

Summer Of Fear

By

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INT. COURTROOM - 1969 - DAY

JAMES PUTTNAM(24), dressed in a suit and tie, fresh jail house hair cut, sits quietly with his court appointed attorney awaiting the verdict.

He does not look up when the JUDGE speaks.

JUDGE

Jury foreman do you have a verdict?

The JURY FOREMAN stands and looks down at a piece of paper.

JURY FOREMAN

Yes, we do your Honor. In the matter of the State of Tennessee versus James Henry Puttnam, we the jury find the accused to be guilty as charged in the first degree murder of Connie Parker.

A gasp and loud cheers erupt from the courtroom as several news photographers rush up and flash pictures of the now convicted murderer, who still sits quietly with his attorney.

JUDGE

(motioning towards the jury)

I thank you, and the great state of Tennessee thanks you. You are dismissed. Mr. Puttnam, will you please stand while I pronounce sentence?

Puttnam and his attorney rise. He is now animated, eyes wild, with a smirking evil grin on his face.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

James Henry Puttnam, you have been found guilty of the heinous, cold blooded murder of Connie Parker. Do you have anything to say before sentence is pronounced?

PUTTNAM

I'd do it again...If you give me a chance. So Judge you better never let me out...

The courtroom erupts again, but eventually is brought under control by the Judge, beating his gavel.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE

Order, order, there will be order
or I'll clear the courtroom.

The Judge continues to beat his gavel as his anger grows.

JUDGE(CONT'D)

James Henry Puttnam, you are hereby
sentenced to death by electrocution
at the State's earliest
convenience. May God have mercy on
your soul. You'll need it, son.
Bailiff, take charge of this sack
of shit and get him the hell out of
my courtroom.

Puttnam enraged, suddenly breaks free from the bailiff's
grasp. Before anyone in the court can stop him, he is on the
Judge, hands around his neck strangling him.

Cops rush over, tear him from the Judge's neck and start
again to drag him out of the courtroom.

PUTTNAM

You're a dead man Judge...a dead
man.

EXT. STREET - NEW ORLEANS - 1946 - DAY

Cars going up and down the street, horns gently tapping,
children playing and laughing.

The door of the Putt residence in a poor New
Orleans neighborhood.

INT. PUTTNAM RESIDENCE - DAY

PUTTNAM'S FATHER BEATS three month old James violently with
a leather strap. The baby cries and screams.

PUTTNAM'S MOTHER tries to stop the beating but is knocked to
the floor herself. She crawls over to the telephone to call
the police as the beating continues...

MOTHER(O.S)

Operator...give me the police...

FATHER

You little bastard, I told you to
stop crying. I'll give you
something to cry about, you little
fucker.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER

Please stop! You'll kill him.

FATHER

I don't give a shit, I'll teach
this little spawn of yours to cry.

Father continues beating the child.

The baby SCREAMS loudly and cries.

The mother riffles through a desk drawer and pulls out a .38
caliber pistol.

BANG! She pulls the trigger, shooting Puttnam's father. He
lies in a pool of blood...

The police siren BLARES as the squad car pulls up in front
of the house.

Mother picks baby James up from his crib and comforts him
gently. She is still sobbing but manages to utter a few
words of consolation.

MOTHER

Don't worry James, I'll never let
that bastard father of yours hurt
you ever again, I promise.

The front door is kicked open with a SPLINTERING SOUND.

The police rush in to find Mrs. Puttnam holding baby James,
covered in blood...

INT. ORPHANAGE - BERTHING - 1955 - NIGHT

Rows of beds with sleeping children.

The sound of SNORES and breathing permeate the darkness.

The children are shackled to their iron bed posts by chains
that eerily fill the room with sounds of metallic CLANKING,
as the little ones turn in their sleep.

A single orderly patrols the isles, walking up and down, a
large flashlight in his hand...

He selects a BOY...Unlocks his chains and drags him into
another room in the darkness...

INT. ORPHANAGE - BERTHING - DAY

The children stand in front of their assigned racks.

SISTER MYRNA CONNOR, gray haired, evil shrew walks up and down like a beat cop on patrol. She carries a leather razor strap in her hand slapping it against her side as she walks.

She stops her rounds at one particular bunk.

Standing in front of it is a SHIVERING boy...JAMES HENRY PUTTNAM(9), blond haired, blue eyed, thin and frail.

MYRNA

James...What is this stain on your sheet?

JAMES

I don't know Sister...

There is a large yellow stain, shining brightly on the white bed sheet.

MYRNA

Well, I do...It is the mark of a little boy with no self control...a bed wetter, a weak willed little piss pot. What do you have to say for your self?

JAMES

(trembling)
Nothing...ma'am.

Myrna lashes James a couple of good licks with the razor strap.

MYRNA

Now pick up your cloak of shame and parade it for all to see...I want all the little children to see that James wet his bed like a little baby. I said parade boy...now.

James removes the sheet, wraps it around himself and parades amongst the rows of children.

All the children point and laugh at little James, who hides his head in disgrace under the yellow stained sheet.

MYRNA

Enough...enough. Join the other children now for morning prayer.

(CONTINUED)

The children all kneel by their bunks, heads bowed for prayer.

MYRNA

Dear God...bless these poor little children's pitiful souls...Help me to keep their feet on the path of righteousness. Give me strength and courage to keep them from eternal damnation. Show me the way...Show me the way, oh God, to give guidance and impart wisdom to these little bastards and miscreants. I pray you watch over them and keep them safe until such time as You call them home to Heaven to be with You Ole Lord. But in all things, not my will but yours be done...In Jesus' Holy name, Amen...

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

In the dimly lit orphanage basement a dead, mutilated cat hangs by a rope around it's neck. It swings slightly.

Entrails protrude from the cat's belly.

Blood is everywhere on the floor and walls.

A young boy hidden in the shadows stands, as if admiring his work.

INT. LUNCHROOM - DAY

Children, vacant eyes staring into nowhere, sit at bare tables eating a sparse meal of lumpy gruel and a piece of hard bread.

They eat in silence as Myrna patrols the room, with her strap clutched ominously in her hand.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Children dressed in dirty torn clothing, on hands and knees, scrub the floor with soap and water.

The SOUND of their brushes SCRUBBING fills the otherwise silent air...

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

The JANITOR(70), white haired, bent, gingerly enters the basement.

He looks through some boxes, shuffling through their contents, muttering to himself.

The MUTILATED CAT is SUDDENLY in his view...

He falls to the floor and looks back up at the animal in utter disbelief.

JANITOR
(crossing himself)
Jesus...Mother Mary of God...

He manages to pull himself back up off the floor trembling, wide eyed...

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Children with dirty mops, a bucket nearby, mop the floor of the old, run down, communal bathroom.

INT. DAY ROOM - DAY

All the children are standing in a line like military ranks, apprehensively, shivering.

Myrna walks up and down, enraged, slapping the razor strap against her hand and she paces.

MYRNA
I want to know...now...Which one of
you little evil bastards did it?
You know what I'm talking about.

The children stand quivering in silence...

MYRNA
I don't care if I have to whip all
you little heathens to death...I
will find out...Now who did
it...tell me now...

James steps forward, raising his hand, shamelessly and takes the blame.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

I did it...

Almost before the words are out of his mouth, Myrna is on him, beating him with her strap.

Two orderlies drag James out of the day room and to a closet, open the door and throw him in.

INT. CLOSET - DAY

James is in the closet, crammed with buckets and cleaning chemicals.

He sits on the floor with a content but evil look on his face...

EXT. BALL FIELD -DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: Three months later.

A baseball game is in full progress.

James is up to bat, he swings a couple of strokes waiting for a pitch.

The pitcher throws the first ball, James swings and misses.

James waits for the second pitch,

It is a fastball. James is too slow, the ball strikes him in the forehead with a loud THUMP, knocking him unconscious.

TIGHT ON James' face...

They crowd around him awestruck, not knowing what to do.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

James lays in a hospital bed still unconscious.

A DOCTOR, NURSE and a PRIEST from the orphanage discuss James' fate.

DOCTOR

James has been out for some time now...He's in a coma. That long without oxygen to his brain means there's a good chance he'll have permanent damage.

(CONTINUED)

NURSE

They say he wasn't breathing for several minutes, poor child...

PRIEST

Even if he pulls through...there's a good chance he won't ever be right in the head. Is that what you're saying doctor?

DOCTOR

Yes, I'm afraid so...he's in God's hands now Father...

The Father kneels next to the hospital bed and prays...

INT. ORPHANAGE - BERTHING - NIGHT

In the darkness a figure can be seen in the dimly lit berthing area. A boy is walking up and down the row of racks as if he is searching for someone.

He stops at a particular rack where a young boy of approximately seven innocently sleeps.

The older boy suddenly grabs the little boy, one hand over his mouth, the other holding a large knife to the little one's throat. The older boy's face comes in to view in the dim light.

It is James, now thirteen years old...

JAMES

Don't say a word or you're dead...

He forces the young boys pajamas and undershorts down and rapes him.

When he finishes he gives the little boy a sadistic warning.

JAMES

You better not say anything to anyone...If you do I'll come back and cut your little dick off...You hear me, you little fuck?

The little boy, scared out of his mind can only shake his head.

James quietly leaves the berthing.

The little boy starts to cry...All alone in the darkness.

INT. TEENAGE BERTHING -NIGHT

James has only one friend at the orphanage, a little weasel faced boy by the name of HAROLD GREEN.

James and Harold sit in the dark on a bunk talking in a hushed tone.

HAROLD

Did you do to that little boy what they said you did?

JAMES

Yeah, I fucked that little shit. Had him crying like a little mama's boy bitch. You should have seen him Harold...Crying and begging...

HAROLD

But why would you do something like that. You wouldn't do that to me, would you?

JAMES

No...No, you're my one and only best friend.

HAROLD

But why do you do it, James?

JAMES

I like the power it gives me...I'm gonna kill me somebody soon...You just wait...Maybe that bitch Myrna, if she keeps on fucking with me.

Harold just looks unable to speak, eyes wide, head shaking.

JAMES(CONT'D)

I'm gonna be famous someday, boy. Famous for killing and raping and mutilating...You just wait Harold...You gonna read about me in the newspaper.

INT. ORPHANAGE - NURSE'S OFFICE - DAY

A little boy lies in a hospital bed, a NURSE and a NUN stand over him and watch him as he sleeps.

(CONTINUED)

NURSE

That child was raped, as sure as I'm standing here. The poor little one. He was bleeding something awful from his anus when he came here this morning...But he wouldn't say what happened.

NUN

I will speak to him when he wakes up...Maybe he will confide in me.

NURSE

We need to tell the director. This is the second case in the last month... He wouldn't tell either. Both boys were scared out of their little minds.

NUN

If they were raped...who would do such a thing?

NURSE

I don't know...but we'll find out. Then we'll turn him over to Myrna.

NUN

Yes, her justice is swift and harsh, but effective, I must say.

NURSE

Yes, indeed...

They continue to watch the boy sleep in silence for a while...

The nurse gently caresses the boy's hair, the nun bows and says a silent prayer.

INT. ORPHANAGE - MYRNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Myrna is in her bed sleeping peacefully in her simple room. The only furniture is an old bed, a dresser, and a chair. A Crucifix hangs in a place of honor on the wall behind her.

The door slowly opens, only partway at first. The head of a boy appears in the opening, peering into Myrna's room, while she lays sleeping in her bed, snoring.

The bold child now opens the door the rest of the way, slowly and quietly.

(CONTINUED)

The face of the intruder comes into view... it is James.

He begins looking silently through her things.

He sees what he is looking for, the prize he seeks.

James takes Myrna's purse, makes a face of defiance, and turns and eases on back out of the door.

INT. ORPHANAGE - BERTHING - DAY

Myrna is livid, pacing back and forth, madder than the children have ever seen her.

The children stand like frightened soldiers, dutifully in front of their racks, shaking in fear of what has made Myrna so outraged.

MYRNA

I know one of you little bastards took it. And when I find out I'm going to send you to hell where you belong. Now which one of you little degenerate, vile, pieces of human filth, defiled my room just last night...and stole my purse while I was sleeping.

The children just stand and shake, not knowing what to say.

MYRNA

God damn you to hell, you little bastards. Who took it...who took it?

(leering around the room)

I'll just beat the life out of all of you then. Sooner or later...some one will talk. I'll start with you.

(pointing at the little boy closest to her)

Come here, you!

She starts to beat the little boy...He cries and screams like he's being murdered.

James suddenly jumps out from where he is standing..

JAMES

Stop it! Stop it! I took your fucking purse, you stupid old bitch. I wiped my ass on it, then I pissed on it. So fuck you. What you going to do about it.

(CONTINUED)

Myrna is on James quicker than can be believed, but James surprises her and punches her up the side of her head, almost knocking her down.

Myrna recovers and comes after James again.

This time he lands a blow squarely in her left eye and knocks her down. He is on her beating the hell out of her. Blood is starting to pool on her face as James continues to beat her.

Two orderlies burst into the room and drag James away...

James yells as they pull him from the room...

JAMES

I'll kill you, you fucking bitch.
I'll kill you...

INT. ORPHANAGE - MYRNA'S ROOM - TWO YEARS LATER - DAY

Myrna lies in her bed, nude from the waist down. A butcher knife sticking out of her vagina, her throat cut...

EXT. LEFLORE JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER - DAY

Leflore looms on the horizon, old run down buildings, surrounded by a fence topped with barbed wire.

The rain pours down in usual New Orleans fashion, as a detention center bus, almost as old as the buildings, comes to a stop in front of the facility

The door opens and several boys including James(now sixteen) are led out of the bus in chains.

The front door of building #3 creaks open. The boys trudge in assisted by several rather large guards.

INT. LEFLORE JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER - DAY

The inside does not betray the look of the outside of the building. It is equally as run down with a filthy blue floor and white walls yellowed with time and the stale putrid air.

The boys are ushered into a large holding tank, a mean looking guard with a blond flat top haircut, BUFORD REDMAN, unlocks the boys chains, as two other guards watch the action.

(CONTINUED)

The chains drop to the floor with a clank, each boy now wondering what is going to happen next.

The two guards who had been watching, drag two fire hoses into the holding tank.

BUFORD

Strip 'em off boys. Get them
fucking clothes off. I want to see
nothing but naked asses. Strip 'em
off!

The boys obediently comply, their clothes lying on the dingy holding tank floor.

The two guards spray the boys down with the fire hoses.

The boys almost drowning from the strong stream of water, try to run but there is nowhere to go.

BUFORD

Stand still you little fucks. Turn
around and spread them butt cheeks.
We got to get you scum cleaned up
before you become our guest. We
don't want no lice or crabs in this
facility.

The torrent of water finally stops, the four boys stand shivering, their old clothes soaked, lie in a mangled pile on the floor.

BUFORD

Now, you little degenerates...walk
your naked little asses over next
door and we'll get you some new
clothes...Oh, you gonna like
'em...Got your own special number
on 'em and everything. Let's move
it!

The boys are ushered over, by the two guards, to the next room.

THE ISSUE ROOM

Two older boys standing behind a table give the clothes to James and the other three, sneering and leering.

The OLDEST BOY singles James out of the group.

(CONTINUED)

OLDEST BOY

What's your name, boy? You sure are pretty. I'm gonna come by and visit you tonight. We gonna have a date...Your first of many.

James does not say a word, just looks hatefully at the boy.

OLDEST BOY

I said, what's your name boy?

JAMES

My name is Dick. Least that's what your mama called me, when I was fucking her last night.

The oldest boy flies into a rage and jumps over the issue table to get to James. He dodges him, the boy falls flat on the floor.

James is on him, wailing the hell out of him. Blood is flying as three guards rush in and pull James off.

They drag him down the hall to the warden's office, kicking and fighting.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

The warden big JIM MONROE is sitting behind a equally large desk with his feet propped up, smoking a cigarette, as the guards knock timidly at his door.

MONROE

Come on...This better be good...

The guards burst into the room with James in tow.

BILL RANDALL has a night stick planted under the boy's neck, the other two hold him firmly. All three look pissed as hell.

MONROE

Who the hell is this sack of shit, you're dragging in my office.

BILL

New arrival, Boss...a James Henry Puttnam. He started a fight in clothing issue already this morning. A real hard case this one.

Monroe comes out from behind his big desk, face red as crimson. He grabs a phone book and approaches James.

(CONTINUED)

MONROE

Oh, we've got ourselves a tough guy here boys.

(looking from one guard to the others)

We love tough guys, don't we?

Big Jim takes the phone book and bangs James up the side of his head.

MONROE

You a real bad ass...huh boy? We'll see how bad you are. Hold him up straight Bill.

He bangs him in the head a couple more times.

MONROE

What's your name, tough guy?

James doesn't answer, he spits on the warden instead.

Big Jim really pissed now, grabs the night stick from Bill and starts to beat James repeatedly, knocking him to the floor.

MONROE

Pick that piece of shit up.

(beat)

Boy, we'll kill your little ass in here, bury you deep in the swamps where nobody will ever find your body. You understand what I'm telling you boy?

James shakes his head unable to speak.

MONROE

Put this little shit in the hole for a month. We'll see how tough he is when he comes out of there. Get him the hell out of my sight.

The guards drag James down the hallway, open the door with a loud bang, and toss James into the isolation cell.

