

Riverside Afternoon

FADE IN:

EXT. RIVERSIDE - DAY

A sunny afternoon brights up the scenery. A river runs through the woods and high trees give shade enough to the perfect spot for a picnic.

By a station wagon, a family is sitting on a large blanket. They have just finish their lunch.

A beer can in hand, DAVE is a bearded man in his late thirties. He wears pleated kaki shorts, a golf shirt, sneakers.

CHERYL has the same age. Adorable, sweet and strong, a happiness spark in her eyes.

LORI (15) is an artfully bedraggled burnout kid. She is sitting at the foot of a tree with a MP3 player that seems to be grafted inside her ears. She appears to not be aware of everything around, tossing her hair to the rhythm of the music.

RANDY is the typical radical 13-year-old boy. His nostril piercing and the skull printed tee-shirt tells the story of a wannabe rebel. With a pocket knife, he sharps a piece of wood.

By the river and facing the water, on a folding chair, LILLY (60's) is dozing under her stray lacy hat.

Relaxed, Dave enjoys the sun and lays on the blanket, his head on Cheryl's thighs. His wife lowers the head to him, pulls aside her hair, and caresses his forehead. Dave closes his eyes.

DAVE

What I'd give to be back when we
were young. You remember our
first kiss? We were right here.

CHERYL

I remember. Everyone came here.

Dave opens his eyes and, as one, he turns his head with Cheryl to the tree they are sitting under. On the stump, a heart is carved along with two names: Cheryl and Dave.

CHERYL

Who would know then our future
and the two beautiful children
we'd had?

They both turn their head to Lori and Randy and they two can't help a sardonic smile.

CHERYL
Never thought it would be so
difficult to be a mother.

DAVE
(sarcastic)
As long as they stay away from
real troubles.

CHERYL
You should be more often there.

DAVE
Yes, I know.
(sigh)
But, today, enjoy.

He closes his eyes again.

CHERYL
(to herself)
Never thought it would be so
difficult to be a mother.

She keeps caressing his forehead.

DAVE
Your mother made it. Why wouldn't
you?

Cheryl turns her head to Lily. The old woman takes a
glimpse at her watch.

CHERYL
I'm not her. Never was. Never had
her strength or her will though
she's been always blue all her life.

DAVE
Come on. I'm sure she's been happy.
Although she raised you by herself.

CHERYL
Wish I'd knew my real father.
(beat)
Never knew why he left us.

Dave takes her hand.

DAVE
I never will.

CHERYL
I know.

She closes her eyes.

LATER

Shade has reached the blanket. A fly buzzes around Dave's face and lands on his cheek. With the wave of his hand, he chases the insect.

His sudden move makes Cheryl jump.

CHERYL
Finally awake.

DAVE
(opening his eyes)
I wasn't sleeping.

CHERYL
(with a smile)
Sure. Just snoring.

Dave stretches and sits.

DAVE
What time is it?

CHERYL
Almost four.

DAVE
(standing up)
Time to go.

Cheryl gets up and starts folding the blanket.

DAVE
Randy! We pack up!

Randy barely turns his head to his father and draws a heavy sigh. He folds his knife and puts it in his rear pocket.

DAVE
Lori darling!

Still listening to her music, Lori doesn't react.

DAVE
Lori!

Not a move from the girl. Dave picks up a piece of wood and throws it to Lori. The wood touches her leg. Frowning, Lori turns to her father who claps his hands twice.

DAVE
C'mon young lady!

Reluctantly, Lori gets up.

Dave picks up the picnic basket.

CHERYL
Dave. Where's mum?

DAVE
Mmm?

CHERYL
Where's mum?

Dave turns his head to the folding chair by the river. Lily is nowhere to be seen. Her hat is on the ground.

DAVE
She's --
(shrugging)
-- somewhere.

CHERYL
Mum!

Dave puts the basket in the back of the car.

CHERYL
(worried)
Mum?! Where are you?!

Dave joins her.

DAVE
Lily!

Wind rustling through the trees and the river giggling are the only sounds.

Lori looks up at her parents like she was emerging from dreamland. She looks at them calling out but can't hear them. She takes her earbuds out.

CHERYL
(pacing to the
riverside)
Mum!!

As her father passes her by, Lori stops him.

LORI
Where's grandma?

DAVE
We're looking for her,
sweetheart.
(he turns to Randy)
All of us.

Dave steps to the riverside, joining Cheryl.

Randy sighs and, straggling, walks to his father.

Cheryl's worried eyes searches over the river.

DAVE

I don't think she'd be there. We
should have hear her.

CHERYL

(with sob in her voice)
She can't swim!

DAVE

Why the Hell would she go for a
swim?

Lori joins them at her turn, tears in her eyes.

LORI

Grandma!

CHERYL

Mum!!

DAVE

She should be somewhere.

(beat)

Okay. Randy, you check up the
stream.

Randy stares at him.

DAVE

Move, for God's sake!

Randy turns his back and walks along the riverside.

DAVE

(to Lori)

Down.

Lori just nods and paces to the other direction.

DAVE

(to Cheryl)

I'm gonna look around. You stay
here, just in case she'd be back.

At the verge of the nervous breakdown, Cheryl nods and
watches with anguish her husband walking away.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Dave walks through the woods.

DAVE

Lily!

EXT. RIVERSIDE - DAY

Sobbing, Cheryl wipes her nose up with her sleeve. She desperately looks over the river for any sign.

EXT. RIVERSIDE - UP THE STREAM - DAY

Randy, his hands in his pockets, wanders around, looking up.

EXT. RIVERSIDE - DOWN THE STREAM - DAY

Lori clumsily walks on the river pebbles.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

As Dave carries on walking, a gunshot resounds through the woods.

Several birds fly away.

Then, a second gunshot --

EXT. RIVERSIDE - DAY

Cheryl jumps in surprise as she hears the gunshots.

EXT. RIVERSIDE - UP THE STREAM - DAY

Although the gunshots, Randy, keeps on wandering around.

EXT. RIVERSIDE - DOWN THE STREAM - DAY

After the gunshots, Lori freezes.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Out of breath, Dave runs to the direction where he had heard the shotguns.

DAVE

Cheryl!!

EXT. RIVERSIDE - DAY

Disabled, Cheryl scans around her.

CHERYL

Dave!!

EXT. RIVERSIDE - DOWN THE STREAM - DAY

Lori dashes back to her mother on the pebbles, unbalanced.

LORI

Mummy!!

EXT. WOODS - DAY

As he was lost, Dave stops and spins around, trying to find his way through the woods.

DAVE

Cheryl! Lori! Randy!

He holds his breath for a short while and listens.

CHERYL (V.O.)

Dave!!

He takes a puff of air and resumes running.

EXT. RIVERSIDE - DAY

Hyperventilating and her arms folded, Cheryl doesn't know what to do. She scans the woods in hope to see Dave.

LORI (V.O.)

Mummy!

Cheryl turns her head and notices Lori who runs to her.

CHERYL

Darling! Are you alright?!

Lori shelters into her arms.

LORI

I'm fine mum. Where's daddy?!

CHERYL

I don't know.

DAVE (V.O.)

Cheryl!

Dave springs from behind the bushes and sprints to Cheryl and Lori.

CHERYL
Dave! What'd happened?!

Out of breath, Dave joins them and takes them in his arms.

DAVE
You two OK?

Cheryl and Lori both nod.

CHERYL
Where's Randy?

DAVE
He was supposed to walk up the
stream.
(he points to the way
Randy took earlier)
I'm gonna check.

He starts to pace.

CHERYL
We're coming with you!

She takes Lori by the hand and joins Dave.

DAVE
Randy!

They walk for a while when they hear a bush shuddering.
They stop. Cheryl grabs Dave's arm.

Randy appears, as white as a bedsheet.

RANDY
Dad. Come here.

He just turns his head as to indicate something and steps
back into the woods.

DAVE
Are you OK?!

Dave, Cheryl, and Lori get along to him.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

As they cross through bushes, Dave, Cheryl, and Lori get
close to Randy. They freeze.

Lori and Cheryl fall into each other's arms, sobbing.
Dave's face is stunned.

Her dress unbuttoned, Lily lies on the ground under the body of an OLD BLACK MAN in a deadly embrace. He still has his hands around her face. A golden ring shines on his black skin finger.

In Lily's open hand, an old gun.

Lily and the black man both have a bloody bullet hole on their temple.

Dave pulls his son back and turns back to hold Cheryl and Lori in his arms, trying to comfort them.

DAVE

The bastard tried to rape her. I don't know how she dealt to take his gun.

Randy notices a piece of paper on the ground. He picks it up.

In his hand, he realizes it is a folded photograph. He unfolds it.

DAVE

Let's call the cops and --

RANDY

Dad.

Dave turns back to his son.

Randy hands him the photograph. Trembling, Dave gazes at it and freezes again.

INSERT

It is an old black and white photograph of two radiant people: a young white woman and a young black man. Lily was 18. She looks very much in love.

On a part of the photo, some feminine hand had written:

NEITHER WITH YOU, NOR WITHOUT YOU

FADE OUT: