

Blood Country

by

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INT. CONCERT HALL -- NIGHT

The lights are down in the building. The only thing visible is the darkened wood floor of the stage, which sits in shadows.

Slowly the sounds of a cheering crowd of concert goers rises from a mere whisper to full blown volume.

A red stage light slowly fades up and a portion of the once black stage floor turns red.

The crowd goes crazy with loud cheers and whistling.

A figure stands alone inside a circle of red light thrown from a stage light.

Starting from the black cowboy boots on the stage, the camera pans upward to black Levi's, a shiny black acoustic guitar and a dark Western shirt behind the guitar.

RICKY BLACKWELL is behind the guitar. He looks to be in his mid-to-late thirties. He has pale skin, short black hair and is clean-cut. He is handsome in a rugged, cowboy kind of way and has slightly intense eyes.

His onstage demeanor is one of the polite Southern gentleman. He speaks with a thick Southern drawl.

CU of Blackwell's smiling face under a black Stetson cowboy hat.

BLACKWELL

Well, I guess y'all been so good to me tonight so I'm gonna play you one more from my new album called "Black Water Runnin'". This one is for all ya out there. Thanks for comin' out tonight. This one's called "Return to Solitude".

Blackwell begins playing the song. The song is an acoustic number with just the guitar and Blackwell singing.

BLACKWELL

(first verse)

Return from me/Return to you/Return to solitude.

ROLL CREDITS

While Blackwell plays, the audience comes into view.

There are about three hundred people in the building and the venue looks filled to capacity.

BLACKWELL

(chorus)

My life is gone but so are you/A
thousand years 'til I am through/It's
not what I want/It's what I have to
do/Return to solitude.

(second verse)

It's been so wrong for so long/Won't
shut my eyes 'til it's gone/Nothing
lasts forever/And neither did you/One
thousand years of solitude.

END CREDITS

Blackwell finishes the song and holds up a hand and waves to the audience.

BLACKWELL

Thank you and good night. See y'all
next time I'm back here in your neck
of the woods.

Blackwell exits the stage. The crowd cheers wildly.

SIDE OF STAGE AT CONCERT HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Blackwell hands his guitar to a roadie, who hands him a white towel, even though Blackwell isn't perspiring very much for a guy who just played a concert.

Blackwell walks down a short hall and is approached by his road manager, CASSANDRA.

Cassandra is mid-thirties, medium height and build, with dark hair and brown eyes. She is attractive, like a young Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, with girl-next-door good looks. She is dressed professionally and holds a clipboard.

CASSANDRA

That was a really good show tonight,
Blackwell.

BLACKWELL

Felt pretty good. Crowd's a lot
better than last night, too.

Blackwell appears to be slightly distracted and almost fidgety. He pulls Cassandra close to him and whispers in her ear.

BLACKWELL

Did you find what I asked you to?

CASSANDRA

We'll pick it up in the morning.
You be okay until then?

BLACKWELL

Yeah, I s'pose. Just as long as I
get it in the morning.

CASSANDRA

First thing in the morning, I promise.

Blackwell touches the side of her face almost affectionately. Cassandra lightly pushes his hand away and speaks to him in a playful tone.

CASSANDRA

Don't you dare start flirting with
me, Ricky Blackwell.

Blackwell is equally as playful.

BLACKWELL

No ma'am. I promise, there's no
flirtin' goin' on here.

Blackwell winks at Cassandra and walks down the hallway.

GREEN ROOM AT CONCERT HALL -- MOMENTS LATER

Blackwell enters the room. The members of his backup band, TROY, EDDIE, DWAYNE and NED are hanging out drinking beer. A couple of local women are sitting on a couch on either side of Eddie.

Troy is Blackwell's right hand man. He plays rhythm guitar and is in his late forties, with slightly graying black hair tied back in a ponytail and a well-groomed beard and mustache.

Troy is the elder statesman, having toured extensively with various bands including stints on the road with some very famous musicians.

Eddie, the drummer, is in his mid-twenties, tall, clean-cut and overly talkative. He's a raging ball of hormones and has only been with the band for a very short time. Previously he was living in Dallas and playing in a country cover band.

Dwayne plays bass. He is in his mid-thirties with long brown hair. He is a solid musician and a mostly quiet, serious person with a wife and family in Nashville.

Ned plays both keyboards and pedal steel guitar. He's in his early thirties with dark hair and is of average height and build. Ned is the jokester/smartass and stoner of the band.

Troy tosses a can of beer to Blackwell when he walks in the room. Blackwell catches the can, looks at it for a brief moment and sets it down.

BLACKWELL

Who's got the good stuff?

Ned takes a long pull from a bottle of bourbon and passes it to Blackwell. Blackwell takes a drink from the bottle.

BLACKWELL

Great show tonight. Think we knocked 'em dead.

Blackwell claps Eddie on the shoulder.

BLACKWELL

You're doin' great, kid. I really like what you're doin' with that drum fill right in the middle of "Angel On My Shoulder". Damn good stuff. Keep it up.

Eddie is obviously thrilled.

EDDIE

Thanks, man, I mean, uh, thanks Blackwell.

Blackwell grins like a happy demon.

BLACKWELL

As for the rest of you sorry sons of bitches, what can I say? Let's just keep these crowds jumpin'.

Blackwell raises the bottle of bourbon in a toast.

BLACKWELL

Here's to the tour. We got Little Rock tomorrow and Kansas City on Thursday. We got a day off after that, then Saturday we're in Tulsa, which should be the biggest crowd we've played for yet.

Blackwell takes a long pull off the bottle and wipes his face with the back of his sleeve.

BLACKWELL

Cassandra showed me some sales numbers
and the new record's been flyin' off
the shelves in Tulsa and we're even
in the Top Five for songs requested
at one a the radio stations there.
The show should be a good one.

Troy raises his beer.

TROY

To Tulsa.

All band members raise their drinks.

BLACKWELL

We'll be takin' off as soon as the
gear's loaded. We got a long drive
to Little Rock in front of us.

Blackwell leaves, taking the bottle of bourbon with him.

One of the girls sitting next to Eddie has a chunky build
and is wearing tight blue jeans and a white blouse. Her
blonde hair is teased with enough hairspray that her hair
looks like it might shatter if anything touches it.

HAIR SPRAY GIRL

Why you gotta leave so soon?

EDDIE

'Cause the boss says so. But I'll
be back soon.

The girl stands and pulls Eddie up off the couch.

HAIR SPRAY GIRL

I was just startin' to like you.
Can we at least take a walk together
before you leave?

EDDIE

Sure, baby, wherever you want to go.

Eddie follows the girl out of the room. The rest of the
band watches Eddie leave.

TROY

Ah, youth.

NED

Or whatever you want to call it.
You see the mudflaps on that girl?
Even Moses would have a tough time
parting those.

Ned stands.

NED

Don't let the bus leave without me.
I gotta find some weed before we
split.

DWAYNE

Now there's a surprise.

NED

Every man needs a vice. Mine happens
to be the wacky tobacky. Catcha in
a few.

Ned leaves with the other girl who was sitting on the couch.
Troy shakes his head.

TROY

Jesus.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. DALTONS' HOUSE -- MORNING

Two story white farm house on the outskirts of Independence,
Kansas.

SUPER: "April 1988"

BUD DALTON is standing in the large kitchen, alternating
between taking sips from a white coffee cup and nervously
fumbling with the tie of his Sheriff's uniform.

Dalton is thirty years old, a little over six feet tall,
stocky and handsome with a short brown flattop haircut. He
is a former local high school star quarterback who went on
to play football in college.

He was recently elected Sheriff of Montgomery County. Today
is his first day as Sheriff.

Dalton angrily undoes the tie, obviously frustrated. He
closes his eyes, takes a deep breath and begins to tie his
tie once more.

His wife, ROXANNE, enters the kitchen with a small smirk on her face. Roxanne is also thirty, of average height and is very pretty with long blonde hair. She is an educated, big city woman who now often feels trapped by small town life.

ROXANNE

You need help with that, Bud? Or do you want me calling you "Sheriff" from now on?

DALTON

Could you please help me with this damned thing?

Roxanne begins tying Dalton's tie, while Dalton stares up at the ceiling exhaling anxiously.

ROXANNE

Relax, honey. So you start your new job today. Big deal. You know all these people already so it's not like you're going in blindly to a brand new job.

DALTON

I know, but it just feels strange. I still just think of myself as a deputy and now I have even more responsibilities and more people looking up to me. I don't want to screw this up.

ROXANNE

Have you ever screwed anything up?

DALTON

Well...

ROXANNE

You know you haven't so don't worry. Besides we all make mistakes sometimes, right?

Dalton's shoulders sag and he gives Roxanne a defeated expression.

Roxanne finishes adjusting Dalton's tie and looks into his eyes.

ROXANNE

I'm not saying you're going to make mistakes, I'm just saying making mistakes is human and don't fret about it. If it makes you feel any better, everyone has faith in you. Remember you won that election by a landslide. People around here are thrilled that you're the new Sheriff, especially with Ernie suddenly getting sick like he did. This town needs you.

Dalton smiles slightly, comforted by Roxanne's words.

Roxanne picks Dalton's Sheriff's star badge off the kitchen table and pins the badge on Dalton's shirt.

ROXANNE

Good luck today, Bud.

DALTON

Thanks, Rox.

Dalton and Roxanne kiss. Dalton finishes his coffee and leaves the house.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION -- LATER

Dalton is behind the wheel of a Sheriff's Cruiser with Montgomery County Sheriff's Department stenciled on the doors. The car pulls to a stop outside of the Sheriff's station.

Dalton turns off the ignition and stares at the Sheriff's Station for a few moments, blinking, obviously still amazed that he is now Sheriff.

Dalton steps out of the Cruiser, closes the door behind him and walks up the couple of steps to the front door of the Sheriff's Station.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION -- CONTINUOUS

A banner that says "Welcome Sheriff Dalton" hangs on the wall. A couple of people wave to Dalton. He waves back.

Dalton is approached by WILL SIMMONS, a Sheriff Deputy and Dalton's boyhood best friend.

Will is medium height, clean-cut and all-American looking. Unlike Dalton, who left town but eventually moved back, Will has never left town and probably never will. Will isn't as educated or urbanized as Dalton, but is no less intelligent.

Will holds his hand out and he and Dalton shake.

WILL
 Congratulations, Sheriff. So how
 does it feel?

DALTON
 Not quite real yet. I'm still not
 even sure I'm not dreaming this.

WILL
 How 'bout I punch you and wake you
 up?

Dalton gives Will the kind of smile that good friends make
 when clowning around.

DALTON
 Don't think punchin' out the new
 Sheriff on his first day of work'll
 look too good on your job report.

WILL
 I'm real excited for you, Bud. I
 know you've been back for a while
 but I don't know if I ever told you
 how good it is to have you back. I
 think back to us growing up and how
 much smaller this place was back
 then. 'Course there's still not
 much around here but it has gotten a
 lot bigger.

DALTON
 That's for sure.

Will and Dalton walk to Dalton's new office, with "Sheriff
 Bud Dalton" stenciled on the glass door. Will opens the
 office door and they both go inside.

DALTON'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

The office is in a state of disarray, with a couple of open
 boxes full of things from Dalton's old desk sitting on the
 floor. Dalton lifts the boxes onto his desk and begins
 unpacking.

WILL
 I'll leave you to that and catch
 back up with you later, okay, Sheriff?

Dalton nods and continues unpacking. Most of what is in the
 boxes are manila folders and framed snapshots.

Dalton lifts up a framed picture of him and Roxanne on their wedding day and sets it on a shelf next to the office window.

He comes across a photo of him with his mother and father taken at least ten years earlier and a photo of him in high school throwing a football.

WILL (O.S.)

Hey, Dalton. We all gotcha something for your wall.

Dalton turns around to find Will standing in the office doorway with a large parcel wrapped in brown paper.

Behind Will is the entire staff of the Sheriff's Department, the former Sheriff and the town Mayor. Everyone is grinning.

Dalton does his best not to look overwhelmed and takes the package from Will. He unwraps the parcel. It is a framed orange Texas Longhorns football jersey with the number 22 and the name DALTON in capital letters on the back.

Dalton smiles with a slight embarrassment.

DALTON

Jesus. Where'd you get this?

WILL

We all pitched in and ordered it. We thought it would look good in your office.

The Mayor, DAVE SCHNEIDER, a short man, with thinning gray hair and a politician's smile steps forward.

SCHNEIDER

I said we should hang it out in the hallway but Will said you'd probably like it better in your office. We had to do something for the greatest quarterback ever to come out of Independence.

DALTON

Thanks, Dave. I mean, Mister Mayor.

Dalton gestures at the framed jersey.

DALTON

And thank you, all of you, for this.

Behind Mayor Schneider is a tall, gangly-looking bald man in his sixties walking stiffly with a cane. He is the former Sheriff, ERNIE CALLAWAY.

DALTON

Good to see you up and about, Sheriff.

Callaway makes a shooing motion with his hand.

CALLAWAY

I ain't the Sheriff no more. I'm just plain ol' Ernie Callaway now and that's okay by me. It was time to pass the job off to someone else anyhow.

The crowd begins dispersing, except Dalton, Schneider and Callaway.

DALTON

You feelin' okay?

CALLAWAY

Sure, I guess. Now I know what they mean when people tell you what it's like to be an old man. I sure do appreciate you steppin' up like you did and deciding to run for Sheriff. Dale Kenzington down at the Ace Hardware, now he's a real stand-up guy and all but he's not Sheriff material. And Will, he's a good guy and a fine Deputy but he don't have the attention span to be a good Sheriff, if you know what I mean.

SCHNEIDER

We're sure glad you came back to take care of your daddy like you did, Bud. We both think you'll be an outstanding Sheriff. Your daddy excited about your new job?

DALTON

I s'pose. Pa doesn't seem to get excited about too much these days.

SCHNEIDER

Tell your daddy I'll stop by his place one of these days to visit.

DALTON

He'd like that.

Dalton shakes their hands.

SCHNEIDER

Congratulations, Bud.

Dalton nods at him.

CALLAWAY

Good luck, son. You have any questions or just want to talk sometime, you know where to reach me.

DALTON

Thanks, Ernie.

Schneider and Callaway leave.

Dalton picks up the framed football jersey once more and stares at it for a moment. He sets the frame against an empty wall and leaves the office.

SHERIFF'S STATION MEN'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Dalton enters the bathroom and steps up to the sinks. He turns on the faucet, cups his hands together and rinses his face off. He stares at himself in the mirror and exhales, obviously overwhelmed by everything.

INT. BLACKWELL'S TOUR BUS -- DAY

Cassandra is inside the small cramped bathroom on the tour bus. A small florescent light above the mirror is on and Cassandra carefully applies dark red lipstick to her face.

She smooths out the lipstick and turns her head side to side, checking herself in the mirror. She smiles, making sure there's no lipstick on her teeth.

She puts the tube of lipstick in a small purse and removes a prescription bottle from the purse. She opens the bottle, removes two pills, dry swallows them and puts the bottle back in the purse.

Cassandra holds her hand out, palm side down, inspecting it. Satisfied that her hand isn't shaking, she opens the bathroom door and steps out.

Troy, Eddie, Dwayne and Ned are in sitting in the front of the bus, drinking beer and talking loudly.

CASSANDRA

Y'all might want to keep it down 'cause Blackwell's sleepin'.

All four men stop talking and look at her.

Cassandra grabs her briefcase from a bunk and disappears into the back cabin of the bus, closing the door behind her.

All four men stay quiet for a couple moments.

EDDIE
Y'all think they're fuckin' back
there?

Dwayne holds a finger to his lips and frowns.

DWAYNE
Quiet, man.

Eddie looks to Troy for support.

TROY
Just keep it quiet, Eddie. Remember
who's cuttin' your checks for you.

EDDIE
I was just kiddin'.

NED
Chill, man. Don't say anything else,
okay? You don't want to end up like
the guy you're replacing.

Eddie wrinkles his nose.

EDDIE
What's that s'posed to mean?

Ned opens another beer and cocks his head at Eddie.

NED
Nobody's told you about our old
drummer Floyd?

Eddie starts to answer but Ned cuts him off.

NED
See, our last drummer Floyd was the
kinda guy who'd really shoot his
mouth off when he was drunk, not
like you who just runs his mouth
all the time.

Ned holds up an index finger signaling Eddie to keep quiet.

NED
Let me finish.

Ned stares at Eddie, who starts to say something but thinks
better of it and closes his mouth.

NED

So this one night Floyd's all good and fucked up on whiskey and starts mouthing off to Blackwell about all kinds of shit like why doesn't Blackwell ever stay in hotels with the rest of us and why does he lock himself in the back of the bus when we're not playing shows and why can't the rest of us hang out in the back of the bus and that sort of thing.

FLASHBACK -- INT. BLACKWELL'S TOUR BUS -- EVENING

Floyd, a guy in his mid-thirties with stringy hair and the beginnings of a decent-sized beer belly is pointing a finger at Blackwell, asking him unheard questions while occasionally jabbing his finger toward the back of the bus.

NED (V.O.)

So Floyd, he just keeps razzing Blackwell about all this bullshit. Why was the band good enough to be on stage with but not good enough to be seen out in public with and that sort of thing. Finally Blackwell just loses his patience with Floyd and punches him. Man, that was one hell of a punch, too.

Blackwell punches Floyd hard enough to lift him off his feet and send him flying up the aisle of the bus. Floyd hits the front window of the bus and drops into the stairwell.

The bus driver, SONNY, a short, round, creepy looking, almost Uncle Fester-like bald guy, stares down at Floyd, with utter surprise.

NED (V.O.)

So Floyd lands in the stairway of the bus. Then the bus screeches to a halt, the door opens and Blackwell picks up Floyd and throws him out of the bus.

The bus slams on its brakes. The bus door opens and Blackwell picks up Floyd by the back of his shirt and throws him out of the bus.

FLASHBACK -- EXT. TOUR BUS -- CONTINUOUS

The bus sits on the side of the road in the middle of nowhere. Floyd lies in the grass, stunned for the moment.

Blackwell storms off the bus, opens one of the side cargo hatch doors and begins throwing all of Floyd's drum equipment out of the cargo hatch onto the side of the road.

NED (V.O.)

Then Blackwell gets off the bus,
opens the outer cargo hatch and takes
all of Floyd's shit and throws it
out of the bus in the middle of
fuckin' nowhere somewhere in
Louisiana.

While Blackwell is tossing the drum equipment out of the trailer, Floyd tries to deck Blackwell. Blackwell grabs Floyd's fist with one hand and punches him with the other. Floyd drops to the side of the road, gasping.

NED (V.O.)

Floyd tried to stop him, but Blackwell
dropped him with one shot to the
gut.

Blackwell gets back on the back on the bus and the bus starts to drive away.

Floyd is on his hands and knees screaming at the bus.

FLOYD

Wait, you owe me twelve hundred bucks,
you son of a bitch!

The bus stops and the door opens. A hand reaches outside of the bus and throws a wad of money into the Louisiana breeze.

The bus drives away.

BACK TO PRESENT

Ned rolls a joint, paying close attention to what he's doing while talking.

NED

And two days later we were in Dallas
auditioning your scrawny ass.

EDDIE

No way that happened.

DWAYNE

Happened just like Ned said it did.
You just gotta stay out of Blackwell's
way when he's in one of his moods
and you'll be just fine.

EDDIE

Damn. I had no idea Blackwell was so moody.

TROY

Aw hell, Blackwell's just another singer-songwriter and every one of 'em thinks they're the center of the universe. I should know. I've played with enough of 'em. Blackwell's as fucked up and crazy as the rest of 'em, but Blackwell also plays just as good if not better than the rest of 'em too. And if Blackwell likes you, you'll get paid better than you will tourin' with just about anyone.

EDDIE

No shit?

TROY

No shit. You know how I first started playing with Blackwell? About eight, nine years ago I was playing this gig in St. Louis. I was with this band and we'd been together for a while, but we were still only playing whatever small bar gigs we could scrounge up.

Troy drinks from the can of beer and stares at the can for a moment, lost in a memory.

TROY

So here we were at this small club in St. Louis. The place was jammed-packed and there's Blackwell standing in front of the stage all night watching me. At first I thought he might be a homo or something until we finished our first set and he came up to me and told me he wanted me to join his band. Then he gave me an envelope with fifteen fuckin' thousand dollars in it.

Troy shakes his head, still amazed by the memory of the envelope full of money.

TROY

I quit the band right there on the spot and left with Blackwell in the morning. True story. I'll never forget what he said to me when I asked him who he was.

TROY'S FLASHBACK -- INT. ST. LOUIS CLUB -- NIGHT

Blackwell dressed in all black, standing in front of the stage, staring up at an unseen Troy. The club around him is packed with people.

TROY (V.O.)

Don't matter much who I am. I'm just a man with a song.

Blackwell mouths the same words.

BACK TO PRESENT

TROY

So what I'm sayin' is if you stay out of Blackwell's way and he likes you you'll make good cash when you tour with him.

Eddie looks at Dwayne.

EDDIE

How'd you start playin' with Blackwell?

DWAYNE

My story's kinda similar. I was playing with a couple of bands and workin' construction during the day to support my family. Blackwell actually showed up at my job site all dressed in black wearing these weird looking sunglasses and told me he wanted me to join his band. He gave me an envelope full of a lot of money and next day I was in the band.

Ned lights the joint and inhales deeply.

DWAYNE

And Blackwell found Ned on a dope farm somewhere in Tennessee, ain't that right, Ned?

Ned exhales a large cloud of smoke.

NED
Somethin' like that.

EDDIE
Now that don't surprise me at all.
You smoke like a chimney. How you
play every night when you smoke that
much dope?

Ned holds the joint out at Eddie. Eddie stares at it.

NED
Maybe you should try it. It might
improve your playing.

Eddie ignores the jab.

EDDIE
So where's Blackwell live when he
ain't touring? I mean where's he
from?

Ned shakes his head.

NED
I dunno.

EDDIE
Troy, you know?

Troy gives him a lazy shrug.

TROY
No clue, man.

EDDIE
You've been playing with him this
long and you've never asked him where
he's from?

TROY
Never seemed all that important to
know.

EDDIE
You know anything about the guy?

TROY
I know what I need to know and that's
good enough for me.

Sonny, the bus driver, speaks. His voice is deep and raspy.

SONNY

We'll be there in half an hour,
Cassandra.

Eddie wrinkles his brow.

EDDIE

Who the fuck's he talkin' to?

NED

You mean the Troll? He talks to
himself sometimes.

Cassandra opens the door of the back cabin and yells up to
the front of the bus.

CASSANDRA

Thanks.

Cassandra closes the door and disappears from sight.

All four guys are suddenly very quiet. They look back and
forth between each other, tripped out by what transpired.
They drink beer in silence.

INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER -- AFTERNOON

Dalton is behind the wheel of the car, driving down a rural
country road. He turns the car into the driveway of a large
farmhouse, stops the car and gets out.

EXT. JONAS' FARM HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Dalton's father, JONAS, sits in a rocking chair on the front
porch, wrapped in a quilt. He is in his seventies, and was
once a tall, almost intimidating man who is now withering
away from cancer.

Dalton approaches the house carrying a small brown paper
bag.

JONAS

First day on the job, eh, boy?

DALTON

Yeah it is, Pa. Made it half a day
without getting fired yet.

Dalton climbs the steps onto the porch and leans against the
railing. Through the screen door, Jonas' live-in nurse,
GERALDINE, can be seen inside the house.

JONAS

Somethin' special you came to see me
about?

Jonas lifts a flask out from under his quilt and takes a
pull off of it.

He screws the cap back on the flask and puts it back under
the quilt.

DALTON

I wish you wouldn't do that, Pa.
It's not good for you especially
with your chemo treatments and all.

JONAS

Yeah? Well it makes me feel good so
try and stop me.

Dalton holds up the brown bag.

DALTON

I got you something at the gas station
but I'll only give it to you if you
give me the flask.

JONAS

Boy, you tryin' to bribe me like a
little kid?

DALTON

That's exactly what I'm trying to
do.

Jonas removes the flask from under the quilt, takes another
pull of whiskey and holds the flask out to Dalton with a
smirk. Dalton grabs the flask and shakes it. The flask is
empty. Dalton shakes his head.

JONAS

You gonna show me what's in the bag?

Dalton removes a Moon Pie from the paper bag and hands it to
his father. The old man's face lights up.

JONAS

So this is what you're doin' with
your lunch hour? Ain'tcha supposed
to be off eatin' doughnuts or
something?

DALTON

That's what cops are supposed to do during their lunch hour, huh? And what did you do with your lunch hour all those years you owned the mill?

JONAS

I had me a liquid lunch with my old pal Jack Daniel, that's what I did. Three fingers worth and I could deal with just about anything until closing down for the night.

Dalton changes the subject, as he often has to do with his father.

DALTON

Dave Schneider and Ernie Callaway stopped by this morning. Dave said he was going to stop by and visit you sometime soon.

JONAS

What's that old windbag wanna visit a dying old fart like me for?

DALTON

Don't talk like that, Pa. You ain't close to dead yet.

JONAS

You know I'm almost as dead as your mama.

Dalton doesn't answer, obviously stung by his father's words.

Jonas sucks on his teeth, thinking about what he just said.

JONAS

Okay, sorry 'bout that. I was just kiddin'. Here, why don't you help me open this damn Moon Pie.

Dalton takes the package from Jonas, tears it open and hands it back to his father.

Jonas takes a bite of the Moon Pie and sees that Dalton is still hurt from the earlier comment.

JONAS

That really hurt you, didn't it, boy?

DALTON

Yeah it did, Pa. Why you have to say mean and nasty things like that?

JONAS

'Cause when you've reached my age, you've earned the right to be mean and nasty.

DALTON

You actually believe that?

JONAS

'Course I do. Besides, I ain't being mean and nasty, all I'm saying is the truth. I'm dyin' and you know it.

DALTON

When you say it like that it sounds like you've already given up on living.

JONAS

Naw, I'll keep being a pain in your ass for a while longer, just as long as I have my flask and you keep bringing me Moon Pies.

DALTON

Yeah, you better be.

Dalton puts his hand on Jonas' shoulder.

DALTON

I gotta get back to the Station. Can I get you anything else today, Pa?

JONAS

Naw. Just be sure to say hello to that pretty wife of yours for me.

Dalton waves good bye and gets in the Sheriff's Cruiser.

BLACKWELL'S FLASHBACK -- EXT. BARN -- NIGHT

The year is 1931, somewhere in rural Mississippi.

The barn is in a clearing of tall, mossy trees next to a large cow pasture that runs up to the bank of a small river.

There is a crowd of people around the barn, talking and laughing, many of whom are smoking cigarettes.

More people are entering and leaving the barn.

The night is a big social event for the entire county so all of the people are dressed as nice as they can, considering the depressed economy.

BLACKWELL'S FLASHBACK -- INT. BARN -- CONTINUOUS

The room is cavernous with very few features other than a stage at the end of the room opposite the entrance that is separated from the rest of the room by a makeshift red curtain.

The mood inside the barn is festive, the crowd of people inside obviously happy to be there dancing and partying and temporarily forgetting about their worries.

On the stage side of the red curtain are six men and musical instruments set up for a show. All six men are white, between the ages of 25 and 40.

Four of the six men are smoking and all of them are taking swigs off a whiskey bottle being passed around.

One of the men is Blackwell but he goes by the name Ricky Dupree. He looks identical to how he looks in 1988. He holds a guitar. His facial expression is one of anticipation.

He peeks around the edge of the curtain to look at the crowd. Immediately his eyes go to a woman in a tight black dress, long silky black hair and porcelain white skin like a China Doll. Blackwell can't take his eyes off her.

She stares at him and smiles. He smiles back.

A man with a large straw hat pulls the curtain aside and the crowd begins cheering loudly. The man addresses the crowd.

MAN WITH HAT

Ladies and gentlemen, Billy Buckner
and the Mississippi Backwoods Boys.

The crowd cheers louder.

Blackwell steps forward on the right side of the stage, smiling. The woman in black stands directly in front of Blackwell, her eyes locked on him with a seductive gaze.

Standing front and center with an acoustic guitar around his neck, Billy Buckner turns to the band, gives a four-count and the band begins playing their first song.

Throughout the song, the crowd is dancing but the woman in black is standing still, continuing to stare at Blackwell with a look of hunger in her eyes.

Blackwell makes periodic eye contact with the woman, obviously liking the attention from the woman in black.

BLACKWELL'S FLASHBACK -- INT. BARN -- LATER

The band is taking a break and are milling about the barn. The woman in black approaches Blackwell. She speaks with a swampy, Louisiana drawl.

WOMAN IN BLACK

I really like your music. You sure can play that guitar of yours.

Blackwell tips his hat at her.

BLACKWELL

Much appreciated, ma'am.

WOMAN IN BLACK

Ma'am?

She eyes him coyly.

WOMAN IN BLACK

You make it sound like I'm a little ol' lady you're gonna help cross the street or something.

Blackwell nods at her and smiles.

BLACKWELL

Sorry 'bout that. So what's your name, darlin'?

WOMAN IN BLACK

Madeline.

BLACKWELL

Madeline. Now that's a real pretty name. My name's Ricky. Ricky Dupree.

Madeline holds her hand out and Blackwell takes it.

MADELINE

Nice to meet you, Ricky.

She smiles seductively.

MADELINE

Say, Ricky, you want to take a walk
with me?

Blackwell looks around at his bandmates, but nobody seems to be watching him. He knows the hell he's catch if anyone tells his wife about taking a walk with a beautiful, strange woman.

BLACKWELL

Okay, let's go.

He takes her hand and they hurry out of the barn before anyone notices them.

BLACKWELL'S FLASHBACK -- EXT. BARN -- MOMENTS LATER

Blackwell and Madeline walk toward the river, holding hands.

BLACKWELL

You ain't from 'round here, are you,
Madeline?

MADELINE

How can you tell?

BLACKWELL

Well, for starters 'cause you don't
sound like the other people around
here. So where you from, anyway?

MADELINE

Here and there. Mostly N'awlins, I
guess.

BLACKWELL

Yeah? Never been there before.
What brings you here?

MADELINE

Just travelin' around.

Blackwell is genuinely surprised by the idea of a woman traveling alone.

BLACKWELL

By yourself? Ain't that dangerous?

MADELINE

I can stand up for myself.

Blackwell shrugs in acknowledgment.

BLACKWELL

Yeah, well, I s'pose you could.

They reach the river and Madeline watches the dark, slowly moving water for a couple of moments.

MADELINE

I just love rivers, don't you, Ricky?

BLACKWELL

Never really thought about it before, but sure, I guess so.

MADELINE

I love the way a river moves and the way water feels when it touches your body. It kinda makes me excited, if you know what I mean. You ever make love next to a river, Ricky?

Blackwell looks slightly embarrassed.

Madeline suddenly grabs Blackwell's chin with her free hand and kisses him deeply. Blackwell pulls away from her with a surprised half-cocked smile.

BLACKWELL

Whoa. What was that for?

MADELINE

I want you, Ricky. Make love to me right here by the river.

Blackwell holds up his hands and backs a step away from her.

BLACKWELL

I'd like to, but I got a wife and two little girls at home. I really do like you but I just can't do this.

Madeline steps forward and violently grabs the sides of Blackwell's head with both her hands and puts her mouth on his.

Blackwell pulls away from her. Madeline pushes him hard, knocking him down into the wet sand on the river bank. She rips open his shirt and sits down on Blackwell, straddling him, leaning over him and pinning his arms to the ground.

Blackwell struggles but to his surprise, finds Madeline is stronger than he is.

Madeline holds her face just inches above Blackwell's

MADELINE

Don't fight it. You know you want
it so why not just give in?

Blackwell struggles again with no success. Madeline smiles at Blackwell and kisses his face once more. She licks Blackwell's neck with a couple flicks of her tongue, finally putting her lips around his neck and biting down.

Blackwell's eyes shoot open with shock and he struggles again as blood escapes from Madeline's lips.

Madeline continues drinking from Blackwell. His eyes eventually close and his facial expression goes from one of pain to that of almost serenity, as if he were enjoying what is happening to him. He begins moaning softly.

Madeline stops drinking for a moment and whispers in Blackwell's ear.

MADELINE

That's right. I knew you'd like it.
Just me and you by the river.

Madeline goes back to feeding on him. Blackwell's heart rate starts slowing down.

INSERT MONTAGE -- BLACKWELL'S FLASHBACKS

Quick, grainy images flash by.

--Blackwell's wife and children. The girls are five and eight years old, with their mother's blonde hair. Blackwell's wife is young and pretty, with an almost angelic air about her.

--A small white house. Blackwell's house in the country where he lives with his wife and children.

--Blackwell's parents in their old age. They are weathered and stern looking. Blackwell's father appears to be someone who worked a hard, labor-like job for many years. His mother has dark hair and sharp Eastern European features.

--Blackwell's baptism in a river when he was a child. Little Ricky Dupree closes his eyes and holds his breath as a preacher holds the boy's nose and dips the boy under the water.

BACK TO SCENE

When Blackwell's heart appears to be barely beating, Madeline stops draining him. She pulls away from his neck and stares at Blackwell in the moonlight, whispering.

MADELINE

Open your eyes, Ricky Dupree.

She waits a moment.

MADELINE

Open your eyes and look at me.

Blackwell drowsily looks at her with unfocused eyes.

MADELINE

Listen to me, Ricky. I think you're beautiful and I like you too much to kill you. But everything is different now. You have to forget about who you were, 'cause it's all gone now. Remember this: stay close to the rivers. They can take you away and hide you. Never stray far from the rivers.

Madeline vanishes. Blackwell closes his eyes.

After a moment, Blackwell groggily opens his eyes. After a little struggle, he manages to roll onto his side. He puts a hand to his neck and sees the blood on his fingertips in the moonlight.

Blackwell sits up. Waves of nausea him and he begins vomiting violently.

Blackwell lays on his side for a couple of moments, finally getting up enough energy to stand on shaky legs. In the distance he can see the lights and hear the noise of the barn dance.

Blackwell watches the lights for a moment, remembering Madeline's words.

MADELINE (V.O.)

You have to forget about who you were, 'cause it's all gone now.

Blackwell stumbles down the river bank into the darkness.

BACK CABIN OF BLACKWELL'S TOUR BUS -- EVENING

The room is small and dark because the windows are blacked out. Other than a small wooden dresser and a tiny refrigerator, the only other piece of furniture is a bed.

Blackwell is in the bed, wearing only a pair of black jeans. He tosses and turns in his sleep, sweating heavily and moaning. His mouth opens and closes, exposing his fangs.

Cassandra sits on the edge of the bed, watching Blackwell.

After a couple of moments, Cassandra shakes Blackwell's shoulder.

CASSANDRA
Wake up, Blackwell.

She shakes his shoulder once more.

INSERT IMAGE OF MADELINE

Madeline sinks her teeth into Blackwell's neck. Blackwell screams.

BACK TO PRESENT

Blackwell sits up, red eyes bulging wide open and he grabs Cassandra's shoulders, mouth open wide. She forcefully grabs the sides of his head.

CASSANDRA
Look at me, Blackwell. Wake up.

Blackwell loosens his grip on Cassandra's shoulders, his fangs retract and his eyes turn back to their normal brown color. He looks at her with a spaced-out expression.

CASSANDRA
Look at me. Are you okay?

Blackwell looks her in the eyes and nods.

BLACKWELL
I was having the same dream again.

Cassandra lets go of his head.

CASSANDRA
I could tell.

Blackwell lifts his head and sniffs the air.

BLACKWELL
It's almost dark outside.

CASSANDRA
Almost. You slept all day. We've been in Little Rock for a few hours. The guys went out looking for something to eat.

Blackwell clutches the side of his head and lets out a loud groan. His body shakes wildly, like a junkie needing a fix.

BLACKWELL

Did you get it? I need it.

Blackwell balls his hands into fists and clutches his arms around his shivering torso.

BLACKWELL

I'm losing it. I'm losing my fuckin' mind.

Cassandra opens her briefcase and removes a plastic blood bag full of red liquid.

CASSANDRA

I picked it up this morning like I said I would. I've been back here almost all day waiting for you to wake up.

She hands him the blood bag and closes her briefcase. Blackwell stares at the blood bag for a moment with a disappointed expression.

BLACKWELL

Is this all you got?

CASSANDRA

There's another one in the mini-fridge. Try to make it last.

Blackwell lets out a quaking sigh and shakes his head.

BLACKWELL

It's getting worse. I'm gonna need more than this. You have to get me more. I've been holding back for too long.

Cassandra puts a hand on Blackwell's shoulder.

CASSANDRA

You're doing great. Just keep it together for now.

Cassandra stands, gesturing at the blood bag.

CASSANDRA

Take your time with that. Don't drink it too fast 'cause I don't want you gettin' sick. You have over an hour until sound check so you have plenty of time.

Blackwell waits for Cassandra to leave the room.

After she closes the door behind her, Blackwell hungrily bites into the blood bag, sucking and chewing on the plastic bag like a five year old with a juice box.

INT. DALTONS' HOUSE -- NIGHT

Roxanne is in the process of serving dinner. She sets full plates on either side of the dining room table and dims the lights for a candlelight dinner.

Dalton sits at the table with a glass of red wine in front of him, obviously happy to be home.

Roxanne sits down across from Dalton.

ROXANNE

So how was the first day, Sheriff?

DALTON

Not bad I guess. Pretty uneventful. Mostly I was just getting my office set up. A bunch of people stopped by to wish me good luck.

ROXANNE

That was nice of them. What else happened today?

DALTON

Like I said, not much. Just feels a little funny still. Especially with Will, Mel and Mike 'cause I'm their boss now and not a Deputy like them any more even though all of them have been there longer than me.

ROXANNE

If any of them are jealous, I'm sure they'll get over it soon enough. Besides, I'm sure that most of them, especially Will, would much rather have you Sheriff than Ernie Callaway.

DALTON

You're probably right.

They eat in silence for a couple of moments.

ROXANNE

Oh, you'll never guess what happened today.

She gets up and goes to the CD player, puts a CD in the machine and presses play. The music is Ricky Blackwell.

DALTON

Can we listen to this a little later, Rox? It doesn't exactly go with the candlelight dinner mood.

ROXANNE

Just listen for a minute.

The music plays for a little while.

ROXANNE

Do you like it?

DALTON

It's okay, I guess. Who is it?

ROXANNE

Ricky Blackwell. It's pretty good, isn't it?

Dalton nods, though he obviously isn't interested in the music. Roxanne turns the music off and sits at the table.

ROXANNE

I'm glad you like it, 'cause that's what we're doing this weekend. Peggy Jean was listening to the radio today and won four tickets to see Ricky Blackwell in Tulsa on Saturday and she wants us to go to the concert with her and Will.

DALTON

Tulsa? Tulsa's at least a couple hours from here.

ROXANNE

But we haven't done anything in months and you promised me we'd do something this weekend to celebrate your new job.

DALTON

But going to a concert?

ROXANNE

Stop sounding like an old man. You used to love going to concerts. We'll make a weekend out of it and it'll be fun, I promise.

Dalton grumbles.

ROXANNE

Please, Bud? I'd really like to go and we haven't done anything fun since your campaign started.

Dalton grumbles again and sighs.

DALTON

Okay, fair enough. You call Peggy Jean tomorrow and figure out what you want to do about driving down there and where we're staying and all that.

ROXANNE

Thanks, Bud. I really do think the four of us will have a fun time.

Roxanne holds up her wine glass.

ROXANNE

Here's to the new job.

Dalton also holds up his glass and they toast.

ROXANNE

Who woulda thought that a year ago we were living in Houston, you working as a cop and me at that awful job at Macy's. Now we're here and you're Sheriff and I'm selling farming supplies and putting my Masters in Psychology to good use.

Sensing Roxanne's sarcastic comment and knowing Roxanne is having a tough time with small town life, Dalton proceeds carefully.

DALTON

Do you like this job better than the last one?

Roxanne makes a toothless, serious smile.

ROXANNE

Well, I'm not going to lie to you and tell you that I love or even like the job, but I love us and I will go anywhere and do anything to keep us together.

Her smile changes from serious to one of adoration.

DALTON
I love you, Rox.

They eat in silence for a few moments, watching each other.
Dalton breaks the silence.

DALTON
So I stopped by to see my old man
during my lunch hour.

ROXANNE
And I s'pose he's as crotchety as
ever.

DALTON
Yep, crotchety and not doing anything
to take care of himself, but that's
the way he's always been. He seems
to be hanging in there but I know
he's driving that live-in nurse crazy.
It'll only be a matter of time before
she quits.

Roxanne raises her glass again.

ROXANNE
Well here's to your daddy then too.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION -- MORNING

Dalton sits behind the desk in his office going through stacks
of paperwork and manila envelopes piled up on the desk.

Dalton's secretary, PAM, a woman in her early fifties with
pale skin and a large beehive hairdo, is going through open
filing cabinets in the office, helping Dalton clean out and
rearrange the cabinets.

PAM
I shoulda helped Ernie go through
these filing cabinets ages ago.
Most of the files in these bottom
cabinets are ancient.

Pam stares at the files in the bottom cabinets and frowns.

PAM
You could probably send all of this
stuff down to the basement.

DALTON

If you could do that for me, that would be great.

PAM

Sure thing, Sheriff.

Pam opens a metal cabinet and removes a cardboard box with a stack of manila envelopes inside. She sets the box on Dalton's desk.

PAM

Where do you want me to file these?

DALTON

What are they?

PAM

They're all the unsolved crimes files.

She shakes her head with a smile.

PAM

You know, like old man Walker losing some of his cattle last year and claiming that UFOs abducted them.

Dalton stares at the box for a couple of moments.

DALTON

Just leave them there and I'll take care of them.

Dalton stares at the box for a while longer, while sipping from a cup of coffee. He drums his fingers on the desk, eventually pulling the box in front of him.

Dalton flips through the files in the box and removes a manila envelope.

DALTON

Pam, you wanna take some of that stuff down to the basement right now? You know, before there's no more room left on my desk or on the floor?

Pam is slightly taken aback by Dalton's suddenly bossy, I-want-it-done-yesterday tone of voice.

PAM

Uh, okay, Sheriff.

Pam picks up a cardboard box and a stack of files and leaves the office.

Once Pam is gone, Dalton opens the file in front of him. The file is an unsolved murder of a woman named Sissy Coleman, who was a high school girlfriend of Dalton's.

Dalton rests his elbows on the desk, plants his chin on his palms and stares at the crime scene photos and the dead body of a once very pretty twenty year old girl.

He flips through the paperwork in the file.

Dalton stares up at a picture of his high school football team hanging on the wall.

DALTON'S FLASHBACK -- INT. PICKUP TRUCK -- EVENING

Sissy Coleman, seventeen years old and pretty. She laughs at an unseen Dalton sitting across from her in the cab of an old Chevy pickup. Sissy smiles and pushes her long, straight light brown hair behind ears.

SISSY

I love you, Bud Dalton.

She leans forward to kiss Dalton.

BACK TO PRESENT

Dalton is snapped out of his daydream by knocking on his office door. As he closes the file, the door opens and Will enters with a happy, almost mocking smile.

WILL

Well good mornin', Sheriff. Whatcha up to?

DALTON

Just a little spring cleanin'.

WILL

I can see that. What's in the box?

DALTON

Buncha old cases. Old unsolved cases.

Will's smile disappears.

WILL

You got Sissy's file in there, don'tcha?

Dalton nods his head at the file in front of him.

DALTON

It's right here. Doesn't seem possible that she's been gone for ten years, does it?

Will shakes his head.

WILL

No, it sure doesn't.

Dalton drums his fingers on the desk again.

DALTON

You wanna go for a ride?

INT. CONCERT HALL -- NIGHT

Medium-sized venue in Kansas City, Missouri, filled to about three-quarters capacity. The band opening for Blackwell is on stage playing.

Troy, Dwayne and Eddie are in the wings of the stage watching the opening band. Troy and Dwayne nod their heads to the music. Eddie is scoping the audience. Blackwell sits nearby on a folding chair tuning a guitar.

EDDIE

Man, I don't think there's a single hot girl out there. I ain't seein' nothin' but Wrangler ass out there.

TROY

Whatcha mean Wrangler ass?

Eddie makes a large half circle motion with both hands.

EDDIE

You know. Wrangler ass.

He makes a small "C" shape with both hands.

EDDIE

Instead of Levi ass. Big difference between the two. Is this the dog track or what?

Eddie turns away from the stage and stands by Blackwell, drumming out a rhythm on the top of an amplifier cabinet with his drum sticks.

EDDIE

So where you from, Blackwell?

Blackwell looks up from his guitar.

BLACKWELL
Here and there.

EDDIE
What's that mean?

BLACKWELL
Means just what it's supposed to mean. Here and there.

EDDIE
But everyone's from someplace.

BLACKWELL
You goin' somewhere with all a this, son?

EDDIE
Naw, guess not. Just tryin' to make conversation.

Blackwell knows what conversation is to Eddie. He stares Eddie in the eye.

BLACKWELL
Conversation, huh? You just keep poundin' on those drums like you do, okay, son?

Ned approaches from the backstage area wearing black leather pants and a tight black T-shirt. Eddie and Dwayne stare at him.

NED
What's the matter? Ain'tcha ever danced with an evil man in leather pants?

Blackwell smirks at Ned and lets out a small snicker. Ned's smile disappears and he closes his mouth.

On stage, the opening band is finishing its last song.

INT. CONCERT HALL -- LATER

Blackwell is having a pre-show pep talk with the band off on the side of the stage. The loud sounds of the cheering audience echoes through the building.

BLACKWELL

Let's get this place jumpin'. Eddie, remember we're goin' with the slower tempo for "I'll Be Gone". Ned, you do that slide solo you did the other night on "Yesterday Will Never Be the Same." Other than that everything's how we rehearsed it. Let's go tear the roof off a this place.

CONCERT M.C. (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen. Ricky Blackwell.

The audience continues cheering. Blackwell and the band take their places on a darkened stage.

BLACKWELL

How y'all doin' tonight, Kansas City?

The lights come up on stage and the audience screams louder. The band starts playing an uptempo song called "Marlene".

BLACKWELL

(first verse)

Marlene my Tennessee queen/I'll love you for all time/You're living in my dreams/My Tennessee queen.

(second verse)

Marlene my Tennessee Queen/You take control/And show me what life means/My Tennessee queen.

(chorus)

I love you/And you love me/You'll take control/And set me free.

(third verse)

Marlene my Tennessee queen/Your daddy hates me/But mamma knows what I mean/My Tennessee queen.

The band performs the song in its entirety.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER -- DAY

Dalton drives. Will sits in the passenger seat. Dalton parks the car in front of a doughnut shop.

WILL

What're we doing here?

DALTON

What's it look like? We're getting doughnuts. Or actually you're getting doughnuts for us.

Will is taken aback.

WILL

What?

DALTON

I'm giving you your first official order as Sheriff and I'm ordering you to go get us a dozen doughnuts. Make sure at least two of them are the jelly filled kind with powdered sugar on top. And get a bear claw for my old man.

Dalton reaches for his wallet, pulls out a ten dollar bill and holds the bill out at Will. Will stares at him with a pissed-off expression.

Dalton maintains a serious demeanor for a moment and bursts into laughter.

DALTON

Just kidding. You really think I'd do that to you? C'mon. Let's go get some doughnuts.

INT. DOUGHNUT SHOP -- MOMENTS LATER

Dalton and Will enter the shop. Two women in white uniforms are behind the shop counter.

LORETTA is in her late thirties with dark hair and signs of aging in the form of strands of gray in her hair and crowsfeet around her eyes.

ANGELA is one year out of high school and very pretty. She is obviously taken by the sight of Dalton and stares at him with puppy dog eyes.

An old man wearing overalls, a flannel shirt and a well-worn green John Deere baseball cap sits on a stool facing the counter with a partially eaten doughnut and a cup of coffee in front of him.

LORETTA

Mornin', Sheriff.

The old man nods at Dalton. Dalton tips his hat at both Loretta and the old man.

DALTON
Loretta. Mister Travis.

LORETTA
Mornin', Will.

Will tips his hat at Loretta.

WILL
Mornin' Loretta.

LORETTA
How's your daddy doin', Sheriff?

DALTON
He's hangin' in there.

LORETTA
Well, that's good. And Roxanne?
She doin' okay?

DALTON
She's still workin' over at the Farm
N Feed and she's doin' just fine.

LORETTA
Well that sounds just great.

Loretta cocks her head at Angela.

LORETTA
Well, stop staring and ask the Sheriff
and his Deputy what they'd like.

Angela gives Dalton a flirty smile and an even more flirty
tone of voice.

ANGELA
What can I get for you, Sheriff?

Loretta puts both hands on her hips and speaks as though
she's scolding a young child.

LORETTA
This is a doughnut shop, young lady.

Angela is suddenly very polite.

ANGELA
Yes, ma'am. Is there something I
can get for you, Sheriff?

DALTON

A dozen mixed doughnuts and a bear
claw.

Loretta nods at Angela.

LORETTA

I ever tell you how I used to babysit
the Sheriff when he was a little
boy? That was before he took
Independence to the State Football
Championship and all of that. Now
look at him. All grown up and
everything.

DALTON

Or something like that.

Angela finishes putting the doughnuts and the bear claw in a
pink cardboard pastry box. Her flirty tone returns.

ANGELA

Anything else you'd like to have,
Sheriff?

Loretta shakes her head.

Dalton speaks with a sarcastic politeness, like the hero
from an old Western.

DALTON

No thank you, ma'am. I believe that's
all we'll be needing this morning.

Dalton takes the box of doughnuts, leaves money on the counter
and tips his hat at the women.

DALTON

You ladies have a nice day, okay?

INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER -- LATER

Dalton drives. Will holds a half-eaten chocolate doughnut
in one hand.

WILL

I appreciate the doughnut and all,
but you never did say where we're
going.

Dalton watches the road with a preoccupied expression.

DALTON

So what d'ya think about the concert this weekend?

WILL

That's what this is about? Aw, I dunno. I guess it'll be fun. I don't know much about this Ricky Blackwell guy, but his music seems pretty good. Peggy Jean is really excited about the show 'cause she won the tickets on the radio. She's never won anything on the radio before. Did I tell you she got backstage passes too?

DALTON

No kiddin'?

WILL

Peggy Jean's all excited because she's never met any celebrities face to face unless you count that news anchor from Channel Thirteen up in Topeka with that big ugly pompadour.

Dalton turns the car down a dirt road. Will stops chewing on his doughnut, his smile fading when he realizes where they're headed.

WILL

You, uh, never been out here since it happened?

Dalton shakes his head.

DALTON

I thought about it, but I could never bring myself to come out here until now.

WILL

You never did get over Sissy Coleman, did you?

DALTON

No, I did. I just never got over how she died.

The road ends at the banks of a river. Dalton slows the car down and parks the car at the end of the road. Both men get out of the car.

OLD CRIME SCENE -- CONTINUOUS

Will and Dalton stand near the river. The area has several trees on the riverbank and is overgrown with tall green grass.

Dalton surveys the surroundings.

DALTON

You were out here investigatin',
weren't you?

WILL

I was out here, but I wasn't really
investigatin' on account of it being
only my second year on the job and
all. It was more like assisting
than investigatin'.

DALTON

I read the file this morning. Tell
me what you know about the case.

Will points to a small cluster of trees on the river bank
about twenty yards from where they are standing.

WILL

Crazy old Mister Mosley found her
right over there snagged in those
trees. It was a couple of days after
some heavy summer flooding so nobody
knows where she was actually killed
'cause she coulda floated down river
from just about anywhere. Last place
anybody saw her was four days before
that up in Wilson County using a
fake ID to get into bars. Her mother
reported her missing two days after
that.

While Will talks, Dalton wanders around, inspecting the area.

WILL

The coroner report listed her official
cause of death as died from loss of
blood and they figured that she'd
been dead for three or four days
before we found her, so she musta
run into someone that night up in
Wilson County.

Will points to his neck.

WILL

She was found naked with two puncture wounds on her neck. There was no sign of bruising or forced sexual contact and there wasn't any semen found in her. Everybody figured Sissy musta knew whoever did it. And you know the kinda trouble she liked hanging out with.

Will pauses and chooses his words carefully.

WILL

After you two weren't together anymore, I mean.

Will checks Dalton's face to see if he might have said something he shouldn't have. Dalton stares at the river, lost in thought. If Will's words were inappropriate, Dalton shows no indication.

WILL

When Dispatch called and I found out it was her out here, I almost lost my cookies.

Dalton crouches down and runs his fingers through the grass, still lost in thought.

DALTON

No suspects?

WILL

Sure, there were suspects, but nothing panned out. At first we figured it was that asshole Darryl Leary, but he had an alibi for when Sissy went missing. He was driving a truck load of beef hearts to New Mexico and he was identified as one of the patrons in a topless bar in Albuquerque the night Sissy disappeared. Besides, he's more of the wife beater type and Sissy wasn't beaten up at all. We questioned some other creeps around here but we didn't find out anything.

Dalton stares up river and begins scanning the area as if he might see something crucial not noticed ten years earlier.

DALTON

And that was it?

WILL

Well, sure. With no suspects, no real crime scene and no evidence other than a body, the case went cold. And now ten years later, most people have probably forgotten about what happened to Sissy.

Dalton makes eye contact with Will.

DALTON

What do you think happened to her?

Will shrugs.

WILL

Hell if I know. You gonna reopen the case, Dalton?

DALTON

I don't know.

INT. CONCERT HALL -- NIGHT

Blackwell is finishing his set at the Kansas City music venue. The band closes with a theatrical ending. Blackwell holds up a hand in greeting.

BLACKWELL

Thank y'all so much for comin' out and spendin' your evenin' with us. We'll see y'all next time.

Blackwell tosses a couple of guitar picks into the audience and he and the band walk off stage, leaving the sounds of a cheering crowd behind them.

SIDE OF STAGE AT CONCERT HALL -- CONTINUOUS

All band members except Blackwell grab towels and bottles of water. They're all grinning and it's obvious that they had a fun time playing.

Except Blackwell. He is not smiling. He looks tired, more pale than normal, and almost sickly. He approaches Cassandra.

CASSANDRA

Good show tonight.

She eyes Blackwell.

CASSANDRA

You okay, Blackwell?

Blackwell's speaks with almost a snarl.

BLACKWELL

Do I look okay?

CASSANDRA

You look sick.

BLACKWELL

And I feel like shit. Did you get more of what I asked you to?

CASSANDRA

I wasn't able to find anything.

Blackwell closes his eyes, obviously disappointed. Cassandra pulls Blackwell to the side and whispers to him.

CASSANDRA

Look, I tried to find some place that was open, but everything was closed for the night. So unless you want me to go rob a hospital, we're out of luck tonight.

BLACKWELL

I need more. I fuckin' played like shit tonight.

CASSANDRA

You played just fine. I thought you sounded good tonight.

BLACKWELL

I sounded like shit and you know it. That was easily the worst show of the tour.

CASSANDRA

You sounded fine, Blackwell, and the guys looked like they were having a blast out there.

Blackwell closes his eyes and makes fists with both hands.

BLACKWELL

I'm fuckin' losin' it. I'm losing my fuckin' edge. I need some right now.

He opens his eyes and a dark expression appears on his face.

BLACKWELL

You know what that means I have to do.

Cassandra takes a deep breath and lets out a long exhale.

CASSANDRA

Anyone special in mind?

BLACKWELL

The tall blonde in the blue dress standing at the front of the stage.

Cassandra smirks.

CASSANDRA

I thought you'd be checking her out. I know what you like.

Blackwell flashes a small toothy grin.

BLACKWELL

She looked tasty.

CASSANDRA

I'll take care of it. You get out there and do your encore.

INT. CONCERT HALL -- MOMENTS LATER

By the stage next to a backstage door at the edge of the cheering crowd, Cassandra talks to a big, burly bouncer. She points at the woman in the blue dress.

The bouncer makes his way through the crowd, talks briefly to the woman in blue and then walks toward the backstage door with the woman in tow.

The woman in blue appears to be about twenty five, tall, slim and pretty, with long, straight blonde hair and blue eyes.

CASSANDRA

What's your name?

WOMAN

Cindy.

CASSANDRA

Well, okay Cindy, I have a question for you. You a Ricky Blackwell fan?

CINDY/WOMAN

Of course. I just love his song
"Moonlight--."

Cassandra cuts her off.

CASSANDRA

That's great. Listen, Ricky was
admiring you from up on stage and he
wanted to know if you were interested
in going backstage and having a drink
with him.

Cindy is thrilled.

CINDY

You mean actually meet Ricky
Blackwell? Are you--.

Cassandra cuts her off again.

CASSANDRA

Here's the thing Cindy. If you're
interested, you have to come with me
right now. There's no time for you
to tell anyone. If you're interested,
then come with me, otherwise it's a
no go.

Cindy looks over at a group of her friends clustered around
the stage. They don't even seem to notice she's gone.

CASSANDRA

If you're coming, we'll arrange for
you to get a ride back home or to
wherever you want to go later.

Cindy follows Cassandra backstage.

INT. HOTEL -- LATER

Cindy is in a room with Blackwell. They're both sitting on
a bed a couple of feet apart. Cindy looks at Blackwell with
an expression just shy of awe.

Blackwell holds a bottle of bourbon and smiles at the girl
with a relaxed, friendly grin.

The sounds of an after concert party is heard outside the
room.

BLACKWELL

You look like you're about to say
something.

Cindy blinks a couple of times and shrugs nervously.

CINDY

I just can't believe I'm here. I mean, you're Ricky Blackwell.

BLACKWELL

Yeah, right now I am, I'm pretty sure.

Blackwell passes the bottle to Cindy. She takes a long drink and passes it back.

Blackwell gently strokes the side of her face with the back of his fingers.

BLACKWELL

My God, are you beautiful. Anyone ever told you that?

Cindy slides closer to Blackwell so they're right next to one another.

CINDY

You probably say that to all the girls.

BLACKWELL

None of them are as pretty as you are though. And I mean that, honest to God.

Cindy leans over and kisses Blackwell. He slowly licks his lips and smiles.

BLACKWELL

That was really nice. Can you do that again?

Cindy kisses Blackwell again.

BLACKWELL

That lip gloss you got on is really something. Tastes like a vanilla milkshake and those are my favorite.

This time he initiates the kiss. It is a long, drawn out kiss.

Blackwell stops kissing her and strokes her face, smiling, staring right into her eyes.

Cindy leans down, partially lifts up Blackwell's shirt and kisses his stomach.

She starts undoing Blackwell's belt but he stops her.

BLACKWELL
There's plenty of time for that later,
darlin'.

Blackwell takes another drink from the bottle.

BLACKWELL
Say, you know, I hear you got a real
nice river around here.

Cindy stares at him with a confused expression.

CINDY
Well, yeah, there's the Missouri,
but there's some other small ones
too. What's the big deal about a
river?

Blackwell's eyes open wide in mock surprise.

BLACKWELL
What's the big deal about a river?
You ever listened to the sound of a
runnin' river? I love the sound of
a runnin' river. It gets me all
excited...For things like vanilla
milkshakes.

Blackwell smiles seductively.

BLACKWELL
You wanna go for a ride and show me
where that river is?

Cindy speaks in a flirty tone.

CINDY
What's in it for me?

BLACKWELL
Anything you want.

CINDY
Will you write a song about me?

Blackwell thinks about it for a moment and gives her a small smile.

BLACKWELL
I reckon I just might.

Blackwell stands and adjusts his shirt.

BLACKWELL

Meet me down at the front of the hotel. I gotta go get something.

Cindy leans over and picks up the telephone next to the bed. Blackwell gently pushes the receiver down, putting the phone back in its cradle and speaks to Cindy in a flirty whisper.

BLACKWELL

Don't tell anybody. Let this be our own little dirty secret.

Cindy smiles and sighs, obviously getting turned on. Blackwell leaves the room. Cindy follows a moment later.

EXT. HOTEL -- MOMENTS LATER

Blackwell walks out the front door of the hotel and around the corner to where the tour bus is parked.

Blackwell raps on the bus door.

BLACKWELL

Sonny. Open up it's me, Blackwell.

After a moment, the Igor-like Sonny opens the door and pokes his head out of the bus.

SONNY

Whatcha need, boss?

BLACKWELL

I need you to open up the trailer. I need to get something outta the back.

HOTEL PARKING LOT -- MOMENTS LATER

The back door of the trailer behind the tour bus is open and the revving of a motorcycle reverberates from inside the trailer.

Blackwell exits the trailer on the back of a glossy, jet black Harley Davidson motorcycle. He rides the cycle around to the front of the hotel, where Cindy is waiting.

Cindy climbs on the back of the motorcycle and wraps her arms around Blackwell with a large grin on her face.

Blackwell slides a pair of black wraparound sunglasses on his face and guns the motorcycle. The motorcycle rides off.

RIVER BANK -- LATER

The motorcycle is parked in a grassy clearing. Nearby, Blackwell and Cindy are laying on a blanket, making out.

CINDY

I see what you mean about the sound of the river. It's a definite turn-on. You know what I really like? I like when guys lick my ears and bite my neck.

They quickly fumble with removing their clothes. Once naked, Blackwell rolls Cindy on her back and starts licking her all over.

CINDY

Oh, that's nice. I like it when you bite my nipples. But not too hard.

Blackwell starts fucking her. Cindy moans with pleasure.

CINDY

Oh yeah, country boy, that's right.

Cindy starts moaning louder as they continue fucking.

As she's coming, Blackwell sinks his teeth into her neck and starts bleeding her. She chokes off a scream and her body starts shaking with pain and waves of orgasms.

Blackwell doesn't loosen his bite and continues fucking her with a fast, frantic motion.

Blackwell arches his back and lets out a roar. His face and torso are covered in blood.

Blackwell rolls off Cindy's now dead body. He lays on his back, writhing and snapping his jaw, overcome by the sensation of an intense blood high.

Blackwell finally stands, a wide-eyed, crazed look on his face and stumbles to the motorcycle. He removes a large (circa 1988) cell phone from a saddlebag and hits a couple of buttons on the phone.

The phone picks up.

Blackwell's voice is deep, guttural and barely sounds human.

BLACKWELL

I'm done. It's...done. I need you.

Cassandra's voice is heard on the other end.

CASSANDRA (O.S.)
I'll be there as soon as I can.

Blackwell hangs up the phone and stares at the sky with a wide-eyed crazed expression, still whacked by the blood high.

INT. JONAS' FARM HOUSE -- DAY

Jonas sits in an easy chair in the living room wrapped in his quilt, watching television. The house is a mess and Jonas doesn't appear to care at all.

On the television is an afternoon news broadcast with a story about Mike Dukakis winning the Wisconsin primary, making him the front-runner for the Democratic Party Presidential candidate.

The front door is open, the screen door closed.

Dalton approaches the screen door and knocks. He holds a white paper bag.

DALTON
How you doin', Pa?

Dalton opens the screen door and steps inside.

JONAS
Same as last time you saw me. Still breathing.

Jonas nods at the bag in Dalton's hand.

JONAS
You got something to help give me diabetes in that bag?

Dalton hands the bag, which contains a bear claw, to Jonas.

DALTON
This house is a mess, Pa.

Jonas inspects the contents of the bag.

JONAS
If it doesn't bother me, why should it bother anyone else?

DALTON
Do I need to send someone over to clean the house for you?

Geraldine, the live-in nurse appears in the hallway.

She's a short, heavysset woman in her forties with a warm, friendly air about her.

GERALDINE

I thought that was you, Bud, I mean, Sheriff. I'm sorry about the way the house looks, but every time I try to clean something or rearrange anything your daddy snaps at me and tells me to leave it be.

JONAS

What's a little dust when I'm turnin' to dust myself?

DALTON

I appreciate everything you're doin' for Pa. Taking care of him is enough. You shouldn't have to clean the whole house too.

GERALDINE

It really isn't that big of a deal to do a little bit of cleanin'. If your daddy will let me, that is.

Jonas reaches out and spanks Geraldine lightly on the ass and smiles at her. Geraldine crosses her arms and frowns, obviously not impressed.

JONAS

This one's young and frisky, just like I like 'em.

Geraldine points at Jonas the way someone would point at a scolded child.

GERALDINE

And this one obviously needs his medication for the day.

DALTON

You better be nice to her, Pa, or she's gonna stop taking care of you.

JONAS

Then you'll just have to put me in one of those old farts homes. Or maybe you can move me into your house.

Jonas cackles.

JONAS

You'd like that, wouldn't you, boy?

Jonas takes a bite of the bear claw. Geraldine leaves the room.

DALTON

I stopped by to tell you I was goin' out of town for the weekend.

JONAS

So you felt like you had to check in with me? You're a grown man. You can do what you want.

DALTON

I was just letting you know I was leaving in case you were looking for me.

Jonas takes another bite of the pastry and chews it slowly.

JONAS

Ain'tcha gonna tell me where you're goin'?

DALTON

Me and Roxanne are goin' down to Tulsa with Will and Peggy Jean for a concert.

Jonas' face twists into a smirk.

JONAS

Ain'tcha a little old to be goin' to concerts?

Dalton stares at Jonas for a moment but doesn't say anything.

JONAS

Well, no matter. I'm sure a weekend down in the big city will be good for you and especially good for that wife of yours.

DALTON

She's got a name, Pa.

Jonas' eyes open wide in mock sarcastic surprise.

JONAS

She does? Her name ain't Missus Sheriff?

Dalton frowns, not impressed with his father's antics.

JONAS

Where's your sense of humor, boy?

Jonas pauses, seeing that Dalton is not in the mood.

JONAS

Okay, bad joke. I'll bet that Roxanne is really excited about a few days away from here. She adjusting any better to small town life?

DALTON

She's doin' just fine, Pa.

Dalton walks over to the mantel above the fireplace and looks at the photos sitting there, particularly one of his mother and father and one of him from high school dressed in his football uniform.

Dalton wipes a line of dust off the mantel with his fingers and inspects the messy house.

DALTON

You really do need to get this place cleaned up, Pa.

JONAS

You think it's messy down here, you should see the attic. You know how your mama used to hold onto everything like a packrat. I ain't even been up there in maybe ten years, but last time I was up there it looked like we were about ready to start our own flea market.

Dalton smiles sadly, thinking about his mother.

DALTON

Mama did save everything, didn't she?

JONAS

Everything that she thought she or someone else she knew could use one day. Most of it was junk, but I never threw any of it out, 'cause boy she'd get mad when I did. Your mama had the attic and I had the garage. Those were our spaces. I can tell you what's in the garage. I don't think I even the slightest clue what all's up in the attic.

DALTON

Maybe you should go look.

Jonas shrugs, the attic obviously not high on his list of priorities.

JONAS

Maybe some day.

DALTON

You sure you're doin' okay, Pa?

Jonas lets out a tired sigh.

JONAS

Some days this big old house just seems like too much for an old man like me. And then there's those days when I don't feel like gettin' out of bed because it feels like my life's over. I know you don't like hearing it, but it's true. So what are you gonna do with this old house when I'm gone?

DALTON

I don't think about things like that.

GERALDINE (O.S.)

You let me know when you're ready, Mister Dalton.

DALTON

Ready for what?

JONAS

My sponge bath. About the only thing I look forward to any more. Nips from my flask and getting a sponge bath from a pretty woman. Some day you'll understand.

DALTON

Well, I'll leave you to your bath and I'll see you when I get back from Tulsa.

Dalton puts a hand on Jonas' shoulder, squeezes lightly and heads out the front door.

INT. BLACKWELL'S TOUR BUS -- DAY

The door of the back room of the bus opens and Blackwell steps out wearing black jeans, a black button-up shirt and cowboy boots.

Blackwell looks healthy and vibrant. There is color in his face and he is even smiling brightly. All the previously sickly air about him is gone.

Blackwell goes into the bus bathroom and turns on the little light next to the sink.

At first, he doesn't cast a reflection in the mirror. He stares at the mirror with an intense gaze and growls. His reflection appears in the mirror.

Blackwell combs his hair, admiring himself in the mirror as he does.

From a cabinet he removes a black toiletry bag and opens it. He takes a tube of super strength sunscreen from the bag and applies the sunscreen to every exposed part of his body.

When done, he puts the sunscreen back into the bag and puts the bag back in the cabinet. He leaves the bathroom and disappears into the back cabin.

The rest of the band is sitting in the front of the bus eating fast food and drinking beer. Ned is rolling a joint.

Cassandra sits at a table, going through her daytimer and jotting notes on a pad of paper.

EDDIE

What radio station are we goin' to?

TROY

Only the biggest country radio station in Tulsa.

Cassandra looks up from her daytimer.

CASSANDRA

This is the station that gave Blackwell his first big break. They love him here in Tulsa.

EDDIE

I didn't think Blackwell liked doing radio spots. I mean he hasn't done any since I've been with you guys.

TROY

Normally he doesn't like doing them,
but like Cassandra said, Tulsa's
special to Blackwell.

EDDIE

They gonna put all of us on the radio?

Ned scoffs at Eddie.

NED

This is Blackwell's gig. They don't
need to talk to any of the rest of
us. Besides, a couple months ago
you were pumping gas and playing
covers of Top 40 country songs so
what the fuck do they want to talk
to you for?

Ned finishes rolling the joint.

CU of Ned lighting the joint.

Blackwell exits the back cabin and walks to the front of the
bus. He's wearing a black cowboy hat and holding a pair of
dark wraparound sunglasses. He grabs a beer from the cooler.

Blackwell swallows a mouthful of beer and takes the joint
from Ned's fingers, much to Ned's surprise.

Blackwell inhales a long drag from the joint and holds in
the smoke. All the band members stare at him in slight shock
because they've never seen him smoke pot before.

Blackwell hands the joint back to Ned.

BLACKWELL

That's some good shit.

Ned blinks with amazement.

NED

You feelin' okay, boss?

Blackwell smiles like someone who just won the lottery.

BLACKWELL

Like a million bucks.

DWAYNE

You over that flu bug, then?

BLACKWELL

I reckon I am.

EXT. BLACKWELL'S TOUR BUS -- LATER

The bus pulls to a stop in front of K95.5 FM, one of Tulsa's largest, most listened to country stations. The bus door opens and Blackwell and Cassandra exit the bus and walk toward the station.

INT. RADIO STATION -- MOMENTS LATER

Blackwell walks back toward the DJ booth, getting his arm pumped by the station's Program Director, MITCH COLLINS, who looks like a used car salesman wearing an expensive cowboy hat.

MITCH

Glad to have you back in the studio,
Ricky.

BLACKWELL

Glad to be back.

Mitch ushers Blackwell into the studio, where the disc jockey, T.C. THOMPSON, sits behind the board. Thompson is a plain looking guy with scraggly, thinning hair and an Alan Jackson-like mustache, wearing blue jeans and NASCAR T-shirt

MITCH

T.C., this is Ricky Blackwell.

Blackwell and Thompson shake hands. Blackwell sits next to the guest microphone. A pair of headphones sit on the counter under the microphone.

T.C.

How long you gonna be here? I guess what I'm askin' is how much time do we have to talk on air and how many songs can we squeeze in and all that?

BLACKWELL

Just enough time to talk about the concert and the album and play a couple a songs.

T.C.

Sounds good. I'm sure you've done this kinda thing before. Just put on those headphones and speak into the mic as loudly and clearly as you can. I just need to run this one commercial and we'll be going on air.

Blackwell puts on the pair of headphones.

The commercial ends and T.C. turns on his microphone. He gives Blackwell a thumbs-up gesture and begins talking with a rapid-fire, slightly theatrical and over-the-top delivery that is typical of most commercial radio disc jockeys.

T.C.

You're listening to Tulsa's only home of country, K95.5 FM. T.C. Thompson with you here on the Afternoon Zoo. Sitting next to me in the studio is none other than Ricky Blackwell, who's headlining this year's "K95.5 FM Shindig '88" tonight at the Tulsa Theater. Some of you out there might not recognize the name Ricky Blackwell, but I guarantee that you'll be hearing a lot from this guy in the very near future. His latest album is sure to make him a superstar. So Ricky, how's the tour going?

Ricky leans forward and speaks into the microphone.

BLACKWELL

So far it's been pretty good. I've been on the road for a while now and we have a couple more weeks before I wrap things up. Like you said, tonight I'll be playing the Shindig at the Tulsa Theater with a buncha other excellent country artists. It promises to be a great show and y'all here in Tulsa are always some of my favorite folks to play for. The show starts at eight and be sure to bring your dancin' shoes because me and the guys are gonna get the place jumpin'.

T.C.

You have a fairly recent album out. Care to tell us somethin' about it?

BLACKWELL

It's called "Black Water Runnin'" and has ten originals and two cover songs from some old time country artists. Don't know if you're aware of it, but this station was the very first radio station anywhere in the world to play the album and for that I'm very appreciative.

T.C.

I also understand that this is the first one of your albums to be released on CD.

Blackwell chuckles.

BLACKWELL

Well, they say it's the future, T.C.

T.C.

We're going to listen to a couple of songs from the album "Black Water Running". What can you tell us about the songs we're about to hear?

BLACKWELL

Well, I think we'll start with the second song on the record. It's called "Down By the River" and it's a love song of sorts. It's also about rebirth and redemption.

T.C.

I'm here with Ricky Blackwell. He's headlining tonight's "K95.5 FM Shindig '88" at the Tulsa Theater. There's a few tickets still available, but if you're the ninth caller, you and a friend are going to the show courtesy of your favorite radio station. From his latest album called "Black Water Running," this is Ricky Blackwell and "Down By the River". You're hearing it only on K95.5 FM, Tulsa's only home for country.

The song begins playing.

BLACKWELL

(first verse)

I loved her but she had to die/I
loved her but she had to die/Down by
the river/Another soul to deliver/On
a crooked path to heaven/She will
ride.

INT. DALTON'S TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Dalton is behind the wheel of a double-cab, dual rear wheel Ford pickup truck. Will is in the passenger seat. Roxanne Will's wife, PEGGY JEAN, are in the backseat.

Peggy Jean is the same age as Will and the Daltons.

She's loud and outspoken with a big blonde, full can of hair spray hairdo. She's the kind of person who chews gum non-stop and snaps it whenever she can.

The truck drives into the outskirts of Tulsa.

The radio in the cab is on, playing the Blackwell song. Peggy Jean can't contain her excitement.

PEGGY JEAN

It's Ricky Blackwell! Turn it up.

Will turns up the volume on the radio. Peggy Jean nods her head to the music.

BLACKWELL (V.O.)

(second verse)

I kissed her and I almost cried/I
kissed her and I almost cried/Down
by the river/Another soul to deliver/
On a crooked path to heaven/She will
ride.

(third verse)

I touched her and I almost died/I
touched her and I almost died/Tell
me that you want me/Tell me that you
need me/And I'll kill you one more
time before you die.

They listen until the song ends and a commercial begins. Dalton turns down the radio.

DALTON

How'd you hear about this guy?

PEGGY JEAN

He's been gettin' played some on the
radio.

DALTON

Is he new? I've never heard of him.

PEGGY JEAN

I think he's got a couple a other
records other than his new one, but
he just ain't super popular or
nothin'. I think he's got a nice
voice and I think he's kinda cute in
a rugged sort of way.

She punches Will playfully.

WILL

Yeah and I got a thing for Tanya Tucker. I definitely wouldn't kick her outta bed.

DALTON

Where you girls want to go first? Will and I have to run an errand for a case we're working on.

Will looks surprised. Dalton cocks his head and stares at Will with an expression that says to play along.

DALTON

Should we drop you off at the hotel?

PEGGY JEAN

Hell no. We're goin' shoppin'. Drop us off at the mall.

Peggy Jean grins at Roxanne.

PEGGY JEAN

When was the last time you went to an actual shoppin' mall?

Roxanne's voice shows how much she is enjoying the time away from small town Kansas.

ROXANNE

Ages ago.

PEGGY JEAN

Hell yeah. Drop us off at the mall. Let's go spend some money

INT. DALTON'S TRUCK -- LATER

Dalton drives. Will gives Dalton a sideways stare.

WILL

Down here doin' an errand for a case we're workin' on? Where the hell we goin', Bud?

DALTON

Tulsa Police Department. I want to check on something.

WILL

I thought this was s'posed to be a weekend escape for all of us.

DALTON

It is. This won't take long.

Dalton gives Will a questioning expression.

DALTON

Would you rather go shopping with the girls?

Will grumbles.

WILL

Fine, drive on. But you're buying the beers when we're done.

INT. TULSA POLICE STATION -- LATER

Dalton and Will follow a heavysset desk Sergeant whose name tag says GILBERT, down a hallway.

GILBERT

You boys drove down from Kansas to see us?

DALTON

Yes sir. Well, we're down here for the weekend and I thought checking your data base might help us on a case we're working on. Our resources are limited up in Independence, as you can probably guess.

GILBERT

Be glad to help out however I can.

Gilbert shows them to a computer terminal.

GILBERT

Well here it is. If you've never used one of these before, it's pretty self-explanatory.

Gilbert turns on the computer.

DALTON

And I can access other police databases around the country?

GILBERT

Any one that's posted.

DALTON

Great.

GILBERT

Give a holler if you need any help.

Gilbert walks off. Dalton and Will sit down in front of the computer.

WILL

You still haven't told me what you're looking for.

DALTON

I want to see if there's any record of other cases similar to what happened to Sissy.

WILL

You think it might be some kinda serial killing?

DALTON

Dunno. Just thought I'd see what I can find.

Dalton stares at the computer monitor looking perplexed.

DALTON

Case number? Key words? Database?

WILL

I don't know what the hell to do with that thing. You're on your own.

Will stares at the computer with a look of bored confusion, computers obviously not being familiar to a small town Sheriff's Deputy in 1988.

WILL

I'm gonna go find us some coffee.

He stands and goes down the hallway.

INT. TULSA POLICE STATION -- LATER

Will enters the room with paper cups of coffee in his hands and sits down next to Dalton, who stares at the computer monitor carefully reading text on the screen.

WILL

Any luck?

DALTON

Found a similar case in Oklahoma City from a little over year ago. Dead girl found on a river bank with puncture wounds on the neck who died from blood loss. Case is still open with no real leads. Interesting thing is it makes reference to another similar unsolved homicide in Knoxville a year and a half ago. The FBI's apparently involved because of the similar M.O.s of the crimes but there's been no arrests.

WILL

You think it's the same guy? I mean why wait eight years between victims and then do two in six months?

DALTON

Maybe they just never found the other bodies.

Will chews his lip.

WILL

Anything 'bout Sissy in there?

DALTON

No, 'cause it hasn't been put on their computer yet.

Dalton points up the hallway.

DALTON

Go grab that desk sergeant and see if we can get copies of these files.

INT. SHOPPING MALL -- LATER

Dalton and Will stand at a juncture in a crowded mall. Will looks genuinely overwhelmed by the size of the mall.

DALTON

Where did the girls say to meet them?

WILL

They said to meet them right here by the hot pretzel stand. You've never seen Peggy Jean shop, though. We could be standing here until next week.

Dalton notices a bookstore.

DALTON

You wanna wait for the girls here?
I'm gonna go look in that bookstore
for a minute.

Dalton walks to the bookstore.

INT. BOOKSTORE -- CONTINUOUS

Dalton stops in his tracks at the front of the bookstore. A life-sized cardboard cutout of a caped, Dracula-like vampire smiling exposed fangs stands behind a table with stacks of hardcover books on it.

Dalton stares at the vampire cutout for a moment.

INSERT

Image of puncture wounds on the side of Sissy Coleman's neck.

BACK TO PRESENT

The book is a non-fiction book called "VAMPIRES AMONG US". Dalton picks up one of the books and opens it.

Dalton thumbs through the book for a couple of moments before a sales clerk approaches him.

BOOKSTORE CLERK

You finding everything okay?

DALTON

I'm just browsing.

The clerk notices the book in Dalton's hands.

BOOKSTORE CLERK

That's a good one. It's all about
real vampires throughout history.

Dalton looks up from the book.

DALTON

Real vampires?

BOOKSTORE CLERK

You believe in vampires, don't you?

Dalton blinks.

DALTON

Never given it much thought, honestly.

The clerk points at the book.

BOOKSTORE CLERK

I especially like the chapters on
the modern vampires.

DALTON

Modern vampires?

BOOKSTORE CLERK

Yeah. You know, Richard Nixon, Sonny
Bono and Liza Minelli, among others.

The clerk speaks in a completely serious tone of voice.
Dalton nods, pretending the clerk's words don't sound at all
odd.

Dalton looks over the book for a moment and glances up at
the cardboard vampire cutout. Turning his head he notices
Roxanne, Will and Peggy Jean walking toward the store.

Dalton hands the book to the clerk.

DALTON

Go ahead and wrap this up for me.

INT. TULSA THEATER -- NIGHT

The auditorium is packed with people. Blackwell and the
band are on stage performing. The band is rocking. Blackwell
is grinning, stomping his feet and occasionally glancing
back at band members who are having a blast.

Blackwell is playing a song called "She Said".

BLACKWELL

(first verse)

She said she don't look back anymore/
She said she's been there a thousand
times before/But she's never had
what she's taken/Taken from me/That
night, that night/Underneath the old
oak tree/In the moonlight/Angels
fight over me.

(second verse)

She said hello with a smile/Ain't
felt that chill for a while/October's
almost gone/And winter's coming on/And
I'm falling like the autumn leaves/
That cold wind's blowin' over me.

Dalton, Will, Roxanne and Peggy Jean stand toward the front
of the crowd. Dalton holds Roxanne from behind while they
watch the band. Roxanne dances side to side, obviously
enjoying herself.

BLACKWELL

(chorus)

Stuck on a memory/The silence is
killin' me/And I'm so tired/That I
just can't see/The angels fighting
over me.

(third verse)

She said good-bye with a bang/She
sent me runnin' to the shadows in
shame/That big bright harvest moon/It
sends me to my doom/But it ain't
nothin' but a thang/The angels
fightin' once again.

Blackwell finishes the song. He is grinning like a kid on Christmas.

BLACKWELL

I hope y'all had as much fun as we
did tonight. I hate to be the bringer
of bad news, but we only have one
more song for ya. Thanks for comin'
out to party with us. Be safe gettin'
to wherever it is you're goin' from
here. See y'all next time.

INT. TULSA THEATER -- LATER

The crowd files out of the rear of the building. Dalton, Will, Roxanne and Peggy Jean are moving against the crowds toward the backstage area. Peggy Jean is beaming like an excited child.

PEGGY JEAN

Now that was a show. Three encores.
I ain't ever seen anyone do three
encores before. Now we even get to
meet him. You think he's gonna be a
nice guy?

Peggy Jean reaches in her pocket and removes four backstage pass stickers. She hands them to Will, Dalton and Roxanne.

PEGGY JEAN

I guess we're s'posed to stick these
on our shirts and they'll let us
backstage.

The four of them paste the passes on their shirts and walk past a group of bouncers into an area where other people with backstage pass stickers on their clothes are waiting.

A woman arrives to escort everyone to the Meet and Greet area.

MEET AND GREET WOMAN

Y'all follow me this way. There's a bar with beer and Ricky and the band will be out soon.

THEATER BACKSTAGE AREA -- CONTINUOUS

The group follows the woman to the backstage area, which is little more than large room with a couple of folding tables and chairs, a small, makeshift bar and a lot of people standing around looking lost.

WILL

I'll go get us something to drink.

He goes over to the bar.

Moments later a door opens and Blackwell and the rest of the band enter. Blackwell immediately starts shaking hands and signing autographs.

Troy, Dwayne and Ned sit down next to one of the large folding tables and all pop open cans of beer. They know it's Blackwell's show so they stay out of the way, but they do talk to the handful of people who approach them.

Eddie is mingling, hitting on girls with no success. They don't seem to care that he's the drummer.

Blackwell approaches Dalton, Roxanne and Peggy Jean.

BLACKWELL

Ricky Blackwell. Nice to meet you.

Peggy Jean gushes, like a fan enamored by the sight of their favorite movie star.

PEGGY JEAN

I have to say that that was one of the best shows I've ever seen.

Blackwell tips his hat at her and smiles warmly.

BLACKWELL

I appreciate it, darlin'. Thanks for comin' out tonight.

PEGGY JEAN

We drove down from Kansas to see you. It was definitely worth the trip.

Blackwell acts genuinely flattered.

BLACKWELL

Driving all the way down here from Kansas just to see the show? Well, shoot, then I definitely thank you for comin' out tonight.

PEGGY JEAN

I'm Peggy Jean and this is my friend Roxanne.

Blackwell kisses the backs of both women's hands.

BLACKWELL

It's a pleasure to meet you both.

ROXANNE

And this is my husband, Bud. He's the Sheriff in Montgomery County, where we're from.

Blackwell shakes Dalton's hand. Dalton is immediately overcome with a feeling of uneasiness about Blackwell. He suppresses a shiver.

BLACKWELL

Nice to meet you, Sheriff. Hope you enjoyed the show.

Dalton does his best to hide his uneasiness.

DALTON

You put on quite a performance, Mister Blackwell.

BLACKWELL

Thanks for sayin' so.

Blackwell turns to talk to Roxanne and Peggy Jean. Dalton watches, unable to shake his uncertain feeling about Blackwell.

A hand clamps down on Dalton's shoulder and he almost jumps. He turns and looks at "FLASH" KRIEDER, a former teammate from college.

Where Dalton is still in shape, Flash is now overweight and balding. He's wearing blue jeans and a Polo shirt with an Oklahoma State University logo on it and suede cowboy boots. He grins like someone who is itching to tell a dirty joke.

Flash speaks with a heavy Texas drawl.

FLASH

Bud Dalton. I don't fuckin' believe it.

Dalton's grin is equally as goofy, but he is happy to see his former teammate.

DALTON

Flash Krieder. Long time no see.

They shake hands and embrace.

FLASH

Can't fuckin' believe you're here. Gunner called me and told me you'd made Sheriff. I was gonna call and congratulate you and give you lots of shit about it. So how the hell are you?

DALTON

Doin' well. And you?

Flash points to his shirt.

FLASH

Can't complain. Got a job with the OSU Athletic Department, so things are going all right right now.

Dalton smiles a "you have to be kidding me" smile.

DALTON

OSU? Oklahoma fuckin' State? You're working for the enemy?

FLASH

Hey, now. Fuck you, it's a job. Hey speaking of which, there's some people over here I want you to meet.

Flash leads Dalton to where a group of Flash's friends are standing. Flash points at Dalton.

FLASH

This is Bud Dalton, the Budman. We played football together down in Austin.

There are greetings all around.

Dalton looks over in the direction of Roxanne and Peggy Jean. They're still talking to Blackwell, but their conversation isn't heard.

Dalton notices that Blackwell is standing between the women and has a hand on both women's asses. Blackwell is face Dalton and turns his head side-to-side listening to the women.

Dalton turns back to the conversation in progress, Flash is pointing at Dalton and telling his friends a story.

FLASH

...This guy had an arm on him, let me tell you. This one time we're playing in this little game y'all might've heard of called the Cotton Bowl, and we're down by four to Florida State with just seconds left on the clock and no time outs left, and this son of a bitch right here somehow manages to break four fuckin' tackles and throw this bullet of a pass to this wide receiver named Doug Randolph, who we called D-Train. And D-Train goes haulin' ass straight into the endzone where he got leveled by the safety right as he crossed the goal line, but he still managed to hold on to the football. It was unfuckin' believable. We were ten point underdogs, too.

One of Flash's friends nods at Dalton.

FLASH'S FRIEND

And you didn't go pro?

Before Dalton can answer, Flash speaks up.

FLASH

The talent scouts said he didn't have the size or speed for the pros and this dumb bastard listened to them and didn't even put his name in for the draft. He decided to go to law school instead.

The way Flash says "law school" makes it sound like a dirty word. Flash punches Dalton lightly in the shoulder.

FLASH

Ain't that right, Sheriff?

Dalton smiles politely and turns back to look at Roxanne and Peggy Jean.

Blackwell's hands are still on the women.

The women begin whispering in each others ears and caressing each other in a sexual manner.

Blackwell looks directly at Dalton and smiles a dark, devious grin.

WILL (O.S.)
Grab one of these before I drop them.

Dalton turns to face a happy looking Will, who has four plastic cups of beer in his hands.

WILL
You look like you need a drink.

His smile fades.

WILL
Something wrong?

DALTON
You see that?

WILL
See what?

Dalton turns to point at the girls. Roxanne and Peggy Jean are walking toward him. They're both smiling, but nothing seems to be out of the ordinary.

Dalton scans the room for Blackwell and sees him talking to a couple wearing matching cowboy hats.

WILL
See what, Bud?

Dalton shakes his head.

DALTON
Nothing. Guess it was nothing.
Let's go out and find a bar and see
what Tulsa has for nightlife.

WILL
Now that's the Dalton I know talkin'.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- LATER

A Motel 6 off the freeway. Cheap paint-by-numbers paintings hang on the wall. The noxiously colored plastic curtains are pulled closed.

Roxanne sits on the queen-sized bed, with her back against the headboard. She's grinning and is obviously very drunk.

Dalton is in the bathroom brushing his teeth. He spits into the sink and resumes brushing, a glob of white toothpaste foam clinging to his lower lip.

He steps out of the bathroom with toothbrush in hand.

DALTON

So you wanna tell me what happened tonight?

Roxanne giggles.

ROXANNE

We went to a concert. You forget all ready?

DALTON

I mean after the concert.

ROXANNE

What do you mean?

DALTON

I mean you were talkin' to Ricky Blackwell then out of nowhere you and Peggy Jean started touchin' each other.

Roxanne frowns.

ROXANNE

Touching each other? What do you mean touching each other?

DALTON

I mean touchin' each other like I've never seen women touch each other.

ROXANNE

Sounds like some kind of teenage fantasy to me. How much you have to drink tonight, Bud Dalton?

Dalton thinks about it.

DALTON

Enough, I guess.

He stares at her for a moment and shakes his head.

DALTON

Never mind. Forget I said anything.

Dalton goes back into the bathroom and finishes brushing his teeth. When he's done, he washes his face.

While drying his face, he hears the unmistakable metal CLICKING noise of handcuffs closing.

Dalton steps into the bedroom and finds Roxanne naked, partially under the covers of the bed, her wrists handcuffed to the backboard of the bed and a look of sexual hunger on her face.

ROXANNE

You wanna come over here and read me
my rights, Sheriff?

Dalton is slightly surprised but aroused by what he sees. He approaches the bed.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION -- MORNING

Dalton sits at his desk, drinking coffee and reading over some files. Pam enters the office.

PAM

Mornin', Sheriff.

DALTON

Mornin', Pam. Looks like it was
pretty quiet around here this weekend.

PAM

We had just the usual problems.
There was a couple a fights over at
the Bull's-Eye and we got called out
to the Shipley's house again. I
just don't understand what that nice
girl sees in a mean ol' guy like
Roger Shipley who beats her up all
the time.

DALTON

You ever been attracted to someone
who you knew was no good for you?

Pam thinks about it.

PAM

There were a couple of boys I dated
who I knew were nothing but trouble.
'Course my daddy warned me to stay
away from them, but I didn't listen.
But neither of them ever punched me
around like Roger Shipley does to
Bess.

DALTON

How do you convince a woman like Bess Shipley that she doesn't have to stay with a guy like Roger who beats her up every Saturday night?

Pam shakes her head.

PAM

I don't know, Sheriff. I just worry that one a these days we're gonna get called out there for somethin' much worse than Bess getting a black eye.

The door to Dalton's office opens and Will enters. He has a coffee cup in his hand and a rolled newspaper under his arm. He is whistling a Blackwell song and is in good spirits.

WILL

Mornin', Pam.

PAM

Mornin', Will.

Will sits down across from Dalton.

WILL

I still can't believe how much fun that show was the other night.

Sensing that Dalton and Will want to talk, Pam leaves the room.

DALTON

Yeah, it was a pretty good show.

WILL

That latest tape of his is somethin' else. I'll let you borrow it sometime.

Will hands the newspaper to Dalton. It is a copy of the Kansas City Star from the day before. Will gestures at the paper.

WILL

There's an article on page three that I thought you'd be interested in.

Dalton opens the newspaper.

DALTON

Yeah? Something interesting happen
up in Kansas City?

WILL

They found a girl floating in the
Missouri River over the weekend.

Dalton's smile vanishes.

DALTON

Does it sound like it was done by
the same guy?

WILL

I don't know. There's no real details
except two guys fishing the river
found her on Saturday morning. And
talk about weird coincidences, the
last place she was seen alive was at
a Ricky Blackwell concert. He musta
played there right before Tulsa.

Dalton skims over the article with a frown.

Will sips his coffee and sings the chorus of Ricky Blackwell's
song, "Marlene" while nodding his head.

WILL

Marlene. My Tennessee queen. I'll
love you for all time. You're living
in my dreams. My Tennessee queen.

Dalton looks up from the paper.

DALTON

What did you say?

WILL

Marlene My Tennessee Queen. It's a
Ricky Blackwell song that I got stuck
in my head.

Dalton sets the newspaper down and thinks for a moment. He
opens a manila folder on the desk next to him. The folder
contains the case printouts from the Tulsa Police Department.

He skims through one of the sheets, stops and points at the
sheet of paper.

DALTON

There.

WILL

There what?

DALTON

The dead girl from Knoxville a year and a half ago. Her name was Marlene and she was a former beauty queen.

WILL

Yeah? And?

Will frowns.

WILL

You think Ricky Blackwell knew the girl? Dalton, it's just a song. Besides, even if the song is about a real person, how many girls do you think are named Marlene in Tennessee? Shitloads.

DALTON

Did you bring the Ricky Blackwell tape to work with you?

WILL

Yeah, it's in my pocket. I was going to listen to it on my Walkman during my lunch break.

DALTON

Let's see the tape.

WILL

What for?

DALTON

I want to check on something.

Will removes the plastic cassette case from his pocket.

WILL

What are you lookin' for?

DALTON

Are there other songs about girls on there?

WILL

Jesus, Dalton, it's a country record. Just about every song is about a girl or getting drunk or both.

DALTON

Other than the Marlene song, are there any other songs with a girl's name in the title?

Will looks at the back of the plastic cassette case.

WILL

There's two others.

DALTON

Is one of the names Genevive or maybe Genny?

Will blinks.

WILL

Uh, yeah. The song's called "Genevive in My Heart".

DALTON

Genevive Lucinda Taylor was the name of the girl who was found in the river in Oklahoma City about a year ago.

WILL

Now you're soundin' ridiculous. You sayin' you think Ricky Blackwell of all people might have somethin' to do with these girls dyin' and then actually writin' songs about it?

DALTON

Last place Genevive Taylor was seen alive was at a country music concert.

WILL

Was it a Ricky Blackwell concert?

DALTON

Doesn't say.

WILL

Now look, that's just plain stupid thinkin' there's some kind of a connection between Ricky Blackwell and those girls.

DALTON

What's the name of the other song with a woman's name in it?

Will removes the insert from the cassette case and folds it open.

WILL

The song's called "Madeline" but it shoots down your theory because Ricky Blackwell didn't write it. Says so right here on the tape jacket.

DALTON

That song of his we heard on the radio the other day was about drowning a girl in a river.

WILL

And? Like I said, it's just a song. Ricky Blackwell isn't the first musician to sing about killing someone.

Will points a finger at Dalton.

WILL

You gonna tell me that Ricky Blackwell has a song about Sissy Coleman too?

DALTON

Let's check his other records and see.

Will sighs and shakes his head.

WILL

You're too much sometimes, Dalton.

Will crosses his arms over his chest.

WILL

And what do you plan to do with this little theory of yours of a musician who's some kinda psycho who kills girls after they go to his concerts?

DALTON

I s'pose nothin'. Not like I can prove anything.

WILL

That ain't stopped you before.

Dalton stares at Will but doesn't say anything.

INT. JONAS' FARM HOUSE -- LATER

Dalton opens the screen door and enters the living room, which is still in the same state of disarray. He has a brown bag in his hand.

Jonas is watching television, wrapped in the same quilt as before. Jonas' condition has deteriorated in the last couple of days. He looks tired, sickly and even more frail than before.

The volume is low on the television and Jonas only seems to be half looking at the TV. The news story on the television is about US Attorney General Ed Meese's legal troubles that will most likely cost him his job.

DALTON

Hey, Pa. Brought you something.

JONAS

And I'll never guess what it is, right?

Blackwell's "Down By the River" is heard on the radio in the kitchen. Dalton is a little surprised to hear the music and peers down the hallway toward the kitchen.

DALTON

You playin' that music?

JONAS

Think I'd take the time to move back and forth between here and the kitchen for a little bit of music? Geraldine's back there somewhere. She likes the music so I don't mind if she listens to it just as long as it ain't too loud.

Geraldine yells from the kitchen.

GERALDINE (O.S.)

Hi there, Bud, I mean Sheriff. I'm just back here makin' some lunch for me and your daddy. There's plenty of extra food if you want to join us.

DALTON

No, that's okay. I just stopped in to see how Pa was doing. I won't be staying long.

Dalton takes a seat next to Jonas.

DALTON
You like that music, Pa?

Jonas shrugs.

JONAS
It sounds like more of the same old
shit to me. But what do I know?

Jonas clears his throat.

JONAS
You and that wife of yours have fun
at your concert?

DALTON
Yeah, we did, Pa. Rox really liked
spending the weekend in Tulsa.

Dalton removes the Moon Pie from the paper bag.

DALTON
You believe in good versus evil, Pa?

Jonas lets out a phlegmy laugh.

JONAS
Good versus evil? Isn't that
somethin' you talk about after you
eat lunch?

Jonas laughs another phlegmy laugh.

JONAS
That's some pretty heavy shit coming
from a man holdin' a Moon Pie.

DALTON
I'm serious, Pa.

JONAS
So am I.

Jonas begins coughing violently.

DALTON
You okay, Pa?

After a couple of moments, Jonas' coughing stops but his
voice is wheezy.

JONAS
I'll manage.

Jonas closes his eyes for a moment.

JONAS

What's all this about good 'n evil?

Dalton puts the Moon Pie in his father's hand.

DALTON

Do you believe in good and evil?

JONAS

Of course. Anybody who doesn't obviously doesn't know anything about history or human nature.

DALTON

Meaning?

JONAS

Look what human beings have been doing to each other since the dawn of time. We're really good at killin' one another, yet at the same time are capable of doin' amazing things for their fellow man.

Jonas closes his eyes for a moment like he's in pain.

JONAS

Where did all this good 'n evil talk come from anyway? You already havin' troubles with the new job?

Dalton shakes his head.

DALTON

It's nothing like that. It's just that...

Dalton trails off when he looks at Jonas, who is staring tiredly at a television news anchor talking about Mikhail Gorbachev signing Geneva Accords on Afghanistan and doesn't even seem to be listening to Dalton. Jonas blinks.

JONAS

It's just that what? I'm listening.

DALTON

Have you ever met someone before and immediately had such an intensely uncomfortable feeling about that person, but not really been sure why?

JONAS

Don't you call that getting a bad feeling about someone?

DALTON

Yeah, but it's much worse than just a bad feeling. It's more like the feeling you got is one that makes you wonder if that person is truly evil.

JONAS

You talkin' about someone here in town?

Dalton shakes his head.

DALTON

Someone I met in Tulsa.

JONAS

Anyone I might know?

Dalton shakes his head again.

JONAS

And you think this person did something bad?

DALTON

Maybe lots of bad things, but I don't know for sure and there's no way I can prove anything.

JONAS

Then it don't sound like you have much. Maybe you should just try and forget about it.

Jonas continues watching the television with a tired stare. Dalton nods slowly, looking lost in thought for a moment.

Dalton stands.

DALTON

I should go, Pa. I'll stop by again tomorrow.

Jonas doesn't answer.

Dalton glances down at the unopened Moon Pie sitting in Jonas' frail hands. He contemplates opening the Moon Pie for his father but decides against it. He squeezes his father's shoulder lightly and leaves the house.

INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER -- LATER

Dalton is behind the wheel driving. The police radio crackles.

DISPATCH (O.S.)
 Sheriff, this is dispatch. Come in
 please.

Dalton picks up the CB radio and lifts the mouthpiece to his face.

DALTON
 This is Sheriff Dalton. Go ahead.

DISPATCH (O.S.)
 We got a call that there's some
 trouble over at Frank Kelly's store.

DALTON
 I'm on it.

INT. KELLY'S STORE -- LATER

A small, convenience store-like market with a couple of gasoline pumps out front. Standing behind the cash register counter is FRANK KELLY, an obese, middle-aged man of average height.

Frank holds a pump shotgun and aims it angrily at a teenage boy.

The boy, LENNY HAUSMAN, a pimply faced kid who looks about sixteen with shaggy hair, wearing a blue jean jacket and a Mötley Crüe "Shout At the Devil" T-shirt, holds his hands above his head.

Lenny stares at the barrel of the gun in frozen fright.

FRANK
 I'm tired of you little shits coming
 in here and shoplifting stuff from
 me all the time. If I could get
 away with it, I'd go ahead and shoot
 you just to teach you punks a lesson.

The bell on the front door of the market jingles and Dalton enters. He sizes up the situation, looking at both Frank Kelly with the shotgun and teenage Lenny who is trembling with fear.

DALTON
 What's the problem here, Frank?

FRANK

Glad you're here, Sheriff. I caught this little punk shoplifting.

DALTON

Shopliftin', huh? You tryin' to steal somethin' from this store, Lenny?

Lenny doesn't answer. Frank thrusts the shotgun in Lenny's direction.

FRANK

Tell the Sheriff that you tried to steal something.

Lenny's voice cracks with fear.

LENNY

Yeah! Yeah, I tried to steal something.

DALTON

Frank, you wanna lower that gun so Lenny here doesn't shit his pants or better yet so you don't accidentally pull that trigger?

FRANK

What if he tries to run?

DALTON

Where's he gonna run to? His daddy works at the real estate office across the street and I know where he lives.

Reluctantly, Frank lowers the shotgun.

DALTON

Why don't you show me what's in your pockets, Lenny?

Lenny reaches in the pocket of his blue jean jacket and removes a candy bar and a pack of bubble gum.

DALTON

That's it?

Lenny nods.

DALTON

You sure that's everything?

LENNY

Yes sir.

DALTON

Why don't you go ahead and put them right up there on the counter.

Lenny puts the two pieces of candy on the counter.

DALTON

You going to steal anything from Mister Kelly again?

Lenny shakes his head.

DALTON

Tell Mister Kelly you're sorry and it won't happen again.

Lenny keeps his head lowered, unable to look at Frank Kelly.

LENNY

I promise I won't steal from you again, Mister Kelly.

DALTON

Good, now get out of here.

Frank Kelly's eyes shoot wide open with surprise. Lenny quickly runs out of the store.

FRANK

You just let him go!

DALTON

That's right, I did. I'll tell you this, you won't have any more trouble from Lenny Hausman 'cause that shotgun put the fear of God in him.

FRANK

I can't believe you just let that punk walk right out of here.

DALTON

And I can't believe you were ready to shoot that boy over a Snickers bar and a pack of Bubblicious. He learned his lesson. If he didn't, I'd be real surprised.

FRANK

And if I catch him stealing from me again, can I blame you for it?

Dalton tips his hat at Frank Kelly.

DALTON
Try not to shoot anyone, okay? You
have a good day, Mister Kelly.

Dalton exits the store.

INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER -- MOMENTS LATER

Dalton starts the car and pulls out of the parking lot of Frank Kelly's store. The police radio sounds.

DISPATCH (O.S.)
Sheriff, are you there?

Dalton picks up the CB.

DALTON
I'm here. I just took care of the
problem at Frank Kelly's store.

DISPATCH (O.S.)
We've been trying to radio you for
the last couple of minutes. Sheriff,
your daddy's had an accident.

EXT. DALTONS' HOUSE -- LATER

An ambulance is parked in front of the house. Dalton's cruiser pulls up in front of the house and Dalton jumps out of the car.

Dalton is met on the front steps by two paramedics pushing a collapsible gurney with Jonas on it. Jonas' eyes are closed. He doesn't appear to be alive.

Dalton's voice is full of anxiety.

DALTON
What happened?

One of the paramedics shakes his head.

PARAMEDIC
I'm really sorry, Sheriff. We did
what we could, but he was in a really
bad state when we got here.

Dalton stands over his father and closes his eyes for a moment, fighting back tears. He opens his eyes and touches the side of Jonas' face.

Geraldine is inside the house weeping. She opens the front door and approaches Dalton.

GERALDINE

I'm so sorry, Bud. Shortly after you left, your daddy...I guess he got up off the couch and fell over. I heard a crash and found your daddy on the floor not moving.

She bursts into a sobbing fit. Dalton hugs Geraldine.

DALTON

It's not your fault.

Tears begin rolling down Dalton's face.

INT. CEMETERY -- DAY

Dalton sits next Roxanne to the side of a shiny casket. Both are dressed in black. Will and Peggy Jean, along with people from town like Ernie Callaway and Dave Schneider stand behind Dalton and Roxanne.

A priest is standing at the foot of the casket, saying words about Jonas. The priest's lips move but his words aren't heard.

INT. DALTONS' HOUSE -- LATER

People paying their respects stop at Dalton and Roxanne's house. Dalton shakes hands with people. Roxanne gets hugs from a few women. Will, Peggy Jean and a couple of Sheriff's Deputies mingle around the living room.

EXT. JONAS' FARM HOUSE -- DAY

Dalton stands on the walkway leading to the front steps of the house and stares at the big farm house with a blank expression.

INT. JONAS' FARM HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Dalton enters the house and silently looks around. He paces through the house looking at photos on the wall. He enters bedrooms and walks through them slowly. He stops at the empty couch where his father sat right before he died.

EXT. JONAS' GARAGE -- LATER

The garage sits off to the side of the house. Dalton opens a side door to the garage and enters.

INT. JONAS' GARAGE -- CONTINUOUS

The inside of the garage is a cluttered mess. A large work table sits in one corner. Several boxes and wooden crates of various sizes sit on rusty metal shelves along two of the walls.

A couple of dusty stuffed deer heads hang on the wall along with photos of a younger Jonas taken on hunting trips.

Between some of the rusty metal shelves is a locked gun cabinet with several rifles inside.

Dalton walks through the room slowly, taking it all in.

He stops at the work table. Pieces of an unfinished model airplane sit on the table.

A vise grip is attached to the table. Clutched in the vise is an empty bullet shell casing. Dalton unscrews the vise handle and takes the shell casing in his hand.

He stares at the casing for a moment. His gaze then goes to the shelf in back of the work table. On the shelf is a small container of gunpowder and another of slugs.

Dalton flips the shell casing in his hand.

DALTON'S FLASHBACK -- WOODED AREA -- DAY

A younger Jonas is showing an eight year old Bud Dalton how to shoot a rifle. About sixty yards away is a line of cans sitting on an old wooden fence.

Jonas hands the rifle to Bud, who lifts the gun to his shoulder. He closes an eye and stares down the barrel at the line of cans.

Bud pulls the trigger and a can flies off the fence. Bud smiles. A proud Jonas pats Bud on the shoulder.

BACK TO PRESENT

Dalton sets the shell casing on the work table and leaves the garage.

INT. JONAS' FARM HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Dalton enters the house, goes up the stairs to the second floor and opens the door to the attic. He flips a light switch and walks up the stairs.

The attic is full of dusty boxes, a couple of cedar chests, some old furniture under sheets and a smattering of other things.

Dalton opens a box and finds children's clothes that once belonged to him.

Another box has old clothes that belonged to Jonas, along with an old, scuffed pair of cowboy boots and a large silver belt buckle with an image of a grain harvester on it.

Dalton opens a cedar chest and finds his high school Letterman's jacket.

In another cedar chest, Dalton comes across his mother's wedding gown.

Sitting next to the chest is a box of old vinyl records and an old turntable. Dalton flips through the records.

DALTON'S FLASHBACK -- INT. JONAS' FARM HOUSE -- EVENING

Jonas and Dalton's mother are dancing in the living room to the music coming from the same phonograph from the attic. Both of them are dressed nicely and are having a good time. The year is approximately 1963.

BACK TO PRESENT

Dalton continues flipping through the records, most of which are country or big band albums.

One of the album covers catches Dalton's eye.

He removes the record jacket from the box and stares at the cover. The band is called Big Earl and the Hurricanes. The cover is yellowing and faded but one of the band members looks identical to Ricky Blackwell.

Dalton flips the album over. The picture of Ricky Blackwell says that he's a guitarist named Ricky Johnson. The publishing date on the album is 1943. One of the songs on the album written by Ricky Johnson is called "Madeline".

Dalton puts the album under his arm and picks up the old turntable.

He walks down the two flights of stairs to the living room. Looking around the room, Dalton sees the electrical outlet he is looking for and plugs in the turntable.

Dalton slides the record out of the jacket. He blows a layer of dust off the record and puts it on the turntable.

He turns on the record player and sets the needle on a groove between songs.

The song starts. The music is filled with snap-crackle-pop noises but when the singing starts, the voice sounds a lot like Ricky Blackwell.

The song plays while Dalton stares at the photo of Ricky Johnson/Blackwell.

MONTAGE -- DALTON'S DAYDREAM

--Sissy Coleman alive, laughing and kissing a high school age Bud Dalton.

--The crime scene photo of Sissy with a CU of the puncture marks in her neck.

--Blackwell on a grassy riverbank sinking his fangs into Sissy Coleman's neck and bleeding her.

BACK TO PRESENT

Dalton continues staring at the picture of Blackwell on the record jacket.

He stands and drops the record cover on the floor.

INT. DALTONS' HOUSE -- EARLY MORNING

Dalton sits in a striped robe at the kitchen table with a coffee cup in front of him along with open manila folders containing the files from the Tulsa Police Department and Sissy Coleman's file.

Also spread out in front of Dalton is a map of the U.S., with red marks signifying all the known locations of where women were found in rivers.

Next to the map is a Ricky Blackwell T-shirt with tour dates listed on the back. The book on vampires Dalton bought in Tulsa is lying open face down on the table.

Also on the table is the compact disc insert for the Ricky Blackwell album, "Black Water Running". The insert is folded open, showing the song lyrics along and a photo of Blackwell dressed in black with a guitar and a solemn look on his face.

Dalton rotates between skimming through the vampire book, reading the crime scene files and reading song lyrics looking for similar details in both the lyrics and the files.

Roxanne enters the kitchen clutching a blue robe around her body with a tired, puffy-eyed expression.

ROXANNE

You're up early.

Dalton mumbles an affirmative at her.

Roxanne approaches the table.

ROXANNE

You got back late last night and are up way too early today. What is all this stuff?

DALTON

A case I'm working on.

Roxanne sees the crime scene photo of dead Sissy Coleman and shudders.

ROXANNE

What happened to this poor girl?

DALTON

She was murdered up river from here.

Roxanne is suddenly awake.

ROXANNE

You didn't tell me somebody was murdered. When did this happen?

DALTON

About ten years ago. Her killer was never caught and the case went cold. I've been digging around and I think I might have a lead on catching who did it.

ROXANNE

After ten years? Really? That's great, I mean if you actually find out who did it.

Roxanne studies Dalton's face for a moment, noticing some sort of connection between Dalton and the girl.

ROXANNE

Did you know this girl, Bud?

Dalton stares at Sissy's photo for a couple of moments and finally nods his head.

DALTON

Her name was Sissy Coleman. We went out for a while in high school. For a while I thought I was madly in love with her.

ROXANNE

What happened between you two?

DALTON

Nothing really. We went out for maybe a month and a half then she broke up with me and started hangin' out with a bad crowd of people. After we went to State and won, she tried to get me back, but she'd changed a lot and I wasn't interested in her anymore because she seemed so...I don't know, different, I guess, than the girl she was when we were goin' out.

Dalton appears lost in thought for a moment.

DALTON

It did shake me up a lot when I heard she'd been killed.

ROXANNE

Who do you think did it?

DALTON

I...I don't know. It's just that now I don't think she was the only one. I've found other girls who were killed the same way Sissy was whose cases haven't been solved either.

ROXANNE

You saying she was a victim of a serial killer? Here in Independence? Bud, you're starting to scare me.

Dalton is quiet for a few moments while he looks at the back of the T-shirt with the printed concert dates.

DALTON

It happened a long time ago.

Dalton's eyes move to the U.S. map on the table.

CU of the city of Omaha on the map.

Dalton looks up at Roxanne.

DALTON
I'm gonna catch this guy, Rox.

MONTAGE -- INT. JONAS' GARAGE -- LATER

--Dalton standing at the work table, readying a couple of bullet shell casings and gun powder. The silver belt buckle from the attic is melting in a metal pot sitting over a Bunsen burner.

--Dalton pouring the melted silver into a slug casting.

--Dalton trimming the silver slug.

--Dalton pouring the gunpowder into a .38 caliber bullet casing.

--Dalton putting the silver slug into the bullet casing.

--Dalton holding up a finished bullet and inspecting it. The materials for more silver bullets sit on the work table, including brass .22 casings.

--Dalton opens the gun cabinet and removes a rifle with a large scope on top.

INT. CONCERT HALL -- NIGHT

Small venue in Omaha packed to capacity. Blackwell and the band are on stage playing. While the music sounds okay, Blackwell doesn't really appear to be into it. His expression is distant and he looks vaguely sick.

The band plays a song called "Brutal Kiss".

BLACKWELL
(first verse)
She showed up in her eternal disguise/
With her evil loving eyes/The kind
that I cannot deny/She said let's
take a walk down by the lake/And
realize our fate/For the hour is
growing late.

While the band plays, Blackwell spends much of his time staring at a young woman standing by the stage with brown hair wearing a jean skirt and a blouse and cowboy hat that are a matching red.

BLACKWELL

(chorus)

Leave a brutal kiss/Then I fall
asleep/Pray the Lord/My soul to keep/
Make it feel right/But I know it's
wrong/I close my eyes/And when the
sun comes up/You'll be gone.

The woman knows Blackwell is watching her. She makes flirty gestures, kissing motions and winks at him.

BLACKWELL

(second verse)

Never met a girl that looked like
you/Never met a girl with eyes so
blue/Never met a girl that I loved
true/We can take a walk down by the
pond/And I'll whisper you're the
one/And live for the rising sun.

Blackwell continues playing the guitar and singing but he is transfixed by the woman.

BLACKWELL

(second chorus)

Give a brutal kiss to you my queen/
Heaven and Hell and in between/Feels
so right/But it was wrong/I close my
eyes/And when the sun comes up I'll
be gone.

While the stage lights flash in alternating colors, the crowd is really into the music. Several couples are dancing near the stage.

Dalton stands on the side of the room in the shadows, eyes locked on Blackwell.

CONCERT HALL BACKSTAGE -- LATER

Blackwell and the band have just finished. Other than Blackwell, the band is dripping sweat and in good spirits. All of them are drinking beer and have towels hanging around their necks.

Blackwell isn't in a good mood. He looks sick and his pale skin is almost ashen gray.

Blackwell walks toward the band in a quick manner. Eddie holds up a beer in a toast.

EDDIE

Good show tonight, huh, Blackwell?

BLACKWELL

Get outta my way, boy.

Blackwell pushes by Eddie with enough force to knock Eddie into the wall. Wide-eyed, Eddie holds up his hands in a confused, slightly pissed-off gesture of resignation.

Blackwell storms past the band members.

Troy looks at Eddie without concern. He's seen Blackwell's moods before.

TROY

Just stay out of his way, man.

Blackwell finds Cassandra in the hallway, grabs her and pulls her to the side. Cassandra frowns.

CASSANDRA

You're hurtin' me, Blackwell. Let go of me.

Blackwell moves his face inches from hers, frowning. His body motions are twitchy.

BLACKWELL

I want more. Get me more. Now.

Cassandra raises her voice at Blackwell.

CASSANDRA

Let go of me. God damn it, Ricky, let go of me.

BLACKWELL

Are you getting more for me?

Cassandra tries to jerk herself out of Blackwell's grip.

CASSANDRA

I will if you take your hands off of me.

Blackwell loosens his grip.

CASSANDRA

What the hell's gotten into you, Ricky?

BLACKWELL

I need more.

CASSANDRA

You don't need more. You fed two
nights ago, remember?

Blackwell speaks through clenched teeth with a look bordering
on madness in his eyes.

BLACKWELL

I did, but look at me. Look at me,
Cassandra, and tell me that I really,
honestly don't need it.

CASSANDRA

You are looking a little haggard,
Blackwell.

BLACKWELL

You call this haggard?

Cassandra closes her eyes thinking Blackwell might hit her
but he doesn't.

BLACKWELL

Find the girl in the red cowboy hat
and red blouse. That's what I want.

Cassandra stares at him and sighs, trying to compose herself.

Blackwell smiles a small sarcastic grin.

BLACKWELL

Maybe tonight I need two for a change
of pace. Two would be lots of fun.

CASSANDRA

Don't do anything reckless, Ricky.

Blackwell continues smiling a sarcastic grin.

BLACKWELL

Reckless? But if I had two tonight
I wouldn't need to feed for days,
would I, Cassandra?

Blackwell stares coldly at Cassandra.

BLACKWELL

I want more. Tonight I want to bathe
in it. Maybe tonight I'll go and
kill just because I can. Hunt like
I used to instead of having them
handed to me like it is now. Wouldn't
that be fun?

Blackwell makes a mock pouty expression.

BLACKWELL

What's a matter? Is this job getting
to be a bit much for you, Cassandra?
Is it time for a change in employment?

Cassandra crosses her arms, not amused by Blackwell's attitude.

CASSANDRA

You done? The girl in the red cowboy
hat. Anything else?

Blackwell smiles and steps away from Cassandra. He holds his hand out in the same manner that a gentleman would take a woman's hand. Cassandra takes his hand. He motions down the hall with his free hand.

BLACKWELL

Hurry. My hunger can't wait long.

HIGHWAY -- LATER

Blackwell's Harley, with Blackwell and the woman with the red cowboy hat on the back, speeds south on Highway 75. The woman has one hand around Blackwell's waist. The other clutches her hat to her head so it doesn't fly away.

Blackwell wears his wraparound sunglasses. Though he still looks sickly, he's grinning like someone who knows they are about to get laid.

RIVER BANK -- LATER

Blackwell and the woman with the red cowboy hat sit in the grass near the river. It is partially cloudy, covering the ground in shadows. Blackwell holds an open bottle of whiskey.

WOMAN IN RED

You gonna share that whiskey, Mister
Ricky Blackwell?

BLACKWELL

Sure thing, ma'am.

Blackwell hands the bottle over to her. She takes a drink and passes back the bottle.

WOMAN IN RED

Sure was lucky of your manager to find me across the street in that diner like she did. With the way we were lookin' at each other during the show and the show endin' and all, I thought you'd forgotten about me.

BLACKWELL

Naw. Nothing like that. I just got held up backstage after the show. Say, are you ever gonna tell me your name, darlin'?

WOMAN IN RED

Why don't you just call me Red.

BLACKWELL

Red? What kinda name's that? Here I'm wantin' to kiss you all over and you're tellin' me to call you Red. Red's the kinda name given to old men who own the bars where guys like me play music at night.

WOMAN IN RED

Diane.

BLACKWELL

Diane?

DIANE/WOMAN IN RED

That's my name.

BLACKWELL

That's much, much prettier than Red.

Blackwell and Diane move close together. They kiss.

Not far away, Dalton lies on the ground in the grass next to a grove of trees.

DALTON'S PERSPECTIVE

He watches the outlines of Blackwell and Diane through the cross hairs of a high-powered rifle scope.

BACK TO SCENE

Blackwell and Diane are kissing frantically. Blackwell lies Diane on her back and they continue kissing.

Dalton shifts in the grass.

Blackwell lifts his head up and quickly looks in Dalton's direction.

DIANE

What's a matter, baby?

BLACKWELL

Thought I heard something.

He looks in Dalton's direction for a few moments more and sniffs the air.

BLACKWELL

I guess it was nothin'.

Blackwell and Diane resume their frantic kissing and soon they are peeling their clothes off.

DALTON'S PERSPECTIVE

Dalton continues watching through the rifle scope as Blackwell and Diane, lit by the moon, begin having sex. Blackwell is inside of Diane, kissing her face and neck. He sinks his teeth into Diane's neck and she struggles.

BACK TO SCENE

Unlike past killings committed by Blackwell, this one is especially savage. He pulls his fangs out of Diane's neck and bites her repeatedly in the throat, neck and shoulders.

Diane struggles but Blackwell is sitting on her and pushing the side of her face into the ground with his hand.

With a quick sideways slash of an index fingernail, Blackwell slices open her jugular vein, spraying blood all over him.

Blackwell drinks from the severed vein while continuing to be showered with blood.

After a few moments, Blackwell screams in a rage, looking confused and angry, lost in the throws of a blood high.

Blackwell rolls over on his back and closes his eyes, while rubbing the sticky red blood over his face and chest.

Dalton approaches Blackwell as silently as possible with the rifle in his hands.

Blackwell's eyes are still closed though he sniffs at the air and appears to still be lost in his blood high.

BLACKWELL

How was the show, Sheriff?

Dalton freezes in his tracks.

BLACKWELL

You have this smell about you. It's a couple of different kinds of flowers that pretty wife of yours probably leaves in the kitchen, mixed with a metallic tinge that would make me guess that you shower with well water.

Blackwell sits up, opens his eyes and stares at Dalton with an evil smirk. He wipes blood out of his eyes.

Dalton stares at Blackwell in horror, but keeps his gun pointed at him.

DALTON

What kinda monster are you?

BLACKWELL

If you're here you must have a pretty good idea.

Blackwell stands. Dalton pulls back the bolt on the rifle and chambers a round. He lifts the rifle to his shoulder and aims at Blackwell who gives him a bored look and begins pulling his jeans on.

BLACKWELL

How's that pretty wife of yours? You know that night in Tulsa your wife and that big haired friend of hers were as wet as the Mississippi River.

Blackwell looks Dalton in the eye.

BLACKWELL

Just like teenage girls. I could smell it through their clothes. Because of me I bet you had the best fuck of your life that night.

DALTON

Shut your mouth Mister Blackwell or Johnson or whatever the fuck your name is.

Blackwell's face registers a little surprise as he stands.

BLACKWELL

Sheriff's been doing a little homework. My birth name's Dupree but Ricky Dupree died a long time ago. Names don't mean all that much anyway when you think about it.

Blackwell begins walking toward Dalton with his arms out in a crucifixion-like stance.

DALTON

You're under arrest for the murder of this girl and for the murder of Sissy Coleman.

The name Sissy Coleman elicits an expression of half-puzzlement, half-recognition from Blackwell.

BLACKWELL

Oh yeah, Sissy. She was a dirty little bitch, wasn't she? She a friend of yours? Don't matter. She probably died like the rest of 'em.

Dalton keeps the rifle pointed at Blackwell, not falling for Blackwell's taunts.

DALTON

How many people have you killed?

BLACKWELL

About sixty years worth but not as many as I wanted to.

Blackwell stares at Dalton, obviously toying with him.

BLACKWELL

I do believe you're more than just a little bit outside of your jurisdiction to be able to arrest me so I guess you gotta shoot me.

Dalton continues pointing the rifle at Blackwell's chest.

DALTON

You have ten seconds to get down on your knees and put your hands on your head.

Blackwell calmly and casually drops to his knees and puts his hands on the top of his head.

DALTON

I want to know about Sissy.

BLACKWELL

Shit, I don't remember all the names, Sheriff. I've been doing this for a long time now. Besides, I'm not the only one...of my kind that feeds by rivers. I might not have even had the pleasure of meeting your beloved Miss Sissy.

Blackwell stares Dalton directly in the eye.

BLACKWELL

I wouldn't a minded feedin' on that pretty little wife of yours. I'm sure she tastes just as sweet as she looks.

Dalton quickly approaches Blackwell, rage burning in his eyes, ready to smash the rifle butt into Blackwell's face.

As Dalton brings the rifle down, in a flash of superhuman speed, Blackwell grabs the butt of the gun.

Blackwell squeezes the rifle and it shatters in Dalton's hands.

Partially stunned, Dalton doesn't have enough time to react before Blackwell punches him, sending him flying back about fifteen feet into a tree trunk.

Blackwell walks toward Dalton. Though winded, Dalton removes the .38 from his holster and aims it at Blackwell, who kicks the gun from Dalton's hand. The gun lands in the river and disappears.

Blackwell spreads his legs and sits on Dalton, straddling him. Out of breath, Dalton struggles weakly.

Blackwell rips open Dalton's shirt, exposing a three inch long crucifix hanging around Dalton's neck.

Blackwell yanks the crucifix from Dalton's neck and stares at it with amusement.

BLACKWELL

You think this bullshit's gonna help you, Sheriff?

Blackwell takes the crucifix and rams it into Dalton's shoulder. Dalton screams in pain.

Blackwell holds Dalton's head up to his.

BLACKWELL

Say hi to Sissy for me.

Blackwell sinks his fangs into Dalton's neck and begins feeding on him. Dalton continues writhing and screaming.

Dalton slowly becomes weaker and more silent.

MONTAGE -- DALTON'S FLASHBACKS

--Dalton age six at Christmas in Jonas' house. A large Christmas tree sits in a corner of the living room. A grinning Dalton unwraps a red sled and shows it to his smiling mother and father.

--Dalton at seventeen is the high school quarterback throwing the pass that would win the Kansas State Football Championship.

--High school aged Dalton kissing Sissy Coleman.

--Dalton in college, wearing an orange Texas Longhorns football jersey, breaking a tackle and running into the end zone for a touchdown.

--Dalton making love to Roxanne. The looks on both of their faces shows how deeply in love they are.

BACK TO PRESENT

Blackwell continues clutching Dalton's head in his hands while drinking from him.

With eyes closed and a pained expression on his face, Dalton reaches into his boot where a backup .38 caliber handgun is hidden.

Dalton slowly lifts the gun and pushes it into Blackwell's side.

Blackwell stops feeding and twists his head to see what is jabbing him in the ribs. Blackwell is surprised to see it is a gun and hisses at Dalton with red eyes bulging. Blackwell grabs for the gun. Blackwell and Dalton struggle.

A GUNSHOT rings out.

Blackwell's motorcycle sits nearby. The large, 1988 cell phone in the saddlebag begins ringing.

The phone rings six times.

CU of the saddlebag. A bloody hand reaches in the saddlebag and grabs the phone.

GUTTURAL VOICE (O.S.)

Hello.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. TRUCKSTOP -- AFTERNOON

Diner on the outskirts of Laughlin, Nevada. The place looks like just about every truckstop diner anywhere in the country, with Formica tables and counter tops, vinyl booths and circular vinyl seats at the counter.

A jukebox sits next to the front door.

A handful of customers, mostly truckers and one couple are inside.

SUPER: "Present Day".

The waitress behind the counter is Madeline, the vampire who turned Blackwell. Her black hair is pinned up, though it sticks out wildly in places.

She still has her porcelain white skin and she looks like an attractive truck stop waitress in her yellow polyester uniform with the name "MADELINE" stiched above the breast. She looks exactly the same age as when she was seen last.

Madeline fastens an order ticket to a metal clip hanging next to a heat lamp in the service window.

The front door of the diner opens and a bell jingles.

A man in all black: a black cowboy hat, black button-up western shirt, black jeans and black cowboy boots, with a knapsack on his back and a beat-up black guitar case in his hand enters the diner and sits at the counter. He drops the knapsack and guitar case on the floor.

When the man in black sits down, before Madeline turns around, she sniffs the air and is suddenly aware of one of her kind sitting at the counter. She turns around slowly.

Madeline steps over and smiles at the stranger. She grabs an order pad and a pen and lays on her best flirty tone of voice.

MADELINE

Can I get you somethin', handsome?

The man's voice is deep and scratchy.

MAN IN BLACK

Black coffee.

A slim, pretty blonde woman in her twenties wearing a white cowboy hat and tight cut-off shorts saunters up to the jukebox. She bends over, puts her hands on the jukebox and begins looking through the music selection.

Madeline pours coffee in the previously empty cup sitting in front of the man in black.

MADELINE

Do I know you from somewhere?

MAN IN BLACK

I don't think so, darlin'.

MADELINE

I'd swear that I know you from someplace.

The man makes a humming noise like he is thinking about something.

MAN IN BLACK

I don't think so. Would you like to get to know me?

Madeline raises her eyebrows in a racy manner.

MADELINE

Maybe I would.

Madeline points at the guitar case.

MADELINE

You a musician?

MAN IN BLACK

I guess you could call me that.

MADELINE

You sure I ain't seen you on the TV or something?

The woman at the jukebox slides some quarters in the machine and begins punching in her music choices.

MAN IN BLACK

You're confusin' me with someone else, darlin'.

The man takes a long sip of coffee.

MADELINE

You from around here?

MAN IN BLACK

No, are you?

MADELINE

I'm from here and there, though
mostly N'awlins, I guess.

The man in black nods an affirmation and is quiet for a moment.

MAN IN BLACK

Say, sugar, I'm in town for a few
days. Whatta y'all do for fun around
here?

Madeline smiles suggestively.

MADELINE

Well, if you aren't going to the
casinos, most people go party down
on the river. That's what I usually
do.

Ricky Blackwell's "Down By the River" begins playing on the jukebox. The man in black turns to look toward the jukebox.

MADELINE

I just love this song. It still
sounds so good after all these years.

The woman in the white cowboy hat leans on the jukebox, tapping her foot to the music and is deciding on another song to chose. She looks up from the jukebox and smiles at the man in black.

The man in black is Dalton, who still looks the same age as he did in 1988. He smiles a brilliant smile at the woman in the white cowboy hat.

DALTON

Party on the river, huh?

MADELINE

That sound like your idea of fun?

Dalton nods slowly, smiling, keeping his eyes locked on the woman in the white cowboy hat.

DALTON

Yeah, I reckon it does.

The woman in the white cowboy hat begins dancing to the music with a happy smile on her face.

FADE OUT: