

THE 4TH STEP

Written by

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Based on a true story

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EXT. PENTICTON, BC, CANADA - OFFICE BUILDING - PARKING LOT -  
DAY (1996)

A car parks. PAUL CHILD (45) exits the car and approaches the building. Words on the glass front door read: "GOVERNMENT OF BC - ADDICTION SERVICES."

Paul is ruggedly handsome. He stands about six feet tall in his cowboy boots. A subtle look of, "I dare you," is seen in his intense, deep blue eyes.

Just below the surface, you catch a glimpse of a sad little boy. He looks haggard and depressed. He opens the door and enters.

INT. LOBBY

At the reception desk, Paul's counselor SARA talks to the receptionist. Sara spots Paul.

SARA  
Hi Paul. Good to see you.

PAUL  
You too, Sara.

Sara leads Paul to her office.

INT. SARA'S OFFICE

Paul sits across the desk from Sara. She looks deeply concerned as she focuses on the desperation on Paul's face.

SARA  
How are you doing Paul?

Paul struggles with the thought of sharing his feelings.

PAUL  
The truth? Not good - not good at all. I can't sleep - I don't want to get out of bed in the morning. I don't even want to eat.

SARA  
How long have you been feeling this way?

PAUL  
Ever since Mom died and Wendy turfed me, I guess.

SARA

I'm sorry to hear that. I know how hard it can be. Have you been using?

PAUL

Nope.

SARA

Good for you. Have you been having any suicidal thoughts?

PAUL

All the time.

SARA

You just hang in there - don't do anything stupid. It could be Post Acute Withdrawal Syndrome. It's delayed withdrawal symptoms from no longer having false comfort from alcohol and drugs. In a nut shell, it's a kind of emotional retardation. It's symptomatic of addiction.

Paul manages to maintain his sense of humour despite his condition.

PAUL

Wonderful. I'm a burnout, crazy AND retarded. Oh yeah, I don't use anymore. Two outta three ain't bad I guess.

SARA

(smiling)

Now stop that. Have you completed Step Three?

PAUL

Yeah.

SARA

Would you be willing to go through a rehabilitation program to deal with this?

PAUL

I'd be willing to go to Outer Mongolia to deal with this, if it would help.

SARA

I'll see if I can get you registered at Crossroads by Christmas. Being that you have finished step three, I'll recommend they move you on to Step Four. Maybe it's time for you to get honest with yourself.

INT. CROSSROADS - PAUL'S ROOM - DAY - CHRISTMAS SEASON

The room resembles a cheap cement block motel room. A window faces a courtyard with picnic tables.

A sign above an office door across the courtyard reads: "CROSSROADS TREATMENT CENTRE."

On the bed, Paul reads "An Addict's Guide to Step Four."

PAUL

(to himself)

"Thoroughness ought to be our watchword when taking our personal inventory. We wish to look squarely at the unhappiness we have caused others and ourselves. Without animosity, we must examine the pain and injustice that was inflicted on us by others. It is also important that we face the truth about how we may have endangered the lives and well-being of others. We also want to look closely and honestly at the harm we may have caused the society in which we live..."

BEGIN FLASHBACK SEQUENCE:

EXT. OREMAN - MAIN STREET - DAY (1963)

A truck parked in front of a dilapidated hotel. The street is reminiscent of a northern mining town. A sign on the door of the truck reads: "CHILD'S DELIVERY SERVICE."

A sign on the building reads: "OREMAN HOTEL." A sign on the door reads: "BEER PARLOUR - MEN ONLY."

INT. DELIVERY TRUCK

Paul (13) and his father KEN sit in the cab. Ken stares at Paul with a stern, uncompromising gaze.

Ken Child is an aggressive alcoholic. He is a frustrated rebel trapped in the lifestyle of family man.

KEN

I'm going in for one. Wait here.

PAUL

Bullshit! The last time you went in for one I just about died of old age in here.

KEN

Don't give me any back talk ya little punk. And I'm getting tired of your filthy mouth.

PAUL

I wonder where I got the filthy mouth from.

KEN

(smirking)

You must have got it from your mother.

PAUL

Mom doesn't swear.

KEN

Shut up smart ass.

Ken gets out, slams the door and enters the beer parlour. Crestfallen, Paul watches the pedestrians.

Suddenly, a group of rugged looking men sprawl into the street from the beer parlour. A drunken melee ensues. Paul shrinks down in the seat to avoid being seen.

INT. CHILD HOUSE - DINING ROOM - AUTUMN - DAY

Paul, Ken, his mother SHIRLEY, his brother PETER (8) and sister PAULA (15) eat dinner. Shirley is a stoic woman. Her hard veneer hides a heart of gold.

KEN

(to Shirley)

I'm going moose hunting with GORDON this weekend.

SHIRLEY

You might as well take Paul with you.

KEN

What the hell for?

SHIRLEY

He's driving me crazy.

PAUL

You don't need me to drive you crazy. You're there already.

KEN

Shut your mouth. Don't talk to your mother like that.

PAUL

Why not? You do.

KEN

One of these days...

SHIRLEY

Can't you go just one day without causing trouble?

PAUL

I don't know. I never tried.

SHIRLEY

(to Ken)

See, it never stops. He's just plain bad - rotten to the core.

Paul swipes his plate onto the floor and storms away.

KEN

(to Shirley)

Do something for God's sake. Go get the strap.

SHIRLEY

He just laughs at me. He's too big for me to handle any more.

Ken storms away after Paul.

EXT. FOREST - AFTERNOON

A car parked on a narrow bush road overlooking a swamp. Beer bottles on the hood of the car.

In front of the car, Ken and Gordon shoot high powered rifles aimlessly across the swamp.

Paul leans against the back of the car. He flinches with every report. He stares down the road with a look of, 'I would rather be anywhere else but here,' on his face.

INT. CAR - DUSK

Ken is at the wheel with Gordon beside him. Paul slouches in the back seat.

Ken and Gordon chug on a bottle of whiskey. Drunken babble as they pass the bottle back and forth.

GORDON  
Where the hell 'r all the moose?

KEN  
Maybe in the bush.

GORDON  
D' ya think we should go get one?

KEN  
T' hell with that. Let 'm come t'  
us.

Gordon rolls down his window, sticks out his head and hollers.

GORDON  
Hey, mooses, come here ya lazy  
bastards.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Windows covered with frost. Ken and Gordon passed out in the front seat. They snore without restraint.

Paul lies on the back seat. He tries in vain to keep himself warm with his jacket. He sits up and shakes Ken by the shoulder.

PAUL  
Dad, Dad, wake up. I'm freezing to  
death back here.

Ken half wakes up and swings at Paul with the back of his hand, but misses. Shaking with cold, Paul lies back down. Ken resumes snoring.

INT. DILAPIDATED DANCE HALL - NIGHT (1966)

Paul (16) and another BOY loiter by the back door. They pass a mickey of whiskey back and forth. Paul takes hold of the bottle.

A BOUNCER approaches and holds out his hand.

BOUNCER  
Give it here.

PAUL  
Kiss my ass.

Paul hands the bottle to the boy.

BOUNCER  
Get out, both of you. You're not old enough to even be here.

Paul crosses his arms in defiance and leans against the wall. The boy hands the mickey to the bouncer and leaves. The bouncer puts it in his pocket.

The bouncer grabs Paul by the shirt. Paul knocks his hands away and pushes him. A fight ensues. Paul wins, but not without acquiring a black eye.

INT. CHILD HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Shirley is at the stove. Paul enters while donning a shirt. She notices Paul's black eye. She looks disgusted.

SHIRLEY  
You had better hurry. Your father is waiting for you. So what kind of trouble did you get yourself into this time?

PAUL  
No big deal. Just a fight.

SHIRLEY  
I suppose you were drunk?

PAUL  
Not too drunk to win. My life is none of your business anyway.

SHIRLEY  
You are my child. Everything to do with you is my business.



PAUL

For Christ's sake, your child? I'm just about sixteen. I'm nobody's child.

SHIRLEY

Don't take the Lord's name in vain in this home, and in front of your mother. Do you think you are a man because you swear?

PAUL

Some mother you are. And what do you mean, "in this home?" This isn't a home. It's a place where I sleep and eat sometimes.

SHIRLEY

You say the most hurtful things. And this IS a home. For your brother and sister at least.

PAUL

Oh yes! Cute little Peter and perfect Paula. To hell with it. I can't stand this place anymore.

Paul storms away, slamming the door hard as he leaves.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

Ken leans with his back against the delivery truck. He smokes a cigarette. Paul approaches.

KEN

It's about goddamn time. Get your lazy ass in the truck.

INT. DELIVERY TRUCK

They pull out of the driveway and head down the street.

KEN

Nice shiner. So, you got your ass kicked last night?

PAUL

No I didn't. You should see the other guy.

KEN

Who is he?

PAUL  
A bouncer at the dance.

KEN  
Who took the first punch?

PAUL  
He did.

You can see that Ken is pleased.

INT. DELIVERY TRUCK - LATER THAT DAY

Paul and Ken drive down main street. Paul watches the beer parlour go by.

PAUL  
Why don't ya stop and grab a dozen.

KEN  
I quit.

PAUL  
Sure ya did!

KEN  
I'm not kidding. I went to an AA meeting the other day.

Paul looks at him with disbelief.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Paul and GREG WINTERS (aka SPIKE) stand in front of the PRINCIPAL's desk. You can tell they are a little tipsy.

Spike is slim and about six and a half feet tall. He wears his altitude with confidence.

He sometimes speaks in Early Modern English, but just in jest. He rarely takes anything seriously. Sarcasm is his native tongue.

PRINCIPAL  
Child and Winters, you have gone too far this time. Drinking on school property will not be tolerated. I have given you every chance to fall in line with the rest of the school - but lo and behold, here you are again.  
(MORE)

## PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

Between the two of you, you have spent more time in the detention hall than the rest of the students combined. The last warning I gave you WAS your last. Letters of expulsion will be mailed to your parents. Now get out of my sight. And good luck - you're gonna need it.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MINUTES LATER

Paul and Spike saunter along.

SPIKE

It's about time. I was afraid they'd never get rid o' me. It took a hell of a lot of energy to get incorrigible enough for this.

PAUL

You're hilarious, but we're in deep shit now. What do you think your dad will do to ya?

SPIKE

Well, seeing he's a cop and all, he'll likely shackle me in the basement for the foreseeable future.

PAUL

At least you won't have to work on a delivery truck 'til ya die of exhaustion.

SPIKE

Be heartened, young man. All is not lost.

PAUL

Stop talking like some guy out of a Shakespeare play.

SPIKE

It's Shakespearian play.

PAUL

You read too much.

SPIKE

Those teachers wouldn't be able to understand half the stuff I read.

(MORE)

SPIKE (CONT'D)

It would go right over their low-lying heads.

PAUL

Everybody has a low-lying head compared to you, Goliath.

SPIKE

Hey, I like that. He kicked a lot of ass in his day.

PAUL

Yeah, but David kicked HIS ass. And someday I'm gonna kick yours.

SPIKE

We both know that ain't gonna happen. But hold onto that fantasy for your own sense of security.

Paul punches Spike hard on the shoulder. They laugh as they approach a café. A sign above the door reads: "TROUBLED WATERS CAFÉ." They enter.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY - SPRING (1967)

On the outskirts of town, Paul stands with his thumb out. A car pulls over. He gets in.

INT. CAR

The single occupant is a middle-age MAN.

MAN

Aren't you Ken Child's son?

PAUL

Yeah, that's my dad.

MAN

Where are you going today?

PAUL

Calgary.

MAN

That's a long way to go by yourself. Does your dad know you're leaving town?

PAUL

He knows.

MAN

What does he think of the idea?

PAUL

He's not crazy about it. But he can't stop me. I'm sixteen now.

MAN

Do you know anyone in Calgary? Do you have a place to stay?

PAUL

I have a friend there. He's spending the summer with his uncle.

MAN

I'm going as far as Saskatoon. That will be a good start for you.

PAUL

That 'd be great. Thanks.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The car pulls out and heads on down the road.

INT. CALGARY - SEEDY HOTEL - DAY

On a pay phone in the lobby, Paul talks to GRANT.

PAUL

Grant, how ya doing?

GRANT (V.O.)

Is that you, Paul?

PAUL

It's me.

GRANT (V.O.)

Where are you?

PAUL

I'm in town, at the East Side Hotel.

GRANT (V.O.)

What the hell are ya doing here?

PAUL

I had to get away from all the bullshit at home.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

I was thinkin' about maybe getting a job here and hangin' around for a while.

GRANT (V.O.)

Where are you staying?

PAUL

Nowhere yet. I was hopin' I could stay with you.

GRANT (V.O.)

I wish you'd called before you came. I don't know what my uncle will think of the idea. Just hang on a few minutes. I'll ask him.

A muffled argument on the other end of the line.

GRANT (V.O.)

Sorry, Paul. He said you should've phoned before you left home.

PAUL

That's okay. I'll figure somethin' out. Thanks anyway.

EXT. CALGARY - SLUMS - NIGHT

Paul slouches on a bus bench with his duffle bag. A man approaches and sits beside him.

LOUIS GAGNON (30's), runty and rotund, looks like the kind of man who would make you want to check your pants for your wallet when he turns around.

LOUIS

You look lost.

PAUL

I know where I am.

LOUIS

Yeah, where's that?

PAUL

Calgary.

LOUIS

Oh, a smart ass. I like that. I just meant that ya look like you been on the road for a while. I'm Louis.

PAUL  
I'm Paul. I just hitched into town  
today.

LOUIS  
Where from?

PAUL  
Oreman.

LOUIS  
Oreman, eh! I heard that's a crazy  
place.

PAUL  
Yeah, it's not quite civilized yet,  
but the missionaries are workin' on  
it.

LOUIS  
Yeah, right! Where ya stayin'?

PAUL  
Not sure yet.

LOUIS  
You can crash at my place. I like  
t' help strangers.

Paul sizes him up.

PAUL  
That would be great, thanks.

LOUIS  
No problem man.

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

A dilapidated old house. Paul and Louis at the table.

LOUIS  
Nothin' fancy for breakfast. Hope  
ya like it.

PAUL  
I'm so hungry I could eat a skunk's  
ass.

LOUIS  
No, that's for supper.

PAUL  
So, where do ya work?

LOUIS  
I don't have a regular job. Do ya  
have any money?

Paul looks at Louis suspiciously.

PAUL  
Actually, I'm down to my last ten  
bucks. I don't know what I'm gonna  
do. Is there any work around?

LOUIS  
Maybe, I might have a job for ya,  
if ya have the balls for it. Have  
ya ever been in jail?

PAUL  
A few times, but just for a few  
hours. They can't keep me because  
I'm not eighteen yet. My dad comes  
and gets me out.

LOUIS  
What did they get ya for?

PAUL  
Fighting, drinking under-age. That  
kind o' shit.

LOUIS  
Did ya ever get busted for theft?

PAUL  
No, never got caught. The cops are  
idiots. My dad says if you take  
their rule book away from them it's  
like removing their brains.

LOUIS  
You're hired. We're gonna have a  
lotta laughs, me 'n you.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Paul and Louis drink beer while cruising the streets of  
Calgary. Louis points out a storefront.

LOUIS  
The dress shop over there is one o'  
the places my old lady cleans.  
(MORE)



LOUIS (CONT'D)

They leave a float in the till -  
about a hundred bucks.

Louis turns down a back alley, drives slowly halfway down the block and stops.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Ya see that window just above the garbage cans? That goes into the stockroom. My old lady 'l leave it unlocked. Just climb up on one o' the garbage cans and in ya go.

PAUL

Why don't ya just do it yourself?

LOUIS

I lost my nerve, and I'm too fat to fit in the window.

PAUL

No shit! When do we do this?

LOUIS

Monday night. There ain't a lot o' cops around Mondays. That's when the old lady cleans it. She should be done about ten. You can do it any time after that. Can ya handle it?

PAUL

Sounds pretty easy t' me.

They drive on.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - MONDAY NIGHT

Paul dumps the contents of a garbage can on the ground. He turns the can upside down, climbs on it, opens the window and crawls through.

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - THE WEE HOURS - THREE MONTHS LATER

A raucous party. Louis and Paul lean with their backs against the wall, beer in hand. They show signs of intoxication. Loud music muffles their words.

LOUIS

I gotta tell ya man, I never thought things would go this good.

PAUL

Yeah, money in the pocket, beer in the fridge and girls in the bed.

LOUIS

You're one hell of a thief. But of course ya learned from the best.

PAUL

I'm startin' to get nervous, though. Sooner or later, the cops have to put this together. I mean what, maybe thirty jobs and no heat. This can't last forever.

LOUIS

I'll tell ya what. After this gas station job on Sunday, we'll take a break and let things cool for a while. We have t' do this one though. Should be good for around a grand.

A GUY enters the kitchen from the living room.

GUY

(to Louis)  
We're outta whiskey.

PAUL

(to Louis)  
Gimme the keys. I'll make a run to the bootlegger.

LOUIS

(to the guy)  
Gather up some cash.

Louis takes the car keys from his pocket.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Are ya sure you can drive?

PAUL

I drive like Mario Andretti when I'm drunk.

Smirking, Louis hands him the keys.

INT. CAR - A CITY STREET - MINUTES LATER

Sparse traffic. Paul behind the wheel. A "do-or-die" expression on his face. The speedometer reads 80 miles per hour.

A red light at an upcoming intersection. He blasts through. Another red light a long block ahead. Cars crossing.

Paul locks the brakes and turns hard. Tires smoke and scream. The car spins a perfect three sixty and stops.

Paul looks pleased with himself. You can see he is enjoying the rush. He carries on - not quite as fast.

INT. CAR - SUNDAY NIGHT

Parked at the curb, Louis keeps watch on a gas station across the street.

INT. GAS STATION

Flashlight in hand, Paul empties the cash register. He creeps into the office and scrutinizes the safe.

Cop car lights flash in the window. Paul sprints out the back door into the alley.

EXT. BACK ALLEY

Two cops in hot pursuit of Paul.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM

At a table, Paul and BAD COP sit opposite each other.

BAD COP

We got you cold. You're done. We know for a fact that you're good for at least ten more break and enters. No amount of your bullshit is gonna to get you out of this.

PAUL

Maybe not, but a lawyer's bullshit will help.

BAD COP

Look you smart-mouth punk. You're going down for this, along with your partner Gagnon. He's in the next room hanging this all on you right now.

PAUL

Bullshit, I know how ya work.

BAD COP

We know all about you. We already talked to the RCMP in Oreman. Gagnon is a five-time loser. This isn't the first time we've locked him up.

GOOD COP enters and sits down.

GOOD COP

Gagnon said he just gave you a ride. He says it was all your idea. I know that you're just a confused kid. I understand that. You can help yourself out here. We don't want you. We want him. If you give him up, maybe we can help you.

Paul looks at the cop as if to say, "I don't believe a word that is coming out of your mouth."

PAUL

What else did he tell you?

BAD COP

Hey, we ask the questions and you answer. If you don't start talking, I'll make sure you go down just as hard as him.

PAUL

You can't even hold me. I'm not eighteen yet.

BAD COP

Look Perry Mason, you're in Alberta now. According to our laws, you're considered to be an adult at sixteen. You'll get time for this, hard time.

GOOD COP

Take it easy on the kid. He's not stupid.

(MORE)

## GOOD COP (CONT'D)

He'll get himself out of this. It's easy, Paul. All you have to do is tell us about Louis's involvement in this. That's all there is to it. Tell us the whole story and we'll talk to the prosecutor. My guess is that he'll just send you back to Oreman.

Paul defiantly leans back in the chair and stares at the cops with contempt.

## INT. JAIL - CELL BLOCK - GANGWAY - DAY

A TRUSTEE hands Paul his meal through the bars.

## TRUSTEE

Hey kid, ya better watch your ass in here.

## PAUL

Really, my neck ain't long enough for that.

## TRUSTEE

Do ya think you're some kinda comedian or somethin'? You're just another pretty boy punk. I'll see you in the showers. Maybe I'll watch your ass for ya.

Paul is stuck for words. The trustee walks away.

## INT. WEIGHT ROOM

Paul lifts weights. MARCEL, a well-muscled dangerous looking dude approaches.

## MARCEL

You must be Paul?

## PAUL

That's me.

## MARCEL

I'm a friend of Gagnon. I got a message from him. He says I should watch out for ya.

## PAUL

Why would ya wanna do that?

MARCEL

He said you're a solid kid, you didn't flip on him. If anybody messes with you in here, let me know. I'll take care of it.

PAUL

(false bravado)

Thanks man, but I can take care o' myself. There is one thing, though. Do ya see that asshole over there?

Paul points across the room at the trustee.

MARCEL

What about him?

PAUL

He was talkin' shit to me when he brought me supper - said to watch my ass in the showers.

MARCEL

No problem. I'll take care of it for ya. You're using those weights all wrong. Let me show ya how it's done.

INT. CELL BLOCK - GANGWAY

Paul's face is pressed between two bars, as if trying to get the perspective of being on the other side. Fear and near panic on his face.

The trustee approaches. Paul quickly steps back and puts on his 'tough guy' facade.

TRUSTEE

Hey kid. Sorry 'bout that thing the other day. I was just havin' a bad day. Marcel said I should set it right.

PAUL

Don't worry about it.

TRUSTEE

I can bring ya some books if ya want.

PAUL

Sure.

TRUSTEE

Do ya want some more westerns?

PAUL

Hell no - something deep. You know, somethin' that makes ya think. The harder t' understand the better. If I read one more Louis L'Amour I'll go crazy.

TRUSTEE

You got it.

The trustee begins to walk away.

PAUL

Wait a minute. Bring me a dictionary too.

TRUSTEE

No problem man.

INT. JAIL LIBRARY

The trustee peruses the books.

TRUSTEE

(to himself)

Hard t' understand. Everything 's hard t' understand. Big, maybe a big one. This one's pretty big.

He pulls "Crime and Punishment" by Fyodor Dostoevsky from the shelf. He studies the title.

TRUSTEE (CONT'D)

There ya go, crime. The dumb shit might even learn somethin'.

EXT. JAIL - DAY

A car parked in front of the jail. Ken behind the wheel. Paul approaches and gets in.

INT. CAR

They look happy to see each other. They drive off.

KEN

Hello son. Looks like you thrived in there.

PAUL

Hi Dad. Yeah, working out in the gym. Pacing in my cell. Lots of exercise.

KEN

I wish you would've let us know where you were a little sooner. We didn't know what happened to you.

PAUL

I didn't want to worry you guys.

KEN

Good God boy, we have been worried about you ever since you left. Hell, we've been worried about you your whole goddamn life. You're our son for Christ's sake.

PAUL

Calm down. I can look after myself. I'm not a kid anymore. I screwed up, okay. I learned a lot from this. I won't be going back there. I just wanna go home.

KEN

All right, if you learned something from this that will help you change your life around maybe it'll be worth it. Let's have lunch and hit the road. We should be able to make Saskatoon tonight. I brought some camping gear.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Paul and Ken roll out sleeping bags.

KEN

It's a nice, clear night. We might as well sleep under the stars. Can you remember the first time we did that?

PAUL

I think I was about ten, when we were fishing at Jan Lake. That was great, except for the gargantuan mosquitoes.



KEN

Gargantuan. That's a pretty impressive word. Where did you get that from?

PAUL

I did a lot of reading in there. I spent twenty-two hours a day locked up in my cell.

They lie down beside each other and gaze up at the sky.

KEN

I can't imagine what it must have been like for you.

PAUL

I wouldn't recommend it.

KEN

There's something I have to say to you. I know I wasn't much of a father to you. I wasn't home much when you were a kid. And when I was I was awful hard on you. I was a miserable drunk. I never really grew up myself. I'm sorry Paul.

PAUL

Don't worry about it...

KEN

Let me finish. I want you to understand what alcohol can do to you. Now that I've been sober for a while, I'm learning what being a man is really all about. It has to do with integrity, honour, and strength. The right kind of strength, the kind that gives you the courage to do the right thing.

PAUL

Okay.

KEN

It takes a long time to learn to live with yourself after you sober up. It's not easy - but I'll tell ya, it's worth every tear.

PAUL

I haven't shed a tear since I was five.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

I made a promise to myself that I'd never let anyone make me cry again.

KEN

You've built a wall around your heart. Someday...

PAUL

Okay, okay - give me a break. I quit drinking when they threw me in jail. It was easy. Please, no more lectures.

KEN

Find out for yourself then. I see THAT didn't change. Take the hard way out. Good night.

Ken rolls over on his side with his back to Paul.

Paul lies on his back and stares thoughtfully at the vast star-lit prairie sky.

EXT. OREMAN - MINE SITE - WINTER - DAY (1969)

Paul (19) exits the main gate. A large sign above a metal framed archway reads: "HUDSON BAY MINING AND SMELTING - OREMAN."

In the parking lot, Paul hops in a new Camaro and races off.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - A FEW MINUTES LATER

LISA (17) waits by the main doors. The Camaro pulls up beside her. She gets in and they drive off.

INT. CAMARO

Lisa leans over and gives Paul a peck on the cheek. A petite beautiful blonde. Her figure makes her the object of desire for every libidinous male in school.

PAUL

How was school?

LISA

No more boring than usual. How was work?

PAUL

The same old grind. Did your parents say you could go to the game tonight?

LISA

My mom said it's okay but my dad didn't like the idea very much. He said I could go though.

PAUL

I don't get why your dad hates me so much.

LISA

He says you're bad news. And he calls you an ex-con.

PAUL

That was a long time ago. I've been on the straight and narrow for two years now.

LISA

Maybe so, but he says you drink too much and that you can't handle your liquor.

PAUL

I only drink on weekends. What's wrong with that?

LISA

Nothing, I guess. It should be a great game. The Bombers and St. Thomas hate each other.

They now talk with youthful exuberance.

PAUL

I just hope everyone comes out alive. St. Thomas doesn't have a chance, they're scared shitless of the Bombers. The Bombers are way too tough for them. BOBBY CLARKE will make their defence look like statues.

LISA

St. Thomas will be so beat up they'll have to leave by ambulance.

PAUL  
So Clarke got drafted by the  
Philadelphia Flyers.

LISA  
Yes. He deserves it too. He's  
amazing.

They pull up in front of Lisa's house.

PAUL  
Okay, I'll pick you up at seven.

Paul leans over to kiss her. She pushes him away.

LISA  
My dad might see you.

PAUL  
To hell with your dad. He must know  
by now that we kiss.

LISA  
Don't give him any more reasons for  
making me break up with you.

PAUL  
Yeah, yeah, all right then. See you  
at seven.

INT. HOCKEY ARENA - NIGHT

A large crowd. The play is in St. Thomas' end. Bobby Clarke checks an opposing player hard into the boards. The play-by-play ANNOUNCER calls the action.

ANNOUNCER  
HAVE MERCY! A brutal check by  
Clarke. Cunningham is down...  
Clarke has the puck... passes to  
Leach... Leach back to Clarke. HE  
SCORES!

The whistle blows. The crowd goes wild. A fight breaks out between two players. Others join in. A brawl breaks out among the fans in front of Paul and Lisa.

PAUL  
Holy shit, even the fans are going  
at it. I'm tempted to join in.

LISA

They don't need your help. Our guys  
are doing just fine without you.

The referees and arena security move in and break up the fights.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT - SUMMER

Paul and Lisa park in a secluded spot overlooking a lake. Paul pulls Lisa close to him. She pushes away.

PAUL

What's wrong?

LISA

I didn't come here to make out. I  
came here to talk.

PAUL

Talk. Here we go again. That's all  
we ever do anymore is talk. We  
don't make out. We hardly ever kiss  
anymore. Hell, we rarely even  
cuddle. I won't even bring up the  
subject of sex, the forbidden  
topic.

LISA

I don't know how to say this. I  
don't even want to say it, but it  
can't wait any longer. You tell me  
all the time how much you love me.  
You try to get me to say it too.  
I've seen how much it hurts you  
when I don't. It isn't fair to you  
Paul. This can't go on.

Paul fearfully contemplates her words.

PAUL

Are you saying what I think you're  
saying?

LISA

I know you're in love with me. And  
it makes me feel good that you are.  
But at the same time, I feel awful.  
I feel so guilty that I'm not in  
love with you. I do love you as a  
person, and even as a man.  
Sometimes, I even think it would be  
nice to be in love with you.

(MORE)

LISA (CONT'D)

But I can't change the way I feel.  
I wish I could make you understand,  
but I don't even understand. I  
don't want to feel this way  
anymore. I'm breaking up with you.

PAUL

You're right, I don't understand.  
I've known for a long time how you  
feel about me. But I try not to  
think about it. It hurts too much  
when I do. I'm begging you Lisa.  
Don't leave me.

LISA

I am so sorry Paul. I wish it  
didn't have to be this way. Please  
don't beg.

Paul's grief turns to anger.

PAUL

There's a goddamn classic for you,  
you begging me not to beg you!

Lisa looks at Paul with pity.

EXT. CAMARO

The car reverses fast and spins around. Tires smoke and  
scream as it rockets forward.

INT. CHILD HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Paul paces the floor of his bedroom.

PAUL

(to himself)

I'll never, ever let a female make  
me feel this way again. Love 'em  
and leave 'em. It's either them or  
me. I'll break their hearts before  
they have a chance at mine. "You  
can't live with them? You can't  
live without them?" Bullshit! I  
lived without them before and can  
live without them again.

He drives his fist through the drywall.

INT. TROUBLED WATERS CAFÉ - DAY

At a table, Spike and others stand to leave. Spike notices Paul is grief-stricken. He sits back down with Paul as the others leave.

SPIKE

What the hell's wrong with you? You look like you just fell out of a country and western song.

PAUL

Never mind your clever witticisms.

SPIKE

Sorry. What's wrong?

PAUL

Lisa dumped me.

SPIKE

Oh shit! I know that feeling.

PAUL

I've never felt this way before. I don't know what to do. I want her so bad that my heart actually aches, I mean physically. Even when I get drunk, it doesn't help. It just makes it hurt more.

SPIKE

Surely you jest. Never has the strong drink failed me.

PAUL

You're a big help.

SPIKE

Sorry, just trying to add some levity to the situation.

PAUL

Yeah, I know.

SPIKE

I wish I could help you Paul, but you have to carry this load yourself.

A waitress approaches the table to take Paul's order.

EXT. BUSH PARTY - NIGHT

A clearing in the forest beside a lake. A bonfire surrounded by young people. Cars parked here and there. A festive atmosphere.

Paul, Spike and BILLY lean against the driver's side of the Camaro and watch the action. Billy is short, slim and cocky as a bantam rooster.

Paul spots Lisa and other girls laughing by the bonfire. His countenance falls.

He roughly pushes Spike away from the door and gets behind the wheel. Spike glances at Paul angrily until Billy points out Lisa to him.

Paul fights with all his might to hold back his tears. The Camaro drives into the darkness.

EXT. OREMAN - CAMPGROUND - SUMMER - DAY (1971)

At a picnic table, Paul and Billy sit near Billy's nineteen-fifties hearse.

Billy has his usual, deviously amused twinkle in his eyes. The kind of expression you might see on a little boy's face while pissing in his brother's shoe.

He hands Paul a joint.

PAUL

No thanks.

BILLY

What are you afraid of? It's just weed. Everybody's smokin' it.

PAUL

No way, I'll stick with the beer. I don't need anything else screwing up my life.

BILLY

It'll make your life better man. It makes ya see life in a whole different way. You can't even get hooked on it. Just try it. You'll feel better than ya have ever felt in your life. Just have a few tokes. Try it, chickenshit. What have ya got to lose?



PAUL  
Just my sanity.

BILLY  
It's not acid. It won't screw up  
your head. It'll just make ya  
happy. Looks like ya could use some  
happy.

PAUL  
Okay, okay. Give me the goddamn  
thing, if that's what it takes to  
shut you up.

Paul inhales deeply and holds his breath for a few seconds and coughs. Billy laughs. Rain begins to fall. They run to the hearse.

INT. HEARSE

Decorated in early Hippie. A coffin acts as a table. A large clock hangs on the wall. Paul and Billy on either side of the coffin.

BILLY  
What d' ya think?

PAUL  
I don't feel any different.

Paul stares at the clock as if in a trance. His eyes follow the second hand from the 6 up toward the 12.

Just before reaching the top it comes loose, drops back down and swings like a pendulum.

Paul laughs as if he might never stop.

BILLY  
Ya don't feel any different, eh?

Billy reaches over the back of the seat and cranks the stereo.

INT. CHILD HOUSE - PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT (1972)

A large furnished room with a bed in one corner. Paul's hair is past his shoulders. His garb is early seventies hippy.

Acid rock blares. Black light posters glow on the walls. Candles and incense burn.

Paul, Spike, Billy and three girls party. Some share marijuana joints. Paul hands out LSD tablets.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - THE WEE HOURS

Paul is alone. He lies on his bed staring at the ceiling. He sees the house above him dissolve. He sees the immense starlit sky and beyond.

He leaps to his feet with an expression of startled revelation.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

Highway appears to fly by. Paul glances at the speedometer. It reads 10 miles per hour.

Paul turns off the highway and parks in front of an apartment building.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING

Paul climbs the stairs to Spike's room and enters.

INT. SPIKE'S ROOM

Spike slouches on the sofa. Music blares. Paul hurries to the turntable and lifts the tonearm off the album.

SPIKE

What the hell are you doing here?  
You're disturbing my tranquility.

PAUL

Spike, you gotta hear this man.  
What a trip. The wildest thing just  
happened. You won't believe it.

SPIKE

I don't believe anything you say.  
What's the big kerfuffle all about?

PAUL

I was peaking on the acid and all  
of a sudden I was in a state of  
Nirvana. I read about it one time.  
I'm telling you, I was actually  
there.

SPIKE

So what's the big deal? That's where I live man.

PAUL

Get serious for a minute. I've had a lot of hallucinations before, but this was different. It was a higher level of consciousness. It's like I knew all the secrets of the universe.

SPIKE

Yeah right. The only way you can reach Nirvana is to sit on a mountain top in Tibet freezing your ass off.

PAUL

There's no use trying to talk to you. Kiss my ass.

Spike gets up and places the tonearm on the album. They sit down on the sofa and groove to the tunes.

INT. WINNIPEG - DRUG STORE - NIGHT (1973)

Paul and Billy rummage around inside.

A drug cabinet with glass doors. They shatter the glass and remove bottles of various pharmaceuticals.

BILLY

Wow man, we scored big time. We got uppers, downers and everything in between.

They pick through the bottles.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Paul, Billy and CAPTAIN, A prototypical outlaw biker, prepare and inject pharmaceuticals from the burglary.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

At the table, Billy and Paul weigh and wrap chunks of hashish with tin foil.

BILLY

This is primo stuff man. I'll give it to ya for five bucks a gram. You can sell it for ten easy. I'll give ya the acid for two a tab and you'll get three or four out of it, no problem. If ya take it up north, the sky's the limit.

PAUL

The cops in Oreman know what I'm doing. They stake out my house but they're about as inconspicuous as black cats on a snowbank.

BILLY

I have a line on some MDA. Next time I'll set ya up with some. If ya jam it, the rush'll blow your mind, man - better than coke.

PAUL

Word on the street says the stuff's dangerous.

BILLY

That's bullshit, I've done it at least ten times.

Billy hands Paul a bag of hashish.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

On the stove, two knives with red-hot tips rest on an element. Billy picks them up. Paul places a chunk of hashish on one.

Billy places the second knife on the hash and compresses it. They inhale the resulting smoke.

BILLY

How was the heat in Oreman?

PAUL

No problem.

Billy takes a few capsules from his pants pocket and hands them to Paul.

BILLY

This is the MDA I was tellin' ya about. Try it out and tell me what ya think.

PAUL  
What the hell, I'll give a shot.

INT. CAMARO - CITY PARK - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Captain prepares the MDA in a spoon. He draws it into a syringe and injects himself. He repeats the process and injects Paul.

CAPTAIN  
Is that the best rush ya ever had  
or what?

Paul oozes sweat. Sudden terror on his face. He leaps from the car.

EXT. CITY PARK

Paul runs frantically - stops and drops to his knees. Captain approaches him.

CAPTAIN  
Paul, are you all right? Paul, what  
happened man?

Paul does not respond.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
Paul!

Paul trembles and stares straight ahead. His mouth opens and closes as he tries to talk, but can't.

(long beat)

He stops trembling. He gazes up at Captain with fear and confusion. He gets up and walks slowly toward the car. Captain walks beside him frequently looking at him with curious concern.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT

Paul frantically paces the floor. Mentally tormented, he clutches his head as if trying to hold it together.

At a coat rack, he rummages through his coat pockets. He finds a bottle of Valium. He dry-swallows a few and sits down in an armchair. A vacant stare.

INT. BIKER BAR - NIGHT

Strippers on the stage. Patrons are an odd assortment of ne'er-do-wells. Heavy metal blares.

Paul enters. He is unkempt and looks paranoid. He spots Billy and Captain. He gets a beer from the bar and joins them.

BILLY

Where the hell have you been? I haven't seen ya for weeks. Don't ya answer your phone anymore?

Paul stares at Billy with restrained anger.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Captain said ya freaked out on the MDA.

PAUL

That shit is poison.

BILLY

Ya just can't handle it.

CAPTAIN

You're a pussy Child.

PAUL

To hell with you both. The only reason you like the shit is because you're already crazy. Ya got nothing to lose.

BILLY

Cool it man. We're just rattling your cage. Do ya wanna make another trip up north?

PAUL

Not a chance - I'm done. Spike and some of the guys moved to Calgary. I'm heading out there.

A waitress approaches the table with a tray of beer.

INT. CALGARY - SPIKE'S HOUSE - DAY (1977)

On a patio in the back yard, Paul and Spike stand beside a barbecue, beer in hand. A young woman cooks. Loud rock music, chatter and laughter come from the house.

SPIKE  
(to Paul)  
Now what?

PAUL  
I don't have a clue.

SPIKE  
I knew you and Linda were having problems but... what, she just kicked you out?

PAUL  
Not really, it was mutual - more mutual for her. I was bored, she was lonely.

SPIKE  
Lonely? How does that work?

PAUL  
Apparently, I wasn't there for her - emotionally. Whatever the hell that means.

SPIKE  
I'll have to check the manual and see if that's grounds for divorce. You don't look all that shook up about it.

PAUL  
I was looking for a way out anyway. The whole 'going straight' thing wasn't really my bag.

SPIKE  
I sorta like it. A regular pay check. The old lady catering to my every whim...

PAUL  
You're so full o' shit. You're whipped, man.

Spike humorously goes into a fighting stance. He swings wide of Paul's head.

Paul pounces on him and playfully throws him to the ground. They wrestle vigorously.

Billy comes around the corner of the house. Paul and Spike see him and stop.

BILLY  
 Carry on. Don't stop just because  
 I'm here.

Paul and Spike stand.

PAUL  
 Holy shit. You're not in jail yet?

BILLY  
 Still one step ahead, man. I heard  
 you went straight - married and  
 everything.

PAUL  
 Up until a couple weeks ago. On the  
 loose again.

SPIKE  
 (to Billy)  
 No kids, she had him castrated. Get  
 yourself a beer.

Billy walks toward the back door. Without malice, Paul flips  
 Spike off.

INT. SPIKE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - THE WEE HOURS

The party is over. A young woman picks up empty beer bottles.  
 Spike empties ashtrays into a can. Paul and Billy on the  
 sofa.

BILLY  
 (to Paul)  
 I could use somebody to do border  
 crossings. Maybe collections -  
 banking...

PAUL  
 Count me in.

They clank their beer bottles together in a toast.

INT. CALGARY - BAR - NIGHT (1979)

Paul, Spike and Billy ogle young women at a nearby table.

SPIKE  
 I haven't seen this many hot chicks  
 since the last time I was hanging  
 with Hef at the Mansion.



PAUL  
That must have been just before you  
woke up this morning.

BILLY  
Look hard Spike. This is as close  
as you'll get.

SPIKE  
Maybe they'll be impressed when  
they see me kick your asses.

PAUL  
(To Billy)  
So when are we going to Montana?

BILLY  
We're meeting O'Reilly the day  
after tomorrow..

SPIKE  
You guys are taking a hell of a  
risk. If you get caught in the  
States, they'll lock you up until  
you're dust.

BILLY  
They haven't caught me yet.

SPIKE  
That's just lunatic luck. It's  
sure as hell not because of your  
prowess as a masterful drug lord.

BILLY  
I'll take what I can get. Lunatic  
luck is better 'n no luck at all.  
Who wants to do a rail?

They stand and walk toward the men's room.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Billy chops up lines of cocaine on the basin counter top.  
With a rolled up hundred dollar bill, they take turns  
snorting the stuff.

EXT. MONTANA - MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

A truck and camper parked on a secluded logging road. Paul is  
on the camper's roof. He removes the last of the screws from  
the false top.

He lifts it off and hands it down to Billy. Billy hands up bundles of dope. Paul packs them in the cavity.

INT. CALGARY - CAR - PARKING LOT - DAY

Paul enters Billy's car. He hands Billy a briefcase. He puts it on his lap and opens it. It is full of cash. He places a pistol on the cash and closes the lid.

BILLY

Good job, man. Did ya find Mikey?

PAUL

No. He just split. Nobody seems to know where he went.

Billy slams his fist on the steering wheel.

BILLY

I'll take care o' that son of a bitch myself. I know who can find him.

EXT. FARMER'S FIELD - NIGHT

In the moonlit, a dilapidated barn. A car with an open trunk behind the barn. Behind the car, a man digs.

INT. CAR - DAY

Paul drives down a residential street. He spots an unmarked cop car parked at the curb. He turns down an alley and parks behind Billy's house. He exits, walks to the back door and knocks.

Billy calls from behind the door. He sounds paranoid.

BILLY (O.S.)

Who is it?

PAUL

It's me.

BILLY

Who's me?

PAUL

Paul, for christ's sake.

Billy opens the door and nervously looks past Paul to see if anyone is behind him. Paul walks to the living room. Billy locks the door and follows.

INT. BILLY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

On the coffee table, a syringe, spoon and a mound of cocaine. Billy sits down on the sofa. He fidgets and grinds his teeth.

Paul stands at the coffee table. He removes a thick envelope stuffed with cash from his pocket.

PAUL

You know the narcs have the place staked out.

BILLY

You're just paranoid.

PAUL

No, I'm not. I thought I saw them a couple weeks ago. But it was dark out and I wasn't sure. Now I'm positive. They're parked just down the street. We have to make some changes.

BILLY

Don't bother me.

PAUL

You're still a lunatic , but your luck's running out. We've been using the same methods for too long. We need to change it up before it's too late.

BILLY

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

PAUL

It is broke. I have some ideas.

BILLY

When did you take over the operation?

PAUL

I'm not trying to take over anything. I'm trying to keep us from ending up behind bars.

BILLY

If I need your advice, I'll ask for it. And I don't, so get lost.

PAUL

Okay man, I'm moving on. I'm not going down with you.

BILLY

Should I give a shit? You won't be hard to replace.

Paul angrily frisbees the envelope at the coffee table. Cash flies from the envelope. Cocaine scatters. Paul turns and walks away.

INT. PRISON - VISITORS ROOM - DAY (1982)

At a table, Billy in prison garb. Paul in street clothes. They talk in hushed tones.

PAUL

We can do this.

BILLY

We'll need at least twenty grand.

PAUL

I've got that covered. I made a great connection in Mexico. You just have to set up the distribution in Canada. I'll get working on the transportation when I get back to Vancouver.

BILLY

Two more months of this shit hole and we're in business.

The buzzer goes to end visitation time.

EXT. BC - MOUNTAINS - DAY

A small, secluded landing strip. Paul, Billy and a PILOT beside an airplane.

The pilot opens a hatch in the side of the plane. He removes several large cardboard boxes.

Paul opens one. A kilo of cocaine and a pistol on top of bricks of marijuana. Paul grabs the gun and the cocaine and holds it in front of Billy.

Paul glares at him.

PAUL

What the hell is this! I told you when we started this thing, I don't deal coke. And we're dealing guns now?

BILLY

The gun's for me. And the real money's in the coke. The weed's just chump change.

Paul seethes with anger as they load the dope in the trunk of a car.

INT. VANCOUVER - PAUL'S APARTMENT - DUSK

Paul gazes out the balcony doors at the panorama of English Bay. At the dining room table, Billy prepares a line of cocaine.

PAUL

I'm pulling out, man.

BILLY

What? Why?

PAUL

The coke.

BILLY

Don't be stupid. The coke 'ill make us rich.

PAUL

Like the last time?

BILLY

Yeah.

PAUL

Okay, let's see, you got busted. They took your cars, your boat, your cash and you did three years in the joint. I don't want to be that rich.

BILLY

Do you think I'm an idiot. I learned my lesson.

PAUL

You're doing coke again - what lesson.

BILLY

I'm not wired to it. I just play around with it. And who are you to talk?

PAUL

I do a line once in a while so I can stay awake. And I don't get high when I'm working. You get wired to everything you play around with. You stuff that shit up your nose all day long. That's why bozos like you end up behind bars and I don't. I'm taking back the money I dumped into this thing, my share of the profits and I'm gone.

BILLY

Like hell you are!

PAUL

Like hell I ain't! This isn't just your gig. We're partners this time around.

BILLY

How am I gonna pay for the boat?

PAUL

That's all on you man. You bought that thing on your own. You didn't even ask me. You didn't even tell me you bought it. I didn't know anything about it until Gary told me.

BILLY

We need the goddamn thing...

PAUL

Like a fish needs a bicycle. And I told you from the get-go, I don't deal coke. The boat's your bill, not mine.

BILLY

If you do this, you're a dead man.

Paul grabs Billy by the front of his shirt. He lifts him out of the chair and pushes him toward the door.

Billy points his finger at Paul, simulates the sound of a gunshot and leaves.

EXT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Paul staggers and stumbles out of a taxi.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM

Paul wobbles as he stares at himself in the mirror. His reflection is old and haggard.

PAUL  
(to himself)  
Good God, not this again! I don't  
look like that.

He lingers in confusion. He vomits in the toilet.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

At the sink, Paul holds a part bottle of scotch. He glares at it with contempt. He removes the lid and starts to pore it out. He stops and replaces the lid.

INT. DINER - DAY

Billy and Captain at a corner table. Billy holds an envelope.

CAPTAIN  
Where do I find him?

Billy slides the envelope across the table. Captain stares at it but doesn't pick it up.

BILLY  
All the details are in here with  
the cash.

CAPTAIN  
Are ya dead sure about this man?  
You and him go back a long way.  
When that's in my hand, there's no  
turnin' back.

Billy stares at the envelope.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - EVENING

At the bar, a bartender puts a drink in front of Paul. THOMAS enters the club. He sees Paul and joins him. Paul looks pleasantly surprised.

Thomas is about the same age as Paul. He has an air of subdued authority. He is well dressed. His opulent gold jewelry denotes his wealth.

PAUL

Thomas, what the hell are you doing here? I thought you were in Asia somewhere.

THOMAS

I'm just on my way back. I was in Oreman doing some recruiting.

PAUL

How are things on the home front?

THOMAS

Same as always.

PAUL

Where's the crew?

THOMAS

They'll be here later.

PAUL

I don't suppose you need another courier.

THOMAS

You?

PAUL

Yeah.

THOMAS

I thought you and Billy had something going on.

PAUL

We did. He got into something I'm not cool with. I cashed out. What do you think? Am I in?

THOMAS

I always have room for a pro.



PAUL

Thanks man. When are you heading back over?

THOMAS

A couple days. I'm picking up the tickets tomorrow. I'll get one for you - if you're sure about this.

PAUL

I'm sure. I gotta split - take care some business. I'll call you tomorrow.

Paul stands and walks toward the exit.

INT. SEOUL - HOTEL ROOM - DAY (1984)

Thomas paces the floor nervously. Paul enters. They wear business suits.

THOMAS

Finally! What happened to you?

PAUL

Korean immigration pulled me in.

THOMAS

Oh, shit! What did they say?

PAUL

They wondered why I come to Seoul so often. They frisked me down and went through my luggage pretty good. Don't worry, they missed my shoes.

They take off their shoes and socks. Their feet are wrapped with tape. They unravel the tape and remove small, flat, gold ingots from the bottoms of their feet.

THOMAS

Do you think they're onto you?

PAUL

I think I convinced them I was legit. I can't be sure though. Maybe we should cool it for a while.

THOMAS

I'll think about it. What are you going to do while I go see the buyer?

PAUL

The usual. Check out the clubs.

THOMAS

Okay, meet me here in the morning.

Thomas puts the gold in his briefcase and leaves.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

The stage undulates with youthful, rebellious energy, punctuated by a dazzling light show.

On either side of the band, several exotic female dancers perform in various stages of undress.

A WAITRESS approaches Paul's table.

PAUL

Pretty crazy in here tonight.

WAITRESS

Always crazy in here. Would you like another drink?

PAUL

Sure, why not. Some good-looking dancers up there. Are they available? You know, for a short-time?

WAITRESS

Yes.

PAUL

I can't take my eyes off the one in the red bikini. How much for her?

WAITRESS

Ten American dollar.

PAUL

Send her over.

The DANCER approaches the table. She is barely out of her teens.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
 Sit down. I'll buy you a drink.

DANCER  
 I do not drink, but I will sit with  
 you, thank you.

She sits down bashfully. You can see she is not comfortable with her lot in life. Paul is somewhere between lust and guilt.

PAUL  
 Do you mind if I ask you something?  
 Why do you do this? I mean, a  
 pretty young woman like you - there  
 must be jobs...

DANCER  
 I have many brothers and sisters  
 and my father is gone.

PAUL  
 I'm sorry to hear that.

DANCER  
 Do not be sorry for me. Men pay  
 much money for me. I have room  
 across street. We go now?

INT. JETLINER - DAY

Paul looks severely hung over. Thomas is a few rows ahead working his calculator.

EXT. OREMAN - INDUSTRIAL PARK - DAY

A semi-trailer with a flat-deck trailer piled high with heavy equipment parked in the rain. Paul's father on the top of the load.

Near the edge, Ken drags a chain over a piece of equipment. He loses his balance.

He plummets to ground and strikes his head on a metal tool box. He lies on the ground - blood pooling around his head.

INT. HONG KONG - THOMAS'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

On the bed, Paul and Thomas remove their shoes and socks. They free stacks of cash from the tape on their feet. Thomas gathers the money and counts it.

THOMAS

Any problems with Hong Kong  
immigration?

PAUL

No, I breezed through. Why don't we  
stay away from Korea for a while.

THOMAS

I'll think about it. We'll talk  
about it tomorrow. I gotta go.

Thomas hands Paul some cash and leaves.

INT. PAUL'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

At the desk, Paul takes a small piece of folded paper from  
his pocket and unfolds it. It contains white powder. He cooks  
it in a spoon, draws it into a syringe and injects it.

He leans back in the chair and closes his eyes. His  
expression of anxious tension dissolves into one of peaceful  
bliss.

INT. PAUL'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Paul sits on the bed. A knock on the door. Paul slowly gets  
up opens it. Thomas enters. He spots the heroin  
paraphernalia.

THOMAS

You were doing smack last night!  
You told me you were done with that  
shit.

PAUL

I'm just chippin' once in awhile

THOMAS

Bullshit, you have a habit. If you  
don't lay off that crap, you'll be  
looking for another job.

PAUL

Relax, I've got a handle on it.

THOMAS

It has a handle on you.

Paul stands and walks toward the door to avoid the issue.

PAUL

I have to go check my mail.

Thomas storms past him out of the room.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

At the counter, a clerk hands Paul a piece of paper. It is an emergency telegram from his brother Peter: PHONE ME IMMEDIATELY, VERY IMPORTANT.

Paul enters a phone booth.

INT. PHONE BOOTH

Paul sits down and dials a number.

PETER (V.O.)

Hello!

PAUL

It's me. What's the big emergency?

PETER (V.O.)

The old man is dead.

PAUL

What?

PETER (V.O.)

He had a fall at work.

PAUL

When?

PETER (V.O.)

About two weeks ago. We've been trying to get a hold of you. Where the hell are you anyway?

PAUL

In Hong Kong, right now. I just got your telegram a few minutes ago.

PETER (V.O.)

Anyway, he was cremated and we had the memorial service and everything. Are you coming home or what?

PAUL  
I'll take the next flight after I  
tie up some loose ends here. I'll  
call you when I get there.

PETER (V.O.)  
Okay, I'll see you in a few days  
then.

Paul hangs up. He stares at the graffiti on the wall. One  
phrase jumps out at him: MINIMIZE YOUR MAXIMUM REGRET.

INT. HONG KONG - AIRPORT - DAY

A security check point. A uniformed WOMAN scrutinizes Paul's  
passport.

She leafs through a thick book. She stops and stares at a  
page. She signals a male immigration OFFICER.

The officer approaches Paul, ushers him away from the desk  
and handcuffs him.

PAUL  
What's going on?

OFFICER  
Mr. Child?

PAUL  
What is this all about?

OFFICER  
That will be explained to you  
downstairs.

PAUL  
I don't know what's going on here  
but....

OFFICER  
Just come with me.

The officer leads Paul across the departure floor to an  
elevator. Curious travelers stare as they go by. Paul  
displays false bravado.

INT. AIRPORT BASEMENT - INTERROGATION ROOM

At a desk, Paul sits across from a plain clothes DETECTIVE.  
At a table, the immigration officer searches through Paul's  
luggage.

The detective stares intensely at Paul.

DETECTIVE

Well, Paul. Do you mind if I call you Paul?

PAUL

Call me anything you want as long as you tell me what the hell this is all about.

DETECTIVE

I would just like to talk to you about your activities in our country.

PAUL

What activities would those be?

DETECTIVE

Our department has been monitoring your comings and goings for some time. I've been in touch with Interpol. It is clear that you and your cohorts have been carrying on criminal activities in Asia.

PAUL

Who are you talking about?

DETECTIVE

You know who I'm talking about. The guys from Oreman. The closer I look, the dirtier you get - smuggling gold, drugs, burglary.

PAUL

Do you have any proof to back that up?

DETECTIVE

We have enough evidence to file charges on some of you. I was hoping you might like to help me out. You seem to be a bright guy. What is it you say in America, "We wash each other's backs?"

PAUL

Close enough. Thanks, anyway, but how about, "You wash your own back and I'll wash mine."

The detective glances at the immigration officer who has just finished searching the luggage.

DETECTIVE  
Anything?

The immigration officer shakes his head.

PAUL  
Well, I guess that's that. I'll be on my way now.

Paul starts to stand up.

DETECTIVE  
Sit down. I'm not finished with you. I would like to make you an offer. If you tell me what I want to know, you walk away a free man. All you have to do is tell me about the gold.

A hint of intended extortion on the detective's face.

PAUL  
What gold?

DETECTIVE  
You know what gold.

PAUL  
I see. You would like to supplement your income... maybe buy something nice for the wife. Unless you found something in my luggage, I'm a free man already. Are you going to cut me loose or do I have to call the embassy?

Paul walks away. The detective struggles to control his anger.

INT. PASSENGER JET - NIGHT

Paul occupies a window seat beside BARRY. Paul looks emotionally exhausted.

BARRY  
It's going to be a long flight. Maybe we should introduce ourselves. My name is Barry.



PAUL

I'm Paul.

BARRY

What brought you to Hong Kong?

PAUL

(lying)

I'm on my way back from the Philippines.

BARRY

What's in the Philippines for you?

PAUL

Fun in the sun. I spend the winters there. And how about you?

BARRY

I do business in Asia. I suppose you're going home for the summer?

PAUL

A little early this year. I just found out my father died.

BARRY

I'm sorry to hear that. If you don't want to talk about it, I understand. I don't want to intrude in your private life.

PAUL

No, that's fine. I think I must still be in shock though. I can't seem to fathom it all. He was only sixty. I missed the memorial service. They couldn't find me in time. One more regret to add to the list.

BARRY

It sounds like you have more than a few.

PAUL

I've been doing some soul searching since I got the news. The harder I look, the more I find.

Paul stares through his reflection in the window at the black sky.

INT. OREMAN - CHILD HOUSE - NIGHT

Paul enters the house and hugs his mother. He sits down at the kitchen table. He looks weak and exhausted.

SHIRLEY

You must be exhausted.

PAUL

You got that right. How are you holding up, Mom?

SHIRLEY

I'm doing all right. It's so tragic, though. He didn't even get to enjoy his retirement. Would you like a cup of coffee?

PAUL

Sure. I could use a cup. I still can't get my head around it.

Shirley gets the coffee pot, fills two cups and sits down.

SHIRLEY

It's too bad you couldn't have been here for the memorial service. It was actually quite nice. There were so many people there. Your father was a well-respected man.

PAUL

He sure was. He turned into a good man after he got sober. I wish I could have made it for the service.

SHIRLEY

It couldn't be helped.

PAUL

I must have been a terrible disappointment to him.

SHIRLEY

Not at all, he loved you for who you are. He never judged you. I think he even envied you in a way. He was always excited to hear about your adventures.

PAUL

If he knew the whole story, he wouldn't have been impressed.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

The version I told you guys was heavily censored. But it could have been worse. I might have turned out like Paula. Or even worse, Peter.

SHIRLEY

Oh you. Stop joking around. Your sister is just fine. And so is your brother. And you are too, just a little wild is all.

PAUL

Well, rules are meant to be bent.

SHIRLEY

Ken felt so bad about the way he was with you. And I have to take my share of the blame too. I was awful hard on you too.

PAUL

Don't worry about it. Water under the bridge.

SHIRLEY

No, you can't just dismiss it like that. I was awful. When I look back on it, I think I was trying to beat your father out of you. I'm so ashamed...

PAUL

Forget it. I forgive you. And you didn't deserve the way I treated you. I'm just starting to see how much I must have hurt you - you AND dad. I really don't want to talk about it, Mom.

SHIRLEY

Okay, then. How long do you plan to stay home this time?

PAUL

I'm not sure. I might go back to Asia after a while. I haven't really decided anything for sure yet.

SHIRLEY

Don't you think it would be a good idea to settle down? Most people are married and have families by the time they're in their thirties.

PAUL

I think about that sometimes. But then I start shaking and sweating.

SHIRLEY

Don't be silly. I worry about you ending up in jail in one of those godforsaken countries.

PAUL

There's nothing to worry about.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Paul sleeps.

(DREAM SEQUENCE) INT. ASIA - DILAPIDATED ROOM - NIGHT

Paul injects himself with heroin.

A knife wielding Asian man enters.

He stabs Paul repeatedly.

Paul tries to defend himself, but to no avail.

His eyes are open wide with terror as he lies on the bed dying.

(END OF DREAM SEQUENCE)

Paul wakes abruptly. Fear in his eyes. Soaked with sweat.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Shirley cooks breakfast. Paul leans against the counter beside her.

PAUL

I decided I'm not going back to Asia.

SHIRLEY

Thank God. I have been praying for that. What made you decide all of a sudden?

PAUL

Maybe it was your prayers.

Shirley gives Paul a warm hug. He sheds his first tears since he was a child.

He gently turns his face into his mother's hair and lovingly wipes the tears away.

Shirley dishes up breakfast.

SHIRLEY

What are you going to do now?

PAUL

I was thinking about driving cab in Vancouver. Expo is coming. They'll need all the drivers they can get. There 'll be good money in it.

SHIRLEY

Not at night I hope. You would just be jumping from one frying pan into another. Why don't you just stay home and get a job?

PAUL

I haven't felt at home anywhere for a long time. I'll try the taxi thing for a while and take it from there.

They eat.

INT. TROUBLED WATERS CAFÉ - LATER THAT DAY

Spike enters and joins Paul at a window booth. He feigns surprise as he stares at Paul.

SPIKE

Holy shit, you're still alive.

PAUL

You expected otherwise?

SPIKE

I wasn't sure, with the contract and all.

PAUL

Contract?

SPIKE

You know, Billy.

PAUL

No, I don't know. What the hell are you talking about?

SPIKE

Billy took out a contract on you.

Coincidentally, Billy walks by the window. Paul looks shocked when he spots him.

Billy enters and sits beside Spike. He glares across the table at Paul.

BILLY

I heard you were in town.

PAUL

I heard you wanted me dead.

BILLY

I do. But I figured you weren't worth the hard time.

Paul glares at Spike.

PAUL

(To Spike)

Asshole.

Spike smiles mischievously. Paul looks like he is about to explode with rage. He stands and walks toward the door.

Billy leaps from his seat and tackles him from behind. A fight ensues. Paul unleashes his fury.

Leaving Billy bleeding on the floor, Paul leaves. Spike attends to Billy.

SPIKE

(to Billy)

That was a fruitless endeavor.

Billy looks at Spike with malice.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

Paul stands on the end of a dock. He looks distressed. He tosses stones at the moon's reflection on the water.

INT. VANCOUVER - SLEAZY HOTEL/STRIPPER BAR - DAY

Luggage in hand, Paul approaches the front desk.

## INT. PAUL'S ROOM

The decor is what you would expect from a room normally rented hourly by strippers. Raunchy music can be heard from the bar below.

Paul tosses his luggage on the bed. He opens a suitcase and removes a bottle of Scotch. He fills a glass and takes a hefty swig.

## EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT (1986)

A sandwich board by the front door. It displays a photo of a scantily clad young man. It reads, "CHIPPENDALE DANCERS - WEDNESDAY THRU SATURDAY."

Paul waits in his cab for a fare. WENDY (28) exits the nightclub and gets in beside him. She is tall and slim with long black hair.

She is a sensual woman with a gentle nature, inner strength and integrity.

## INT. CAB

Paul looks pleasantly surprised as he notices her beauty. She is dressed to kill, chipper and a little tipsy.

PAUL  
Where to beautiful?

WENDY  
My place.

PAUL  
An address would be useful.

WENDY  
I'll show you. Just drive blue eyes.

PAUL  
My name's Paul, brown eyes.

WENDY  
I'm Wendy.

Paul glances over his shoulder at her seductively as he drives off.

INT. WENDY'S PLACE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Paul and Wendy are awakened by Wendy's son TERRY (8). He wears a mischievous grin.

TERRY  
Who are you, ya shipwrecked pirate?

WENDY  
Get out of here. Go back to bed.

TERRY  
No way.

PAUL  
How could you tell I'm a pirate?

TERRY  
By your ugly face.

WENDY  
Terry, don't talk to him like that!  
And his name is Paul.

TERRY  
He's still ugly.

Terry leaves.

WENDY  
I'm sorry, he's such a brat.

PAUL  
Yeah, but he's sure perceptive  
though.

WENDY  
What do you mean?

PAUL  
He noticed I'm a pirate.

WENDY  
You're not a pirate.

PAUL  
Oh yeah, how can you tell?

WENDY  
There's no parrot on your shoulder.

They laugh and snuggle.



PAUL  
So, that's all? Just the one?

WENDY  
Kids? No - one older boy, Tim -  
he's ten.

PAUL  
Speaking of smugglers, have you  
ever heard of Phantom Island?

WENDY  
Are you just making that up?

PAUL  
No. There is such a place. It's off  
Vancouver Island. Could you get  
somebody to watch the boys for a  
few days?

WENDY  
I could ask my mom. What are you up  
to?

PAUL  
I'd like to take you on a little  
vacation.

Paul initiates a long passionate kiss.

EXT. PHANTOM ISLAND - DAY

A hot summer day. A small plane with pontoons nosed up to the beach. Paul and Wendy disembark. They stand in the sand and take in the view.

White sand spreading up to a row of small, one room cabins. Thick coastal rain forest behind. People scattered here and there along the beach.

WENDY  
This is gorgeous.

PAUL  
Paradise right here at home.

WENDY  
You'd think it would be swarming  
with tourists.

PAUL  
It's privately owned, invitation  
only. Let's grab a cottage and get  
settled in.

They walk toward a small tropical style hotel/bar. A wooden  
sign reads: "SMUGGLERS INN."

EXT. SMUGGLERS INN - THAT EVENING

At a table on the sand, Paul and Wendy stare across the ocean  
at the setting sun.

WENDY  
How did you hear about this place?

PAUL  
I told you I was a pirate.

WENDY  
Oh, you!

PAUL  
Not actually a pirate but I used to  
be in... well, a kind of crime  
thing.

WENDY  
What kind of "crime thing?"

PAUL  
Ask me no questions and I'll tell  
you no lies.

Paul quickly changes the subject.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
There's a cave party tomorrow  
night.

WENDY  
Tell me more.

PAUL  
You'll see. It's a surprise.

WENDY  
Okay, Mister mysterious.

EXT. OCEAN - EVENING

Hand in hand, Paul and Wendy walk in shallow water alongside a steep rock face. Paul carries a small cooler.

They come to the entrance of a cave, about four feet in diameter, just above the waterline. They crouch down, enter and climb a few rock stairs.

INT. CAVE

Dimly lit by candles set in alcoves in the rock walls. A ghetto blaster blares. Young men and women in swimsuits. Some drink and smoke dope. Others dance.

Paul and Wendy lean against the wall and absorb the vibe. A YOUNG WOMAN passes a joint to Wendy.

Wendy smiles at her thankfully. Wendy takes a hit and passes it to Paul. Paul holds up the palm of his hand in a 'thanks anyway' gesture.

Wendy looks mildly surprised and hands the joint back to the young woman.

WENDY

(to Paul)

You do smoke weed, right?

PAUL

Nope. Left all that behind.

He tips back his beer. Wendy takes Paul's hand and leads him into the crowd of dancers.

INT. CAVE - LATER

Paul and Wendy, wet with perspiration, lean against the wall. Chatter and music muffle their words.

PAUL

It's getting too loud in here.  
Would you like to leave - take a  
walk on the beach?

WENDY

I would like that.

They wind their way through the crowd to the entrance of the cave. The high tide now covers the entrance. They descend down the steps to the water and dive in.

EXT. OCEAN

They resurface and swim to shore in the moonlight. They stroll along the beach at the water's edge. Wendy is joyful.

WENDY

This place is incredible. I haven't felt this free since... ever.

PAUL

Yeah, I used to think I'd be happy in paradise. I read about tropical islands like this. I'd imagine finally being content. I stayed here for a couple months one time. It didn't work.

WENDY

How could you not be content here?

PAUL

The longer I stayed the more restless I got. I can't seem to really relax anywhere.

WENDY

Maybe it's because you have no peace inside you.

PAUL

Is anyone actually at peace?

WENDY

You silly man, lots of people are at peace.

PAUL

I haven't met any.

WENDY

Maybe you have but you just don't see it.

PAUL

I read somewhere that most men live lives of quiet desperation. Maybe I'm just one of those.

WENDY

That would be very sad.

PAUL

Well, when I'm drinking I feel happy.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

When I'm traveling I feel happy.  
When I'm with a beautiful woman  
like you I feel happy. Let's stay  
drunk, on the move and live happily  
ever after.

WENDY

(smiling)

You're crazy. You know, when I  
first saw you in the cab I thought  
you looked angry. But when I looked  
into your eyes, I saw sorrow.

PAUL

Okay, that's enough o' that. What  
about you? Are you happy?

WENDY

I'm happy to be here with you.

PAUL

It doesn't take much to make you  
happy. Do you want to walk down to  
the other end of the island  
tomorrow. There's a little  
restaurant with the best seafood  
you ever ate.

WENDY

I would be happy to.

PAUL

There you go, being happy again.  
This is gonna be easy.

Wendy laughs. They stop and stare lovingly into each others  
eyes. Wendy looks enamoured. Paul looks enamoured and yet  
fearful. They hold each other tight and kiss.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Hanging oil lanterns provide subdued light. Paul and Wendy  
sit at a table overlooking the ocean. They have just finished  
dinner.

PAUL

Can I trust you?

WENDY

Yes, I keep many secrets.

PAUL

I used to be a drug dealer - among other things.

WENDY

I pretty much had that figured out. How did you come to get involved in something so sinister?

PAUL

I come from a small city that turned out a lot of outlaws.

WENDY

If it's a small city, why so many?

PAUL

It's a mining town. Low wages and dangerous working conditions created a lot of anger. Things have improved over the years but... that kind of culture breeds outlaws. Goddamn capitalism.

WENDY

So what's the answer - communism? Do you have a better idea?

PAUL

Hell yeah, a benevolent dictatorship with me as the king.

WENDY

You almost convince me. And who will be your queen?

PAUL

The position hasn't been filled yet.

Wendy smiles at Paul seductively. Paul pays the tab. They walk toward the beach.

EXT. BEACH

Paul and Wendy walk near the water's edge. The only light is a faint glow from oil lanterns that hang on the stoops of the cabins that border the beach.

WENDY

There is no moonlight tonight. I've never walked outside when it's this dark.

PAUL

Me neither. It's sort of like life. You feel your way along without seeing what's ahead, or even what's right at your feet sometimes. Or like looking for truth... you know - the meaning of life and all that. You think you caught a glimpse of it and see it was just a shadow.

WENDY

How can you see a shadow when there's no light? Maybe what you see isn't a shadow at all, but a truth that is dimly lit.

PAUL

Either way, I gave up the search.

Suddenly, out of the darkness an OLD MAN appears.

OLD MAN

(to Paul)

Why would you give up?

They stop.

PAUL

Looking for truth?

OLD MAN

The truth cannot be seen by the eye or understood by the mind. It can only be discerned by the spirit. The light is in the spirit.

PAUL

Interesting. Gotta go.

They continue on down the beach.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(to Wendy)

Crazy old fart!

WENDY

You are too quick to judge. Maybe he knows something you don't.

PAUL

I've looked for truth in a lot of different places. I concluded there is no such thing.

WENDY

So, because you have concluded  
there is no such thing, there is no  
such thing?

PAUL

I should o' stuck with the dumb  
blondes.

Wendy pushes Paul into the water. They frolic and laugh.

INT. COTTAGE - LATER

Wendy's perfect form is dimly lit by a candle as she slips  
off her light summer dress. She beckons to Paul. You see on  
Paul's face that he couldn't be more pleased.

WENDY

Come here, king of nowhere.

Paul playfully pounces on her. They fall back onto the bed.  
Paul hits his head on the bedpost. They laugh and begin to  
make love.

EXT. WENDY'S PLACE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Paul and Wendy relax on the sofa. Terry and Tim can be heard  
playing in another room. Wendy nestles in and takes hold of  
Paul's arm.

WENDY

I've fallen in love with you Paul.  
I know we haven't been together  
very long, but I was hoping we  
could move in together.

PAUL

I love you too. I'm not sure about  
living together though. I mean, I  
love the boys and all that... But  
it's a lot of responsibility.

WENDY

I won't rush you. Take your time.  
Whatever you decide.

INT. HOTEL/STRIPPER BAR - PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Paul sleeps and squirms restlessly.



(DREAM SEQUENCE) EXT. STARK DESERT - DAY

Terry is on a swing. Paul pushes him ever higher from behind.

Terry looks over his shoulder. Paul is walking away.

Terry loses his balance and falls.

Paul hears Terry's screams and glances back. Terry looks heart broken.

TERRY  
DADDY! DADDY!

Paul stares ahead. Dead eyes. Moves on.

(END OF DREAM SEQUENCE)

Paul wakes, turns on the bedside lamp and sobs with compassion.

INT. WENDY'S PLACE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Paul watches TV. Wendy enters the room from the hallway.

WENDY  
The boys should be down for the night.

Wendy sits beside Paul and snuggles in. Paul mutes the TV and looks at Wendy.

PAUL  
I've been thinking - about us. An old buddy of mine is building houses in Penticton. I phoned him this morning. He said if I moved there he could put me to work. He pays union wages - good money. How would you like to live there?

Wendy looks excited.

WENDY  
Are you kidding me. That has been a dream of mine for years. I love the Okanagan. But how could we afford to move?

PAUL  
I've been saving my tips since expo started. I figured it all out. We can do it. Hank says he even has a house we can rent.

Wendy skips out of the room and returns with a bottle of wine and two glasses. You can tell by her visage that she is 'all in.'

INT. PENTICTON - FAMILY HOUSE - DAY

A bright, cheerful and spacious house. Paul, Wendy, Terry and Tim unpack moving boxes.

EXT. BUILDING CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Paul climbs a ladder. He wears a tool belt and hard hat. A car pulls up. The horn blows. Wendy, Tim and Terry get out and wave at Paul.

Paul descends the ladder as he sees them over his shoulder.

EXT. PICKUP TRUCK - LATER

Paul and Wendy sit on the tailgate. Tim and Terry play in the box. They have lunch.

PAUL

Thanks for lunch, guys.

WENDY

It's such a lovely day. I thought we would share some of it with you.

PAUL

That's sweet. No wonder I love you so much.

TERRY

Don't get all mushy. I don't wanna puke all over the place.

TIM

(To Terry)  
You're gross.

WENDY

Quiet you two. Don't get started.  
(To Paul)  
I have some exciting news.

PAUL

What's that?

WENDY

Are you sure you're ready for this.

PAUL  
I'm ready, I'm ready.

WENDY  
I'm pregnant.

Paul spills his coffee.

PAUL  
You're serious? Get outta here.

WENDY  
I got the results this morning.

Paul pulls Wendy close and kisses her.

PAUL  
(In jest)  
Am I supposed to say thanks or  
something?  
(To the boys)  
What do you think? Are ya ready for  
this.

TERRY  
I don't need the competition.

TIM  
Whatever.

INT. HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM - DAY (1988)

A NURSE cleans a newborn baby. Paul gazes over her shoulder.  
Wendy lies on a gurney.

NURSE  
It's a beautiful baby girl. Have  
you chosen a name yet?

WENDY  
Cara.

PAUL  
It means beloved and cherished one.

The nurse hands the baby to Wendy and leaves. Paul sits  
beside Wendy and grasps her hand. Tears well up in his eyes.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CHRISTMAS MORNING

Wendy, Tim and Terry sit on the floor by the tree. Paul and Shirley on the sofa. Baby Cara on Shirley's lap. The boys distribute the gifts as Wendy digs them out.

WENDY

This one is for Grandma. Give this one to your dad. Tim, this goes in your pile. That's all of them. Let the paper fly.

They unwrap their gifts. Terry removes a wetsuit from a box.

TERRY

Wow! Does this mean you're gonna teach me to windsurf, Dad?

PAUL

That's right. Go look out the window.

Terry rushes to a window. He sees a sailboard in the driveway. The sail is propped up and strung with Christmas lights.

EXT. BEACH - DAY (1990)

Wendy sunbathes on a blanket. Paul and Terry (now 13) carry their sailboards from the water onto the sand. Wendy sits up and smiles at them.

Paul and Terry set the sailboards down and high five each other.

WENDY

You looked good out there, boys.  
Ready for lunch?

Wendy opens the cooler and removes a bag of sandwiches. She sets them on the blanket and removes two beer. She holds one out to Paul.

Paul makes a "no thanks" hand gesture. Wendy smiles at him with delight.

INT. CAR - CITY STREET - DAY

Paul is alone in the car. He wears work clothes. He stops at a red light. He stares over his shoulder at a beer parlour.

The light turns green. Paul doesn't notice - keeps staring. A car behind beeps his horn. Paul carries on down the street and circles the block.

He parks in front of the beer parlour. You see he is struggling hard to keep from going in. He turns the key off and opens the door.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT (1993)

Paul stares out the open back door. Terry (15) comes around the corner of the house. He sees Paul and stops. He knows he has been spotted and walks to the door.

PAUL

Where the hell were you?

TERRY

None of your business.

PAUL

It sure the hell is my business. You come staggering home at three in the morning smelling like booze and weed. That makes it my business.

TERRY

I'm almost sixteen. I can do what I want. And look who's talking - piss tank.

Paul slaps Terry across the face.

PAUL

Don't talk to me like that you little punk!

TERRY

Don't you ever lay a hand on me again.

Paul's expression changes from anger to remorse.

PAUL

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done that. You didn't deserve that.

TERRY

What's with you? You're supposed to be my dad. I don't know if you're my friend or my enemy anymore.

(MORE)

TERRY (CONT'D)

I never know if you're gonna hug me  
or hit me. Just leave me alone.

Paul looks ashamed of himself as Terry walks past him.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Paul and Wendy on the sofa watching TV. Wendy tries to  
snuggle into Paul. He inches away from her.

PAUL

Not now.

WENDY

So when then? It's been "not now"  
for two years.

With a fallen countenance, Wendy walks away.

EXT. HOUSE PARTY - SUMMER - NIGHT

Cara (5) sleeps as Wendy carries her from a house toward the  
car. Loud music and party sounds come from the house. Paul is  
obviously drunk. He takes his keys from his pocket.

WENDY

You're not driving!

PAUL

I can drive.

WENDY

Don't be stupid. You're hammered.

PAUL

I've been driving drunk for twenty  
years. I've had a lotta practice.  
Don't worry about it.

WENDY

Don't be an idiot. Give me those  
keys.

Wendy holds out her hand. Paul glares at her as if to say,  
"don't argue with me woman."

They load into the car and drive off.

EXT. CAR

The car screams around a sharp corner. It drifts toward the railing of a bridge.

INT. CAR

Wendy is wide eyed with terror.

WENDY  
PAUL! LOOK OUT!

At the last moment, Paul corrects the car, barely missing the railing.

WENDY (CONT'D)  
Oh, my God. You can't keep on doing this. We have Cara in the car for crying out loud. How many times have you told me you wouldn't drive with the kids in the car when you're drinking?

Paul looks shaken as he continues to drive, now slowly.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Paul and Wendy sit at the kitchen table. Shirley and Cara play in the living room.

WENDY  
I'm really getting worried about your drinking Paul.

PAUL  
Look who's talking. You drink as much as I do.

WENDY  
No I don't. Couldn't you at least try to stay sober while your mother is here?

PAUL  
Stop nagging me for Christ's sake.

WENDY  
I'll stop nagging when you start listening. I've just about had enough.

Paul backhands his beer bottle. It shatters against the wall.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Cara cries. Shirley comforts her and takes her into a bedroom.

INT. AIRPORT - COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Paul and his mother at a table.

SHIRLEY

It has been so nice spending time with you and the family. But there is something I have to say before I go - it's your drinking.

PAUL

Not you too.

SHIRLEY

You listen now...

PAUL

I know. I know. The truth is, I've been trying to quit. I don't even enjoy it anymore. I actually saw a counselor a couple months ago. She said I should try AA.

SHIRLEY

Maybe you should then. It kept your father sober for many years.

PAUL

I know, but it sounds - I don't know, simple-minded.

SHIRLEY

You are too smart for that, are you? You don't want to lower yourself.

The intercom announces Shirley's flight is boarding.

PAUL

Yeah, I know. It's my foolish pride. As embarrassing as it is, I'll give it a shot. I promise. You had better go. That's your flight.

SHIRLEY

Remember, you promised. You should never break a promise to your mother.



PAUL

Yes mother, you're right. You have always been right. I love you Mom.

SHIRLEY

Be good to yourself Paul.

They stand. Shirley initiates a hug.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

I almost forgot...

She takes an old tattered Bible from her handbag and hands it to Paul.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

I want you to have this.

Paul reluctantly takes it. Shirley smiles warmly and walks away. Paul lingers and watches her until she disappears.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT - TWO DAYS LATER

The phone rings. Paul picks up. It is his brother.

PAUL

Peter, what's happening?

PETER (V.O.)

I don't know how to tell you this... Mom died this morning.

PAUL

What?

PETER (V.O.)

She had a massive heart attack.

PAUL

I just saw her a couple days ago. She looked healthy as a racehorse.

PETER (V.O.)

It just came out of nowhere. No one expected it. She had been eating healthy, walking a lot. I don't get it.

PAUL

Oh, my God. How is Paula taking it?

PETER (V.O.)

Not good. She's really taking it hard. You know how close they were.

PAUL

This is too much. I don't know what to say. Have you made any arrangements yet?

PETER (V.O.)

Not yet. I'll let ya know as soon as we work out the details.

PAUL

Okay. Take good care of Paula. Goodbye for now.

Paul hangs up. He looks stunned.

INT. A VINTAGE STONE CHURCH BUILDING - NIGHT

Paul is in the last pew away from the others. An OLDER MAN behind the podium reads from the AA Big Book. Paul mumbles to himself.

PAUL

What the hell am I doing in a church?

OLDER MAN

"If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome alcoholism, many of us would have recovered long ago. But we found that such codes and philosophies did not save us, no matter how much we tried. We could wish to be moral, we could wish to be philosophically comforted, in fact, we could will these things with all our might, but the needed power wasn't there. Our human resources, as marshalled by the will, were not sufficient. They failed utterly. Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves. But where and how were we to find this power..."

EXT. CHURCH GROUNDS

In front of the church, Paul and the older man talk.

OLDER MAN

I haven't seen you here before.

PAUL

This is my first meeting.

OLDER MAN

How long have you been sober?

PAUL

Just a few days.

OLDER MAN

Did you hear anything that you think might help you?

PAUL

Well, that "power greater than yourself" thing got my attention.

OLDER MAN

Why do you think that is?

PAUL

I've always wondered about God, the meaning of life and all that. I've read piles of philosophy and occult stuff.

OLDER MAN

Do you consider yourself to be an open-minded person?

PAUL

Yeah, my mind is so open I have a hard time keeping anything in there.

OLDER MAN

Seriously though, do you pray?

PAUL

Are you kidding? Even if there is a God, I'm sure he wouldn't hear me.

OLDER MAN

I thought you said you had an open mind.

PAUL

Well, yeah, but okay. I see your point.

OLDER MAN

Why don't you give it a try? What do you have to lose?

PAUL

Nothing I guess, but what do I pray for?

OLDER MAN

Why don't you just ask God to take the compulsion to drink from you?

PAUL

Are you serious? It can't be that easy.

OLDER MAN

There are people who have achieved sobriety by prayer. That's not all of course. You have to stay away from temptation. You'd have to leave your old drinking buddies behind.

PAUL

Whatever it takes...

OLDER MAN

I really hope you take this to heart. It takes discipline to continue praying every day.

PAUL

I don't have a clue how to pray.

OLDER MAN

It doesn't really matter how you pray. The important thing is that you're sincere and honest. Just talk to Him, even if it feels like you're talking to yourself. You have nothing to lose except your pride. And where has that got you?

PAUL

Well, let me see. In a shitload of trouble.

OLDER MAN

Now you're getting it.

PAUL

How am I supposed to know if He's hearing me?

OLDER MAN

Time, time will tell you. And one more thing, keep coming to the meetings. That's where you'll find sober friends.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE - DAY

The phone rings. Paul picks up. It is his brother.

PAUL

Hi Peter. What's up?

PETER (V.O.)

Just calling to let you know we made the arrangements. We had Mom's body cremated. We're going to bury her ashes in the spring.

PAUL

When exactly?

PETER (V.O.)

The first week in May.

PAUL

I'll be there. Stay in touch.

Paul hangs up. He cries.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Paul watches TV. Wendy enters the house and sits beside him.

PAUL

You smell like a winery. Where were you? It's almost three o'clock.

WENDY

Just because you don't drink anymore doesn't mean I can't.

PAUL

I don't really care if you drink or not. But coming home at two in the morning - what's that all about?

WENDY

I want to talk to you about something. Something serious.

PAUL

Yeah? What's so serious?

WENDY

Ever since you stopped drinking, you're more like the man I always hoped you'd be. I don't understand it, I'm sorry, but I don't love you anymore.

PAUL

You're just drunk.

WENDY

Maybe so, but I know what I'm saying. I've been wanting to tell you for a while now.

PAUL

You're serious. I'm a better man now, so you don't love me anymore? You don't understand. How the hell do ya think I feel?

WENDY

I'm sorry Paul. I really am.

Wendy walks to the bedroom leaving Paul in shock.

EXT. FAMILY HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Paul loads luggage into his car.

Wendy and Cara stand nearby. Cara walks over to Paul and takes his hand.

CARA

Where you going Daddy?

PAUL

I'm leaving for a while sweetie.

CARA

Why, Daddy?

PAUL

Mom thinks it would be better if I got my own place.

CARA

I want you to stay. I don't want you to go.

PAUL

It's okay, it's just a little ways from here. I'll see you every weekend. Wait until you see it. There's a swimming pool and everything. You'll love it. Nothing but fun. You can even bring your friends over.

Paul picks Cara up, hugs and kisses her and puts her down. She walks back to Wendy and takes her hand. She cries as Paul drives away.

END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE.

EXT. CROSSROADS - COURTYARD - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

Paul at a picnic table, deep in thought. JOHN (30's), a fellow addict, joins him. He is tall, thin and weathered beyond his years. His long, straight brown hair falls past his shoulders.

JOHN

How goes the "searching and fearless moral inventory?"

PAUL

This being honest with myself is getting ugly.

JOHN

It looks like it. You look like shit, man.

Without malice, Paul flips him off.

PAUL

I've hurt a lot of people in my life. I didn't really want to. I didn't even know I was most of the time. Somewhere inside I knew it was wrong. But it's like I've had an argument going on in my head. It's like - I don't know, a part of my mind condoning my sins and debating with some kind of intuitive morality. The condoning part's the loudest.

JOHN

I've been on the losing side of that debate before. Your mind can justify anything. You gotta turn the volume up on the intuitive morality part and recalibrate your moral compass.

PAUL

I never thought I might be doing damage to society. Never entered my mind until I had my own family. Then I wanted to keep them safe from people like me.

JOHN

Stick with it man - brutal honesty. The results can blow your mind.

INT. CROSSROADS - LIBRARY - DAY

At a table, Paul reads "The Desire of Ages" by E. G. White. He looks sick in body and spirit. John approaches and sits down.

JOHN

That's a good book.

PAUL

Fascinating. I like this line: "Self must be dethroned, pride must be humbled, if we are to know the glory of the spiritual kingdom." I certainly understand what humbled means now. No glory though.

JOHN

Are you a Christian?

PAUL

No, I've always been curious about Jesus though.

JOHN

A fascinating man.

PAUL

I like the way this book portrays Him. Honest, wise, powerful, courageous... I can't help but love the guy. It says He's still alive somehow.

(MORE)



PAUL (CONT'D)

And you can actually get to know him on a personal level. It's a nice fantasy.

JOHN

I know Him in that way - spiritually.

PAUL

Get outta here! Are you telling me this book is true?

JOHN

That part is anyway. Are you a praying man?

PAUL

I suppose. I've been praying for God to take my compulsion to drink away. I haven't felt like drinking ever since I started. I don't know if God had anything to do with it though.

JOHN

Are you open-minded?

PAUL

Yes, I think I am.

JOHN

When you go to your room, read Psalm 51.

PAUL

That's not part of the program.

JOHN

No, but it might lift your spirits.

PAUL

I don't see how that could help.

JOHN

There's a lot you don't see, yet. Don't forget, an open mind. What do you have to lose, your pride?

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Paul sits on the bed. He rummages through his suitcase until he finds the Bible his mother gave him. He leafs through and finds the 51st Psalm.

He notices his mother's handwriting in the margin. It reads: "This was your dad's favorite Psalm." He kneels beside the bed.

PAUL

(to himself)

"Have mercy upon me, O God,  
according to Your loving kindness,  
according to the multitude of Your  
tender mercies. Blot out my  
transgressions. Wash me thoroughly  
from my iniquity, and cleanse me  
from my sin. For I acknowledge my  
transgressions, and my sin is  
always before me. Against You, You  
only, have I sinned, and done this  
evil in Your sight, that You may be  
found just when You speak, and  
blameless when You judge... Behold,  
You desire truth in the inward  
parts, and in the hidden part You  
will make me to know wisdom. Purge  
me with hyssop, and I shall be  
clean. Wash me, and I shall be  
whiter than snow. Make me hear joy  
and gladness... Hide Your face from  
my sins, and blot out all my  
iniquities. Create in me a clean  
heart, O God, and renew a steadfast  
spirit within me. Do not cast me  
away from Your presence. And do not  
take Your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of Your  
salvation. And uphold me by Your  
generous Spirit.... For You do not  
desire sacrifice, or else I would  
give it... The sacrifices of God  
are a broken spirit, a broken and a  
contrite heart..."

Suddenly, Paul looks awestruck. His countenance transforms from despair to joy. He leaps to his feet.

He catches a glimpse of himself in a mirror on the wall. He stares at his reflection in disbelief.

The dark bags are gone from under his eyes. His skin is flawless. His eyes are clear and radiant. He looks younger than a few minutes before.

He lays down on the bed and stares into space - in awe.

EXT. COURTYARD - NEXT MORNING

At a table, Paul and John talk. Paul looks to be at peace. The emotional pain is gone from his face. A knowing smile on John's face.

PAUL  
I can't get my head around it.

JOHN  
Your head isn't big enough to "get around it." It doesn't matter. Your heart knows.

PAUL  
If it happened to you too, what are you even doing here.

Sudden sorrow on John's face.

JOHN  
Life was great for a long time after that. But I lost my way again - when my son died.

PAUL  
Oh man! I'm sorry...

JOHN  
Leukemia, he was just five. I fell hard - ended up on the skids.

John abruptly changes the subject.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Anyway, we're out of here in a couple days. What's the plan?

PAUL  
Just deal with each day as it comes.

JOHN  
Exactly.

EXT. CROSSROADS - PARKING LOT - DAY

Paul and John stand beside Paul's car.

JOHN  
Let's keep in touch. Kelowna 's not far away.

PAUL  
For sure, brother.

Paul places his suitcase in the trunk. A warm farewell hug.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY - SPRING

Paul packs his luggage while talking to his brother on the speaker phone.

PAUL  
I'll be hitting the road in an hour or so. I just have to go to Wendy's and say goodbye to the kids.

PETER  
See you in a couple days, then.

Paul hangs up and continues packing.

INT. CAR - DAY

Paul navigates the car down the winding highway through the mountains. A Christian rock-and-roll song blares from the speakers. (I Believe In You Now by Michael W Smith?)

EXT. OREMAN - CEMETERY - DAY

Paul, Peter and Paula stand beside a burial plot. Paul holds a shovel. Peter holds an urn. Paula holds a bouquet.

Paul tries to hand the shovel to Peter.

PAULA  
(to Paul)  
You're the oldest son, you do the honours. It's already been decided.

PAUL  
Peter can do it. I don't deserve this.

PAULA  
No, Paul. She forgave you. And she loved you more than you will ever know. You go ahead.

Paul weeps bitterly as he digs.

INT. TROUBLED WATERS CAFÉ - DAY

Paul and Spike debate.

SPIKE

Oh, come on! You and me both know religion is bullshit. How many times have we talked about that? All of sudden your brain goes out the window?

PAUL

My brain is right where it belongs. I'm not talking about religion. Jesus didn't preach religion. He preached love. If you boil it all down, what you're left with is love.

SPIKE

You're a Christian aren't you? You can't have Jesus without religion.

PAUL

I'm telling you, you can. Look at it like this: "Jesus is to religion as lightning is to thunder. The power is in the lightning. The thunder is just the sound."

SPIKE

(sarcastically)

How clever, where did you get that from?

PAUL

Just something I wrote the other day.

SPIKE

It's just like your trip to Nirvana. I didn't believe that and I don't believe this.

PAUL

It was nothing like the Nirvana thing. That was surreal. My encounter with Jesus was the real thing. I know what happened. I was there, you weren't.

SPIKE

Good grief!

PAUL  
I can see this isn't going  
anywhere. What are doing back in  
Oreman?

SPIKE  
The old lady wanted to be closer  
her family. Calgary was getting too  
expensive anyway.

PAUL  
Have you heard anything from Billy?

SPIKE  
He's back in prison, armed robbery  
this time. He'll do anything to  
feed his habit.

PAUL  
That's too bad. The price you  
pay...

SPIKE  
You got that right. Captain 's  
dead. Nobody knows what happened to  
Mikey. Ron just got whacked. Too  
many casualties.

PAUL  
How are you doing - I mean habit  
wise? You're looking pretty rough.

SPIKE  
Just the beer, for the most part.

PAUL  
I'll pretend I believe you. I'd  
better get going - long road ahead.

They stand. Paul initiates a hug. Spike is surprised, but  
reciprocates.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
I'll be in touch. Take care of  
yourself big guy.

INT. PENTICTON - PAUL'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING (2007)

Paul (56), Wendy (48), Cara (18) and Terry (30) have just  
finished dinner.

A birthday cake in the centre of the table. Letters on the  
cake read, "HAPPY SOBER 12."

Wendy stands to leave.

WENDY

I wish I could stay for the cake.  
But I told Rick I would be home by  
eight. You know how he gets...

PAUL

That's too bad. But thanks for  
coming. Say hi to him for me.

Wendy looks sad as she says her good-byes and leaves.

TERRY

I wish things would have worked out  
for you guys. I mean, she always  
bitched about you drinking and  
everything... you sober up and she  
dumps you.

CARA

Nice choice of words Terry.

PAUL

It happens all the time. She was  
raised in a dysfunctional family -  
that's her comfort zone. When I  
started to change, it scared her.

CARA

Well, that's just stupid.

TERRY

Okay, that's the end of psychology  
101 for today. Too bad Tim couldn't  
be here.

PAUL

Have you heard from him lately?

CARA

Actually, he phoned the other day.

PAUL

Oh, really? I hope he's doing  
better than the last time I saw  
him.

CARA

Well, he sounded happy for a  
change. He even has a girlfriend  
now. And he says he's off the  
crack.

TERRY

Wow, maybe there's hope for him yet. Cara, cut me a piece of cake.

PAUL

Let me blow out the candles first.

Cara lights the twelve candles.

CARA

I hope you like the cake. I made it myself ya know.

TERRY

Scratch?

CARA

Box. I'm not Betty Crocker ya know.

PAUL

I think a prayer is in order.

They bow their heads and join hands.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Dear God, I thank you for this special day. Thank you for your love for us and the love we have for each other. Thank you for the healing of our hearts. And please be with Tim. Free him from his addictions, as You did for us. I thank and praise you for protecting my loved ones from the sins their father. In Jesus name, Amen.

TERRY

Amen. Let's go to the lake and walk this off when we're done.

Paul blows out the candles. Cara cuts and distributes the cake.

EXT. BEACH - DUSK

Paul, Terry and Cara amble down the shoreline. Terry playfully pushes Paul in the water. Cara pushes Terry in and runs. Terry chases Cara as Paul chases Terry. They laugh and romp like young children.

THE END