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DOWN CREEK

by
Elizabeth Britt McClure

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford
May 2014

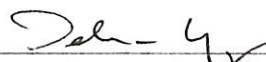
Approved by



Advisor: Professor Tom Franklin



Reader: Professor Chris Offutt



Reader: Dr. Debra Young

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my family for always being supportive of my creative endeavors, even when they involve severed body parts in crab traps. I am grateful for Chris Offutt's careful instruction and feedback, both in and outside the classroom. Many thanks to my advisor and friend, Tom Franklin. I would be remiss in not mentioning my gratitude for that bully of a writing teacher, George Singleton.

ABSTRACT

Growing up, the story was told to me this way: one day, a little boy's foot washed up on a beach in Charleston. An investigation found that the foot belonged to a patient of Dr. Reed, an orthopedic surgeon who had removed the boy's foot some three years prior. The doctor had stored the boy's foot in his freezer at home. When one day the freezer broke down, Dr. Reed disposed of the body part by substituting it for raw chicken in his crab trap. Somehow the foot escaped the bait compartment—much to the leathery beachgoers' horror.

Even as a girl, I always hated that light-hearted ending. What if this story had taken a dark turn?

The image of a hand in a crab trap haunted me. A hand is more complex than a foot—any artist can tell you that. A hand also seems more delicate, more intimate. So I had my opening image all along. But the setting, Beaufort, provided me with a place and a people. And more problems.

Of course there are racial tensions between black and white residents of Beaufort County. There's a long history here, as we all know. But as deep-rooted as those conflicts can be, attitudes and perceptions are always changing. In many households there is a generational divide—with parents caring more about racial differences than their children.

Meanwhile, the Hispanic population in Beaufort County continues to rapidly increase as laborers move in for work. If the population trend continues, Hispanics may soon outnumber blacks. This new minority has disrupted Beaufort's formerly binary paradigm of race.

You'll also find vast socio-economic differences in Beaufort County. Poor whites, blacks, and Hispanics have been pushed to the outer edges of the county—away from the wealthy, historic downtown, with its mansions and parks and large mossy oaks. In this really beautiful place, there are a lot of ugly problems that your average tourist will never capture through the lens of a Nikon.

So I grabbed a bigger camera.

Down Creek

By

Eliza McClure

EXT. CREEK - BEAUFORT, SC - NIGHT

Two men and a teen-aged girl travel by jonboat. Tall green marsh grass grows on the muddy banks on either side of the narrow creek.

BUCKY, mid-40s, white, wearing utility coveralls and a camouflage hunting cap, pilots the motor, sitting forward and grasping the throttle behind him.

FLOYD, mid-40s, white, overweight, also wearing utility coveralls, sits at the bow of the boat, holding the neck of a scraggly mutt.

SAMMY, Bucky's 16-year-old daughter, white, brunette, sits opposite of Floyd, pointing a flashlight across the water. The boat begins to slow.

BUCKY

You see any new ones up there,
Sammy?

Sammy's flashlight illuminates the white, floating Styrofoam bulb of a crab trap.

FLOYD

Yeah, looks like one'a J.T.'s.

Bucky twists the throttle slightly, nearing the trap.

BUCKY

He won't know if we take a few
keepers. Go 'head and pull it up.

Floyd grabs the rope beneath the Styrofoam bulb. He begins to pull the trap out of the water.

SAMMY

Can't we just check our own traps?

FLOYD

Told you not to bring her along. If
I wanted to listen to a woman whine
and complain, I would'a stayed at
home.

BUCKY

Leave her alone. I let you bring
that cur-ass dog of yours.

The dog wags its tail against the metal boat.

The trap begins to surface in the water.

(CONTINUED)

BUCKY

(to Sammy)

Go see if a coon can catch a crab.

Floyd hoists the trap onto the bow. We hear the scuttle of crabs in the trap.

FLOYD

Damn, J.T. got some good bait or what? How many you count?

Sammy points the flashlight's beam into the trap. We see several large blue crabs inside.

SAMMY

12 blues, 2 stones?

Bucky moves to the front of the boat. The three crowd around the trap.

BUCKY

Give me that light.

Sammy hands over the flashlight. Bucky points the beam toward the metal compartment where the bait is stored.

BUCKY

What's that look like to you?

FLOYD

Chicken a'course.

BUCKY

You ever seen a chicken with a manicure?

CLOSE ON: An adult-sized hand in the bait compartment of the trap. The hand is delicate and white and appear recently severed at the wrist. Pink painted fingernails are visible. The fingers are slightly swollen from being submerged. The crabs have picked at the flesh - revealing tissue beneath.

FLOYD

Fuck...

Sammy closes her eyes.

INT. BUCKY'S TRAILER - KITCHEN - LATER - NIGHT

The kitchen walls are painted yellow. Crusty dishes are piled high in the sink. Bags of chips and boxes of cereal litter the kitchen counter.

Bucky and Floyd sit at the circular kitchen table. The hand is on the table between the two men.

Sammy leans against the kitchen counter, texting on her pink cellphone.

BUCKY

I got a call from ol'Warren the other day.

Bucky turns to Sammy.

BUCKY

(to Sammy)

You aren't friends with his granddaughter anymore?

SAMMY

No...

BUCKY

(to Floyd)

Anyway. He says things've turned to shit at the station.

FLOYD

Doesn't surprise me. That new sheriff - Johnson, ain't it? - puttin' all his buddies in charge.

BUCKY

Says Johnson replaced me with some kid who can't work a damn scanner. His cousin, or somethin'.

FLOYD

Listen, Buck. I know you're a little sensitive about your job.

SAMMY

(under her breath)

Don't get him started.

FLOYD

But you lost it. You're a badge-less bitch now, just like the rest of us.

(CONTINUED)

A beat.

BUCKY
Forensics can't ever find a single
print on submerged bodies. Remember
the last homicide case?

FLOYD
'Bout as cold as this thing.

Floyd picks up the hand.

FLOYD
I get in enough trouble of my own.
Leave me out of yours.

BUCKY
Figure you don't have much of a
choice, seeing as you've already
tampered with the evidence.

Floyd pushes down all of the fingers on the hand except the
index finger. He points the finger in Sammy's direction.

FLOYD
You're one shitty business partner.

SAMMY
(disgusted)
I'm going to the store.

Sammy exits the room, the two men hardly seeming to notice.

FLOYD
Can't believe you're involving me
in this. Right before shrimp
season, too.

BUCKY
Screw shrimp. I gotta 16-year-old
daughter I gotta protect from some
lunatic up the creek.

A beat.

BUCKY
(CONT'D)
You'll be a hero.

Floyd pays attention to Bucky for the first time in the
scene. Bucky has struck a cord.

(CONTINUED)

BUCKY

(CONT'D)

You still doin' those reenactments?

FLOYD

Naw. They caught me with some Cheetos and said I wasn't authentic enough. Fuckers.

BUCKY

What if you could have your battle and your Cheetos too.

INT. TRUCK - LATER - NIGHT

Sammy drives a truck down a dirt road. She looks panicked. She turns the steering wheel and lets off the gas.

Sammy's POV: through the windshield, a one-story blue cinder-block house comes into view. The porch light is on.

On the porch sit two metal folding chairs and a weather-worn rocking chair. The porch is flanked by bushes.

EXT. J.T.'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Sammy runs up the porch steps and enters the house through the front door.

INT. J.T.'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

The room is small but tidy. A staticky TV screen is the only source of light. Family photos seem to decorate every surface: the side tables, on top of the TV, filling a small bookshelf. In one corner of the room, there is a futon lined with decorative pillows.

J.T., 18, black, wearing an old t-shirt and jeans stained around the ankles from mud, is sleeping in the recliner facing the TV.

The front door opens. Sammy enters the living room.

SAMMY

(whispering)

J.T.! J.T.! Wake up.

J.T. opens his eyes and sits up, startled. When he realizes it's Sammy, he relaxes and smiles.

(CONTINUED)

J.T.
Hey, baby...

SAMMY
Come with me.

J.T.
(smiling)
Mom's still on shift...

J.T. stands and places his hands on Sammy's hips, drawing her nearer.

Sammy pushes him away.

SAMMY
(frustrated)
I'm not joking. We need to get out of here. I tried to text -

Sammy grabs J.T.'s hand.

J.T.
I can't just leave. My sister's in the back.

SAMMY
My dad's looking for you.

J.T.
Did he find out about us?

SAMMY
No! Of course not. Come on.

J.T.
Let me grab Mya.

INT. BUCKY'S TRUCK - LATER

Sammy drives the truck while J.T. sits in the passenger seat, holding MYA, 7, black, wearing a purple nightgown, sleeping.

J.T.
I'd just checked that trap at sunset and replaced the bait.

SAMMY
So whoever put that...that hand...in there did it sometime between then and midnight.

(CONTINUED)

J.T.
Yeah, but who'll believe that?

SAMMY
It doesn't matter who believes
what, as long as we're the first to
find out who did it.

Sammy takes her right hand off the steering wheel and places it over J.T.'s hand. J.T. looks at her and almost smiles.

EXT. AUNTIE KAY'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

In the background of the scene, we see Auntie Kay's low brick house (the size of a double-wide trailer home), as well as the darkened creek behind it.

