? Like what's your excuse these days, the thief was right in front of you!

Darin, looking at the Sheriff's concerned expression, puts a hand briefly on Sade's shoulder.

DARIN

Hold on.

SADE

(To Darin)

You ain't from here, I've been dealing with their bull-crap since I've been alive.

DARIN

Something worse has happened.

SHERIFF JONES

You're right, we just got the call; something at the blues Museum. You're at the paper Sade, you might as well know. They found Kalisha's body. That's all we got.

(To Darin)

And that guy that tried to steal your camera is on our radar now, but we've got to handle this.

The Sheriff and Deputy rush away. Leaving Sade and Darin perplexed.

DARIN

Look, you may need to take-

Sade interrupts.

SADE

I'm going to need to go to this.

DARIN

No problem.

The SIREN (O.S.) can be heard trailing off.

SADE

I've never covered something like this.

DARIN

No worries, get you a picture right away. An overall picture setting the scene. Get crime tape that is up, if there is any, and the police. Then get one of the coroner's vehicle in the foreground or near the building.

(MORE)

DARIN (CONT'D)

After an hour to four hours, they should remove the body.

SADE

Okay.

DARIN

Stay and get the body coming out. They'll have it covered. You can get them coming out of the door, walking it along the way, or as they load it. Stay on it, get all three of those so you have something.

Sade rushes away but is stopped.

DARIN (CONT'D)

Wait, get those main shots but also look for family or friends arriving. Watch them. Once they hear the news they will show some emotion usually. Be ready for it. Sometimes if there is a weapon they may just throw it down right in front of a place.

(beat)

OK, now you can go.

SADE

Thanks.

He grabs a roll of used film from a pocket on the camera bag.

DARIN

Wait!

SADE

I have to go!

DARIN

Real quick, take this film and develop it for me will you. No push or pull.

SADE

What's that?

DARIN

I'll give you my email, you can ask later.

Darin gets his film camera out of the bag and winds up the film.

SADE

Sure.

Darin opens the back camera door, whips the camera with his bandaged hand. The film roll jumps out and lands in his other hand next to the other roll.

He hands both rolls to her then she distances herself again.

DARIN

You got my number right. Call me if you need anything.

SADE

Yeah, I got it.

(Puzzled)

That didn't hurt when you whipped that camera.

As she turns and leaves for her car he shouts.

DARIN

Remember, the negatives only, you don't have to print any!

Sade throws a hand up.

Darin walks back to his table where the waitress is cleaning.

With his camera bag already in tow he grabs the take home box off the table and walks to his car.

EXT: TREE - CROSSROADS - DAY

It is still and the DEAD LEAVES that circle a large area at the base of the tree are motionless as Darin puts the chicken bones in a pile. He pours out the painted fingernails next to it.

With the empty take-home box, he walks back to the car. In the background is the old, abandoned house belonging to Fuller.

INT. DARIN'S CAR

He chunks the empty box into the back seat away from his camera bag where he digs his camera out.

CLOSE UP: His phone in the passenger's seat as the CAR DOOR is SHUT. The phone receives a TEXT by Mr. Webb. It reads, "Surprise! Hey Darin, I'm in town. At the hotel. Text me when you get this."

EXT: TREE

It's a peaceful day and the wind is not stirring. Darin looks in the distance seeing the dilapidated house.

Behind the tree he notices crudely crafted stick crosses on old graves. Darin takes pictures of the graves and gets close ups of the cross's crude craftsmanship.

Darin walks toward the pile of chicken bones and fingernails. He kneels in front of them facing the tree, taking pictures of the offerings.

He then takes the camera from his neck.

DARIN'S POV: He raises the camera out, as if offering it to someone that is not there.

His EYES CLOSE and there is DARKNESS. The WIND HOWLS.

DARIN
(Mental voice)
What? The wind probably howls all
the time out here in the flat
lands.

The wind stops and there's a sound of dirt hitting the ground in the DARKNESS of our closed eyes.

DARIN (CONT'D)
(Mental voice)
Open your eyes. There was no sound
before the howling now there is.

There are LEAVES CRACKLING in tandem with FOOTSTEPS WE CANNOT SEE but HEAR.

DARIN (CONT'D)
(Mental voice)
That is definitely somebody. Open
your eyes Darin. Open them. No.
It's lore, just lore. This is real.
Those are real steps.

We are still in the BLACKNESS of our closed eyes as LEAVES CRUNCHING get nearer, then stop.

DARIN (CONT'D)
(Mental voice)
Wait to see if they take your
camera.

In our DARKNESS comes the sound of things DRIBBLING to the ground.

DARIN (CONT'D)

(Mental voice)

They're eating the offerings. You can take a punch if that's what they are here for. What if they stab you? Shoot you?

(beat)

They just took the camera. It's the devil.

(beat)

The devil isn't real.

From the DARKNESS comes an ANGRY and RASPY voice.

RASPY VOICE

No pictures!

DARIN

(Mental voice)

Now, open them now!

DARIN'S CONTINUED POV: HIS EYES OPEN as his camera comes violently swinging down from the arm of a decayed human form. It's way too fast to block, hits his face and his EYES CLOSE immediately.

DARIN'S CONTINUED POV: ONE EYE OPENS to dirt and the tree looking sideways. He is hit again, and it all GOES BLACK again. There is NO SOUND.

BACK TO SCENE:

EXT: HOTEL - DAY

The Caretaker's STEP-SIDE BLUE TRUCK parks near Mr. Webb's RED PORSCHE. The Caretaker exits his truck without any expression.

INT: DARIN'S HOTEL ROOM

Mr. Webb comes out of the bathroom in a robe and takes the cell phone from the end table. He types into it, "Surprise! Hey Darin, I'm in town. At the hotel. Text me when you get this."

He tosses the phone on the bed next to his pressed clean clothes laid out for the evening. He grabs a t-shirt out of his luggage and there is a KNOCK at the door.

MR. WEBB

(In robe))

My room ready?

CARETAKER (O.S.)

Mr. Webb?

MR. WEBB

Who's asking?

CARETAKER (O.S.)

It's me, the caretaker.

