

# THE VINE

Written By

Max Hoven and Aaron Crow

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max@hovencrow.com

aaron@hovencrow.com

**EXT. MIDWEST HIGHWAY - DAY**

A four-lane highway smack in the middle of nowhere, Illinois. We're far enough south of Chicago to make you think we're in Kansas. It's just flat farmland in every direction straight into a white sky on the horizon.

A cross-country TRANSIT BUS roars by.

**INT. TRANSIT BUS - DAY**

A bus full of sad sacks and desperate souls. There's a reason these people aren't on a plane. In the middle, blending right in is SAL HARRIS, 60's, a grizzled man who feels older than he looks. He dazes out the window at nothing through dark sunglasses. In the seat beside him is a large green army-issued duffel bag.

A woman's voice disrupts Sal's trance.

WOMAN

Hey mister.

Sal slowly turns his head to look at the woman. She's haggard. Mid-twenties, holding a TODDLER BOY, dangerously thin. Sal doesn't speak, only looks.

WOMAN

Can you switch me seats? My son  
can't take the smell.

Sal leans over his bag to look where she's just come from. It's the very last seat, across from the bus bathroom. The door doesn't latch, so you can see it flapping. Sal leans back and sighs.

WOMAN

Well?

FLUSH

CUT TO:

Sal now sits in the backseat leaning against the window with his duffel bag below his feet.

He takes a swig from a flask with one hand and holds a postcard with his other. He studies the postcard.

It's a copy of an old painting depicting a fallen angel. In a Romanesque font, it reads:

*'Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed.'* - Corinthians 15:51

He turns the post card around and we see it's from the St. Louis Art Museum, and there's a short message:

*"Come visit soldier. - BUD"*

A BUSINESS MAN, the only clean-cut guy on the bus, steps out of the bathroom.

BUSINESS MAN

Sir, are you drinking on the bus?

Sal, still holding the flask, looks at the guy through the top of his sunglasses.

SAL

It helps brighten the scenery.

The man takes a serious breath of concern.

BUSINESS MAN

It's not allowed sir.

We see the man walk up to the front of the bus and begin speaking to the driver. We can't hear what he's saying, but we catch his intentions as he points to the back at Sal.

Sal takes a long drink then turns his flask upside down. It's empty.

**EXT. LIQUOR STORE PARKING LOT - DAY**

Sal stands on the side of the liquor store with his duffel bag at his feet beside him, staring forward.

He takes a drink straight from a cheap whiskey bottle.

The voice of an angry COUNTRY BOY, early twenties, dominates the air.

COUNTRY BOY

I aint got all day. Now get your  
tight little ass in there 'n get  
me what I want!

While sitting in the driver's seat of a beat-up TRUCK, the country boy pushes a COUNTRY GIRL, out of the passenger seat.

The girl almost trips over herself as her cowboy boots hit the pavement. She struggles to stand up straight while adjusting her denim skirt.

COUNTRY GIRL

Don't treat me like I'm your girl!

**INT. TRUCK - DAY**

The country boy pokes his head out of the window to yell at the girl as she walks into the liquor store.

COUNTRY BOY

You're whatever I say you are,  
bitch!

There's a THUMP from Sal throwing his duffel bag into the back of the truck. The country boy turns around confused. The passenger door opens. Sal slides right in like he's going for a ride. The country boy is startled.

COUNTRY BOY

What the hell you think you're  
doing?

Sal smiles, then jabs the boy in the face. Blood spills out of the boy's nose and his eyes tear up. He's so thrown off by the punch it's almost sad.

SAL

Get out.

COUNTRY BOY

*(pathetically)*

No.

While the boy is still in a fog, Sal slams his face into the steering wheel, gets out of the car, walks over to the driver's side door, and throws the boy out of the car and onto the gravel.

COUNTRY BOY

Ok, Ok!

Sal gets into the driver's seat and looks at the blood on the steering wheel, slightly disgusted.

SAL

Give me your shirt.

The boy takes off his shirt and hands it to Sal. Sal wipes off the steering wheel.

COUNTRY BOY

But...that's my Daddy's truck.

This is almost disheartening to Sal. Sal frowns and reaches into his pocket.

The boy stares blankly as his shirt is thrown back at his chest and he catches it. As he unrolls it, he finds a hundred-dollar bill inside. The boy silently watches Sal pull out of the parking lot and drive off.

The country girl walks out of the liquor store.

COUNTRY GIRL

Where's the truck baby?

**EXT. ILLINOIS HIGHWAY - DAY**

Sal and his newly acquired truck drive down the highway. He passes a green ROAD SIGN reading:

*"ST. LOUIS 150 MILES"*

**EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD - EVENING**

A picture perfect suburban backyard in the outskirts of St. Louis, Missouri. Bright green grass and purple flowers surround a patio that looks like an outdoor living room with a classic BBQ grill on the side.

Smooth JAZZ plays from an old 1990's portable radio. Smoke from the grill fills the air.

Beside the grill is Sal, who stands drinking a beer with the cook, BUD SCHWARTZ. Bud is in his mid 50's, he's happy, rocking a Hawaiian shirt and an *STL* baseball cap.

Bud adjusts and seasons burgers as he talks to Sal.

SAL

How's the American dream?

BUD

Is that what I'm living?

*(winks and sips his beer)*

Tell me why it took you three years to come see an old pal.

SAL

The summers go fast and the years move slow.

BUD

You been busy?

SAL

You could say that.

BUD

Working?

SAL

No contracts. Just here and there.

BUD

Here and there, huh. Where next?

SAL

I figured I'd head back west.  
Maybe Vegas.

BUD

Stay for a few days. There's a little river town on the Illinois side where I grew up. Lotta good hunting over there.

SAL

Fishing's more my style now. Less  
gunpowder.

Bud, responds with a confused look as he hands Sal a plate with  
a thick juicy burger on it. The two of them smile.

WOMEN LAUGH from inside the house causing them to turn their  
heads.

BUD (CONT'D)

Girls are here.

SAL

I don't know about this.

BUD

Don't worry. Cheryl's still new to  
me and her friend is cute.

Sal takes a sip from his beer, seemingly unconvinced by Bud.

A sliding glass door opens from Bud's living room and two women  
step out. The first, a redhead, CHERYL, early forties,  
attractive, comes out smiling and holding drinks.

Behind her is LINDA, an uppity brunette in her mid-forties.  
She's tall and comes out of the house with her chin held high as  
she walks the patio toward Sal and Bud wearing a sundress, sun  
hat, and white strapped heels.

CHERYL

Are we eating out here?

BUD

I'd say it's nice enough.

The girls meet at a table and each take a seat. Bud grabs the  
last of the food off the grill. He and Sal join the girls at the  
table.

They all begin to fill their plates with burgers, baked  
potatoes, and coleslaw.

SAL

You still working Bud?

BUD

Six months retired and they still call me.

CHERYL

I didn't know the country clerk was that important.

BUD

It isn't, but I did the job well. A lot better than I ever did working with Sal.

LINDA

(to Sal)

You two served together?

Sal continues to chew his food without responding.

BUD

Yeah, this guy saved my ass more than once.

SAL

It was a long time ago.

CHERYL

What did you do after?

Sal takes a big bite of his burger and talks with a full mouth.

SAL

Travel.

Linda has a glimmer in her eyes.

LINDA

I love to travel, where have you been?

SAL

Slums mostly. Let's just say I wasn't eating like this every night.

LINDA

What did you do?



SAL  
I used the few skills I have.

LINDA  
What are those?

SAL  
Nothing you need to worry about.

CHERYL  
You don't like to talk about  
yourself do you?

SAL  
I will when I'm going after a  
broad.

Linda makes direct eye contact with Sal.

LINDA  
Are you looking for someone?

SAL  
I'm not looking for shit.

Sal sees the look of disgust on Linda's face. He stands up, sets his napkin down, and pushes in his chair.

SAL (CONT'D)  
Thanks for the meat, Bud.

BUD  
You can't leave yet.

Sal walks to the edge of the yard and Bud stands up. Linda and Cheryl trade glances with each other.

Bud rushes to catch Sal.

BUD  
Hey, what's wrong?

SAL  
I don't need any more women  
pressing into my life.

BUD  
Come on, she's a kind woman.

SAL  
Not my kind.

Bud watches Sal turn and leave and lets out a SIGH.

**EXT. LEWIS AND CLARK MOTEL - NIGHT**

We see Sal's truck sitting alone in the small parking lot of a little MOTEL near the bank of the Mississippi River. Christmas lights and fake palm trees line the motel's entrance.

**EXT. LEWIS AND CLARK MOTEL - POOL - NIGHT**

Sal floats on a blow-up raft in an outdoor pool with his sunglasses on, arms in the water, and his flask on his chest. He could be asleep or he could just be very relaxed.

Crickets CHIRP in the distance.

A young man's voice breaks the silence, BARNEY, the motel's only employee who acts as manager, front desk clerk, and housekeeper. He watches Sal from the side of the pool.

BARNEY  
The pool closes at ten sir.

Sal lifts up his sunglasses to look at Barney.

SAL  
I'm from the wild west. It's only  
eight my time.

BARNEY  
(chuckling)  
Ok, sir. Just clean up your mess.  
I don't want to pick glass out of  
the pool tomorrow.

Sal lifts his flask as if to cheers him, then taps it with his knuckle.

SAL  
Steel, pal.

Barney leaves him a towel on a chair by the pool and walks inside as Sal chugs his flask.

Whiskey spills down his chest.

**INT. LEWIS & CLARK MOTEL - HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Barney walks down the hallway. As he rounds the corner, he bumps into a sexy BLONDE, in her late-forties, wearing an all-black swimsuit. We can't see her face, but she stands tall even though she's leaning against the wall, intentionally trying to be intimidating.

BLONDE

Hello, Barney.

Barney doesn't respond, only stares in disbelief both awestruck by her beauty and her presence.

**EXT. LEWIS & CLARK MOTEL - POOL - NIGHT**

Sal starts to drunkenly twist on the cap to his flask until...BLOOP. The flask falls into the water. He looks around and spots his chair on the side of the pool with his whiskey bottle underneath it.

Sal paddles his way towards the edge of the pool. From the edge, while still half-on his blow up raft, he puts one hand on the edge of the pool, and reaches for the bottle with his other.

He's just a few inches away from grabbing the bottle when...SLIP. Sal's arm slides out from underneath him and his head SMASHES against the pool's edge.

SPLASH. Sal falls into the water.

He slowly falls to the bottom of the pool, face up. His sunglasses float off, his eyes are closed and his mouth is open. As Sal drops further down, he's motionless with his arms floating slightly above him. The seconds seem too long. He is still. You sense that at any moment he's going to breathe in water. Suddenly:

A FEMALE ARM grabs his hand. You can clearly see a TATOO of a rose inside a triangle on her inner wrist where a watchband would be.

Sal's eyes open. In an almost dreamlike view we see from his perspective: The outline of a woman with glowing blonde hair above the surface of the water.

As he's pulled to the surface, she becomes more and more clear, but just as we're about to see who she is, we-

CUT TO:

**INT. SAL'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Your typical mid-grade motel room. A king size bed, mini fridge, TV, and a bathroom in the back. Sal sleeps shirtless, face down on the bed wearing only a pair of boxer briefs. A towel has been placed under him at his waist. His eyes open and he leans up to look around.

AN ARM, the same tattooed arm that saved him, hands Sal a glass of water.

Sal graciously grabs the glass and takes a sip with a look of confused awe at his savior: The same stunning blonde we saw earlier with Barney.

She sits in a chair, beside a table next to the bed, still wearing her black swimsuit. Sal's clothes sit neatly folded on the table.

SAL

What happened?

The blonde smiles, and without responding, takes his glass and sets next to Sal's clothes, where she notices a COMBAT KNIFE.

The blonde picks up the knife and delicately runs her finger across the blade, then turns around toward the window.

She walks to the window by the door and slowly peeks around the curtain.

SAL (CONT'D)

You looking for someone?

The blonde closes the window curtains and turns around smiling.

The blonde walks over to the nightstand and DROPS the knife into the nightstand causing it to stick.

SAL

Who are you?

The blonde slides on top of him. Sal wants to say something but she kisses him to stop him from speaking.

Sal takes off her top and we -

CUT TO:

Sal deep asleep in his bed, under the covers. A KNOCK at the door wakes him up.

BARNEY

Housekeeping.

Sal, quickly gets out of bed. He looks around. He's alone. There's not even a phone or a clock.

SAL

What time is it?

BARNEY

It's eleven. Check out is at eleven.

Sal opens the door.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

Hello, Mr. Harris. Would you like a late check out?

SAL

Yes. Actually, I'm going to stay another night, maybe two.

BARNEY

That's great. I'll go book you into the computer.

Barney turns to walk away.

SAL

Hey. What room is the blonde woman staying in?

BARNEY

You were my only check in.

Sal's head tilts with bewilderment.

SAL

Wait. There was a woman here last night. You must be mistaken.

BARNEY

Did you call a prosty?

SAL

A what?

BARNEY

A prosty, sir. A woman of the night.

SAL

No, I didn't call a damn hooker. I don't even have a phone and there's no phone in your room.

BARNEY

Did you go out and look for one? Or did one find you?

SAL

I never left the motel.

BARNEY

Woah. That is a mystery.

Barney walks away smiling and Sal closes the door.

Still in a fog, Sal walks over to the bathroom.

He pauses at the sink where he finds his clothes folded up nicely.

On top of the clothes, there's a NOTE on a white drink coaster that reads:

*Come find me.*

He flips the coaster around to find the logo for a bar:

THE MUDDY PUB

**EXT. THE MUDDY PUB - PARKING LOT - DAY**

A seedy bar with a line of MOTORCYCLES parked in front. Bearded, drunken, DIRTY MEN randomly file through the parking lot.

One LEATHER CLAD MAN urinates just on the other side of his motorcycle.

A rough rider in his mid-thirties leans against the bike closest to the front door. The license plate on the back of his bike reads his name: RICKY. He's smoking a cigarette and speaking quietly to a tough GOON across from him.

Sal's truck pulls into the gravel parking lot and parks at the far end away from the bikes. He's immediately noticed.

Ricky and the goon stop talking to turn and look at who the new guy is.

**INT. SAL'S TRUCK - DAY**

Sal looks at the rough riders through his rear-view mirror. They have their eyes on him.

He opens the glove box to grab his COMBAT KNIFE.

He puts the knife into a sleeve in his boot.

**EXT. MUDDY PUB ENTRANCE - DAY**

Sal walks past the row of bikes towards the front door. He firmly looks at the rough riders. He's got his sunglasses on, a white T-shirt, blue jeans, and boots.

Ricky and the tough guy step behind Sal just as he's about to walk in the door.

RICKY

This joint's exclusive.

SAL

*(looking around)*

I don't see a sign.

RICKY

I'm your sign.

SAL

I'm thirsty.

Sal walks inside. The rough riders exchange concerned looks.

**INT. THE MUDDY PUB - DAY**

This place might be rowdy at night but right now it's calm despite its intense patrons. Rough riders sit at the bar; tough guys sit at tables. The few women here are taken and they look just as rough as the men. Smoke and bar CHATTER fill the air.

Sal stands against the corner of the bar and looks around. Although some patrons take notice of him, they're not out to get him. Sal catches eyes with the bartender who seems almost happy to see a new face.

Sal lets his guard down and takes a seat.

SAL

A whiskey straight.

BARTENDER

Enjoying the sights?

SAL

Just got here.

The bartender passes Sal his drink, and sets his glass on a fresh coaster.

BARTENDER

Start a tab?

Sal sets a five-dollar bill on top of the coaster that came from his room.

SAL

Not yet. I'm looking for someone.  
A blonde. I think she may be a  
local.

Sal taps on his coaster with the note. The bartender smiles.



BARTENDER

Lots of blondes come through here.

The bartender walks to the far end of the bar to serve another patron. Something catches Sal's eye behind them:

AN ARM, tattooed on the wrist with *a rose inside a triangle*, choosing a song from the jukebox. The woman herself is hidden behind other patrons.

Sal stands up, drink in hand, ready to confront the woman. He brushes past the other patrons to get to her.

Her SONG kicks on and she turns around. Sal takes a step back, clearly confused. It's not her; it's a young girl, ROSA, 17, blonde, innocent, probably just got her braces taken off.

Rosa dances on top of a table to her SONG. The bar goes wild.

The women get up and dance with her. The men HOOT and HOLLER in awe.

Sal shies away back to the bar, mentally defeated; he looks at the bartender who seems just as amused by Rosa as everyone else.

SAL

Is she even old enough to drive?

The bartender turns towards Sal, unamused.

BARTENDER

She's none of your business.

The bartender eyes behind Sal's shoulder. Sal's face drops and he turns to look behind him.

**EXT. MUDDY PUB ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER**

Sal is physically tossed out of the front door by Ricky.

Ricky stares him down from inside with the door open.

Sal stands up and brushes himself off.

SAL

You could've just asked me to leave.

RICKY

I told you not to enter.

Ricky walks further inside and the door closes behind him.

Sal cracks his neck and puts on his sunglasses, trying to appear unfazed. The sound of a door SWINGING open and girls LAUGHING catches his attention. He peeks around the corner at the side of the pub.

Rosa is near the back, by the dumpsters. She sparks a joint and passes it to TASHA, 22, a bad girl biker chick with a tight black jacket and wild dark hair.

Sal stays hidden behind the corner. He can't see them, but he can hear them. We hear the back door SWING open again. The girls stop laughing when they see who just stepped outside.

MAN (O.S.)

Your Dad know you're here?

ROSA

I'm on break.

MAN (O.S.)

Tasha, you know not to bring her here, take her back to work.

Tasha grabs Rosa by the hand and throws the joint on the ground. They both look like sad puppy dogs that just got scolded.

TASHA

Come on Rosa.

The girls run away towards the front corner heading for the parking lot. They pass Sal without even noticing him. Sal watches them from where he stands. Instead of going to a bike or a car, they run past his truck and into a SMALL FOREST past the edge of the parking lot.

As Sal watches, the voice we just heard comes from behind him.

MAN (O.S.)

Can I help you?

Sal turns around to find himself face to face with FREDDIE, a pretty boy but well past his prime. Early 40's. Tough but not scary.

Sal tries to act un-startled even though he is.

SAL  
I'm looking for a blonde woman.  
Thought she'd be here.

FREDDIE  
What made you think she'd be here?

SAL  
Just a hunch is all.

FREDDIE  
This ain't the place to be pokin'  
around on a hunch.

SAL  
I'll be leaving then.

**EXT. MUDDY PUB PARKING LOT - DAY**

Sal opens his truck door and lifts his leg to get inside.

CLANK

Coming from the forest, almost twenty yards away, we hear a hunk of metal hitting a hard place like a heavy door just latched into a frame.

Sal stops and looks towards the forest. He hesitates as to what to do. He's intrigued. He closes his car door and looks back at the pub. Freddie's gone. Nobody's outside.

Sal makes a move towards the forest.

**EXT. SMALL FOREST - DAY**

There's a path, not quite a dirt path, but it's worn in the forest. Sal follows it, searching for a person or a place. There's nothing, just trees.

The path ends at a rock wall. A natural rock wall like that of a cliff. Sal turns around confused. He looks down.

There's something off about a small patch of grass. The grass is almost too green. Sal kneels down to feel it. He pulls out a clump. It's real, but as he throws the clump to the side he sees a smooth silver patch in the empty spot where dirt should be.

He starts to pull away more patches of dirt, then:

The patch of grass rises. A MANHOLE COVER pops open in front of Sal. It was a disguise to a tunnel entrance. Sal takes a step back.

A GOON's fat head pops out from the hole. Goofy looking guy.

GOON

You lost?

SAL

More like curious.

The Goon points a pistol at Sal. Sal steps back and shows his empty hands.

GOON

Well, you better come on down.

**INT. THE BUNKER - DAY**

Sal steps down off a ladder like you'd find in a sewer onto a metal floor.

Although it's not obvious, we're in a railway freight car buried underground. Christmas lights line the walls and there's a machine in the corner filtering air.

Towards the back there's three GOONS playing cards in front of a door.

The goon closest to the door is MIKE, 30's, Asian but a redneck, wearing a cammo-jacket. Big and rough but likeable.

MIKE

What brings you to the woods, Mr...?

SAL

Call me Sal. I'm looking for a blonde, don't know her name.

MIKE

And you think she's here?

SAL

Well, I saw one wander into these woods. I really didn't expect all this. Quite the bomb shelter you got here.

MIKE

The girl is with me.

SAL

Girls. There were two of them.

MIKE

Every girl who comes through here is my property.

SAL

Do their parents know that?

The goons COCK their weapons, threatened by his remark.

MIKE

Easy boys. Our friend here is just in the wrong place.

SAL

If you could lead me in the right direction, I'll be on my way.

Mike takes out a business card from his jacket and sets it on the table.

Sal steps towards the table, keeping his eyes on the goons beside him.

MIKE

Ask for Madame Zoe.

Sal picks up the business card, which reads:

The Marina Exclusive  
 "All you can eat"  
 5000 River Lane

MIKE (CONT'D)

I expect to never see you here  
again, Sal.

SAL

Cross my heart.

**EXT. RIVER BANK - JUNGLE - EVENING**

The sun sets on the forested horizon surrounded by a yellow fog. Sticks and tree brush slowly flow down river.

A bare foot presses into the muddy bank leaving a print. A VIETNAMESE TEEN runs into the water.

An AMERICAN SOLDIER with his RIFLE drawn steps into view, watching the boy as he splashes through the river.

The soldier is Sal, 40 years prior. He takes aim at the boy. The boy swims down underwater.

Sal puts his finger on the trigger and squints down the barrel. The boy doesn't rise back up to the surface.

Sal takes a step toward the water then stops. He looks down and around himself. Something is off about the ground around him. It looks unnatural.

He takes a step toward a BUSH and uses his rifle to push leaves aside and then he sees it:

A HOLE in the ground. An air vent.

Suddenly, the SQUARE LID of leaves and dirt begins to RISE a few inches from the ground right between his legs.

Sal aims his rifle at the ground below him.

FADE TO:

**EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER BANK - EVENING**

Sal watches as the SQUARE LID of dirt lowers down into the ground and fades into MUD.

Sal's rifle is now a FISHING POLE and we see that Sal and Bud are sitting in lawn chairs fishing along the bank of the Mississippi River. Sal stares at the ground in a daze.

BUD

Branded girls and doomsday  
preppers. You really have a knack  
for trouble, don't you?

Sal takes a breath, bringing himself back to the current moment.

SAL

For a few decades.

Bud slowly adjusts his fishing rod.

BUD

What made you decide to come back  
state side?

SAL

I got old is all.

Bud grabs Sal and himself a beer from the cooler.

BUD

Too many Thai hookers you couldn't  
afford to pay?

SAL

No. The women helped keep me  
there. They're a good memory. One  
of the few.

Bud leans over to look more seriously at Sal.

BUD

You've put things in the past I  
hope.

SAL

Things changed after you went  
home. We killed kids. Didn't think  
twice about it.

Bud frowns and looks at the river.

BUD  
Just following orders.

Wanting to ignore the subject, Sal looks at the river too and chugs the rest of his beer.

SAL  
Last night I found a woman.

Bud smiles, thinking he's joking.

BUD  
She wasn't a hooker was she?

SAL  
That's what I'm going to find out.  
I want you to help me.

Bud catches something on his rod; he starts to reel it in.

BUD  
If it'll keep you around here and  
out of trouble, I'm in. But I do  
have one condition, stay away from  
the bars.

Bud reels in a log. Sal smiles and takes a drink.

SAL  
I'm not going to a bar.

**EXT. THE MARINA - GATE - NIGHT**

A grand gate leading to the private sector of the docks. The gate isn't designed to truly keep people out; it's designed for the appearance of exclusivity. It's locked and guarded by a CODE BOX.

Sal opens the flap cover to the code box and looks around. He's alone on the outside of the gate. Although we can't see the details of the docks in the dark, we can hear the WHITE NOISE of a party in the background.

Sal takes out his business card and looks at it again. He types in the numbers "5-0-0-0". The code box reads "error." He turns the card around to find it blank; he tosses the card into the water.



He uses the code box as a footstool and climbs over the gate. He goes up and over with ease.

**EXT. THE DOCK PARTY - NIGHT**

Stunning women line the docks. They're not dressed upscale in a classical sense, but rather sexually casual. Almost all the women seem to have at least one tattoo, some have many that cover their sides or back as they walk by in bikinis. Some women have the same tattoos as others. Sal can't help but to look and they stare back.

Sal grabs a blonde by her hand and smiles, she smiles back. He looks at her wrist, it's blank, and he lets go of her. She's intrigued, but his attention shies away to the sound of SINGING.

The sound of a small band and laughter comes from a DOCK BAR in the distance. Sal makes eye contact with an eye-catching SLOVAKIAN WOMAN, who has a microphone, and sings a tune in her native tongue.

**EXT. DOCK BAR - NIGHT**

Sal unapologetically trots through the men of the party, who despite their difference in appearance and demeanor, awkwardly gape and whistle at the singer in the same way the Muddy Pub patrons drooled and hollered over Rosa earlier.

The Slovakian woman finishes the song with such emotion the men at the bar stand in awe and APPLAUD. Sal is unfazed and eyes around the bar for a bartender, who appears to be missing.

Disappointed, Sal weakly joins in the applause just as a young female SERVER steps up to him with a tray full of fancy drinks.

SERVER

You look like a guy who's in need.

SAL

Depends on the need. Are any of those a whiskey?

SERVER

Buy a table and I'll bring you whatever you want.

SAL  
I don't see any tables available.

SERVER  
There are always tables available.

The server nods her head towards the boats beyond.

SAL  
Oh really? How much?

SERVER  
If you're asking, you don't have  
enough.

The server starts to walk away and Sal grabs a champagne glass  
off her tray to slow her down.

SAL  
*(taking a sip of champagne)*  
I'm looking for a Miss Zoe.

Sal finishes the glass and sets it back on the tray.

The Server gives him an impressed gleam.

SERVER  
*(eyeing the Slovakian singer)*  
Get in line, stranger.

Sal looks at the group of men surrounding Zoe, who's telling a  
story we can't hear. The men around her are laughing with  
exaggeration to try and win her attention.

SAL  
Maybe you can help me, just you.

SERVER  
I'm not for sale.

SAL  
I'm not looking to buy, I just  
need to know something.

SERVER  
Shoot.

SAL

How many girls have a tattoo on  
their wrist with a triangle  
surrounding a rose?

The server is somewhat thrown off by the question.

SERVER

Only one girl I know has that  
tattoo, and you shouldn't be  
asking about her.

The server starts to walk away. Sal presses towards her again,  
only this time he's confronted by two suited up BOUNCERS which  
the server slides in-between.

SAL

What's her name?

The bouncers step up to Sal, who puts his hands up to express  
surrender. Most of the party takes notice, including Zoe, who  
cuts her own story short, which irritates her listeners.

The server walks away into the shadows.

SAL

No trouble fellas. Just looking  
for a real drink.

