

Powder Keg Pines

By

Jack A. Strickland

Thriller: A disc jockey recalls the night a group of crazed animal rights activists botched a ransom deal after realizing their leader may have be in cahoots with the poacher they were holding captive.

1290947

nghstrick@yahoo.com
434-760-0601

OVER BLACK:

VOICE

*Before I tell y'all the most messed
up and freaky love story ever told.
I got just one thing to say;
WEEEEEEEEEEEOOOOOOHEEEEEEEEEEEEE!*

FADE IN:

INT. REBEL ROUSER RADIO STATION - DAY

ZOOM OUT past the uvula (small fleshy punching bag in one's throat) and out of the mouth of REBEL ROUSER, 30s, disc jockey, a tall blond gentleman with a cheese cutting jawline, leather jacket, blue jeans, too big for his office and hollering hard.

Shelves of vinyl records and old movie posters take up the walls.

REBEL ROUSER

(To microphone)

Brothers and sisters, a long time ago in a fantastic film far, far away, a wise man said that a certain day in a certain city was h-o-t, and I gotta tell ya, same here, same today. I mean I know we're almost smack dab on the mason Dixon line and warm weather ain't no vampire twiddling his thumbs on our porch swing, but can a white boy get a break? I mean it's volcanic out there, it's Betty Page on a beach in Europe, it's the tip of the Terminator's chain gun -- brothers and sisters, it ain't Christmas season. My name is Rebel Rouser. Why, do you ask? Because I'm, young, true blue and slapin' and dashin' for all the right reasons, but we don't play that rap or heavy metal crap. Only the best, the good stuff, that prime wax; soul, blues, country, rockabilly, popcorn, surf, turf and of course..rock-and-roll. We got so many forty fives you ain't ever felt so alive. We're that whistling booger, that battery pressed on your tongue, we're that five

(MORE)

REBEL ROUSER (cont'd)
 hundred and fifty pound Chimpanzee
 hanging from your shirt collar, but
 we just want you to love us baby so
 come on and give daddy a kiss.

Rebel Rouser punches a big red button and it makes a big wet smackaroo sound.

REBEL ROUSER (CONTD)
 (To mic)
 It's Monday, so you know what that
 means.

Rebel Rouser punches another button and it makes an eerie b movie mad scientist laboratory sound.

REBEL ROUSER (CONTD)
 (To mic)
 That means it's Mad Man Monday. We
 here at Rebel Rouser studios invite
 the weirdest of the weird, every
 other week to tell tales that'll
 turn that hide of yours into a
 bonafide Braille atlas, and since
 we're talking location, that puts
 us right in our home state of
 Virginia. More specifically;
 Snapdragon county, all three
 thousand of us lovers to the -nth
 degree. So put that job or nagging
 wife on hold for a minute and tune
 in, turn up the knob and don't be a
 snob, because I'm humble and
 prostrate and just begging to
 please.

Rebel Rouser swivels his chair and microphone to face a WITCH DOCTOR, he is, as you can imagine, stereotypically scary as a son of a bitch: thin red lips, cataract eye, scar running down the base of his cheek, long black goatee, fez cap.

A SQUARE SHAPED THING sits next to the witch doctor, covered with a blanket.

REBEL ROUSER (CONTD)
 I have a young man here today. A
 certified palm reading, blood
 drinking witch doctor, so pardon me
 while I clutch my Rosary. He goes
 by the name of, uh..what was your
 name again?

WITCH DOCTOR

Name? I have no name.

REBEL ROUSER

Enigmatic sorcerer with no name..
Color me surprised. Well, what can
we call you then? Hello? I gotta
call you something, bud, and I got
an hour before they start doing
this indie rock crap across the
hall so pick a johnny.

WITCH DOCTOR

There are some who call me, Jeff?

REBEL ROUSER

Alright Jeff, the witch doctor.
What'cha got?

JEFF

I have acquired a little woodland
beast. One that I have cast a spell
on to speak from the netherworld, a
dead man's medium..if you will.

Jeff lifts the blanket to reveal A CAGE, inside the cage is
a BEAVER. Jeff whispers something to the Beaver and does a
magic wand motion with his hand. The Beaver sighs, clears
it's throat.

BEAVER

(Human voice)

Yeah, uh, Eugene Scours here. I'd
like to tell ya'll what really
happened at the Snapdragon Wildlife
refuge last Summer.

Rebel Rouser leaps up onto his chair, aiming his rosary in
the direction of the beast.

REBEL ROUSER

Hey, hey, hey, tranquilo cabron.
You can scoot that hot sauce back
between the napkins and salt and
pepper shakers. Shoot, most of us
already swim laps in our
imagination to begin with, and the
local rag's got plenty of pictures
of what happened that night to get
it going...I mean I'm peaked,
Jeffy, but same as I wanna kiss one
of my cousins, that doesn't
necessarily mean it needs to
happen.....Alright fine.

JEFF
Proceed, Eugene.

BEAVER
(Eugene's voice)
I tend to revert back to the
happiest day we ever shared
together. Some old dive off
twenty-nine north.

EXT. ROADSIDE MOTEL - DAY - LONG AGO - CREDITS

DIXIE BRUISER, 20s, half Cherokee, thick curly black hair,
pale blue eyes, drop dead gorgeous, splashes champagne on
EUGENE SCOURS, 20s, handsome, goatee, rail thin, stringy
blond hair down to the shoulders.

Eugene splashes champagne back at her, onto the asphalt and
into the air as they do the twist from their FOREST GREEN
JALOPY all the way to their motel room.

Enraptured, healthy, young, dancing through dead leaves in
the late afternoon sun.

EUGENE
(VO)
This is the part of the story that
some folks call boring, but if
you're a sap like me you might find
it kinda cute. Either way, you
gotta have humble beginnings before
shit goes down, so just bear with
me.

EXT. RANCH - DAY - LONG AGO - CREDITS

A BIG BLACK SUV rips up gravel, lulls to a stop in front of
a modest one story home. Acres upon acres roll on behind it.

EUGENE
(VO)
Sometimes I curse the day I met
little miss Dixie Bruiser, until I
hit snooze again.

EUGENE'S FATHER, a big guy in a black suit, gets out of the
big black vehicle with YOUNG EUGENE, 8.

YOUNG DIXIE, 8, walks out of the ranch and waves to Eugene
and his father.

HANOVI BRUISER, 30s, Dixie's father, full blooded Cherokee, American flag bandanna wrapped around his leathery forehead, strides out onto the lawn with a SAWED OFF and pushes young Dixie behind him.

EUGENE (CONTD)

(VO)

From an early age I can remember going over to the Bruiser family ranch and my dad trying to get them out of their house. He was the head of the bureau of land management. He wanted their land and he wanted it bad.

Eugene's father holds up A SHEET OF PAPER WITH A BIG RED STAMP. As Hanovi and Eugene's father argue, Dixie peaks out from behind Hanovi's leg and locks eyes with Eugene.

EUGENE (CONTD)

(VO)

Growing up we did typical teenage stuff. We'd go to the drug store and buy our weight's worth in candy and cigarettes, go swimming in the pond. Well, not quite a pond.

EXT. FLOODED LAND - DAY - LONG AGO - CREDITS

TEENAGE DIXIE AND TEENAGE EUGENE use an old gasoline hose to swing out of a tree and into a body of water. Broken parking lot signs and other municipal debris float through it.

EUGENE

(vo)

One of our favorite spots to swim was this little lake, if you could call it that. Really it was the result of flooding, which was the result of illegal water channeling, which was the result of the Bureau of Land Management trying to force the Bruiser family out of their home.

Eugene swings out of the tree and plummets into the murky brown water..five seconds, ten..Dixie worries...Eugene shoots up out of the water, inches from her face, she squeals. They kiss.

EUGENE (CONTD)

It was some straight up Capulet,
Montague stuff. With a southern
twist. They just couldn't pull us
apart. The heart wants...yaddi
yadda.

EXT. ROADSIDE MOTEL - DAY - LONG AGO - CREDITS

Dixie and Eugene (first scene cont'd) perform a flawless
rendition of the Jitterbug dance until Dixie hops up on the
bed and jumps up and down, chugging a bottle of champagne.

Eugene chugs a bottle, does the Charleston and spontaneously
vomits all over the television stand.

Dixie jumps off the bed and rubs Eugene's back as he vomits
into an ice bucket.

EUGENE

(VO)

...Point is, I got tons and tons
and tons of memories of she and I,
but I always go back to that day at
the little motel...Because the rest
is, well, unfortunate. Specifically
the dynamic of things at home.

INT. RANCH, KITCHEN - NIGHT - LONG AGO - CREDITS

PENNY BRUISER, 30s, Dixie's mother, curly brown hair, smoke
wrinkled face, crumbling beauty, screams back and forth with
Hanovi in front of the sink. Hanovi punches a fist print
into the fridge.

EUGENE

(VO)

The constant run in with the bureau
took a toll on Dixie's family.
Specifically her mother and
father's marriage. I mean, they
didn't get along to begin with, but
my dad just fueled the fire. Penny,
Dixie's mom, the lady ya'll are
watching scream like a banshee,
right in Hanovi's face there...she
kept telling Hanovi to sell the
land.

Teenage Eugene watches them argue from the window. His eyes
widen like he just won the lottery. He chokes on his spit.

EUGENE (CONTD)

(VO)

He said no, she said yes, he said no, et cetera. Dixie was at boarding school for getting into trouble with me, go figure.. and..yeah..they needed money to pay for it. Sometimes the home ain't where the heart is, folks.

EXT. RANCH - NIGHT - LONG AGO - CREDITS

Teenage Eugene sprints across the front lawn, crying.

Hanovi watches Eugene run from the front door, looks at something in his hand, although we don't see it. He slams the door shut.

EUGENE

(VO)

I ran damn near to North Carolina that night. Seems I been running my whole life. If I had just come clean about what I witnessed that night, I would've woke up in that motel room years later and Dixie would've been laying by my side. I'd have woke her up with shitty motel room coffee and we'd have made sweet love, trading our morning breath.

EXT. ROADSIDE MOTEL - DAY - LONG AGO - CREDITS

Eugene panics, looks under the bed, in the shower, coat closet, dresser drawers, runs out into the parking lot. No forest green jalopy, no Dixie.

Eugene runs back in and punches a stand up mirror in the corner, blood squirts out of his knuckles,

He somersaults over the bed and weeps, naked, covering himself with the sheet.

EUGENE

(VO)

That is precisely the reason why I always go back to the day in the motel room. Because it's a big fat fucking yin yang's worth of pleasure and pain, love and loss.

INT. REBEL ROUSER RADIO STATION - DAY - CREDITS

Rebel Rouser punches another one of his buttons and a fuse sound effect sizzles throughout the room.

REBEL ROUSER
Come on man, enough of the
prologue. Enough of the lovey dovey
stuff. Let's get dark, let's get
wild, let's get with it!

BEAVER
(Eugene's voice)
...And so it goes.

REBEL ROUSER
Nevermind the furniture! Clear the
whole damn room!

The sizzle of the fuze sound effect gives way --
BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM:

INSERT CARD: POWDER KEG PINES

EXT. MOUNTAIN SCAPE - DAY - SUNRISE

Quintessential, sweeping, dead of Summer. Something black slowly DISSOLVES over it in equal vastness:

A CONVEYOR BELT, various ANIMAL MASKS scoot toward a register.

A HAND pays with cash and the bills seem to turn a murky brown DISSOLVING into mud, a panoramic amount...next picture just as big as the last, FIRE, GASOLINE FUNNELED INTO CANS, ROCKS, A BIG WELCOME SIGN THAT SAYS "SNAPDRAGON, VIRGINIA" DAY BECOMES EVENING, DARKER, EARTH, DIRT, MUD, NIGHT, FIRE, ANIMAL MASKS.

A FORD ECONOLINE VAN, beaten and black barrels right through the center of these CHAOTIC IMAGES until we crystallize.

TREES whip and curl over the van as the driver speeds like the laws of gravity not only don't apply, but if they did they'd be insulting.

Lighting strobes against heavy sheets of rain.

The Words: ANIMAL SAFETY SYNDICATE are stenciled into the side of the van. Abbreviated that's A.S.S.

INT. ASS VAN - NIGHT - TEARING ASS

Eugene, mid 30s now and looking rough, is the Evel behind this Knievel, he's still got that stringy blond hair, Wayfarer sunglasses, a goatee, chipped tooth, he turns up the volume knob, slams his fist on the wheel. He's dressed up as a Parrot.

Next to and behind him are the other members of the Animal Safety Syndicate, all dressed to the nines in animal costumes of a "furry" quality.

For the sake of anonymity, we'll call them CAT, HORSE, PIG, FOX, ROOSTER, FROG and GOAT.

Frog sits next to Eugene and just looks at him, then the ceiling.

Cat sits next to Fox and Rooster, who are basically dry humping each other, hands down the backs of their unzipped costumes, they hump their way over to Cat's lap, Cat pushes them, punches the wall

Pig sits next to the window, shovels pork rinds under his mask.

Duck sits next to Horse, counts money -- CRUNGGK -- pothole, money goes flying, Duck scrounges the floorboard for the bills but his own bill gets in the way, Horse looks at him with purple eyes, shakes his head.

Goat sits slumped in the very back, blue horns flapping with the wind through the window crack.

EXT. DEAD END/TRAIL - NIGHT

COP CARS litter the cul-de-sac, the demeanor of the SLEW OF OFFICERS here shows that the situation isn't too pressing. Some snooze, some are lost in idle chatter and coffee stained paper cups rest on Crown Victoria hoods.

GRADY MCDOWELL, 40s, Sheriff, cop 'stache, cop crew cut, cop everything, trudges out of the woods, rubs binocular rings that have been embedded into the skin around his jade green eyes, throws the binoculars into a port o john.

GRADY

How about one of y'all drive up to the Food Lion and get some marshmallows and graham crackers, huh? If we're gonna stand around here doing Jack shit we may as well go the whole nine. Shhh!!

Rustling... ABOUT A DOZEN OF YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN appear out the woodwork. They are DIXIE'S FOLLOWERS.

The cops go into a frenzy -- a cacophony of "get down on the grounds, don't fucking moves, freezes and stops."

Grady motions to all of them "calm down," turns to the dozen or so young men and women.

GRADY

What happened? Y'all get sick of living like ape men? Where's she at?

VOICE IN CROWD

She's still at the refuge. She told me to tell you, personally, officer McDowell --

GRADY

-- Sheriff McDowell.

VOICE IN CROWD

She said she won't pick the smallest berry from the smallest plant, so long as the government's got the ranch.

GRADY

What else?

VOICE IN CROWD

She said that justice shouldn't wane or bend in the face of adversity.

GRADY

Actually it should snap clean in half for the law. Especially over a damn house. This is what you call living in an absolute world, kids. Y'all been out here two weeks and some change right? Somewhere around there?

VOICE IN CROWD

Maybe more.

GRADY

Well, unless she's been sneaking snacks behind your backs, I'd just as soon go get her myself. It's not like she's gonna put up a fight.

EVERYONE laughs, except for Grady.

GRADY (CONTD)

Touche. So before I arrest you I gotta ask you two questions; one, what prompted your surrender?

VOICE IN CROWD

We don't want to her to die Sheriff.

Grady thinks on that, Cicadas roar throughout the woods.

GRADY

I suppose I don't either, but, I digress; question number two, who is Penny?

VOICE IN CROWD

We don't know --

GRADY

-- I know you don't. That's her mother. That young woman out in the woods y'all are working under is such a momma's girl that whenever Penny would leave when Dixie was an itty bitty baby she'd cry so hard she'd shit herself...and while that may seem a little bit on the vulgar side, it's still sweeter than a bag of cherries. Smelling what I'm stepping in? Hello?...It's a maternal sentiment, ya'll. This ain't political, this is personal. Dixie Bruiser wants her mother back, and getting that ranch -- *in her little Peabody brain* -- is the only way of making that happen. You had no idea did ya?...You hear that boys? That there's the sound of silence! Alright, let's go. Peter and Paul, stay here and guard the entrance, I'mma be back with Mr. Hanovi Bruiser and the golden scissors in just a little bit.

PETER and PAUL, deputies, stand in front of the trail.

THE OTHER OFFICERS and Grady pile Dixie's followers into cop cars and burn rubber.

INT. ASS VAN - NIGHT - DOWN THE ROAD

Everyone ducks as the cops blow by, they sit back up, masked faces locked on Eugene. Eugene gives it a second.

EUGENE

Let's start with the creed.

EVERYONE

"Anyone who owns or kills an animal deserves the same inhumane treatment inflicted upon them to the worst extent, deemed by their crimes, in accordance with the natural laws of the food chain and the inherent paradox of animal-in-man relations and nutrition."

EUGENE

Damn, hold me back. I mean whoa baby! Your enthusiasm is crippling. I can see our posterity now all passing it down to theirs. You know what you guys sound like? You sound like those pussies over their at P.E.T.A.!

FROG

How come Goat gets to cut the power?

EUGENE

That why you're all salty? Because you can't cut the power?

FROG

Let me ask y'all something; who cut the power at the S.P.C.A.?

HORSE

You.

FROG

Smith field?

DUCK

You.

FROG

Purdue?

EVERYONE

You!!

FROG

Who was scaling telephone poles for
Dominion power for six years? Knee
deep in the dirt, splinters for
breakfast --

CAT

-- Where is this place anyway?

EUGENE

It's at the corner of
I'll-ask-questions-and-shut-your-fucking-chin-slit.
Frog, you work pesticide now.
You're a step above pedophile.