Mr. Webb eases toward the door, puts his hand on the knob and leans an ear close to the crack.

MR. WEBB

The caretaker?

CARETAKER (O.S.)

That's right, that's what they call me these days. Are you alone?

MR. WEBB

Why does it matter?

CARETAKER (O.S.)

I thought we could talk about that old demo reel.

Webb opens the door, motioning the aged Caretaker to come in.

The Caretaker enters and glances at the DEMO REEL CANISTER ON THE TELEVISION.

MR. WEBB

Who are you and how do you know about the demo?

Webb has walked to the end of the bed, turns now to find the Caretaker having a seat.

MR. WEBB (CONT'D)

Maybe the guys at the meeting?

(To himself aloud)

They didn't want it in the first place.

CARETAKER

No one told me anything rest assured.

Webb pauses his flustered pondering, the gears in his head come to a halt.

MR. WEBB

(Growing mad)

Quit playing, who are you?

CARETAKER

Give those gears in your head a crank. Why would an old black man in Clarksdale, Mississippi be knocking at your door.

Webb shrugs his shoulders, but he keeps staring intently at the aged Caretaker.

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

I'm the musician, well I'm in possession of his body. His soul is in a cage where I use him for a mutt to kick.

MR. WEBB

Old man you're nuts. You need to leave.

Webb goes for the hotel phone, but the Caretaker snatches it quickly from the wall. Plaster mists from the wall as the cord RIPS upward before separating. He tosses the severed hotel phone on the bed.

Webb pauses, the quick phone snatch was out of character for an older man such as the Caretaker.

CARETAKER

Sit down now that I have your attention.

Webb pokes his chest out taking one step forward.

MR. WEBB

I'll walk out that door if I want.

CARETAKER

I can snatch your spine out just as quick.

Webb sits on the bed, keeping his eyes on the Caretaker.

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

Your writer friend has taken a young prodigy under his little angel wing.

Webb's face maddens and his fists ball up.

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

He has brought into the mix a young lady named Sade.

(MORE)

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

Who long ago did a loving act for her brother that has now sent the predestination blocks into building the foundation for what is to come. Because see, with her comes more people that are not like you or me. Not with souls like ours. These people will be acting out their predestined roles. Their roles on this earth are confined to their missions. Their paychecks don't allow free will. They do not have the choice you had in that room. The free will to play the music for Stan or not.

MR. WEBB

I'm going to leave.

The Caretaker stands up.

CARETAKER

It's going to unravel, all the work I've done. All the work you've done.

Mr. Webb looks at him quizzically.

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

Like the apocalypse is predestined so is the confrontation that is to take place. And you would have to choose a side. But you won't have that free will, I am going to choose for you.

The Caretaker SNAPS his neck quicker than he jerked the phone and damaged the lower wall.

Webb's body PLOPS to the floor.

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

And I must come out from hiding and walk along this killing floor.

The Caretaker looks upon the body of Mr. Webb. He backs up and sits in the chair.

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

(Whispers)

Someone summonses me.

He relaxes and his body goes limp and lifeless as he slowly closes his eyes.

THE CARETAKERS POV: The contents of the room FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. DARK COFFIN - CROSSROADS - DAY

Complete darkness is soon exposed to light trickling into the coffin as dirt falls into it, revealing a rotting face between its digging arms.

There is a faint HOWLING wind growing as the hole gets bigger. The figure climbs out of the coffin into the light above.

Debris falls into the coffin.

EXT. MAKE-SHIFT GRAVEYARD

The DECAYED CREATURE, a possessed decayed man, with superhuman strength, steps out of the grave and dirt TRICKLES from his body.

TREE

He continues assuredly toward a kneeling Darin extending his camera with eyes shut. The Decayed Creature reaches down grabbing a handful of the chicken bones and fingernail clippings.

He stuffs them down its throat and pieces DRIBBLE out the rotted holes of his neck.

Then the Creature grabs Darin's camera and immediately opens it up, tossing the film from inside the camera away.

DECAYED CREATURE

(Raspy)

No Pictures!

The Creature grows mad wrapping the strap in his hand and swinging the camera to hit Darin in the head.

Darin opens his eyes and tries to block the camera. It hits him in the forehead, and he goes down onto his side.

He tries to get back up, but the Creature swings it again. It hits Darin in the temple.

Darin's body relaxes.

The Decayed Creature grabs Darin by a leg and drags him toward the house across dead leaves.

INT. NEWSROOM - NEWSPAPER - NIGHT

There's one person pushing away at a keyboard, the EDITOR (41). It's a small room in an old building. About 5 desks with small petitions between the desks.

Sade comes hurriedly through the entrance. She sits by a computer and hooks her phone into it.

SADE

You already got the programs opened?

The Editor, typing, answers without a missed beat.

EDITOR

Sure do. As soon as you get them ready let me know, we're going to print at two.

Sade is already dragging four pictures into the "NEWS" folder.

SADE

It won't take long.

EDITOR

What did you get?

SADE

It basically writes itself. If it's a murder you need the body picture and hopefully get some emotion.

EDITOR

Did you get that?

SADE

I sure did.

EDITOR

I'll use the body pic and that emotion one.

The Editor slides her chair a little closer.

EDITOR (CONT'D)

You can go home. You need to pick your brother up.

SADE

I still got time to edit some negatives.

Sade grabs her phone from the download cord and heads to the back dark doom. The editor slides her chair back to her computer.

SADE (CONT'D)
Chemicals still mixed from last week?

EDITOR
(Glances to Sade)
They are.

SADE
Okay.

EDITOR
Go get your brother when you're done.

SADE
Thanks

Sade steps through a black cylinder's opening at the back of the room.

INT: CYLINDER DARK ROOM DOOR

Inside it, she spins the opening around, there is briefly total darkness until it opens into another room. There is no normal door entering dark rooms so no one can accidentally open it, letting light in to destroy negatives.

EXT: GRAVEYARD - CROSSROADS - NIGHT

More human-like silhouettes of wabbling dead move toward the dilapidated house with very few lights on. Panning down the last dead man that came alive crawls out of his shallow grave in the FULL MOON'S light.

INT. DARK ROOM - NEWSPAPER - NIGHT

In the darkness a light switch is flipped on. Sade hits the timer set for 7 minutes.

She takes the cylinder canister of negatives soaking in D-76 solution and agitates it by turning it upside down and then right side up a few times.

She waits as the negatives sit in the solution. She looks at the timer which shows plenty of time left.

She takes her phone out and calls Darin, his voice mail picks up.

SADE

(Into phone)

Darin this is Sade. I got what I needed at the museum. Everything you mentioned. I'm about to take the negatives out of the developing canisters. Call me.

Sade abruptly hangs up and calls her mother who picks up on the first ring.

SADE (CONT'D)

Hey mom, Darin, call you?

DOCTOR KERRY (O.S.)

Not yet.

SADE

He said he was, I don't think he would lie.

(beat)

Did you hear?

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - DOCTOR KERRY'S HOME - NIGHT

Kerry adds the last folded garment to a clothes basket.

DOCTOR KERRY

About Kalisha? Please tell me it's not true.

SADE (O.S.)

Yes, it's true. I got pictures of it.

DOCTOR KERRY

Of her body? Oh, you didn't, did you?

SADE (O.S.)

No, it was covered up. They were taking her out.

DOCTOR KERRY

You have to pick your brother up soon. Do not be late.

DARK ROOM

Sade looks at the timer.

SADE

Steven said his relief called in
and will be late, so he has to stay
another hour.

DOCTOR KERRY (O.S.)

Is that still enough time?

SADE

I'll be done by then. Oh, wait-

STEVEN'S BEDROOM

Kerry puts folded clothes on Steven's MINDCRAFT decorated
bed.

DOCTOR KERRY

(Firmly)

What do you mean, 'Oh wait?'

DARK ROOM

With her phone held to her ear by her shoulder Sade grabs
some raw newsprint from a stack and opens it up on the
counter.

SADE

I'm developing this film for Darin.
I still have to dry the negatives
and look through them to make sure
they're good. It's no biggy, but
could you pick steven up since
you're off? I mean if that's okay,
but I have every intention to get
him myself.

DOCTOR KERRY (O.S.)

I guess so, if that's what you need
me to do. I can take him and get
some ice cream afterward.

SADE

Thank you, with you doing this I
can go show the negatives to him.

Sade faces the timer.

SADE'S BEDROOM

Kerry folds Sade's laundry.

DOCTOR KERRY

Stephen and I can talk over ice cream. I've been needing time with him.

SADE (O.S.)

Darin's only here for a few days.

DARKROOM

The timer goes off. Sade grabs it and puts it back on the shelf above the sink.

DOCTOR KERRY (O.S.)

It's fine Sade, really. Have Darin call me.

SADE

Thank you. And yes, I'll have him call you and I'll do the dishes tomorrow.

DOCTOR KERRY (O.S.)

Oh, you will wash those dishes and love you.

SADE

Love you too.

She finishes the call and SWITCHES THE LIGHT OUT, turning on a RED LIGHT. She unscrews the canister's top, dumping the D-76 solution down the drain.

SADE (CONT'D)

(To herself aloud)

Too old to recycle.

EXT. CROSSROADS - NIGHT

In the hue of night, we see the lone leafless tree and Darin's truck silhouetted against the FULL MOON'S sky.

EXT. CELLAR DOORS - DILAPIDATED HOUSE

High grass surrounds the closed cellar doors.

INT. DARK ROOM

MUSIC plays low as Sade, in a hue of red light, grabs a loop. It's a small magnifying circle, used to place over negatives to see the image close.

She turns on the REGULAR LIGHT switching off the red.

In the brighter white light, she goes to the pair of negatives that are hanging from a wire.

Sade positions the loop against one of the negatives so the light shines through toward her.

SADE
(To herself)
Let's just see if an image came
out.

She travels down the frames within the negatives with her loop.

SADE (CONT'D)
(To herself)
Okay, okay. Looking good Mr. Darin,
looking good.

She scans over another then stops. She goes back to the one she previously scanned.

SADE (CONT'D)
(To herself)
What is that?

She turns her music off and grabs a pair of scissors from a drawer. She cuts a section of the negatives off that includes the frame she just looked at.

Sade puts the scissors back and without leaving fingerprints takes the section to a light-table.

She turns on a nearby light table and puts the section of negatives across it. The light passes up from the table and through the negatives.

She leans over putting the loop directly over the frame.

INSERT CLOSE UP IMAGE ON NEGATIVE It's the picture Darin took at the delapidated home through a window. Under the loop's magnifying glass one guitar has more sunlight from the window revealing the bottom section where a CHILD-LIKE LIGHTENING BOLT was painted.

She leaves the loop on the light table with the negatives and retrieves her purse. She hurriedly digs out the photograph of her brother and his guitar. She fixates on it.

INSERT PHOTOGRAPH OF HER BROTHER. In the band photograph he holds the guitar that she painted a CHILD-LIKE LIGHTENING BOLT on.

With photo in hand, she quickly returns her attention to the negatives. She grabs the loop and presses it over the frame of negative that gripped her attention earlier.

INSERT IMAGE ON NEGATIVE Only one guitar has sunlight from the window revealing the bottom section where a CHILD-LIKE LIGHTENING BOLT was painted. The image is a NEGATIVE, but the details are still identifiable.

Immediately she puts the photo in her purse and grabs the negative. She darts away but turns around and grabs the loop then leaves quickly with her purse as well.

INT. OFFICE AREA - SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

It's the 12-hour shift change. Chief Gunn is coming on shift along with 9 deputies, replacing Sheriff Jones and his crew of 11 deputies.

SHERIFF JONES

So we had Rodgers out sick, must be going around, Blaylock isn't going to make it tonight.

Chief Gunn takes his phone from his pocket and begins swiping pictures on it as he searches for one.

CHIEF GUNN

I'll put Blaylock's partner with me.

Sheriff Jones leans into over and gazes at the pictures Gunn swipes.

CHIEF GUNN (CONT'D)

Here it is lying down.

SHERIFF JONES

That's a big'n.

CHIEF GUNN

Look here, look at those points. Eight points, and it's as big as a ten-point or better.

SHERIFF JONES

Your boy did good, you make him drink the blood?

CHIEF GUNN

Did it on his own.

SHERIFF JONES

Good kid.

RECEPTION AREA

Bypassing the last bit of office administration leaving, Sade rushes through the front door and passes a reception desk. She excitedly holds the negatives above her head.

SADE

Sheriff!

OFFICE AREA

Sheriff Jones immediately looks her way as some deputies glance toward her to see what the rush is. Others continue their shift change duties.

SADE (CONT'D)

Sheriff Jones, I got it!

Sheriff Jones pats Chief Gunn's shoulder and goes to Sade.

In her excitement, Sade rushes past the countertop, but Sheriff Jones stops her.

She goes back to the front and puts the negatives on the clean counter with the loop beside them.

She digs the photo of her brother from her purse. She SLAPS it onto the counter with the loop. She puts a finger on the guitar with CHILD-LIKE LIGHTENING BOLT.

SADE (CONT'D)

Look at it.

He starts to pick it up, but she stops him.

SADE (CONT'D)

No, with the loop. Look at the guitar. Look closely at the lightning bolt.

He does so and shrugs.

SHERIFF JONES

See what Sade? Your brother? Yes, I see him. I had seen him for years on that board.

He points to the bulletin board with pictures of those missing, where the same band picture of her brother is posted.

SADE

The guitar Sheriff. Look here.

She slides the negatives in front of him.

SADE (CONT'D)

Hold them toward the light and look
at the third from the bottom frame.

Her confident voice has drawn closer attention by those in the room. A few of the deputies have come closer and the room's background CAHTTER has quieted.

Chief Gunn props up at the counter as well.

Sheriff Jones fumbles with the negatives and loop. He looks to the surrounding deputies.

SHERIFF JONES

Deputy Morgan, hold this out.

Morgan takes the negatives from him and holds them up.

Sheriff Jones positions so the ceiling's light passes through the negatives toward him. He holds the loop up to the third frame. He is perplexed at what he sees.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)

Where's this at?

SADE

The crossroads. The old house next
to it.

SHERIFF JONES

You take these Sade?

SADE

No, the writer did.

Sheriff Jones hands the loop to Chief Deputy Gunn, and he takes his turn looking at the negatives.

Jones looks to Sade.

SHERIFF JONES

Let me get ahold of him to verify
the location.

SADE

That's his guitar Sheriff!

Sheriff Jones looks to Chief Gunn.

CHIEF GUNN

That's it Sheriff.

SADE

I know it is! I drew and painted
that lightning bolt.

CHIEF GUNN

(To the Sheriff)

We have probable cause.

SHERIFF JONES

Sade it is his guitar but I need a
witness to get a warrant.

SADE

I can't get Darin on his phone. I
was supposed to help him get
pictures at the crossroads.

SHERIFF JONES

You couldn't get him?

SADE

No sir.

Deputy Johnson, rolling up a paper towel in his hand, enters
through the back door and sees everyone huddled at the
counter with Sade.

DEPUTY JOHNSON

(Calmly)

I got them in their kennels. The
bitches are fed, and they've
pooped.

Deputy Morgan glances to Johnson.

DEPUTY MORGAN

Be respectful.

Deputy Johnson ignores him and tosses the paper towel in his
desk's waste basket. After a few seconds, he notices their
serious faces.

DEPUTY JOHNSON

What's going on?

SHERIFF JONES

I'll catch everyone up to speed in
a second Johnson.

Sheriff Jones looks to Sade.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)

You were saying?

SADE

Yes sir, I can't get him on the phone. I've tried twice. And he was supposed to call my mother and hasn't yet.

SHERIFF JONES

Maybe his phone is out.

DEPUTY JOHNSON

Sir, someone tried to steal his camera bag earlier.

What Johnson says registers with Jones.

SHERIFF JONES

All right guys, here's what's going to happen. I'll get a picture off the internet of the writer for you in a sec. Once we all have a photo we go out to his last known location.

Jones glances at Sade then the rest of the guys.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)

Chief Gunn will get a warrant and have a deputy drive it to the crossroads. Once we have it, we'll work the house.

(beat)

I and Johnson will arrive with Seamore and Pepper. The rest of first shift will secure the area.

(beat)

Second Shift under Gunn. You will go about your shift. The town needs its force. This thing probably has tentacles, and we'll need you to see where they lead.

(beat)

All radios on, and cell phones on silent. Follow the chain of command.

Sheriff Jones goes to his desk. At a computer, he types in Darin's name.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)

Sade, you'll need to identify the guitar when we bring it out. You will stay with Deputy Andrews and ride with him.

Multiple images pop up and Jones clicks on one of Darin.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)
 You got that Andrews? The girl is
 with you.

Andrews is putting his bullet proof vest back on.

DEPUTY ANDREWS
 Ten- Four boss.

CHIEF GUNN
 (To Andrews)
 Put a vest on her; there's extra.
 We got a couple guys out.

DEPUTY ANDREWS
 That's right.

CHIEF GUNN
 Morgan, you ride up front with
 Andrews, put the girl in back.
 She'll be safer.

Deputy Morgan Starts to hand the negatives to Sade but pulls
 back keeping them in hand.

DEPUTY MORGAN
 (To Sade)
 I'll put these in the Chief's desk
 until we get back.
 (To Chief Gunn)
 Copy Chief, I'm with Andrews.

Deputy Morgan places the negatives in Chief Gunn's desk as
 Darin's picture prints.

INT. CELLAR - DILAPIDATED HOME - NIGHT

Darin's awful face, a contrast to the one that printed out at
 the Sheriff's office, looks drained and blood is matted in
 his hair and dried on his face.

His eyes are closed as we hear a distant cry of his name.

SADE (O.S.)
 Darin!

EXT: YELLOW TAPE - CROSSROADS - NIGHT

Sade, yells for Darin again as she stands on the other side
 of the yellow tape with Deputy Andrews at her side.

SADE
 (Calling out)
 Darin!

DEPUTY ANDREWS
 Give your voice a break cuz. Sit in
 the passenger's seat and lock the
 doors. Here's the keys.

Sade takes the keys.

DEPUTY ANDREWS (CONT'D)
 It's not protocol, but you have to
 be here and you have to be safe.

Sade walks away with the keys towards Andrew's patrol car.

Deputy Andrews, passing a mobile flood light, goes under the
 tape into the investigation's parameter.

DARIN'S TRUCK

Deputy Andrews walks to Darin's abandoned truck that's in an
 orb of a flood light. Two other deputies are nearing it as
 well, DEPUTY TIPPETT, (40's), and DEPUTY SWAIN (29).

TREE

Sheriff Jones and Deputy Johnson look over the disturbed
 ground.

DEPUTY JOHNSON
 Look how far these two pressed down
 spots are apart. And they're the
 right size for hands.
 (beat)
 Where he must have been pushing up.

SHERIFF JONES
 It's subtle.

DEPUTY JOHNSON
 To you, but they're fresh and
 strong to me. The older it gets,
 the unpressed leaves will have
 mixed in with the broken ones.

Pointing to the ground, deputy Johnson moves a few feet from
 the handprints they were looking at toward the direction of
 the dilapidated house.

DEPUTY JOHNSON (CONT'D)
 This is a drag mark. They never
 made it to their feet.

SHERIFF JONES

What do you mean?

DEPUTY JOHNSON

The handprints, plus disturbance where the ground was heavily pressed, means they had a lot of dead weight they were trying to push up. But the drag marks say this person never was able to fully get up.

SHERIFF JONES

Let's see where they go.

The two walk a little space away.

MAKE-SHIFT GRAVEYARD

They come to the open graves in the FULL MOON light.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)

We have a missing person that looks to be dragged that way.

(beat)

Toward that house.

DEPUTY JOHNSON

Between freshly dug up graves.

SHERIFF JONES

Stay focused on the task at hand.

DEPUTY JOHNSON

Roger-that boss.

SHERIFF JONES

Get the canines.

Sheriff Jones gestures toward the deputies at Darin's truck.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)

Johnson, help them out at the truck too, see if there is anything in there that has Darin's scent.

DARIN'S TRUCK

Deputy Andrews opens the driver's door as Deputy Tippett opens the passenger's door.

DEPUTY TIPPETT

Put a light in here on my side.

His partner, Deputy Swain, holds a flashlight over the opened passenger's door.

DEPUTY TIPPETT (CONT'D)
There's something on the
passenger's seat!

Swain aims his light directly on the passenger's seat, illuminating DARIN'S PHONE he left behind.

DEPUTY SWAIN
We got a phone!

DEPUTY JOHNSON (O.S.)
You got a shirt in there too!

Deputy Andrews shines his light on the camera bag in the back.

DEPUTY ANDREWS
Got a camera bag!

INT: ELEVATOR AND STAIRWELL - HOTEL - NIGHT

Chief Deputy Gunn and six other deputies wearing uniform backpacks enter the lobby.

The team includes DEPUTY TACKET (22). All show purpose with hands firmly on their UNSNAPPED holstered standard-issued pistols.

CHIEF GUNN
Deputy Tackett keep watch on who
enters and leaves, but stay near
the stairs and elevator.

LOBBY

Doctor Kerry turns toward the Chief and his deputies. She tugs on Steven's arm and begins to walk over.

DOCTOR KERRY
Stay with me baby.

ELEVATOR AND STAIRWELL

The Chief stops at the elevator door. The others gather around him, with DEPUTY KITCHENS (31) and DEPUTY BURNS (27), near.

CHIEF GUNN

Once we get in the room, we will need someone to post at the door on the inside. The rest of us will do our thing. And remember to communicate, communicate, communicate.

(beat)

Deputy Kitchens!

DEPUTY KITCHENS

Yes sir?

CHIEF GUNN

You and I will clear the stairs. When the rest of you hear 'clear' take the elevator up. Deputy Burns, post between the second floor stairwell and elevator.

Doctor Kerry, with son in hand, steps faster across the lobby floor. Deputies see her approach.

DOCTOR KERRY

My son told me cleaning service found two bodies up there?

(beat)

Is it that writer? My daughter was supposed to meet him but he hasn't answered his phone.

CHIEF GUNN

Your daughter is safe, she is with the Sheriff and there are many deputies with them so don't worry.

(beat)

If I may speak to you in private. I don't have much time.

Chief Gunn steps about 10 feet away and blocks the deputies from seeing her face.

DOCTOR KERRY

There's something you're not telling me.

CHIEF GUNN

Yes ma'am, but Sade is fine. It's that the writer got a photo of the interior of the dilapidated house out by the crossroads. Inside there appeared to be a guitar like your son's.

Doctor Kerry covers her mouth in shock.

CHIEF GUNN (CONT'D)
Sade has gone with them to identify it. I Cannot tell you more, I don't have time. Wish I did. Get your son out of here and you two stay safe.

Chief Gunn puts a hand on her shoulder tenderly.

CHIEF GUNN (CONT'D)
We've been with you this far; we will keep you posted as soon as we find anything out.

DOCTOR KERRY
Thank you, Chief.

He turns back to his deputies.

CHIEF GUNN
Come on Kitchens.

EXT. TREE - CROSSROADS - NIGHT

Sheriff Jones with Deputy Johnson take the canines towards the dilapidated house with DEPUTY EVANS (38) DEPUTY FARRAR (36), both having their standard pistols drawn.

EXT: FIELD

They pass the make-shift graves and enter the field that unfolds under the FULL MOON'S light before you get to the rundown house.

DEPUTY FARRAR
Boss I have to say none of us has a warrant in hand.

DEPUTY JOHNSON
Chief got the warrant, but they had to go to the hotel.

DEPUTY EVANS
What now?

SHERIFF JONES
Two more bodies. That's why I instructed you to unholster those standards.

(beat)
Now pay attention.

(MORE)

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)
 When we get up here to the side of
 the house, they're going to pull
 the patrol cars up with lights off,
 and I'm going to need you two to
 get your big guns and meet us at
 the cellar.

DEPUTY FARRAR
 This is getting crazy.

DEPUTY EVANS
 Full moon too.

DEUPTY JOHNSON
 (Looking up)
 Oh man, that's right.

The dogs begin to SNIFF louder as they move closer to the
 dilapidated house.

SHERIFF JONES
 (Whispers firmly)
 When you go get the guns take
 Pepper to Morgan, tell him they
 have scent.

INT: DARIN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Deputy Kitchens stands post at Darin's hotel room door.

CHIEF GUNN
 Give us some room Kitchens.

Kitchens steps out and shuts the door.

Chief Gunn turns to those in the room, DEPUTY MCCAUSTLIN (33),
 DEPUTY DRIESE (45), DEPUTY KLUTZ (50) and DEPUTY ROE (35).

CHIEF GUNN (CONT'D)
 McCastlin you and Roe get me some
 prints. Every inch of this room and
 the bodies.

DEPUTY MCCAUSTLIN
 I'll start in the bathroom.

Deputy Roe and Deputy McCastlin take out each other's
 fingerprint kits from their backpacks, still worn, and
 exchange them.

DEPUTY ROE
 I'll join you. I'll get the tub if
 you get the sink and mirror.

DEPUTY MCCAHLIN

Deal.

The two disappear into the bathroom.

CHIEF GUNN

Klutz get your camera out and do the same. Every inch, and make sure you get them fingerprinting. Gloves on everyone NOW before we start.

Deputy Klutz turns his back to Deputy Driesee who takes the camera out of the backpack and hands it to him.

CHIEF GUNN (CONT'D)

Driesee, you're with me. Let's get a look at these bodies so the Coroner can get to work.

DEPUTY KLUTZ

Where is she by the way?

CHIEF GUNN

She's wrapping up Kalisha's and getting a quick bite. I told her we had to do our thing first, but we still need to get it done as soon as we can.

(beat)

Anyway, she's got a long night ahead. I got a bad feeling this thing is far from over. Now, let's ID these guys if we can.

Deputy Driesee and Chief Gunn stoop down next to the dead bodies and search their pockets.

CHIEF GUNN (CONT'D)

I'll check their pulse in a bit to make it official.

DEPUTY DRIESEE

Go ahead, I'll check for contents.

(beat)

I doubt this guy has anything in his robe.

Chief Gunn removes a glove and checks both bodies for a pulse.

CHIEF GUNN

Try the bed, under those clothes.

(beat)

(MORE)

CHIEF GUNN (CONT'D)
 It's semiofficial until the coroner
 gets here, but no pulse on either.

Deputy Klutz, with camera slung, dips his head into the doorway of the bathroom.

DARIN'S BATHROOM

Deputies Roe and McCastlin dust for prints.

DEPUTY KLUTZ
 Your gloves guys.

DEPUTY ROE
 (fingerprinting tub)
 We heard!

DEPUTY KLUTZ
 My bad.

Deputy Klutz takes an overall picture of them working with their gloves on.

EXT: CELLAR DOOR - DILAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT

Sheriff Jones and Deputy Johnson approach the cellar door. They squat on each side with Evans and Farrar guarding their backs with weapons drawn; Farrar with an AR-15 and Evans with a MOSBERG 500 shotgun.

Studying the cellar door Sheriff Jones finds a crack in the boards and peeks through.

SHERIFF JONES POV: He sees only a dim light and moving silhouettes.

BACK TO SCENE:

INT: DOCTOR KERRY's car - MOVING - NIGHT

Driving along, Doctor Kerry speaks aloud so that her smart automobile will make a call for her.

DOCTOR KERRY
 Call Sade!

Steven looks to his mother with worry.

INT: DEPUTY PATROL CAR - DILAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT

Sade, in the county patrol car's back seat, gets a cell phone call. She glances at it after the first buzz and urgently answers.

SADE

Mom!

DOCTOR KERRY (O.S.)

What's happening.

SADE

We found Miss Lightening momma.

INT: DOCTOR KERRY'S CAR - MOVING

Doctor Kerry drives with tears running down her cheek as she covers her mouth again in shock.

STEVEN

(Worried)

What is it momma?

INT: DEPUTY PATROL CAR

Sade, hurriedly, speaks into her cell phone.

SADE

Momma, they're about to raid the house.

(beat)

I'll call you back when we have it.

She ends the call and leans forward intently staring through the windshield.

EXT: FRONT PORCH

Getting into position Deputy Andrews with a REMINGTON 870 shotgun, and Deputy Morgan with the leashed k9 Pepper, flank left of the door.

Weapons drawn, Deputies Tippet and Swain flank the right with MOSBERG 500 tactical shotguns.

EXT: CELLAR

Sheriff Jones, with a SMITH AND WESSON POCKETKNIFE, scrapes away the interior edges of the crack to make it bigger. He takes another look.

INT: CELLAR

Darin, bloody and out of his wits, is tied to a post near the staircase leading up into the house. Across from Darin is the young man who tried to snatch Darin's camera still in his BLACK HOODIE. He is also tied to a post and just as weary as Darin.

Decaying figures gather around them. One is brandishing a machete and begins screwing the tip into the chest of Darin. When he finishes, another SUCKLES from the hole.

The machete-wielding human-like creature rips Darin's sleeve, and digs the machete point into his forearm. Another creature begins to SUCKLE.

EXT. CELLAR

Sherriff Jones places a prybar between the IRON LOCKED cellar doors.

SHERIFF JONES

(Hushed)

There's at least five or six creatures. That's the only way I can describe them. Kill them all.

DEPUTY JOHNSON

(Puzzled)

All?

SHERIFF JONES

Darin is tied up and another guy. Kill all the others.

Quickly Deputy Johnson radios to the other team.

DEPUTY JOHNSON

(Into radio)

Two friendlies, Two friendlies, multiple hostile creatures in the basement. Going in hot.

EXT: FRONT PORCH

Morgan draws his 1911 pistol as he loosens Pepper's leash.

DEPUTY ANDREWS

(Into radio)

Ten-four but what are hostile creatures?

DEPUTY JOHNSON (V.O.)

I have no idea either, but we're about to find out.

Deputy Andrews speaks to his team.

DEPUTY ANDREWS

Multiple hostiles and two friendlies, we're going in hot.

(MORE)

DEPUTY ANDREWS (CONT'D)

(beat)

Morgan, once the door's gone send Pepper. Then follow us clearing until we get to the basement. I'll take the left, Tippet the right and Swain center.

DEPUTY MORGAN

Semper Fi.

EXT: CELLAR

Sheriff Jones pries at the cellar door to free it apart.

SHERIFF JONES

(Gritting teeth)

Now, Now, Now.

Deputy Johnson springs in to help with all his might. The door breaks apart IRON CLANGS and they swing the double doors open. Sheriff Jones steps back and releases the GROWLING K9, Seamore.

It leaps into the cellar door first.

Deputy Johnson draws his pistol and Deputy Evans, with shotgun, follow Seamore.

Sheriff Jones enters quickly with his standard pistol drawn.

Deputy Farrar posts at the edge of the cellar and aims his rifle down into the door's opening supplying cover from the high ground. His squinting eye travels along the barrel.

RIFLE SHOT.

RIFLE BULLET'S POV: Coming out of Deputy Farrar's rifle barrel, into the cellar's dim light, the rifle bullet passes Sheriff Jones as A BURST OF FIRE comes from his pistol.

The rifle bullet travels alongside that pistol-bullet going over the shoulder of Deputy Evans with his tactical shotgun pointed at an attacking creature. That SHOTGUN BLASTS.

Three rounds are in flight, a rifle-bullet, pistol-bullet, and between them a shotgun blast of pellets.

Underneath the three bullets is Seamore, the K9, opening its SNARLING jaws for the leg of the creature suckling on Darin's forearm; the same creature Farrar's bullet is aimed for.

Evans' shotgun blast peels back the face of an attacking creature to bone.

Sheriff Jones' pistol bullet goes through the eye of one and explodes out the back of its head.

Farrar's rifle bullet goes through the top of the creature's skull that suckles on Darin's forearm. Its skull splits, parted by the rifle bullet. The bullet ends up in the post Darin is tied to.

BACK TO SCENE:

Deputy Johnson slides onto his knees and glides toward the thief in BLACK HOODIE tied to a post.

A fourth decayed creature turns in time to see Johnson's gun pointed at him. It moves quicker than humanly possible, almost dodging Deputy Johnson's bullet, but it knocks the MACHETE out of the creature's hand.

Johnson turns right aiming at the creature again, but it immediately reverses back, and dives into Johnson, taking a chunk of his throat with its teeth.

Johnson falls quickly bleeding out as the creature leaps by Sheriff Jones and out the cellar door tackling Deputy Farrar who could not get another shot aimed correctly in time.

EXT: CELLAR

Deputy Farrar falls backward into the tall grass, and the creature viciously bites a chunk of his throat as well. Farrar begins grasping frantically at his throat to stop the bleeding.

INT: CELLAR

Seamore, the male K9, with all his speed runs for the opening of the cellar passing the body of Johnson and passing Jones, who has turned toward the cellar door.

EXT: CELLAR

The creature, its mouth covered in Deputy Farrar's blood, stands quickly. There's a GROWL off screen. The decayed thing whips to see where the growl came from.

CREATURE POV: Seamore is midway toward him in the air with his jaws open.

BACK TO SCENE:

The creature punches Seamore's side knocking the K9 sideways.

Sheriff Jones, coming out of the cellar, unloads his weapon into the creature's head until it falls to the ground. He quickly looks down into the Cellar.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)
Is there anymore?

DEPUTY EVANS (V.O)
Just the guy tied to the post.
(Fighting back grief)
Oh man, Johnson. Deputy Johnson is dead.
(Angry)
What the hell were they?

SHERIFF JONES
Get Darin off that rack!

Sheriff Jones checks Deputy Farrar for a pulse. There is none.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)
He's gone!

INT: CELLAR

Sheriff Jones climbs down into the cellar. He checks the pulse of Deputy Johnson as Evans unties Darin.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)
Johnson is dead.
(Sighs)
Let's get Darin out.

Sheriff Jones and Deputy Evans take Darin off the post.

Darin makes weak steps as the two support him past the bodies of creatures, the fallen MACHETE, and over Deputy Johnson's body.

EXT: CELLAR

They get Darin's upper body out of the cellar and onto the ground. Darin is exhausted and DEEPLY BREATHEs.

Deputy Evans and the Sheriff come out of the cellar and drag Darin out the rest of the way.

INT: PATROL CAR

Sade stares out of the windshield, being overly watchful.

SADE'S POV: Through the windshield she sees the front of the house and the busted open door. There is no movement.

BACK TO SCENE:

Sade exits the vehicle.

EXT: FRONT PORCH

Sade walks toward the front porch.

She eases up the steps, her senses heightened.

She gets closer and closer to the wide-open door where suddenly she hesitates in shock.

Determined, Sade steps forward passing slowly into the dilapidated house.

EXT: CELLAR

Darin is on his feet, supported by Deputy Evens. Who looks back at the Sheriff going to get Seamore the k9.

DEPUTY EVANS

What about that other guy?

SHERIFF JONES

Right now, we need to get him and Seamore to the car. You'll take them and Sade outside the driveway a few hundred feet and make that radio call.

(beat)

Keep ambulances and everyone back until it is clear.

DEPUTY EVANS

Let me call the Chief.

Jones bends down to get Seamore who is breathing erratically.

SHERIFF JONES

(Looks to Evans)

He already has bodies to worry about.

INT: CELLAR

Feet of the Decayed Creature step down CREAKING stairs from the house into the cellar. As it reaches the bottom it is revealed to be MISSING AN ARM and is the same one that first attacked Darin at the tree.

It turns to the BLACK HOODED thief still tied at the post.

DECAYED CREATURE

You want to make amends, be my pet again?

The BLACK HOODED thief nods slowly.

The Decayed Creature unties the thief who wobbles. The creature puts his only hand on the thief's head.

DECAYED CREATURE (CONT'D)

I will give you strength.

The thief straightens his posture as he walks with a quickness to the MACHETE on the floor. He picks it up and goes toward the stairs that lead up and into the dilapidated house.

The Creature watches the thief disappear up CREAKING stairs.

INT: PATROL CAR

Sheriff Jones puts Seamore in the back seat, he's still breathing irregularly for a k9.

SHERIFF JONES

Do you see Sade?

EXT: PATROL CAR

Deputy Evans, looking around while propping Darin against the passenger's door.

DEPUTY EVANS

I don't see her.

Sheriff Jones shuts the back door and helps Deputy Evans put Darin in the front seat.

Evans rounds the car to the driver's side.

SHERIFF JONES

Keys in the visor?

DEPUTY EVANS

What about Sade?

SHERIFF JONES

I'll have to bring her with me. Get them out of here.

Deputy Evans opens the driver's side door.

INT. PATROL CAR

Upon grabbing the keys from the visor Deputy Evans shouts.

DEPUTY EVANS
Keys are here.

He shuts the door and turns to Darin bloody and slumped.

DEPUTY EVANS (CONT'D)
Hang in there.

Darin has a blank stare.

DARIN
(Weak whisper)
Get. Her. Out.

DEPUTY EVANS
Sheriff has it now.

Evans CRANKS the vehicle.

INT: DELIPADATED HOME

Sheriff Jones enters after reloading his standard issue pistol. Keeping it pointed he stops in his tracks.

Laid out across the floor are his lifeless comrades. Deputies Andrews, Morgan, Tippet, and Swain appear to be dead. Their bodies in pools of blood.

Amongst them are 3 dead creatures and A SEVERED CREATURE'S ARM.

Jones begins cautiously checking their pulses. When he gets to Andrews he feels a pulse. He takes his shirt off and wraps it around his bleeding neck.

Pepper GROWLS from OFF SCREEN and Sherrif Jones quickly points his weapon in that direction, to the far right.

Sheriff Jones tactically approaches the open entrance at the far right. Pepper's OFF SCREEN GROWLS become BARKS.

INT. SUNROOM

When he gets there, he sees a room lit by the full moon coming through the windows on his right. The TATTERED puddled curtains are FULLY OPEN and tied up with Passementerie that has lost its luster.

Opposite of the widows, his left, is a WALL OF GUITARS. The MISS LIGHTENING guitar is in the middle, near the bottom.

Sade stands in the center of the sunroom facing Pepper at the other end. Pepper is BARKING at the CREAKING coming from darkness.

The CREAKING STOPS.

Pepper darts into the darkness and cannot be seen. Suddenly there is no more barking.

Sade fearfully takes a step back.

SHERIFF JONES

Sade, come back to me. Keep on. We got to get you out of here.

Sade takes another step back toward Jones.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)

Come on baby.

As if thrown, Pepper flies past Sade and hits the sunroom floor sliding toward Sheriff Jones.

Suddenly out from the darkness, at the end of the hall, steps the BLACK HOODED thief into the moonlight from the windows.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)

(Commanding)

Come here Sade!

Behind the BLACK HOODED thief comes the Creature and he halts at the edge of the moonlight.

The BLACK HOODED thief raises the machete as he steps toward Sade.

SHERIFF JONES (CONT'D)

Move Sade, move.

Sade's fear is overcome by worry, she looks back to the Sheriff and sees his gun raised.

Sade runs to the wall of guitars and swipes MISS LIGHTENING off. She slings it across the floor where it SLIDES in front of the BLACK HOODED thief.

The Thief stops and directs his attention to the guitar, with its CHILD-LIKE LIGHTENING BOLT. His fingers uncurl the MACHETE, and it falls.

He leans down to get Miss Lightning.

SADE
 (To Sheriff Jones)
 He's my brother!

Sheriff Jones FIRES multiple shots.

SADE (CONT'D)
 NOOOOO!

The one arm Creature who is now in his line of direct fire violently receives the bullets from his gun. The back of the Creature's head explodes outward.

INT: DARIN'S HOTEL ROOM

Chief Gunn, holster still UNSNAPPED, faces Deputy Driesse as he hands him the hotel room's telephone receiver.

Driesse puts it into a large evidence bag.

CHIEF GUNN
 We will get prints off this later.
 (Glances at the bodies)
 Neither of them has gloves on. If
 it was one of them, we will be able
 to tell.

DEPUTY DRIESEEE
 (Cracks a grin)
 Give my plyers back. You probably
 got all three of the ones I've
 lost.

The dead body of the Caretaker opens his eyes then springs to life behind Chief Gunn who is facing towards Driessee.

CHIEF GUNN
 I don't have sh-

The Caretaker pulls Chief Gunn's standard issued pistol quicker than the old west's fastest gun slinger. He shoots Gunn in the back twice and blows a hole in Deputy Driessee's head.

The plyers fall from Chief Deputy Gunn's hand.

The two dusting for fingerprints in the bathroom come rushing out with weapons drawn. Deputy Klutz gets a round off. The bullet CHIPS BLOOD AND GARMET from the old Caretaker's shoulder.

The Caretaker, unphased, puts a round in Deputy Klutz's forehead and another round in McCastlin's head who trails behind fumbling for his pistol.

The Caretaker snatches the DEMO REEL'S TIN CANISTER off the TV.

Deputy Kitchens charges in; his weapon drawn. He is shocked to see the Caretaker leaping out of the window, SHATTERING the window's glass.

Deputy Kitchen's eyes widen more as he looks around the room. He reaches for the radio clipped to his shoulder.

INT: DILAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT

Sheriff Jones kneels at Andrew's side, using his shirt to hold pressure to an open wound on Andrew's neck.

Sade helps her older brother walk past the bodies. Her need to embrace him overcomes her and she pulls JEROME'S (26), BLACK HOODIE down and hugs him.

She lovingly looks into his dazed glassy eyes and kisses his cheek.

SADE

I knew it was you, Jerome.

EXT: FRONT OF DILAPIDATED HOUSE

Sade helps Jerome walk down the steps below the FULL MOON. He continues to struggle with his balance. A set of headlights pulls up and out from the car comes Dr. Kerry.

SADE (CONT'D)

Where's Steven?

DOCTOR KERRY

I left him with the deputy!

Dr. Kerry rushes to them with open arms. She embraces them in a swirl of blue lights from first responders arriving.