J.T. carries Mya out of the red GMC 1500. Sammy exits the vehicle as well but leaves her driver's side door open.

SAMMY
Just lie low as much as you can.
I'll think of ways to throw my dad
off.

J.T.
You've always been one step ahead,
Sam girl. Just like in Mrs.
Robinson's Algebra class.

SAMMY
(with a nervous smile)
I think this might be a little more
serious than finding the degree of
a polynomial.

J.T.
We'll figure this out.

Mya rubs her eyes.

SAMMY
Promise?

J.T.
Promise.

They kiss quickly, just before AUNTIE KAY, 60s, black, wearing a pink muumuu, opens the screen door.

EXT. J.T.'S HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

Bucky and Floyd sit in the bushes beside the front porch of J.T.'s house. Bucky thumbs the pistol in his holster, while Floyd sharpens his hunting knife.

FLOYD

Maybe he isn't comin' home tonight.
Flounder giggin' or something.

BUCKY

He'll come home. If we have to do
it come dawn, we will.

FLOYD

We should tie him up first, find
out who he done it to.

BUCKY

Well we know it wasn't your
ex-wife.

FLOYD

Fuckin' man hands. And that wasn't
the worst part about her.

BUCKY

Whoever he hurt...or killed, we'll
find that out eventually. I'd
rather terminate the problem before
it spreads.

FLOYD

Like the time we shot that prego
shark?

BUCKY

Sure, Floyd. Sure.

A sedan eases into the driveway. The men cannot see who is
inside the car.

BUCKY

(whispering)
Sit up. Here he is.

SANDRA, J.T.'s mother, late 30s, black, wearing hospital
scrubs, exits the car.

FLOYD

Well, shit.

(CONTINUED)

BUCKY

Shhh...

Sandra climbs the steps and enters the home. A light turns on from inside.

The front door rattles. The squeak of a sliding dead bolt is heard.

INT. J.T.'S HOUSE - J.T.'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Sandra opens the door to J.T.'s room. There are posters of NFL and NBA players on the walls. His bed is unmade and empty.

SANDRA

J.T.?

INT. J.T.'S HOUSE - MYA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Sandra opens the door to Mya's room. Dolls and stuffed animals line the dresser and night stand. Mya's pink comforter is on the floor and the bed is empty. Sandra's facial expression is one of rage and disbelief.

SANDRA

Mya? MYA!

Sandra turns on the lights and looks under the bed.

There's the sound of knocking.

EXT. J.T.'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Bucky and Floyd stand at the front door, their weapons hidden from sight.

INT. J.T.'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Sandra walks through the living room. Another knock is heard.

SANDRA

(yelling)

J.T.! You forget those keys one more time, boy!

Sandra's phone lights up in the pocket of her scrubs. She pulls it out and reads a text:

(CONTINUED)

"@ Auntie Kay's w/Mya."

Sandra pauses. She approaches the window beside the front door. Lifting the blinds, she peeks out of the window.

Sandra's POV: On the porch, Floyd smooths his unruly hair with the palm of his hand. Bucky tucks his shirt into his coveralls.

Sandra backs away from the window and places the phone into her pocket. She approaches the front door.

EXT. J.T.'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Sandra steps onto the front porch, leaving the door open behind her. She crosses her arms and looks the two men up and down. Bucky and Floyd grin.

BUCKY

Sorry to bother you so late, ma'am.

SANDRA

It's four in the morning.

FLOYD

Early, then.

Sandra crosses her arms.

BUCKY

We're looking for J.T. We saw some old Yankee pulling up one of his traps this evening.

FLOYD

Yeah, one of those Ohio yanks. All wrinkled and leathery lookin'.

SANDRA

So you needed to tell him that at this hour?

BUCKY

Ma'am, we didn't mean to--

SANDRA

I'll let J.T. know about the trap. I'm truly touched you fine men care so much about us poor black folk.

Sandra enters the house, closing the door behind her.

Bucky turns, facing the front lawn. Floyd follows.

(CONTINUED)

Bucky pulls a pack of cigarettes from his shirt pocket. He wordlessly offers a cigarette to Floyd. Floyd takes one and nods.

Floyd pulls his lighter out of his coverall pocket, lighting his cigarette and taking a deep drag. He hands his lighter to Bucky.

FLOYD

Let's get Crazy John on it.

The two men exit the porch.

INT. AUNTIE KAY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is light blue. Twin beds, covered with identical handmade quilts, are located in opposite corners of the room. A shaded lamp on the bedside table illuminates the room. Mya sleeps soundly in one of the beds.

J.T. paces the bedroom. He whispers into the phone.

J.T.

What the fuck did you do to her? I told you to give me another week.

J.T. grabs his wallet from his back pocket. He opens it and pulls out a handful of cash. He counts out ten \$100 bills.

J.T.

I've got a thousand on me, forty-three grand in the safe.

A beat.

J.T.

Get a translator, man. I already told you, Ty's bringing in the other six.

J.T. glances back at Mya.

J.T.

Just don't touch Liz until--

J.T. looks at the phone. The caller hangs up and his home screen flashes before him. The background is a picture of his mother and sister huddled around a birthday cake.

INT. TRAILER - SAMMY'S ROOM - DAY

Sammy, wearing cotton running shorts and a varsity cheerleading t-shirt, opens her eyes. She throws pink sheets off of her.

The room is painted pink, and looks like it has not been updated since she was a little girl. There are stuffed animals around the room, old pictures, and a sign in the shape of a stork that reads: SEPTEMBER 2ND, 1997 WELCOME INTO THE WORLD, SAMANTHA, 7 LBS 8 OZ.

Sammy rubs her eyes and gets out of bed. She grabs the flip flops at the foot of the bed and exits.

INT. TRAILER - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

The living room is small, the furniture mismatched. The couch is covered with a blue and green plaid pattern. The recliner is yellow.

There is a wooden coffee table in the center of the room. On top of the table, there are two light blue candles set in glass candlesticks.

The outdated, clunky TV is against the wall, on top of an old desk.

Bucky sits on the couch, cigarette in one hand, coffee in another. He stares blankly at the TV until Sammy enters the room. Sammy sits beside him.

SAMMY
Did you catch him?

BUCKY
Who?

SAMMY
Don't play stupid.

A beat.

BUCKY
No. Doesn't mean I'm going to give up.

Sammy grabs a cigarette from the pack beside her father.

SAMMY
I heard he likes to shoot pool down at the bait shop.

(CONTINUED)

BUCKY

I got Floyd lookin' down there. He convinced that beast of a brother-in-law to come along too.

Sammy sets the unlit cigarette down on the couch cushion.

SAMMY

Crazy John?

BUCKY

You know he'll look for any excuse to whoop a nig--

SAMMY

Don't say it.

Sammy stands, looking frustrated. Bucky puts his cigarette out in an old beer can on the side table.

BUCKY

What?

SAMMY

I'm gonna take the boat. Some people are out at the sandbar.

BUCKY

Grab a few cold ones on your way out.

Sammy exits. Bucky watches her leave.

Bucky leans forward and pulls a small Igloo cooler from underneath the coffee table. He opens the lid and peers inside. There, sitting in ice, is the hand.

EXT. RIVER - AUNTIE KAY'S DOCK - LATER - DAY

Sammy pilots the jonboat, slowing as she approaches Auntie Kay's dock.

On the bank, we can see the back of Auntie Kay's modest brick house. Auntie Kay's small figure can also be seen in the backyard. She is working the soil with a shovel.

EXT. AUNTIE KAY'S DOCK - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

With two ropes in hand, Sammy jumps out of the jonboat and onto the floating dock.

Working the rope into a slipknot, she ties down the boat to the two cleats on either end of the floating dock.

She climbs the dock's rickety wooden ramp.

EXT. AUNTIE KAY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Sammy walks through Auntie Kay's backyard. Auntie Kay, wearing a floral bandanna and blue jeans, sits on her knees, packing the loose soil around a newly planted Confederate Rose. She looks at Sammy.

AUNTIE KAY

Who're you?

SAMMY

J.T.'s friend, Sammy.

Sammy extends a hand to Auntie Kay. Auntie Kay looks at Sammy's hand curiously but does not take it. Sammy drops her hand to her side.

AUNTIE KAY

Let me call him.

Auntie Kay stands, wiping the dirt from her gardening gloves onto her jeans. She turns toward the house.

AUNTIE KAY

(yelling)

J.T.! J.T.! You got a girl visitor.

Auntie Kay turns back to Sammy.

AUNTIE KAY

Don't you get my nephew into trouble, you understand?

SAMMY

Yes, ma'am.

AUNTIE KAY

He's the only man not foolin' around like everyone else in these parts.

A beat.

(CONTINUED)

AUNTIE KAY

(CONT'D)

And he better not be foolin' with
you.

EXT. FLOATING DOCK - MINUTES LATER - DAY

Sammy sits in her father's jonboat. J.T., wearing the same
clothes from last night, stands on the floating dock,
looking down at her.

SAMMY

We have to check the trap. You
expect me just to sit here--

J.T.

I'll check it myself.

SAMMY

With what boat?

J.T. puts his hand on his head and begins pacing the dock.

J.T.

I'll go back home first.

SAMMY

I don't think you understand. Dad's
got Crazy John after you.

J.T.

You think I'm scared of that
cracked-out redneck?

SAMMY

I saw him bite the rattle off a
live snake once.

J.T. smiles.

SAMMY

(CONT'D)

I'm not joking. That guy's been in
and out of prison since he was--

J.T.

You can't go. There could be
something else inside it...

SAMMY

I've already been flipped off by a
dead hand. It's not going to get
much more traumatic.

(CONTINUED)

J.T.
Sammy, you can't.

SAMMY
If you want to check it after me,
fine.

J.T. sighs. He steps into the jonboat.

J.T.
I'm not letting you go alone.

J.T. unties the two ropes from the cleat hitches and sits beside Sammy. Sammy revs the motor.

EXT. CREEK - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Sammy pilots the jonboat. J.T. sits at the front of the boat. The boat speeds down the river, the marsh grass becoming one continuous wall of green.

EXT. CREEK - CRAB TRAP LOCATION - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Sammy eases the throttle and the boat slows as they approach the crab trap's styrofoam bulb.

J.T.
You sure it's this one?

SAMMY
Yeah.

J.T.
I don't think we should--

Sammy moves to the front of the boat and begins pulling the crab trap's rope. J.T. follows her.

J.T.
No, you shouldn't be the one doing
this.

J.T. grabs the trap's rope as Sammy is pulling it up. Sammy stops pulling and looks at him.

SAMMY
I'm fine.

J.T. pries the rope from Sammy's hands with some force.

(CONTINUED)

J.T.
It's my problem.

Sammy loosens her grip.

SAMMY
No, it's not. You didn't deserve
this.

The trap reaches the surface of the water.

J.T.
Get back.

SAMMY
Why?

J.T.
Trust me.

Sammy sits in the back of the jonboat on the bench next to the motor.

J.T. hauls the trap into the boat. In the metal compartment where the bait is stored, there is an adult-sized small, white human ear.

J.T. looks horrified. Sammy begins to stand to get a better look. J.T. throws the trap into the creek.

J.T.
Start the motor, Sam.

J.T. sits at the bow of the boat. He vigorously wipes his hands on his jeans, as if what he has seen is now on him.

EXT. CRAZY JOHN'S BACKYARD - DAY

Floyd, who wears an orange hunting cap and the same pair of coveralls, walks across an unkempt and overgrown backyard with CRAZY JOHN, 30s, who wears a t-shirt with the sleeves cut off, revealing his large biceps.

The men approach a metal shed that's surrounded by junk: an ancient-looking pontoon boat, folding chairs, giant tractor wheels, and large wooden cable spools.

CRAZY JOHN
I'm telling you, bitches love
getting fucked around all those
guns.

Floyd pulls down on his neon orange hunting cap.

(CONTINUED)

FLOYD
I'm sure they do.

Crazy John unlocks the padlock on the shed's door.

INT. CRAZY JOHN'S GUN SHED - CONTINUOUS - DAY

The only light inside the shed comes from the opened door. Gun racks line all four walls of the shed, holding every kind of gun that's available on the market, and some that aren't: pistols, revolvers, shotguns, machine guns, sniper rifles, etc.

Floyd takes his hat off and examines the walls from a distance. Crazy John begins circling the shed.

CRAZY JOHN
Eeny, meeny, miny, mo...

Crazy John points to a different gun with each word.

CRAZY JOHN
Catch a nigger by his toe...

FLOYD
Cut the bullshit. It's hot as hell
in here.

CRAZY JOHN
If he hollers let him go. Eeny,
meeny, miny...

Crazy John slows down. A smile creeps across his half-lit face, revealing his stained and rotten teeth.

CRAZY JOHN
Mo.

Crazy John's finger lands on an AK-47.

EXT. AUNTIE KAY'S FLOATING DOCK - LATER - DAY

Sammy docks the boat. J.T. jumps out of the boat with a rope and ties the cleat hitch. Sammy turns the motor off but remains in the boat.

SAMMY
We can go back once it gets dark.

(CONTINUED)

J.T.
You can't go with me.

SAMMY
We're a team.

J.T. receives a text. He opens his phone. There is a picture of a young blond woman. Her arms are tied together at the elbows. Her right hand has been amputated and cauterized. Her face is covered by her blond hair, most of which is crusted with dried blood.

Below the picture, the text reads:

"Running low on body parts, chancho."

J.T. stares at the screen in disbelief. He begins texting back: "Where is she--"

SAMMY
Who're you texting?

J.T deletes the text.

He turns back to Sammy.

J.T.
I can't put you in this situation.

SAMMY
I put myself in this situation. I knew that involving myself with you--

J.T.
Would lead to finding random body parts in a crab trap?

Sammy looks down creek.

J.T.
(CONT'D)
You're one of the only good things I have.

Sammy stands and steps onto the dock, the boat keys in her hand. She grabs J.T.'s hand and places the keys inside it. She clasps both of her hands around his hand.

SAMMY
You'll take my boat, then.

INT. BAIT SHOP - DAY

Crazy John enters Joe's Bait Shop, which doubles as an unlicensed bar. The shop is small, with white-washed concrete walls and R&B playing from the speakers behind the counter. Tanks, which resemble white plastic troughs filled with water, line the wall behind the counter.

JOE, 40s, black, the shop owner, wearing white utility coveralls and muddied boots, stands behind the counter, tending to the eel tank.

Four other black men are in the shop, drinking beer, smoking cigarettes, and taking turns shooting pool.

Joe turns around, holding a live eel in his hand.

JOE
Can I help you?

CRAZY JOHN
Two quarts of shrimp. None of that
freezer burned shit.

The pool players look at Crazy John.

JOE
Gimme a minute.

Joe puts the eel back in the tank and exits to a back room.

Crazy John approaches the pool table.

CRAZY JOHN
(to the pool players)
You know a guy by the name of J.T.?

The men are silent. Pool Player 2 grinds chalk onto the tip of his pool cue, glaring at Crazy John.

CRAZY JOHN
(CONT'D)
I heard he's been catchin' the
biggest blues in town. Wouldn't
mind buying a few pounds for the
weekend.

POOL PLAYER 1 tosses his cigarette butt and stomps it out on the concrete floor.

POOL PLAYER 1
Haven't seen him in a few days.

(CONTINUED)

CRAZY JOHN

What'd'ya say I gave each of you
fifty bucks if y'all get him to me.

POOL PLAYER 2

I'd tell you to shove it up your--

Joe re-enters the main room, a bag of frozen shrimp in his hand.

JOE

That'll be ten.

Crazy John ignores Joe. He approaches Pool Player 2.

CRAZY JOHN

(to Pool Player 2)

Go on, nigger. Say it.

Pool Player 2 punches Crazy John in the eye.

Crazy John covers his eye with his hand.

POOL PLAYER 2

I ain't gotta say nothin'.

Crazy John tries to swing, but he is pushed to the ground by Pool Player 3.

The four players pin Crazy John to the ground.

Pool Player 4 kicks Crazy John in the side.

CRAZY JOHN

Ahh!

Crazy John's POV: Joe stands over Crazy John.

JOE

(to the pool players)

Let him go, boys.

The pool players back away.

Crazy John stands, looking outraged but defeated.

JOE

(CONT'D)

Here's some freezer burned shit for
that eye.

Joe shoves the bag of frozen shrimp into Crazy John's chest.
Crazy John takes the shrimp.

(CONTINUED)

Crazy John grabs a wad of cash out of his shirt pocket. He drops a ten dollar bill on the ground. He then spits and stomps on it with his steel-toed boot. He exits the store.

Joe picks up the bill and wipes it on the pant leg of his utility coveralls.

INT. TRAILER - KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Bucky and Floyd sit at the kitchen table, a shotgun and a pistol before them. The hand is also on the table, next to Floyd. Floyd strokes the hand as if it is a pet. Bucky is drinking a carbonated energy drink.

FLOYD

So where's the boat gonna be?

BUCKY

I told you we don't need one.

FLOYD

I don't think you can walk all the way out there...

BUCKY

Low tide, you sure can. I used to dig for oysters on that bank.

FLOYD

That's reassuring...

Crazy John enters, AK-47 in one hand, the bag of frozen shrimp in the other. His eye is black.

BUCKY

The hell happened to you?

FLOYD

Let J.T. sock one to ya?

Floyd pulls a seat out from the table, offering it to Crazy John. Crazy John glances at the seat but remains standing.

CRAZY JOHN

He wasn't there.

Crazy John throws the sealed bag of shrimp on the table.

BUCKY

Now we know he's not stupid.

(CONTINUED)

FLOYD
(lifting the hand)
Doesn't seem like the smartest way
to get rid of a body.

Crazy John takes the hand from Floyd, examining it closely.

CRAZY JOHN
Looks like he used a bolt cutter.

Bucky turns away from the hand.

BUCKY
Can't stand the thought of him
being loose.

FLOYD
Where's Sammy anyway? Wouldn't let
her out of sight...not with a mad
man roamin'.

BUCKY
You know I can't tell that girl
what to do. I can only control the
things around her.

Crazy John looks out the window at the darkening sky. He
sets the hand on the kitchen table.

CRAZY JOHN
Huntin' time.

INT. AUNTIE KAY'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

J.T. talks on his cell phone in a bathroom that is so small
that the toilet almost touches the bathtub. J.T. looks at
himself in the mirror as he whispers into the phone.

J.T.
You want me? Deal with me.

There's a knock on the door.

SAMMY
(O.S.)
Auntie Kay's going to take me back
around 10. Dad'll be at Floyd's.

J.T.
Sounds good!

EXT. MIKE'S SEAFOOD - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

SANTIAGO, late 30s, Mexican, with tattoos of thorns, roses, and skulls covering his forearms, talks into his cellphone. He smokes a cigarette and speaks with a heavy Hispanic accent. In the background, we see a small seafoam-colored shack with a sign that reads MIKE'S SEAFOOD.

SANTIAGO

That the *chica nueva*? Good thing you replaced the old one...she ain't too *handy* anymore.

Santiago laughs into the phone.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

J.T.

Meet me at midnight, at that goddamn trap. I'll have your 50 grand. Then I'm out. I'm done.

SANTIAGO

That's all we need, my *pinacate*.

J.T.

And don't mess with anyone else.

SANTIAGO

You bring the money, no *problemas*. You bring any other bullshit, can't say the same.

J.T. hangs up the phone.

EXT. TRAILER - LATER - NIGHT

We see the tail lights of Auntie Kay's Oldsmobile on the dirt road. The trailer in the background, Sammy turns around and waves in the direction of the car.

SAMMY

Thanks, Auntie Kay!

The Oldsmobile accelerates down the road, a cloud of dust trailing behind.

Sammy walks toward the white, single-wide trailer, with a sunken, homemade porch, pulling a key from her pocket. No lights are on inside, though the truck sits in the driveway.

INT. TRAILER - FRONT DOOR/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Sammy enters the living room, closing the front door behind her. The room is dark. Sammy searches for the light switch.

SAMMY
Anyone home?

Suddenly there is a crash. Glass breaks. Sammy finds the light switch and we see her panic-stricken face.

Floyd's dog sits beside the coffee table with a blue candle in his mouth. Looking at Sammy, he wags his tail. Beside him, there is a broken glass candlestick.

Sammy approaches the dog. She reaches out toward its mouth, her palm open.

SAMMY
(angrily)
Give that here.

The dog drops the candle into Sammy's hand.

Sammy hits the dog on its snout and then grabs the loose skin on its neck. Sammy drags the dog toward the door.

SAMMY
Get!

The dog exits through the door, tail between its legs.

Sammy turns on the TV with the remote control.

She begins picking up the large pieces of broken glass from the carpet, placing them into her cupped palm.

Local news is on the TV. ANCHOR 1, black, female, mid-40s, sits to the left of ANCHOR 2, white, male, 50s. They sit at a desk. There is a blue wall behind them with a logo that reads "Action News 2."

ANCHOR 1
The 57th annual Beaufort Water Festival is off to a grand start as hundreds of locals and not-so-locals dance the night away at Waterfront Park.

ANCHOR 2
Selina Davis is live at Waterfront Park. How's the footwork looking over there, Selina?

Sammy exits.

EXT. MARSH - LATER - NIGHT

Bucky, Floyd, and Crazy John trek through the mud, parting the marsh grass to either side of them. All three men wear industrial rubber boots and headlamps.

Crazy John carries his AK-47 over his shoulder. Floyd carries a shotgun. Bucky wears a pistol in a holster at his waist.

Floyd removes a can of chewing tobacco from his coveralls.

Floyd trips. He drops the can of tobacco to the ground.

FLOYD

Dammit.

Floyd searches for the can of tobacco as Bucky and Crazy John continue walking.

BUCKY

(to Crazy John)

Spring low tonight. Tide won't run us off.

CRAZY JOHN

Nothing will be runnin' off.

Crazy John lifts his AK-47, looking down the barrel.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

J.T. sits in a booth. The diner is small and poorly lit, with tattered booths and a counter lined with worn bar stools. The kitchen is behind the counter.

A WAITRESS, 40s, white, in uniform, with a bad hair dye job and a gold front tooth, stands behind the counter, painting her nails with bright pink nail polish.

A COOK, 17, black, also in uniform and baby faced, sings "Spoonful" while washing dishes behind the counter. There are no other patrons in the restaurant.

J.T.'s booth is near the entrance, and J.T. sits on the side where he can see the entrance. He eats a plate of eggs and sausage, glaring at the door.

(CONTINUED)

The waitress comes by his table. She carries a pot of coffee and a mug. She sets the mug down on the table. J.T. does not turn to her.

WAITRESS
Here's your coffee, sir. Anything
else I can get ya?

J.T. does not respond. He continues to stare at the entrance.

As the waitress fills the mug with coffee, she also glances in the direction of the door. Seeing nothing there, she returns her gaze to J.T.

WAITRESS
(CONT'D)
Sir?

J.T. shakes his head, annoyed. He looks at his watch. It reads 10:50. He returns his gaze to the door.

WAITRESS
(CONT'D)
Alrighty then.

The waitress slams the pot of coffee on the table, so that some of the coffee sloshes onto the table.

INT. TRAILER - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sammy dumps the handful of broken glass into the trashcan.

Sammy opens the refrigerator. There is nothing in the fridge except beer, a large jar of mayonnaise, and mustard. She grabs a can of Busch.

Sammy exits the kitchen.

INT. TRAILER - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Sammy sits in the recliner in front of the TV.

She opens the beer and takes a sip. Action News 2 is no longer broadcasting, and a political drama is now airing.

Disinterested in this show, Sammy grabs the remote and changes the channel.

(CONTINUED)

ANCHOR 1, black, male, mid-30s, and ANCHOR 2, white, female, 50s, sit at a desk. Behind them, there is an image of a shrimp boat in a river. A caption below the anchors reads: "LIVE 5 NEWS AT 11."

ANCHOR 1

The Beaufort Police Department is asking for your help in the search for a missing 16-year-old girl.

ANCHOR 2

Police are looking for Sarah Elizabeth Warren, who may also go by the name "Liz."

In the right corner of the screen, a yearbook picture of Liz appears. She is petite and blond.

Panicked, Sammy grabs her cell phone from her pocket. She goes through her contacts until she finds "Liz tha Shiz." She presses the call button.

The call goes straight to voicemail:

LIZ

(O.S.)

It's your girl, Liz. Leave it!

The phone beeps.

Sammy holds the phone to her ear and begins sobbing.

SAMMY

Liz, where are...I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. Please forgive me...

The phone beeps again.

AUTOMATED VOICE

(O.S.)

End of message. If you would like to replay your message please press-

EXT. CREEK - MARSH/BANK - NIGHT

Bucky, Floyd and Crazy John hide behind the marsh grass at the edge of the bank across from the crab trap, which is about 25 yards away. Their headlamps are off.

A boat motor rumbles in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

CRAZY JOHN

Listen up.

Crazy John lifts his AK-47. Floyd raises his shotgun.

BUCKY

Hold your fire until I say so.

A jonboat rounds the bend. We see the outlines of three figures in the boat, but it is too dark to see their faces.

FLOYD

(whispering)

Looks like he brought some friends.

CRAZY JOHN

(whispering)

The more the merrier.

The boat travels to the middle of the creek and slows.

BUCKY

(whispering)

They're at the trap.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

J.T. sits at the booth. He checks his watch again: 11:00. As J.T. looks at his watch, TERRELL, early 20s, black, with tattooed tears under his right eye, enters the diner. He takes a seat across from J.T.

J.T.

Why the hell are you here?

TERRELL

Your boy Ty couldn't make it.

J.T.

I just texted him today.

TERRELL

You texted me. Kid left his phone in my car before he got -

J.T.

Got what?

TERRELL

(lowers voice)

Nailed by a motherfucking narc.

(CONTINUED)

J.T.
Where's the money?

A beat.

J.T. glares at Terrell.

J.T.
(CONT'D)
Dammit!

J.T. slaps the table with the palm of his hand. Coffee sloshes out of his coffee mug.

In the background, the waitress glances toward their table.

Terrell retrieves a napkin from a dispenser. He wipes the spilled coffee.

TERRELL
Chill, man.

Terrell reaches into his back pocket and pulls out a bulky envelope. He slides it across the table toward J.T.

TERRELL
(CONT'D)
That's all I found.

J.T. opens the envelope underneath the table. He pulls out four stacks of 100 dollar bills (\$4,000). Each stack is paper clipped. J.T. fingers through the bills quickly.

J.T.
(laughing)
Only two grand short!

J.T. stuffs the bills into the envelope.

TERRELL
He had two g's wortha rock on him.

Terrell grabs J.T.'s empty cup. He pours himself a cup of coffee and takes a sip.

J.T.
Two g's worth? He sells nickles and dimes.

TERRELL
Wasn't dealing to our normal clientele.

Beat.

(CONTINUED)

J.T. looks confused.

TERRELL
(CONT'D)
He was meeting a runner.

J.T.
A runner? Like rich white folk use?

TERRELL
That's who he was going after.
They're all downtown for that
festival, looking for a fix.

Terrell chugs the cup of coffee, slamming the empty cup on the table.

The waitress approaches the table, notepad in hand.

WAITRESS
Anything I can get your friend
here?

Terrell stands.

TERRELL
Just leaving, ma'am.

EXT. CREEK - MARSH/BANK - NIGHT

Crazy John smiles before firing a round at the boat.

Floyd fires his shotgun.

Bucky holds his pistol but does not pull the trigger.

From the boat, we hear yells, cries, and garbled Spanish profanities.

Bucky turns to Crazy John and Floyd.

BUCKY
Fuck! Stop!

Floyd lowers his pistol momentarily, but Crazy John keeps firing. Floyd looks over to Crazy John and raises his gun again, continuing to fire.

EXT. CREEK - SANTIAGO'S BOAT - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

CAMERINO, late 20s, Mexican, with a slightly crooked nose and wearing a white t-shirt, stands at the front of the boat, raising his semi-automatic pistol in the direction of the gunfire. He begins firing.

ANDRÉS, early 20s, Mexican, muscular, wearing a wifebeater and baggy jeans, scrambles to the back of the boat.

The jonboat's outboard motor is an older model, slightly corroded by salt water. Andrés pulls the motor's starter cord. The motor grumbles but the cord does not catch.

Andrés pulls again, with greater force. The motor grumbles but the cord does not catch. Frustrated, he hits the motor with the palm of his hand.

Santiago, the leader of the group, kneels in the bottom of the boat and retrieves his handgun from his side.

SANTIAGO

That lying motherfucker!

EXT. CREEK - MARSH GRASS/BANK - NIGHT

Bucky, Floyd, and Crazy John crouch behind the marsh grass. Floyd and Crazy John continue to fire.

Over the noise, the boat motor grumbles to life, then pauses.

A bullet strikes the mud to the right of Bucky. Mud flies into Bucky's eyes.

CRAZY JOHN

Got us a real battle now, boys!

Bucky wipes mud from his face. He lifts his gun, looks down the barrel, but cannot bring himself to shoot.

FLOYD

Yeehaw!

Bullets hit the mud around them.

Bucky sets his gun down in the mud, purposely.

BUCKY

I can't.

Floyd steadies his shotgun. He looks down the barrel, aims, fires. Suddenly there we hear a cry:

(CONTINUED)

CAMERINO

Mi brazo!

We see Camerino's silhouetted figure crumple into the bottom of the boat. Andrés's silhouetted figure moves to the back, reaching toward the motor. Crazy John and Floyd continue to fire.

SANTIAGO

Chingada! Vamos, vamos!

The boat motor sputters, the starter cord finally catching. The boat speeds off in the opposite direction of the gunfire.

Bucky stands, wiping mud from his knees.

BUCKY

(under his breath)

Jesus Christ. What have we done?

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

The diner is a low-ceilinged structure with large windows. Above the entrance, a large fluorescent sign reads "Gloria's" and a smaller fluorescent sign below reads, "Shrimp n'grits done rite."

Terrell walks away from the diner, hands in his pockets.

J.T. follows Terrell.

J.T.

Terrell!

Terrell keeps walking across the parking lot and does not turn around.

TERRELL

I can't do anything else for you, man.

J.T.

This isn't my business, you know that.

TERRELL

I'm not getting involved with this one. Heard about what they did to that little white bitch.

J.T. flinches.

(CONTINUED)

J.T.
Just tell me how to get the money.
In less than an hour.

Terrell stops, turning on his heels to face J.T.

TERRELL
I got a cuz down in New Orleans,
right?

A beat.

TERRELL
(CONT'D)
He sells whammy down in the Quarter
to these dumbass white tourists.

J.T.
Whammy?

TERRELL
Fake crack, man. Microwaved oral
gel and baking soda. They think
it's the real shit cuz their face
go all numb.

J.T.
Fucking brilliant...and tonight--

TERRELL
(smiling)
Bay Street might as well be
Bourbon.

INT. TRAILER - SAMMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room is lit by the lamp on the bedside table. Sammy sits on the carpeted floor with a scrapbook titled "Happy Sweet 16, Sam Girl."

Sammy opens the book, to a photo of her and Liz, as well as another cheerleader. The girls wear blue and gold uniforms. Sammy grasps Liz's left foot and the other girl grasps Liz's right foot. Liz beams a white smile, her arms split into a "v." Sammy has her eyes on Liz.

Sammy flips to the back of the scrapbook, to a page titled "Sweet 16!"

- The first photo is of a bonfire with silhouetted figures gathered around it, holding beer cans.

(CONTINUED)

- The second photo is of Sammy. She has a can of Natural Light in her hand. She sticks her tongue out at the camera.

- The third photo is of Sammy, Liz, and J.T. Sammy is on the far left of the picture, throwing a peace sign at the camera. Liz is in the middle of the photo, blowing a kiss to the camera. J.T. is to the right of Liz. He has his arm around Liz, and he seems to be whispering something into her ear.

She tries to remove the picture from the scrapbook, picking at the edges with her fingernails.

Frustrated, she tears the picture from the book, ripping the page in half. Sammy brings the picture close to her face and traces Liz's outline with her finger. She cries.

Off screen, Floyd's dog begins to howl.

EXT. BEAUFORT- BAY ST./PARK/RIVER DANCE - NIGHT - MONTAGE

"Summertime Blues" by Buddy Holly plays throughout montage.

A) J.T., dressed in a nice button-down and khakis, carrying a small book bag, exits a black low-riding vehicle with tinted windows. The car pulls off, the license plate reading "VIC TERRY."

J.T. walks down Bay Street. The street is full of well-dressed, inebriated white people.

B) Bay Street. A gray-haired GENTLEMAN, white, wearing seersucker--with a WOMAN, 20-something, attractive, wearing high heels and a tight red dress, at his side--approaches J.T. The two exchange a few words before J.T. pulls two baggies of fake crack from his book bag. He discretely hands them to the gentleman. The gentleman retrieves two \$50 bills from his pocket.

C) A shot of Waterfront Park. A beach music band performs on the park's permanent stage. People talk to each other around the perimeter of the park, but closer to the stage, partners are dancing the "Carolina shag" (similar to a six count swing--triple step, triple step, rock step).

D) In a poorly lit section of the park, near the water, three white COLLEGE GIRLS, wearing low cut blouses, approach J.T. The girls touch J.T.'s chest, as if buttering him up. J.T. puts on his charm, smiling and joking with the girls. Each girl hands him two \$20 bills.

(CONTINUED)

E) A MALE HIGH SCHOOLER, 17, white, muscular, wearing a shirt that reads "CANES FOOTBALL 2012," approaches J.T. J.T. gives him a "bro" handshake (they clasp hands, bend their elbows into their chests, and slap one another's backs with the left hand). They pull away. The high schooler opens his hand. Inside he finds a baggie of fake crack. The high schooler smiles, retrieving a wallet from his back pocket.

F) A WOMAN, white, late 40s, wearing a neon yellow t-shirt that reads "WATER FESTIVAL STAFF," approaches J.T. behind a concession stand. She hands J.T. three \$20 bills and a can of cold beer.

INT. TRAILER - SAMMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sammy lies on her bed in the dark. An outdoor floodlight shines through the blinds. The slatted light illuminates Sammy's face: her eyes are open - she is staring at the ceiling.

We hear a dog's bark from outside. Sammy sits up, frustrated.

SAMMY

Jesus.

Sammy walks over to the window. She lifts the blinds and opens the window.

SAMMY

(yelling)

Hush, dog!

The dog continues barking.

SAMMY

Hush up!

Sammy looks across the lawn, partially illuminated by the floodlight, but the dog is not in sight.

EXT. TRAILER - YARD - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Sammy stands in bedroom window. She turns around and disappears view.

We hear the dog's barks turn to a cry. Then the cries turn to a whimper.

INT. TRAILER - SAMMY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Sammy returns to her bedroom with a glass of water. She takes a sip and places the glass on her nightstand.

She flops down on her bed. The bedroom window remains open. Sammy closes her eyes.

EXT. EMPTY LOT NEAR CRAB TRAP - NIGHT

Bucky, Floyd, and Crazy John walk across an empty, cleared plot of land surrounded by marshland. Bucky walks ahead of Floyd and Crazy John.

The men's headlamps are on. Crazy John smokes a cigarette and carries his AK-47 on his right shoulder.

FLOYD

Funny how they never found a buyer for this land.

CRAZY JOHN

Recession hit, I guess.

FLOYD

I heard they were tryin' to sell it for 500,000.

Crazy John whistles between his teeth.

CRAZY JOHN

For marsh front property? 'Bout as valuable as Bucky's nutsack.

FLOYD

Wait, he has one?

Crazy John and Floyd laugh. Bucky does not turn around.

Floyd playfully reaches out and grabs Bucky's shoulder, giving him a shake.

FLOYD

Aw, come on, Big Buck. We're just messin' with you.

Bucky rips away from Floyd's grip.

Crazy John's 1995 Chevrolet Silverado appears in the foreground.

Bucky walks past the truck.

(CONTINUED)

Crazy John opens the truck's driver's side door.

FLOYD
(CONT'D)
Where you goin'?

Bucky continues walking and does not turn around.

BUCKY
Home.

FLOYD
Don't you want a ride?

His back still turned, Bucky flips them off.

INT. CRAZY JOHN'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Crazy John sits in the driver's seat and cranks the engine.

Floyd sits in the passenger's seat, releasing a sigh.

CRAZY JOHN
Guess we learned a lesson tonight.

A beat.

FLOYD
Never make fun of Bucky's nutsack.

The men laugh. Crazy John turns up the stereo. Country music blasts from the speakers.

CRAZY JOHN
Time for a fucking drink!

Crazy John retrieves a plastic Gatorade from inside the driver's side door. The contents of the bottle are clear.

Crazy John unscrews the cap, takes a sip, and hands it to Floyd.

Crazy John throws the gearshift into drive and hits the gas pedal.

Floyd spills some of the contents of the bottle onto his shirt.

They speed across the field, passing Bucky.

ON: Bucky as seen through the rear window of the truck, trudging through the high grass in his heavy boots, his eyes on the ground.

EXT. AUNTIE MAY'S HOUSE - FLOATING DOCK - NIGHT

Still dressed nicely, J.T. stands on the floating dock. He opens the book bag he carried previously. Inside, there are stacks of bills.

J.T. tries to count the bills, but then he looks at his watch. It reads 12:00.

J.T.

Shit.

J.T. stuffs the cash back in the bag.

J.T. unties the rope from the cleats and throws them into the jonboat.

He jumps into the jonboat.

INT. TRAILER - SAMMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sammy lies on her bed. Her eyes are closed. The window near her bed remains open.

A gust of wind blows through the window, sending some sheets of paper on the nightstand flying. Sammy turns in her sleep but does not wake.

Suddenly, a gloved hand appears in the window. Andrés appears in the window's frame.

Andrés swings his legs through the window without making a noise. He approaches Sammy's bed.

Andrés pulls his semi-automatic pistol from his side. With his left hand, he grabs a bandanna from his back pocket. Focusing his eyes on Sammy, he trips over the scrapbook on the floor. A floorboard groans.

Sammy opens her eyes. Her eyes grow wide. Before she can scream, Andrés stuffs the bandanna into her mouth.

Sammy kicks Andrés in the groin. Andrés bends over, knocking over the bedside lamp and glass of water.

ANDRÉS

Fuck!

Andrés grabs Sammy's throat, pinning her to the bed. He holds the gun to her temple.

Sammy gags. Tears form in her wide, hysterical eyes.

(CONTINUED)

Andrés leans into Sammy. He whispers into her ear.

ANDRÉS
(CONT'D)
Aw, don't cry, puta.

Still holding Sammy down by her throat with his left hand, Andrés sets the gun down on the bed and reaches into his back pocket, retrieving a cell phone. He holds the phone over Sammy.

ANDRÉS
(CONT'D)
You'll ruin the picture.

We see a bright flash from the phone's camera.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. CREEK - NIGHT

J.T. pilots the jonboat. He reaches the crab trap and shifts to neutral. J.T. picks up a flashlight but does not turn it on.

We hear a "ding" sound. J.T. retrieves his cell phone from his back pocket. He flips open his phone and opens a text message.

We see the picture of Sammy that Andrés captured with his phone. In the picture, Andrés's left arm is visible. His left hand is clasped around Sammy's neck. Sammy's eyes are wide and full of tears. A bandanna is stuffed in her mouth. Her face is red, the veins on her neck pronounced. She lies on top of a pink comforter.

J.T. drops the phone. It lands in the bottom of the boat.

J.T. turns on the flashlight, scanning the dark marshland.

He then directs the light's beam to the crab trap.

CLOSE ON: the white floating styrofoam bulb, which is now sprayed with a fine mist of blood.

INT. TRAILER - FRONT DOOR/LIVING ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

Bucky closes the front door behind him. He pulls off his muddied boots, leaving them by the front door. He scans the living room. Everything is still in place, undisturbed.

(CONTINUED)

BUCKY
(in a low voice)
Sammy?

INT. TRAILER - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Bucky walks down a short, narrow hallway, which is illuminated by a small night light.

Bucky reaches a closed door. He grabs the knob and slowly twists it, as to not make too much noise.

Bucky opens the door a few inches and peeks inside.

INT. TRAILER - SAMMY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Bucky scans the moon-lit room and notices the empty bed. He sees the pink comforter and pillow lying on the floor. Lastly, he sees the open window.

Bucky turns on the bright overhead light. ON: the broken bedside lamp.

For a moment, he does not move. His face is blank.

He rushes over to the bed, tearing away its thin sheets. Sammy's pink cellphone falls to the floor.

BUCKY
No, no, no...

Bucky gets on his knees and searches under the bed.

BUCKY
No, no, no!

Bucky opens the closet door. He begins pulling down old quilts and sweatshirts, searching for Sammy as if she were a lost object.

EXT. SANTIAGO'S BOAT - CREEK - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

The jonboat snakes its way down a winding creek littered with a few rotted docks belonging to dark, large houses along the shore. The motor hardly makes any noise at all--the boat is almost in neutral, it's moving so slow.

Santiago pilots the jonboat.

(CONTINUED)

Camerino lies across the jonboat's bench, shirtless, his eyes closed, his upper arm tied with a white t-shirt seeped with blood.

Andrés sits on the bench at the front of the boat. Sammy sits rigidly on the floor of the boat beside Andrés. Her hands are tied behind her back.

SANTIAGO

The one thing I ask you to do.

ANDRÉS

Changed the oil yesterday. Whole motor's rusted out.

Sammy cries, her wails audible despite the bandanna in her mouth.

ANDRÉS

(to Sammy)

Head down.

Andrés pushes Sammy so that her head slams against the side of the boat. Sammy's muffled cries grow louder.

SANTIAGO

Shut that *puta* up for good.

Andrés pulls his semi-automatic pistol from his side. As Sammy begins to lift her head, Andrés hits her across the head with the base of his pistol grip.

Sammy's head hits the side of the boat. She is silent. Her body slouches. Her eyes close.

Camerino lets out a low moan and grabs his injured arm.

CAMERINO

(under his breath)

Mi brazo...

SANTIAGO

Oughta shut up this sorry *puta* too.

EXT. BUCKY'S DOCK - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

J.T. jumps out of the jonboat. He frantically ties the boat down to the dock cleat, creating one loose knot. J.T. stumbles over an empty crab trap. In the foreground, Bucky's white trailer is visible.

J.T. sprints up the dock's ramp.

INT. TRAILER - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Bucky sits on Sammy's bed. He holds Sammy's cellphone in his hand. He thumbs the numbers 9-1-1 without actually punching them. He repeats this motion, but does not push the buttons.

He throws the phone against the wall with such force that the battery separates from the device.

Bucky bends down and picks up the picture of Sammy, Liz, and J.T. that Sammy had torn from the scrapbook.

CLOSE ON: photo of J.T. whispering into Liz's ear.

Bucky tears the photograph so that J.T. is no longer included in it. Holding the picture of J.T., he picks up the phone and battery from the floor. He replaces the phone's battery, then hits the number 9. He pauses a moment, then hits the number 1.

J.T.
(O.S.)
SAMMY!

Bucky looks up.

INT. CRAZY JOHN'S GUN SHED - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

A single light bulb illuminates the shed.

Crazy John cleans his disassembled AK-47 at the carpenter's table in the middle of the shed. He sprays oil inside the receiver and cleans the inside with an old toothbrush.

A small transportable stereo on the far side of the table plays a staticky country radio station.

Floyd sits in a metal folding chair facing Crazy John, sipping moonshine from the Gatorade bottle.

Floyd reaches into the large side pocket of his coveralls and pulls out the hand. He cradles it in both of his hands, examining it closely.

FLOYD
Pretty little hand, ain't it?

CRAZY JOHN
I'm into a lot of crazy shit,
Floyd. That's how I got the name.
But I can't say I'm too into dead
girls' hands.

(CONTINUED)

FLOYD

No one said she's dead.

Crazy John pauses. He sets down the toothbrush.

CRAZY JOHN

You know something I don't?

Floyd shoots back a mouthful of moonshine. His face pinches for a moment, as if he's in pain. He wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, revealing a slow, drunken smile.

FLOYD

I don't know a damn thing.

A beat.

FLOYD

(CONT'D)

But I do know J.T. is a lying bastard. If he's insane enough to steal money from me, wouldn't be surprised if he butchered some whore.

Crazy John looks surprised.

CRAZY JOHN

You told me you were going after J.T. in order to protect our innocent women, or some bullshit.

Floyd laughs.

FLOYD

Women? If you care about those things, they'll take all your money and your Viagra prescription too.

CRAZY JOHN

Sounds about right...

FLOYD

Women and dealers. Always leave you feelin' empty.

Floyd pulls a small, empty bag from the pocket of his utility coveralls. He holds it up to the overhead light. White powder residue clouds the plastic.

EXT. CREEK - HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

Establishing shot. The homemade houseboat looks like a small, gray floating metal box. A rusted beach chair sits on the boat's five-foot-long deck. Santiago's jonboat is tied to the side of the houseboat.

The houseboat looks as though it might have been abandoned before Santiago took it over. Green slime grows on the metal siding and lone window. Barnacles crust the sides and bottom of the boat.

The boat is located on a narrow creek. The unpopulated Otter Island lies in the background, some forty yards away.

INT. CLOSET - HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

SAMMY'S P.O.V. - Sammy blinks slowly. The closet and Liz appear in and out of focus. The closet is lit by a single bulb. It is extremely small and filthy. Soiled towels cover the floor. A roach climbs up the opposite wall.

Liz's face hovers over Sammy. Liz is sitting on her knees. Liz's hair is bloodied and matted around her missing ear. Liz's arms are tied at the elbow behind her back (cannot see hands); her feet are also tied.

LIZ
(whispering)
Sammy? Sammy, wake up.

Sammy's eyes grow wide. She tries to move her body, but her hands and feet are tied.

SAMMY
Liz.

LIZ
Shhh...they're out there.

We hear the faint sound of a Hispanic radio station.

ANDRÉS
(O.S.)
Got any eights?

INT. HOUSEBOAT - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

There is only one room, aside from the closet. The walls are made of plywood, with pink insulation exposed in places. There is a sink and a toilet in this room. There is a stained mattress in the corner.

Santiago, Camerino, and Andrés sit in folding beach chairs, holding five playing cards in their hands.

Santiago puffs a cigar, its smoke filling the tiny boat. Camerino leans to one side of his chair, holding his injured arm, still tied with a bloodied t-shirt.

In the middle of the men sits a deck of cards.

SANTIAGO
Que?

ANDRÉS
Ocho!

SANTIAGO
(laughing)
Pesca, motherfucker.

Andrés rolls his eyes. He leans forward in his chair and draws a card from the deck.

INT. CLOSET - HOUSEBOAT - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Sammy begins to cry silently. Liz scoots over to sit beside Sammy.

LIZ
Shhh, now.

ANDRÉS
(O.S.)
(yelling)
Ha! Go fish!

INT. TRAILER - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bucky is crouched behind an armchair. The room is lit by a standing lamp beside the couch. The front door swings open.

J.T. enters. His face glistens with sweat. His button-down clings to his chest. He appears panicked.

(CONTINUED)

J.T.
Sammy! Sammy!

Bucky stands. He points his pistol at J.T.

BUCKY
Say her name one more time and
you're a dead man.

J.T. raises his arms above his head.

J.T.
I already feel like one.

EXT. CRAZY JOHN'S GUN SHED - NIGHT

Crazy John and Floyd sit on the ground, leaning against the shed. Throughout the scene, they pass a joint back and forth. Both men drink cans of Miller High Life. Thunder rolls in the distance.

CRAZY JOHN
I used to have a dealer, back when
I was buildin' docks.

FLOYD
His name?

CRAZY JOHN
(smiling)
Her name. Amata. A bona fide *chica*.

FLOYD
Bet you bone-a-fide her, alright.

CRAZY JOHN
Wonder if she's still sellin'.

FLOYD
Be stupid to stop now, with the
kind of demand 'round here.

Crazy John retrieves his cell phone from his pocket.

CRAZY JOHN
Lemme see.

Crazy John squints, looking at his phone screen.

CRAZY JOHN
(CONT'D)
Still got her number, if it hasn't
changed.

(CONTINUED)

FLOYD
I wonder if she knows...naw.

CRAZY JOHN
Those beaners we shot earlier?

FLOYD
That's like expecting all the
Baptists in Beaufort County to know
each other. There's too many.

CRAZY JOHN
I'm gonna get her to hook us up.
Ain't gonna sleep tonight anyway.

A beat.

CRAZY JOHN
(CONT'D)
All that adrenaline.

FLOYD
You know, I could spend the rest of
my life in a deer stand, but
shooting a man...there's nothin'
like it.

A bolt of lightning flashes across the night sky. Both men
look skyward.

CRAZY JOHN
Nothin' like it at all.

INT. CLOSET - HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

Sammy and Liz sit in the closet, their backs pressed against
the wall. Liz's hands are not visible behind her back.

The light above flickers. The boat rocks. Throughout the
scene, there is the sound of rolling thunder in the
background.

Sammy is alert now. Liz has grown considerably weaker - she
is hardly responsive.

SAMMY
Liz?

Liz stares straight ahead. She seems not to have heard
anything.

(CONTINUED)

SAMMY
(CONT'D)

I need to apologize. In case something happens to either of us.

Liz does not move. Sammy scoots closer to Liz, speaking into her ear.

SAMMY
(CONT'D)

Liz, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have taken J.T. from you. I was so stupid.

A beat.

SAMMY
(CONT'D)

Look where he got us.

Liz stares ahead. Sammy nudges Liz with her shoulder. Liz falls forward into Sammy's lap, revealing, for the first time, Liz's cauterized wrist. The wound is badly infected.

Liz closes her eyes and moans in pain.

SAMMY
(CONT'D)

Oh my god.

Sammy's expression is one of shock and fear. She cannot take her eyes away from Liz's wrist.

INT. TRAILER - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

J.T. stands by the door, his hands above his head. Bucky continues to hold his aim, but his stance is more relaxed.

BUCKY
You're telling me this is all your fault.

J.T.
Sammy didn't know a thing. About the drugs, the cartel, nothing.

BUCKY
I should kill you for screwing around with my daughter.

(CONTINUED)

J.T.

Yes, sir.

BUCKY

I should kill you for allowing her to be kidnapped by a fucking cartel.

J.T.

Yes, sir.

BUCKY

I should kill you for calling me "sir," as if you respect me.

A beat.

Bucky puts his gun back into his holster.

BUCKY

(CONT'D)

But it wouldn't help me find Sammy.

EXT. CRAZY JOHN'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

A 1994 Chrysler van runs off the dirt road and into the backyard. One of its headlights is out.

Crazy John stands in the middle of the yard, hands in his pockets. He pulls out a wad of cash from his coveralls, counts it, then stuffs the cash back into his pocket.

Floyd stands beside Crazy John, smoking a cigarette.

Crazy John waves. The van comes to a stop in the middle of the yard. The driver's side door opens. A bare leg appears from the van's open door.

CRAZY JOHN

Amata, Amata, Amata.

AMATA, Hispanic, late 30s, wearing a short, skin-tight black dress, dark red lipstick, and carrying a worn faux leather purse, exits the van and approaches Crazy John.

CRAZY JOHN

(CONT'D)

How I amata you.

Amata looks Crazy John in the eye and slaps his cheek.

Crazy John touches his cheek.

(CONTINUED)

AMATA

You're full of bullshit.

CRAZY JOHN

I know it's been a long time...

AMATA

Cinco años!

CRAZY JOHN

I quit the habit. But then tonight, I was looking up at the sky, and I saw the lightning, and I remembered that one time...

AMATA

On the boat?

CRAZY JOHN

Oh yeah, babe. That one time.

Amata holds Crazy John's face in her hands. She kisses the cheek she slapped.

Floyd looks away.

AMATA

Tan romántico.

Crazy John winks at Floyd.

CRAZY JOHN

Let me introduce you to your new customer.

Amata cocks her hip and looks Floyd up and down.

AMATA

I'm not cheap, honey.

FLOYD

I'm not either.

Floyd pulls a bejeweled silver ring from his pocket. He presents it to Amata.

Amata takes the ring from Floyd's hand. Amata grabs a lighter from her purse. She holds the flame close to the ring, examining it.

AMATA

Not too bad.

She smiles, placing the ring on her ring finger.

(CONTINUED)

AMATA
(CONT'D)
(to Crazy John)
I like him already.

Crazy John leans into Floyd. Amata admires the ring on her finger, ignoring the two men.

CRAZY JOHN
(whispering)
The hell you start collecting jewelry?

FLOYD
(whispering)
I thought the fingers could use a little decorating.

He pulls the hand from his pocket, just far enough for Crazy John to see the middle and index fingers.

EXT. TRAILER - PORCH - EARLY MORNING

J.T. and Bucky sit in plastic chairs on the front porch, smoking cigarettes. Bucky has changed out of his coveralls into a thin short sleeve cotton button down and jeans. J.T. wears his white undershirt. A legal pad sits on his lap.

A light rain begins to fall. Thunder rumbles in the distance. Both men gaze ahead toward the river. The water appears purple and choppy. The wind blows the marsh grass to one side.

J.T.
I know you cops like to play this detective game. But how we gonna find Sammy from this porch?

BUCKY
We have no idea where she - or your cartel buddies - might be.

J.T.
Mike's Seafood.

BUCKY
What about it?

J.T.
That's where you'll find Santiago. Conducts business there.

(CONTINUED)

BUCKY

I sell to Mike. He's a normal guy.

J.T. shrugs.

J.T.

Maybe. But even normal guys can ignore an unusually heavy snapper, if it's good for business.

BUCKY

Let me get this straight, you just walk in there and buy a coke-stuffed fish...

J.T.

You gotta be in the know.

A beat. Bucky pulls his phone from his pocket.

BUCKY

I'm not. But I think I know someone who is...

CLOSE ON: Bucky's phone - contact list. The first contact (in alphabetical order) is Amata Rodriguez.

INT. CLOSET - HOUSEBOAT - EARLY MORNING

Liz sleeps on Sammy's shoulder. The closet rocks gently with the waves. The closet door opens. Santiago appears in the doorway.

SANTIAGO

How precious, two sleeping beauties. Which one will get to sleep with Papi today?

Liz's eyes open slowly. She appears weaker than before.

SAMMY

Take me, you sick fuck.

SANTIAGO

Back home they're all brown haired. But this one...she is different...look like that Marilyn girl.

Santiago grabs Liz's arm.

(CONTINUED)

SAMMY

She's weak. I'll give you
everything you want.

Santiago lets go of Liz's arm. He turns to Sammy.

SANTIAGO

(smiling)
Everything?

EXT. CRAZY JOHN'S GUN SHED - EARLY MORNING

Floyd stands against the shed, where the rusted roof provides some shelter from the lightly falling rain. He smokes a cigarette.

Aside from the falling rain, the only other audible noise comes from inside the shed. We hear rhythmic thumping.

CRAZY JOHN

(O.S.)
Oh yeah...oh yeah...

AMATA

(O.S.)
Ai, Papi!

Floyd checks his watch.

INT. CRAZY JOHN'S GUN SHED - CONTINUOUS - EARLY MORNING

Amata bends over the carpenter's table. Crazy John thrusts from behind. Amata's phone is on the table, close to her.

Amata's phone rings. The ring tone is "Yo No Soy Un Monstruo" by Elvis Crespo.

Amata tries to grab the phone, but before she can, Crazy John takes it.

The caller ID reads: UNKNOWN. Crazy John answers the call while continuing to have sex with Amata.

CRAZY JOHN

Fuck off!

EXT. TRAILER - PORCH - CONTINUOUS - EARLY MORNING

Bucky and J.T. sit in the plastic chairs on the porch. Bucky removes his phone from his ear. He looks at the screen, confused.

J.T.
Who you trying to reach?

BUCKY
Someone who's helped me out in the past....I think she's busy.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - MORNING

The interior of the houseboat is dark. The lone circular window above the sink is covered in green slime.

Camerino, his arm still tied with a bloodied t-shirt, lies on the stained twin-sized mattress in the corner of the room. *

Sammy sits on the end of the mattress in the corner of the room. Santiago sits beside her, stroking her thigh and whispering something inaudible in her ear. Sammy appears terrified.

Andrés sits in a folding chair next to the bed, holding a fishing rod between his legs. He ties a hook on to the end of the line.

Santiago's phone rings. He looks at the screen.

SANTIAGO
Andrés, give the puta something to eat. Need her to have plenty of energy.

Santiago winks at Sammy. Sammy stares at the floor.

ANDRÉS
(under his breath)
Feeding your bitches. What's next?
I'm in charge of wiping their asses?

SANTIAGO
What did you say?

Andrés looks at his feet.

(CONTINUED)

ANDRÉS

Nada.

SANTIAGO

That's what I thought.

Santiago exits, holding the phone to his ear.

Camerino sits up. He opens a cabinet under the sink.

ANDRÉS

(CONT'D)

Don't fuck with that ice, man.

The inside of the cabinet is filled with bricks of cocaine. Camerino moves the bricks around. He reaches into the back of the cabinet and pulls out a first aid kit. He blows dust off of the top of the kit, then opens it.

CAMERINO

(under his breath)

Gracias a Dios!

Andrés glares at Camerino.

Camerino unties the t-shirt from his arm, letting it fall to the floor.

Camerino grabs a roller bandage from the kit. He begins to unravel the bandage.

CAMERINO

(CONT'D)

Help me wrap this up.

ANDRÉS

Fuck, do I look like some nanny?
You're worse than that kid.

He gestures toward Sammy.

Camerino clumsily tries to wrap the wound.

Andres grabs a bag of white bread from the floor. He pulls out a slice of moldy bread and pinches a piece off. He balls the piece of bread and places it on the fish hook.

ANDRÉS

Breakfast is ready, sweet pesca.

EXT. CRAZY JOHN'S YARD/GUN SHED - EARLY MORNING

Crazy John exits the gun shed, wearing nothing but his boxers. Floyd is leaning against the outer wall, smoking. It is no longer raining, but the clouds overhead are moving quickly across the sky.

CRAZY JOHN
Strange weather out here.

A gust of wind blows across the yard, trees bending to one side.

FLOYD
Things've really been howlin.'

Crazy John slaps Floyd on the shoulder.

CRAZY JOHN
Come on, Floyd. Got her nice 'n greased up for you.

Floyd looks disgusted.

Crazy John begins walking in the direction of the house in the distance.

CRAZY JOHN
(CONT'D)
Gotta go clean up, but you kids have fun.

Floyd stomps his cigarette out under his boot. He sighs, staring into the distance.

INT. CRAZY JOHN'S GUN SHED - CONTINUOUS - EARLY MORNING

Floyd closes the shed door behind him. Amata leans against the carpenter's table, facing Floyd, wearing only a black g-string thong and the cross ring Floyd gave her, her legs split into a "v".

AMATA
Come here, Papi.

FLOYD
I don't want what you think I want.

AMATA
I want what you're wanting.

Amata approaches Floyd.

(CONTINUED)

FLOYD

Good, because first I want you to keep what little clothes you have on, on.

Amata looks confused.

AMATA

Okay, we can do it that way if you wish.

FLOYD

No, no sex. No te follar...or however you say it.

Amata glares at Floyd. She marches to the other side of the table, retrieving her dress, bra, and purse from the floor.

AMATA

Old men are pathetic. Always wanting some tight-ass *chica*. Some little bitty whore!

Floyd approaches Amata. He reaches for her, but she swats his arm away.

FLOYD

Any man can make you orgasm. I've got more to offer.

Amata spits at Floyd's feet.

AMATA

More to offer, my ass.

FLOYD

I gave you that ring.

Amata twists the ring on her finger, admiring it. She absentmindedly drops the dress in her hand.

FLOYD

Go 'head and gimme a teener.

AMATA

I need to see the money.

Floyd grabs a rubberbanded wad of cash from the pocket of his coveralls. He pulls out two \$20 bills. He approaches Amata, lifting the strap of her g-string. He places the forty dollars at her hip and lets go of the elastic strap.

(CONTINUED)

AMATA
(CONT'D)
Gracias.

Amata places her purse on the table and retrieves a cocaine-filled baggie from an inside pocket. She places the baggie in Floyd's hand, closing his fingers around it.

AMATA
(CONT'D)
Now, tell me what else you need.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

Andrés raises the fishing pole and waves the line in front of Sammy's face. A wadded piece of bread is stuck on the hook.

Sammy follows the swinging "bait" with her eyes, but her face remains emotionless.

Andrés opens a can of Spam and tears off a piece of meat, also placing it on the hook.

ANDRÉS
I know you're hungry. Here *pesca*,
pesca.

Camerino drops the bandage and grabs the fishing line.

CAMERINO
Just give her the food.

ANDRÉS
You in love or somethin'?

CAMERINO
Do what Santiago said.

ANDRÉS
Or what?

Andrés swings the sharp hook around Sammy's head. She ducks to avoid being caught by the hook.

CAMERINO
Fuck you.

Camerino rips the can of Spam out of Andrés's hand. He breaks the piece of meat in half and feeds it to Sammy.

Sammy chews the meat slowly, glaring at Andrés.

INT. CRAZY JOHN'S GUN SHED - MORNING

Amata steps into her black dress. Floyd leans against the carpenter's table, watching her. Amata pushes the dress straps onto her shoulders.

AMATA
Zip me up, huh?

Floyd zips her dress slowly and carefully, in a way that isn't expected of him.

AMATA
(CONT'D)
Yeah, I know the black kid. Works for Santiago. Only seen him once, in Mike's.

FLOYD
Thought he took his crabs to Port Royal...

AMATA
Crabs? How you fit kilos into crabs?

FLOYD
Ah...of course.

AMATA
Don't know nothing else.

FLOYD
I don't think he'll be hanging around Mike's anytime soon. Tell me the second place he'd be, if he works for Ole 'Iago.

AMATA
Well he could be...I don't know...

Floyd hands her a \$100 bill.

FLOYD
You'll get more, later, if your tip proves useful.

Amata smooths the bill in her hand.

AMATA
I've heard of Santiago's boat. Most people don't know where it is...it's secret. But once someone
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AMATA (cont'd)
told me they thought it was over by
Otter Island.

FLOYD
Otter Island.

AMATA
(CONT'D)
I don't think he is there. Only the
top guys know where it is. The
black kid doesn't know shit.

Amata waves the bill in Floyd's direction.

AMATA
(CONT'D)
I didn't give you any useful
information. The kid doesn't know
about the boat.

FLOYD
You've earned your tip, darlin'.

Amata grabs her purse and cell phone from the carpenter's
table and walks toward the door.

INT. CRAZY JOHN'S HOUSE - DAY

Floyd enters Crazy John's house. Floyd steps over a greasy
pizza box. There are dirty clothes on the floor. The living
room walls are lined with imitation wood paneling. A large
buck head hangs over a fire place. A couch sits against the
back wall, a parrot in a cage to the left of it.

MS. MINNIE, 80s, with a tracheotomy, in a light blue silk
nightgown, sits on the couch.

Floyd approaches Ms. Minnie.

FLOYD
Ms. Minnie, it's so good to see
you.

Crazy John enters the room, wearing only a towel around his
waist.

CRAZY JOHN
No reason to chat Mama up.

Ms. Minnie's eyes jump between the two men.

(CONTINUED)

FLOYD

I'm sorry.

CRAZY JOHN

I'm not. