

MISFORTUNE COOKIES

by
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INT. "BURT'S BASS HOLE" - AFTERNOON

A well-stocked store for the rural fishing enthusiast, every inch filled with reels and lures and more.

PANSY CARTWRIGHT, a fireplug of a teenage girl, admires a brand-new Evinrude outboard motor, displayed prominently above the counter. She takes off her battered cap. Runs thick fingers through her copper mullet. Takes a long drag on her cigarette.

BURT LAWSON, the elderly storeowner, finishes ringing up a customer. He sees Pansy ogling the engine.

BURT

She's a beaut, ain't she? Just got 'er in.

PANSY

Most beautiful thing I ever seen.

BURT

Yer in here so much, maybe I should start chargin' you fer starin'.

PANSY

You don't have to piss on me, you crotchety old fuck.

BURT

You little--! I don't have t' take crap from some punk kid! Get out o' here, Pansy! An' don't come back 'til you can afford somethin'.

PANSY

You don't own me. I'm ain't going nowhere.

Burt picks up the phone, puts his finger in the rotary dial.

BURT

Maybe I give Dayton a call. An' when he gets here, you can tell him that.

They stare each other down.

Pansy blinks first. Stalks out.

BURT
(muttering)
Goddamn white trash... Should'a
arrested all them Cartwrights...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL/FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

A nondescript brick high school located in a small rural Southern town on a pleasant autumn night. A sea of red and gold jackets and sweatshirts undulates as the crowd cheers on the home team. A big colorful sign that says "PURDYVILLE MUSKRATS" hangs from the press box.

Pansy sits in the stands, watching the Purdyville players plow into their opponents.

The cheerleading team ends a routine. Pansy waves at the cheerleader leading the group.

CRYSTI JUNE PURDY, the head cheerleader, waves back. Her blonde hair pulled back into two ponytails with pink ribbons, she commands all the attention.

CHEERLEADER #1
Ewww, why do you bother with that
Pansy Cartwright? She's so gross.

CRYSTI JUNE
She's not so bad. She used to keep
the bullies away from me in first
grade, and we've been friends ever
since. Besides, she's funny.

One of the other cheerleaders notices the gaudy bracelet on Crysti June's waving arm.

CHEERLEADER #2
Crysti June, is that one of your
new pieces?

CRYSTI JUNE
(proudly)
Yes it is. I just finished with the
makin' of this one last night.

She models it for the girls: a nightmarish conglomeration of fake red stones and cheap gold plating.

CHEERLEADER #2
It's beautiful.

CRYSTI JUNE
 Red and gold for Purdyville. And
 it's quality, not that flimsy stuff
 you get at the mall.

To demonstrate, she slips her fingers around the loops and
 yanks. Yanks hard. The bracelet doesn't budge.

CHEERLEADER #1
 Can I have it?

Crysti June jerks her arm back haughtily.

CRYSTI JUNE
 You may not! These are one of a
 kind. And they cost accordingly.

A loud CRUNCH from the field draws their attention.

On the field, the two teams disentangle from another tackle.
 The quarterback calls a timeout. Heads for the sidelines.

The cheerleaders all whoop and holler, bouncing and kicking.

CRYSTI JUNE
 Yay Caldwell! Go baby go!

CALDWELL SARTAIN, the beefy young quarterback, takes off his
 football helmet, his unkempt mop of brown hair falling in
 sweaty curls over a bandana wrapped around his forehead.

As COACH SARTAIN, a thick slab of a man, gives him
 instruction for the next play, Caldwell pulls out a hand
 mirror out of his duffel bag. He uses it as he adjusts his
 bandana, only half-listening to the coach.

COACH SARTAIN
 Listen, keep your head in the game!
 We win this, then the division
 championship is a lock! But we
 won't get there if your goddamn
 neck is broken!

CALDWELL
 Got it.

The anger in the coach's face dials up to ten.

COACH SARTAIN
 You let those dickheads take the
 hits! You're the secret weapon! You
 hear me? Huh?!? "Magic Finger"!

CALDWELL
 "Magic Finger". I know, dad.

Coach Sartain slaps him across the face.

COACH SARTAIN
 You call me "Coach Sartain"! I
 ain't your dad on game day! Now get
 back in there and do this!

Satisfied that his hair is okay, Caldwell grabs his helmet.

RUDY RAY (O.S.)
 Way t' go, hero!

RUDY RAY GRAYSON, dressed all in denim, sits parked in his
 wheelchair on the track behind the player's bench. He waves
 his denim baseball cap energetically.

Caldwell runs over and fist-bumps his friend.

RUDY RAY
 Caldwell! My man!

CALDWELL
 Hey, Rudy Ray! You made it!

RUDY RAY
 Lookin' good out there, buddy!

CALDWELL
 Thanks, bro.

RUDY RAY
 The old man givin' you shit?

CALDWELL
 Ah, y'know... He just wants me to
 be the best.

RUDY RAY
 Man, what I wouldn't give to be
 back out there with you again.

CALDWELL
 Yeah, that'd be awesome. Beat
 Denton like we did last year.

Rudy Ray looks down at his withered legs.

RUDY RAY
 Yeah, well, uh... Hey, see you
 tonight after the game, right?

Caldwell's mood darkens a bit.

CALDWELL
Yeah... yeah, I'll be there. You
need a ride?

RUDY RAY
Naw, I got Delmer again tonight.

CALDWELL
Ugh! Well, don't touch nothin'!

Caldwell reaches into his jersey. Pulls out an object on the end of a gold chain. Clutching it tightly, he gives it a soft kiss and silent prayer. He drops it back into his shirt and darts out onto the field.

Rudy Ray jealously watches his friend rejoin the game. As the teams line up, and the crowd roars in anticipation, Rudy Ray wheels himself towards the school, away from his lost life.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - EVENING

Rudy Ray coasts down the quiet halls. He stops in front of the men's room.

RUDY RAY
(knocking)
Delmer! You still shittin'? C'mon,
the game's almost over. I wanna get
outta here before th' lot gets
crowded...

No response.

He's about to knock again, when a SOFT SOUND coming from the woodshop across the hall catches his attention.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/WOODSHOP - EVENING

Rudy Ray nudges the door open. Slides through into the room. A BUZZING fills the air, mixed with MUFFLED MOANS.

RUDY RAY
Delmer?...

He wheels through the table saws and upright drills, making his way towards a door in the back that stands slightly ajar.

RUDY RAY
Delmer, I hope you ain't in h--
JESUS!

DELMER CRAIB, pale and greasy and awkward, spins around, almost falling over. His pants are bunched up at his ankles. An electric hand sander pressed to his groin, he mops at himself with a dirty towel.

DELMER
Rudy Ray! I... I--

RUDY RAY
Fuck, Delmer! I thought you said
you gave that shit up!

Too embarrassed to speak, Delmer struggles to pull up his pants. The sander still BUZZES in his grip.

RUDY RAY
Goddamn, you need a fuckin'
girlfriend. Or a real vibrator. Or
somethin'. Shit! Go clean yerself
up. We gotta go.

Delmer flicks off the sander. He sidles past Rudy Ray. Drops the sander on a worktable as he flees into the hall.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/BATHROOM - EVENING

Delmer bolts into the men's room. Runs for the handicapped stall at the end of the row.

He throws open the door.

GARNELL
AAAAH!!!

GARNELL JEFFERSON, a black teenager sitting on the toilet, jumps out of his skin. His thick glasses leap off his face, falling onto the pile of homework papers in his lap.

DELMER
What're you doin', Garnell?! You
scared th' daylights outta me!

GARNELL
I... I just needed a place to
finish this...

DELMER
Who does homework on a Friday
night? In the toilet?

GARNELL
I was just going to... to slip it
under Mrs. Morgan's door.

DELMER

Well go someplace else! I gotta take care of... somethin'.

GARNELL

Okay, okay! I'm done.

He cobbles together all the papers. Shoves them into his bookbag. With a worried look on his face, he pushes past Delmer and runs for the door.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL/PARKING LOT - EVENING

Garnell darts between the cars, heading for the football field.

A HONK from a large truck in the parking lot catches his attention. Pansy sits behind the wheel, a cigarette dangling from the corner of her mouth.

GARNELL

Pansy! I thought you were in the stands!

PANSY

Game's almost over. What took you so fuckin' long?

Garnell fishes the paperwork out of his bag. Pansy snatches it from him before he can organize it all.

GARNELL

I had to complete your algebra, and that essay on "Gulliver's Travels". It's a solid B.

Pansy flips through the homework, snorting a cloud of smoke into his face. He chokes quietly.

PANSY

Damn, you got my handwritin' down pat. Looks like those gay-ass art classes are finally payin' off.

GARNELL

It takes me a while to do your numbers. They're all screwy--

Pansy glares at him angrily.

GARNELL

...They're... not the way I do them.

PANSY

Good save. See you tomorrow night,
for our next "tutorin'" session?...

Garnell's shoulders slump.

GARNELL

So soon? I thought we might wait a
couple of days... My neck still
hurts from Sunday--

PANSY

You want me to go to Mr. Belinsky
and tell him you haven't been doin'
your job? How would that look t'
them college people, a demerit from
the guidance councilor on your
precious permanent file? Huh?

GARNELL

(sighs)

Okay. I'll be there at seven.

PANSY

And I'll have my "book" open. Heh-
heh-heh!

A ROAR from the field. The BLARE of an air horn. The game has
come to an end. The crowd CHEERS enthusiastically.

PANSY

(to herself)

Welp, sounds like that jerk-off
Caldwell did it. Chalk up another
win for Purdyville's great white
hope.

(to Garnell)

See you at the Panda.

GARNELL

Um, Pansy, I... I really don't want
to participate in th--

PANSY

You got no choice, Garnell. You
ride your bike here?

GARNELL

Yeah, it's over by the--

PANSY

Don't be late.

She PEELS OUT, leaving Garnell choking in a cloud of dust and exhaust.

CUT TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - EVENING

The "HAPY PANDA", an inexpensive Chinese restaurant, with suitably tacky décor. The place is packed, BUZZING with conversation and laughter as the Purdyville football team celebrates their victory with friends and family. Overhead on the far wall, a large animatronic panda with two neon chopsticks in its paws WHIRS and CLICKS as its inner mechanics clunkily move.

Pansy and her group sit at a large round table under the electronic panda. The mood at their table is much less lively than the others.

PANSY

Damn, that's some good food! I'm glad you found this place, Garnell. Beats the hell out of a crappy burger.

GARNELL

(glumly)
Now I'm wishing I'd never mentioned it.

PANSY

Why? What's it to you?

GARNELL

If you're so strapped for cash, you could all get jobs, or...

His voice trails off as they all glare at him.

RUDY RAY

(indicating his
wheelchair)
Now how th' fuck am I supposed t'
work?

PANSY

I'm not goin' to let some dickhole boss me around. I get enough of that shit at school.

GARNELL

Okay, okay! I'm just saying. Wi-Chang came to the States without a dime to his name. But even though he couldn't speak English, he started this restaurant.

PANSY

Yeah, and look at what he's doin'. Takin' our American money.

(indicates menu logo)

Christ, he can't even spell good. "Hapy" with one fuckin' "P".

(to Garnell)

You wuss. Now, go.

With an apprehensive look, Garnell leaves the table. He tries to nonchalantly walk to the bathroom.

Pansy pushes back from the table. BELCHES loudly. No one reacts.

PANSY

Aw, c'mon. That one was classic!

CALDWELL

What do you want us to do? Jump up and down? We're all on edge.

PANSY

You can try to relax. We're just a bunch of friends, having a nice meal to celebrate our school's big win.

Caldwell's brow furrows. Crysti June takes his hand, trying to be supportive. Pansy notices this with a hard stare.

PANSY

(to Caldwell)

I guess after the championship, you're gonna have your pick of colleges. You'll be the first one of us to get out of this hellhole.

CRYSTI JUNE

He won't be going alone, though...

Crysti June and Caldwell kiss. Pansy smirks.

PANSY

You're not going to college!

CRYSTI JUNE
How do you know?

PANSY
You're barely passing anything.
You failed your algebra test.

CRYSTI JUNE
Daddy will get me in. He's got a
lot of connections, you know.

DELMER
Just 'cause he has the biggest used
car dealership in town doesn't make
him a player.

CRYSTI JUNE
Oh, well, I suppose your daddy is a
bigger man, is he? I'm the great-
granddaughter of the town's
founder. And what's your daddy? Oh,
that's right, a prisoner.

An awkward silence, punctuated by Pansy's hoarse laughter.

PANSY
Ha! Nice one!

DELMER
(under his breath)
At least I still have a dad...

Pansy's laughter comes to an abrupt halt. She glares at
Delmer. The group holds their breath.

Before anything can happen, Garnell returns from the
bathroom. Pansy lightens up.

PANSY
Well?...

GARNELL
(hesitantly)
No. Nothing. Just a single lock.

PANSY
Ha! Three break-ins and he still
hasn't done shit to beef the place
up. This is gonna be a cakewalk.

GARNELL
SHHH! Would you keep it down--

LING-SU, the young Chinese waitress, arrives with a tray holding their check, and several fortune cookies.

GARNELL
Thank you, Ling-Su.

LING-SU
No problem. Anything else?

GARNELL
No, thank you, it was all delicious.

The kids all throw in their money. Pansy grimaces as she pulls the last bills out of her now-empty wallet.

PANSY
(softly, to her money)
I'll see you later...

Garnell collects their payments. Hands the tray back to Ling-Su. Smiling, she places her hand on Garnell's shoulder.

LING-SU
I'm glad you like. Please come again.

PANSY
(smirking)
Oh, we will.

The others cut her a "will you shut up?" look.

A bark from across the room startles Ling-Su. (*Italics = Chinese*)

WI-CHANG (O.S.)
Ling-Su! Quit wasting time! Get this order to table twelve!

WI-CHANG, Ling-Su's geriatric grandfather, beckons to her from the kitchen doorway with a gnarled hand. She hurries over. He berates her as she rings up their bill. Her brother HONG pushes past pushing a busboy cart filled with dirty dishes.

Pansy elbows Garnell in the ribs.