The bouncers don't move or say anything, but Sal can sense their  
intentions.

A beautiful hand brushes Sal's shoulder, and he turns around to  
find himself face to face with Madame Zoe.

ZOE

Are we searching for the same  
thing?

SAL

Whiskey.

ZOE

Anything else Mr...?

SAL

Call me Sal. Maybe a blonde.

ZOE

Not a brunette like me?

SAL

No offense.

They study each other, both trying to make the moment appear flirtatious. The outdoor lighting gives her a mysterious glow and a shine in her eyes.

She gives a signal to the bouncers to go away. They glance at Sal before leaving.

ZOE

Let's fix ourselves a *real* drink.

She smoothly walks away showing her nice shape in a short dress and Sal follows while gleaming at the other men who respond with frowns of disgust.

**EXT. PRIVATE DOCK END - NIGHT**

A secluded dock away from the party. Large boats line both sides of the dock and an abyss of dark water extends into the background.

A few fancy outdoor chairs and a table sit at the dock's edge. It's as if the dock is a runway with Sal and Zoe as the two sole viewers of the private show. Sal and Zoe both sip glasses of whiskey.

A line of blonde women walk single file down the dock towards them. The girls fan out and turn so that Sal can see each one of them.

The middle girl lowers her waistband to reveal a tattoo of a *horseshoe* on her pelvis before letting the band snap back to her hip.

SAL

None of them.

ZOE

*(whispering)*

You aren't allowed to waste my time. I suggest you choose.

SAL  
I'm looking for a specific blonde.

ZOE  
Describe her.

SAL  
Older than you. She has a tattoo  
on her wrist of a rose inside a  
triangle.

Zoe stands up like he's just offended her.

ZOE  
Do you know her name?

SAL  
No, I was hoping you would. Do  
you?

ZOE  
How do you know her?

SAL  
I just met her.

ZOE  
Where?

Sal tilts his head to express confusion over her concern but reveals his compulsion to lie.

SAL  
On the street.

Zoe, now truly alert, hides her suspicion and smiles.

ZOE  
Wait here for me. I'll bring her.

Zoe walks down the dock back towards the party, the girls step out of her way.

She whispers into the ear of the two bouncers. She points in the direction of Sal, and the bouncers nod with understanding. They move away from her.

SAL

Shit.

Sal finishes his whiskey then grabs Zoe's glass and downs it too.

He breathes out and looks around him. He's trapped unless he goes into the water.

We follow the bouncers as they walk down the dock in and out of girls and drunk men towards the private area.

BLOOP. Sal disappears into the water.

The bouncers didn't see him drop into the water, but they move quicker once they notice Sal is missing from his chair.

At the dock's edge, a bouncer pulls out a two-way RADIO while looking past the empty chairs and into the dark water.

BOUNCER

(into radio)

Check the gates on both ends.

**EXT. MARINA LEVEE - NIGHT**

Away from all the boats and the party, is a rock LEVEE, which serves as a barrier between the river and the marina. Sal, soaking wet, climbs up the rocks and over to the river's side so he's hidden from whoever may be watching for him from the docks.

He turns his attention away from the party. He instead looks towards a YACHT docked near the edge of the water, which has a small gathering of people on its deck. There are two blonde women and two men having an inaudible discussion.

Sal, while lying on his side, soaking wet, pulls his flask from his breast pocket and takes a pull. He wipes his mouth as he watches the yacht.

**EXT. YACHT DECK - NIGHT**

The deck of the yacht serves as a lounge. There's a tall table and a couch.

Two men stand around the table while having a conversation with two young blonde women; one is Rosa, and the other is ALICE, who looks strikingly similar to the blonde from the motel, only 20 years younger.

One of the men we recognize as Freddie, but the other is another new face, TORCH, mid-forties, wearing a white suit and gold watch.

**EXT. MARINA LEVEE - NIGHT**

From Sal's view, we only see one of the blondes: Rosa. Alice is facing away making it unclear if she's the blonde from the motel or not.

Sal slowly walks down the levee to get a closer look. He stops when he gets a clear view of Zoe, who's just arrived onto the yacht. She whispers into the ear of Torch.

**EXT. YACHT DECK - SAME TIME**

Zoe continues whispering to Torch while he takes a sip from his glass, staring at Freddie, who's coldly watching Alice.

Zoe leans away from Torch's ear as if she's done speaking. Torch nods, then leans in and kisses her.

Zoe walks away and Torch turns to look at Alice.

TORCH

Now Alice. Why should I hire you  
to tutor my daughter?

ALICE

Other than my expertise in the  
field, Rosa and I get along quite  
well. We met before I even knew of  
the job.

TORCH

Is this true Rosa?

ROSA

I do like her.

Underneath the table, we see Alice reaching into her purse. From the purse, she pulls out an ink pen, which looks rather strange, larger than it should be.

TORCH

Well, your resume is quite impressive. You've even done some time as a private tutor in Southeast Asia. Which is why I'm curious about your dedication.

ALICE

Travel is a part of why I chose this profession, but I can assure you Mr. Torch, I'd be devoted to your daughter full time. Day and night.

Alice pulls the pen up from under the table along with a small notepad.

Torch eyes Freddie, who eyes Alice.

ALICE (CONT'D)

If you allow me to take notes, I could have a full lesson plan written in a week.

Alice puts the pen up to her full and beautiful lips as she waits for a response. She smiles.

Freddie grabs her arm, and rips the pen from her hand. Alice is startled.

Rosa looks over, concerned. Freddie pulls the cap off the pen, revealing a SMALL THIN KNIFE.

Freddie holds the pen knife up to her throat, and Rosa leans back in her chair, in shock.

TORCH

You almost had me fooled, you really did you bitch.

ALICE

It's just a precaution, I know what you do.



ROSA

What the hell are you doing dad?

TORCH

This is what happens when you befriend strangers Rosa. Do it Freddie.

FREDDIE

Run away Rosa.

Rosa gets up and starts to walk away, tears in her eyes.

Torch stops her and grabs her, forcing her to watch.

TORCH

Don't make me tell you again Freddie.

ALICE

You're scared of her aren't you Torch? You should be. She's going to...(cut off)

Freddie, suddenly slits her throat. Blood sprays onto Rosa's face and onto Torch's white suit.

Freddie drags Alice to the edge of the yacht and throws her OVERBOARD.

**EXT. DOCK BESIDE YACHT - NIGHT**

Sal steps along the edge of the water and reaches the start of the pier. He hides in a dark spot between light posts.

While he's just a stone's throw away from the yacht and moving forward, Sal looks up at the hull of the boat just in time to see Alice drop from the edge of the yacht and SPLASH into the water beside him.

Startled, Sal looks at the floating blonde, who's face down and clearly dead. Blood fills the water around her head. Sal takes a step back.

In a panic, he jumps back into the water in the opposite direction from Alice, disappearing from the situation.

Sal never comes back up and Alice's lifeless body appears to float to the beat of the distant MUSIC.

**EXT. YACHT DECK - NIGHT**

Freddie throws the pen knife off the edge of the boat while looking down at the bloody deck floor.

Torch steps up to him and lifts his chin so that he looks him in the eyes.

TORCH

I know she's alive Freddie. There was a man looking for her.

Freddie looks at him guiltily.

TORCH (CONT'D)

You're going to finish what you should've done all those years ago, or I'll make Rosa watch you die.

FREDDIE

I don't know where she is.

TORCH

She's close. Call Dick. The man who's looking for her must have seen her around. Find him.

**INT. LAUNDROMAT - MORNING**

Small. Grimy. Sells fish bait along with detergent. Sal sits in the corner glancing a newspaper as he waits for his clothes to dry. He flips quickly as if he's just looking for a specific story, not to catch up on news.

He squints, almost frustrated as he folds it back up and tosses it to the chair beside him.

Sal's alone except for Bud, who's pouring two cups of coffee from a home coffee maker that sits on the clerk's desk.

Bud hands Sal a cup of coffee and takes a seat directly across from him.

SAL  
Nothing here Bud. I need more.  
Anything.

Sal pours a shot from his flask into his coffee.

BUD  
You threw out the card?

SAL  
It didn't have anything on it.  
Just an address. 5000 River Lane,  
all you can eat.

BUD  
Describe the woman you slept with.

SAL  
White, long hair, blonde, thin,  
tall, maybe five-nine or ten;  
forties, tattoo on her inner  
wrist, can't remember which hand,  
but that's the only ink I saw.

BUD  
And the girl in the water looked  
like?

SAL  
White, blonde, it could have been  
dyed. Height and build were the  
same as my girl. I don't know if  
she had the tattoo.

Bud raises an eyebrow.

SAL (CONT'D)  
You don't believe me.

BUD  
I believe you. Which is why I see  
this as a very dangerous and  
avoidable dilemma.

SAL

It's a dilemma to help women in danger?

BUD

You don't know the floater was dead.

SAL

She was dead. There are women underground being whored out. I know that. I'm not seeking revenge here, just a little bit of understanding. Either you help me or not.

The CLERK walks in from outside holding a PBR tall boy and sits behind his desk.

Bud raises his coffee cup to cheers the clerk.

The clerk CRACKS his beer and sips it.

Bud breathes in and gives Sal a look of defeat.

BUD

No more meets. I'm out of this visually. Use pay phones and leave messages.

SAL

Done.

Bud leans in close to Sal.

BUD

Watch the water and get in close to someone with information.

Bud gets up to leave. Sal's dryer BEEPS.

BUD (CONT'D)

Play it nice and don't draw a crowd.

Sal gets up to look at his white T-Shirt, which is covered in dark stains.

CLERK

That your only shirt?

SAL

Where's the nearest department store?

**INT. LEWIS AND CLARK MOTEL - FRONT LOBBY - DAY**

Sal wears a fresh set of new clothes and looks at a wall of brochures, postcards, and magazines in the quaint lobby.

BARNEY

A map. But not my map?

SAL

Yeah, a different map.

BARNEY

Tell me what kind of map you want.

Sal runs his finger along an array of brochures for local shops, fishing spots, and famous St. Louis attractions.

He passes along the same POSTCARD for the Art Museum he'd been reading earlier on the bus. He also passes a few that catch his eye: "*Haunted Houses*," and "*National Great Rivers Museum*."

SAL

Nevermind a map, I need locations.

BARNEY

What kind of locations?

Sal pulls out a brochure for "*Local Routes: The Underground Railroad*."

SAL

Camouflaged ones.

(winks)

Book me for the whole week. Same room and give me a discount.

BARNEY

What kind of discount?

SAL

The kind for veterans.

Sal takes a stack of brochures and heads out the door.

**INT. THE MUDDY PUB - NIGHT**

It's rowdy. The MUSIC is loud. Dance and laughter fill the room. Ricky and his goons are playing pool.

Ricky chalks his stick and sets up his final shot. His face is focused. A ROUGH WOMAN leans into his ear and whispers something we can't hear.

Ricky sinks the 8-ball and passes the woman his stick without a change in expression.

He walks away from the table and two ROUGH RIDERS follow like bodyguards behind.

The other patrons get out of his way as he sparks up a cigarette and plows his way to the front entrance.

**EXT. MUDDY PUB - PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

Ricky POUNDS open the doors to find Sal leaning against Ricky's bike, cool and collected like he's been waiting there.

RICKY

Take your ass off my bike so I can  
shoot ya without leaving a mark.

Sal leans off the bike and puts his hands in his pockets. Ricky throws his cigarette on the ground and pulls out a PISTOL.

SAL

I'm unarmed and I'm going to be  
blunt. I didn't come here to die,  
I came here to fight.

Sal takes his hands out of his pockets and puts them up.

SAL (CONT'D)

I thought the impression my ass  
made on your seat here would piss  
you off enough to make that  
happen.

A few more patrons walk outside to see the commotion, one of them is the rough woman.

RICKY

You're a dumbass.

Ricky passes his gun to one of his goons and starts to take off his jacket.

SAL

No, no, no. Give it to your girl.

RICKY

What did you just say?

SAL

I'm fighting the three of you. So, pass the gun to your girl.

RICKY

*(laughing)*

Baby, take my gun and point it at this asshole's head.

The girl gladly takes his pistol and points it at Sal.

Sal keeps his eye on Ricky and his goons who take off their jackets and start to surround him as he backs into a more open section of the gravel parking lot.

RICKY (CONT'D)

You make one dirty move and she'll shoot you where you stand.

SAL

And if I put the three of you on the ground, I keep your bike.

RICKY

Not a chance.

All three men step up to Sal. Ricky takes the first swing and Sal counters it by taking one solid step to the side and shoving him into a second goon.

The third goon throws a punch and Sal counters him by ducking, gut punching him and then putting him into an arm bar in which the goon's arm is wrapped around his own back.

Sal pulls the goon in close to him, taking control, and threatens the other two like he has a hostage.

SAL

Both of you get on the ground or I  
break his arm.

The third goon tries to head butt Sal while Ricky and the other two charge at him. Sal breaks the goons arm and throws him on the ground in front of him, stalling the other two.

The goon SQUEALS in pain. The rough woman COCKS Ricky's pistol.

Ricky and the other goon charge Sal.

Sal pulls the goon's head into his knee, which knocks the goon out cold, then Sal catches Ricky in the same arm bar he just had on the third goon. Ricky, knowing he's caught, yells to his girl.

RICKY

Shoot 'em baby! Shoot.

She hesitates for a second then...

A HAND pops up from the side of the rough woman and forces her to point the gun down. This hand is revealed to be Freddie's.

FREDDIE

That's enough. Everyone inside.

Freddie points at Sal.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

You're coming with me.

A few patrons help the goons off the ground.

SAL

(to Ricky)

Seeing as I didn't get the lot of  
you on the ground in time, you can  
keep the bike.



RICKY

Eat shit.

Sal smiles at Freddie with a glow of adrenaline.

SAL

Does this mean I get a drink on  
the house?

Freddie keeps a strong stare on Sal, which causes Sal to drop his smile and walk forward.

**INT. MUDDY PUB PRIVATE AREA - NIGHT**

An empty back section of the bar. It's a dark and dimly lit area formally used for dining. There are booths on the side and a closed down kitchen.

Freddie and Sal sit in one of the booths while two GUARDS stand watching just far enough to be out of their conversation, but close enough to take charge.

FREDDIE

Do you know who I am?

SAL

The owner?

FREDDIE

I'm Freddie, and I don't need my  
staff or customers in the  
hospital.

SAL

I'm sorry.

FREDDIE

You know something, I think you're  
full of shit.

SAL

I'm looking for work. I thought I  
could replace the bouncer. I  
handed my application to you  
outside. Now we're having our  
first interview.

FREDDIE  
You think you're smart.

SAL  
I'm only trying to appear  
confident.

Freddie relaxes, almost appearing respectful.

He waves to one of his GUARDS.

FREDDIE  
Get our friend here a drink. A...?

SAL  
Whiskey. Straight.

The guard walks out to the main part of the bar.

Sal sits awkwardly, there's a casual pause as Sal cracks his neck and puts his hands on the table as if to say, "What's next?"

FREDDIE  
I can't use you. All my employees  
are old pals. It's a trust issue.

The guard comes back in with a glass of whiskey and sets it in front of Sal.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)  
I'd use you as a bus boy, but it  
might be difficult with your arm.

Sal reaches for his drink.

SAL  
My arm?

Freddie grabs Sal's arm and holds it tight against the table. Sal squirms, but the guard holds Sal's face on the table in an extremely vulnerable position.

Freddie twists Sal's wrist so that his own palm is facing his face, ready to be snapped at any second. The moment becomes extremely tense.

FREDDIE

I don't ever want to see you  
again. Do you understand me?

SAL

Yes. Completely.

FREDDIE

If I even get a whiff of your shit  
around here again, I'm not gonna  
stop Ricky from killing you. I'll  
drop your body in the river  
myself.

SAL

Got it.

Freddie suddenly jerks Sal's palm forward, SNAPPING his wrist.  
Sal GROANS and breathes heavy trying to hide his pain and fear.

FREDDIE

That's for what you did to my  
honest hardworking employee.  
(to the guard)  
Get him out of here.

**INT. LEWIS AND CLARK MOTEL - FRONT DESK - NIGHT**

Sal barges in with his shirt wrapped around his wrist.

SAL

No questions. I need a phone and  
pain killers Barney, stat.

Barney looks up from reading a magazine and immediately walks  
around and hands Sal his cell phone like a true friend.

BARNEY

Here's my cell. I have muscle  
relaxers and over the counter  
migraine meds in my backpack.

SAL

I'll take it all.

Sal sits down in the lobby chair, sweating, taking a huge load off.

Barney grabs his backpack and digs through it as he walks back over to Sal. Sal's basically only one handed, struggling to grab his wallet, which has a paper with Bud's phone number inside.

Sal puts the cell phone on his lap then dials the number as Barney hands Sal a few white pills.

SAL

Put it on speaker, and all of this stays in this room. Lock the front door.

BARNEY

Yes, sir.

Barney presses a button on the phone, then walks over to lock the front door.

Sal throws the pills into his mouth, takes his flask from his jacket pocket and chugs from it.

BUD

(via cell phone speaker)

Hello?

SAL

(into phone)

This is Sal. I'm on the front desk kid's cell phone. Don't worry, he's alright.

Sal motions for Barney to leave the room, which he does without hesitation.

SAL (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Someone got the jump on me.

BUD

(via phone)

Are you hurt?

Sal readjusts in his chair and looks at his wound under the shirt. It looks bad; black, twisted, swollen.

SAL  
(into phone)  
Nothing I can't deal with.

BUD  
(via phone)  
What's the next play then?

SAL  
(into phone)  
I want you to look into a guy  
named Freddie..

BUD  
(via phone)  
Freddie? From the pub?

SAL  
(into phone)  
Yeah, you know him?

BUD  
(via phone)  
He owns a couple bars.

SAL  
(into phone)  
He's dealing in some sort of dirt.  
You still know people at the  
courthouse, right?

BUD  
(via phone)  
Of course.

SAL  
(into phone)  
I need known associates, a  
criminal history.

BUD  
(via phone)  
Ten four. Get some rest for  
Christ's sake and don't drink  
yourself to death.

Sal hangs up and finishes the rest of the flask.

He struggles to stand up and KNOCKS on the front door, where we see Barney outside smoking a cigarette. Barney comes back inside like he's been signaled. Sal grabs the thickest magazine he can find from the table near the front desk.

SAL

I must say, your motel has the greatest customer service in the world.

BARNEY

Thank you, sir.

**INT. SAL'S MOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Sal sits in a bathtub with the magazine tied around his wrist like a DIY splint. He takes a deep breath and then reaches over to grab his bloody shirt.

**EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

A black sedan pulls into the parking lot and parks directly behind Sal's truck. The car IDLES. We don't know who's inside, and they're not getting out in a hurry.

**INT. MOTEL - FRONT DESK - NIGHT**

Barney is reading his magazine again. A set of official looking legs walk through the front door: A SERIOUS MAN with black dress pants and shoes.

Barney looks up, off guard. Whoever he's looking at has him spooked.

**INT. SAL'S MOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM**

Sal rips his shirt with one hand and his teeth. He wraps the strips of shirt around his splint as an outer layer and ties it off at the top.

**INT. MOTEL HALLWAY - SAME TIME**

The serious man walks down the hall. We still can't see who he is.

**INT. SAL'S MOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM**

Sal closes his eyes and gently sets his hand on the edge of the tub. His knife sits on the sink, more than an arm's reach away.

**EXT. SAL'S MOTEL ROOM DOOR - SAME TIME**

The serious man stops. We hear him KNOCK. A pounding knock.

FLASH TO THE BATHROOM:

Sal's eyes open wide. Alert.

**INT./EXT. SAL'S MOTEL ROOM/DOOR - CONTINUOUS**

A master key opening Sal's door. The door CREAKS open. The lights are on.

A cop stands at the door, OFFICER DICK. Tall, old, hard, like an ex drill sergeant stiff at attention.

Officer Dick looks around and sees the closed bathroom door. He draws his gun and points it at the door.

SAL (O.S. FROM BATHROOM)  
I'm unarmed and I'm naked.

OFFICER DICK  
Step out of the bathroom and put  
your hands in the air.

Sal GROANS in pain.

The officer steps to the side of the bathroom and puts his back against the wall.

SAL  
I'm wounded.

Sal opens the bathroom door slowly and steps out with his hands in the air and a towel around his waist.

Officer Dick manhandles Sal to the ground with no regard for his wrists and handcuffs him around the splint.

The officer briefly checks the bathroom. He sees the knife.

He takes the knife and throws it on the bed.

He then goes through the room and finds Sal's wallet.

Sal squirms with his face on the ground.

OFFICER DICK

Sal Harris. I think it's time for us to get acquainted. I'm Officer Richard Phelps.

The officer gets down on one knee and presses it onto Sal's broken wrist. Sal WHINES.

OFFICER DICK (CONT'D)

Seeing as you're a tourist, you don't know how things work around here.

SAL

Is Illinois that different?

OFFICER DICK

Word is, you're fighting people that live in my town.

Officer Dick leans off Sal's wrist and stands up. Sal doesn't respond.

OFFICER DICK (CONT'D)

I really hope you're hearing me Sal, because in this town I enforce the law. I'm a nice guy. I want you to know that. Because I'm such a nice guy, and because this is my town, I'm going to let you go with just a warning.

He grabs Sal's knife off the bed. He looks at it with joy and intrigue.

OFFICER DICK (CONT'D)

Combat issue.

Officer Dick puts the knife in his back pocket and leans over to un-cuff Sal.



OFFICER DICK (CONT'D)

I don't care if you drunk drive  
that piece of shit into the  
Mississippi River. You get dressed  
and you leave. Clear?

SAL

Yes, sir.

**EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

Sal walks outside in a hurry. He has his jacket halfway on. The wrist with his DIY fix is not in a sleeve, leaving it exposed and ragged looking. He throws his duffel bag in the back of his truck.

He looks around. He's alone. No cars in sight.

**INT. SAL'S TRUCK - NIGHT**

Sal gets in. He turns the key.

Out of the corner of his eye, he notices in his passenger seat there's a brand-new flip CELL PHONE.

Sal turns on his dome light and opens the phone. He reads a text message from a "Restricted" number.

*"A JOB. THE LOOSE GOOSE. ASK FOR A VINE."*

Sal flips the phone closed and stares forward, almost worn out and unwilling.

**INT. LOOSE GOOSE CLUB - LATE NIGHT**

Colorful flashing lights bounce off the ass of young women who dance to the beat of MUSIC you'd have to be on drugs to enjoy.

Sal, truly out of his element, awkwardly stands in a long and wide line waiting for a drink. It's like a madhouse college bar; he could have been in this line for 10 minutes already.

Cute college girls squeeze past him and go straight to the front of the line. No one seems to take notice or care as they chat within the line, sweating, high, they might not even know where they're at.

Sal holds his arm in the air and slides past the others in line. He almost goes unnoticed until he gets to the front, where's he's stopped by another row of patrons at the bar itself.

CLUBBER

Hold on old man.

SAL

I need a drink fast, it's an important matter.

The CLUBBER leans against the counter and relaxes, like he's ready to hear the whole story.

CLUBBER

How important?

SAL

I didn't come here for the DJ.

CLUBBER

Why not? He's a local legend.

SAL

Just help me get a drink, I'm in a hurry.

CLUBBER

What's your drink?

SAL

A vine.

The clubber raises his eyebrow and changes character like he's been in disguise. He turns to signal the BARKEEP.

The barkeep makes eye contact with the clubber. The clubber puts two fingers up, after a pause he spreads them to make a "peace" signal, which also happens to make the symbol for the letter "V."

The clubber grabs Sal and searches him for a weapon.

Sal stares around at the girls on the dance floor. They're all dressed bizarre and slutty.

Sal's clean, and the clubber steps off. When he turns around back towards the bar counter, the barkeep stares at Sal with his arms crossed, waiting.

The barkeep reaches into his chest pocket and pulls out a small medicine VIAL filled with an unknown liquid.

Sal watches as the barkeep pours from the vial into a martini glass.

SAL

Any chance you could drip that  
into a whiskey?

The barkeep looks up at Sal and without emotion looks him straight in the eye.

BARKEEP

All of it.

SAL

What?

BARKEEP

Drink it. Now.

SAL

On the house? Right?

The clubber beside Sal sternly but sneakily shoves a PISTOL into Sal's ribs. Sal leans over and begins drinking the martini like it's a water bottle. CHUG, CHUG, CHUG.

The clubber puts his gun away as Sal finishes the last drop and sets the empty glass down. Sal shakes as it rushes through him.

Mike appears to the side of Sal, smiling, like they're old friends.

MIKE

Follow me, Sal... Harris.

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

A BLACK SEDAN pulls away from the Loose Goose club. The sedan drives out of sight.

After a moment, another car, an older beat up BLUE CAR pulls away from the curb of the club and goes down the street in the same direction.

**INT. BLACK SEDAN - NIGHT**

The clubber drives while Mike sits passenger. Sal sits alone in the backseat.

Through the downtown streets of St. Louis, they drive.

Sal looks out the windows in a daze. The lights trail. Sal looks down. He's tripping and he hates it. He COUGHS.

MIKE

Turn left.

The clubber makes a hard RIGHT.

Sal looks up at blurred street signs.

They drive out of the downtown strip.

The streets are dark, the few people you see on the street may only come out at night.

Sal unbuckles his seat belt and lays down on the seats and stares at the ceiling. While laying down, the clubber makes a sudden U turn.

These guys aren't lost, they're just keeping Sal confused. They speed up and merge onto a highway.

Sal closes his eyes in despair.

**INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL - NIGHT**

Sal is pushed through a tunnel in a wheelchair by Mike. The tunnel is like a creepy corporate building basement. It's long and dimly lit by a string of lanterns.

Partly down the tunnel, near the middle, there's a room with a door wide open. Sal's large pupils gaze into the room where we see NAKED WHITE WOMEN, dosing blotter sheets.

Their only clothing is rubber gloves. Some women dip sheets of thick paper into tubs. Others hang the sheets on a line to let dry.

As one of the women dips a sheet into a tub, Sal looks over and sees a VIETNAMESE WOMAN pulling a bloody shirt from the tub and hang it on the line behind her.

They pass the room and Sal pops his jaw, almost like he's trying to chew something. He scratches his legs as if he's trying to write until his fingers twitch uncontrollably.

Sal looks forward to see the tunnel STRETCH to a seemingly endless length.

### **INT. THE HIVE - NIGHT**

The headquarters and main office of Torch's criminal operation. A very nice and elegant room other than the lack of windows.

There's a desk, where Torch sits waiting, smoking a blunt.

Mike wheels Sal up to Torch's desk. Sal is not speaking even though he might be trying. We see Sal in the wheelchair across from Torch, we cannot see Torch's face, instead we stare across the desk at Sal.

TORCH

Strap him.

Mike and the clubber rip off Sal's coat like surgeons, cutting off his jacket so they don't have to struggle with his homemade splint.

They lean him forward and throw on a leather VEST, which we briefly see has a thick layer of DUCT tape on the entire inside. At first glance, you'd think they're strapping a bomb to him. Each flap, and the back, have a thick layer of something. If they were any more sophisticated they would have sewn whatever it is directly into the fabric, but instead they just taped it.

Sal lets them do this like he's going through the motions, practically helpless.

Sal's leaned back into his chair and given a glass of water like he's perfectly normal.

SLAM CUT TO:

**EXT. THE CLARK BRIDGE - UNDERPASS - MORNING**

The loud sound of TRAFFIC roaring by overhead.

Sal lies on the ground with eyes still wide in a groggy fog staring at the underside of a four-lane highway bridge above him. Remnants of hallucinations still run through his mind, but he's lucid.

Sal stands up and looks down at his chest, trying to get a feel for what's strapped on him. He feels the fabric of the vest and notices a thickness inside the material. He peels away a part of the tape to reach for something inside.

Wrapped in tin foil, is a stack of palm sized blotter sheets with approximately 25 hits of LSD per sheet. If he were to peel away more of the tape and pull out everything sealed in the vest he'd find approximately 3,000 more hits.

Sal slides the tab back into the vest.

He's disgusted and looks down once again at the vest. He pats it as if he's checking to make sure he's really wearing it.

At the riverbank, he SPLASHES water onto his face. He looks around to get his bearings as to where he's at and who may be watching him. He's alone, at least within shouting range; but he's also in a very vulnerable spot, out in the open. He's on the Missouri side of the river, staring at the skyline of the small Illinois town he came from.

**EXT. PUBLIC PARK - PARKING LOT - DAY**

Sal walks through a nearly empty parking lot near the bridge. He sees something, which makes him smile.

Sal's TRUCK sits parked in the middle. Although it's not clear immediately, Barney leans against the truck eating a sandwich, waiting for Sal to arrive.

Barney sees Sal walking towards him and puts his hands in the air.

BARNEY

He's alive!

**INT. SAL'S TRUCK - CITY HIGHWAY - DAY**

Sal sits in the passenger seat while Barney drives. Sal steals the sunglasses off of Barney and leans back far in his seat like he's taking a nap.

BARNEY

How do you feel?

SAL

Not as bad as a few hours ago.

BARNEY

You're going to feel it for a while. Mike said they gave you a heavy dose.

SAL

How'd you get involved in all this?

BARNEY

I live here; I'm a part of the game.

SAL

What game?

BARNEY

The one you're in now.

SAL

Yeah, well help me get rid of this vest, I'm done with this section of the country.

BARNEY

You're not done yet.

SAL

I've walked away from worse.

BARNEY

What you do next is up to you, but it's my duty to explain your mission.

SAL

What mission?

BARNEY

Getting rid of that vest.

SAL

I'm sure I can make it sink.

BARNEY

Torch put that on you. He wants you to convince the East Side to distribute his product.

SAL

I'm not a drug dealer.

BARNEY

You are today.

SAL

Take me back to the motel.

BARNEY

You can't go back there.

SAL

Then hide me somewhere. I need a bed.

Barney puts a business card in Sal's hand that reads:

*THE GATEWAY INN*

He turns the card around to see a hand-written note that reads:

*TRANSIENT RM 13*

BARNEY

After the deal. Go there. It's safe.

**EXT. A STREET OF TENEMENTS - DAY**

Barney pulls onto the side of the street and parks.



We're right in the middle of a place where some real street violence happens on a regular basis. Most of the people here are quick to spot white guys rolling through.

BARNEY

This is as far as I go. We'll keep in touch.

Barney gets out of the car but Sal stays inside.

SAL

What exactly am I supposed to do?

BARNEY

Don't worry, they're cool. Just tell them that you're going to Dallas.

SAL

Texas?

BARNEY

Yeah, like Texas.

Barney eyes the CORNER HOUSE. Sal leans forward and looks.

On the front porch, there are three TOUGH BLACK THUGS smoking and drinking. They're relaxing. They're not big, but they're threatening. MUSIC plays there.

Sal looks back over to the driver's side and Barney's gone.

**EXT. CORNER HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

Sal walks up to the front gate with his head down looking at the sidewalk. He still has his sunglasses on, trying to appear confident and sober.

He turns his view upward. He smiles at the three thugs on the porch. They turn off their music and stand up.

Sal begins to open the lock to the FRONT GATE. Because he's still feeling the effects of the LSD, he can't push up the latch smoothly.

LEAD THUG

You drunk?

Sal finally gets the latch up correctly and opens the gate. He walks through and SLAMS the gate behind him.

SAL

I'm here to make a deal and leave.  
I'm not a cop.

Sal raises his hands in the air and points at his DIY splint.

LEAD THUG

Who you with?

SAL

I believe his name is Torch.

The two other thugs pull guns on Sal at the sound of the name.

SAL (CONT'D)

Now, now, I'm unarmed and although it seems you don't like Torch, you might like his product. Please lower your weapons.

The thugs do not lower their weapons.

LEAD THUG

What product?

SAL

My vest. But don't get any bright ideas. I was just here with another guy, and he disappeared into the woodwork.

Sal nods to a beat up BLUE CAR, which has two shadowy figures sitting inside it parked on the street half a block away.

SAL (CONT'D)

I expect there are others around watching us, ready to re-appear.

The thugs look around with a slight paranoia. The lead thug feels Sal's chest and vest.

LEAD THUG

Take it off.

Sal removes the vest and hands it to the lead thug.

The two other thugs begin to move closer with their guns held high.

SAL  
(hesitantly)  
I'm heading to Dallas.

The thugs lower their weapons and the lead thug LAUGHS as he tosses the vest to another thug.

LEAD THUG  
You're good. You can go.

Sal stands awkwardly puzzled.

SAL  
Shouldn't I get paid?

The thugs LAUGH hard.

LEAD THUG  
Go on.

SAL  
I'm confused.

LEAD THUG  
(to his thugs)  
This guy's trippin'.

The thugs continue to LAUGH.

Sal smiles with them and starts to walk away. The thugs sit down and turn up their music.

Sal gets into his truck. He eyes the blue car with shadowy figures in the distance. They're not looking at the thugs, they're watching him.

**INT. THE GATEWAY INN - FRONT DESK - DAY**

A nice place. Bustling with a crowd of mostly business men. Sal sticks out looking quite rugged with his duffel bag by his side.

The DESK CLERK gives him a genuine smile. She's intelligently attractive, mid-twenties, with hair wrapped in a big, high bun.

DESK CLERK

Welcome to the Gateway, do you  
have a reservation?

Sal slides the business card Barney gave him onto the desk and flips it over to show her the room number.

SAL

I think so.

DESK CLERK

And your name?

SAL

Sal Harris.

The desk clerk types and studies her computer.

She looks up, smiles and hands him a key card.

DESK CLERK

Your room is on the 13<sup>th</sup> floor.

SAL

I didn't think hotels had a 13<sup>th</sup>  
floor.

DESK CLERK

It's reserved for VIP guests.

SAL

I didn't know I was that  
important.

She forces a CHUCKLE. Sal looks around, almost lost. The walls of the hotel lobby are wood paneling. The wood moves like a wave.

DESK CLERK

Take the elevator to the 12<sup>th</sup>  
floor. From there you take a right  
and you'll see the stairs. If you  
need help with your luggage I can  
ring for a porter.

SAL

Got it.

DESK CLERK

*(winks)*

Anything you need, just dial zero.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY**

A large king-sized bed, perfectly made. Sal stares at it blankly.

After a deep breath, Sal puts out his arms and lets himself fall onto the bed.

His body bounces for a moment, then he just lays there silent, smiling, and content.

He looks at the wall, which pulsates like he's looking at smoke above a fire. His face frowns like he wants to cry knowing the drugs have still not worn off. He closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK

**FADE IN - HOURS LATER**

Sal wakes up to a NAKED BLONDE in bed beside him, he gently brushes the bangs off her face to see that it's:

The blonde woman from the beginning; the woman he's been looking for, DALLAS.

She opens her eyes and smiles. Sal is pleasantly surprised.

DALLAS

You're up.

SAL

You. You're alive. I thought you might have been killed.

Dallas gets out of bed and we finally see her full features, which make us further understand Sal's will to find her.

DALLAS

Can I get you anything?

SAL

Whiskey.

Dallas puts on a robe and tightens it at the waist.

She picks up the front desk phone and dials zero.

SAL (CONT'D)

What's your name?

DALLAS

I'm Dallas.

SAL

Like Texas.

DALLAS

(into phone)

A bottle of our finest whiskey.

Thank you, sweetie.

Dallas hangs up the phone.

SAL

Our?

DALLAS

I own this place.

SAL

Do you own the motel too?

DALLAS

I was visiting Barney when we met.

Sal gives her a confused look.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

Barney has eyes on some of my old acquaintances.

SAL

He works for you?

Dallas smirks at Sal.

DALLAS  
He's loyal, like a son.

SAL  
And where do I fit into this?

DALLAS  
I'll admit you were a premature  
celebration.

A beat passes. Sal sits waiting for more.

DALLAS (CONT'D)  
You've come a long way since then.

SAL  
I'm still not sure why.

DALLAS  
Am I supposed to know the answer?

SAL  
You brought me here.

DALLAS  
I gave you direction.

SAL  
You could be more precise next  
time.

Dallas sighs and turns away.

DALLAS  
You saw my girl get dropped in the  
river.

SAL  
I thought it was you.

DALLAS  
It should have been.

Dallas takes a step up to the large glass windows and opens the shades causing a burst of sunlight to blast inside.

FLASH CUT TO:

**INT. APARTMENT - KANSAS CITY - NIGHT - 15 YEARS PRIOR**

A YOUNGER DALLAS, late 20's, plays on the floor with a 2-year-old TODDLER GIRL. Blocks are dispersed across the apartment floor.

Dallas and the girl build a stack of blocks.

A piece falls to the ground and rolls under the couch nearby.

Dallas puts her arm under the couch to reach for the piece. Her face is close to the floor, looking under the couch.

Under the couch, Dallas sees her APARTMENT DOOR creak open.

A YOUNGER FREDDIE, early 20's, comes through the door carrying a pistol with a silencer in his right hand.

Dallas jumps up to her feet quickly and moves in front of the girl.

DALLAS

You can't. I left him alone. I left that life! You can't!

FREDDIE

You took his daughter.

Freddie gets to the couch and grabs Dallas.

He drags her away from the girl.

DALLAS

I was your girl Freddie! He raped me! You remember that?

Dallas throws some punches in Freddie's direction.

FREDDIE

He's my boss. Then and now.

Freddie throws Dallas on the floor and heads toward the girl, who's begun CRYING.

Freddie picks the girl up and puts her over his shoulder.



FREDDIE (CONT'D)  
You thought you could get away  
with this?

Dallas gets off the floor and rises to her knees.

DALLAS  
(pleading)  
Just don't take her to him.  
Please.

Freddie turns to Dallas and places the end of the silencer against her forehead. Tears stream down her face. She closes her eyes, expecting a shot.

Freddie grasps the gun harder, hesitating, but ready.

After a moment, he lowers the gun and walks away.

Dallas writhes in agony on the floor. SCREAMING.

Freddie speaks over his shoulder as he walks out of the apartment.

FREDDIE  
Move further away this time, or  
you'll kill all of us.

CUT TO:

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - PRESENT TIME**

There is a silence in the air. Dallas stares out the window overlooking the city and Sal sits on the edge of the bed.

SAL  
I saw her.

DALLAS  
She has my features, doesn't she?

SAL  
Your hair and tattoo.

Dallas eyes Sal with a confused look. Sal tilts his head as if to say "you didn't know?"

DALLAS

Freddie must have given it to her.

Dallas walks up to Sal, stands between his legs, and looks straight into his eyes.

SAL

What are you going to do?

DALLAS

We're going to save her.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

Dallas smiles at Sal and then answers the door. A PORTER enters with a bottle of aged whiskey.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Dallas hands the PORTER a wad of cash and closes the door. She gets a glass and pours the whiskey into the glass straight.

Dallas sits down next to Sal and caresses his inner thigh.

SAL

What's next?

Dallas hands him the glass and Sal takes a drink. Dallas climbs on top of his lap and loosens her robe.

**INT. HARDWARE STORE - NEXT DAY - MORNING**

Sal stares at a wall of power tools while drinking a coffee.

A SALES ASSOCIATE walks up next to him while peeking into his shopping cart. The cart is full of seemingly random items: DUCT TAPE, TOOL BELTS, COTTON BALLS, A TOOL VEST, SAFETY GOGGLES, KNIVES AND BLADES.

Sal glances over at the sales associate.

ASSOCIATE

What are you building?

Sal stares ahead, ignoring the associate.

ASSOCIATE (CONT'D)  
Sorry sir, just trying to help.

The sales associate starts to walk away.

SAL  
I didn't say you couldn't.

The associate stops.

SAL (CONT'D)  
I need Kevlar.

ASSOCIATE  
For what?

Sal's face drops into a serious frown of concern.

**INT. SAL'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY**

The bed is covered with the supplies. The vest has been cut into four pieces and has been sewn back together with Kevlar.

The tool belt has been cut up into two pieces and there are blades sitting neatly on an extra bed sheet, which is still folded up like it came straight from the folding press.

Sal sits in the guest chair with a whiskey on the table beside him. He wraps a fresh new splint with strips of cut-up bath towels and Kevlar.

Sal takes a drink and taps his new "cast" on the side of the chair as if to test it. He picks up his boots, and moves over to the bed.

He grabs the phone and dials, while it rings he flips one boot upside down and looks at it.

SAL  
(into phone)  
It's me. What'd you find?

BUD  
(over phone)  
Freddie's a clean front for a  
Tyler A Jackson. Known alias  
of... (cut off)

SAL  
(into phone)

Torch.

Sal takes a blade and slices into the side of the sole of his boot; just a little slit. He works on making a little hole as he holds the phone to his ear with his shoulder.

BUD  
(via phone)  
Well done.

SAL  
(into phone)  
The blonde from the motel, she told me.

BUD  
(via phone)  
I take it you found her. Is she one of Torch's?

SAL  
(into phone)  
She's not a hooker.

BUD  
(via phone)  
And Torch?

SAL  
(into phone)  
He's big time. Runs things on the Illinois side and possibly further south.

BUD  
(via phone)  
Do you know how they operate?

SAL  
(into phone)  
Not exactly, but I want you to look into the dams. Find out what's passing through.

Sal finishes making his boot slit hole.

Sal takes a piece of thread and pokes it through a hole in a RAZOR BLADE made for sliding into a handle. He ties off the string and lets the blade dangle like a pendulum.

BUD  
(via phone)  
I'll make some new friends.

Sal takes the razor blade and slides it in the boot slit. A perfect fit, almost completely hidden.

SAL  
Just watch your back.

He pulls on the string and the blade slides right out.

BUD  
(via phone)  
Where will you be?

KNOCK, KNOCK.

PORTER (O.S.)  
Porter!

SAL  
Come in!

The porter comes in with a food tray covered by a metal dome lid. On the tray is a tent card that reads:

*"FOR TORCH - DALLAS"*

The porter takes off the lid to reveal a dirty STACK OF \$30,000 CASH wrapped in rubber bands.

SAL (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
Illinois.

**EXT. MARINA POOL - DAY**

A group of families spin around in a pool like they're dancing. There are 5 couples and 8 kids in the pool doing a form of aerobics to upbeat MUSIC. It's comical.

Standing outside the pool in a bikini that's hardly acceptable for a PG crowd, is Zoe, the instructor for whatever water class is happening.

ZOE

Keep that rocking motion.

Zoe walks around and leans over to speak directly to one of the fathers.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Push the water out and in.

HAPPY DAD

Anything you want!

As Zoe leans back up, we see Sal standing behind her, menacing and extremely out of place in his all-black new outfit.

SAL

Do you know where I can find a girl by the name of Rosa Jackson?

Zoe is startled, but she plays it cool.

ZOE

Excuse me, but I'm in the middle of a class.

SAL

People pay for this?

ZOE

Yes and you haven't. Now leave or I'll call the police.

SAL

They couldn't get here soon enough.

MAD DAD

Hey! She doesn't want you here man!

ZOE

You need to leave now.

BOY

I'll get him Dad. You better leave mister!

SAL

Tell your boss I have his package.  
8pm. Under the bridge.

The boy swims up to the side of the pool and SPLASHES water at Sal as he walks away.

Zoe turns towards her class.

ZOE

I'm sorry for that interruption everyone. Now, I want movement!

**EXT. MARINA PARKING LOT - DAY**

Sal takes a drink from his flask while staring at the river. He's focused on a very specific barge that's docked along the side of the river, near an old MILL.

He looks the other direction to watch another barge moving towards a majestic LOCK and DAM. The loud GROWL of motorcycles distracts Sal from his thoughts.

A line of MOTORCYCLES drive towards Sal, who turns around to see them. The fleet of motorcyclists surround Sal, who are revealed to be Ricky and his rough riders.

Ricky calls to Sal over the loud RUMBLE of idling bikes.

RICKY

Freddie wants to talk.

SAL

I've got my phone.

RICKY

Face to face. Now.

**INT. MUDDY PUB - MAIN BAR - DAY**

A slight contrast to Sal's last encounter. Sal sits at the bar alone. The few other patrons give Sal a nod of respect.

Ricky stands at the pool table in the corner, watching Sal, covering the bar.

The bartender drops a whiskey in front of Sal.

BARTENDER  
(*stale*)

On the house.

Sal grins wide and nods with respect.

BARTENDER  
You can take it with you.

The bartender nods to the private area in back.

Sal turns and sees Ricky's piercing stare from around the corner.

#### **INT. MUDDY PUB PRIVATE AREA**

Sal's now alone in a booth. He peeks around. He's truly alone, not one guard.

He sits patiently sipping his drink. After his second sip, he gives a face of non-caring and finishes it all.

FREDDIE  
Please. Use a coaster.

Freddie sits across from Sal and slides a coaster towards his side of the table.

As Sal sets his glass down, he notices that it's the same "COME FIND ME" coaster Dallas gave him at the motel.

Sal sets his empty glass on it, ignoring the implication.

Freddie sits happily across from Sal, like they're old friends.

FREDDIE  
How was your trip?

SAL  
Forgetful.



FREDDIE

I'm assuming you made a deal.

SAL

I'll give it to Torch later.

FREDDIE

I didn't bring you here for an update. I want to know why you're looking for Rosa.

SAL

She's cute.

FREDDIE

She's 17.

SAL

How much does that cost?

Freddie cocks his weapon and presses the barrel directly into Sal's knee.

FREDDIE

Not for sale.

Sal puts his hands on the table to show that they're empty.

SAL

That coaster.

(nods toward it)

Dallas left it for me.

Freddie releases the pressure of the gun on Sal's knee, but he still keeps it aimed at Sal's groin.

FREDDIE

What do you know about Dallas?

SAL

She's lived a life and a half. I have too, now that I think about it... She says you were in there somewhere, in one of her lives.

Freddie gazes at Sal before giving a soft smile.

FREDDIE  
Another whiskey?

Freddie knocks on the wall and withdraws his gun.

SAL  
Is that rose your brand?

FREDDIE  
What do you mean?

SAL  
Rosa's tattoo, it's the same one  
Dallas has.

FREDDIE  
*(relaxing)*  
It's not like that. That tattoo's  
special. I designed it for Dallas.

A beat of understanding on both sides.

SAL  
You loved her?

FREDDIE  
I raised Rosa as my own. What do  
you think?

SAL  
I think Rosa deserves a better  
life.

A goon brings Sal another whiskey.

FREDDIE  
What's the plan?

SAL  
To save her.

**INT. NATIONAL GREAT RIVERS VISITORS CENTER - DAY**

A combination between gift shop and museum. Parents bustle around staring at old pictures reading maps, while kids run around with stuffed animals.

One child takes a stuffed fish from a basket near the Cashier Desk. The cashier is Rosa.

ROSA

I know you think it's cute, but you have to pay for him.

STUFFED FISH BOY

My fish.

ROSA

After you pay.

The boy runs away and Rosa lets him leave. She lightly smiles.

ROSA (CONT'D)

Little shit.

Her face drops when she sees Freddie coming towards the register. He's coming in hot, edgy.

FREDDIE

We're leaving.

ROSA

And where are we going?

FREDDIE

How about Canada?

ROSA

Gross, why?

FREDDIE

Because I said so.

ROSA

What are you talking about?

FREDDIE

Just listen. Has there been a man or woman in here lately, hanging around?

ROSA

No, Fred. Now can I finish my shift in peace?

Freddie eases off some, he takes her tone seriously.

FREDDIE

You like it here?

ROSA

Sure. Daddy got me 20 an hour.

FREDDIE

To sit on your ass and sell  
stuffed animals?

Rosa tightens her face, she can tell he's hinting at something.

ROSA

Are you here for a reason or just  
to bug me?

FREDDIE

Tonight. Any outsiders come  
looking for you, run.

**EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE/RIVERSIDE - SUNSET**

The sound of loud CARS and small WAVES. Sal and Torch walk down the shoreline, side by side. Sal hands Torch a bath towel.

SAL

Nice day for a swim.

TORCH

Not in my river.

Torch unfolds the towel to find the DIRTY CASH Dallas gave Sal.

TORCH (CONT'D)

What's with this?

SAL

I didn't have an envelope.

TORCH

How'd you win 'em over?

SAL

I have a way with words.

TORCH

If that's how it is, I'm gonna use you.

SAL

Just tell me when and where.

Torch stops and looks up the hill, where we see the silhouettes of TWO GOONS at the top, watching them.

TORCH

There are rules. Rules you can't break.

SAL

Go ahead.

TORCH

No more girls. No more snooping.

SAL

Understood.

TORCH

Stay away from the Marina and Mike's tunnels. You'll answer to Freddie and only Freddie.

SAL

Freddie's the man.

TORCH

I'm the man.

Torch stares down Sal. Sal holds his ground.

Torch relaxes and looks at the river.

TORCH (CONT'D)

Tomorrow morning. The pub.

SAL

I'll be there.

Sal puts his hand up for a handshake, Torch doesn't raise his own.

TORCH

Why did you ask about my daughter?

SAL

(hesitantly)

She can dance. I love a good dancer. That's all.

TORCH

Where was she dancing?

SAL

The pub. It was my first day in town.

Torch turns away from Sal.

TORCH

(smiling)

You know I've got eyes on you right?

SAL

I've seen them. I'm trained.

TORCH

That's right. Soldier Sal Harris.

Torch turns back toward Sal.

TORCH (CONT'D)

(very serious)

You're a soldier for me now.

**INT./EXT. DAM - PARKING LOT/BUD'S CAR - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT**

Bud's car sits in an empty PARKING LOT. Bud is a hundred yards away talking to a DAM WORKER, young, rough, in an orange vest. We can't hear them talking.

They both smoke a cigarette. Part of the large CONCRETE LOCK AND DAM is visible behind them.

Bud's cell phone sits on the car dashboard BUZZING.

It continues to vibrate as Bud steps away from the dam worker nodding as if to understand. He throws his cig away and heads to his car.

Bud gets inside his car and answers the phone.

BUD

Hello?

**INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM/BUD'S CAR - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT**

The hospital is mostly empty. A few people sit in chairs half asleep like they've been waiting for hours.

Near the corner, Sal sits next to a table with a LAND-LINE PHONE to his ear. Sal's not here for help, he's just here for the free phone.

SAL

(into phone)

I'm in with Torch. I'm making a move.

Sal takes a swig from his flask. He looks around, relaxed.

BUD

(via phone)

Right now?

SAL

(into phone)

Tonight.

BUD

(via phone)

Single handedly.

Sal looks toward his damaged wrist and hand.

SAL

(into phone)

Literally. What do you know about the dams?

BUD

(into phone)

I need more time.

SAL  
(via phone)  
Tell me anything you can.

BUD  
(into phone)  
Our guys use the barges to move  
their products. Shipments are  
caught sometimes, but security  
here is either weak or bought off.  
But that's not all.

SAL  
(via phone)  
What do you mean?

BUD  
(into phone)  
Recently more and more shipments  
have been coming from train cars.

SAL  
(into phone)  
They're using the railway along  
with the river?

BUD  
(via phone)  
Maybe, the railway has a line that  
runs up the river from town and  
ends at the dam.

SAL  
(into phone)  
I know where to go.

BUD  
(via phone)  
Sal, don't do this.

Sal hangs up on him. He looks around to see everyone in the room  
is now staring at him. He looks at a SECRETARY, who frowns.

SAL  
(to the secretary)  
Thanks for the phone.



**EXT. MUDDY PUB - PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

Sal sits in his truck at the far end of the full parking lot. He peers at his rear-view mirror, watching the front door. There are a few patrons, but none take notice of him.

**INT. THE WOODS - NIGHT**

Sal creeps through the trees, battle ready. The moon shines eerily through the branches. He stomps on the ground.

STOMP. STOMP. DINK. He flashes a light. We see that he's at the right spot. The grass is bright green. He turns off the light.

He takes out a knife and waits a few seconds. He takes a drink from his flask. He stops, confused. He tilts the flask upside down. It's empty. A look of real shock and fury. He forgot to refill.

He turns the flashlight back on. He's done being sneaky. He kicks away the grass. He finds the handle. He pulls up the manhole cover.

A BLACK HOLE.

He shines the light down. Nothing. Nobody.

**INT. UNDERGROUND BUNKER - NIGHT**

Sal's light shines on an empty room. There's not even any chairs or tables, it looks like it's been abandoned.

Sal gets to the BACKDOOR. He opens it slowly to reveal:

**A LARGE CAVERN**

Sal's light doesn't shine far enough to reach the extent of this cave's network.

**INT. CAVERN TUNNEL**

Sal COUGHS as he walks through the catacomb-like rock and dirt tunnel. It's natural, but marked with the signs of modern men. Broken glass and trash scatter the rock floor.

Sal comes to moonlight. Air blows across his face. He's reached the end of the tunnel.

**EXT. THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE - NIGHT**

Tall wire fences surround a large cave entrance. To his right is a parking lot filled with parked CARGO TRUCKS. It's as if he's in a closed down construction yard. There's not another soul in sight.

Sal gets to the fence. On the other side is THE MILL. Leading into the mill is a line of RAILROAD TRACKS.

He looks down the fence to find an opening. He shines his light on a GATE, wide open.

**EXT. TRAIN YARD - NIGHT**

Lines of cargo cars sit. Sal shines his light on the cars as he walks down the tracks, searching.

His light stops on a BROKEN PAD LOCK on a train car door.

**INT. OPEN TRAIN CAR - NIGHT**

Sal shines his light inside. We see the aftermath of a horror story. Chains and torn up women's clothing fill the floor of the car.

Sal puts his hand on the edge to climb in, where his hand touches something sticky: FRESH BLOOD.

A BLACK FIGURE walks up behind Sal and COCKS a weapon.

Sal turns around. The gunman shines a bright flashlight on him.

Sal shields his eyes and we hear a familiar voice.

OFFICER DICK

Is that blood on your hands?

SAL

Are you going to arrest me?

OFFICER DICK

You're not going to jail yet.

SAL  
I suppose you wouldn't want to  
fight me for my freedom.

OFFICER DICK  
Get in the car.

SAL  
This car? No, I'll take my chances  
at the...(cut off)

Officer Dick puts the barrel of his gun in Sal's mouth.

He opens Sal's jacket to find a knife.

OFFICER DICK  
Another one?

Sal MUMBLES.

The officer takes the gun out of Sal's mouth and grabs the knife  
from Sal's jacket.

He holds it up to Sal's throat while searching him for other  
weapons. He takes and stomps on the CELL PHONE.

SAL  
That was a gift.

Officer Dick jabs Sal in the nose then swoops Sal's legs like a  
fireman's carry. He throws him in the train car.

Sal lies on the floor of the car. As he starts to get up to his  
knees, Officer Dick closes the door, sealing him inside the dark  
box.

**INT. HOTEL/LOBBY/BAR - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT**

A well-dressed DOORMAN, wearing a hat, holds the FRONT DOOR of  
the hotel open for Dallas. She strides through the lobby and  
heads toward the nearby BAR. The FEMALE BARTENDER, late 20's,  
innocent looking, is putting away bottles behind the bar. She  
sees Dallas coming and smiles.

FEMALE BARTENDER  
I didn't know you'd be in tonight.

DALLAS

It's a last-minute thing. Could you bring two glasses of champagne to the back. I'm expecting someone.

FEMALE BARTENDER

Of course. Coming up.

Dallas leaves the bar and walks to a back booth. She takes a seat. There's nobody else in sight.

A beat passes before the female bartender brings two drinks.

FEMALE BARTENDER

I think your guest has arrived.

The female bartender leaves. Dallas turns and watches as a BLACK FIGURE sits down at the seat across from her; we can't see who it is.

DALLAS

A drink if you'd like.

Dallas takes a sip of her own glass of champagne and stares confidently at her unknown company.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

How can I get my daughter back?

**INT./EXT. TRAIN CAR - AN HOUR LATER**

The train car door opens. Sal sits with his back leaned up against the wall. He slightly turns his head to see who's out there.

TORCH

Dick tells me you've been snooping around. I thought I was clear before.

SAL

I got a little lost is all.

TORCH

You can come out now. We're gonna have a meeting.

Sal stands up and walks to the edge to see: Torch, Freddie, Officer Dick, and Mike all standing outside the train car.

Sal hops down off the car.

TORCH

Mike says you're a nobody.

SAL

A criminal drifter's more accurate.

TORCH

What's your say here, Freddie?

FREDDIE

He's not working for Dallas. He's just a degenerate.

Torch eyes Freddie and softly grins. He takes a step toward Freddie and pats him on the back.

Officer Dick steps in front of Freddie while Mike steps directly beside him. Freddie looks around in shock, knowing he's blocked in.

TORCH

This has been a long trip, Freddie. All the clubs, all the women. We own more than we ever dreamed of. We...you were unstoppable. But now, now you're skipping town on me, trying to steal my daughter?

Officer Dick points his gun at Freddie. Freddie reaches for his pistol, but Mike stops him by grabbing his wrist.

FREDDIE

(truly shocked)

I've been right here! Right beside you! All the terrible things you asked me to do, I did it all. But by far the one thing I should of never done is bring that girl back to you.

TORCH

But you did. And you raised her  
like your own.

FREDDIE

Only reason I stayed around.

TORCH

And, yet you never knew.

Torch smiles and takes a step away from him.

FREDDIE

Knew what?

TORCH

She's yours.

Freddie is distraught. He scowls at Torch, tearing up.

TORCH (CONT'D)

But I'll decide what happens to  
her.

Freddie lunges at him.

BLAM.

Officer Dick BLASTS Freddie in the head. Blood gets all over  
Mike's face.

Sal steps back in awe.

Torch takes the gun from Officer Dick and hands it to Mike, who  
grabs the gun while wiping blood off his face.

MIKE

Coulda' gave some fuckin' notice.

TORCH

Get rid of this.

Torch turns toward Sal as Mike begrudgingly walks away shaking  
the blood off his hands.

Sal snaps back from his sudden shock.

TORCH (CONT'D)  
Tell Dallas, if she wants Rosa,  
she can buy her.

**INT. UNDERCOVER COP CAR - NIGHT**

Sal is curled up in the trunk with handcuffs on.

SAL  
Don't worry, there's plenty of  
legroom back here. But, I  
would...(cut off)

Officer Dick closes the trunk. Sal continues to talk but his words are unclear.

**EXT. LOCK AND DAM 26 - NIGHT**

A wall of concrete and steel covers the river like a massive bridge with small buildings on top.

At the dam's edge, is a parking lot covered by cars, out of commission boats, and industrial equipment.

Night shift workers mill about in the parking lot and on the dam wall itself.

At the edge of the parking lot, farthest from the dam, is a small building. A sign on the front of it reads:

*"NATIONAL GREAT RIVERS VISITORS CENTER"*

**INT. PARKED CAR IN DAM PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

Bud looks through a pair of binoculars, watching the main offices.

The lights to the Visitor's Center go out. Bud's eyes turn.

Rosa locks the front door like she's closing for the night.

Bud's focus switches to her and he looks back through the binoculars. She waves at a coming car, which pulls into the parking lot. It's driven by Mike.

Bud adjusts his binoculars to look at her arm - there it is - the telltale tattoo.

BUD

Bingo.

As Mike pulls away with Rosa, Bud follows.

**INT. THE GATEWAY INN - NIGHT**

Officer Dick pulls into the parking garage.

**INT. PARKING GARAGE**

Officer Dick opens the trunk and Sal slowly gets out himself.

SAL

That was a great choice of music,  
it was a little hard to hear from  
my seat, but you have taste.

OFFICER DICK

The Mill. Sunrise.

Officer Dick gets into his car.

**INT. THE GATEWAY INN - FRONT DESK - NIGHT**

Sal stands at the Front Desk.

SAL

I seem to have lost my key.

DESK CLERK

Name?

SAL

Sal Harris.

DESK CLERK

Can I see your I.D.?

SAL

I seem to have lost that too.

DESK CLERK

Rough night?



**EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT**

Bud follows behind Mike. Too close.

Mike turns left onto a DARK SIDE STREET.

Bud hesitates as to turn. He continues to stay on the main street.

He takes the next left.

He continues looking on the side street trying to keep an eye on where Mike may be. Nothing. He lost him.

BUD

Damn.

Bud speeds up and takes another left to get onto the side street Mike turned on.

Bud makes a hard stop.

Mike's car is parked in the middle of the street, headlights off. He's waiting.

Bud sits petrified. He puts his car in reverse when suddenly...

TAP, TAP.

Mike KNOCKS on his window with a PISTOL. Bud lets go of the clutch.

MIKE

You're burnt.

**INT. GATEWAY INN - SAL'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Barney lays on the bed watching T.V. Sal storms in, on edge, a nervous wreck.

SAL

Where's Dallas?

Sal goes to the window and peeks outside like he's looking for anything suspicious.

BARNEY

Did you escape or is this a trap?

SAL

I'm bait.

Sal turns to scope the room.

BARNEY

Dallas is here, secure. Were you followed?

SAL

Eyes are on me that's for certain.  
Who's next door?

BARNEY

Nobody. It's just us on the floor.  
How much time do we have?

SAL

Not enough. Call Dallas.

BARNEY

Dial zero.

SAL

Wait.

Sal leaps over to the room phone.

BARNEY

Just chill man. Everything is  
alright.

Sal dials a number.

SAL

(into phone)

It's Sal, are you ok?

MIKE

(VIA PHONE)

I'm great.

Sal gives Barney a look of distress.

SAL  
(into phone)  
Who is this?

MIKE  
(via phone)  
Mike! Your old friend.

SAL  
(into phone)  
Where's Bud?

MIKE  
(via phone)  
He's locked up. He'll be sent to  
Kansas City in a can, unless you  
stop it.

SAL  
(into phone)  
I will.

MIKE  
(via phone)  
I know you will.

SAL  
(into phone)  
He was only a set of eyes. He's  
not in this.

MIKE  
(via phone)  
His price is fair.

SAL  
(into phone)  
What's the price?

MIKE  
(via phone)  
A trade, you for him.

Mike hangs up. Sal slams the phone.

BARNEY  
I spoke too soon.

Sal picks up the phone and dials zero.

DESK CLERK

How can I help you?

SAL

I need Dallas and a fifth of  
whiskey, stat.

Sal lies down and closes his eyes. Barney stands up.

BARNEY

We have some work to do, don't we?

SAL

You can call it work, sure.

BARNEY

What do we need?

SAL

Is there a conference room here?

BARNEY

Yes, two.

SAL

Bring us a dry erase board and  
markers. We're going to map out a  
plan.

BARNEY

On it.

Barney exits. Sal lies down. After a pause, Dallas enters the room with a bottle of whiskey. Sal leans up.

DALLAS

Where is she?

Sal quickly stands up and violently grabs the bottle. He cracks the cap and takes a solid GULP.

SAL

Freddie's dead.

DALLAS  
(*true sadness*)  
My Freddie?

SAL  
He tried to help us.

DALLAS  
(*sadness to anger*)  
Where's Rosa?

SAL  
I don't know where she is, but  
they have her and now they have  
Bud.

Sal takes a pull of his whiskey and tosses the bottle on the bed.

DALLAS (CONT'D)  
(*calming down*)  
We can win this.

SAL  
We're trapped and forced into  
another trap.

DALLAS  
What did Torch tell you?

SAL  
If you want Rosa, you can buy her.

DALLAS  
When?

SAL  
Tomorrow morning at the Mill.

DALLAS  
By that time, we'll have an army.

Sal smiles and takes the whiskey.

SAL  
Barney?

Barney stops and looks at Sal.

SAL

(to Barney)

Grab the brochures from my bag.  
We're making a map.

BARNEY

What kind of map?

DALLAS

A battleground.

**EXT. THE MILL/BLUFF - CONTINUOUS - SUNRISE**

A dirt road. The sun rises over the horizon. The river is calm.

A BLACK SEDAN rolls to a stop near the entrance of a large WAREHOUSE. It's dilapidated, an American flag flies outside.

Surrounding this warehouse are dozens of HENCHMEN, wielding assault weapons. Men are on the ground. Some are on the roof, others on the bank of the river.

Two men step up to the sedan.

In the distance on a BLUFF, Barney watches everything with a pair of binoculars.

**INT. WAREHOUSE - MORNING**

A large open space like a boathouse. Crates, barrels, and boxes fill the building. Along the sides are doors and entrances to other areas. The place is like a maze, except for the center that serves as a large aisle.

A LARGE WOODEN CRATE sits in the center of the warehouse.

**EXT. WAREHOUSE ENTRANCE - DAY**

Sal rolls down his window, Dallas leans over him to yell out.

DALLAS

I want to see my daughter.

A nearby henchman doesn't respond.

Dallas starts to get out of the car, but a second henchman closes the door on her.

DALLAS  
Don't you know who I am?

HENCHMAN  
(to Sal)  
Step out. Hands on your head.

Sal steps out of the driver's seat with his hands on his head.

One of the henchmen frisks him, taking his knife, and throwing it so it stabs into the dirt.

Sal starts to make a remark, but he stops himself.

The henchman takes out a set of handcuffs. Sal opens his hands as if to offer them. The henchman shakes his head and turns Sal around, so he can handcuff him behind the back.

SAL  
Watch the wrist.

The henchman lifts Sal's jacket sleeves. He tries to put the handcuff on Sal's big bulky homemade cast. It won't fit.

The henchman opens the car door and SLAMS it on Sal's wrist.

Sal SCREAMS in pain. This breaks Sal's wrist further and weakens the splint enough to rip it off, which the henchman violently does.

DALLAS  
Stop it!

As Dallas yells, the henchman closes the car door and slaps the cuffs on Sal.

SAL  
What about her?

HENCHMAN  
Separate transactions.

The henchman takes a piece of duct tape and tapes Sal's mouth closed.

**EXT. BLUFF TOP - DAY**

Barney keeps a close eye on both Sal and the sedan. Sal steps inside the warehouse, out of site.

**INT. WAREHOUSE MAIN AREA - SAME TIME**

Inside are familiar faces. Torch and Officer Dick are front and center. Mike stands near another door holding Rosa by the wrist with a gun to her head.

TORCH  
(to Mike)

Take her.

Mike pulls Rosa out of sight.

TORCH (CONT'D)  
(to Sal)

How's it going hero?

Sal MUMBLES.

TORCH (CONT'D)  
I have your friend.  
(to Officer Dick)

Show him.

Officer Dick slams open the front flap to the crate. BUD rolls out of it, dead.

TORCH (CONT'D)  
I know we had a deal, but he was worth nothing to me. You aren't either, but someone else wants you.

Sal runs for the crate awkwardly with his hands cuffed. He bends over and drops to his knees. He leans over Sal's body, he rests his cuffed hands against Bud's chest. He's distraught.

TORCH (CONT'D)  
Don't worry, you'll join your friend soon.

Sal turns toward Torch, sweat drips down his face.



TORCH (CONT'D)

But your buyers want you alive for  
now.

Two henchmen come beside Sal and force him to stand up. They drag Sal towards another room.

Sal stares at Bud's lifeless body, tearing up.

**EXT. WAREHOUSE OUTER ENTRANCE - DAY**

Dallas stands beside the sedan, anxious. She isn't handcuffed, but all guns are on her. She eyes the men who surround her.

A door SLAMS open. Dallas stands tall and tears up when she see's what's in front of her: Rosa getting drug outside by Mike.

Mike releases his grip and Rosa rips her hand away from him. She scuffles her feet and looks at Dallas with hard eyes.

Dallas puts her hands out, as if she's expecting Rosa to run towards her and hug her. Rosa doesn't.

DALLAS

Can a mother have a hug?

Rosa slowly walks towards her.

Dallas hugs her. She squeezes her tightly, holding her like it's all she's ever wanted. Rosa keeps her arms by her sides.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry it took so long.

Rosa hugs her back, but doesn't respond.

Dallas releases her hug and brushes the bangs from Rosa's face allowing them to make solid eye contact.

Dallas smiles. Rosa smiles back, feeling her mother's emotion.

MIKE

Times up, Dallas!

Dallas's smile turns into an almost evil grin and she turn toward Mike.

**INT. WAREHOUSE SUPPLY ROOM - DAY**

Sal is hanging by his handcuffs, which are looped and locked to a hook on the ceiling. It's an uncomfortable and vulnerable position.

POW. A solid punch to his gut causes Sal to GROAN and COUGH. He fights to keep conscious. He's being used as a punching bag. Ricky, and the goons Sal humiliated previously, take turns wailing on him. The one goon has his arm in a sling from his last fight with Sal.

RICKY

Come on. I want to hear a joke!

POW. POW. Sal's stomach is knotted up. Bloodstains from the goons' knuckles cover his shirt.

BAM. Another solid punch from a goon.

GOON

What you got under there?

The goons open his jacket to find Sal's flask. Ricky grabs it and takes a drink.

RICKY

Mmmm. I'm a vodka guy myself;  
 whiskey makes me crazy. Violent.  
 (in Sal's face)  
 My girl hates it when I drink  
 whiskey. She always gets hurt.

Ricky slaps Sal. Humiliatingly. Then pours out the whiskey onto Sal's face before throwing the flask.

The goons LAUGH.

CUT TO:

**EXT. JUNGLE/CANOPIED HUTS - EVENING**

Sal wakes up to LAUGHING. He's sitting at a table, looking down at his lap. He's back in Vietnam, bloody, and one of his eyes is swollen shut.

Sitting around the table with him are three dirty VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS in jungle garb, with side pistols and knives. They smoke cigars and LAUGH under a CANOPIED HUT, outside.

The HEAD SOLDIER notices Sal awake at the table. He turns and smiles Sal while motioning to the other two soldiers.

The head soldier stands up and walks behind Sal. Sal, while still in a fog, turns his head to see behind him.

SMASH. The head soldier elbows Sal's neck and SLAMS his face against the table.

Sal lies facedown, bleeding from his mouth. All three soldiers LAUGH.

Sal opens his eyes; in his line of sight, he watches a soldier stepping out of the neighboring HUT. The soldier drags a young VIETNAMESE GIRL, 16, through the mud by her hair. Her hands are tied together, and she's been beaten. Probably abused for months. She's barely dressed. She CRIES out as she's dragged.

Sal GROANS, attempting to speak. His jaw drops, as if it's broken. He SPITS blood.

The head soldier grabs Sal by his neck, forcing him to watch the girl.

VIETNAMESE MAN  
You like her? You want a go?

The soldiers LAUGH and the girl's SCREAMS echo straight to Sal's soul.

FLASH BACK TO:

**INT. WAREHOUSE SUPPLY ROOM - DAY**

BAM. Ricky smacks Sal, then lifts his chin off his chest.

SAL  
Why don't you get me down and let  
me die like a soldier?

RICKY  
You still think you can fight? You  
won't be able to stand.

SAL  
(bleeding from the mouth)  
I'll get by. Let's do it again.  
Three against one.

RICKY  
No. Just you and me.

**INT./EXT. SEDAN - OUTSIDE THE WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS - DAY**

Dallas stands in front of Rosa, guarding her, still smiling.

MIKE  
Quit stallin'.

Suddenly, a KNIFE is put to Mike's throat. Mike stands petrified. He takes his finger off the trigger of his gun and puts his hands up.

Zoe is revealed behind him.

ZOE  
The deal's done.

MIKE  
You crazy bitches.

ZOE  
Drop the gun.

Mike tosses his gun off to the side and looks around to see all the henchmen now have guns aimed at their heads by East Side Thugs. Mike smirks and shakes his head.

Dallas opens the back door of the sedan and motions to Rosa. Rosa slides inside as Zoe walks toward the driver's side door.

Zoe gets into the driver's seat of the sedan, then rolls her window down.

ZOE  
(to Mike)  
You work for me.

Mike scowls.

Zoe and the girls pull away. Mike looks up at the bluffs to see a SHADOWY FIGURE.

**EXT. BLUFF TOP - SAME TIME**

Barney, watching Mike from the bluff, brings a two-way radio to his lips.

BARNEY  
(into radio)

Now.

**EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - JUST BEYOND THE WAREHOUSE - DAY**

A henchman stands guard walking down the middle of the tracks. Surrounding him are parked train cars. The henchman isn't looking at the cars, but instead he's looking under them and on top of them. He stops and sparks a cigarette.

Unbeknownst to him, a group of East Side Thugs open the door to a train car behind him, silently drawing their weapons.

**INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE - DAY**

Torch and Dick are in a warehouse OFFICE. Dick brings Torch a drink. Torch sits with his feet up on a desk. He's pleased.

TORCH  
Once Dallas signs everything over,  
take her to the hive. I'm going to  
enjoy tonight.

Dick nods his head.

SLAM.

Suddenly, Mike bursts in the office, throwing the door against the wall.

MIKE  
Zoe fucked us!

OFFICER DICK  
How?

From outside the warehouse, SHOOTING is heard. It's sounds like a small militia.

TORCH

What's happening out there?!

Officer Dick COCKS his handgun and runs out of the office.

**EXT. SIDE OF WAREHOUSE - DAY**

Officer Dick steps outside with his gun drawn.

Two of his guys are dead on the ground but there's nobody in sight. He keeps his back to the wall and slides to peak around the corner of the warehouse.

On the shoreline, a trail of blood leads to a GOON who's sitting against the warehouse sidewall smoking a cigarette, dying.

GOON

The trains.

**EXT. BLUFF/WAREHOUSE ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS - DAY**

Barney repels from the rocky bluff side onto the rooftop of the warehouse.

He cuts himself from the line and walks up to the back edge, where we see all the action at the train cars.

Dozens of East Side Thugs are on top of the trains and on the ground, taking out Torch's henchman with Mac 10's. It's a massacre.

BAM. Barney is SHOT from behind, right in the back. He falls to the ground.

Mike steps up to him. Barney tries to crawl towards his gun, which is at the edge of the roof.

MIKE

Traitor.

BARNEY

At least I chose the winning side.

Mike walks to the edge of the roof and kicks Barney's gun off.

Barney takes out a knife, twists to his side, and cuts Mike's Achilles tendon, causing him to lose his balance and fall off the roof out of Barney's view.

Barney rolls over and pulls off his jacket to reveal, a bulletproof vest.

**INT. WAREHOUSE SUPPLY ROOM - DAY**

Sal falls to the ground into a lump. He rolls around into the fetal position GROANING.

RICKY

See. Look at yourself.

Ricky LAUGHS but is cut short by the sound of GUNFIRE. The goons look up toward the ceiling.

RICKY (CONT'D)

(to the goons)

Watch the tunnels!

One goon steps out of the room and the other stands guard at the door.

Sal rolls away from them, posing. He puts his broken-wrist hand up and starts to get to his knees.

He stands up, wobbling and half awake. He's partially out of it, partially acting. Either way, he's ready to fight.

Ricky smiles and takes a swing. Sal counters it with his good arm and trips Ricky onto the ground.

The goon at the door turns around and tries to shoot Sal, but Sal counters, knocking his arm down which causes the goon to shoot Ricky in the head.

BLAM. The back of Ricky's head is blown off.

The goon stands shocked, stuttering with his mouth agape.

GOON

Boss!

Sal elbows the goon in the ribs, grabs his gun, and SMASHES the butt into the bridge of his nose.

The goons falls to the ground, knocked out.

**EXT. BACKSIDE OF WAREHOUSE - DAY**

Officer Dick hides behind a forklift with his eyes on a line of train cars.

TWO THUGS walk along the tops of the second nearest train car, looking down towards the ground.

Officer Dick steps out from behind the forklift and FIRES at the thugs. He gets one, but misses the other, who SHOOTs at him.

BLAM. Officer Dick gets hit in the shoulder.

He hides back behind the forklift and checks his wound. It's bad, but not fatal.

He turns back around and POPS the second thug in the head as he climbs down from the train car.

**INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE - DAY**

Torch cowers in the corner of the office between his desk and a loaded BUFFET TABLE with a long red table cloth, holding a sawed-off SHOTGUN.

He peeks his head around the leg of his desk to see:

A SET OF BOOTS.

Torch looks up to see Sal holding a pistol, standing above him, smiling.

Torch slowly puts the shotgun down beside him and Sal slides it away. Sal grabs a whiskey bottle sitting on the buffet table and takes a pull.

TORCH

Always need a little more don't  
ya?

Sal finishes his chug and SMASHES the bottle along the side of Torch's face. It SHATTERS; Torch drops to the ground.



After a brief pause, Torch rolls on the floor until he disappears under the hanging tablecloth.

Sal pulls back the tablecloth to see a secret OPENING in the wall that leads to a dark tunnel. Torch is gone.

Sal begins to climb into the secret entrance.

**EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS/TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS - DAY**

Officer Dick, wounded, hobbles down the tracks hiding behind train cars.

He gets into one that's open and full of half-naked girls, locked in chains. He hides inside. He puts his finger up to his lips as if to say "SHHH."

Barney arrives with a group of East side thugs behind him.

Officer Dick hides behind the girls. Suddenly, he's startled by a voice behind him.

BARNEY

You can come out now.

The girls stand up. As they all pile out, Officer Dick has his hands in the air in the back.

OFFICER DICK

I surrender.

Officer Dick slides his gun forward toward Barney and the East Side Thugs.

BARNEY

(to thugs)

Give him some air.

(to Officer Dick)

You may want to lay down officer.

Barney closes the door, sealing Officer Dick inside.

The thugs FIRE at the door and bullets fly through it.

Barney waits and listens, then locks the doors.

OFFICER DICK

(muffled)

I'm the police!

**INT. TUNNEL - SAME TIME**

Torch runs down the tight tunnels bleeding from his head. He is hobbling and holding one side of his face as he struggles forward. The hanging lights flicker on and off.

BANG. A light above him is shot out.

Torch flinches and looks behind him. Sal, who's yards behind him, has his gun drawn.

The tunnel lights FLICKER.

Sal stares forward and watches a VIETNAMESE SOLDIER look at him and smile. Sunlight shines down around the soldier as if there's a HOLE above him. The soldier jumps up into an unseen space and crawls out of sight.

Sal walks to where the soldier disappeared and finds himself looking up into JUNGLE.

CUT TO:

**EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER BANK - DAY**

Sal rises out of a HOLE in the ground. It's eerily similar to his experience in the Vietnam jungle. Surrounding the hole are out of place bushes.

Sal looks up toward the river, which is 20 yards away. He aims his pistol at the water.

He slowly steps to the bank and stares at the brown muddy river. The light from the sunrise reveals himself aiming the gun at his own hazy reflection.

Suddenly, Torch appears in the reflection and tackles Sal from behind.

SPLASH. Torch and Sal drop hard into the water.

Sal comes up for air and GROANS. Torch grasps firmly onto Sal's broken wrist. He tugs Sal down and SLAMS his elbow into Sal's face.

Sal falls under water. Torch jumps on top of him and reaches his hands into the dark water.

Inches below the water, Sal struggles to come up for air. Torch holds him down.

Torch struggles to hold Sal under. He splashes to the right and left. He drops further in the water, taking a firmer hold of Sal. The struggle eases. A beat passes as the water calms.

Blood fills the water surrounding Torch. Torch pulls his hands out of the water to see his right forearm has been SLIT longways from wrist to elbow.

Torch's face drops and he falls backwards.

Sal rises from the water holding the RAZORBLADE he had carefully fit for his boot sole.

Torch slowly falls under the water, eyes still open.

The sun shines on the river. Sal relaxes and drops the razorblade into the water.

Sal watches Torch slowly drift out into the deeper water. A yellow fog blows across his body.

FADE TO:

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - SOME WEEKS LATER - DAY**

Sal adjusts his nearly healed arm while watching TV in bed. We see that it's a different room than he was in before. It's bigger, with two beds.

Sal puts on his jacket. He goes outside where he finds Rosa sun bathing in the pool.

SAL

It's time to go.

ROSA

Where are we going?

SAL

Riding.

Rosa jumps out of the pool, excited.

ROSA

Really?

SAL

Yes, really. Get dressed. And, put  
on boots, no sandals.

**EXT. MOTEL - PARKING LOT**

Sal walks outside of the pool gate to reveal that they're in THE MOUNTAINS, no longer in Illinois, maybe Colorado or Montana.

Dallas comes up from around a corner and meets Sal.

DALLAS

Bring her back in one piece or  
you're done for.

DALLAS smiles at Sal. Rosa walks out the gate in full riding gear, holding a helmet. Sal takes a flask out of his jacket and puts it to his lips.

ROSA

Stop it. You're driving.

SAL

I'm not perfect.

Rosa frowns a pouty face. Dallas gives a look saying "come on now".

Sal frowns back at them and puts the flask away without drinking it.

SAL (CONT'D)

I'm not wearing a helmet.

Rosa hands him a helmet and puts on her own. Sal reluctantly puts it on and they both hop on the MOTORCYCLE.

Rosa waves to Dallas as they drive out of the parking lot. We see the license plate, which reads:

*RICKY*

They drive down winding roads into the mountains at the horizon.

On this, we--

**CUT TO BLACK**