FROG

Insects don't have feelings,
Eugene.

EUGENE

Plants do. Same as you, me and
these two love birds in the back
seat here..Hey Punch and Judy! Can
y'all give that shit a rest before
you get the rest of us pregnant?
Please? Thank you! Great, fuckin'
brain farted. What was I saying?

HORSE

You know what my boss told me the
other day?

EUGENE

Oh, Lord have mercy. I feel like
I'm stuck between a rock and a
flock of I'm-with-stupid shirts.

FROG

Says the guy who operates table
saws after chugging moonshine, and
who also wears Holy Water like
cologne. Not to mention the fact
that he's a Jehovah's Witness. I
swear, you're like half man half
easel.

Eugene flips Frog the middle finger, there's a stub where it
should be, still healing.

EUGENE

Lapsed. Lapsed Jehovah's witness,
and if you don't bite that big
tongue of yours we're gonna have
fucking problems.

HORSE

He said that true freedom means
giving yourself up to a higher
power.

Duck finishes counting his cash and whinnies like a Horse.

DUCK

Yeah, blowing my fucking mind.

HORSE

Why are you here?

DUCK

I'll tell you why I'm not here; I'm
not here to listen to your waxing.

HORSE

Why are you here?

DUCK

Because we're gonna take over that
refuge.

EUGENE

Hey --

HORSE

-- And why we are we gonna take
over that refuge?

DUCK

To get paid.

HORSE

Why do you want to get paid?

DUCK

So I can have some money.

HORSE

Why do you want money?

DUCK

So I can buy stuff.

HORSE

Don't you want to seek the truth
regarding your most fundamental
constitution?

DUCK

What?

HORSE

Oh, right. I said why do you want
to buy stuff?

DUCK

So I can be happy.

HORSE

Why do you want to be happy?

DUCK

What?

HORSE

Exactly as I thought. It's a stupid
question. See how long that took?
To get to the essence of the
matter? There's more to the soul
crushing reality that is life on
this planet than what it shows us
on its surface.

EUGENE

Excuse me, orchestra? May I
orchestrate? Good. Piggy -- you're
-- this is ridiculous.

Eugene slaps Pig's pork rinds out of his furry hooves.

EUGENE (CONTD)

Those aren't even fucking vegan,
bro.

Pig just stares at him.

EUGENE (CONTD)

I'm sorry. I didn't mean it.

Eugene gives Pig a hug. Pig barely reciprocates. Eugene
looks genuinely hurt.

EUGENE (CONTD)

If I wanted a fair-weather embrace
I'd go Virginia Beach in the Fall.
I'm not feeling the love, y'all.

(MORE)

EUGENE (CONTD) (cont'd)
 This organization was built upon
 love, not hate, because without
 love there is death. Cat, you got
 the camera?

CAT
 Sure as fish fuck in water.

EUGENE
 Good to hear it, and make sure to
 keep that thing running with a full
 battery. When we get there and set
 it all up don't worry about angles
 and lighting and shit like that.
 We're not shooting for an Oscar
 here, that's not our Steely Dan.
 All we want is a close knit group
 of like minded individuals. Rooster
 and Fox?

Rooster and Fox stop their honeymooning for a moment.

ROOSTER AND FOX
 Guard the yard.

EUGENE
 Guard the yard, and?

FOX
 Shoot anything that comes near it.
 be it a poacher, a cop, game warden
 or white family of five; smoke
 anything that moves.

EUGENE
 Unless?

ROOSTER
 Unless it's a half Cherokee woman
 with pale blue eyes.

FROG
 I cut the power at Piggly Wiggly
 too.

EUGENE
 Okay, fine. Let's recap; You worked
 at Dominion Power correct? That
 place that dumps all that ash into
 the James river? You want us to put
 on our fucking birthday suits in
 your honor?

FROG

They weren't dumping ash when I worked there.

CAT

Nah it wasn't Dominion that was dumping ash it was the miners.

HORSE

I thought it was oilers, fracking for shale or some other crude substance.

DUCK

"Fracking for shale," get fucked. Natural gas. It was natural gas they were drilling.

EUGENE

You're all wrong it was the miners. They had themselves a little party popper for a stretch, drinking subsidized beer as it were. Until the state put that big boot up their ass.

CAT

Yeah, the miners. I already said that.

DUCK

I'm pretty sure you guys are getting your decades mixed up --

EUGENE

-- It doesn't fucking matter y'all! Geeze Louise! May I continue this diversion please?

GOAT

Can I ask you a question?

EUGENE

Fuck it why not? Everyone else is running their mouth, why not the guy who never talks take part in this fucking chuckle hut. What? Go ahead!

GOAT

Why are you wearing sunglasses at night?

Eugene holds that thought as he opens the door and steps out into the night.

EUGENE

I wear my sunglasses at night
because it ain't ever quite dark
enough for my liking. I wear them
because my mother used to dunk me
in ice baths 'cause she thought I
had the devil in me, but she never
stopped to think that the house we
were growing up in was already cold
enough to sedate my squirrely ass.
Now, ponder that until I get back
and don't-fucking-move until then.
If you gotta pee, piss your pants
because you should've gone like I
said before we left.

Eugene slams the door.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT - WALKING

Eugene gulps, watches Peter and Paul in the distance, looks back over his shoulder at the van. Takes a cavernous breath.

EUGENE

(to himself)

This is it, Geney. Those pigs don't
know, those lemmings in the van
back there don't know either, no
one knows. They think you're a
genius. They're the chicken, you're
the farmer's hand, you're the corn.
You got this, you're brilliant,
you're Bach, you're roll-over
Beethoven, you're a suave James
Dean meets Brando motherfucker.

Eugene lights a smoke.

EUGENE (CONTD)

You're the man, you're the plan,
you're a hero.

EXT. DEAD END/TRAIL - NIGHT

Peter and Paul hear a shuffling in the darkness. Eugene appears in his Parrot suit. They look at him, then each other and laugh their asses off.

EUGENE
I need your help, y'all.

PETER
Wrong public service, friend.

Eugene takes off his parrot mask, still wearing shades of course.

EUGENE (CONTD)
My name is Eugene Scours --

PETER
-- Take your sunglasses off.

Eugene stares for a moment, like Peter just gave him the worst kind of insult. He removes his shades for the FIRST AND ONLY time in the film.

Eugene scans their name tags.

EUGENE
Peter and Paul, my name is Eugene Scours. I was kidnapped by the Animal Safety Syndicate and threatened with my life that I act as a decoy in order for them to infiltrate the woods and hold Dixie Bruiser for ransom.

PETER
Did you tell them it's futile? That girl is worth as much as that ranch she's fighting for, and pretty soon some guy's gonna sell it for a song.

EUGENE
Not true. There are natural gas deposits beneath Hanovi Bruiser's ranch worth over two million dollars, although she doesn't know it.

PAUL
How do you?

EUGENE
This is my old employment card I received when working for the Bureau of Land Management. I am regretfully, somewhat responsible for this entire situation.

Paul scans the ID with a flashlight.

PAUL
It's legitimate.

EUGENE
Believe it, brother. Young lady
shoulda-coulda-woulda owned all of
Snapdragon county last New Years.
Until the man found out.

PETER
It's like the Indians all over
again.

EUGENE
Which ones?

PETER
Who shit in your fruity pebbles?

EUGENE
Sorry, it was a broad stroke you
made. They weren't bombarded by one
white man, they were railroaded by
many. But I guess I get your
allusion.

PAUL
So does the animal safety syndicate
know about the two million's worth
of gas?

EUGENE
Nope. Just broken homes with an axe
to grind.

PAUL
By kidnapping an activist?

EUGENE
She's a hunter. I guess that's what
put the hop in their step. Speaking
of which; they might be walking up
here from the A-S-S van as we
speak. I told them I'd give a
signal after distracting you, but
you know how it is.. patience ain't
a youthful virtue.

PETER
What's with the costumes anyway?

EUGENE

Oneness, plus; I don't care who you are, everybody loves to play dress up.

PETER

Are they armed?

Eugene grits his teeth "yeah." Their expressions change immediately.

EUGENE

For the record, their records are clean as a whistle. They're wannabes, damn near incapable of violence. Except for one.

PETER

Which one?

EUGENE

If I had to pick the wild one out of the bunch it'd be the one dressed up as a Pig.

PAUL

Take cover in the woods and don't move, okay?

Eugene watches them disappear into the darkness and does a Tiger Woods fist. He makes his way toward the trail, a rifle duct taped to his back.

INT. ASS VAN - NIGHT

Frog taps his hands on his legs, Horse checks the rear view mirror, Pig looks at the floor, Fox and Rooster giggle, Cat groans, Goat stares off into the night.

HORSE

Why do we need this woman alive? What about the others? Couldn't we just kidnap one of them and call it?

CAT

Because you kill the king and the whole colony crumbles, or something like that. What the fuck is taking so long, man? My jeans are gettin' faded.

HORSE

I don't get it. His plan is to go talk to the cops that he's apparently friends or acquaintances with? It reeks. Worse than Limburger cheese. He's parleying with the law a matter of a mile from where we're going to be breaking it. It's counter productive.

DUCK

What are you saying?

HORSE

I'm not saying anything.

DUCK

You just said something.

HORSE

No, I told something.

DUCK

Yeah and what's the difference, Pokey?

HORSE

I could sit here and say to you that Eugene isn't being forthright with us, I could say that there are motives we aren't aware of --

CAT

-- Oh, bullshit.

HORSE

I'm just telling you that it's not impossible.

CAT

You're right Horse. And neither is fucking your mother, but I think I'd give my worst enemy the benefit of the doubt.

FROG

Why is he lying to us then?

HORSE

I don't know.

FROG

Okay Mr. Gittes. Let's say it's an inside job and he's working hard. Actually, fuck that, let's say he's the hardest worker, let's say he's a cop. If Eugene's a cop that means a cop lit an animal shelter on fire last year. What law are we breaking? Watching a cop commit arson some *three hundred and sixty something days ago*? I'm pretty sure that's not a rule in any rule book that I've ever read. Also, he set this whole thing up -- *with my help of course* -- which clears him in my opinion. I mean, I don't like him, sometimes I even hate him, but he took a direct hand in a criminal act. Not just once, but over and over and over and over --

HORSE

-- You're rambling again.

FROG

Yeah I'm rambling, why not? No cop, undercover or above-cover is gonna dedicate that much time to piss off a group of cavalier tree huggers, and I'm sorry but that's what we are.

CAT

Hey, Jeremiah. I am no fucking tree hugger you understand?

PIG

Yeah, me neither.

FROG

(to Pig)

Welcome to the land of the living.

HORSE

So what have we established? That Eugene is crazy? Or stupid --

FROG

-- Or both. That's why I say we change the plan. We don't need him and we're all at risk. Shit, you're the one who doesn't trust him. Am I wrong?

HORSE

I'd be lying if I said otherwise.

FROG

So let's do things my way.

HORSE

I'm afraid not. I follow no man.

FROG

Oh get off your damn high horse...So what? You think you should lead?

HORSE

Yes. The main reason being this; you're not changing the plan for the sole reason of it being a better plan. You're just changing it because you want to be Eugene.

FROG

Nope. I don't wanna be Eugene, I just want what he has. You spend too much time looking in the mirror anyway. Which, that's cool man, do whatever makes you feel sexy, but it's a waste of time. More time than I have, because as it stands I'm earning scratch that's two steps from fucking food rations. Doesn't it chap your ass?

PIG

Butt cheek Blistex, you got any?

FROG

So can we all agree that this whole thing is bullshit?

HORSE

Both in delegation of responsibility and monetary reward? Yes, it's a chimney sweeper's salary. To say the least.

FROG

Shit, I got soot spewing out of my fucking ears! So it's settled; let's check weapons, spectacles, testicles, what have you.

Everyone straps up. Not noticing the flashlights headed their way in the distance.

DUCK

How we splitting his portion?

CAT

You guys are pieces of shit. That man has done wonders for us and here you are; Judas, Judas and Judas talking about taking his money. It's sick, I don't want any part of it.

DUCK

We're talking a couple hundred grand here.

CAT

Actually Hanovi Bruiser's ranch is worth less than that. Splitting it six ways instead of seven's not even a fucking number.

DUCK

It's enough for me.

HORSE

Based on Eugene's amateur behavior alone, I'd condone the moral mishap.

FROG

Let's not forget we can't trust him.

CAT

If this plan unfolds, we're throwing hands. Me versus all of you; Horse, Frog, Goat, Pig and even the two honeymooners here!

Pig cocks his pistol and presses it to Roosters chest -- BANG -- Everyone freezes, Fox loses it. Pig shoves his pistol against her furry red cheek.

PIG

I got a knife too, bitch. You ever screamed so hard you saw purple?..We're following through with Frog's plan. Cat you're not doing a fucking thing. Look up; see those flashlight beams, yeah? That means we're no longer in the woods, that means we're knee deep in the salad, and it really doesn't matter

(MORE)

PIG (cont'd)

whether or not Eugene is a lying bastard. Frankly, I don't give a damn. Frog, when they get here calmly roll down the window and look at the officer's name tag, then whisper it to me as you reach for the registration.

FROG

Then what?

PIG

Then I'm gonna shake his fucking hand! What do you think then what?

Peter approaches the window, Paul at his six.

PETER

How we doing tonight?

FROG

Good, you know, just..here, I'll get my license and registration.

PAUL

You guys have any guns, knives or explosives in your vehicle?

Frog freezes, whispers Peter's name back to Pig.

PIG

What?

HORSE

Are we being detained?

PETER

Are there weapons in the vehicle, sir?

FROG

Ugghhhjjkk-PETER---ughsskkk.

PIG

What?

FROG

Peter ughhkk -- trying --ghgkk- to not make -- ghrhrkytk it obvious. Whew, excuse me officer. These Cicadas bring the worst kind of allergies.

PIG
 Pete? Is that you? I thought that
 was you!

EXT. ASS VAN - NIGHT - SAME

Pig rears around the vehicle.

PIG
 No fucking way! Who'd have thought
 Mr. Football star would be a cop?

PETER
 I never played football.

PIG
 What about dodge ball?

PETER
 Yeah, why?

BANG -- Peter's temple gushes blood -- BANG -- Paul
 drops -- BANG BANG BANG.

Paul looks up as Goat, Frog, Horse, Pig, Duck, Cat and Fox
 tower over him in a circle, illuminated by the moon...Pig
 aims his pistol, Paul whimpers -- BANG.

INT. WOODS - NIGHT - TRUDGING

Eugene hears faint rustling, in the distance he sees a LARGE
 MAN carrying a SMALL WOMAN.

As they get closer Eugene realizes the small woman is Dixie,
 now in her thirties, cheap sea foam green flip flops clap
 against her heels as the large man carries her.

Her skin looks as though it was stretched over her bones,
 her shirt hangs off of her like a curtain, small round
 feathers have been braided into her thick curly black hair
 and a necklace of seven turquoise Stars hangs loosely around
 her neck.

The large man carrying Dixie is SHEPHERD MCDOWELL, 50s,
 barrel chest, salt and pepper pony tail, leathery skin,
 steely gray eyes that blink a lot.

Eugene swivels around a tree, curses, thinks.

Shepherd stops and wheezes, coughs up blood -- CHHGKCHGGK --
 Eugene steps out from behind a Pine tree, rifle aimed at
 Shepherd.

EUGENE

Stop.

SHEPHERD

Stop what? Having lung cancer?

EUGENE

Very funny. I'm sure you're wondering why I'm dressed up as a Parrot. So, let's head on back to the refuge and I'll tell you all about it.

SHEPHERD

I'm turning this girl over to the authorities before she dies of starvation.

EUGENE

She's not gonna starve if you shut your fat fucking red neck mouth and listen to everything I say.

INT. WILDLIFE REFUGE/MAIN BUILDING - NIGHT

This place is an office, but also sleeping and living quarters. Besides a hallway, spare bedroom and bathroom, it's one big square brown wooden room with two rafters, almost like home made animal trap.

A ROSARY hangs on a nail next to the light switch by the front door.

A huge stained-brown table with stout square legs sits in front of the sink, it looks like an ALTAR.

A LAMP hangs above the altar from the ceiling with a focused Golden-white beam, creating a perfect circle on the surface of the altar.

A FRESHLY SHARPENED RED HATCHET rests on the cutting board next to the sink.

An OLD RECTANGULAR CASIO TAPE PLAYER sits next to the hatchet, a rebel rouser radio signal cuts in and out.

There's a COFFEE TABLE in the den. On it are a SORRY BOARD GAME and a BOTTLE OF LOG CABIN SYRUP.

Eugene and Shepherd carry Dixie into the SPARE BEDROOM and head back into the den.

Eugene grabs Sorry off the coffee table and tosses it onto the altar as they sit down.

EUGENE

Set this up. Unless you have plans. Do you have plans? I'm fucking with you man I know you don't have plans. Any trespassers, poachers or teenagers necking in this neck of the woods would've gave that up a while ago. You're like a man without a country out here. How's that for an assertion?

SHEPHERD

Who are you?

EUGENE

Boy, you know..your voice, it's, it sounds just like a pair of Elephant tusks rubbing against the side of a mountain.

SHEPHERD

That's very sweet of you, Robert. But until you start telling me things I wanna hear I'mma have to just knock the fuzz off your Peach. What color you want?

EUGENE

Doesn't matter.

SHEPHERD

How about yellow?

EUGENE

Green.

SHEPHERD

Nope, that's my color.

EUGENE

Blue.

SHEPHERD

So?

Eugene pulls a BLOOD STAINED MANILA BUBBLE MAILER out of his costume and slaps it onto the counter. Sits down.

EUGENE

You tell me about you first. I got a gun.

SHEPHERD

Me too.

EUGENE

Okay..My finger's on the trigger, and my name's Eugene. Why are you here?

SHEPHERD

Other than turning her in, I felt a twinge of pity for the young lady. Me and Hanovi go pretty far back, that's her daddy. Plus she's my neighbor.

EUGENE

You must be the game warden, which means you must be Shepherd. Is Grady your brother? The Sheriff?

SHEPHERD

You don't much sound like you need that to be verified.

EUGENE

How's he feel about locking up an innocent man?

Shep slams his pawn onto a space.

SHEPHERD

Appropriately guilty. So, you know my little brother's the sheriff, you know her father, you know her, you know me. That's all I know that you know and that still ain't enough, young man.

EUGENE

We have a very serious problem on our hands and it's most likely halfway to us. But it's okay because you're going to help me solve this problem. Unless you want to leave it up to chance; say you win this game of sorry here. If you win, you can go free and take her with you, but if not you gotta stay here and help.

SHEPHERD

Ain't nothing in that for you.

EUGENE

That's how confident I am in winning this game of Sorry. I got the best luck in the world. Some say I got the devil's luck and I think they might be right, old man. Because I've never lost a game..So, one-mo-gain, there's a group of anti-Christ's trudging through the woods as we speak, to hold Dixie for ransom.

SHEPHERD

Why?

EUGENE

Money, power, feeling special, but mainly because I said so.

SHEPHERD

Who are these devils that you're talking about?

EUGENE

Animal safety syndicate.

SHEPHERD

Worlds collide. So what are you here now for? Protection?

EUGENE

I'm here to save her.

SHEPHERD

Then how about you and that sterling smile help me get her to safety.

EUGENE

Nope. It would be against her will which would make it betrayal.

SHEPHERD

Not if her life's in danger.

EUGENE

Betrayal's betrayal. All appearances to the contrary notwithstanding.

Shepherd goes to swipe the game off the table. Eugene aims the rifle at him.

EUGENE (CONTD)

That'd be a colorful forfeit,
Shepherd McDowell.

SHEPHERD

You won't shoot me. You don't have
the guts to use it.

EUGENE

Maybe, maybe not, but you sure
straightened up didn't you? My
turn. Two, home, draw again,
Sorrriyyy! Okay you ready to hear
the plan? It's fairly simple, but
first you gotta shine that light on
me..

Shepherd grabs the lamp above the altar and points it at Eugene's face.

EUGENE (CONTD)

If you repeat anything of what I'm
about to tell you..well, now, shine
the light in your face..What do you
see?

SHEPHERD

All I see is the light.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - RUNNING - SOMEWHERE CLOSE BY

Hooves, webbed feet and paws splash and crunch as Pig, Frog, Duck, Horse, Cat, Goat and Fox trudge through coniferous Summer terrain.

Costumes get caught and tear on brambles, but the A.S.S. crew keeps on beneath moonlit pines like shadows, packing RIFLES, PISTOLS and SHOTGUNS.

EXT. WILDLIFE REFUGE/MAIN BUILDING - NIGHT

Pig motions for everyone to stop, peers through dense foliage, spots the main building (where Dixie, Shepherd and Eugene are).

The A.S.S crew creeps up into the yard and waits in front of a fire pit which is directly in line with the front door, the flames on their way out.

Pig does the Shaka sign.

Frog and Horse rear around the back of the building and stand by rotting Corn hole boards and cock SHOTGUNS.

Fox and Goat collapse on a log in front of the fire pit with RIFLES. Goat picks up an old length of rope, studies it, looks over at a weeping willow that looms over the property. Fox weeps like mad.

PIG

(at Fox's weeping)

Foxy, you don't quit your gekkering
I'mma give you something to gekker
about.

Pig, Cat and Duck walk up to the front door packing PISTOLS.

INT. MAIN BUILDING/CLOSET - NIGHT

Eugene and Shepherd squeeze inside and watch through the slits of the closet door as Pig, Duck and Cat pile in without knocking. Duck rummages through cabinets and drawers for valuables, tosses them in a Pillow case.

CAT

So educate me on this; Eugene
smacks some chips outta your hands
and all he gets is the stink eye,
but Rooster and Fox playing a
couple rounds of Tonsil Hockey
warrants a bullet to the chest?

PIG

You know that heart tattoo that
Eugene's got?

CAT

No one's perfect. What's your
point?

PIG

Let's just say you're on a need to
know basis.

Duck moves down the hallway, looks directly at the closet, but doesn't open it, keeps on.

INT. KITCHEN/DEN - SAME

Cat sets up his video camera, adjusts tripod and focus. Pig looks in the fridge, grabs a single Steel Reserve tall boy, chugs.

CAT

You ever do anything in moderation?

Pig burps, tosses the can in the sink.

PIG

I swear; if beer was good for you I'd be the healthiest person on the fucking planet. Where's Geney?

DUCK

(from bedroom)

Don't see him. Found Dixie though. There's some Jello back here if you're hungry.

PIG

Always am...Something in my teeth, kitty cat?

CAT

I'll tell ya this; you pull some powder keg shit on me like ya did to them earlier, I'll make you squeal.

PIG

Sheeeeyit. If you ran that camera as much as you did your mouth, you'd have a trilogy, wouldn't you?

INT. CLOSET - SAME

Eugene nods, Shep presses his GLOCK to Eugene's head. Duck walks by the closet carrying Dixie. Eugene motions "one minute."

INT. KITCHEN/DEN - SAME

Duck plops Dixie down in a chair. Pig notices the blood stained manila envelope that Eugene put next to the fridge. Pig pulls out a letter from the mailer, scans.

DUCK

Dixie? Can you hear me, Hello? She won't wake up. Still breathing though.

PIG

Tie her down. How's that camera Mr. Müller?

CAT

Ready to roll.

INT. CLOSET - SAME

Shep and Eugene sweat like mad.

EUGENE

(Mouthing)

One, two, three, four --

INT. KITCHEN/DEN - SAME

Pig looks deeper inside the mailer and pulls out a SEVERED MIDDLE FINGER. He studies it, pockets it, hands cat the letter. Cat reads.

CAT

Motherf! --

Shepherd kicks the door open, walks out with Eugene, gun pressed against Eugene's head. Cat looks up from the letter at Eugene, trembles.

CAT (CONTD)

Why did you mail this letter here?
How well do you fucking know her?
Huh!? Tell me the truth!

EUGENE

Do you not see the gentleman behind me with the pistol point pressed against my skull?

DUCK

Yeah, who are you?

SHEPHERD

Shepherd McDowell, Game warden station six --

PIG

-- Snapdragon, Virginia yeah, yeah,
we read the roster.

Pig pulls Eugene's finger out of his pocket, points it at Eugene.

PIG (CONTD)

To answer your question. No, I do
not count change with this.

EUGENE

What's that doing here?

PIG

What about that letter? That your
letter too?

SHEPHERD

I'll shoot him if you get any
closer.

PIG

Feel free, Mr. Game Warden.. unless
Eugene vindicates himself. Because
all I know about Eugene Marshall
Scours right now is that he's a
whiny, spineless, backstabbing
bastard who's no better to me than
Jimmy-fucking-Dean. Go on and shoot
him.

CAT

Eugene, you better start talking
and talking fast.

EUGENE

That's not my handwriting.

CAT

Not your -- really, I can't wait to
hear this!

EUGENE

Where did you find that letter?

CAT

You fucking mailed it here.
Remember?

EUGENE

No.

Cat tackles Eugene, as they wrestle around on the ground grunting and shouting expletives..

...Duck trains his pistol on Shepherd, guides him to a chair.

DUCK

Hey guys! We're all on the home team, remember? Let's keep our eyes on the fuckin' prize here!

Pig watches, shakes his head, grabs a pillow off of the couch in the den, presses it to Cat's back as Cat throttles Eugene -- BAM -- Cat takes a muffled bullet in the shoulder -- BAM -- Cat stops moving.

PIG

You'll have to forgive me, gentleman. Must'a been something in that beer.

Pig kicks Cat in the ribs, guides Eugene to a chair, passing Duck, who is frozen solid. Pig snaps his fingers.

PIG (CONTD)

Strap 'em down, Duck. It's about to get white hot in this meat locker.

Duck snaps out of it, assists Pig in tying down Shepherd and Eugene. Dixie sits passed out between them.

PIG

So, while I don't get quite as angry as our dear departed friend Bagira over there by the coffee table, I am prone to stepping out of the cage from time to time..and the more you bullshit me, the further I get from the cage.

EUGENE

How far are you from the cage now?

PIG

Right now I'm fucking miles from the cage and you don't want to see me cross state lines, brother. How did your finger end up in an envelope with your name on it, with a letter presumed to be written by you, but it isn't from you?

EUGENE

Forgery.

PIG

I take it that's a digital printed finger too?

EUGENE

No that's mine.

PIG

Well tie me to the fucking train tracks and twiddle my mustache! Who wrote the letter then?

EUGENE

The only person who was there when I cut my finger off. The only person who ever has a problem with the way I do things.

PIG

Oh, plot fucking thickens! Duck, switch places with Frog.

DUCK

Nope. That means I gotta hang out with Horse. I ain't hanging with Horse, man. That guy's a prima donna with a capital P. Bold and underlined.

PIG

I don't care. If he gets all head-in-the-clouds on you just shoot his fucking ass. More money for you. That's your modus operandi ain't it?

DUCK

I don't want to hurt anybody.

PIG

Well I do, so beat it or get beat.

Duck exits, Frog hops up the stairs after a beat.

FROG

What's going on?

PIG

Get your green ass in here. Shut the door..Did you write this

(MORE)

PIG (cont'd)
letter?...Is this your handwriting,
Frog? Frog, is this your
handwriting?

 FROG
What happened to Cat? Did you shoot
him? Oh shit! You shot him didn't
you!? What the fuck! What the fuck!

 EUGENE
I got a letter in my wallet that I
was gonna mail to the mayor before
we hit up that Boston Market last
Winter. Decided against it, we were
still fresh, it was too cocky. Get
it out of my pocket and compare my
chicken scratch to that chicken
scratch and tell me I'm wrong.

 PIG
Alright, you're right about that.
Handwriting doesn't match up.

 FROG
What's going on here?

 EUGENE
You tell me.

 FROG
What are you saying, Geney?

 EUGENE
Oh, all of a sudden I'm "Geney" now
that the gloves are off. You're so
full of shit it's coming out of
your mouth.

 FROG
What? You're not -- I can't believe
you'd do me like this, man.

 EUGENE
Oh, screw you! Screw you for saying
that!

 SHEPHERD
You know what's funny to me?

Pig breaks Shepherd's nose, Shepherd snorts and spits blood.

PIG

What was your name again?

SHEPHERD

Call me Shep, because you're mine. It's funny to me that y'all are activists kidnapping an activist and fail to see the fucking irony in that.

PIG

Is that what you been thinking about this whole time? Irony?

SHEPHERD

Nope. Been thinking about my daughter.

PIG

How's your relationship with her? Spotless I presume?

SHEPHERD

Could be better.

PIG

(Imitates Shep's gravelly voice)

"Could be better." She as ugly as you? Hahaaaa! Now that, that is a poetic expression! So, may I continue? With your well-earned permission, of course...Look everybody, this isn't a fucking pissing match, okay? It's gonna be when the cops show up, and if we keep running our damn mouths we're still gonna be here when they do...Frog, are you squeamish?

Frog sucks his teeth. Pig pulls out a "now that's a knife" knife from a sheath on the inside of his costume.

PIG (CONTD)

You might want to hop on off this Lilly pad.

Pig watches Frog leave, turns back to Eugene.

PIG (CONTD)

Clearly I can't ask Miss Keller here a damn thing because she's as worthless as a retard registered

(MORE)

PIG (CONTD) (cont'd)
 for highest honors. I can't ask Mr. Game Warden anything either because he's a good guy. Not only that, but a pissed off good guy and those are the worst kind of good guys. Can't get Frog's opinion because I don't trust him yet, Cat's dead, Duck's too greedy to feel any which way, Horse is a fucking idiot, Goat's perpetually depressed and that fucking round-heel sitting next him is mourning the loss of a loved one. So that pretty much narrows it down to you, Geney. We need to talk about that heart on your sleeve.

EUGENE

What about it? I was drunk and acme was around the corner.

PIG

Look, you getting that anatomically correct heart tattooed on the inside of your wrist is the equivalent of me getting a big, greasy piece of Pepperoni pizza tattooed on my back. Point is; anybody who meets you or me knows you're a romantic and that I like to eat. It would be absurd to deny it.. And while I get that everyone should feel like a unique snowflake and roar and all that shit to feel special from time to time, I don't feel like they should blow two hundred dollars at a tattoo parlor to feel as such. I'm sorry, I just, I gotta be sure that you're..you know, in this..and I swear I'm not a sadist, I'm just mean for the right reasons.

Pig practices throwing his big ass knife at the wall. Eugene flinches each time it hits.

PIG (CONTD)

Let's get real here; losing that tattoo would be like starting a new chapter in your life, you know? God knows it's been a long time coming.

Eugene puts it together, swallows.

Pig grabs the bottle of Log Cabin syrup on the coffee table, hands it to Eugene. Eugene holds the bottle in his mouth by its side.

Pig flips over Eugene's wrist and cuts a rectangle in his skin surrounding the tattoo, lighting shoots out of Eugene's lungs. Syrup squirts out of the bottle.

PIG (CONTD)

How do you know her?

EUGENE

I'm partially responsible for her father losing their ranch. I was a consultant for the B.L.M.. State government wanted her dad's land so they had people like me pester them to sell.

PIG

Did they?

EUGENE

It was taken. They never actually said yes.

PIG

Expound.

EUGENE

Hanovi Bruiser is in jail for a pre-orchestrated crime that he unwittingly committed. See, there was a lightning storm a couple years back that hit the countryside extra fucking hard.

PIG

Hansen hill, what about it?

EUGENE

Whole thing was a hoax. Hanovi --

PIG

Who's that?

EUGENE

Her dad!

PIG

Right. What about him?

EUGENE

Half his land went up in flames that night. So he started a back-fire on his property to combat it.

PIG

Sounds erroneous to me.

Pig cuts under the skin and lifts a flap an inch, tearing it from the flesh.

EUGENE

It's an old Native American technique! They've been doing it for centuries! But see, there wasn't ever a lightening fire to begin with! The fire was started by the government.

PIG

Why did the government want the ranch so bad? Why should we pour salt in their wounds two years later? Why do we need Dixie specifically to get our point across? Why not kidnap anyone of her supporters? Why the sudden call to arms the very night that her supporters abandon her? You're in love with her aren't you?

EUGENE

I already told you. I knew her professionally.

PIG

But at first you didn't know her at all. Now all of a sudden she's an old client?

EUGENE

If I loved her why would I do all this to get her back? Wouldn't a phone call suffice?

PIG

I don't know. Something tells me you're not relationship material. So just tell me what's going on here, alright? Save yourself the pain... Unstoppable force, immovable object? That the angle

(MORE)

PIG (cont'd)
 we're taking?...Geney, I swear man
 if wasn't for bad luck you wouldn't
 have no luck at all.

Pig hunkers down and tears off the rest of Eugene's tattoo as CAMERA PULLS OUT of the main building toward the fire pit.

Frog, Horse and Duck run in as CAMERA CONTINUES TO PULL out of the main building until it is past the fire pit behind the shoulders of Goat and Fox as they watch the house -- BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM -- horrific screams fill up the inside.

Fox walks up, peers inside, walks off into the woods.

Goat fastens the old length of rope he found earlier into a noose.

CUT TO PRESENT DAY:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE REBEL ROUSER STUDIO - DAY

Shepherd limps his way toward the door to the studio with a cane, sores cover his bic-bald head. He pulls Dixie's seven starred necklace from his pocket. Knocks. Jeff the witch doctor answers.

SHEPHERD
 You, uh, Rebel Rouser?

JEFF
 He's hiding beneath his desk by the trash bin over there.

SHEPHERD
 Sir? You in here?

REBEL ROUSER
 Yep.

SHEPHERD
 What are you doing under that desk?

REBEL ROUSER
 I just got told some real shit by a talking beaver and I'm still readjusting. Other than that my Monday's run-of-the-mill.

SHEPHERD

Well, it's me, Shepherd McDowell. I was at the refuge that night and I got something that belongs to Dixie Bruiser.

Rebel Rouser inches out from underneath his desk and takes a good long look at the Beaver, then Shep, adjusts the lapels of his leather jacket.

REBEL ROUSER

Can I see some ID?

Shepherd shows Rebel Rouser his Game warden badge, tosses Rebel Rouser the necklace. Rebel Rouser studies it, as does the Beaver.

BEAVER

(Eugene's voice)

Most expensive necklace ever purchased. How ya doing Mr. McDowell? Chemo's going well I can see.

Shepherd looks at the Beaver then to Jeff the witch doctor.

SHEPHERD

What's your name?

REBEL ROUSER

There are some who call him Jeff.

SHEPHERD

Jeff, you better take the spell off that bullshittin' Beaver before I lose a second leg, sticking it up your ass.

Shepherd lifts his pant leg exposing a prosthetic limb.

SHEPHERD (CONTD)

Been listening to your broadcast all day, it's sensational. For a second I forgot you were huckin' me into believing there was a talking Beaver in here. Matter of fact, I had to keep reminding myself it's just a show, but now that I'm here and can plainly see he's clucking like he's on Howard Stern, I got something to say; this rodent's a ruse, hoss. Don't believe a word he tells ya. You hear me, Mr. Scours?

(MORE)

SHEPHERD (CONTD) (cont'd)
 Huh? Everyone else here may think
 you're a hero, but you and I both
 know the real hero is standing
 right here on one leg.

REBEL ROUSER
 Take a seat in the King's throne,
 Captain Canterbury.

SHEPHERD
 (to microphone)
 Dixie, if you're out there and
 you're listening..I still got your
 necklace, baby. It was a mighty
 fine gesture of you to give it to
 me and all, but I got no use for
 it. Truthfully, all it does is give
 me the willies and I'd like to
 return it to you. So if you're out
 there, anywhere, you know where to
 find me.

Shepherd turns to Rebel Rouser.

SHEPHERD (CONTD)
 Ya'll wanna know what really
 happened that night at the
 Snapdragon Wildlife Refuge? Okay,
 good...That night all my sins came
 to a head.

CUT TO PAST:

INT. SHEPHERD'S CABIN/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Shepherd is bare-assed except for his Forest Ranger jacket,
 his sun blached butt pumps against a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN HALF
 HIS AGE.

SHEPHERD
 (vo)
 Usual night. I am, unfortunately,
 cursed with a penchant for hard
 drinking. Which always leads me
 into trouble.

A foot knocks a bottle of Jim beam off the night stand.
 Liquor pools out over a carton of Reds on top of a Black
 Bear skin rug. Headlights wash over Shepherd's mantle, lined
 with dusty football trophies.

SHEPHERD (CONTD)

I was sewing some oats after a visit to the local watering hole; the Sneaky Tiki, it's called. I was that old smooth talking vulture, that man your daughters and wives warn you about.

Headlights shoot in through the window. Shepherd looks up.

EXT. SHEPHERD'S CABIN/PORCH - NIGHT

Shepherd stands in his boxers, nodding his head and grinning as A YOUNG WOMAN IN CHEERLEADER ATTIRE screams her face off at him.

SHEPHERD (CONTD)

(vo)

Then an angel came to visit, my long lost daughter. "You were never there for me, I hate you I hate you I hate you," whole nine yards. Little did she know I'd been sending her money since the day she'd been born. Her mother didn't want me around, so I sent the old bag cash for Jenny, as well as a fruit basket of kiwis even though she was allergic to 'em. It was a polite "thank you" for breaking my heart and pushing my daughter out of my life.

REBEL ROUSER

(vo)

What's this got to do with Dixie?

Shepherd watches his daughter storm off to a Prius and peel out. Shepherd then looks off at a faint light in the woods, the building that Dixie has taken by seige, thinks hard.

SHEPHERD

(vo)

Well, Dixie's the same age as my daughter, she's my neighbor -- she lives down the woods a bit -- and she's starving herself to death because she misses her mother, and everybody in Snapdragon county knows Penny Bruiser ain't ever coming back. How she stayed married to Hanovi as long as she did is worthy of the Nobel prize.

EXT. WILDLIFE REFUGE/MAIN BUILDING - NIGHT

Shepherd knocks on the front door, waits.

SHEPHERD

(vo)

She's a dime out of a dozen womenfolk I know suffering from abandonment issues, and even though I am a son of a bitch I couldn't help but feel sorry for the poor thing. So I grabbed the Tupperware container full of Jello I had in the freezer, same Jello I was planning on bringing her before but couldn't muster up the courage to do it because she's up against my brother and that ain't my playground, legally speaking...

Shepherd lets himself in.

INT. WILDLIFE REFUGE/MAIN BUILDING - NIGHT

Shepherd tip toes down the hallway, stops by the door to the spare bedroom.

SHEPHERD (CONTD)

(vo)

I was either gonna convince her to turn herself in or take her in myself. Should've been easy. Should've been...

INT. SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT - SAME

Shep sits on the edge of the bed, puts his fingers beneath her nose.

SHEPHERD

Dixie Bruiser, are you alive?

Shepherd turns to a pile of letters on the night stand, grabs one, reads -- CLICK -- Shepherd turns around to find Dixie holding him at pistol point.

SHEPHERD

I'm the game warden around these parts. You sure you want that on your conscience?

Dixie lowers the gun. Shepherd tosses her the Jello.

SHEPHERD (CONTD)

You win. Welcome to the neighborhood.

DIXIE

Is that frozen Jello?

SHEPHERD

Yeah.

DIXIE

You watch TV at all?

SHEPHERD

Not really, but I know who you are. If that's what you're asking. Ohhhh, right. The hunger strike.

DIXIE

Who are you?

SHEPHERD

I'm the game warden, sugar.

DIXIE

You said that already. What's your name?

SHEPHERD

Shepherd McDowell, game warden station six, Snapdragon Virginia. Call me Shep.

DIXIE

Nice to make your acquaintance, Shep.

SHEPHERD

Likewise. So, me being your neighbor and also being the game warden it might behoove you to ask yourself; "why hasn't this man arrested me yet?...Lord knows I should. Especially the way y'all cut your Venison out here. You're supposed to cut with the grain of the muscle, not against it.

DIXIE

Anything else?

SHEPHERD

I don't appreciate your sass.

DIXIE

You're breaking and entering.

SHEPHERD

We're, breaking and entering. This building don't belong to you.

DIXIE

You know what I meant.

SHEPHERD

Well, here's what I meant; I been looking at that eye sore of a fire for about a month now and it's starting to bother me. Set up Skunk traps until I realized it wasn't the damn Skunks it was y'all smoking grass. Turning the twenty something acres into a Hendrix concert, and while I appreciate the blast from the past I have every right to arrest you right here, right now. I'm also stronger than you, but to be honest I haven't arrested you yet because it pisses off the mayor and I find great satisfaction in that because I'm very petty.

DIXIE

Did he approve the theft of your home? Did he snap your family in half? Did he ruin your life?

SHEPHERD

No, he's the son of the worst referee in high school football history.

Dixie wipes sweat from her forehead, vomits.

DIXIE

Give me one of those hate letters.

Dixie wipes her mouth, shivers. Lays back down.

DIXIE (CONTD)

No, mom, the paper towels -- wait --wait, what? Who? What's your name again?

Dixie passes out. Shepherd picks her up, lurches out into the hallway.

INT. WILDLIFE REFUGE MAIN BUILDING/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Shepherd carries Dixie out the front door and disappears into the woods.

REBEL ROUSER

(vo)

We gotta get back to the main story now.

SHEPHERD

(vo)

Let's see..Eugene stopped around the part where them boys in costumes shot each other up after the one boy skinned him?

INT. WILDLIFE REFUGE MAIN BUILDING, KITCHEN/DEN - NIGHT

Frog, Horse, Duck and Pig are all sprawled out on the floor drenched in blood. Pig holds up the piece of Eugene's tattooed skin and tosses it at Eugene's feet.

PIG

At least now you can lie with a straight face.

Pig looks down at the three holes in his pink chest, dies. Frog, Horse and Duck all study their wounds.

DUCK

Anybody else get shot in the ass?

FROG

I did.

HORSE

Me as well. What's the body count?

FROG

Cat's out, Pig too. Fox and Goat are still out front, if I'm assuming correctly.

HORSE

My gut is telling me that everyone here is lying through their teeth and my gut never tells a lie. So,

(MORE)

HORSE (cont'd)
 let's answer a series of questions
 proposed by me, a true
 professional. Huh? Yay?

DUCK
 Nay.

HORSE
 Was that an accident?

DUCK
 Was what an accident?

HORSE
 The pun you made, and you just
 answered your own question.

DUCK
 How do you know that was an
 accident?

HORSE
 Because you're too much of a Nancy
 to make jokes right now. Also, I'm
 smarter than you.

DUCK
 Yeah, really ruffling my feathers,
 and smarter how? Because you read a
 bunch of fucking books about a
 bunch of fucking bullshit? Wake up
 to the real deal, Horse. This is
 life and death.

HORSE
 Isn't that what philosophy is,
 preparation for death?

DUCK
 It's preparation for acting like an
 asshole is what it is, and yes I
 said nay because you're dressed up
 as a Horse, but that doesn't make
 it a pun it just makes it clever.

Shepherd coughs up blood.

FROG
 You get hit too?

EUGENE

He's got lung cancer apparently.
Can someone untie me?

DUCK

Jeez, can you believe Pig? What a
psycho. What a fucking psycho!

EUGENE

Took a conscious flaying to put
that together?

HORSE

I told you he's an idiot.

Duck points his pistol at Horse.

DUCK

Take it back. Did you hear me? I
said take it the fuck back.

EUGENE

Can someone untie me, please?

Duck drags himself over to Horse, they trade stares, Duck
kick Horse's pistol out his hand. Duck aims his pistol at
Horse.

DUCK

Stand up. Stand up or I will shoot
you point blank in that
big-brown-stupid-snout of yours!
You think I'm joking!

-- BAM -- Duck fires into the ceiling. Horse forces himself
up off the floor. Duck jerks Horse toward him and presses
his pistol in Horse's lower back.

DUCK (CONTD)

(whispers in Horse's ear)
I'd start saying your prayers, I
was you. (to Eugene) To answer your
question, Eugene; I'm not untying
shit until I find out what happened
in here.

EUGENE

Do I not look trustworthy? I'm tied
and tortured! I'm missing skin --

DUCK

-- I just got shot in the fucking
ass, alright? So I don't want hear

(MORE)

DUCK (cont'd)
any of your bullshit! Now, two words..You ready for 'em; natural gas. What? You look puzzled. Is it because you're awe struck that someone could know just how full of shit you really are? Or is it something else? Are you constipated? Huh? Say something! Say something you fucking douche bag! I should put two bullets in you just for the verbal abuse I've had to eat alone tonight. Not to mention you thinking it was a good idea to have this pompous piece of shit on the level! You better start relaying some facts and fast or I'm gonna shoot Horse straight through the kidney.

EUGENE
Can I get some sort of tourniquet before I bleed to death?

DUCK
You don't start talking about natural gas in the next five seconds you won't even get a wet nap. Now, there's about two million worth of gas down there correct?

EUGENE
In theory.

DUCK
Nope. They already started drilling it, that's about as much as they've estimated so far. See, I'm not an idiot, Eugene. I don't know how many times I gotta say it. Now, who owns the gas rights beneath the ranch? And don't you dare say the Bruiser's and insult my intelligence again. Because I know the Bruiser's don't own the gas rights because I looked into it already, and that's a real tragedy in its own right. But that doesn't mean I shouldn't get what's coming to me.

EUGENE

What's coming to you?

-- BAM -- Duck shoots Horse in the lower back, Horse rolls around and claws at the floor boards, screaming in agony. Duck limps over to the FRESHLY SHARPENED RED HATCHET on the cutting board and brings it back over to Eugene.

DUCK

How many fingers am I holding up?

EUGENE

Six.

DUCK

Fuck. How about now?

EUGENE

Six.

DUCK

Ten. Which means you get ten chances. I'm gonna count to ten and then I'm gonna bury this hatchet into your femur bone. All you gotta do is give me the name of the rich guy or girl that owns the gas rights beneath that ranch.

Frog drags himself over to his shotgun as Duck counts down. Stands up behind Duck, point blank range.

DUCK

-- Nine, ten.
Un-fucking-believable! Are you seriously gonna make me do this?

Duck rears up with the hatchet and just as it reaches flesh:

FROG

Put, that hatchet, down. What are you doing? You're still holding the hatchet, don't hold it, put it down, put it -- put it, put it down. There, good. Now, we're just gonna stand here, and we're gonna wait. Until I figure something out.

Frog aims his shotgun at Duck -- BOOOOM, CHHCHHHK -- Duck goes flying into the coffee table and obliterates it. Frog limps over to Eugene.

FROG (CONTD)

Look at you now, ring-around-the-rosy. All tied up and tortured and not a soul in the world left to believe your bullshit. Except for those two pecker woods playing hee-haw by the fire pit out there. Why the fuck did you even hire them?

EUGENE

Same reason I hired you.

FROG

Yeah, and what was that exactly? To get picked off like acne scabs?

EUGENE

I hired you to be a part of something bigger than yourself.

FROG

You really don't mind that people are dying?

EUGENE

I didn't mean for any of this to happen. Tell them Shep.

SHEPHERD

Don't call me Shep. Don't call me anything but sir. Because you don't know me like that.

EUGENE

I don't know you like what now? Are you not the same Shepherd McDowell that got kicked out of the Virginia Tech forestry department for knocking boots with students?

FROG

It's my turn to talk --

EUGENE

-- WELL THEN WHAT'S THE FUCKING PLAN BOSS!? Would you like to switch places and get skinned alive in hopes of remaining true to your convictions? Huh? Do you wanna? That's what I thought. So, Shep, are you that guy or not? Public records might be hard pressed to

(MORE)

EUGENE (cont'd)
 find a dead ringing, hay seed
 munching faggot with the same name.

FROG
 No he's Shepherd McDowell. I would
 know, because I did all the grunt
 work on background checks. Because
 I'm the blood flowing through the
 veins of this organization. All
 guts and no glory. Something that
 Eugene here doesn't seem to
 recognize or appreciate --

EUGENE
 -- Is there another Shepherd
 McDowell who got charged with
 assault and battery of a minor?

FROG
 Yeah it was some punk getting happy
 with his daughter, who doesn't know
 he exists.

SHEPHERD
 Not until tonight.

EUGENE
 The prodigal father. How sweet.

SHEPHERD
 She came to me.

EUGENE
 Well, I'd applaud your pathetic
 life, but my hands are tied.

SHEPHERD
 What about adultery? You forget
 about that?

EUGENE
 No I didn't, but thanks for saving
 my breath. What about involuntary
 manslaughter? How old was he again?

SHEPHERD
 Seventeen.

EUGENE
 Seventeen and in the wrong place at
 the right time. Ain't it a little
 convenient that the same kid who
 (MORE)

EUGENE (cont'd)
roughed up your daughter at the
Sneaky Tiki is the one you ran
over?

SHEPHERD
Actually, young man, it's
inconvenient because I'd never kill
nobody..and if I am this big bad
wolf that y'all claim me to be,
then why yall's panties in a twist
for handful of folks out here
killing Quail and Deer to survive?
They're good eating.

EUGENE
Because nature is a faultless
phenomenon.

SHEPHERD
You're a fucking idiot.

EUGENE
I'm an idiot with a great diet.

Frog holds his shotgun inches from Shepherd's face.

FROG
So why are you here?

SHEPHERD
I came to drop off some Jello for
my new neighbor, Miss Dixie
Bruiser.

FROG
Where's that at?

SHEPHERD
Spare bedroom I think.

Frog comes back with the Jello, slams it on the altar.
Points the Golden white beam of the lamp in Shepherd's face.

FROG
Anything else?

SHEPHERD
Other than having to piss like a
prize winning Pony, not that I
reckon.

FROG

"Not that I reckon." What are you a cowboy?

SHEPHERD

That's outlaw to you.

Frog aims the shotgun at Eugene.

FROG

What's your excuse, Rosebud?

EUGENE

I'm here because the plan was to take over the refuge and kidnap Dixie Bruiser, hold her for ransom until all of the animals in the local community were released back into the wild, and, in the process, if all went according to plan, get some extra cash to split amongst ourselves. That was the initial plan.

FROG

Initial?

EUGENE

I've already admitted the fact that I know this woman more than I've let on, but it's not on a personal level, I can assure you. It's strictly professional. With that being said, like I've already stated --

FROG

-- No you didn't say fucking shit to me, so regurgitate.

EUGENE

The Bruiser's lost their ranch after a decade-spanning series of intimidation tactics, both physical and emotional. Illegal water channeling, encroaching fencing, and other subversive measures to force them out of their home. All went according to plan because the man's got their land and Hanovi Bruiser's in jail now. You happy?

FROG

No, I'm barely content. I already know that's why she's out here. What's it got to do with you?

EUGENE

I used to work for the Bureau --

FROG

WHAT!!!!???

EUGENE

I would've said something, but no one would've bought that I was doing this for us.

FROG

That's because it would be a fucking lie. How long's it been since she ate?

EUGENE

Local press says about a week.

FROG

Gimme that damn Jello.

Frog grabs the Jello and tears the lid off.

FROG (CONTD)

I don't understand how there's two million dollars under the ranch and only you and Duck knew about it.

EUGENE

I know because I used to work for the --

FROG

-- Bureau of Land Management, yeah. How did that greedy little fucker know about it?

EUGENE

Because he's a greedy little fucker. How should I know?

FROG

Look, everybody in the Animal Safety Syndicate knows that you're not a greedy guy. It's a good character trait to have, and splitting that -- *up until now non*

(MORE)

FROG (cont'd)
existent -- two-million in cash
 seven ways wouldn't of caused you
 lack-of-sleeping, so why not bring
 it up? You know this woman
 professionally? I got that right,
 right?

EUGENE
 I just lost six by six inches of
 skin to prove it.

FROG
 I'm not convinced. You don't want
 us to have the money, you don't
 want the government to have the
 money, you don't want the money for
 yourself, so that can only mean one
 thing.

EUGENE
 That I want her to have it? So
 what? My old job stole her
 livelihood.

FROG
 St. Eugene Scours everybody!

EUGENE
 I'm a sinner too. I'm right and
 wrong, sad and glad. I'm a human
 fucking being. Shoot me.

FROG
 You know what you're doing right
 now? You're threatening me with a
 good time, and based on the way
 this night has progressed I got no
 problem being your fucking
 Huckleberry, but I want you to tell
 me why it's so convenient that the
 person we're holding for ransom is
 an ex-client of yours.

Eugene looks over at Shepherd, then back to Frog.

EUGENE
 That's a rhetorical question --

FROG
 -- "I'm in love with her" was the
 answer I was looking for. Also, you
 seem to be forgetting about that

(MORE)

FROG (cont'd)
 botched framing earlier. Remember?
 The bubble mailer with the letter
 and the finger? The one that I
 forged in hopes of turning everyone
 against you? Which is funny because
 you did it to yourself? Bells
 ringing or not, Geney?

EUGENE
 Don't believe his lies, Mr.
 McDowell.

FROG
 You Motherfuc --

-- Frog smashes him in the face with the butt of the
 shotgun.

FROG (CONTD)
 You got nerve. You got nerve the
 size of little planets, Eugene
 Scours.

Frog grabs the Jello and puts the Jello beneath Dixie's
 mouth. She inhales it, vomits. Frog gets her a glass of
 water. She guzzles, looks somewhat alive.

FROG
 Welcome back! To answer your
 question; yes, you are surrounded
 by a bunch of dead people dressed
 up as animals, and yes that's
 cherry flavored corn syrup
 funneling through your veins. Call
 me Jeremiah. As of tonight, at this
 very moment, I am the head of the
 Animal Safety Syndicate.

Dixie looks over at Eugene. Double takes. Frog walks over to
 the video camera, presses record.

FROG (CONTD)
 All you gotta do is look at this
 camera right here, and don't worry
 about your appearance "we're not
 shooting for an Oscar here, that's
 not our Steely Dan." Am I right or
 am I right Eugene?

DIXIE
 Why am I tied up?

FROG

Because you're the crux of this sad attempt at a ransom.

DIXIE

I don't have any money.

FROG

You should be so lucky!

Frog looks into the camera.

FROG (CONTD)

Dear viewer, you are looking at what was once the Wildlife Refuge of Snapdragon, Virginia. It is henceforth a pedestal, production office and a sanctuary all in one and all for one; anybody who wants to join us on our mission. Now when I say sanctuary I do mean sanctuary. Take a look at that table there! Looks just like an altar! Maybe it is..By and large, dear viewer...This place right here is a safe haven for anyone who seeks to join us in our cleanse of the abomination that is considered the relationship between man and beast, and I am just the man to cleanse it. Sitting right here is a young woman, a poacher, a murderer, a direct affront to our mission; the complete and utter equality of animals with our kind. Which begs the question: Can genocide walk hand-in-hand with humanity? So, Miss Bruiser, without further adieu, what makes a cunt want to hunt?

DIXIE

Are you kidding? Please tell me you're kidding.

-- BOOM -- Frog peppers the ceiling with a shotgun blast.

DIXIE (CONTD)

Food.

FROG

Say it like you mean it.

DIXIE
I hunt for food.

FROG
Are you aware that consuming animal
flesh is no longer necessary to
survive in the modern world?

DIXIE
With shades of gray, yes.

FROG
It's a black and white question,
Miss Bruiser.

DIXIE
Nope, most vegetarians and vegans
in America partake in a first world
privilege.

FROG
Can you survive in this day and
age, without eating meat. Yes or
no?

DIXIE
Yes, absolutely.

FROG
Than why do you eat it?

DIXIE
Sustenance.

FROG
What about berries, lettuce or
nuts? Shit like that? There's an
abundance of fruit and vegetables
in a three hundred sixty degree
radius around this refuge. Don't
know how you did it really, whole
place is chock full of poison Ivy.

DIXIE
Actually no, it's surrounded by
Virginia Creeper, which is
harmless. I burned all the poison
Ivy.

FROG
Good for you.

DIXIE

That was a lie. Burning poison Ivy is probably the worst thing you could do to it. Despite that being common knowledge, I'm also a botanist. As well as a blood sucking omnivore. How's that for an answer?

FROG

It's alright I guess. You being a murdering bitch aside, I can't help but feel for your plight.

DIXIE

Actually you have no idea of what I'm going through, but thanks for trying.

FROG

You're fucking welcome. Why else do you eat meat?

DIXIE

Because it's, I don't know, it tastes good --

FROG

-- There. Say that again.

DIXIE

It tastes good.

FROG

Perfect. Now, I want you to tell CBS, FOX, NBC and ABC whether or not you would have relations with someone of your bloodline because it felt good.

DIXIE

Sex is a mental and spiritual thing for me --

FROG

-- That's not what I asked.

DIXIE

You're asking me to compare nutrition to incest and there's no comparison. I'm not answering that, it's a sick question. You're asking me to answer a sick question and

(MORE)

DIXIE (cont'd)

I'm not going to answer it. I don't even know if I'm hallucinating or not.

-- CRAGGK -- Frog smashes her in the face with the butt of his shotgun. Dixie spits out blood.

FROG

If you're imagining that kind of pain, Miss Winehouse, I might have to start making life decisions. So, can we both agree that I am, in fact, standing here dressed up as a big old bullfrog and your lip is split wide-the-fuck open? Brilliant. Let's continue. We left off where I was asking you to compare being hung up by your ankles, shocked, and having your throat slit open to incest. Sometimes the blade fails and then you drown in a bathtub full of boiling water. Both things are truly awful, but one is frowned upon or completely ignored while the other is kiss-your-ass-goodbye-you-fucking-rapist-piece-of-shit. I'm sorry your family's dysfunctional, call the waahwaahwahhmbulance, I can't imagine.

DIXIE

Can I have one minute please?

Frog sighs, nods. Dixie turns to Eugene.

DIXIE (CONTD)

Animal cruelty, huh?

EUGENE

It's a legitimate issue. I won't apologize for addressing it.

DIXIE

How about an apology for teleporting back into my life? Or apologizing for putting me in whatever situation this is? I feel like I'm loitering outside of a Hot Topic.

EUGENE

Miss Bruiser, just because you live outside of the food chain doesn't mean you can jerk the damn thing whenever you get a tummy ache.

DIXIE

"Tummy ache?" Fucking tummy ache? Try fighting for the merit of your family!

EUGENE

By rotting away in this chasm? You got bed sores for God sake! You should be out on the block! Raising hell! Blowing shit up! Letting everyone know that you're not gonna take it anymore! How long's your father been in jail?

DIXIE

About two years.

EUGENE

What is stopping you, Miss Bruiser? Don't just dip your toe in the water, get drenched! All this municipal waste is your kindling! Your family's livelihood depends on it!

DIXIE

Why are you talking to me like that?

EUGENE

Like what?

DIXIE

Like that --

FROG

-- Like you're pre-fon-fucking-taine, prepping for a fifty yard dash? Yeah, I was just thinking the same thing. Why are you talking to her like that, Eugene?

EUGENE

Because good things can happen to good people too, Frog.

FROG

Oh, gag me with a rusty spoon! I've had it with this shit. Dixie, how do you know this guy?

All of a sudden, Cat stirs and knocks over an empty Beer can, leans up, collapses. Shepherd, Dixie, Eugene and Frog all look at him. Frog turns back to Dixie.

FROG (CONTD)

You were saying?

DIXIE

He knocked on the door of my father's ranch a long time ago with cold hands, bad news and good manners.

FROG

That it?

DIXIE

Yeah, pretty much.

FROG

You sure that's not the short version? Don't look at Eugene, look at me. I'm the one asking questions. Were you guys ever in love?

DIXIE

Why do you ask?

FROG

Because Mr. Scours looks more buttoned up than a queer on Sunday, so I'll take that as a "yes, Jeremiah, new found leader of the Animal Safety Syndicate, we were in love." Good to know there's still honest people on the planet. Did Eugene actually work for the government? He did didn't he? But you two love birds just couldn't keep those wings from flapping, huh? Talk about conflict. This is good, this is really good. We're spanning time together now. How long you guys last for?

DIXIE
Officially? Five years.

FROG
(a la Ziggy Stardust)
Five years! What I'm trying to figure out here is whether or not Eugene is a good man. Be it business-wise or lover-wise, because I'll tell ya this; business wise, as the FORMER leader of this organization he's lackluster. He couldn't carry a hard boiled egg duct taped to a ladle. Saw him at Wendy's last week. Was that a Cobb salad you were stuffing your lying face with?

EUGENE
Yeah I had a Cobb salad. Cup of Chili for desert.

FROG
Fucking false prophet. So, Dixie. Was he good to you or not? Because if he wasn't good to you I'd admire his constance as a fucking scumbag.

Frog bitch slaps Dixie. Eugene glares at him.

FROG (CONTD)
I'm not gonna hurt her Geney, if you weren't good to her. That's W-E-R-E-N-APOSTROPHE-T. Because if you were good to her I might have to rough her up a bit to remind you that you're a conniving shadow of a boss, but not for lack of trying right? Am I right? Yeah, I'm right. I know I'm right. This organization was technically my idea in the first fucking place. You just gave it a cool sounding name and got on everybody's good side with your who-cares attitude.

-- BANG BANG -- Frog drops like the head of a hammer.

FROG
Fuck! Oh, man! Oh, Lord. Oh, shit this fucking hurts!

Cat does the "blah blah blah" hand motion, struggles to get up, kicks Frog's shotgun out of arm's reach.

CAT

Anybody ever tell you you talk too much? Listen people, I don't have a diatribe like the rest of these unpolishables. I just want to say that Eugene, you should be ashamed of yourself. I been mad my whole life, solving problems with violence. I'm done with it now. Fuck it.

Cat grabs Pig's knife and tosses it in Dixie's lap. They watch Cat disappear into the night, clenching his ribs. Frog continues carrying on, stomping his feet on the ground in immense pain.

FROG

It feels like, it feels like someone twisting a pencil-sized-red-hot spike bat over and over again in your innards. Eugene?

EUGENE

What?

FROG

Just because I respect you doesn't mean I have to like you.

EUGENE

I don't want to hear whatever it is you gotta say, I really don't. So just keep your fucking head down and die honest like everyone else.

FROG

Fuck are you talking about! This was all your idea! Remember?

EUGENE

Saving the lives of animals was. I didn't know it would come to this.

FROG

I'm fucking dying right across the room from you and you're still lying! After everything we've been through?

EUGENE

You're an ideologue, kid. Always was. Whole thing went deep south

(MORE)

EUGENE (cont'd)
 last Summer when I gave you a
 little bit of power. Strong,
 successful business endeavors will
 never be built upon your knee-jerk
 bullshit. Thanks to you, Miss
 Bruiser's life was put in danger.

FROG
 "Miss Bruiser." Listen to you.
 You're convinced of your own lies.

SNAPCRUNCH Cat carries on outside, screaming. Dixie turns
 to Shepherd.

DIXIE
 Do you remember that letter I put
 beneath your windshield wiper? It
 said "Dear Mr. Don Juan the Game
 Warden, can you please remove all
 of the bear traps from the
 surrounding area, as they are
 unnecessary and immoral? PS: come
 say hi and have dinner sometime."
 Do you remember that?

SHEPHERD
 Yeah, I remember. But I don't
 appreciate passive aggressive notes
 from strange women.

DIXIE
 It wasn't passive aggressive, it
 was the truth! They're vicious
 pieces of machinery that don't have
 any place in the twenty first
 century! Case in point; the young
 guy on my front lawn screaming
 bloody murder.

EUGENE
 "My front lawn" says the girl who
 took the building by siege.
 Speaking of taking shit by siege;
 where's my Mustang?

DIXIE
 What?

EUGENE
 My Forest green Ford Mustang from
 the nineties. The one you took
 halfway through our honeymoon?

DIXIE
We weren't married.

EUGENE
You know what I meant. What about the engagement ring? You sell that too? No phone call, no email, not even a message in a fucking bottle. You are something else.

DIXIE
I'm sorry about that, Geney.

EUGENE
You're -- Oh okay, all better now! Let me ask you something. How fucking inconsiderate are you?

DIXIE
Considering I'm tied up against my will and you're to blame, how inconsiderate are you?

EUGENE
Thought you liked being tied up.

Dixie shoots Eugene a look as she cuts away at her ropes.

DIXIE
I'll visit you in prison every month once this is over. Best case scenario.

EUGENE
So you plan on getting out of this too huh?

DIXIE
Like I said. Best case scenario. Are either of you wounded? Oh my God, what happened to your wrist!

EUGENE
You, my dear. You did.

SHEPHERD
He's fine, check the others.

Dixie makes the rounds, checks pulses.

DIXIE
I bet they're not even twenty three.

SHEPHERD

Where are you going?

DIXIE

I'm gonna get that kid out of the bear trap and then figure out where my people went.

EUGENE

They're gone.

DIXIE

What do you mean they're gone? All of them? Is that true?

SHEPHERD

Sorry, Sugar.

Dixie thinks on that.

SHEPHERD (CONTD)

Dixie, I admire you for what you're trying to do here, but maybe you should give it up.

DIXIE

I'm not doing a damn thing besides what I been doing. I'll give up the hunger strike how's that? I'll admit, that was a little..that was a little much..yeah.

SHEPHERD

You gonna untie me?

DIXIE

Nope. I need you right where you are. No one cares about my plight, but if I got the sheriff's brother tied down to a chair unless my conditions are met I should be able to sway an important person or two. What do you think about that?

SHEPHERD

I don't have much of a choice, so to hell with it. Sure.

Dixie grabs Frog's shotgun and makes a beeline toward Cat's screams.

ANGLE ON: the back of Shepherd's chair, he's a little over halfway done cutting through his ropes with a MULTI-PURPOSE TOOL. Unbeknown to anyone.

EXT. REFUGE/FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

Cat pulls at the clamps of the razor sharp teeth embedded into his leg. It tears back flesh and black cloth like a sticker. He yelps.

DIXIE

Listen; I can get you out of this, okay? But you're gonna have to calm down and work with me. Stop touching it! Damn it! Oh, boy. Shep! How do I get this thing off?

SHEPHERD

(O.S.)

Where's it at on him?

DIXIE

Right on his calf!

SHEPHERD

(O.S.)

He's as good as dead, darlin'. Sorry..I'm just kidding. You see the two springs there on either side? Do you?

DIXIE

Yeah. What next?

SHEPHERD

(O.S)

Well, you're gonna have to push down on 'em at the same time. If you don't apply the same amount of pressure on either side you're gonna tear that boy to shreds. So, you push down on the springs, and have him pull back the teeth. Alright?

DIXIE

You ready?

CAT

I'm almost dead anyway. Just let me bleed out.

Dixie steps on the springs, Cat wails like he's living for the first time, Dixie pulls back the teeth. Cat almost gets his leg out, but the jaws snap his ankle in half, sending him into a frenzy.

SHEPHERD

(O.S.)

Got his ankle didn't it? What I
tell you about equal pressure?

DIXIE

Sorry, I'm a real hunter. I don't
trap my food!

SHEPHERD

(O.S.)

Call me indoors-ey, but I don't see
the sense in hunting with a bow and
arrow in the twenty first century!

DIXIE

Why are we even talking about this?

SHEPHERD

(O.S.)

You asked me for help --

DIXIE

-- He's dead. He's freaking dead!

SHEPERD

(O.S.)

He probably just passed out from
the pain. I could feel that crunch
from in here.

-- SNAP -- Dixie jerks her head up to see Goat swinging from
the tree branch, freshly self-hanged, but not a far enough
drop to break his neck.

Dixie scrambles, climbs the tree. Can't untie the knot.

Dixie runs inside the refuge, reemerges with the Red
Hatchet, Goat flails like a fish on a line.

Dixie scales the tree, chops the rope. Goat plummets and
fights for air. Dixie helps him up.

INT. WILDLIFE REFUGE, KITCHEN/DEN - NIGHT

Dixie guides Goat inside. Eugene watches her.

DIXIE

You got cuffs, Shepherd?

SHEPHERD

Call me Shep.

DIXIE

Shep. Cuffs? Yes or no? I'm gonna need that radio too.

Shep nods. Dixie wrangles the cuffs and radio out of their cases, failing to notice the multi-purpose tool in Shep's hands and the last rope holding him down, three quarters of the way cut.

Dixie guides Goat over to the couch by the coffee table, cuffs Goat to an exposed pipe that runs along the floor board.

Dixie marches to the altar, pulls a little black spiral note pad out of her pocket and sits down, scribbles.

DIXIE

How easy it for you to get a hold of the sheriff?

SHEPHERD

Got a preset channel for him. It's those two initials there, scratched in next to the knob, says "L-B." That's little brother, to the layman.

Dixie rips the sheets out of the note book, holds them in front of Shepherd, puts the radio to his lips.

DIXIE

Read this, into that.

SHEPHERD

(Scanning)

Oh, Lord. Here we go; "This is round two-million. This is revelations, this is "let's dance," this is bottles on fingers, this is meet-me-on-the-freaking-pavement. I'm getting that ranch back, so you're going to call whoever it is you gotta call and you're going to tell them to let my people, your prisoners, free. Then you're gonna let my father free. Under the condition that I take his place. Then I let Shepherd go. In case there's any confusion as to which ranch I'm talking about; for the

(MORE)

SHEPHERD (cont'd)
millionth trillionth time it's
called the Bruiser family ranch.
That's one-two-three-four, Carbona
avenue, Snapdragon Virginia,
22911."

Dixie tosses the radio on the couch. Eugene turns to
Shepherd.

EUGENE
I feel like I'm sprinting across
the equator. Lucky for me; I'd
rather feel something than nothing
at all.

Shep tears out of ropes and holds his pistol at Dixie.

SHEPHERD
I'm not gonna shoot ya, just sit on
that couch over there. Go on now,
go on. Alrighty, whether or not
y'all are ready to hear the next
sequence of events, strap on your
listening hats because I'm gonna
tell ya anyway. Dixie, I'm taking
you and that kid dressed up as a
Goat down to the dead end and we're
gonna wait until Grady shows up.
Then I'm going to turn both of you
in. But first.. Eugene, I'm gonna
untie you and kick your fucking ass
for your wolf-crying-Horse-pucky
bullshit and putting me through the
wringer tonight. Call me old
school, but that's how two men who
got problems with each other settle
'em.

EUGENE
I don't have a problem with you. I
fucking love you.

SHEPHERD
That's very cute, but you're gonna
have a problem with me. You're
gonna have a heifer-sized problem
with me in just a minute. Dixie, do
I need to say "drop that shotgun"
out loud? Or are you already smart
as I think you are?

Dixie groans and tosses her shotgun on the ground -- BOOM -- it goes off and blows Goat's entrails right out of his abdomen.

Eugene, Dixie and Shep all just kind look in silence.

EUGENE

Well shewt!

Shepherd takes the cuffs off of Goat and cuffs Dixie's hand to A LARGE LOOPED HOOK on the rafter between the kitchen and den.

Shepherd unties Eugene and they square up. Eugene gets in a praying Mantis style kung-fu pose.

EUGENE (CONTD)

I..I don't even know what to do..I can't fight, man. This isn't gonna be satisfying for you...What the fuck was that? You just put a wallet photo of someone in your fist. Who was that? Was that your daughter?

Eugene laughs his ass off -- THUNGK THUNGK THHUNGK -- Shepherd hits Eugene with two jabs and a hay maker. Eugene collapses, spits out teeth.

SHEPHERD

This might come as a shock to you, but Sorry is a three to four person board game. Everybody know that.

Shepherd wheezes, coughs up blood, drops to his knees, lights a cigarette, struggles back onto his feet, staggers over to Dixie, uncuffs her from the rafter, but just as he does --

Dixie leaps over the coffee table and grabs Duck's pistol out of his dead hand, puts the pistol to her temple, the cuff dangles from her gun clad wrist.

DIXIE

Take the cuff off of me and put it on him. If you try anything..gun's too close to miss me, and I have no qualms pulling this trigger.

Shepherd takes the dangling cuff off of Dixie's wrist as she holds the pistol to her temple.

Shepherd staggers over to Eugene, drags him to the rafter, cuffs him to the hook. Shepherd goes to leave.

DIXIE (CONTD)

Shep.

Shepherd turns around. Dixie takes off her necklace and looks at it.

DIXIE

Until we meet again.

EUGENE

Don't give that to him, D. You don't understand how important that necklace is! Stop! No!

Dixie tosses it to Shepherd. Shep fastens it around his wrist, which is about as big as Dixie's Neck.

Cat begins screaming and crying again outside.

SHEPHERD

As if on cue..there's my crook.

CAMERA FOLLOWS Shepherd out onto the FRONT LAWN and toward Cat, he steps down on the springs of the trap and releases him, throws him over his shoulder.

EXT. WOODS/DEAD END - WALKING

Shepherd lumbers toward the exit to the woods, Cat still slung over his shoulder and slamming his fists against Shep's back like a child being forced to go to bed.

SHEPHERD

Yeah, life's tougher than nails ain't it? All pissed off at folks for eating a damn cheeseburger. Try my life, try a life of sin then lung cancer. Try this; try you're a week from fuckin' retirement and your long-lost daughter shows up on your doorstep just to say she don't wanna see ya. So, all you got to look forward to for the rest of your life is to just rot in your cabin, swimming laps in your brain about all the mistakes you made. Fuckin' tan pair of titties should've been my cross to bare, but here I am now carrying your dumb ass through the fucking woods like the weak old hermit I am. I'll tell ya right now what I'mma be

(MORE)

SHEPHERD (cont'd)
 thinkin' about too the whole time;
 Her, Jenny. That's her name. That's
 her damn mother's name! That's
 about all I know about her. Other
 than she's Pigeon-toed, she fights
 boys off like the plague, she's
 content without me, she's
 graduating, and it would be
 disrespectful for me to show up to
 the ceremony. Let alone brood by
 the bleachers, but yeah, Shamu's
 stuck in a swimming pool fuckin'
 munching on an endless supply of
 wide mouth bass. Cry me a damn
 ocean.

Shepherd stops dead in his tracks as something echoes
 through the woods. Sounds close. It stops. It starts again,
 it's someone whistling "The Odd Couple" theme.

Shepherd picks up to a light jog, his lungs struggle to keep
 him going, blood dribbles down his chin.

He falls, forces himself up, swings Cat back onto his
 shoulder, keeps on, spots the faint light of the street lamp
 in the distance, picks up the pace.

EXT. DEAD END/ENTRANCE TO THE WOODS - NIGHT

Shepherd plops down on the curb, lights up a cigarette,
 wheezes. Looks down at ANTS EATING A CICADA, then over to
 Cat. Shepherd checks Cat's pulse.

SHEPHERD
 Oh, Lord.

Shepherd looks up and damn near falls back, clutches his
 chest in surprise. Fox peers at him, crouched behind the
 exhaust pipe of Peter and Paul's cop car.

She gets up, saunters toward Shepherd holding a JERRY CAN OF
 GASOLINE. Shepherd unholsters his pistol.

SHEPHERD (CONTD)
 I wouldn't step any closer darlin'.
 I know hell's own about shooting
 shit from far away. You know what
 that means? That's means I'm even
 better at shootin' shit up close,
 and I ain't talkin' about talkin'
 either.

Fox stops, starts to cry.

SHEPHERD (CONTD)

You crying? Shit! Come on over here
and we'll cry together!

FOX

He killed him.

SHEPHERD

He has been killing he all night.
So which he you talking about?

FOX

My boyfriend.

SHEPHERD

Who'd your boyfriend kill?

FOX

No, Pig. Pig killed my boyfriend.

SHEPHERD

Which one? The Frog or the duck or
the horse?

FOX

The Rooster.

SHEPHERD

I didn't see a Rooster -- What the
hell am I talking about? Need not
not worry old girl. Sheriff should
be back here any minute.

FOX

Can I sit next to you? Please?

Shepherd nods. Fox waits a moment.

SHEPHERD

Why you keep staring at me?

Fox sits next to Shepherd, grabs his pistol -- BAM -- point
blank in his knee cap. Shepherd rolls around on the ground
hollering "alleluia."

Fox grabs Shepherd by the boot, drags him off into darkness,
gas can in her other hand.

EXT. WOODS/CLEARING - NIGHT - SAME

Fox unzips Shepherd's pants, fondles him, he coughs up blood.

FOX

What's the matter, game warden?
Thought you liked them young. Well,
don't you? Don't tell me you're
crying.. Are you crying?

Fox presses the pistol to his forehead.

FOX (CONTD)

If you're gonna cry old man, cry
for me.

Fox pulls her legs out of her costume, rests the bottom half of the costume on Shepherd's chest, drops her panties and proceeds to rape Shepherd.

Shepherd covers his mouth, stifles sobs. He looks up at the Fox mask as she picks up momentum.

FOX

You see what it feels like to be
helpless?

SHEPHERD

I'm not a rapist!

Fox speeds up, loses control of the pistol, Shepherd grabs at it, she dodges, trains the pistol back on him, stops.

FOX

Those tears of joy, Jiffy pop? I
count two minutes! Any longer I
might have put that old keister in
traction, huh?

Fox puts her costume back on, tosses Shepherd's pistol into his lap and walks further into the woods, grabbing her gas can on the way.

Shepherd aims the pistol at her, but can't bring himself to shoot.

Shepherd looks down at the blood coming out in spurts from his knee, takes a cavernous breath.

Shepherd's eyes dart toward a thin wooden vine hanging from a tree, he drags himself over, rips it down.

Shepherd takes his shirt off, tears it.

With the butt of his pistol, Shepherd whacks at a narrow branch at the base of a tree, cracks it off.

CUT TO PRESENT DAY:

INT. REBEL ROUSER RADIO STATION - DAY

Rebel Rouser kind of just stares at Shepherd in disbelief, then punches another one of his sound effect buttons and an applause rings throughout the studio. Jeff the witch doctor pets the beaver. Rebel Rouser gets back on the mic.

REBEL ROUSER

(to mic)

This special Monday Broadcast has been brought to you by Mary Jane's Lobster shack over there off Broad Crossing Road, best bug meat this side of the James River, also by way of Richardson's record Shop down off Laurel street by town square. Up next we got a real bubblegummer, blasting like a rocket ship straight outta nineteen sixty seven by an outfit known as the rogues, track's called "Secondary Man." Get with it, and if you've got any questions or comments regarding today's story or Mad Man Monday in general, drop us a line, you know the number, and if you don't, turn on that pop station and get outta my life.

The phone rings immediately. Rebel Rouser picks it up.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

A rubbery burn scarred hand turns down the radio. The hand belongs to..

Hanovi Bruiser (Dixie's dad), now in his 50s, sits on the edge of his bunk with his forehead pressed against the top of a metal toilet. He cradles a cell phone between his ear and shoulder, sighs.

INTERCUT BETWEEN: Hanovi, Rebel Rouser, a flashback and Grady.

HANOVI

Today, I have a confession to make.
It is to my daughter, Dixie. Dixie,
I know you don't want to see me
anymore and I can't say that I
blame you.

INT. RANCH - NIGHT - LONG AGO

Hanovi, 30s, watches teenage Eugene from his door step as teenage Eugene sprints through the lawn crying. Hanovi looks down at something in his hands but we don't see what it is. He slams the door shut.

HANOVI

(vo)

Daughter; I saw your life, or any potential for a fruitful one, disappear in strides, as a young man who loved you ran from our home and never came back. Well, I guess he did some years later to fill the shoes of his father and tried to take you away from me again, but you couldn't be saved. Your heart was already hardened. Your mother had left you, but it wasn't because we lost the ranch.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - LONG AGO - SAME

Younger Hanovi looks out through the kitchen window at an old tire swing in the back yard lit up by the moon.

HANOVI

(vo)

Penny and I had sent you to boarding school the day before, I know you remember that. There's something about that necklace I gave you that you don't know, and I'm here today to tell you.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY - PRESENT

Hanovi thinks, his eyes water..so he rolls them.

HANOVI

This dream, this God forsaken dream
I keep having. About the Devil.

(MORE)

HANOVI (cont'd)

About how before you, me, small
 pox, wounded knee.. The devil, he's
 been banished you know? Thrust down
 with that pearly staff into the
 depths of his own pitch black
 oasis, and he builds a capital city
 in hell. With infinite followers,
 poking and prodding at him with
 little pitchforks like Hieronymus
 Bosch in heat, and yet he's the
 loneliest man I've ever seen, at
 first. See, I always pictured him
 as a man. It's easier that way
 because to put him on a divine
 platform is tantamount to high
 treason, but I safely assume that
 he's at least somewhat content --
*you know, being the master of his
 destiny and all* -- but in this
 dream he just sits there, hand on
 his chin, in the most abysmal place
 imaginable. Waiting to prove his
 weight in salt, but the chance
 never comes. So he just waits and
 waits and waits, and I keep
 watching him do this, if only for a
 moment. Because just as he turns
 toward me and smiles, I wake up. He
 knows I'm coming home eventually
 and he waits until the very moment
 before I wake up to remind me, and
 it ruins the rest of my day, every
 day. He does this to me because
 that necklace your mother left you,
 well, I don't know how to say it --

Grady opens the door to Hanovi's cell. Steps in and rips it
 out of Hanovi's hands.

GRADY

Who's this? Hello?

REBEL ROUSER

Heyya this is Rebel Rouser.

GRADY

That disk Jockey?

REBEL ROUSER

Afraid so, you gonna lock me up?

GRADY

What'd he tell you?

REBEL ROUSER

Something about a necklace. You were there that night weren't you? You mind filling us in?

GRADY

No, of course not, how about I stoke a fire in here and tighten up my six string while we're talking.

REBEL ROUSER

Look, Sheriff, uh... That girl's out there somewhere and we're all worried sick about her. Maybe if you tell us what you know, we can tell you what we know and then you can go find her?

Grady looks at Hanovi, who gives him a manly version of puppy dog eyes. Grady grits his teeth, shuts the jail cell and sits down on the edge of the bunk next to Hanovi.

GRADY

I gotta give it to the girl, she knows how to wrap anybody around that perpetual middle finger of her's. Let's see, Shepherd rattled off this manifesto. Presumably written by her.

INT. GRADY'S CROWN VIC - NIGHT - DRIVING - RECENT PAST

Grady looks over Hanovi, pissed off.

GRADY

(VO)

I knew it was Shepherd's personal walky talky because he had the same radio since he joined the forestry department, back when Dinosaurs walked the earth. Damn thing was always squeaking, matter of fact, half the time I just turned it down and pretended to listen to what he was saying. You hear that big brother? Needless to say the fire was officially lit. So I was driving Hanovi down to the refuge to get her out of there. I guess it

(MORE)

GRADY (cont'd)
worked. Hanovi had just finished
telling me about this damn dream he
kept having.

HANOVI
..and I've been praying to the dear
Lord every day to allow me just
enough freedom to tell her what I
did. Now that I got it, all I can
think about is not doing it.

GRADY
Here's something to do; apologize
to me for raising that pain in the
ass. She has to know this ain't
gonna work, and all this baloney
about the devil.. what's that boy's
name in Roman times? Had to push
that big old rock up the hill? 'Som
bitch has nothing but a chance to
prove himself, but he can't, ever,
and he keeps trying anyway even if
it takes all of eternity to do it.
That's way worse than what
Lucifer's dealing with. He's just a
big old turd, and our souls are his
green back flies. He's happier than
hell about it. Fuck him.

HANOVI
How much time do I get?

GRADY
Enough and that's about it. You
gonna put on your clothes-clothes
or what?

HANOVI
I don't want to wear those.

GRADY
You'd rather show up in your
jumpsuit then, huh?

HANOVI
You know what my clothes smell like
right now? They smell like the
inside of a locker on the inside of
a jailhouse, and I don't want to
tell my daughter what I intend to
tell her, smelling the inside of a
locker on the inside of a
jailhouse.

GRADY

What are you gonna tell her that she doesn't already know?

HANOVI

Stop here.

GRADY

Where? There? The liquor store? Or that graveyard across the way for asking me stupid shit?

HANOVI

Man needs his fire water.

Grady slows to a stop.

GRADY

Hanovi, no.

HANOVI

Man needs his fire water --

GRADY

-- Stop fucking calling it that. This isn't the wild west and even if it was I still wouldn't stop because you're a criminal.

HANOVI

If you don't stop I'm going to hit you.

GRADY

We're not fucking stopping.

HANOVI

We're already stopped.

Hanovi pops Grady in the mouth. Grady can't believe his eyes. Grady lunges at him.

EXT. GRADY'S CROWN VIC - NIGHT

They roll out of the passenger door, tussle on the side of the road. Hanovi wraps his hands around Grady's throat.

HANOVI

You know what my spirit animal is?

GRADY

I'm grrnrn frrkkking krrrrll you!

HANOVI

It's that cock roach of a mammal that takes up most of our forests; the deer. I feel like Dixie keeps killing them in hopes that she'll forget me. Are you going to contain yourself? Nod if you are.

Hanovi lets go. Grady gets up and unholsters his pistol, pointing it at Hanovi. Hanovi looks up at him on his knees, hoping.

GRADY

Aren't you just a goody bag of memoirs! Here, how about this, as I, the sheriff of Snapdragon County, point my gun at you, a prisoner, on the side of the main road; she'll never be through missing you, okay? You're the only link she's got to Penny and Penny ain't ever coming home. Shit, you can take all the hard drinks and Peyote buttons this side of the James if you want and Dixie'll still be by your side. By the way, nobody does hallucinogens on a nightly basis, sitting on a damn rocking chair on their front porch to get in touch with their ancestors. They go out into the desert on special occasions. That's called being ceremonial, not what you do. You have fucking problems and if you get drunk again it's just gonna be the same domestic bullshit my daddy and I dealt with before I became the sheriff. It's already bad enough she's out there operating completely outside of legal jurisdiction. Poor thing's damn near a terrorist.

HANOVI

She's not your child, Grady.

GRADY

I know she's not. She's the unfortunate spawn of a knee-jerking knucklehead, pretty as she is. This

(MORE)

GRADY (cont'd)
 ain't nineteen seventy three
 anymore, man. There are rules!
 Rules that don't allow room for
 activism in a town this small. You
 know this!

HANOVI
 Rules, huh? Where have I been
 laying my head the past two years?
 After being unjustly judged by
 three white men?

GRADY
 Oh, cut the white man shit --

Hanovi grabs Grady's pistol and Spartan kicks him in the chest in one fluid motion.

EXTREME CLOSE UP: Hanovi's red fist pointing Grady's pistol at his white face.

HANOVI
 I'll say white man as much as I
 want..White man, white man, white
 man, white man, white man, white
 man, white man. I like you Grady,
 you're a decent man, but you're the
 Peter Pan shadow of a gun-slinging
 Baptist oppressor. Also, your older
 brother is an ape. I always wanted
 to tell you that.

GRADY
 I know what my older brother is,
 okay? Don't remind me, and if y'all
 didn't play football back in high
 school you would've been took a
 fucking dirt nap!

Hanovi gives Grady his gun back.

HANOVI
 I'll take a liter of Old Crow and a
 ride to my apartment for a hot
 shower, white man.

GRADY
 Mr. Bruiser, it is not the
 responsibility of your child to
 repair what you broke.

HANOVI

I'm returning to jail tonight,
correct? Of course I am. If you
tell me how to live the next two
hours of my life or talk to me
about my child one more time, I'll
forget that I'm a proud father.

Hanovi gets back in Grady's car and shuts the door.

EXT. GRADY'S CROWN VIC/APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Grady pulls up outside of Hanovi's apartment and watches Hanovi like a Hawk as he jogs through the courtyard and up the stairs with a half-empty liter of Old Crow.

EXT. HANOVI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hanovi steps in and is sent flying back by a ROAR from SOMETHING inside. The sheer force of the air escaping the lungs of whatever it is is beyond powerful.

Hanovi locks eyes with it, creeps toward the door, shuts it every so gently.

INT. GRADY'S CROWN VIC - NIGHT

Hanovi gets in, chugs some whiskey, spits, lights a red.

HANOVI

There's a Yo-na in my living room.

GRADY

What's a yooowna? You having Peyote
flashbacks?

HANOVI

No.

GRADY

Are you sure?

HANOVI

No, I'm not sure. I just enjoy
wasting time when it's of the
essence. There's a Bear up there.

GRADY

There's a what?

HANOVI
There's a Grizzly Bear in my
apartment.

GRADY
Are you serio--How the fuck did
that happen?

HANOVI
Easy, it waltzed through my
courtyard with a picnic basket. It
picked the lock. It's stealing my
cable. How should I know? What?
Asique hada. What is it?

GRADY
I had an index card stuck beneath
my wiper this morning. It's up
there on the dash.

HANOVI
"Seven stars shine down upon the
Bear, chained to a tree, sniffing
at the earth that should've been
made his flesh."

Hanovi crumples the index card in his fist, shakes, punches
the dashboard.

EXT. WOODS/ASS VAN - NIGHT

Grady and Hanovi screech to a halt and leap out of Grady's
Crown vic.

Grady gapes at Peter and Paul, both shot, glares at the
A.S.S van, blood splattered across the stencil.

Grady looks inside sees Rooster, shot. As Grady studies the
inside of the van, Hanovi takes off.

EXT. DEAD END/ENTRANCE TO THE WOODS - NIGHT

Hanovi slows as he spots Cat, dead, drenched in blood, his
ankle bones exposed through the costume.

Hanovi hears Grady's footsteps, rapidly advancing. Hanovi
sprints into the woods.

INT. WOODS - NIGHT

Hanovi crouches, bobs, weaves, cutting his own line through the woods as Grady's voice slowly disappears behind him and blends with the screaming of the Cicadas.

GRADY

(vo)

I still can't believe a man that old could run that fast. It was like watching red heat.

More sprinting footsteps, in the woods, too close to be Grady, Hanovi double takes as Dixie sprints past him.. followed by Fox.....

Hanovi snaps a branch off of a tree, checks its point "sharp enough," follows.

CUT TO PRESENT:

INT. REBEL ROUSER RADIO STATION - DAY

Rebel Rouser listens intently.

REBEL ROUSER

..And? Say it ain't so, Sheriff!
You just gonna dangle a week-old tuna in front of a one-eyed cat like that?

GRADY

(filtered v.o.)

The rest is police business.

Grady hangs up. Rebel Rouser claps his hands together in excitement.

REBEL ROUSER

(to mic)

Thanks again for tuning in everybody, I'm gonna go support one of my many bad habits and we'll be right back after these messages and keep on keeping on through Mad Man Monday.

Rebel Rouser punches one of his many buttons and the b-movie mad scientist laboratory music plays again.

They head out into the hallway.

EXT. RADIO STATION/PARKING LOT - DAY

Jeff rolls up a joint, Rebel Rouser lights up a non filter Lucky Strike after pulling the pack out of his rolled up sleeve. Shepherd watches them smoke, holding the Beaver cage.

SHEPHERD

I'm gonna die anyway, come on now.

REBEL ROUSER

I done told you old man, I ain't doing it. I'm not giving carcinogens to a cancer patient. Not now, not ever --

Rebel Rouser's cigarette falls out of his mouth, as does Jeff's. Shepherd rubs his eyes, he can't believe it....

There stands, in front of the A.S.S. Van, Dixie Nicole Bruiser. Looking good, past beautiful, red hot, smoking.. literally.

DIXIE

Hey Shep... "Why hasn't this man arrested me yet?"

Shep laughs a raspy cackle, canes his way toward her, engulfs her with his big white python-sized arms.

SHEPHERD

You look like you been crying? I need to beat up anybody?

DIXIE

Let me see that necklace.

Shepherd hands it to her, she lobs it at a sewer drain.

DIXIE (CONTD)

I suppose you boys wanna know why I did that?

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY - LONG AGO

EARLY TWENTIES Dixie's neck veins bulge as she screams into a megaphone. PEOPLE watch her, SOME fill out petitions, OTHERS yell with her. She's magnetic, holding a sign that says "you can steal my house, but you can't steal my home!"

DIXIE

(VO)

Eugene told you all the happy stuff, the childhood stuff. All true, but unlike him I remember the darker side of things. I literally can't help myself. Kind of like how my dad referred to an event today that, uh, only until the drive up here, did I even know about. If I was him I would've told me earlier, but that's called having principles, and I have those and he doesn't.

INT. ROADSIDE MOTEL - NIGHT - LONG AGO

Where Dixie and Eugene were dancing earlier in the film. Dixie removes her nose from a book titled: Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto.

Dixie looks at Eugene, now passed out, then the ceiling. She kisses Eugene on the forehead, cries, takes his car keys and leaves.

DIXIE (CONTD)

(VO)

Spanish priest once told me learning a language fluently hits you all at once. That's the closest comparison I can think of regarding when I knew I had to leave Geney.

EXT. WOODS - DAY - LONG AGO

EARLY TWENTIES Dixie aiming her bow and arrow at a Deer. Her nail polish clad fist shimmies with the tension of the bow.

DIXIE (CONTD)

(VO)

I had to go, I had to live off the land, I had to fight for my beliefs, my mom, my father's ranch, my family.

EXT. CLEANING POST - DAY - LONG AGO

Mid twenties Dixie cuts the Deer down the center, fur and flesh curl over the blade as she rips it down toward the throat. The entrails spill out. Dixie vomits.

DIXIE (CONTD)

(VO)

Despite the fact that I loved Eugene dearly and we were childhood best friends, I was bedding a guy who, in terms of principle, had no place in my life. He was born and bred to screw over helpless home owners. He hated it, but not enough to quit.

INT. MEAT PACKING PLANT - DAY - LONG AGO

Mid twenties Dixie wheels a cooler through a sea of hard hats and bloody rubber boots, A COUPLE PLANT WORKERS notice her but don't say anything.

Watery blood funnels into drains, plastic wrap stretches over various animal product, a band saw tears through bone.

DIXIE (CONTD)

(VO)

All the money I made selling venison -- which wasn't a damn thing -- went to the cause. Which ended up not working anyway, obviously. Regardless, by the time I went on that hunger strike I was so tired of killing and eating Deer that the transition wasn't much of a transition at all. How much time do I have?

REBEL ROUSER

(VO)

Very sweet of you to ask. Around thirty minutes.

DIXIE

(VO)

I had just given Shep my necklace as a thank you, but screwed myself over in the process because letting Shep go meant that Sheriff Grady had no real reason to let my father go. So I figured I would just hold

(MORE)

DIXIE (cont'd)
 Eugene as ransom instead in hopes
 of completing my mission. It didn't
 work.

INT. MAIN BUILDING, KITCHEN/DEN - NIGHT - RECENT PAST

Dixie positions the camera in front of Eugene.

DIXIE
 Repeat after me. "To whom it may
 concern; My name is Eugene Marshall
 Scours, ex employee of the Bureau
 of Land Management, based on my
 experiences with the Bruiser family
 I can full heartedly testify on
 there behalf when I say" --

EUGENE
 That I can fully testify on their
 behalf that before I met Dixie
 Bruiser, I didn't know what love
 was --

DIXIE
 -- "and that I will remain here at
 the Snapdragon Wildlife Refuge
 until the land which is
 appropriately theirs is returned,
 and that Hanovi Bruiser is released
 from prison, under the condition
 that Dixie take his place" --

EUGENE
 -- and I will continue to remain
 here until I convince Dixie that I
 had nothing to do with the current
 situation that we are in. Kind of.

Dixie stops the camera.

DIXIE
 Do you love me?

EUGENE
 Very funny..Look, I might be a
 little crazy and I recognize that
 about myself, but I'm not past
 oblivion. So I want you to tell me
 why I would do all this shit and
 put you in harm's way. I don't want
 to hurt you, that's the last thing

(MORE)

EUGENE (cont'd)

I would do. I'm insulted at the insinuation. Look at me; can you honestly see me dressing up as a fucking Parrot for any other reason than a good one? Penny's never coming back, Dixie --

DIXIE

Stop saying that. You don't know that.

EUGENE

No, I do know that. I definitely know. Only me and the Lord know what's inside this melon. So just give me a minute to explain before I bleed to death. That's all I want. Please?

DIXIE

I'll sit and I may even listen, but that's about it.

EUGENE

Is it too much to ask to uncuff me? Okay, well, try not to be upset. There's roughly two million dollars in natural gas beneath the ranch and the rights belong to some rich guy somewhere. Some rich guy who works for the B.L.M.. That's why they wanted your ranch.

DIXIE

I'm angry about the house, not what's beneath it. Is that what I'm supposed to be upset about? Something that doesn't belong to me?

EUGENE

I thought you'd bat an eye or two, but no that's not it. First I wanted to defend myself regarding all this clusterfuck nonsense that happened tonight. Please don't roll your eyes I hate it when you do that...Okay...I was bribed to pose as the Animal Safety Syndicate's leader because of my connections with the B.L.M. Don't get up, don't get up!..Can you really blame me?

(MORE)

EUGENE (cont'd)

Not only do I get a chance to see you after all these years, but I get paid for it too? I mean, how was I to know these fuckers would man-with-no-name it for a little bit of money? Well, I suppose it's a little more than a little bit. It's like two million, but it's not worth all this. I thought they just wanted to get a rise out of some important people and say some cool stuff. Can't blame them really, they know not what they do. The oldest member of the group is like twenty seven or something. They're fucking children, babe --

DIXIE

-- Don't call me babe. We broke up four years ago.

EUGENE

Actually ya just left with my car, but who am I to split hairs right?

DIXIE

Why did they choose you specifically?

EUGENE

'Cause I'm the man. I got loopholes, inside information, names, numbers, e-t-c. They coulda-maybe pulled it off with a kidnapped cop or two, but, I mean, take a look around you.

DIXIE

So none of this was for the animals?

EUGENE

They set the S.P.C.A. on fire last year.

DIXIE

They didn't need to come here to get the money.

EUGENE

Not particularly, no. But I'm sure kidnapping the girl with the key to

(MORE)

EUGENE (cont'd)

the treasure chest felt more right than wrong.

DIXIE

Key? What key? I don't have a key anymore. That's why you're dressed up as a Parrot and I'm video taping it...Here's what I think, and I know I've always been the cynical one out of the bunch, but here it goes; You tried to save me tonight. Whether or not your intentions are good doesn't really matter. Whether you've been planning this all along and the pieces fell perfectly into place, or if it all took a nose dive from the moment you stepped into the refuge doesn't matter either. Nor does it matter if it is complete and utter chance that I'm here, you're here and the rest of these people are here as well, and have a predatory thirst for bloodshed. None of it matters because I can't be saved. Do you hear that plain enough? So, I'm gonna ask you again; why are you here?

Dixie shines the lamp into Eugene's face. Eugene, shades still on, looks into the light and a single tear falls down his cheek.

EUGENE

I know that ranch means a whole helluva lot to you, and that getting it back is going to prove to the world that justice can be won, that wrong can turn right, that shit's all connected and shit. But I'm here to tell you it's a crap shoot, kid. Nothing means anything. That necklace you tossed to the game warden earlier, like a fucking good luck penny? Where'd you get it at?

DIXIE

You already know where I got it.

EUGENE

Say it.

DIXIE

My mom.

EUGENE

Where'd she get it from?

DIXIE

Snapdragon Jewelers, why?

EUGENE

She ever give it to you herself?

DIXIE

Why are you digging up stuff?

EUGENE

I couldn't of said it better myself. So Hanovi gave it to you, right? She left it as a keepsake after she ducked y'all?...Reach into my pocket. Go ahead.

DIXIE

There's nothing in there.

EUGENE

You sure? Check the other one.

DIXIE

Your hair brush? What about it?

EUGENE

You don't see a piece of paper in there? Little piece of paper. Shit, must have left it at the house! Damn it! It's like before you go on a vacation, you always forget something that you need! All I needed was that little white, fucking piece of paper!

A floor board creaks behind them, Dixie swivels.

FOX

Dixie Bruiser, don't even think about it. I know karate... Geney, you're gonna die in here tonight. You're gonna burn alive, and if you're innocent, well, pat yourself on the back for dying a martyr.

(MORE)

FOX (cont'd)

That club's desperate for members anyway. I'm sure of it. I'll try and forget I saw that burger wrapper fall out of your pocket at the last meeting down there at St. Pete's.

Fox flings gasoline on the walls and floor. Chucks the can at the wall. Walks over to dead Pig, punts him the head, picks up his pistol, checks the chamber.

DIXIE

You're a real shot in the arm. Who are you?

FOX

Reinforcement...it means back up, dumbass. What kind of fund raiser you hail from? Now, you get two options; first one is this..I say you get a ten second head start and that you should run really really fast into those woods, you listen, and do exactly as I say, and if I catch you, I drag you back here and shoot you right through those rosy cheeks of yours while Eugene watches. Or, on the off chance that I don't catch you and you make it out of the woods alive and the cops don't get you..you're a wild Goose in Winter, you're free, congrats. The second option is this; I tell you that you get a ten second head start and you don't listen, you don't run really really fast into those woods, you try something cute, and I cut you, a lot. Once for every tear I've shed tonight and sister --

-- PUMMPHK -- Dixie clocks Fox right in the mouth, Fox stumbles back.

Fox tackles her, gets Dixie around the throat, straddles her. Dixie knees her right in the crotch, runs top speed out into the night.

Fox gets on her feet, tears toward the door with Pig's pistol.

Frog coughs, wakes up, groggily takes in the commotion, on the verge of death, grunts in pain as he drags himself toward the hallway, a trail of blood smears behind him.

EUGENE

Hey, Frog. Can you get the cuff key off the table there? I didn't mean any of that shit I said, I swear. You get me out of this, the Animal Safety Syndicate is yours. You'll be great, man. Lights, fifty fucking feet high! Right? Am I right?

Frog stops dragging himself, fixes his gaze on the hatchet, thinks, throws the hatchet at Eugene's feet.

EUGENE (CONTD)

Hey where you going? Come on man. Hey! Hey! Okay, okay, here we go.

Eugene grabs the hatchet with his free hand and hacks away at the hook on the rafter that his other hand is cuffed to. Nothing.

Eugene hacks at the chain of the cuff, the cuff itself, nothing.

The gravity of the situation hits him...Eugene takes a deep breath, clenches his thumb..Wiggles it back and forth.

EUGENE (CONTD)

One, two --

-- CRUNCH -- he slams his cuffed fist back and forth against the pillar, screams. Tries to pull his hand out, not quite enough space even with the broken thumb.

Eugene looks at the hatchet, grabs it, touches it to the raw flesh of his wrist, three practice swings, and without further adieu, plummets the sharpened weight of the hatchet down onto his wrist, severing his hand from his arm.

CAMERA TRACKS Frog dragging himself past Eugene and into the HALLWAY as Eugene rolls around on the hardwood floor in his own arterial spray.

Frog reaches the SPARE BEDROOM mattress, climbs onto it, dies.

CAMERA MOVES BACK TO Eugene as he lurches out the front door toward the fire pit on the FRONT LAWN, embers still glowing.

Eugene presses his fleshy stump to the glowing embers of the fire, screams himself hoarse, passes out.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - FOX CHASING DIXIE - SCENE SEQUENCE

A) Brambles and bushes rip at Dixie's skin as she high tails it to freedom. Fox screams Dixie's name over and over again, white hot on her heel.

B) Fox picks up speed, spots Dixie through the trees, aims the pistol --

C) -- BOOM -- a bullet rips through a pine tree, bark shrapnel tears into Dixie's arm, she hits the ground, gets up, fights the pain -- BOOM -- bark cuts across Dixie's face...she clutches her jaw, shimmies it back and forth, runs faster, looks back.

D) Just the woods behind Dixie, Fox out of sight. Pine trees bend back and forth with the wind. Fox's voice becomes fainter and fainter, blends with the Cicadas, almost as if the woods themselves are screaming Dixie's name.

E) In the distance Dixie spots a BIG ASS TREE out in front of SHEPHERD'S CABIN, Dixie scales the big ass tree.

EXT. BIG ASS TREE - NIGHT

Dixie peers down as Fox rears out of the cut. Fox stops, looks around, spots Shepherd's cabin, then looks up the tree, scratches her chin.

Fox jogs off toward the cabin... clanging and banging echo from somewhere close by.. Fox returns with a HUSQVARNA CHAINSAW. Jerks back the pull chord.

DIXIE

Imagine this, huh? Girl against girl? See what they do? Pitting us against each other?

FOX

I don't want to hear it..Here's the third option, since you've exhausted the other two; you climb down from that Pine tree so I can teach you a lesson in post-modern art, or you can wait until I yell "timber," and, yeah. I'll give you ten seconds.

DIXIE
Mississippi seconds?

FOX
One-one thousand.

DIXIE
That's the same time interval.

FOX
No it's not and now you get five.

DIXIE
If I'm gonna die ugly I got some questions of my own. First; how old are you?

FOX
Twenty one tomorrow. Oh, shit. I'm twenty one!

DIXIE
Happy birthday, honey. Now walk out of these woods and go to college.

FOX
Already did, dropped out.

DIXIE
For this? Lighting a strange woman on fire, and for what? What did I do to you, personally, to deserve this?

FOX
It's simple. "Anyone who owns or kills an animal deserves to be treated inhumanely, by virtue of the laws of the food chain in the twenty first century, and the inherent paradox of animal-in-man relations and nutrition."

DIXIE
That's why you dropped out of college? What was your major?

FOX
Ugh, fine. Botany.

DIXIE
Get out, me too. What's your name?

Fox thinks, puts her hands on her hips, sighs.

FOX

Jamie. What did you do to Geney? By the way?

DIXIE

Nothing bad enough to be stuck in a tree convincing you not kill me, and you know what? I just ate some Jello after not eating for a week and it was glorious. It reminded me that when I'm out here, shut off from the rest of the world that I can still enjoy desert. Because I love desert, it's like my favorite thing, but you know what I don't like? Cleaning Deer, and I don't like killing them either, but when I cut them down the center and the flesh curls around the blade and I'm trying not to retch my guts out I remind myself that I'm doing it to survive.. and I treat the Deer with respect because I love animals, but you didn't know that, you don't know a lot of things and that's fine because your organization is well-intentioned but completely unrealistic. I'm sorry, Jamie, but that's just the way it is. It's not like we're out here skinning the last white Rhino.

FOX

Well, I miss my fucking boyfriend, and I'll be honest, after this little chat I respect you, I might even have a soft spot for you, but, and this is a big but, my boyfriend's death is kinda-technically-inadvertently-definitely your fault. Why are you crying?

DIXIE

I miss my mom, Jamie. Can I ask you one more question?

FOX

Go ahead.

DIXIE

You know that expression "home is where the heart is?"

FOX

Yeah, everybody knows that expression..Oh, okay. I see what you did there. You don't have one, I do, I'm lucky, your not. That was good. That was -- look, I'm sorry, but I gotta kill you.

DIXIE

I got nothing, Jamie. I thought I did, but I don't. The least you could do is leave me alone. So, truly I say to you; stop while you're ahead.

FOX

No. We're both in these woods for the same reason, and that's to get a point across. So, hello-goodbye.

Fox jerks the pull string on the chainsaw, starts her up -- REEENGKK REEENGK REEEEEENNNNGK -- buries it into the base of the tree, saw dust sprays like a fountain, little over halfway through...almost there -- SHHHNGK -- a spear impales Fox's head like a Watermelon.

Hanovi appears out of the darkness. Steps on Fox's head and rips the spear out, blood pools over sawdust and leaves.

The big ass tree shimmies and creaks, any movement at all could send it plummeting to the ground. Dixie sees her father for the first time in years.

HANOVI

Daughter, get out of that tree.

DIXIE

What if I don't want to, father. I can tell from all the way up here that you're drunk again. How long did that take? Are you high too?

HANOVI

If you don't jump, I'm gonna make you jump. Either way you're going to jump into my arms right now, and I'm going to catch you. You understand?

Dixie jumps, but far out of his reach, Hanovi roars and leaps, misses, cringes "no way she just did that," opens his eyes. Awestruck. There sits Shep with his nature made tourniquet, Dixie in his arms, alive.

SHEPHERD
Evening, linebacker.

HANOVI
Tip top of it, quarterback.

Dixie's middle finger is snapped in half at a ninety degree angle. Hanovi breaks his makeshift spear in half over his knee.

HANOVI (CONTD)
Come here. Dixie! Come here! Sit in my lap. Okay, consider this your breaching branch..you're going to have to bite down on this really hard.

SHEPHERD
Embrace that inner John Wayne of yours. You're tougher than the hide of a Saltwater Crocodile, matter of fact just bite down on that stick as if you were one.

HANOVI
I love you. Ready? One, two, three
--

-- CRUNCH -- Dixie doesn't externalize the pain at all, it's more of an implosion. Snot squirts out of her nose.

DIXIE
..I love you too.

SHEPHERD
Grady called back up, hon.

DIXIE
My people?

SHEPHERD
Yep.

DIXIE
How many cops?

SHEPHERD
A lot. I could see blue and red flashes for miles back there.

DIXIE
Tell them to call more. They're gonna need 'em. Dad, you're
(MORE)

DIXIE (cont'd)
 Rudolph, Shep, hand him your
 flashlight. We're getting Eugene.

EXT. DEAD END/ENTRANCE TO THE WOODS - NIGHT

THE ENTIRE SNAPDRAGON SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT squeezes into the
 little gravel road.

KNUCKLES WHITEN around night sticks..

SHOTGUNS are pumped...

FINGERS tap holsters.....

WHITE FISTS WRAPPED IN LEASHES hold back GERMAN SHEPHERDS,
 salivating, anxious, ready to be commanded.....

Grady strides through the sea of cops, gets on his radio as
 DIXIE'S FOLLOWERS are lead to the woods and
 released...unsupervised....all by themselves.

Grady watches Dixie's followers disappear one by one, lifts
 his radio to his mustache.

GRADY
 (to radio)
 Hey big brother, tell Dixie I got
 every man, woman and child here,
 plus the kitchen sink and minus the
 flavor aid. Dixie? You hear that?
 Come on and meet me out here and
 all your pagan friends can go
 frolic and dance naked and
 everything else y'all do. Dixie
 Bruiser, what the hell's your
 twenty, girl? Come on now.

EXT. WILDLIFE REFUGE/MAIN BUILDING, FIRE PIT - NIGHT

Dixie is on her knees checking Eugene's pulse. Shepherd lays
 collapsed against a log, drifting in and out of
 consciousness, his entire pant leg soaked in blood. Hanovi
 paces back and forth, eyes locked on Eugene.

The radio beeps, causing Eugene to rear awake, he sees
 Hanovi, glares.

DIXIE
 Eugene. I gotta stay here and fill
 my end of the deal. You and Dad are
 (MORE)

DIXIE (cont'd)
going to escape. You're going to run as far as you can and he's going to take you to the closest hospital that's furthest away from here.

SHEPHERD
Was that a paradox?

HANOVI
Contradictory statement, actually. Slight difference.

RADIO
(Grady)
Dixie you got fifteen seconds before I perform my job.

EUGENE
I'm not going anywhere unless it's with you. We're running away together to that little shack at the Pamunkey reservation, remember? Like we planned? We're gonna grow our own tobacco and get Lung cancer together and eat corn and shit? Hanovi's going back in that cage where he belongs.

HANOVI
That's a cage I wouldn't rattle, Geney.

Eugene rips the pistol out of Dixie's hand, presses it to Hanovi's forehead.

EUGENE
How about I turn you into a fucking periscope, huh? How about that? How about them Grannies, fuck face?

Dixie throws a rock at Eugene, hits him on the shoulder. Eugene turns around in disbelief. She throws another one, he ducks.

DIXIE
Apparently, this is what our relationship has come to.

EUGENE

Ow! Damn it, stop. This isn't third grade.

DIXIE

May as well be.

EXT. WOODS OUTSIDE BUILDING - NIGHT - CLOSEBY

Dixie's followers gingerly step around LARGE BLUE LUMPS peppered throughout the woods as they approach the main building. These large blue lumps are OFFICERS, hiding.

EXT. WILDLIFE REFUGE/MAIN BUILDING, FIRE PIT - NIGHT

Dixie and Shepherd watch as Dixie and Eugene throw rocks at each other like children.

EUGENE

You should've said goodbye!

RADIO

(Grady)

Alright. That's it, fifteen and counting; One...

DIXIE

Ow! I'm sorry, okay? I was young. I should've said something before I left!

EUGENE

Ow! You did say something before you left and it was yes! Not just any yes, but an emphatic yes, an emphatic yes in front of the Grand canyon! Cheesy? Of course. Do I give a shit? Of course not! You're my fucking muse, okay?

RADIO

(Grady)

Two.

DIXIE

Leaving you was the hardest thing I ever did, but I'm estranged, damn it! You get to visit your family whenever you want!

EUGENE

I'm your shoulder! Always have been!

DIXIE

We didn't work out and that's okay. People don't gel sometimes, Eugene. They fight, they break up, sometimes they fight and fall out of love! Or sometimes, sometimes, somebody just stops loving somebody else for a reason they can't put their finger on.

EUGENE

Do you love me or not, D?

DIXIE

I can't.

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP -- Eugene gives her a sardonic ovation with his hand and the inside of his stumped arm.

EUGENE

Now's the part where you ask me if I know calisthenics.

DIXIE

I'm not asking you that, I don't know what it means.

RADIO

(Grady)

Three, four.

EUGENE

It means that if I could pull my foot out of my mouth I wouldn't. It means that after your mom disappeared you were controlling, quick to attach, quick to detach. You drank the Atlantic's worth in whiskey. You couldn't commit, you couldn't not commit. You fucked around on me and yes, in case you were wondering, I was aware of that, but I let it slide. I let it slide because I thought I could change you, but I couldn't and I still can't. The only thing I can't ever change is that memory of us twisting away outside the motel room...and I thank you for that.

RADIO
 (Grady)
Five, six.

DIXIE
 What are you doing?

RADIO
 (Grady)
Seven, eight, nine.

Eugene walks over to the main building, pulls out an American Flag Zippo and tosses it inside. The place goes up like a dead Christmas tree.

EUGENE
 Now we have to leave, or get shot.
 But, Hanovi's got something he
 wants to say to you before he tucks
 his tail all the way back to the
 slammer. That's why you're here
 right?

RADIO
 (Grady)
Ten, eleven, twelve.

HANOVI
 Your mother didn't buy you that
 necklace.

DIXIE
 Who did?

Hanovi and Eugene trade a look.

HANOVI
 I did. She didn't leave us because
 she was an activist in the American
 Indian Association. She wasn't an
 activist in any association. She
 left because she found someone
 else. She's never coming back.

RADIO
 (Grady)
Thirteen, fourteen, fifteen.

Eugene aims the pistol he took from Dixie -- BAM -- Hanovi takes one in the thigh. Doesn't even flinch or make a noise, just takes it and slowly drops to the ground.

DIXIE
Eugene!!

EUGENE
I ain't gonna hurt him.

COP IN WOODS
(o.s.)
SHOTS FIRED!

As Dixie cradles Hanovi in her arms -- CLICK CLICK
CLICKCLICKCLICK CLICK -- a myriad of mag lite beams light up
the wood line, turning it into a green sheet of white polka
dots.

EXT. WOODS OUTSIDE BUILDING - NIGHT - CLOSEBY

ALL OF THE OFFICERS jump out of their hiding spots and yell
at Dixie's followers *"go, go, go, follow your fucking
orders, don't make me shoot you, last fucking nerve"*

Dixie's followers look at each other, then the officers.

DIXIE'S FOLLOWERS
You can take her house, but you
can't take her home!

They charge the officers and the forest erupts into absolute
chaos and gun fire.

EXT. DEAD END/ENTRANCE TO THE WOODS - NIGHT

Grady, enraged, jumps up and down on the ground, stomping
with balled fists as THE REMAINING OFFICERS storm past him.

FISTS LET GO OF LEASHES, German Shepherds bound ravenously
toward their targets.

EXT. WOODS OUTSIDE BUILDING - NIGHT - CLOSEBY

A German Shepherd tears open A FOLLOWERS throat.

A night stick knocks ANOTHER FOLLOWERS eyeball clean out of
their socket.

AND YET ANOTHER FOLLOWER wraps their handcuffs around the
throat of a deputy with a HUGE MUSTACHE, blood squirts all
over the mustache.

A FAT COP bites the finger off of A FOURTH FOLLOWER and
sprays them with mace.

THE REST OF THE OFFICERS make headway toward the refuge.

EXT. WILDLIFE REFUGE/MAIN BUILDING, FIRE PIT - NIGHT

MORE OFFICERS pour into the front yard, guns drawn. Dixie doesn't move, just continues to hold her father.

HANOVI

Get up with your hands above your head, and back up slowly. Stop crying and do it.

Dixie listens. The officers scream at her, FINGERS GET HAPPY ON TRIGGERS....

Hanovi gets up, backs up in line with Dixie like a human shield.....

The officers panic -- BAM BAM BAM -- Hanovi's hits the ground, just as he does, Eugene leaps like an Olympian in front of Dixie -- BAM BAM BAM -- Eugene drops.....

Grady runs out of the cut, gapes at the chaos, sees Shepherd passed out against the log, Hanovi near death.....

Eugene drags himself toward the burning building...

Dixie continues to back up slowly.....

EUGENE

Dixie, there's a Cafe Bustelo coffee can next to a shack at the Pamunkey Indian reservation. Sitting right beneath the garden hose. The gas rights to some rich guy are in it. All you gotta do is sign.

Dixie keeps backing up until she is almost around the back of the burning building.

Eugene drags himself up the stairs.

GRADY

Why do you want to burn you idiot!?

EUGENE

What's that the college kids say? Pre-game?

INT. MAIN BUILDING, KITCHEN/DEN - NIGHT

Eugene pulls himself up onto one of the chairs. The flames lick at his arms, he trembles.

Eugene stares at the crucifix hanging from the rosary next to the light switch by the front door as he burns alive.

Eugene's chair topples over, a pair of hands grab him by the throat. It's Horse.

Eugene's legs go limp, Horse drags himself over to the light switch. With his last breath -- CLICK -- the light goes out above the altar.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - ELSEWHERE

Dixie crawls along thorns, rocks and dirt, shredding her fore arms. Barks and yells echo in the distance.

Police flashers wash over her and the woods as she makes her way toward the main road.

Dixie stops. Looks over. Sees the A.S.S. van.

EXT. UNMARKED GRAVE - MORNING

Dixie walks away from a shoddily covered pit in the earth, Rooster's mask on top of a stick, jutting from the ground.

Dixie climbs into the A.S.S. van and burns rubber.

EXT. PAMUNKEY INDIAN RESERVATION - DAY - SUNRISE

Row upon row of Tobacco leaves, vast, ripened, ready for harvest, the rows seems to touch the blue cloudless sky.

Off in the corner, microscopic in proportion to the landscape is a modest little one story house.

EXT. SHACK/PORCH - DAY - SUNRISE

Dixie kicks up her sun tanned feet, picks a couple of Peyote buttons out of a Mason jar that rests next to a SHITTY LITTLE RADIO and pops them in her mouth.

She looks great, no longer in the throes of a hunger strike.

She washes the buttons down with a bottle of something and rolls a bunch of tobacco leaves, making a miniature baseball bat-sized stoogie.

RADIO

(Shepherd's voice)

Dixie, if you're out there and you're listening..I still got your necklace, baby. It was a mighty fine gesture of you to give it to me and all --

TIRE BURN OUT TO:

INT. ASS VAN - DAY - DRIVING

Dixie, clad in heart shaped sunglasses, taps her thumbs on the wheel to a song on Rebel Rouser radio. Hanovi calls in. She doesn't really notice at first, but when she does she can't believe her ears.

RADIO

(Hanovi's voice)

...every day. He does this to me because that necklace your mother gave to you, well, I don't know how to say it -- (Grady interrupts him)....

Dixie drops her cigarette and it lands next to a piece of paper, she can't quite reach it, she pulls over, grabs the cigarette, takes a drag, puts the van in gear, stops "wait a minute."

Next to where her cigarette landed is a piece of receipt paper, she picks it up and reads.

Dixie strains, puts it together, cries.

INT. REBEL ROUSER RADIO STATION - DAY

Rebel Rouser just sits there, crestfallen. He stands up and claps. He shakes Dixie's hand. Dixie puts the little piece of receipt paper on the desk.

DIXIE

I want you to keep this. Consider it a love memento for getting us all in the same room.

Dixie splits.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE REBEL ROUSER STUDIO - DAY

Dixie slurps from a water fountain, wipes her mouth, turns, stops. Grady leans up against a wall, twirling a pair of handcuffs around his finger.

DIXIE

Found out where my mom went.

GRADY

Yeah? Shame ya'll can't reunite.

DIXIE

Not in this life at least.

Grady looks at her, thinks. His eyes widen.

GRADY

Are you shittin' me?

DIXIE

I am not shitting you.

Grady kicks the water fountain so hard the casing falls off. Calms himself down.

GRADY

The moment you walk out that door,
I'm coming after you. With
everything I got. So, rub some dirt
on it and run faster than you ever
thought you could.

Dixie turns and walks out the opposite exit.

INT. REBEL ROUSER RADIO STATION - DAY

Rebel Rouser pulls the mic to his face one final time.

REBEL ROUSER

Well, there you have it. We'll end
tonight with a feel good-er. Little
ditty by the name o' "tell me
something good," performed by Shaka
Khan and Rufus. The better version.
It's got guitar solos. Nighty
night.

Jeff grabs the beaver cage. Rebel rouser notices a little CICADA SKELETON on top of the little white sheet of receipt paper that Dixie left behind.

Rebel Rouser blows the Cicada Skeleton away. Looks at the receipt again, shakes his head. It says this:

Snapdragon Jewelers

3/3/01 -- VISA -- Eugene Scours.

*****8117

Winklestein "Jade star" collection, necklace, silver.

JEFF

You know, Cicadas; their skin
sloughs upon birth.

Jeff, the beaver and Rebel Rouser exit. Rebel Rouser clicks off the light.

THE END.