PANSY
Check that out. Nothin' but cash all weekend long. He's got to have at least ten grand just waiting to be "borrowed".

GARNELL

I hope you're aware that Ling-Su is going to be deeply affected by the outcome of our enterprise...

PANSY

Oh, you're worried about her now? Got a girlfriend, do ya?

GARNELL

What? No! She's just nice to me when I come in, that's all.

DELMER

(to Pansy)

You might try being nice once in a while.

PANSY

Me? Take your own advice, asshole.

CRYSTI JUNE

She's right, Delmer. Start treating us ladies nice, and you'll get yourself a girlfriend.

PANSY

He's already got two girlfriends, "Black" and "Decker".

Everyone guffaws. Delmer sheepishly tucks his head.

PANSY

Now for the best part of the meal...

Pansy reaches for of the fortune cookies. Caldwell stops her.

CALDWELL

No! You don't just take one! You have to pick one out and hand it to the person on your left. Otherwise it's bad luck.

PANSY

You and your goddamn superstitious bullshit. How can such a he-man be such a fuckin' pussy all the time?

CRYSTI JUNE

He's not a... what-you-said. He's just careful.

Caldwell takes a cookie, hands it to Crysti June. She takes a cookie, hands it to Rudy Ray. They go around the table until everyone has a cookie.

They crack them open. Pull out the fortunes.

CRYSTI JUNE

"You will soon be the center of attention."

(giggling)

It already came true!

She kisses Caldwell.

CALDWELL

"You will be the guest of a gracious host". Huh. Hope it's the recruiter from Notre Dame.

RUDY RAY

"You will be in the best position".

(leering)

In bed!

CRYSTI JUNE

Ewww! You're so gross!

DELMER

"Birds are entangled by their feet and men by their tongues." That doesn't even make any sense.

GARNELL

They're not always about the future. "You are faithful in the execution of any public trust." See?

PANSY

This is the dumbest... "If you think you can, you can." So fuckin' stupid.

The others crumple their fortunes.

PANSY

No no! Give 'em here.

CALDWELL

Never thought of you as the type to collect anything... other than detentions.

PANSY
Ha-fuckin'-ha.

She gathers the discarded fortunes. Pops one half of her broken cookie into her mouth.

PANSY
(munching)
I'll give that old geezer this...
he makes the best goddamn cookie.

DELMER
Always the best part of the meal.

GARNELL
There's a mélange of exotic flavors
that seem to escape the palette,
defying definition.

CRYSTI JUNE
(munching)
I know! It's like nothing I've ever
tasted.

RUDY RAY
It's not better than some stuff
I've tasted...

He runs his tongue between the two halves of his cookie. Crysti June wrinkles her nose. The others giggle.

As they all munch away, a shadow falls over them.

DAYTON BLACKWELDER, a large man with an eyepatch and a thick black handlebar mustache, looms behind the table. He chews on a toothpick. His thumbs are hooked into his garish leather belt.

BLACKWELDER
Evenin', all. Enjoyin' our meals?

They all mumble a polite "yes, sir". Everyone except Pansy, who looks down at the table.

BLACKWELDER
And we'll be behavin' ourselves
tonight?

Again, a chorus of "yes, sir", minus Pansy's input.

BLACKWELDER
Miss Pansy? You fergettin' your
manners?

PANSY
Don't feel like salutin'.

BLACKWELDER
Well now, at the very least, you
can acknowledge an elder.

PANSY
I "acknowledge" that you're a
murderin' douchebag.

The group gasps. Dayton's toothpick stops moving. He and Pansy stare each other down.

Dayton ERUPTS with laughter.

BLACKWELDER
HA HA HA! My my, Miss Pansy, you
are a spirited girl.

He plants a meaty hand on her shoulder. Leans in close. Really close.

BLACKWELDER
Must run in yer family.

Pansy shrugs him off.

BLACKWELDER
(to the group)
Have a good 'un.

He ambles out the door.

The kids all exhale.

RUDY RAY
Fuck, Pansy! What're you tryin' t'
do?!

DELMER
That was really dumb. You get on
his bad side--

PANSY
Fuck you! I hate that cocksucker.
I'm already on his bad side, and
you all know it.

CRYSTI JUNE
Pansy, we don't want him to get
suspicious.

PANSY
 He's nothing. So... Sunday night.
 My place. Ten o'clock. And don't be
 late.

They grudgingly nod as they get up to leave.

CUT TO:

EXT. PANSY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Pansy pulls her truck into the muddy driveway of a run-down tract house on the outskirts of town. A large blue tarp covers a section of the back roof.

She climbs out of the cab. Makes her way over to the detached garage.

INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/GARAGE - SAME

Pansy opens the doors. A canvas-covered object lurks in the dim light.

She pulls back the sheet, exposing a medium-sized fishing boat. Her grim countenance melts a little at seeing her precious boat.

The cowling on the outboard motor is open. Pansy cranks the motor. It SPUTTERS and CHUGS. She fiddles at the mechanisms with a screwdriver and pliers. Tries to start it again. No dice. It's dead.

PANSY
 (throwing down tools)
 Fuck!

MITZI (O.S.)
 Pansy? Are you home?

PANSY
 Goddammit--

MITZI (O.S.)
 PAAAAANSY!

PANSY
 WHAT?!?

MITZI (O.S.)
 I can't see my TV! Can you fix the
 dish?

PANSY
Why don't you do it?

MITZI (O.S.)
My lady parts are actin' up.

PANSY
Oh for fuck's sake...

Pansy runs a hand over the side of her boat, like caressing a lover. She drags the tarp back over it, saying goodbye.

EXT. PANSY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Pansy trudges over to a large, rusty, old-school satellite dish next to the house. She adjusts its angle with the motor.

MITZI (O.S.)
No... still bad...

Pansy makes a few more small tweaks.

MITZI (O.S.)
There! I can see it!

Her mood shattered, she opens the SQUEAKY, rusty screen door to the house and steps inside.

INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - EVENING

MITZI CARTWRIGHT sits in the dark, dingy living room in front of a flickering projection TV. Overweight, wearing a wig and a muumuu, she takes her oxygen mask off long enough to enjoy a drag from her tiparillo.

PANSY
Is there anything to drink--

MITZI
SHHH! They're about to announce
which collector's plate is going to
be on sale next!

Pansy grumbles. Heads for the kitchen.

INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - EVENING

Pansy digs through the fridge. She finds a diet root beer.

She plops down at the small table. Frustratedly sips. Looking around at the squalid kitchen, her mood darkens.

She takes in the lime-stained sink. The ancient refrigerator. The ladder in the corner leading up to the still-unrepaired hole in the roof, barely covered with a ratty tarp.

A loud GASSY SOUND comes from the living room.

MITZI (O.S.)
Oh Jesus in Heaven! Not again...
Bring me a towel! Pansy? PAAANSY!!!

Pansy sullenly drops her head.

CUT TO:

INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - LATE EVENING

Pansy softly closes her door. Begins to undress. Digging for her keys, she remembers the fortunes she collected from dinner.

She pulls open the bottom drawer of her dresser, moving clothes aside to retrieve a well-worn scrapbook.

She places it on her desk.

INSERT - THE SCRAPBOOK

A faded pink sleeve, with the words "Daddy's Little Angel" written in yellow script. A heart-shaped cut-out in the middle of the cover contains a yellowed photo of a red-headed young girl and a handsome man: Pansy and her father.

BACK TO SCENE

Pansy cracks open the book. Begins leafing through. She skips over her birth certificate. Pictures of her in the bath. Shots from school pageants.

She stops at a page with photos of Pansy and her dad in New York. From the looks on their faces, it's obvious they're having a fantastic time. She smiles as she revisits each scene: The Statue of Liberty. Times Square. The bustle of Chinatown.

Under a picture of young Pansy and her father outside a fancy Chinese restaurant, there are two cookie fortunes secured to the paper with faded yellow tape.

Turning the page, she reveals dozens of other fortunes taped down... a collection that reminds her of her father.

She skips through several pages full of fortunes, coming to a page with blank space.

Pansy tapes down the new ones acquired earlier in the evening. Her eyes tear up as she adds to her collection.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - LATE EVENING

Ling-Su and Hong exit the back of the restaurant. She locks the door. The siblings leave the parking lot on foot.

Their every move is watched from the bushes by Pansy and the others.

PANSY
(whispering)
Where's the old man?

RUDY RAY
(whispering)
Don't know. Must've gone home
already.

As Ling-Su and Hong round the corner, Pansy signals with a lighter. Garnell slinks out from behind the dumpster.

He works for a few moments on the door. It pops open. He waves to the crew. As one, they slink around the outskirts of the parking lot, staying in the shadows as best they can.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - LATE EVENING

The gang creeps through the back hallway. Pansy signals Rudy Ray to remain at the back door as a lookout.

The others pause at the entrance to the main restaurant floor. They look around in the dim light coming through the front glass windows from outside. There's no one around.

Pansy pulls a pair of bright orange industrial work gloves out of her coat pocket. Slips them on.

PANSY
(whispering)
Go! Go!

They split up. Delmer takes position near the front window, acting as lookout. The remaining kids attack the counter where the register sits.

Garnell realizes that the register needs a key for opening. Pansy starts to panic. He feels around the underside of the counter... pulling out a poorly-hidden key.

Quietly, he opens the drawer.

POV

The till is completely empty.

BACK TO SCENE

Pansy looks over him to Crysti June and Caldwell, who are ransacking the remainder of the front counter area. The looks on their faces show that they've not found anything either.

Pansy's jaw clenches as she tries to think of what to do next.

The SOFT RING of a small gong makes them all freeze.

After a couple of moments, the GONG SOUNDS again. Pansy looks around frantically for the source.

She notices a flickering light coming from under the kitchen door.

Waving to Delmer and Rudy Ray, she assembles the crew by the door.

With an agonizing slowness, she nudges the swinging door open.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT/KITCHEN - LATE EVENING

A bizarre sight drains the blood from Pansy's face.

At the far end of the kitchen, a figure wearing a hooded crimson robe CHANTS. His arms outstretched before a large dough-making machine, its intertwined blades WHIRLING and GRINDING through gallons of raw cookie dough.

On a large altar above the machine sits a weathered statue of a Chinese god. Lit candles of every size cover the counters, shelves, and floors.

PANSY
(whispering)
What the...

Intermittently, the robed figure bows to the statue. HITS THE GONG. Adds unknown powders to the dough.

ROBED FIGURE
*Tsai-Shen, god of abundance, thank
you for another day of happiness.*

*Thank you for another day of
success.*

The gang watches for what seems like an eternity. Crysti June reaches for Caldwell's hand for safety, but finds him clutching the lucky amulet around his neck.

Finally Pansy can't wait anymore. She steps forward.

PANSY

Hey!

The robed figure stands stock still. It then turns slowly, staggering, as if it takes great effort to move. The shadow from the hood cloaks the small figure's face in darkness.

PANSY

What the fuck is all this?!?

Two wizened hands lift the hood back, revealing the scowling face of WI-CHANG.

No one knows what to do. The gang looks to Pansy for direction.

PANSY

What the fuck are you putting in...
Is that the fortune cookie dough?!?

WI-CHANG

(calmly)
You go now.

PANSY

Are you putting shit in the
cookies?!? That shit's been in my
mouth!

WI-CHANG

You go. Now.

Wi-Chang grabs his gnarled cane. Brandishes it like a sword. He takes a step towards the group.

Pansy pulls a semi-automatic pistol from her coat pocket, stopping the elderly chef in his tracks. The other gang members react in shock.

CRYSTI JUNE

Oh my God!

GARNELL

Pansy! What are you doing?

PANSY
Not so tough are you now, huh,
Bruce Lee?

Instead of cowering in fear, Wi-Chang looks up, over the gun, and into Pansy's eyes. His glare radiates anger.

PANSY
Just tell us where all the money
is, and we'll go.

Wi-Chang points at them all with the tip of his cane.

WI-CHANG
I see you faces.

Sweat breaks out on Pansy's brow.

DELMER
Shit, Pansy, we don't got masks or
nothin'. He knows who we are!

PANSY
Shut up.

DELMER
Pansy--

PANSY
Shut the fuck up! He's not gonna
talk, or else we tell the cops
about his little devil worshipping
cult-thing here.
(to Wi-Chang)
Right?

Wi-Chang regards her solemnly.

PANSY
Okay, fine. We'll find the cash
ourselves. Tear the place apart.
I've got him covered.

No one moves.

PANSY
Go! C'mon, we gotta hurry!

Hesitantly, the others begin working their way around the kitchen. They open drawers and cabinets. They knock over stacks of boxes.

Pansy and Wi-Chang stare each other down, as the room gets turned over.

Caldwell comes to a stack of wicker rice baskets. He begins to pry the top off of one.

Wi-Chang suddenly lashes out with unexpected speed. His cane catches Caldwell in the back of the neck, dropping him to the ground.

As he falls, Caldwell tips over the rice baskets. They pop open.

Hundreds of wads of money scatter across the floor.

Wi-Chang moves strike Pansy.

She panics.

BLAM! A bloody hole ERUPTS in Wi-Chang's chest. The gang jumps.

Wi-Chang staggers backward, barely strong enough to grip the edge of the dough vat.

WI-CHANG

You... you bad...

He grabs a handful of the powder. Clutches it to his chest.

WI-CHANG

*Chu-Jung, god of revenge, I... pray
to you. Chu-Jung, give me... the
strength of your fury... to avenge
myself...*

His eyes flutter. Everyone stands rock still, too horrified to do anything.

WI-CHANG

Chu-Jung... Chu... Jung...

A breath GURGLES from the depths of his throat. He topples backwards, into the dough machine.

As the kids look on in disgust, the blades GRIND and TEAR Wi-Chang's body apart. The dough mixes with the blood and flesh and fabric. As his closed fist sinks into the mixture, the fingers snap open. A puff of the powder wisps away into the air.

RUDY RAY

Fuck me...

DELMER

Pansy... you... you...

She licks the sweat off her upper lip.

PANSY

You saw! He was comin' after us! I defended myself!

GARNELL

He was an octagenarian!

PANSY

(indicating Caldwell)

Look what he did to our muscle! He could'a gotten all of us!

CALDWELL

Shit... Oh shit...

RUDY RAY

What was that crap he said at the end?

GARNELL

"Chu-Jung"... I... I don't know! It must... be a prayer or something...

Pansy goes over to the basket of money. Slipping the gun in her pocket, she clutches several rolls of the precious greenbacks. Whatever terror she was feeling evaporates as the bills crinkle in her sweaty grasp.

PANSY

C'mon, let's get this and get out of here.

The others stand rooted to the spot, watching the machine relentlessly mix the remains of Wi-Chang.

PANSY

Hey!

They snap out of their daze. Join Pansy in rapidly scooping up the money.

The dough machine continues its slow GRINDING.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/GARAGE - EARLY MORNING

The gang surrounds Garnell as he finishes counting the stolen money, placing it in large stacks. Pansy puffs a cigarette anxiously.

GARNELL

Okay, if my math is correct...
sitting before us is \$31,784.

They all gasp. Delmer plops onto a paint bucket. Pansy goes to hug Crysti June, but she falls into Caldwell's arms instead.

RUDY RAY

Ho-lee shit! Didn't that gook ever
go t' th' damn bank?

PANSY

Hey, his fuckin' stupidity is our
goddamn fortune!

They high five. Pansy sees that Caldwell isn't as upbeat as she is.

PANSY

(to Caldwell)
What's your deal?

CALDWELL

Deal? My deal?! How about jail! I
get caught, there goes any
potential scholarship!

PANSY

Yeah, well, not all of us got the
chances you got, O.J. I'm fuckin'
desperate, and I saw a way outta my
hole. And the rest of you felt the
same way too, or you wouldn't have
been so eager to jump in on my
plan.

No one can look her in the eye. No one except Crysti June.

CRYSTI JUNE

Well I'm not sorry. My stupid daddy
refuses to support my jewelry
business. He says...

(mocking)

"Oh, we're not selling enough cars,
pumpkin lamb." That's a load of
bullsh... bull-mess. I'm this close
to getting a display in Stacey's
Dress Depot. And from there it
won't be too long before I'm on
Oprah, I just know it. Free money?
I'll take it.

CALDWELL

Crysti June... I can't believe what I'm hearing!

PANSY

Ain't that rich. The two people without dicks seem to have all the balls.

RUDY RAY

Hell... Randy Ray's 'bout drunk away the trailer. We prob'ly got a couple o' months t' go before we get booted out. And then, I'm fucked.

DELMER

Rudy Ray, with your... you know, your "situation"--

RUDY RAY

Dude, I got two priors against me already. One more, they send me t' county. So it was three square meals an' a room I can't fuckin' crawl out of... or that.

He points to the stacks of money. A silence falls over the group.

PANSY

Delmer, the second I mentioned money, you started moaning about how girls don't like you 'cause of your car, your clothes. Now, Rockefeller, you might be able to dip your wick into something you don't have to plug into the wall.

Delmer turns beet red.

PANSY

(to Caldwell)

And you? Your parents have plenty of scratch. So why would you need money so bad? Maybe, it's because... they ain't willing to help you "resod the lawn"...

She reaches for his bandana. Starts to pull it down. Caldwell freaks. He jerks back. Grabs her wrist.

The look in his eyes is one of fear, fear that she knows his vain secret.

PANSY

I guess that's worth a little
burglary, huh, big man?

Crysti June takes Caldwell's other hand, calming him down. He lets Pansy go. They stare each other down like prizefighters about to charge out of their corners.

GARNELL

I don't think any of this was worth
a man's life, though.

PANSY

Oh really? You, you're the only one
of us who's got a legitimate shot
of getting out of this crappy town,
Braniac. But, as you tell it, the
scholarship competition out there
is pretty fierce, ain't it?

GARNELL

I've received a... few rejections,
yes.

PANSY

So what happens if you don't land
one? From the looks of that shitbox
you live it, it don't seem like
your parents have the scratch to
send you to Harvard, huh?

Garnell doesn't have a comeback for her.

PANSY

So it's either his life, or yours.
Think about it.

Grimacing, Garnell begins stuffing the money into a large canvas duffle bag.

CALDWELL

(to Pansy)

And you? What do you get out of
this?

PANSY

What, are you kidding? With the way
things are with my mom...

She begins to choke up. Several of the group cut their eyes at each other, not believing that they're seeing their tough-as-nails semi-friend in a vulnerable state.

PANSY

Ah, shit...

(wiping eyes)

I just needed this. To make things better. I don't have anything to lose. But now I've got everything to gain.

She collects herself, embarrassed but determined to move through it.

PANSY

Awright then. Enough of that. Now... let's celebrate!

She reaches into her pocket. Holds out her hand.

INSERT - PANSY'S HAND

She has a handful of Wi-Chang's fortune cookies.

BACK TO SCENE

CALDWELL

Where'd you get those?!

PANSY

On the way out. "Gift with purchase". Heh-heh-heh!

GARNELL

If you left fingerprints--

PANSY

Calm down, Barney Fife. I took care of it. Now tuck in, everyone.

She starts to toss them out. Caldwell grabs her hand.

CALDWELL

No, you can't just hand them out!

She wrests free of his grasp. Squares up to him.

PANSY

This was my idea. This is my house. So we're doin' this my way.

Without looking at Delmer, she tosses a cookie to him. He fumbles with it before catching it. She then throws a cookie to everyone else, saving Caldwell for last.

Pansy holds a cookie out in front of Caldwell's face. He grits his teeth.

CRYSTI JUNE

C'mon, baby, it's okay. Just take it.

Her touch and voice calms Caldwell down. He snatches the cookie from Pansy's fingers. She merely grins at him. Taking a seat, she cracks open her remaining cookie.

The others reluctantly break into their post-caper dessert. The mood is decidedly downbeat compared to the other night.

PANSY

Well? Read 'em out loud! Let's hear what the old man saw in our futures.

(to Delmer)

You! Go.

DELMER

Um... "You will come into a large inheritance."

PANSY

Ha! As if. Unless there's oil under that shack you live in.

(to Rudy Ray)

Double-R, next.

RUDY RAY

"Life will take you for an unexpected ride."

(adds)

"In bed!"

CRYSTI JUNE

"Your aspirations will pull you in many directions."

All eyes turn to Caldwell. Pansy makes a sarcastic "well?" gesture.

CALDWELL

"Carve your name on your heart, not on marble."

GARNELL

Mine says "When a"--

PANSY

Hey! Me next. You go last. "You and your true love will cause quite a stir."

CRYSTI JUNE
Well that sounds nice.

What looks like a cloud of sadness quickly flits across Pansy's face as she and Crysti June lock eyes.

PANSY
Yeah... yeah, that would be somethin'.

GARNELL
"When all is said and done, you will see the point."

The moment over, they all let their fortunes drop to the dirt floor.

PANSY
Dammit, guys, c'mon...

She bends down. Collects them. Places them on the shelf next to her.

Caldwell shakes his head. He nervously clutches at the charm under his shirt.

PANSY
Would you lighten up?

CALDWELL
What was all that weird pagan shit back there with the candles? And that statue?!

PANSY
I dunno. We can have Poindexter here look into it.

GARNELL
Me? I have enough things going on that--

PANSY
All you gotta do is figure out what he said. You love libraries and bookworm shit like that.

CALDWELL
It sounded like...

PANSY
Like what?

CALDWELL
(biting his lip)
Like he was cursing us.

PANSY
Oh my fuckin' God! You can't be serious! You think he's gonna come back from Chinese heaven or somethin' and kill us all?! You've taken too many shots without your helmet on.

The others sit uncomfortably. Garnell looks thoughtfully down at the ground.

CALDWELL
C'mon Crysti June. Let's go.

He grabs his jacket. Flings open the door.

PANSY
Hey! Remember: this is our little secret.

Without acknowledging her, Caldwell storms out, Crysti June in tow.

PANSY
Welp, that's that. Let's get outta here.

Garnell doesn't react.

PANSY
Garnell! C'mon!

Garnell snaps out of his daydream. Slowly picks himself up.

EXT. PANSY'S HOUSE/GARAGE - SAME

Delmer pushes Rudy Ray. Garnell walks a pace or two behind Pansy.

RUDY RAY
This has been one hell of a night.

PANSY
You said it. I'm beat.
(to Garnell)
Hey, what's eating you? C'mon.

GARNELL
 Huh? Oh, okay, I'm... Oh crap! I forgot my backpack! I'll be right back!

PANSY
 You forgot... For fuck's sake!

Garnell scampers back into the garage.

RUDY RAY
 Can we trust that little porch monkey?

DELMER
 Hey, c'mon, now.

PANSY
 Who, Garnell? He knows we'll kill him if he double-crosses us. Nah, he's the least of our worries.

As she says this, Caldwell drives past. He and Pansy look at each other knowingly.

Garnell runs up, his bookbag on one shoulder, the large duffle bag slung awkwardly over the other.

GARNELL
 Okay, it's all here. Let's go.

He and Delmer and Rudy Ray walk down the road to where Delmer's El Camino is stashed.

Pansy watches them go. Takes a drag on her cigarette. Scowls at her shabby house and environs.

PANSY
 As soon as I get that dough...

She stubs out her smoke. Resignedly, she makes her way into the house, the night's adventure finally over.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - MORNING

Police officers go over the restaurant, taking pictures and unrolling yellow tape.

Out of the kitchen, two cops carry a stretcher holding several small plastic-wrapped body parts past the rotund, elderly SHERIFF ELDRIDGE BOYLES. He pushes his hat back off his thinning gray hair and whistles.

BOYLES

I tell you what, I ain't never seen nothin' like this in all'a my born days.

He accidentally steps on evidence markers as he makes his way over to Ling-Su, who sits in the corner. She has obviously been crying. Hong stands beside her, trying his best to console her.

BOYLES

Now, tell me again, why was your gran'pa here so late?

LING-SU

He stay late every night. To make cookies for next day.

BOYLES

An' you didn't see nobody when you left?

LING-SU

No, I tell you, I come in this morning, and I find...

She breaks down again.

BOYLES

There, there. It's okay.

He straightens. Looks at the stretchers.

BOYLES

What monster could'a done this...

BLACKWELDER (O.S.)

This is gonna hurt their health rating.

Sheriff Boyles whirls. A figure blocks the light coming in through the front door.

DEPUTY DAYTON BLACKWELDER, stroking his handlebar mustache, steps into the restaurant.

BOYLES

Dayton! Oh thank God you're here. I don't got no idea what t' make of all this. We ain't had somethin' this awful since... since I don't know when.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT/KITCHEN - SAME

They move into the kitchen.

Blackwelder looks down at the pool of blood in front of the dough machine.

BLACKWELDER

Since the Cartwright incident.

BOYLES

Oh my, you're right. I'd right t' forgotten all that mess.

BLACKWELDER

Not me.

He taps his eyepatch with his toothpick.

BOYLES

Oh, Lord. Sorry, Dayton. Didn't mean that the way it sounded.

BLACKWELDER

Not to worry, Sheriff.

He bends down to the floor. Using his toothpick, he gingerly picks an object out of a pile of spilled rice.

INSERT

A single spent bullet shell.

BACK TO SCENE

BLACKWELDER

There's always somethin' bringin' it back to mind.

He looks over the shell intently, as if it means something to him.

CUT TO:

EXT. DELMER'S HOUSE - SAME

Delmer pulls on a coat as he makes his way to the garage.

He runs into his GRANDPA EUSTICE, coming out of his wood working shed. Grandpa wipes the grime off his hands onto his ancient overalls.

DELMER

Gran'pa, I'm running late for school. I'm takin' the... El Camino...

Delmer's voice trails off as he peers over Grandpa's shoulder, into the shed.

POV

A huge, ancient belt sander. Looking like a medieval torture device, it sits in the middle of the shed, its six-foot belt calling to Delmer like a siren.

BACK TO SCENE

GRANDPA

Just have it back by four. It's Bingo night at the VFW.

Delmer doesn't hear him. He's lost in the allure of the sander.

GRANDPA

Boy? Delmer!

Grandpa smacks Delmer on the temple. Delmer snaps back to the real world.

GRANDPA

Boy, what's wrong in your head? You get around this wood workin' stuff and you get... squirrely.

DELMER

I... I'm sorry, Grandpa.

He watches forlornly as Grandpa shuts the doors and secures them with a large rusty lock.

GRANDPA

I ain't gonna be around ferever. All that equipment's gonna be your'n someday, you know that. But no need t' go pickin' over my corpse just as yet.

DELMER

No, it's not... You're right. I'm
sorry. I just... Four o'clock.
Right. I'll... I'll be here.

He stumbles off. Once his back is turned to Grandpa, he grabs at the lump in his pants, biting his lip to contain his excitement.

Delmer jumps in the rust-brown El Camino. He pulls away, Grandpa shaking his head as he goes.

CUT TO:

INT. CALDWELL'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - MORNING

Caldwell stands shirtless before a full-length mirror, doing bicep curls with one hand.

His father stands behind him, watching his form.

COACH SARTAIN

That's it. Smooth. Smoooooth. Make
that motion fluid. You got it.
Nice!

Caldwell drops the dumbbell with a THUD. He takes a moment to pose in the mirror, admiring his physique. He then makes a few "air passes", watching his form.

COACH SARTAIN

Remember, it's not just the throw,
it's the finger placement. Your
granddad, he had that "Magic
Finger". All he had to do was touch
the laces, and he'd know where to
hold it.

CALDWELL

I know, dad.

COACH SARTAIN

Always remember granddad's Magic
Finger. He passed that finger on to
me, and I went pro. And now... it's
yours. You're gonna be the best,
son... but only if you don't get
injured, like your old man. Just be
smart, and stay safe.

(looks down at watch)

Holy shit, look at the time. Hit
the shower, son. We'll pick this up
at practice.

Coach Sartain heads for the kitchen, leaving Caldwell alone with this thoughts. He concentrates on the ever-present bandana circling his forehead.

Caldwell grabs a can from the top drawer of his chest. Steps back in front of the mirror. Gingerly, he removes the bandana.

POV - MIRROR

Caldwell winces as he examines the bane of his existence: his severely thinning hairline. He shakes the can. Applies a liberal dose of foam to his exposed scalp. Rubbing furiously, he works the hair-growth formula into his skin.

BACK TO SCENE

He wraps a fresh bandana around his shameful secret, adjusts it, then fluffs his hair around it. Satisfied, but obviously distraught, he grabs a towel and heads for the shower.

CUT TO:

INT. GARNELL'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - MORNING

Garnell puts his dishes in the sink. Reaches around his mother, NASHELLE, to grab the sponge.

The back door opens. BOOKER JEFFERSON enters, carrying his lunchbox.

BOOKER
Hello, everyone.

GARNELL
Hey dad.

NASHELLE
(kissing Booker)
You look tired.

BOOKER
We had two delayed shipments come in at the same time, and Osvaldo is out sick, so I had to unload both railcars basically alone.

NASHELLE
Poor thing. Well, go shower.

GARNELL
I'm going to be home late tonight.

NASHELLE

More tutoring? I swear, you're helping that girl so much it's almost like you're doing her work for her.

GARNELL

(embarrassed)

Ah, um, well, there's a... big test on Friday, and she said she needed... extra tutoring.

BOOKER

Our little professor. Ain't no way any college is going to refuse you, son.

GARNELL

Well, let's hope so.

BOOKER

Here, if you're goin' out...

Booker fishes in his dirty overalls. Pulls out his wallet. He opens it, finding only two well-worn dollar bills.

BOOKER

You might need a little money, 'case you go out or somethin'.

GARNELL

No, no dad. Thanks, but we'll be at her house all night, so...

Booker puts the money back, embarrassed that he doesn't have more to give.

GARNELL

Okay, see you tonight. Bye!

He grabs his coat and bookbag as he runs out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. CRYSTI JUNE'S HOUSE/GARAGE - MORNING

Crysti June KICKS OPEN the door from the kitchen into the garage. A tiny little dog trots behind her, secured to an abnormally long extendable leash.

CRYSTI JUNE
 I can't believe you! You don't
 support me in anything I ever do! I
 only need \$130!

She is followed by her father, JOHNSTON PURDY, and her mother, the chain-smoking former beauty queen RACHEL MAY PURDY. Rachel May leans on the door jamb, a cocktail in her hand.

JOHNSTON
 Sweetheart... things at the
 dealership have been a bit... slow
 lately, and I can't just--

Johnston almost falls on his face as the dog's leash tangles itself around his ankles. He frustratedly tries to extricate himself.

Crysti June dumps an armload of jewelry material onto her work area, a section that was obviously Johnston's workshop before his daughter took over.

CRYSTI JUNE
 One day, when I'm on Oprah, I'm
 going to tell her that I had to
 become successful all on my own,
 and you're going to regret what you
 did to me!

She begins hanging her materials on silver hooks attached to a large metal rack, which is securely bolted to the wall.

A large SUV rolls to a stop at the end of the driveway. Caldwell, behind the wheel, playfully HONKS.

RACHEL MAY
 Oh, there's Caldwell. He certainly
 looked good on the field last week.
 So athletic.
 (scowling at Johnston)
 You're a lucky girl.

CRYSTI JUNE
 Whatever.

She stuffs the dog into a carrier.

CRYSTI JUNE
 Bye bye, Chantilly! I'll see you
 when I get home.
 (to her parents)
 Don't touch my stuff!

She grabs her large purse. Trots for the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUDY RAY'S MOBILE HOME - MORNING

Delmer pulls up in his El Camino, taking in the sad sight before him.

POV

A tiny plot of land with a steep drop-off, so tiny that it can barely contain Rudy Ray's single-wide trailer. In fact, a good half of the trailer hangs out over the edge of the hill, suspended in mid-air by two cinderblock columns: a white trash castle in the sky.

BACK TO SCENE

Delmer raps on the rickety aluminum door. A loud CRASH and THUMP comes from inside.

RANDY RAY (O.S.)
Aw (burp) goddammit... shit...

The DOOR BANGS open, revealing RANDY RAY GRAYSON, Rudy Ray's uncle. Unshaven, balding, and wearing only underwear and work boots, he rubs his swollen face as he sways unsteadily on his feet.

RANDY RAY
Fuck... izzit Monday 'ready?...

DELMER
Yeah, Randy Ray. I'm here to pick up Rudy Ray for school.

RANDY RAY
(urk) (burp) Oh God...

DELMER
Can I just go get him?

A sudden COMMOTION from the other side of the trailer catches their attention.

DELMER
Oh no... Did you forget to strap him in again!?!
A foggy look of pained thinking crosses Randy Ray's face. His eyes go wide.

Delmer races around the side of the trailer.

A dirt-and-leaf covered Rudy Ray is ragging himself towards the steepest part of the hillside drop. His eyes closed shut in deep sleep, he mutters to himself as he pulls his useless legs behind him.

DELMER

Crap! Here! Over here!

Delmer lunges for Rudy Ray's ankles, just as he reaches the lip. Below, through several yards of thin trees and rocky outcroppings, cars and trucks race by on the interstate.

Randy Ray finally stumbles around the trailer, weakly helping Delmer pull Rudy Ray back from the edge.

RANDY RAY

Holy shit, the kid's sleep crawlin' now?--

DELMER

What were you thinking?!? He's already paralyzed 'cause he sleepwalked off this hill! You want him to just die and get it over with?

RANDY RAY

(sheepish but angry)
Shut up and help me turn 'im over.

They succeed in getting Rudy Ray on his back. Still asleep, he continues to claw at the air. Delmer slaps him on the cheeks. Rudy Ray snorts. His eyes flutter open.

RUDY RAY

Wha... Where... Delmer? What th'...

DELMER

Time for school. C'mon.

He and Randy Ray hoist Rudy Ray off the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON

Delmer, Rudy Ray, and Garnell sit together eating lunch. They look down, unwilling to make conversation.

PANSY (O.S.)

What's for lunch, fellas?

She slaps Garnell on the back, making him choke. She plops down next to them, grinning like the cat who ate the canary.

PANSY
Doesn't feel right eating this
crap, does it? We oughtta be eating
filet mignon on gold plates.

DELMER
(softly)
Jesus, Pansy, you wanna get caught?

PANSY
What? We're clear. They say if you
don't find the criminal in the
first forty-eight hours, you almost
never catch them. And it's been...

She tries to do math in her head and on her fingers, but fails.

PANSY
(to Garnell)
How many hours in two weeks?

GARNELL
(without missing a beat)
Three hundred thirty-six.

PANSY
There! See? No way.

She notices Caldwell and Crysti June walking together across the cafeteria. Pansy waves. Only Crysti June acknowledges her.

PANSY
What's his problem?

RUDY RAY
He's still wiggged out from that
Chinese devil worshipping shit. You
know how he is.

PANSY
I don't know what she sees in that
pussy. Well, I'm not sweatin' it.
(to Garnell)
So, how long you figure we gotta
wait before we can "enjoy"
ourselves?

Garnell doesn't hear her. He absent-mindedly pokes at his food.

PANSY

Hey! Genius!

GARNELL

Huh?! Oh, sorry. Lot on my mind. I suggest we wait several more weeks. At least a few months.

PANSY

Are you outta your mind?!?

GARNELL

Pansy, this is a small town. The police will pursue this case doggedly just because it's so prominent in the public eye.

PANSY

The police? Those fruitcakes don't know shit about nothing. I want my money now.

DELMER

I think we should listen to Garnell.

RUDY RAY

Much as I hate t' agree with th' freak an' th' spook, they's right. Imagine I roll into Bob's shop an' buy one'a them premium European dolls, the ones with th' real hair. Everyone's gonna know somethin's up.

Pansy cocks a suspicious eyebrow at the trio, but they all stand firm.

PANSY

Okay, fine. Whatever. But trust me, boys, we're free and clear. Nothin' bad is gonna happen to us. Ever.

She shovels a mouthful of overcooked food in her maw, smiling like a madwoman as she chews.

Garnell eyes her with a mix of disgust and scorn.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DELMER'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - EVENING

Delmer sits in his small room, looking through well-read catalogues of power tools.

A knock at the door causes him to jump.

GRANDPA (O.S.)

Boy?

Delmer awkwardly shoves the catalogue under his bed. Grabs a textbook, just as the door opens.

GRANDPA

(suspicious)

What're you doin'?

DELMER

Nothin'. Just homework. Research for homework.

GRANDPA

Alright... Well, I'm a'leavin'. Dinner at the VFW. I'm takin' the car.

Delmer's eyes brighten a bit.

DELMER

How... long will you be gone?...

GRANDPA

'S long as it takes t' get blind pissed. Heh heh!

Delmer laughs weakly, just to humor the old man.

GRANDPA

Don't go doin' nothin' while I'm gone.

DELMER

I won't. Bye.

Delmer returns to his "research". Grandpa takes off down the hallway.

Delmer drops the book. Listens intently as the back door CLOSES, and the El Camino ROARS to life.

He peeks out of his blinds, watching Grandpa put the car into gear and trundle down the street. When the car makes the left turn at the end of the block and disappears, he leaps off the bed.

INT. DELMER'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - EVENING

Delmer runs to the kitchen and grabs a large loop keychain off a hook by the back door.

INT. DELMER'S HOUSE/WOODSHOP - EVENING

The lock clicks open. The old wooden doors swing wide on rusty hinges. Delmer enters the musty, dusty woodshop.

He walks right past the workbench, the wall of tools, the table saw, the upright drill, the vat of muriatic acid.

He makes his way to the beautiful belt sander.

Delmer runs his hand over the metal supports tenderly, almost lovingly.

DELMER

You like that, don't you...

With a flick of his thumb, he tests the tautness of the belt. It vibrates with a DULL TWANG.

DELMER

...Pansy...

Eagerly licking his lips, Delmer props up a box next to the sander. He stands on it. It wobbles a bit, but he steadies himself. Stabilized, he drops his pants. With a push of a button, the sander RUMBLES TO LIFE.

A lurch. A GROAN. A CLANKING OF GEARS. The sander fires up. Dust comes off the leathery belt as it circulates faster and faster.

Delmer leans against the frame of the sander, the vibrations exciting him.

DELMER

Mmmmmmm...

His eyes flutter as the sander sends wave after erotic wave through his entire body.

DELMER

That's it... baby girl...

He presses more of his groin against the metal frame, trying to get every little jiggle. He gets more and more worked up. His hips begin to clench as his juices build.

DELMER

Gonna... do you... Pansy... Uh! UH!
UHHH!!!

He shudders. His climax starts. His eyes snap open. And they go wide.

But not with elation. With fear.

POV

Standing in the doorway is the red-robed figure of Wi-Chang, silhouetted by the house light, throwing his hooded face into deep shadow.

The figure stabs an accusatory finger at Delmer.

BACK TO SCENE

Frightened, Delmer loses his balance. The box pops out from beneath him. He falls forward...

...into the belt sander.

The rapidly-spinning belt grabs his genitals. Yanks him down into the innards of the sander. With a wet rending TEAR, the sander hurls him across the shed.

His severed penis and testicles hit the window with a FLESHY SPLATTER of blood.

Delmer's body slams into the wall of saw blades and other tools.

It drops down into the vat of muriatic acid.

Screaming, Delmer's nose fills with the fumes of his lower torso melting away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DELMER'S HOUSE/WOODSHOP - MORNING

Sheriff Boyles stifles a gag as two deputies in hazmat suits pull the remains of Delmer out of the muriatic acid.

A deputy takes notes from Grandpa, who angrily wipes tears from his eyes.

GRANDPA

Always actin' weird... He knew it was gonna be his... Never knew he was some sort'a... sex pervert...

Boyles stumbles over to where Blackwelder squats beside an area on the floor under the window.

POV

An oblong shape outlined in white tape and blood.

BACK TO SCENE

BLACKWELDER

(indicating size of taped area)

At least we didn't have to use a lotta tape.

BOYLES

Horrible. Just horrible. See the look on his face? Like he'd seen the devil himself.

BLACKWELDER

If I was bein' dissolved alive, I'd prob'ly be scared shitless too.

BOYLES

You don't think this could'a been a... a suicide?

BLACKWELDER

Suicide? Not unless th' thought of dyin' got 'is rocks off. There's baby batter all over th' belt an' th' floor. Naw, this kid was into some seriously kinky shit.

The men wrangling Delmer's body onto the gurney trip over a large wooden pole laying on the ground. They almost drop Delmer's remains.

EMT #1

Dammit, Robby Ray, watch it!

EMT #2

You watch it!

BLACKWELDER

Been so long since anything happened 'round here, those boys forgot how t' sling a body.

Still chuckling, he hooks his thumbs into his belt as he makes his way out of the shed.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL/BLEACHERS - AFTERNOON

Pansy puffs away on a cigarette, as Rudy Ray haltingly reads from the local paper.

RUDY RAY

"Authorities. Do not. Believe the death. Is a. Suicide. As no. Note was. Found at the. Scene." Fuck.

CALDWELL

Jesus...

RUDY RAY

My cousin Robby Ray is on the EMT team. Said that there was cum all in his uncle's sander.

CRYSTI JUNE

He always was a weirdo.

RUDY RAY

Hey! He was my friend.

Pansy snatches the paper from Rudy Ray. Tucks it under her arm.

PANSY

He wasn't your friend. He drove your crippled ass around, that's all.

RUDY RAY

He was a better friend t' me than yer lesbian ass!

PANSY

I'll come over there and kick you outta that wheelchair--

CALDWELL

Stop it! For God's sake, just... just shut up!

Everyone takes a neutral corner, but the tension remains thick in the air.

CALDWELL

I just can't help but feel that this wasn't an accident.

GARNELL

As traumatic and unfortunate an event as this is, I find it highly improbable that it relates in any manner to our shared "activities".

PANSY

Yeah, I'm with the egghead on this one. Delmer took too many chances, until...

(makes ripping noise)

...he's a Ken doll. And look at it this way: now we're talking about a five way split.

CRYSTI JUNE

Goodness, Pansy, you can be so... so cold sometimes.

PANSY

I'm cold? Who was the first one to join in my little plan, huh?

Crysti June doesn't have a comeback.

CALDWELL

You almost sound like you're glad he's dead.

PANSY

Look, we're cool. It was an accident. No reason to get all fucked up over this. C'mon, let's get outta here 'fore someone wonders what we're doing.

They morosely split up, each going their own way.

Pansy watches them all disperse, thoughtfully rolling her cigarette in her fingers as dark clouds loom on the horizon.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RUDY RAY'S MOBILE HOME/BEDROOM - EVENING

Randy Ray straps Rudy Ray into his medical bed. Thunder rumbles in the distance.

RUDY RAY

I don't see why I got t' get trussed up so goddamn early. Wrestlin' ain't even on yet.

RANDY RAY

'Cause I got a ron-day-voos with Miss Duana Bainbridge, an' she's got a limited window of opportunity a'fore her husband gets home from th' mill.

He tests the straps. They're secure and taut. He cuts on the small black-and-white TV at the end of the bed.

RANDY RAY

There. Now quit bitchin'. See ya in th' mornin'.

Rudy Ray listens to the door shut and lock. He drops his head back on the pillow, resigned to his fate.

FADE TO BLACK

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. RUDY RAY'S MOBILE HOME/BEDROOM - LATER

A loud BUMP wakes Rudy Ray up. Groggily, he shakes his head. Under the PATTERN OF RAIN on the metal roof, a METALLIC GROAN comes from the far end of the trailer.

RUDY RAY

Urrm... Randy Ray? That you?

The mobile home unexpectedly LURCHES. All throughout the trailer, OBJECTS FALL onto the floor.

RUDY RAY

Shit! Randy Ray?!? That ain't funny, goddammit!

Another shift. This time the entire trailer tilts at an angle.

EXT. RUDY RAY'S MOBILE HOME - SAME

A strong rivulet of rainwater run-off sweeps around the spindly cinderblock supports keeping the trailer secure in mid-air. The mud shifts. The supports slide.

INT. RUDY RAY'S MOBILE HOME/BEDROOM - SAME

Once again the trailer tilts, this time violently. DEBRIS ROLLS down the tiny hallway towards the opposite end of the trailer.

Rudy Ray's bed rotates. Points feet-first down the now-sloping floor. Rudy Ray's plummet is stopped by the lip of the doorway.

RUDY RAY

Oh shit! Oh shit! Help! HEEEEELP!!!

Rudy Ray thrashes about, trying to release himself from his restraints. It's no use. He's trussed up tight.

He starts to cry out again. A STRIKE OF LIGHTNING illuminates the window.

POV

Standing at his window in the pouring rain is the red-hooded figure of Wi-Chang.

The robed specter thrusts a finger right at Rudy Ray.

BACK TO SCENE

RUDY RAY

Oh God oh God no no NO--

EXT. RUDY RAY'S MOBILE HOME - SAME

The hillside caves in completely. The mobile home rockets down the slope.

INT. RUDY RAY'S MOBILE HOME - SAME

Rudy Ray's medical bed BOUNCES ABOUT as it rolls towards the downward end. Flying objects and BREAKING GLASS slash and pierce Rudy Ray as the descent intensifies.

RUDY RAY

AAAAH! AAAAAH!!!

EXT. RUDY RAY'S MOBILE HOME - SAME

The mobile home careens downhill.

It SLAMS to a CRUSHING STOP against two large trees.

INT. RUDY RAY'S MOBILE HOME - SAME

Rudy Ray's bed rockets forward.

It SMASHES through the thin wall and windows of the mobile home.

EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME

Rudy Ray's bed CLATTERS across the road. Cars and trucks LOCK THEIR BRAKES to avoid the medical bed as it SKITTERS across the pavement.

It reaches the other side of the road. Catches a wheel on the edge of a culvert. Launches end over end through the air.

EXT. JUNKYARD - SAME

The bed soars over a razorwire fence into a car junkyard.

It flips. Rolls. Comes to a GROANING rest.

Delmer MOANS. He still weakly tries to extricate himself from the restraints.

A harsh SCRAPING SOUND causes him to look up.

A metal lid RUMBLES CLOSED over him. He realizes he's in the wrecking yard's hydraulic crusher.

As the walls close in, Rudy Ray's screams are drowned out by the POURING RAIN and the GRINDING WHINE of the motors.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JUNKYARD - MORNING

Deputies pick through the debris strewn between the hillside and the wrecking yard. Blackwelder toes various bits of wreckage. He finds a particularly filthy porn mag.

BLACKWELDER
See you later, little lady...

He rolls it up. Tucks it in his back pocket.

Blackwelder makes his way over to where the Deputies are working. He passes a deputy shifting debris with a large muddy shovel.

BLACKWELDER
Hey! Where'd you get that thing?

DEPUTY
I found it, here in the mess.

BLACKWELDER

Well put it down. It's part o' the
crime scene, asshole.

The Deputy sheepishly drops the shovel, as Blackwelder
continues on.

Sheriff Boyles interrogates a shaken Randy Ray as they walk
through the wrecking yard.

RANDY RAY

Naw, uh-uh, no way he could'a done
somethin'! He was trussed up
tighter'n a Christmas goose!

(beat)

Unless...

BOYLES

Unless?...

Blackwelder walks up at this moment, sipping from a travel
mug.

RANDY RAY

Well... a few weeks ago, I sort'a
got a little tore up, an'... I
guess I fergot to strap 'im down.
He got a'loose. An' I did have a
few a'fore'n I went out last night.
So, maybe, I could'a fergot...
again...

BOYLES

Uh-huh. And when was this that he
"got loose"?

RANDY RAY

Don't rightly recall. But I do
'member Delmer helpin' me corral
'im.

Blackwelder pricks up his ears when he hears this.

BLACKWELDER

Delmer? Delmer Craib? The kid who
died?

RANDY RAY

Yessir. That's right.

BLACKWELDER

They were friends?

RANDY RAY
I wouldn't call 'em "friends" as
such. Delmer drove Rudy Ray around
fer me.

BLACKWELDER
Hmmm...

EMT #1 (O.S.)
Sheriff? We're bringing it out.

Boyles and Blackwelder escort Randy Ray to the hydraulic
crusher.

A crumpled mass of metal is hoisted out. BLOOD TRICKLES from
between the folds and crimps.

Two EMTs take hold of some of the metal. Pull it back.

Rudy Ray's mangled head falls forward, his face frozen and
twisted in sheer terror. Randy Ray turns away sobbing.

BOYLES
Look'a that boy's eyes... What in
the name o' Moses could'a scared
him like that?

Deputy Blackwelder just grunts.

BLACKWELDER
Looks like a lunchbox full o' white
trash. Okay, get it outta here.

The workers swivel the cubic coffin out to a waiting flatbed
truck.

Blackwelder strides off towards his car, leaving Boyles
standing impotently amidst the crime scene.

CUT TO:

EXT. BODY SHOP - AFTERNOON

Standing alone against the wall, Pansy drags on her cigarette
as she watches her truck up on the lift.

PANSY
Fuck, Vic, it's just a lube job.
Hurry it up.

VIC
I'm doin' it. Jeezus.

A hand CLAPS DOWN on her shoulder.

PANSY
The hell?--

She turns to find Caldwell, an anxious look on his face.

CALDWELL
It's Rudy Ray.

PANSY
What about him?

CALDWELL
He's dead. Last night.

PANSY
Whaaat? Get outta here--

Caldwell grabs her arm, startling her.

CALDWELL
He was smashed in the car crusher
in Murphy's junkyard!

He thrusts the morning newspaper into her face, folded to the article detailing Rudy Ray's death. She takes the paper. Scans it.

CALDWELL
His trailer slid down the hillside
in the rain. He couldn't get free!
He was strapped into that goddamn
bed!

PANSY
Really? Huh. So now it's just a
four way split.

CALDWELL
(angrily)
You seem awfully good at the math
these days.

PANSY
You tryin' to say something?

CALDWELL
It's just suspicious, that's all.
The two you like the least,
suddenly no longer a threat...

PANSY
 If I was gonna start offin' people,
 you'd be the top of my list,
 asshole!

Caldwell slams her up against the wall. He wedges his forearm against her neck.

GARNELL (O.S.)
 Ahem.

Garnell has been standing beside them without their noticing. Caldwell reluctantly lets Pansy go.

PANSY
 What d'you want? I was gonna come
 get you once th' truck's done.

GARNELL
 I was passing by, and happened to
 see you both here.

PANSY
 What'd you do, run over here?
 You're all wet.

Garnell looks down. A large dark area of wetness covers his shirt.

GARNELL
 Ah, I suppose I'm not used to overt
 physical exertion.

CALDWELL
 What do you want? We're busy.

GARNELL
 I thought you might like to know...
 As per your "request" the other
 evening, I researched "Tsai-Shen"
 and "Chu-Jung".

PANSY
 "Jew"-what?

CALDWELL
 Chu-Jung! What the... "person" said
 the other night.

Garnell pulls an incredibly old and worn book from his bag.

PANSY

Did you get that from our library?
That thing looks Chinese or
somethin'...

Garnell opens it to a marked section.

INSERT - THE BOOK

A delicately painted image of a pleasant Chinese god. The same god as the statue over the cookie dough maker.

BACK TO SCENE

CALDWELL

Hey, that looks like--

GARNELL

The statue in the restaurant. "Tsai-Shen". A god of success and plenty. Based on the actions we saw, I believe that... that "certain someone" regularly prayed to Tsai-Shen for continued success. Which he was obviously enjoying.

CALDWELL

What about the other one?

GARNELL

Ah. Well, that's where things become a tad complicated...

He fingers another marker further back in the book.

INSERT - THE BOOK

A woodcarving of a particularly nasty-looking Asian deity, done in thick, jagged lines.

BACK TO SCENE

GARNELL

Chu-Jung. Chinese god of fire. Personifies justice, revenge... and death. I couldn't find many details on his followers, but I suppose Wi-Chang was a believer. It would appear that he was offering something to this god. Maybe his soul or something.

Pansy and Caldwell process this new information. Garnell keeps looking over his shoulder, across the street.

CALDWELL
(softly)
He cursed us.

PANSY
Are you serious?!? C'mon.

CALDWELL
He was cursing us.

He clutches at the lucky charm hanging around his neck under his shirt.

PANSY
Listen, stupid--

CALDWELL
(becoming frantic)
He cursed us and now he's coming
back to kill us all! Kill us all!

Pansy pushes Caldwell around the building. SLAMS HIM up against the wall.

PANSY
Listen to me! If you blow this,
I'll make sure you don't even get
close to jail. You hear me? Huh?!?

Caldwell nervously nods "yes". She lets him go.

Pansy turns on Garnell.

PANSY
Thanks for nothin', idiot. He's the
weak link in all this, and now
you've got him spooked.

GARNELL
I was just--

Without warning, an out-of-control flatbed truck CRASHES into the retaining wall next to Garnell. Its cargo of rebar SMASHES into the cinderblocks.

Pansy and Caldwell rush to the crash, waving away the dust from the impact.

They're stunned to find Garnell, still alive, pinned to the wall between several bundles of rebar.

CALDWELL
Holy shit! Are you okay?

GARNELL
 (in shock)
 I... I think so. I looked up, and I
 saw the points, coming right at
 me...

People from across the street run over to see what happened.
 One of them jumps into the truck to move it.

CALDWELL
 (to Pansy)
 Not cursed?...

Before she can answer, he returns to task of freeing Garnell.
 The truck LURCHES forward. Caldwell pulls him free.

GARNELL
 (in shock)
 I thought I was done... I saw the
 points coming right at me...

Pansy fades into the crowd, leaving the scene behind.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. "BURT'S BASS HOLE" - AFTERNOON

Pansy sits in her truck, taking a long drag on her ever-present cigarette. She studies the façade of Burt's shop intently, the gears turning in her head.

She makes up her mind.

INT. "BURT'S BASS HOLE" - AFTERNOON

Pansy strolls through the front door. Heads right for the main counter.

Burt puts down his magazine. Stands to meet her.

BURT
 Well well well. If it ain't my best
 window-shopper. I thought I told
 you--

PANSY
 I know what you told me, old man.

Burt reaches for the phone again.

BURT
 You're takin' your life in your
 hands, you young punk.

PANSY
 Burt, life's too short to worry
 about anything but havin' fun.

She pulls a wad of money from her coat pocket. SLAPS it down
 on the counter.

PANSY
 Now how 'bout you shut the fuck up
 and hand over that Evinrude?

The sarcastic look on Burt's face turns to one of sycophantic
 delight. He greedily rifles through the beautiful cash.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PANSY'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Garnell rides up on his bicycle. He sees Pansy's truck. Sighs
 heavily.

INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Garnell slowly pushes open the door. The TV BLARES in the
 background.

GARNELL
 Mrs. Cartwright? It's me, Garnell.

MITZI
 Oh, Garnell, hello. Come on in.

Garnell steps around her oxygen tanks on his way to her
 filthy chair. He pulls a bottle from his bookbag.

GARNELL
 I got the lotion you asked for.

MITZI
 Why, thank you, Garnell.

She SQUIRTS a large goopy string of the lotion all over her
 tremendous cleavage. Begins slowly working it into her
 mottled skin.

MITZI
 Oooh... aaaah... mmmmm... It feels
 so good.

You are a nice boy, Garnell. It's not true what they say about you people. You're not all crooks.

GARNELL
(gritting teeth)
Thank you. Ummm, is Pansy--?

MITZI
She got home an hour or so ago, but went straight to the damn garage. Hasn't been in here to help me with anything. I could use a clean towel...

Garnell sighs. He makes for the back door.

INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/GARAGE - SAME

Garnell bursts in.

GARNELL
You didn't come pick me--

His face is almost slashed off as Pansy FIRES UP HER NEW OUTBOARD MOTOR, now safely secured to the boat. The propeller spins mere inches from Garnell's face. He jerks backward and fall over.

PANSY
(yelling over the noise)
Hot damn! Listen to that goddamn baby purr!

GARNELL
Pansy! What... How did you--

She THROTTLES back. Lets the motor slowly stop. She hops out of the boat.

PANSY
Maybe I found a couple of extra bucks in my coat pocket after you all left.

GARNELL
You purposefully hid money from us?!? After what we went through?!?

PANSY
Consider it my ten percent for being your fuckin' agent.

She pushes past him, as she circles her shiny new toy.

GARNELL

I thought you needed the money for your mother's medical bills! The other day, you almost cried--

PANSY

What, you thought I was upset 'cause of that fat bitch in there? Fuck her! I said I needed money to "make things better". Better for me. And now...

(lovingly pats motor)
...things are fuckin' perfect.

GARNELL

Pansy, this... this is completely irresponsible! We discussed this! How will it look to--

PANSY

Relax. I told Burt we got some insurance money. He doesn't give a shit, 'long as he gets paid.

GARNELL

This is not right. This is... is--

PANSY

Shut up, will you?
(regarding the motor)
Ain't she the most beautiful thing you ever seen?
(to the motor)
Damn I love you.

She gives the motor's cowl an exaggerated kiss.

PANSY

Now... if you'll get the hell out of here, I'm going to start packing for my fishing trip tomorrow.

GARNELL

But... I thought you wanted to be "tutored"--

PANSY

Hell no! All's I care about right now is getting that boat out on the lake. You can come by tomorrow night. Maybe I'll serve you some "fish". Heh-heh-heh. Now... go.

GARNELL

Pansy--

PANSY

I wasn't asking, Garnell.

She props open the garage door, waiting for him to exit. Despite his anger, he obeys. She follows behind him, smiling broadly.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

Blackwelder reads a magazine at his desk. A young Deputy walks up, clutching a folder.

DEPUTY

Deputy Blackwelder?

BLACKWELDER

Yeah?

DEPUTY

We got the ballistics back on that shell. Looks like it's from a CZ-75B.

Blackwelder drops the magazine.

BLACKWELDER

Come again?

DEPUTY

The gun that fired that shell. It's Czechoslovakian. Not illegal, really, but--

BLACKWELDER

I know what it is. Gimme.

The Deputy hands over the folder. Hurries away.

Blackwelder pulls at his mustache.

BLACKWELDER

(to himself)

Fuck me sideways.

Blackwelder grabs his hat and heads for his cruiser.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE - SAME

Pansy drifts in the middle of the local lake, casting her fishing line.

A look of serene peace is on her face. For the first time in ages, she's happy.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAKE/SHORE - LATER

Pansy pulls her boat up onto its trailer. Begins securing it.

A CRUNCH from behind startles her. She spins.

Deputy Blackwelder is leaning against his cruiser. He unfurls the fortune pulled from his just-opened cookie.

BLACKWELDER

(reading)

"Birds are entangled by their feet
and men by their tongues." Well
ain't that somethin'.

He throws the fortune cookie he just opened into his mouth. He CHOMPS down on it. Makes a face. SPITS it out.

BLACKWELDER

Bleeech! Fuck, just ain't th' same
since th' old man died.

PANSY

Wouldn't know.

BLACKWELDER

Now is that a fact? Could'a sworn
you an' that rat pack you run with
went there all the time.

PANSY

Not like there's only one
restaurant in town.

BLACKWELDER

True, true. You know, we found a
spent shell casin' next t' that
dead Chinese fella. Looks like it
came from a CZ-75B.
Czechoslovakian. Kinda uncommon in
a place like this. Seems t' me
there was only one guy in town had
a gun like that. Ring any bells?

PANSY

If you're meaning my daddy, I didn't see any guns in his shit. Looks like your detective skills failed you... again.

Blackwelder wads up the fortune. Tosses it through his open car window. He pushes his hat back.

BLACKWELDER

Went by your house. Your momma said you was out fishin'. Ain't seen you out on th' lake in quite some time.

PANSY

Yeah, well, I figured it was high time I had some time off.

BLACKWELDER

Is that so? As I remember it, that piece o' shit motor you had crapped out last spring. But that one there... If I didn't know better, I'd swear it came straight from Burt's shop.

PANSY

And? So what if it did? Ain't no law against buying stuff in this town, is there?

BLACKWELDER

No, no. 'Cept when the person doin' the buyin' happens t' be one o' the poorest o' th' dirt-poor fuckers in this county. That's when I get suspicious.

Pansy continues securing her boat, trying to ignore him. She sees that one of the tool boxes in her truck bed is open. SLAMS it closed.

PANSY

I been saving for it.

BLACKWELDER

Savin'? Now ain't that practical. Not enough youngsters these days thinkin' that far ahead. And I suppose you must'a been puttin' a little aside each week from th' job you don't got?

Or maybe you squirreled away some'a
the inheritance your daddy didn't
leave ya?

Pansy finally can't take anymore. She stalks right up to him.
Blackwelder's demeanor and posture don't change one bit.

PANSY

Don't say a fucking word about my
daddy.

BLACKWELDER

That's just sad. After all this
time, you still stand by that
killer.

PANSY

He didn't kill anyone, and you know
it.

BLACKWELDER

Like you say, I'm no detective...
but that little black hooker sure
as hell looked dead t' me. Funny.

PANSY

Yeah, "funny". "Funny" how you got
to the scene so quick. Almost like
you were there to begin with.

BLACKWELDER

Just happened t' be in th' area, is
all.

PANSY

Yeah. And "funny" how some of the
cocaine appeared to be missing. And
the room looked like it'd been
wiped down. And three people saw
someone matching your description
pick up that hooker girl the same
night. And--

BLACKWELDER

So, you were at the trial. A jury
o' my peers found ever'thing was
above board an' square.

PANSY

Your peers? Every single son of a
bitch in that room was in your back
pocket.

BLACKWELDER

I'm a tolerant man, Pansy, but you're gettin' dangerously close t' crossin' th' line with an officer of th' law.

PANSY

You think you're such hot shit, with that badge and that gun. But you don't fool anyone. Everyone in town knows you're just Boyles' errand boy. Hell, you can't even get promoted. You been a deputy, what, ten years now?

BLACKWELDER

I got no desire t' be sheriff. That fat sack o' shit Boyles takes all th' heat for ever'thing. An' me? I get t' sit back and do whatever I want. Top o' th' mountain ain't always the place t' be.

PANSY

That's such shit. God, I got no idea what my dad ever saw in you.

BLACKWELDER

Your daddy saw things my way. 'S what made him such a good... "partner", y'might say. 'Til he went off th' deep end. Shame.

PANSY

The only "shame" is that my daddy was so fucked up when he pulled the trigger, he missed your forehead and hit you in the eye instead. If his aim'd been better, they would'a pulled the two of you off that hotel floor, not just him.

She jumps into her truck. SLAMS the door. With a SPINNING OF TIRES she pulls away, leaving Blackwelder in a cloud of dust and gravel.

BLACKWELDER

Fuckin'. White trash. Cunt!

He adjusts his eyepatch. SPITS.

When Pansy rounds the bend, Blackwelder pulls a plastic evidence bag out of his pocket.

A bag containing a pair of bright orange work gloves.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PANSY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Mitzi clumsily maneuvers her walker down the hall. She stops in front of Pansy's room. Tries the doorknob. It's locked.

MITZI
Pansy? PAAAANSY?

PANSY (O.S.)
WHAT?!?

MITZI
Are you done studying yet? I need my bath.

PANSY (O.S.)
Christ, Mom... Just... just gimme... ten minutes...

MITZI
Well hurry up. I'm sweating like a whore in church here.

She shuffles off towards the bathroom.

INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - SAME

Pansy lies on the bed, under the covers, deep in the throes of being "tutored".

Garnell's feet stick out from under the sheets at the end of the bed. He's obviously busy doing something that makes Pansy writhe and moan.

PANSY
UUUUUHHH!!! GOD!!!!!!

She comes to a stop. Garnell squirms towards the head of the bed.

GARNELL (O.S.)
I have to get home! This wasn't a regularly scheduled day!

PANSY
Nothin' about today has been regular. Go on, I'm done anyways. Just needed to blow off some steam.

GARNELL (O.S.)
I just wish you didn't humiliate me
like this...

He pokes his head out of the sheets.

He wears a blond wig, the hair pulled back into two ponytails secured with pink bows. A smear of pink lipstick covers his lips and chin.

PANSY
Nah. You look great.

She lovingly caresses the wig.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CRYSTI JUNE'S HOUSE/GARAGE - SAME

Crysti June adjusts the pink bows holding back her twin ponytails, as she puts the finishing touches on more of her jewelry.

She SNAPS CLOSED a large bracelet. Admires it in the glow of the light. She then lifts her willowy leg, examining the garish anklet strapped there.

Rachel May stumbles past the open garage door, trying to act prim and classy but failing due to her intoxication. She makes it to her car. Fumbles open the door.

RACHEL MAY
(slurring)
I'm going to the store. I'll be
back in a little while.

CRYSTI JUNE
You can go buy your booze later,
mother. You still haven't gotten my
rhinestones!

RACHEL MAY
I apologize, dear. I will take care
of that first thing tom--

CRYSTI JUNE
No, now! I need them now!

RACHEL MAY
Sugar beet, I told you--

CRYSTI JUNE
You're the worst mother ever! You
never support me! You're always
trying to sabotage me!

At the sound of raised voices, Chantilly trots out of the garage. Her extendable leash WHIZZES as it unspools.

Rachel May steps past the dog into the garage.

RACHEL MAY
Now... Crysti June, honey, why
would any mother be jealous of her
little girl?

CRYSTI JUNE
Because you're old and you're ugly
and you hate the fact that I've got
a handsome man like Caldwell!

Rachel May staggers, this time not from the booze but the hurt of Crysti June's words.

RACHEL MAY
Crysti June... angel... what--

CRYSTI JUNE
I'm not dumb, mother. I see the way
you look at him. And those comments
you make to daddy... You're a
horrible, evil, selfish woman, and
as soon as I am able I will leave
this place and never come back!

Crysti June returns to her work.

Rachel May trembles, a million emotions short-circuiting her face. She smooths her clothes. Sniffs back some tears.

RACHEL MAY
I will return shortly... with your
beads.

Shaken by her daughter's rage, she backs up to her car. She slides into the seat. Closes the door. The car STARTS UP. Rachel May rolls down the driveway.

The dog leash begins WHIZZING, even louder this time.

CRYSTI JUNE
Chantilly, you get--

When she looks in the mirror, the words die in her throat.

POV - MIRROR

Standing behind her is the red-robed figure from the restaurant.

The silent ghost stabs its index finger at her.

BACK TO SCENE

Before she can scream, she sees that the dog leash leads to her mother's car, going into the driver's side door.

The leash hits its limit. Crysti June is yanked forward, dragged along her workbench.

As she flails and kicks, her garish bracelet catches on one of the large aluminum hooks she uses to store her products.

CRYSTI JUNE
HELP! HEEEEELP!!!

The car continues down the street. The leash stretches Crysti June more and more, contorting her body where it hangs on the hooks.

A sudden wet POP. Her arm separates from her shoulder in a spray of blood.

Her body jumps forward. This time the robust anklet catches on a hook.

With a SINEWY SNAP, her hip joint tears apart.

Her body flips to the end of the row of hooks. Stops when the choker becomes snagged as well.

Her face turns blue. Her eyes bulge out. The tension builds and builds.

Her head SHEARS OFF at the neck. A fountain of blood shoots across the garage.

Crysti June's remaining torso BOUNCES AND SKIPS down the driveway.

Crysti June's father opens the door from the kitchen.

JOHNSTON
Crysti June, sweetheart? Did you
say-- OH DEAR GOD!!!

He sees his dismembered daughter's head floating in a pool of blood. Her eyes wide are with dead terror.

Her body is dragged away into the darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - AFTERNOON

Rachel May and Johnston console each other as the PRIEST throws dirt onto Crysti June's casket. Caldwell holds a bouquet of white lilies. CHURCH BELLS PEAL in the distance.

Pansy stands at the fringe of the ceremony, watching the proceedings. She does her best to choke back a flood of tears.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - LATER

The ceremony over, the attendants walk solemnly back to their cars.

Pansy intercepts Caldwell before he can get into his car.

PANSY

Hey.

Caldwell freezes. Slowly turns to face her.

PANSY

Uh... look, I'm... I'm really sorry
th--

He PUNCHES her. Knocks her flat to the ground. Before she can recover, he pounces on her.

CALDWELL

You did this! You did this to her!

He lands another couple of solid blows, before others pull him off of her. He struggles, almost breaking free.

CALDWELL

You killed the girl I love!

Pansy sits up. Wipes the blood from her mouth.

PANSY

You weren't the only one who loved
her, baldy.

Incensed, he flails about, trying to break free from the friends holding him.

CALDWELL
 You killed us! You're killing us
 all!

FRIEND #1
 Dude! Keep it together!

FRIEND #2
 Head in the game, dude! Tonight's
 the championship! Don't lose it!

They drag him away, trying to calm him down.

Pansy picks herself up off the ground. She withers under the disapproving looks from all the blue-bloods staring at her.

She SPITS out a mouthful of blood. Stalks off to her truck.

Blackwelder watches from a distance, leaning against his cruiser.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/GARAGE - SAME

Sobbing, Pansy cradles a yearbook in her lap.

INSERT - YEARBOOK

A picture of Crysti June. Written beside it:

TO MY BEST FRIEND SINCE 1ST GRADE!

LUV YOU LOTS! XOXOXO!! BFF!!!!

CRYSTI JUNE

BACK TO SCENE

Pansy wipes away the tears. Brings the yearbook up to her lips. Gives Crysti June's picture a gentle kiss.

On the shelf next to her, she notices the fortunes left over from after the robbery.

With a sniffle, she scoops them up.

CUT TO:

INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Pansy begins taping the fortunes into her scrapbook, as her tears continue to flow.

She picks up one fortune. Reads it silently.

INSERT - GARNELL'S FORTUNE

WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, YOU WILL SEE THE POINT

BACK TO SCENE

She begins to tape it down, when something jogs her memory.

FLASHBACK - EXT. VIC'S BODY SHOP - AFTERNOON

Garnell is pulled from the truck wreck.

GARNELL

I thought I was done... I saw the points...

FLASHBACK ENDS

She thinks for a moment. Grabs another fortune.

INSERT - DELMER'S FORTUNE

YOU WILL COME INTO A LARGE INHERITANCE

BACK TO SCENE

FLASHBACK - EXT. HIGH SCHOOL/BLEACHERS - AFTERNOON

Rudy Ray reads the paper to the gang, the day after Delmer's death.

RUDY RAY

My cousin Robby Ray is on the EMT team. Said that there was cum all in his uncle's sander.

FLASHBACK ENDS

PANSY

(to herself)

He came all over his inheritance...

Frantic now, she scrambles for another fortune.

INSERT - RUDY RAY'S FORTUNE

LIFE WILL TAKE YOU FOR A WILD RIDE

FLASHBACK - EXT. BODY SHOP - AFTERNOON

Pansy reads the paper Caldwell shoved into her face.

CALDWELL

His trailer rode down the hillside
in the rain. He couldn't get free!
He was strapped in bed!

FLASHBACK ENDS

Pansy's suspicion has become terror. She reads the next fortune.

INSERT - CRYSTI JUNE'S FORTUNE

The slip of paper reads "*YOUR ASPIRATIONS WILL PULL YOU IN MANY DIRECTIONS*".

BACK TO SCENE

Shaking, Pansy picks up the newspaper on her desk, folded to the article detailing Crysti June's death.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

The words leap out from the article: "...*ASPIRING JEWELER...PULLED APART...*"

BACK TO SCENE

Pansy pushes back from the desk. Her mouth gapes. Her heart pounds in her chest. Her eyes stream tears.

PANSY

Oh... oh God... no... no...

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

Blackwelder sits at his desk, deep in thought. He examines the evidence bag containing the shell found at the Hapy Panda.

Opened on his desk is the case folder for Pansy's father's desk. Photos of the crime scene are mixed in with depositions and other documents.

DEPUTY (O.S.)
Excuse me, sir?

BLACKWELDER
Yeah.

DEPUTY
Um, we got the GSR back on those
gloves you found. The gunshot
residue matches that Czech shell.

BLACKWELDER
Same gun?

DEPUTY
Looks that way.

He drops the file containing the results on Blackwelder's desk.

Not getting a response, the Deputy walks off.

DEPUTY
(under his breath)
Fuckin' asshole...

Blackwelder squeezes the shell in his fist. His knuckles turn white.

He throws it down. Pushes back from his desk. Stalks off.

As he heads towards the exit, he checks the clip in his gun.

BLACKWELDER
(to himself)
Should'a taken care o' this when I
had th' chance...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/CLUBHOUSE - EVENING

The football team, suited up for the big game, runs onto the field as the band plays a charge.

Caldwell hangs back in the shadows, fingering the lucky charm under his jersey. His face betrays the raging fear taking over his mind.

PLAYER #1
Dude! C'mon! Game time!

Coach Sartain grabs Caldwell by the arm. Shakes him.

COACH SARTAIN
 Caldwell, what th' hell is wrong
 with you? You been actin' all week
 like you seen a ghost or somethin'.

CALDWELL
 I'm sorry, dad, I--

Coach Sartain slaps him hard.

COACH SARTAIN
 "Coach Sartain"!

Stunned, Caldwell rubs the charm hidden under his jersey.

CALDWELL
 I... I just don't--

COACH SARTAIN
 Listen, tonight is the biggest game
 of your goddamn life. You win this
 one, the colleges'll be linin' up
 to suck your division-champ dick.
 You hear me? So buck up and get out
 there! Remember: "Magic Finger"!

Snapped out of his fog, Caldwell haltingly jogs out onto the field.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL/FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

The crowd goes wild for their star quarterback.

A light rain falls. The spectators in the stands have pulled on their ponchos. The bleachers are filled with the bright red and gold of the team's colors.

Caldwell, however, only sees an ocean of red robes. The stands are filled with hundreds of Wi-Changs.

Flashbulbs go off. The cheerleaders yell. The band plays.

Caldwell snaps. Drops his helmet. Tears stream down his face. He pushes his way back through his teammates. Disappears back into the clubhouse.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/CLUBHOUSE - EVENING

Caldwell collapses against the wall, hyperventilating.

A hand CLAMPS DOWN on his shoulder. He whirls, his fist cocked.

Pansy throws up her hands in surrender.

PANSY
Caldwell! It's me! Me!

He freezes, but doesn't calm down. He's too far gone.

CALDWELL
He's out there! He's going to get
us! Going to kill us!

PANSY
I know! I believe you!

CALDWELL
You... you do?...

PANSY
The fortunes! The fucking fortunes!
He's picking us off, one by one!
Delmer, Rudy Ray, Crysti June...

Caldwell sags. She tries to prop him up.

PANSY
But he's not perfect! He tried to
kill Garnell, but he missed! So we
got a chance! We can get away.
Leave town, or somethin'...

She reaches into her waistband. Pulls out her gun.

PANSY
He ain't takin' us without a fight,
goddammit!

Caldwell looks at the black metal glinting in the low light.
Then his eyes drift up over her shoulder.

POV

At the far end of the hall stands Wi-Chang, silhouetted by
the light from outside.

He raises his arm. Points directly at the trembling Caldwell.

BACK TO SCENE

A moment of clarity seems to pass across Caldwell's face.

He takes his beloved good luck charm out of his jersey. Grabs
Pansy's gun hand with the same hand. Jerks the gun into his
mouth.

CALDWELL
He's not gonna get me...

PANSY
What th--

Before she can react, he kisses the charm in his fist.

He squeezes the trigger.

BOOM! The back of Caldwell's head EXPLODES outward. The wall is coated with brains. A shower of blood drenches Pansy's face.

Caldwell's lifeless body slumps to the ground. A thunderstruck Pansy stands over him.

Caldwell's glass charm container lies shattered on his stomach.

INSERT - THE CHARM

Granddad's "magic finger". A real desiccated finger adorned with a class ring. Granddad's actual appendage.

BACK TO SCENE

PLAYER #1 (O.S.)
Oh shit...

Pansy spins. Several members of the football team are staring at her.

PLAYER #2
She killed him! She fucking killed him!

Pansy looks down at Caldwell. The gun. The blood all over her.

PANSY
N-no, no... he--

PLAYER #1
Get her!

Panicking, Pansy aims the gun at the young men. They freeze in their tracks.

PANSY
Don't! Don't do it!

Still in shock, she backs towards the exit, keeping them covered.

She hits the door handle. Kicks it open. Disappears into the night.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - SAME

Pansy drives wildly down the road, trying not to freak out.

She feels more of Caldwell's blood running down her temples. She runs a ragged sleeve over her face.

CRASH! A police cruiser SMASHES into the side of her truck.

The GLASS SHATTERS. The frame BUCKLES.

Pansy loses control. The truck GLANCES off a tree on the side of the road.

The truck launches into the air. It makes a lazy turn upside down, before SLAMMING into the ground with a sickening CRUNCH.

The police cruiser SLIDES TO A DUSTY HALT right at the truck.

BLACKWELDER

(on the radio)

Those kids were right, Sheriff. She was headin' home. I got 'er. Call off the dogs. I repeat, I have th' suspect.

BOYLES' VOICE

We're comin' t' help, Dayton. Just hang--

BLACKWELDER

No! You keep your useless fat ass there! This is mine! I don't need you fuckin' things up!

BOYLES' VOICE

Now... see here, Dayton--

Blackwelder throws the receiver down. Cuts off the radio.

He steps out of the car, surveying the scene.

Pansy struggles weakly to get out of the truck's cab. Her face is now covered with her own blood.

Blackwelder SPITS derisively. Slowly ambles towards the smoking truck.

BLACKWELDER

I swanny, this's been a looong time comin'. Yer daddy flipped out when he came to an' found that girl dead. I thought he'd be up fer some fun, but... t' each 'is own, I s'pose.

Pansy coughs painfully. Blackwelder UNSNAPS his holster.

BLACKWELDER

'Fore I could talk 'im down, he pulls a gun an' plugs me. Got a full clip emptied in 'im 'fore he went tits up. He was still twitchin' when th' paramedics showed up. That was some strong coke.

He takes off his hat. Hangs it on a branch next to him.

BLACKWELDER

As I was scrubbin' the place down, all I could think of was takin' out each an' every one'a you goddamn Cartwright pieces o' trash. You, that fat fuckin' mother... but not before we'd had a little fun o' our own. Boyles an' his crew got there first, though, so I just had to let it go.

Blackwelder cranes his head backwards, stretching, as if getting ready for an athletic competition.

BLACKWELDER

But now, you done gone an' give me th' perfect excuse t' kill you once and fer all. An' believe you me, I'm gonna enjoy every single second...

Blackwelder looks back down.

Pansy is pointing her father's gun at him.

BLAM! Blackwelder's remaining eye EXPLODES in a shower of blood and bone.

Screaming, he falls back onto the ground, writhing and clawing at his destroyed face.

Pansy drags herself to her feet. Stumbles over to Blackwelder.

PANSY

This... is for my daddy...

Her jaw clenched, she PUMPS BULLET AFTER BULLET into Blackwelder's head. His face liquifies under the barrage.

CLICK. CLICK. The gun is empty.

Panting, Pansy takes in the corpse of her father's killer. Satisfied that he's dead, she painfully makes her way to Blackwelder's police car.

She climbs inside. SLAMS the door shut. DRIVES OFF.

CUT TO:

EXT. PANSY'S HOUSE - SAME

Pansy ROARS UP to the house. SLAMS into a tree. She tumbles out of the cop cruiser, clutching her midsection. Blood seeps through her fingers.

Struggling to stay upright, she makes her way towards the door.

PANSY

Ma! MAAAA!!!

She hits the screen door hard. Falls forward into the house.

INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - SAME

Pansy finds not only her shocked mother in the midst of applying more of her lotion, but a stunned Garnell as well.

MITZI

What in the name of--!!!

GARNELL

Pansy! What are... Are you bleeding?!?

PANSY

What... th' fuck're you...

GARNELL

Your mother needed her lotion!
What... what happened to you?!?

He moves to help her. Pansy swats him away. Pushes herself up against the wall.

PANSY

We... we gotta get outta here...
Get stuff... get... get out...

MITZI

What have you done this time?

PANSY

Ma... please...

MITZI

You're in some sort of trouble
again! Just like your father! I'm
tired of covering for you, for
fooling myself that you're ever
going to amount to anything!

Mitzi pulls out a cigarette. Sticks it in her mouth. She
flips open her silver lighter.

PANSY

Ma... please--

MITZI

No! I'm going to call the police
this time. As far as I'm concerned,
you can burn in hell!

She flicks the lighter. It sparks.

WHOOOOSH! Mitzi's entire body BURSTS INTO FLAMES.

MITZI

AAAAAAAAAAH!!!

GARNELL

Dear God--!!!

PANSY

MAAAAA!!!

Mitzi flails about. Her skin chars. Her hair smokes. The
flames consume her entire body.

An explosion outside BLOWS IN ALL THE WINDOWS. Six-foot
pillars of fire LEAP past the windows and front door.

GARNELL

The fire! Chu-Jung!

PANSY

Ma! NOOOO!!!

Mitzi falls backwards over her recliner, spreading the flames about the tiny room.

GARNELL

We've got to get out of here!

He throws his arm around Pansy. Hefts her as best he can. Unsteadily, he leads her down the hallway, towards the back door in the kitchen.

INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - SAME

The back door is on fire. All the windows engulfed in flames.

There's no escape.

PANSY

Oh shit... I fucked up... fucked up...

Garnell looks around in haste. Spies the ladder in the corner.

GARNELL

The ladder!

He drags Pansy to the ladder. Helps her climb.

The flames lick at their feet as Pansy uses her last remaining strength to push back the single sheet of plywood and the blue tarp.

EXT. PANSY'S HOUSE/ROOF - SAME

Pansy heaves her rapidly-tiring bulk out onto the shingled roof. Garnell follows, pulling her out and up.

From their vantage point, they can see that the house is ringed with fire, hungry oily columns of yellow and orange death.

GARNELL

C'mon! C'mon!!!

He gets her to feet, barely. Leads her to the chimney. She wraps her arms around it. She catches her breath. Opens her eyes.

POV

The red-robed spectre of Wi-Chang stands below them, the flames making his cloak a dancing sheet of crimson. His huge shadow blankets the bare trees behind him.

With an exaggerated motion, he points an accusatory finger at Pansy.

Pansy screams. She whips the gun out of her belt, aims at the crimson ghost. She pulls the trigger...

CLICK. No more bullets. Her shoulders droop. The gun falls from her grasp.

PANSY

NOOOOOO!!! I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I
didn't mean... I didn't want...

Tears streams down her face. She turns back to Garnell.

He's right behind her. Leering at her. His fear totally gone. A look of pure hatred burned across his face.

PANSY

Wh-wha--

With unexpected swiftness, Garnell PUNCHES Pansy as hard as he can, right in her stunned face.

She recoils from the impact. Topples backward. Falls like a sack of wet hammers, the heat from the flames singeing her skin.

SPLURT!!! She comes to a SQUELCHING stop as her midsection is impaled on the central antenna of the antiquated satellite dish. She hangs spread-eagle like a bloated, bleeding butterfly.

The entire dish shifts backward from the impact, laying almost flat. The burning flames from around the house now lick at the underside of the dish, causing Pansy's exposed skin to smoke.

Garnell looks down at his handiwork with a smug sneer of victory. In one lithe motion, he jumps down from the roof to the ground.

Pansy jerks and gurgles. She's in shock, but still trying to save herself. She impotently grasps at the bloodied metal spear protruding from her belly.

Garnell nonchalantly pulls on a pair of work gloves he retrieves from his pocket. He leans his arms against the lip of the dish.

PANSY
 (gurgling)
 You... you...

GARNELL
 Holy fucking shit! Ding dong the
 wicked cunt is dead! I've wanted
 you out of my life for so long. I
 contemplated killing Mr. Belinsky
 too, just 'cause he saddled me with
 you, but then... you gave me the
 perfect idea...

FLASHBACK - INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/GARAGE - EARLY MORNING

PANSY
 Oh my fuckin' God! You can't be
 serious! You think he's gonna come
 back from Chinese heaven or
 somethin' and kill us all?!

Hearing this, a light goes off in Garnell's head.

SMASH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/GARAGE - EARLY MORNING

Garnell runs back to get the bookbag he supposedly forgot.

When he reaches it he pulls out a notebook. Scribbles down
 the fortunes from Pansy's stolen cookies.

FLASHBACK ENDS

GARNELL
 The first one was easiest. Every
 Tuesday night, that pervert had
 a standing "date"...

FLASHBACK - EXT. DELMER'S HOUSE/WOODSHOP - EVENING

Garnell watches Delmer go into the woodshop.

SMASH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. DELMER'S HOUSE/WOODSHOP - EVENING

Just as Delmer climaxes...

Garnell, hidden in the shed, pushes him into the sanding belt using a long wooden pole.

FLASHBACK ENDS

GARNELL
Rudy Ray? Simple physics. And
the weather didn't hurt...

FLASHBACK - EXT. RUDY RAY'S MOBILE HOME - LATE EVENING

As the rain pours down around Rudy Ray's trailer, Garnell digs away at the wet earth under the support columns with a shovel.

They give way, slipping enough to cause the trailer to shift.

FLASHBACK ENDS

GARNELL
That self-centered stuck-up bitch
you lusted after was the most
satisfying...

FLASHBACK - EXT. CRYSTI JUNE'S HOUSE - EVENING

As Crysti June argues with her mother, Garnell tosses Chantilly into the back seat of Rachel May's car.

Rachel May's car pulls off. Crysti June is yanked down the length of the workbench.

FLASHBACK ENDS

GARNELL
The jock was on the hook almost
from the start, but you just
weren't biting. So I had to use
myself as bait..

FLASHBACK - EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - AFTERNOON

Garnell, at a convenience store across the street from Vic's Body Shop, notices Pansy and Caldwell arguing.

He sees the flatbed truck loaded with rebar parked in front of the store.

Garnell steals a bag of ice from an ice cooler outside the convenience store.

He wedges the ice under the front tire of the truck. Tears open the plastic, allowing the melting water to trickle out.

He reaches through the open window. Puts the truck in neutral.

SMASH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. BODY SHOP - AFTERNOON

Pansy and Caldwell argue, as Garnell keeps an eye on the truck across the street.

The ice melts enough to allow the truck to move.

As the truck begins to roll, Garnell backs up, gauging the truck's area of impact.

Pansy turn on Garnell.

PANSY

Thanks for nothin', idiot. He's the weak link in all this, and now you've got him spooked.

GARNELL

I was just--

Without warning, the truck SLAMS into the retaining wall next to Garnell. Its cargo of rebar SMASHES into the cinderblocks.

FLASHBACK ENDS

GARNELL

And that was all it took to snap Caldwell's tiny little mind. But, from what I hear, he did my work for me.

FLASHBACK - INT. HIGH SCHOOL/CLUBHOUSE - EVENING

BLAM! Pansy's gun goes off. The back of Caldwell's head EXPLODES outward, coating the wall with brains and blood.

FLASHBACK ENDS

GARNELL

He saved me a considerable amount of effort. Now I don't have to get him out to the quarry. Pity, though... I had a pretty cool way of carving his heart with marble...

PANSY

How... how did--

GARNELL

Never mind that. Let's just enjoy the moment, shall we? This is what it was all leading to. You. Oh Pansy, you were the most work.

FLASHBACK - EXT. PANSY'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Garnell puts a flammable chemical into Pansy's mom's facial lotion.

Garnell opens the drain on the heating oil tank next to Pansy's house, watching the oil flow around the foundation of the house.

SMASH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Mitzi BURSTS INTO FLAMES.

As Pansy reacts, Garnell grabs Mitzi's lighter. Tosses it out the window into the moat of heating oil. The oil IGNITES.

FLASHBACK ENDS

Garnell leans in close, right into Pansy's face. She can't turn her head. She can only roll her eyes to meet his gaze.

GARNELL

You wanna know something funny? I wasn't even planning on taking you out tonight! You interrupted me as I got things started with your mom, but once I heard you were on the run... You delivered this to me on a silver platter.

PANSY

(gurgling)

You... money...

GARNELL

What's that? Oh, you think the cops are gonna come after me? Don't worry, sweet cheeks. I've taken care of that. The cops will find no evidence that I've done shit.

Like you said: my "gay-ass art classes" are finally paying off.

He pushes back. Surveys his handiwork. The flickering flames throw jagged shadows over the entire scene.

He begins to walk away.

But then remembers something...

GARNELL

Wait. I almost forgot. Your fortune. What was it? Oh, that's right: "You and your true love will cause quite a stir." How touching. Well, maybe we should get you two lovebirds together, one last time.

He rips back a blue tarp next the dish.

Pansy's new outboard motor is propped up on sawhorses.

GARNELL

(mocking Pansy's voice)
Ain't she the most beautiful thing you ever seen?

Pansy sobs. SPITS UP small fountains of blood with each spasm.

Garnell fingers the throttle. FIRES IT UP. The propeller instantly BUZZES to life.

With a flourish, he hefts the motor up over his head. Pansy feebly tries to move, to escape, but there is no hope.

GARNELL

(mocking Pansy's voice)
Listen to that GODDAMN BABY PURR!!!

With glee, he drops the motor onto the pinned Pansy. The BLADES CUT INTO HER instantly. Blood and organs and meat spray in every direction.

Free of its mounting, the ENGINE BOUNCES AROUND inside the curved satellite dish. It cuts through Pansy's stocky body with every rotation. As the bowl fills with blood and other fluids, the propeller stirs Pansy's remains into a frothy mess.

Taking a wild swing, the engine cowl knocks against some PVC pipes propped up against the nearby tree. Two of them tip over onto the edge of the dish, laying crossed over each other.

Pansy now cooks away in an oversized stir-fry wok, the PVC pipes resembling large chopsticks.

Garnell walks to the end of the driveway. Turns to take one last lingering look at his handiwork.

GARNELL

And now... it's a one way split.

With that, he disappears into the darkness.

Pansy's claustrophobic, pathetic life burns to the ground.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PANSY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Firemen and policemen go through the smoldering remains of Pansy's house.

Paramedics carry two stretchers with body bags on them towards waiting ambulances.

CUT TO:

INT. PANSY'S HOUSE/GARAGE - AFTERNOON

A policeman pokes around Pansy's boat, looking for clues.

Under a seat in the boat, he finds a notebook hidden inside a folded tarp.

CUT TO:

INT. COPY STORE - MORNING

Garnell sits at a computer, working on desktop publishing software. He prints something out. Examines it. Smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

The forensics experts open the notebook.

INSERT - THE NOTEBOOK

Page after page of notes detailing Pansy's plan to rob the restaurant, written in her hand... by Garnell.

The plans implicate Caldwell, Crysti June, Rudy Ray, and Delmer... but Garnell's name is nowhere to be found.

CUT TO:

INT. DIFFERENT COPY STORE - AFTERNOON

Garnell prints a fake mail processing mark across a stamped envelope, making it look like the letter had been officially mailed.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

The forensics experts discover more evidence.

INSERT - THE NOTEBOOK

"Pansy's" writings become paranoid. She begins to list ways to kill her compatriots, in order to keep all the money for herself.

CUT TO:

INT. GARNELL'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Garnell stuffs his printout into the forged envelope. Seals it.

Then tears it open.

CUT TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

The police tell Ling-Su and Hong that they found her grandfather's killer.

Ling-Su breaks down, collapsing into Hong's arms.

CUT TO:

INT. GARNELL'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - EVENING

Garnell shows his family what he printed out: an "acceptance letter" to a prestigious New England school.

INSERT - THE LETTER

The document states that he is to receive an \$18,000 grant.

BACK TO SCENE

Both parents, crying with happiness, hug him tight.

Behind their backs, he smiles malevolently.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

The officers watch the video recovered from Blackwelder's cruiser.

Boyles hears Blackwelder's confession. Anger plays across his face. He looks down at an evidence bag in his hand.

INSERT - BLACKWELDER'S FORTUNE

It reads: "*BIRDS ARE ENTANGLED BY THEIR FEET AND MEN BY THEIR TONGUES*".

CUT TO:

EXT. USED CAR LOT - AFTERNOON

Garnell shakes hands with a salesman. He is handed the keys to a used compact car.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - AFTERNOON

A newspaper is purchased from a stand.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER

The main headline, accompanied by a yearbook picture of Pansy: "*LOCAL TEEN GOES ON KILLING SPREE*".

Below, next to a photo of Blackwelder, a second story proclaims: "*COUNTY DEPUTY FOUND GUILTY OF PREVIOUS MURDERS*".

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - AFTERNOON

Garnell drives along, listening to the radio, happy and content.

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

He makes a turn into the Hapy Panda parking lot. He looks over the building with a smug smile.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT/KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Garnell pushes through the swinging door, carrying his backpack. Ling-Su works at a prep table, her back to him.

He walks up behind her. He grabs her. Spins her around.

She gasps. Stares into his eyes.

And kisses him deeply and passionately.

LING-SU

It is okay?

GARNELL

Yeah, baby. I've got an apartment set up for us. You can move in right after my classes start.

They kiss again.

LING-SU

I did good?

GARNELL

Baby, the looks on their faces...

FLASHBACK - INT. DELMER'S HOUSE/WOODSHOP - EVENING

Ling-Su pulls the hood of the red robe over her head. Steps into the open doorway.

Just as Delmer is about to climax, he sees her. His eyes go wide with fear.

FLASHBACK - EXT. RUDY RAY'S MOBILE HOME - LATE EVENING

Ling-Sun stands up outside the window.

Lightning strikes. Rudy Ray sees "Wi-Chang". He screams his head off.

FLASHBACK - EXT. CRYSTI JUNE'S HOUSE/GARAGE - EVENING

Ling-Su creeps into the garage. Stands up behind Crysti June, so she can be seen in the mirror.

Crysti June's face starts to form a scream, just as she is violently pulled out of her seat.

FLASHBACK - INT. HIGH SCHOOL/CLUBHOUSE - EVENING

Ling-Su looks around the corner at the scene of Caldwell's death. A phone is pressed to her ear.

LING-SU

She is running!

GARNELL'S VOICE

She's gonna come here, I bet. Damn, I'm glad you were there. Hurry up and get over here.

LING-SU

But she will get there first.

GARNELL'S VOICE

Not if I give Deputy Blackwelder a call...

FLASHBACK - EXT. PANSY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Garnell walks away from the burning house.

He's holding hands with "Wi-Chang". Ling-Su pulls back the hood. Shakes her hair loose.

They disappear into the night.

FLASHBACK ENDS

GARNELL

I'd pay anything to see them all shit themselves again.

LING-SU

I almost laugh, when police tell me they find grandfather's killer.

GARNELL

Ha ha ha! I wish I'd been there.

Ling-Su plants small kisses across his cheeks.

LING-SU

Hong has agreed to buy my half of restaurant. I tell him, I cannot do this anymore. It hurt too much.

(laughs)

He agree!

GARNELL

Awesome! We're set, baby. No more worries.

Ling-Su falls into his arms. Holds him tight.

LING-SU

When you first come to restaurant, I know... I know you were good man. I know you would save me.

GARNELL

I'm just sorry we had to sneak around. But everything worked out better than I could've hoped.

(suddenly remembering)

Oh! I almost forgot...

He pulls the old Chinese book from his pack.

GARNELL

Here's Wi-Chang's book.

She looks it over for a moment.

LING-SU

I do not care.

She tosses it aside. It lands on the floor, falling open to the marked page of Chu-Jung, god of fire.

She throws her arms around Garnell.

LING-SU

I have been waiting so long to be happy. My grandfather--

Garnell lifts her face up. Looks into her dark eyes.

GARNELL

Don't worry. Both our monsters are gone.

Ling-Su smiles. Garnell gives her another kiss.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

Garnell makes his way from the kitchen to a table. Ironically, he plops down at the same table where the gang celebrated before.

He watches the crowd, self-satisfied in his invincibility.

He suddenly realizes that, sitting on the table in front of him...

...is a solitary fortune cookie.

He looks around. Ling-Su is in the kitchen. Hong bussess a table in the far corner.

Bemused, he cracks it open.

As he nonchalantly CHOMPS on the cookie, he reads the fortune.

INSERT - GARNELL'S FORTUNE

It reads: *"WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, YOU WILL SEE THE POINT"*.

BACK TO SCENE

He's pleasantly caught off guard. It's the same fortune as before.

But the color leaves his face as he moves his thumb slightly, revealing the entire fortune:

INSERT - GARNELL'S FORTUNE

It now reads: *"WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, YOU WILL SEE THE POINT... **GARNELL JEFFERSON**"*.

BACK TO SCENE

Garnell is shaken.

The world goes into slow-motion for Garnell...

The plastic-and-neon panda statue overhead SHORTS OUT. BREAKS LOOSE from its support. Swings powerfully forward on its secured power cord.

The two neon chopsticks RAM THROUGH THE BACK OF GARNELL'S HEAD. SKEWERS HIS EYES on the ends of the sticks.

The panda BURSTS INTO FLAMES. Garnell's head SIZZLES.

Across the room, Ling-Su comes through the swinging kitchen doors, carrying Garnell's meal.

Ling-Su screams. His food CRASHES TO THE FLOOR.

The other patrons turn to see what's causing the RUCKUS. They see Garnell's twitching body. The blood gushing from his eye sockets. The bubbling of his dark skin. The two glistening orbs of his eyeballs quivering on the points of the neon chopsticks.

The patrons SCREAM. VOMIT. STAMPEDE for the door.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT/KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Ling-Su stumbles back into the kitchen, clutching at her head as she screams.

She falls against the dough-making machine.

With a sickening SLURPING, the torn, bloodied corpse of Wi-Chang rises from the thick mixture.

Mangled, oozing blood and dough, the dead chef snares his granddaughter in his dead arms.

Wi-Chang pulls Ling-Su down into the mixer.

Her screams GIRGLE to a stop as her mouth and nose fill with dough. The SNAP OF BONES AND TENDONS fills the air as she disappears into the now-crimson cookie dough.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

One of Garnell's gouged eyes slips off a flickering chopstick. Lands on the blood-soaked fortune that lays limply in his open palm.

His last sight is his own damnation: at the end, he saw the point.