THE ISOLATION CELL

James sits naked on the dirty floor and leans up against the wall, covered with padding.

The door is banged shut, the light is turned out...

INT. CHOW HALL - ONE MONTH LATER - DAY

James walks into the lunch room filled with a group of scruffy looking boys eating their prison breakfast.

He is carrying his tray filled with gruel and a moldy piece of white bread. Tin cup of water rattles on his tray as he walks.

The two boys from the issue room SAM FREDERICKS AND TOM DESIO sit in a far corner and watch James as he enters.

Sam sees him first and elbows Tom.

SAM

Look...look, it's that little fucker we had the fight with. He's finally out of isolation.

TOM

Yeah..yeah, it's payback time.

SAM

We better not try anything here. Too many screws around. We don't want to end up where he just came from.

TOM

You said that right. We'll catch his little ass alone. We'll do him up real good.

SAM

Yeah, real fucking good...

They both laugh and turn back to their trays of gruel.

James sits down at a table of boys and eats his breakfast in silence.

Two big guards patrol the chow hall, tapping night sticks on their hands as they walk their beat.

James just happens to look over in the corner. He recognizes Tom and Sam. He gives them the finger and a dirty look.

Tom and Sam give James the finger as well and jump out of their seats, knocking them on the floor in anger in the process.

James seeing the two boys make their move reaches in his pocket and pulls something out.

(CONTINUED)

The two boys are on James in a matter of seconds, James dodges the first boy and sticks the second in the neck with a homemade shiv.

He turns around just in time to stab the other boy in the kidney.

Blood is everywhere and so are three guards pulling James off the two boys.

They start to drag him away, scratching, biting and cussing.

JAMES

You see that shit, all you mother fuckers. That's what will happen to you if you mess with me. I'll kill all you cock suckers...every last one of you.

They put James back in isolation, slam the door and turn out the lights...

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Big Jim and the Leflore's psychiatrist FLOYD DUBOIS sit in the warden's office behind closed doors.

Floyd rustles through some papers and finally looks up at the warden over a pair of horned rimmed glasses.

FLOYD

Warden, what you've got here is a straight up psychopath. No doubt about it. This boy's a killer for real. Have you seen his transfer papers from the orphanage?

Floyd hands the papers over to the Warden, he studies them for a minute.

MONROE

Damn...It says here this little bastard was suspected of raping a couple of little boys and killing one of the teachers. Did you see this shit Floyd? The lady's throat was cut and a knife was left sticking out of her vagina...Jesus Christ!

He hands the papers back to Floyd, shaking his head.

(CONTINUED)

FLOYD

This boy is dangerous, you best keep him in isolation.

MONROE

By the way how are the two boys doing he cut up yesterday?

FLOYD

They're in a bad way, especially the one he stuck in the neck, but both are expected to live.

MONROE

Well you're right, we better keep that little fucker locked up tight. Just might have to take him to the swamps. No one would give a shit anyway...a fucking orphan.

FLOYD

Yeah, I hear you...But I hope to God it don't come to that.

About that time there is a knock at the Warden's door. The guards have a new arrival, RON MASON, a big hulking, muscular black kid. They push him in, bound in chains.

FLOYD

Well, I'll leave you to your work Warden.

Floyd gets up and saunters over to the door, shutting it gently.

MONROE

Where in the hell did y'all find this big son of a bitch? God damn, biggest mother fucking boy I ever see'd

GUARD

He's a transfer from up state...Said they couldn't handle him up there, boss.

MONROE

Oh shit...another bad ass. WE love bad asses don't we boys.

The guards nod their heads in agreement, adjusting their grip on their prisoner.

(CONTINUED)

MONROE

You a bad ass boy? A tough guy?

RON

Oh...oh no sir...I done give up all that stuff. That was the devil in me...I got myself saved...I lives by the word of the good book now. I won't gives you no trouble boss...Just wants to do my time, sir.

MONROE

Well, that's what I like to hear boy. But if that devil happens to come back...I'll be waiting. You get my meaning...boy?

RON

Oh yes suh, yes suh...

MONROE

I tell you what...put him in the cell with that Puttnam kid. Normally I'd put him in with the other colors in D block. But I think it's time that little fucker had a roommate.

Big Jim and the guards have a good laugh and take Ron on out of the warden's office.

INT. DETENTION CENTER HALLWAY - DAY

The guards take Ron down the hallway through a couple of locked doors and finally arrive outside James' cell.

They unlock the door and push Ron into the cell, close and lock it.

GUARD

Thought you might want some company. It gets mighty lonely around these parts at night.

The guards laugh their asses off as they turn and walk away leaving Ron and James alone in the cell.

INT. JAMES' CELL - DAY

James jumps out of his bunk, runs to the bars and starts banging and yelling to the guards who are still laughing.

JAMES

What the fuck's up with the nigger
in my cell? Why the hell you done
went and put a coon in here?
Guards...guards.

The guards are out of sight by now.

James turns around to Ron's fist in his face knocking him against the bars and landing him on the floor.

RON

Who the hell you calling nigger,
white boy? I'll kill you...little
pecker wood bastard.

James jumps up and makes a run at Ron.

Ron side steps him and nails him up the side of the head, knocking him out cold.

James regains consciousness in a minute, wakes up rubbing a big knot on the side of his face.

JAMES

Damn, you punch like a mule, boy.

RON

I ain't nobody's boy. Let's get
that straight. I play that shuck
and jive shit for the warden...Let
him think he's the massah. That's
just what I want him to think.

JAMES

Sorry 'bout that. I'm James. I'm a
rapist, murderer and a mutilator.
Gonna be famous some day...you just
wait.

RON

Well...You a scary little white
fucker, I'll give you that. I'm
Ron.

The two boys shake hands and James lays back down on his bunk, rubbing his sore jaw.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

Tell me Ron...what the hell they doing putting you in the cell with me. I've been in solitary ever since I've been here.

RON

Just to fuck with you. Cracker guards think it's funny as hell to put a big, black, bad ass mother fucker like me in the cell with a little skinny white boy like you.

JAMES

They probably hoping we'd kill each other. That would save them the trouble.

RON

Yeah, I've heard stories about this place. I don't want to take one of those one way rides to the swamps with these redneck fuckers.

JAMES

Fuck 'em...Let them take me for a ride. We'll see who gets left in the swamp.

RON

God damn...You sure talk a lot of shit for a skinny little bastard.

JAMES

I'm a fucking killer Ron...That's no shit. That's what I was put on this earth to do. Kill, rape and mutilate...Whoo...oooo.

RON

You crazy as hell boy...But I like you. I think we gonna get along just fine. But I'm warning you...Pull that little dick of yours out around me and I'm gonna cut it off and stuff it down your throat.

JAMES

No...You don't need to worry I'm saving myself for someone special. Besides I don't like dark meat.

(CONTINUED)

RON
Fuck you, man.

JAMES
Just kidding, we cool.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Big Jim and a farm owner, SAM LEBOW, sit in the warden's office, smoking big cigars, talking low down dirty business.

SAM
Yeah...I sure could use some of these boys you got here Jim. Got lots of work to do out at my place.

Big Jim takes a pull off his big cigar and blows out a big puff in the direction of Sam.

MONROE
Is that right? I got some pretty strong boys...good workers. They gonna cost you...

SAM
I'm sure we can come to some arrangement Jim.

MONROE
How does ten dollars a day per boy sound to you?

SAM
How 'bout eight.

The warden rares back in his seat, cigar dangling, moving as he talks.

MONROE
How's about nine

SAM
No, I'm afraid eight is the highest I can go Jim.

MONROE
Damn...You drive a hard bargain, eight it is Sam. And I'll even throw in a couple of guards with the deal, to keep a eye on those little degenerates.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

All right...Saturday good for you?

MONROE

Saturday it is...

The two men stand up, shake hands and Sam leaves the office, big smile on his face.

The warden sits behind his desk for a minute puffing on his cigar, then picks up his phone and dials a number.

EXT. LOUISIANA COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A big flat bed truck rolls down an old dirt country road.

In the back is twenty boys including James and Ron. They are chained to each other at the wrist and their feet are also shackled.

Up front are two big ass GUARDS, a shotgun in the rack.

The dust blows up as the truck turns left and pulls into a gate that says LEBOW'S, PRIVATE PROPERTY, ALL TRESPASSERS WILL BE SHOT ON SIGHT.

INT. FLAT BED TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

GUARD#1

Must be the place...this some redneck shit here for real.

GUARD#2

I hope this son of bitch is expecting us.

Both the guards laugh as they pull up in front of the farmhouse.

They both get out, the biggest one grabs the shotgun.

EXT. LEBOW FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The guard with the shotgun stays with the truck to keep an eye on the boys. The other one goes up to the door.

Sam Lebow comes out of the house, big white cowboy hat on his head, of course smoking his usual big cigar.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

All right... good to see you boys.
Hope that group of convicts is
ready to work...cause I got a heap
of it.

GUARD#1

Oh...they ready boss...you needn't
to worry about that. Ain't that
right boys?

The boys in the truck make different replies, most indistinguishable, some giving the guards a sign that isn't very nice.

Guard#2 opens the back gate of the truck, and yells.

GUARD#2

All right...out of the fucking
truck, you little bastards...You're
burning daylight...Let's go, move
it!

The guards march the boys down a dirt road about a hundred yards to the fields.

They take the chains off the boys and hand them shovels and picks.

GUARD#1

Let's get to work...We've got to
finish this ditch today...Start
digging boys.

The boys start work, feverishly picking and digging at the hard Louisiana dirt.

James and Ron work side by side, James with a pick, Ron a shovel.

JAMES

This is bullshit...

RON

I thought slavery went out back in
the eighteen hundreds.

JAMES

Get to work boy...or the massah
gonna beat your black ass.

(CONTINUED)

RON

Shut the fuck up, James. You out in this sun digging just like me.

JAMES

Yeah, but I'm one thing you'll never be...a white man.

RON

You ain't nothing but low life poor white trash...Black is beautiful...in case you haven't heard.

JAMES

Bull...shit...

Guard#2 sees the boys talking too much and comes over and confronts them.

GUARD#2

Knock off the talk and get to work you two...before I put a number twelve boot up your sorry asses.

The boys look at each other and pick up the pace of their work in silence for a few minutes.

JAMES

Black is beautiful, huh? That turd I dropped this morning was beautiful then.

RON

You're a turd, you little shit.

JAMES

I'm a killer... a rapist, the reaper's best friend.

RON

Oh hell...here we go again.

JAMES

Think I'll go over and take that shotgun from that big guard and shoot his redneck ass with it.

RON

Stop talking shit...You ain't gonna do nothing but dig this fucking hole.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES
I could do it...

RON
Okay...

The boys keep on digging.

The sun is going down as the guards put the chains back on the boys and march them back to the truck.

INT. JAMES' CELL - NIGHT

The boys are back in their cell after hard day in the fields.

Ron is on the toilet, James is lying in the bed.

JAMES
God damn, what crawled up in your ass and died?

RON
A pecker wood...smells just like a wet white boy.

JAMES
No... more like something black and beautiful.

RON
Shut the fuck up, James.

JAMES
Shut me up, black boy.

RON
What did I tell you about that boy shit?

JAMES
You ain't gonna do shit. But take a shit and wipe your black ass.

RON
Wait till I finish the paper work...I'll show you what I'm gonna do.

JAMES
Yeah, tell you what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna break out of this fucking place.

(CONTINUED)

Ron finishes up and climbs in his rack.

RON

Crazy white boy...What you talking about now?

JAMES

We're going back out to that cracker's farm again tomorrow, right.

RON

Yeah...So...

JAMES

That's when we make a run for it.

RON

You're crazy as hell. If we do...Where the hell we gonna go?

JAMES

I ain't thought that far yet...but we could get to some redneck's farm, steal a car and go get some pussy. Man I need some pussy. You need some pussy, boy?

RON

What I tell you about that boy shit. Yeah, I could use some pussy. But ain't no way in hell we would even get that far. These assholes would have the dogs on us before we got a mile down the fucking road.

JAMES

I don't give a fuck...I'm running tomorrow. You can go with me or keep your black ass here. It's your choice.

They finish up their conversation just as the lights go out in the cell block.

All around is dark and silence, except for the sounds of snoring and crying and talking in hushed tones.

EXT. LOUISIANA COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The sun is just peeping through the clouds as the big raggedy truck is heading down the dirt road taking the boys back out to the fields.

Ron and James are two of the twenty jammed into the back, like sardines, jostling down the bumpy road.

JAMES

You ready to do this shit?

RON

I don't know, man.

JAMES

Hell...Don't be a chicken shit...What do we have to lose?

RON

If they catch us...They gonna give us a month in the hole. I don't know if I can take that shit.

JAMES

Don't be a pussy. Fuck these mother fuckers and their hole and the swamp. Fuck it...I'm running. You're invited...So grow a pair.

RON

Well you go ahead and run...If I decide to keep you company, you'll know.

The truck squeaks to a halt.

The guards open the back and the boys pile out.

Guard #2 has a shotgun under his arm, he holds it on the boys as they get out of the truck.

They hand the boys their picks and shovels.

They unlock the boy's chains and they all walk down the road to the fields.

GUARD#1

All right ladies...I want to see nothing but assholes and elbows. Get to fucking work!

(CONTINUED)

GUARD#2

You heard the man! Get to fucking work.

The boys start digging, dirt flying everywhere.

JAMES

Here we are back doing this nigger work again.

RON

What did I tell you about that shit.

JAMES

Well it is nigger work.

RON

Yeah...You right...Nigger work.

JAMES

Keep an eye on the guard with the shotgun. When he ain't looking, that's when we'll make our move.

RON

All right...Let's do this shit.

The boys continue digging, keeping an eye on the guard with the shotgun

He turns away to grab his handkerchief from his pocket and wipe his sweating face.

James punches Ron and nods.

SUDDENLY they drop their digging utensils and are running down the road like bats out of hell.

Before Guard #2 sees that they are running, they are a good fifty yards down the dusty road.

The other guard realizes the boys are running and yells at the one with the shotgun.

GUARD#1

Holy shit...They running. Shoot those mother fuckers...Shoot 'em.

Guard #2 blasts away at James and Ron with his double barrel, but they are way out of range by then.

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The boys are running like hell, turning around occasionally to see if anyone was behind them.

JAMES

Woooo...We made it...we made it.

RON

Bullshit...we're a long way from free.

JAMES

We made it, I'm telling you.

RON

Shut up boy...and run.

EXT. THE WOODS - CONTINUOUS

They veer off the road into some thick woods, the tree branches whip them as they run.

The woods get thicker, the tree branches block out the sun.

James and Ron pick their way through the maze, looking for a way out.

RON

Fuck...We lost...

JAMES

We ain't lost...We just don't know where the hell we are.

RON

Fuck me...

James laughs.

RON(CONT'D)

This shit ain't funny man.

JAMES

Don't worry about it. There's got to be a road around here somewhere.

RON

Damn...I hate this redneck shit.

The boys continue their journey through the woods.

They come upon a clearing and a small farmhouse.

INT. FARMHOUSE - AT THE SAME TIME

A WOMAN is cooking, pots on the stove, she hums softly to herself.

A old dog lies on the kitchen floor, he looks up sleepily at the woman and then lies back down, one ear raised.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - AT THE SAME TIME

A MAN chops wood, his ax swings with fierce blows as a chunk of kindling splinters.

He cusses under his breath and continues to chop.

He is intent on his work, he doesn't notice James and Ron as they sneak up on the farmhouse.

Quick as hell and unnoticed the boys are up on the back porch of the house.

James peers in through the dirty windows, keeping an eye on the man chopping wood.

He turns the door knob. It is open.

He eases it open and they creep into the dimly lit farmhouse.

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

James puts his finger to his lips.

JAMES

Shhhh...

They continue their journey through the house and reach the kitchen.

The woman does not see them at first, she is preoccupied with her cooking. She continues to hum to herself.

The old dog looks up at the boys, yawns, and goes back to sleep.

James grabs a large kitchen knife, he puts it to his side.

SUDDENLY she sees the boys her eyes widen, she starts to scream.

But James is suddenly on her.

(CONTINUED)

He holds his hand over her mouth. The knife to her throat.

JAMES
Don't say a fucking word.

RON
James, I don't know about this
shit.

JAMES
Shut the fuck up...Just keep a look
out.

Before Ron has a chance the man comes through the door.

He looks at the scene developing in total disbelief.

MAN
What the fuck?

James doesn't waist any time, he raises the knife, closes the distance and plunges it deep into the man's chest.

The man screams, blood squirts everywhere. He hits the floor.

He is back with his hold on the woman, just that fast.

JAMES
Now...We ain't gonna hurt
you...Just looking to have a little
fun. Ain't that right Ron?

Ron is in shock, he doesn't utter a word.

James forces the woman over to a couch.

He puts the knife to her throat and forces her to have oral sex with him.

Then he rapes her.

JAMES
Come on boy, get some of this...I
got her warmed up for you.

Ron doesn't want to, he is still in shock.

JAMES(CONT'D)
Fuck...What a fucking pussy.

He cuts the woman's throat and leaves her in a pool of blood.

He sticks the blade into the woman's vagina, it quivers for a few seconds.

JAMES(CONT'D)

Hell...I thought you were a killer.

RON

James...We better get the hell out of here...They gonna be looking for us...Come on.

The boys run like hell, leaving the bloody corpses.

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The guards from the prison are out in full force combing the area for James and Ron

Two guards have dogs on a leash, they bark and strain at their restraints.

The warden himself is on the scene, sweating and huffing in the mid-day heat.

MONROE

Ya'll better find these son of a bitches...Or all you worthless fucks are fired. You hear me.

GUARD#2

Oh...we gonna find 'em. Don't worry Boss.

MONROE

You better...

The dogs lead them off the road and through the woods.

They come out of the woods at the clearing and spot the farmhouse.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The guards and the warden ease up on the house and surround it.

MONROE(CONT'D)

Well...What the hell you waiting on? Let's see if anyone is home.

One of the guards kicks the door in, it splinters with a loud crunch.

They rush in the farmhouse.

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The scene is horrendous. The bloody couple lies dead, the old dog is still asleep on the floor.

The guards and Big Jim stand in disbelief.

MONROE

Looks like they've been
here...Shit...Will you look at this
mess.

They look around a little more, stop at the body of the woman.

GUARD#1

What kind of a sick son of a bitch
would do something like this?

MONROE

Puttnam...that's who.

GUARD#2

How you know, boss?

Monroe points at the body.

MONROE

He left his calling card.

GUARD#1

Shit...

GUARD#2

Jesus Christ...

MONROE

We better catch these fuckers and
quick...Call the morgue...Tell them
to come clean this shit up...Let's
go...They can't have gotten far.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They leave the house quickly, the dogs lead the way.

EXT. WOODS - AT THE SAME TIME

James and Ron are back in the woods, lost, seemingly going in circles.

In the distance they can hear the barking of the dogs.

RON

They got the dogs on us...No way in hell we gonna get away.

JAMES

I don't give a fuck...I'm not going back to that hole. I rather die.

RON

Speak for yourself...I rather go back than die...I'm turning myself in.

JAMES

No you ain't. I'll kill you myself.

RON

You're gonna have to...cause I'm turning myself in.

The boys continue their struggle in the dark woods. The sun is starting to go down.

From out of nowhere the guards, the dogs, and Big Jim Monroe are on them.

They let the dogs loose and they are all over James and Ron, barking and yelping.

The guards have their guns on the boys as well.

RON

Get the fucking dogs off us...We give up...don't shoot.

He holds his hands up in the air.

James fights off the dogs, he still has the knife and stabs one of them.

One of guards comes up and bangs James in the head with his rifle butt.

He goes down like a stone, out cold.

(CONTINUED)

MONROE

(To Ron)

We got you now boy...

RON

I didn't do nothing I swear...

MONROE

Shut up, nigger...We saw what you did.

RON

I didn't kill them people...I didn't touch that woman...I didn't do shit. I begged him not to do it.

MONROE

Yeah...We believe you...don't we boys. Let me show you what we do to black boys who touch our women down here... Shoot this sack of shit.

In a barrage of gunfire, Ron is cut down, he lies bloody on the ground.

The warden points over at James.

MONROE (CONT'D)

Get that little fuck. I ain't through with him yet. Not by a long shot...

They grab him up like a bag of trash, and head out of the woods.

EXT. LEFLORE JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER - 1967 - DAY

James Puttnam stands outside of the juvenile center, wearing a brand new white T-shirt and pair of jeans.

The sun is shining brightly, James, holding an old battered suitcase, squints, and takes a deep breath of the sweet air of freedom.

He walks down the road a piece to a bus stop.

A Greyhound bus arrives, the door opens, James gets in.

The bus pulls on down the dusty road leaving a trail of dust in the wind.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - CONTINUOUS

James walks to the back of the bus and takes a seat by the restroom.

He pulls out a pair of sunglasses and puts them on, opening a window, sticking his face in the cool breeze.

His hair blows in the wind, he relishes his newly found freedom.

A baby cries in the front of the bus, his mother comforts him.

An OLD MAN sitting in front of James is drinking liquor from a brown paper bag.

He turns around and offers James a drink.

OLD MAN

How 'bout a drink young man...You look like you could use one.

JAMES

Well thank you old man...I surely could...Yes sir...I surely could.

James grabs the bottle and takes a big drink. Wipes his mouth and sighs, hands the bottle back to the old man.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Thanks...

OLD MAN

You're welcome young man...You going far?

JAMES

Don't know...Just going. I guess I'll know when I get there.

James goes back to looking out the window.

EXT. GREYHOUND BUS - CONTINUOUS

The old bus rolls down the highway, the sign on the front says: MEMPHIS.

The sun begins to set as the Greyhound pulls into a bus station.

EXT. TUPELO BUS STATION - CONTINUOUS

The station is small and old.

A few passengers, with their luggage, stand outside waiting for the bus.

A man and a lady get off the bus, they go to the side to retrieve their luggage.

James gets off the bus and enters the tiny building.

INT. TUPELO BUS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Once inside the station, he goes to an old cigarette machine, pulls out some coins from his pocket, rocks them into the slot, and pulls the lever.

A pack of Lucky's slides out, he grabs them, rolls them up in his shirt sleeve.

He heads towards the restroom.

THE RESTROOM

Inside the restroom, he goes to the stall, takes a quick leak, comes back out to wash his hands.

He is alone except for a middle-aged man washing his hands.

Before the man is aware he is there James knocks him out with a coke bottle he found in the stall.

The man goes down, bleeding from his head wound.

James casually reaches in the man's pocket, takes his wallet.

He opens it up, takes the cash and dumps the empty wallet in the trash.

He eases the door open.

No one is around.

EXT. TUPELO BUS STATION - CONTINUOUS

James stands outside the station.

He smokes a cigarette.

(CONTINUED)

When he is finished, he throws the still lit butt on the ground, and stomps it out.

He gets back on the bus.

The door shuts and the Greyhound continues it's journey.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - CONTINUOUS

Back in the bus, James takes his seat back by the restroom, pulls the stolen dollar bills out of pocket and counts them.

JAMES

Shit...sixty bucks...

He puts the money back in his pocket, slides on his sunglasses and lays back to take a nap.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - BATHROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

The MAN James robbed comes to from the vicious blow on his head, looks in the mirror at the bloody gash, staggers to the bathroom door.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Inside the waiting area he makes his plea for help.

MAN

Help...help...someone...I've been robbed.

The man falls out on the floor, still bleeding from his head wound.

The GUARD on duty rushes over to render assistance. He shakes the man.

GUARD

Sir...sir are you okay.

The man looks up and slowly shakes his head.

The guard helps him to a bench.

EXT. GREYHOUND BUS - AT THE SAME TIME

The bus careens down the highway, windshield wipers slapping time to the heavy rain pouring down.

Through the downpour a sign can be seen: Ripley 30 Miles.

EXT. GREYHOUND BUS STATION RIPLEY - DAY

The clouds are clearing, the sun is peeking through, as the old bus pulls into the station.

A small town police car pulls into the lot.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - CONTINUOUS

James waking up from his nap, spots the police unit from the side window.

JAMES

Shit...

He eases his bag off of the seat next to him, makes his way to the front and out the open bus door.

EXT. GREYHOUND BUS STATION RIPLEY - CONTINUOUS

James sneaks down the back side of the bus, the small town cops now out of their car, don't notice James' escape.

EXT. RIPLEY STREET - CONTINUOUS

A couple of blocks from the bus station James is in a little residential neighborhood.

A dog barks as he passes, comes to the fence and growls.

James walks slowly casing out the small houses, looking through windows.

He sees a young lady come out of her house, retrieve her newspaper and go back inside.

She does not see James.

The street is deserted, as he ventures around the side of the house and peers in.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Through the window he can see a YOUNG WOMAN sitting in the living room, reading her paper,

James goes back around to the front door and knocks.

There is no answer, he knocks again.

The young woman opens the door.

YOUNG WOMAN
Yes...could I help you.

JAMES
Oh...yes ma'am. I was wondering
could I use your phone...my car
won't start...You know to call a
tow truck.

YOUNG WOMAN
There's a phone booth, right down
the street.

JAMES
Won't take but a minute ma'am...I
don't have any change.

The young woman looks apprehensive, but James looks harmless, she lets him in.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Once inside James looks around, the house is deserted except for the young woman.

She points to the kitchen, a phone hangs on the wall.

YOUNG WOMAN
The phone's right over there.

JAMES
Thank you.

Her purse is sitting on the kitchen table.

She turns to go back to her newspaper when James is on her.

He knocks her down to the floor.

He pulls a large pocket knife from his pocket, pops it open.

The young woman struggles but James is much too strong.

(CONTINUED)

He beats her repeatedly with his fist, cuts her throat.

She lies bleeding on the floor.

James grabs the purse, eases open the front door, peers out.

No one is still around.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

James walks cautiously off the front porch, he casually makes his way down the small street.

He looks in the purse, grabs her wallet, takes out the cash and dumps the purse in the bushes.

James whistles a creepy tune as he walks, swinging his suitcase to and fro.

He pulls his sunglasses out of his pocket and puts them on.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - AT THE SAME TIME

The young woman lies on the floor, she is still alive drawing her final breaths, air gurgling from the gash on her bloody throat.

Then she is still.

The scene is something out of a murder story. Blood on the walls, the floor, and under the lifeless body of the innocent young woman.

EXT. RIPLEY STREET - DAY

James makes his way out of the neighborhood down to the main highway unseen.

He sticks out his thumb.

In a few minutes, an OLD MAN in an equally old Ford pickup stops.

James puts his suitcase in the back and gets in.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Inside the truck James settles in without a word.

OLD MAN

Well...where you heading son?

James finally turns and with a pleasant tone and a smile smoothly replies.

JAMES

Sir, I'm just going...But I'm trying to get to Memphis...Gonna be a big rock and roll star...just like Elvis.

OLD MAN

Is that right? Today's your lucky day. I just happen to be going there myself.

JAMES

Must be a sign from the good Lord.

OLD MAN

He does work in mysterious ways.

JAMES

Yes he does...He certainly does.

The highway is deserted, the night is dark, as the pair of travelers continue their journey in silence.

They pass a sign that says: REST STATION- ONE MILE.

The old man pulls the old pickup into the parking area.

Turns off the lights and the motor.

OLD MAN

Got to go pee, son. You know how us old folks are. Be back in a minute. So if you need to go...better go now.

JAMES

No...I'm a young man...I learned a long time ago how to hold my water.

OLD MAN

Okay...be back in a shake of a lamb's tail...as they say.

(CONTINUED)

The old man gets out of the truck and heads toward the restroom.

James pulls the knife out of his pocket, opens it, wipes the blood on the back of his pants, and starts cleaning his fingernails.

Shortly the old man returns.

James is still cleaning his fingernails.

OLD MAN

That's a mighty big knife you got there, boy.

James gives the old man a weird scary look.

JAMES

The better to cut you with, old man.

OLD MAN

What the hell did you say boy?

JAMES

I didn't stutter...I said the better to cut you with.

James laughs, closes up the knife, and puts it back in his pocket.

JAMES(CONT'D

Just kidding...let's go.

EXT. PICK UP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The old truck pulls out of the rest stop parking lot and heads on down the highway.

It disappears into the darkness.

A highway patrol cruiser flashes it's lights.

It passes on the left side of the old truck and careens on down the highway.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - AT THE SAME TIME

Inside the truck the old man and James watch the patrol car go by.

James looks relieved.

EXT. GAS STATION MIDTOWN MEMPHIS - TWO WEEKS LATER

James wipes the window of MARY BULLOCK(22), and comes to her driver side window.

JAMES

Would you like me to check under
the hood for you ma'am?

The driver motions for James to go ahead.

MARY

Sure...why not?

He opens up the hood and pulls out the dip stick, wipes it off with a rag. Puts it back in.

JAMES

She's about a quart down ma'am.
Would you like me to add one for
you?

MARY

(flirting)

Yeah...sure...don't call me ma'am
you make me feel so old. Call me
Mary.

JAMES

Okay...Mary...Would you like me to
add a quart of oil for you?

MARY

Only if you tell me your name.

JAMES

I'm James...Puttnam.

She holds out her hand, James shakes it, and flashes her a smile.

MARY

Nice to meet you James...I've been
seeing you here for a couple of
weeks. I'm new in town, just moved
here from Atlanta

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

Nice to meet you Mary. I'm new in town too...New Orleans.

MARY

New Orleans...I love New Orleans. I was there last year for Mardi Gras.

JAMES

Yeah...the Mardi Gras. But Memphis is cool...I'm gonna be a big rock and roll star like Elvis. You like Elvis?

MARY

I love Elvis.

JAMES

You know his new movie is showing down the street at the picture show. Maybe we could go sometime.

MARY

Oh I don't know...I only just met you...Would you mind if my sister came along?

JAMES

That would be swell.

MARY

Okay, we'll meet you at the picture show Saturday at seven. Would that be all right.

JAMES

Yeah that's cool...I get off at five.

Mary starts up her car.

MARY

See you Saturday.

JAMES

I'll be there.

She drives off, James just stands staring in disbelief.

EXT. CROSSTOWN THEATRE - NIGHT

Mary and her sister SHERRY(13), stand in front of the theater waiting patiently for James.

The sign over the building says: NOW SHOWING, ELVIS IN SPEEDWAY.

James comes strolling up, smiling, like he didn't have a care in the world.

MARY
You're late...

JAMES
Sorry, I got off late.

MARY
Well...I forgive you this time...This is my little sis, Sherry.

JAMES
Oh, nice to meet you Sherry.

SHERRY
Nice to meet you James.

MARY
Let's go in, the movie's starting in a minute.

INT. CROSSTOWN THEATER - CONTINUOUS

The trio take their seats carrying popcorn and cups of soda.

On the screen is "Speedway", Elvis is singing.

Sherry sits in between Mary and James, he doesn't look happy about the seating arrangement.

MARY
Want some popcorn James?

JAMES
Yeah...thank you.

He reaches over and grabs the bag.

They sit and enjoy the movie for a little while.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES (CONT'D)
You know I'm gonna be a big star,
just like Elvis.

SHERRY
(laughing)
You...please.

MARY
Shut up Sherry.

JAMES
Go ahead and laugh...I'm gonna be
famous...You gonna read about me in
the newspaper someday.

MARY
I believe you James.

SHERRY
You're weird.

MARY
Sherry...

JAMES
That's all right...I ain't
sensitive.

MARY
That's what I get for bringing my
little sister.

JAMES
That all right...I like her.

He pats her on the head like a puppy dog.

JAMES (CONT'D)
We gonna be the best of friends.

James gives a strange, scary look and grabs some more
popcorn.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: SIX MONTHS LATER.

James and Mary stand in front of a JUDGE receiving their
marriage vows.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE

I now pronounce you man and
wife...You may kiss the bride.

The happy couple kisses, James and Mary leave the courthouse
arm and arm.

INT. BAPTIST HOSPITAL - DAY

BETTY LAMONT(45), graying hair, nurse's uniform, sits behind
the desk at the nurse's station.

Doctors and nurses go about their everyday activity, usual
hustle and bustle of a busy hospital.

She is talking to her husband ROY on the phone.

BETTY

Roy...don't forget we're supposed
to be meeting Susan and Michael for
dinner tonight.

ROY(O.S)

I know...I know Betty, you don't
have to remind me of everything.

BETTY

I was just making sure. I know you
don't feel well, but it's Susan's
birthday.

ROY(O.S)

Well, I feel fine...what time are
you coming home?

BETTY

I'll be home in a few.

ROY(O.S)

Okay, dear...I'll see you then.

INT. LAMONT RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Betty enters still wearing her nurse's uniform, looking
tired as hell.

Roy is sitting in an easy chair reading the newspaper.

BETTY

Hello, dear...

(CONTINUED)

ROY
Good evening...

BETTY
Just gonna take a quick shower, and
I'll be ready to go.

Roy looks up from his newspaper.

ROY
Take your time...no big hurry.

Suddenly there is a knock at the door.

BETTY
Are you expecting anyone, Roy?

ROY
No...no one.

BETTY
(standing at the door)
Who is it?

An unidentified MAN is on the porch.

MAN(O.S)
I'm from the phone company, ma'am.
There was a report there was
trouble on the line.

Betty cracks the door open, the chain still engaged.

The unidentified man kicks the door in, the chain breaks as
he enters the apartment.

INT. PUTTNAM RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

James sneaks into his bedroom, Mary wakes as he enters.

He takes off his clothes and gets in bed.

MARY
Where have you been?

JAMES
Hold on...hold on...Don't be
sweating me woman. I had business
to take care of.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

You could have called me.

JAMES

Shut the hell up and go back to sleep.

MARY

Fuck you James...

JAMES

No, I do the fucking, bitch.

James slaps her across the face a couple of times and takes her sexually.

She fights him but he is too strong.

EXT. LAMONT RESIDENCE - DAY

Memphis police department cars line the street in front of the residence.

The neighbors are out in full force, speculating and talking amongst themselves, the result is a muffled roar.

An unmarked car pulls up, two men in suits get out and head for the door.

INT. LAMONT RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Detectives RAY CARSON(45), African-American, balding, slightly overweight, and his partner BILL DRAKE(30), Caucasian, slight build, survey the gruesome scene.

The bodies of the couple lay bloody in the apartment.

Roy is in the living room, stabbed in the chest and abdomen.

THE BEDROOM

Betty lays in the bed, the scene is way beyond bizarre.

She lies nude, a stocking wrapped around her neck, a desk lamp is shining directly on the body.

A butcher knife is sticking out of her mutilated genitals.

The apartment is full of people from the coroner's office, and forensic people taking prints and photos of the bodies.

(CONTINUED)

RAY
Jesus...fucking Christ. Have you
ever seen anything like this?

Bill is quiet, just shakes his head, looking like he might
lose his breakfast.

RAY
In ten years in homicide, I've
never seen anything like this.

BILL
Who in God's name would do
something like this to a woman?

RAY
The devil himself...I can't imagine
a man doing something like this.

Bill loosens the stocking wrapped around her neck.

BILL
Looks like she might have been
strangled to death. But there are
numerous deep stab wounds...I don't
know. We'll have to wait for the
coroner's report on cause of death.

RAY
One thing we know is this was done
by a real psycho...One really sick
son of a bitch.

BILL
Yeah...You're right about that.
This guy ain't new at this
shit...He's gonna kill again, you
can make book on that.

RAY
We can just hope forensics finds
some prints we can match on this
fuck. Other than that we ain't got
dick. Nobody around here saw
shit...that figures.

EXT. LAMONT RESIDENCE - DAY

The coroners carry the covered bodies of Betty and Roy
Lamont out to a waiting ambulance.

The crowd stands in shock and clear a path to let them
through.

The coroners load the body and the ambulance leaves, the crowd remains still in shock.

INT. PUTTNAM RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

James and Mary sit on an old second hand couch watching the tube and eating their dinner off of a TV tray.

The evening news is on the voice of the ANNOUNCER booms.

On the screen is film of the outside of the Lamont residence.

ANNOUNCER

And in other news Roy and Betty Lamont were found murdered in their midtown apartment this morning. The police are withholding the details. They have no leads or motive at this time...Now on to sports.

Mary is totally shocked and looks at James somewhat apprehensively.

MARY

That's just right down the street, James. Did you know those people?

JAMES

Why the hell do you think I might know them?

MARY

I thought maybe you might know them from the gas station.

JAMES

Well, you're wrong...I don't know everybody.

MARY

I just thought...

JAMES

That's your problem Mary...You think too fucking much.

James scowls at Mary, she bows her head and continues to eat her dinner in silence.

EXT. GAS STATION MIDTOWN MEMPHIS - DAY

James finishes pumping a customer's gas and wipes the windows of the old Chevy.

A co-worker FLOYD REYNOLDS(19), a scruffy looking kid, comes out of the service station office.

FLOYD
How's it going, dude? Got a
cigarette?

James pulls a pack out of his pocket, shakes one out and hands it to Floyd.

FLOYD(CONT'D)
Thanks man...

He pulls a lighter out of his pocket, fires it up and takes a draw, inhales it with a sigh.

FLOYD(CONT'D)
Damn I needed that. So what's up
James?

JAMES
Not shit man.

FLOYD
Hey, did you her about them people
that got murdered down the street?
Damn, that's some scary shit.

JAMES
Yeah, I saw it on the news last
night.

FLOYD
That's some fucked up shit, man. I
think they came in here a couple of
times.

JAMES
I don't know...never saw them
before.

James has a distant look on his face, finishes up with the customer's windows and waves as they drive off.

JAMES(CONT'D)
Well...we all got to die sometime.

Floyd looks at James quizzically.

INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE - TWELVE DAYS LATER

MATTIE JACKSON(80) sits in her sewing room, knitting, humming to herself.

Her old calico cat is curled up on the rug at her feet.

The house is quiet except for the ticking of an old grandfather clock in the corner of the room.

She knits, she hums.

A man is seen passing by her window.

She doesn't see him.

EXT. JACKSON RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

A MAN is standing on the elderly lady's porch, his back is turned, we cannot see his face.

He knocks loudly on the door.

INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

The old lady looks up from her knitting in the direction of the door.

There is another knock.

MATTIE

For goodness sake...who could that be?

She gets up and goes to the front window, peeks out her curtains.

MATTIE(CONT'D)

Yes, who is it?

MAN

I'm from the gas company ma'am. You had a problem with your water heater?

MATTIE

No, I didn't call the gas company.

MAN

Ma'am could you let me in? I need to check it.

(CONTINUED)

Mattie opens the door a crack.

It is violently kicked open.

INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE - DAY

Detectives Ray Carson and Bill Drake stand again in shock and horror, amidst the bloody scene.

The murder scene is a carbon copy of the last one.

RAY

God...This is bad...This is real
bad...

BILL

Poor woman...

RAY

An old lady at that...We've got to
catch this sick son of a bitch.
Anybody who would do this...I don't
know Bill.

BILL

I know what you mean, Ray. Damn...I
need some air.

RAY

Yeah, me too.

He motions at the coroner to take the body away.

EXT. JACKSON RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

The detectives stand outside smoking a cigarette as the old lady's body is brought out.

BILL

Poor old lady...never did no harm
to anyone...Ain't right man...it
ain't right.

RAY

This pervert lives in this
neighborhood, I bet you anything.
He might have even known that poor
old lady.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Yeah maybe...But again nobody saw this sicko.

RAY

We best alert the general public. They better lock their doors and windows. Be on the lookout for anyone acting strangely. We've got a serial killer on the loose.

INT. PUTTNAM RESIDENCE - NIGHT

James and Mary sit on the living room couch, James is reading the newspaper, Mary I watching TV.

JAMES

Remember that old lady we tried to rent a room from...Mrs. Jackson?

MARY

Yes...a sweet old lady...Why?

JAMES

Somebody killed her just like that Lamont couple.

MARY

Oh...my God!

JAMES

There must be some kind of really bad nut loose in this town.

Mary stares at James in disbelief.

INT. DETECTIVES OFFICE - DAY

Ray and Bill sit sweltering in their tiny office. Two desks and chairs, black combination telephone.

Bill is on the phone, Ray is poring through a stack of papers on his desk.

BILL

So all you found is one partial print...Not enough to get a match...shit. Okay, keep working on it.

(CONTINUED)

RAY
No usable prints, huh?

BILL
No...I'm afraid not.

RAY
Got to hit the street then. Go door
to door. Somebody had to see
something.

BILL
We're gonna need lots of help.

RAY
Make it happen, 'cause I ain't
sleeping till we catch this fucking
bastard.

EXT. STREET OF MIDTOWN MEMPHIS - DAY

Vice squad officers and uniform police, fan out through the
neighborhood going door to door.

Residents open their doors cautiously, fear is in the air.

EXT. MEMPHIS POLICE DEPARTMENT DAY

The Chief of Police ROGER BRANNON, full dress uniform, holds
a press conference.

All the TV networks and newspaper reporters are there, they
stick microphones in the Chief's face.

CHIEF BRANNON
We've got over a hundred vice squad
and uniformed policemen combing the
area. We're gonna catch this guy.
The net is tightening...It's just a
matter of time. We need you, the
general public, to be on the look
out. Lock your windows and doors.
Don't let strangers in your house.
If you see anyone acting
suspiciously call the police
immediately.

All the reporters speak at once trying to ask a question of
the Chief.

A reporter for the Commercial Appeal, DANNY REYNOLDS,
manages to get his question answered.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY REYNOLDS

We hear that we are dealing with a serial killer, who kills at random. His female victims were brutally raped and their genitals were mutilated. Is that correct Chief Brannon?

CHIEF BRANNON

The details of the murders are not being released at this time. But I can say that we suspect that the three murders were committed by the same individual...However, we have not gone as far as to label him a serial killer.

DANNY REYNOLDS

Come on Chief...We need to know the truth. Is there a monster loose in our city, yes or no?

CHIEF BRANNON

Thank you for coming...This interview is over...

The Chief of Police makes his escape back in the building.

There is a roar of anger from the reporters and the crowd of onlookers.

INT. PRUDENTIAL INSURANCE COMPANY MIDTOWN - DAY

LINDA HARDING(21), blond pretty, is just finishing up for the day.

She says goodbye to her co-workers.

She grabs her purse from under he desk and heads out the door.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Linda walks care freely, singing to herself, stops to grab her keys out of her purse.

A man is lurking in the shadows, she doesn't see him.

She gets to her car, starts to unlock the door.

The man's face comes in to light, it is James.

(CONTINUED)

He puts a blade to her throat. He takes the keys out of her hand.

He forces her into the car and drives out of the parking garage.

INT. LINDA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Inside the car James is driving wildly.

He has the blade of his knife up to her throat.

LINDA
(crying)
Please don't hurt me...Please
mister.

JAMES
Oh, I'm not gonna hurt you. Just
wanna have some fun...that's all.

EXT. LINDA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

James drives a few blocks, makes a turn, continues on parallel to the river.

He parks the car on the street, it is starting to get dark.

INT. PRUDENTIAL INSURANCE COMPANY MIDTOWN - THE NEXT DAY

Linda Harding's desk is empty, the other members of the office staff look at her empty desk curiously.

The office manager SHERRY MIZE(45), blond, average looking, questions the other two secretaries CONNIE SASSER and PEGGY SIMMONS.

SHERRY
You guys heard or seen from
Linda...not like her to be late.

CONNIE
No Sherry, haven't seen her.
Probably overslept.

PEGGY
Very odd, I've never known her to
be late. She could've overslept.
I'll give her a call.

Peggy picks up the phone receiver and dials the number.

(CONTINUED)

It rings...rings.

No answer.

PEGGY

No answer...That's strange. I wonder where she could be this time of the morning.

SHERRY

She got a new boyfriend or anything?

PEGGY

Not that I know of.

CONNIE

I don't live far from her. I'll go by her place on my lunch hour.

SHERRY

No, you go on right now...I'm worried about her with that serial killer on the loose.

EXT. HARDING RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Connie stands at Linda's door, rings the doorbell, no answer.

CONNIE

Linda...Linda.

She knocks loudly.

No answer.

EXT. RIVERSIDE PARK - DAY

Linda Harding's dead body lays in the grass, hands bound by pantyhose.

INT. HARDING RESIDENCE - LATER

Uniformed police officers enter the apartment.

There is no evidence Linda had been there the night before.

EXT. RIVERSIDE STREET - DAY

Detectives Carson and Drake stand in front of a late model Ford.

RAY
Yep, this is the girl's car.

BILL
This is not good, Bill...not good at all.

They look inside the car, there are blood stains on the passenger's side seat.

RAY
Got blood here...on the seat...shit.

Outside the car there is blood on the grass, they follow the trail.

The grass is matted down, there are drag marks.

EXT. RIVERSIDE PARK - CONTINUOUS

The detectives along with a large number of uniformed and plain clothes police fan out and search the park.

Their search finally leads to the body, hidden in some tall grass.

She is nude from the waist down, hands tied with her own pantyhose, multiple stab wounds.

BILL
Damn it...Damn it. I can't believe this shit.

RAY
Oh dear Lord...

BILL
Poor child...It's our fault Ray. We were supposed to protect her. We didn't do our job, now she's dead.

RAY
Don't beat up on yourself, Bill. We did everything we could do. I guess it wasn't enough.

Both of the detectives bend down next to the girl, tears in their eyes.

INT. PUTTNAM RESIDENCE - NIGHT

James is sitting on the couch, obvious scratch marks on his face, drinking a beer.

Mary is in the kitchen washing dishes.

JAMES

Get me some supper, bitch.

Mary comes in from the kitchen.

MARY

Fuck you, James. Get your own supper.

James jumps up and slaps her on the face hard.

JAMES

I said get me something to eat.

MARY

I hate you...

JAMES

Yeah, yeah...Who gives a shit...just get me something to eat.

MARY

You're him...aren't you?

JAMES

What the hell are you talking about woman?

MARY

You're the monster...the one who killed those people...aren't you?

JAMES

Yeah...what if I am...What you gonna do about it?

Mary grabs a butcher knife from the kitchen and tries to stab James.

He grabs the knife from her and beats her till she is unconscious.

(CONTINUED)

She lies on the floor bleeding.

James sits back down on the couch, takes a sip of beer, an insane look on his face.

INT. DETECTIVES OFFICE - DAY

The detectives swelter in their tiny office.

They stare into space, a look of hopelessness on their face.

The phone rings.

RAY

Detective Carson...may I help you.

An UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN is on the line.

She speaks in a quiet tone.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN

The man you're looking for is my husband. He's crazy...he almost killed me yesterday...He's the one who killed those girls, You got to come...He's going to kill me too.

RAY

Ma'am...ma'am. What makes you think he's the one?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN

It's him, you've got to come...Please!

RAY

What's your address?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN

1120 S Cooper #2...Please hurry.

The line goes dead.

Ray grabs his gun and badge out of his drawer.

RAY

Bill, we got a lead...let's roll.

EXT. PUTTNAM RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

The detectives' unmarked unit and two patrol cars pull up in front of the Puttnam residence.

They bail out of their cars and rush towards the door, guns drawn.

They bang on the door.

BILL
Police...open the door.

Mary eases the door open and peers out.

MARY
He left...I tried to stop him.

RAY
Would you mind if we came in and made sure?

Mary opens the door without a word.

She has a black eye, and multiple contusions on her face.

INT. PUTTNAM RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

The detectives look around the apartment James has gone.

BILL
How long has he been gone?

MARY
Only a few minutes...I tried to stop him.

RAY
That's okay ma'am...You said he tried to kill you last night.

MARY
He beat me unconscious...thought I was going to die, for sure.

BILL
Where do you think he went?

MARY
I don't know...To hell where he belongs I hope.

(CONTINUED)

RAY

Okay ma'am, we're going to leave these officers here with you in case he comes back.

The detectives head out the door in a run.

EXT. BELLEVUE AVE. - AT THE SAME TIME

James skulks down the street, people walk by, they hurry away from him.

He walks down a sidewalk between two buildings like an animal on the prowl.

EXT. 14 N. BELLEVUE - CONTINUOUS

He knocks on the first door.

GRACE JOHNSON, speaks through the closed door.

GRACE JOHNSON

Yes, who is it?

JAMES

Telephone company ma'am...We had a report there was trouble on the line.

GRACE JOHNSON

Sorry...You'll have to come back later.

JAMES

I need to check it now. The boss is gonna get mad if I don't.

GRACE JOHNSON

No, you can't come in. Come back later.

JAMES

Shit...fuck this bitch.

He leaves and walks around the complex in search of another victim.

CONNIE PARKER is just opening up her door.

James grabs her, pushes her in the door.

INT. PARKER RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Once inside James starts to stab her repeatedly.

Connie screams for a help.

CONNIE
Help...Murder...Help!

James continues to stab her, she continues to scream.

INT. GROSSMAN RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

In the apartment above, screams and cries for help can be heard.

EDNA GROSSMAN, turns down her TV, hears the screams clearly.

EDNA
Oh my dear Lord...Connie?

She jumps out of her chair, runs out of the door to investigate.

EXT. PARKER RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

James comes running out of the door, covered with blood, carrying a knife and a woman's purse.

He sees Edna, throws down the purse and runs on by her.

Edna frantically knocks on WAYNE SIMMONS' door.

EDNA
Wayne...Wayne.

Wayne comes to the door, rubbing sleep from his eyes, in his underwear.

WAYNE
What...What is it?

EDNA
You've got to help. I think a man
killed Connie...He just ran by
covered in blood. Please hurry!

Wayne comes flying out of his door, still in his underwear, carrying a pistol.

INT. PARKER RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Connie Parker, multiple stab wounds, lies in a pool of blood, dying.

EXT. BELLEVUE AVE. - CONTINUOUS

Wayne manages to catch up with James, who seems to be disoriented.

He starts firing his pistol as they race down the street.

WAYNE

He's a murderer...Catch him.

Two other men join the chase.

James runs down the street, ducks in between two buildings and manages to lose them.

INT. DETECTIVE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The detectives are combing the area when the call comes in from DISPATCH.

DISPATCH

All units in the area of Bellevue and Madison. Report of shots fired. Man with a knife and bloody clothes spotted leaving bilding at 14 N. Bellevue. Approach with caution

RAY

Shit..that's our guy.

They turn on their siren, speed toward the area.

EXT. BELLEVUE AVE. - CONTINUOUS

The detectives are making their sweep when they see James walking down the street in bloody clothes.

INT. PARKER RESIDENCE - AT THE SAME TIME

Connie Parker draws her final breath.

INT. DETECTIVE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

They roar up to James who see them and starts to run.

The detectives jump out of their car to pursue James on foot.

EXT. BELLEVUE AVE. - CONTINUOUS

Bill closes the distance on James.

Ray is a few yards behind as he pursuit continues.

Bill tackles James and brings him to the pavement.

They put the cuffs on him, pull him up, take him to their unit, open the door and toss him in.

The detectives drive off, siren blaring, James is in the back.

EXT. MEMPHIS POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

A crowd of people wait outside, straining to catch of glimpse.

Uniformed officers stand by with riot gear.

An unmarked unit pulls up, a man sits in the back.

Carson and Drake get out of their car, open the back door and pull James out.

They lead him through the crowd being restrained by uniformed officers.

They disappear into the building. The

The crowd roars.

INT. HOLDING CELL - DAY

James sits on his bunk, a contented but demented look n his face,

He starts to whisttle an eerie tune.

FADE OUT:

THE END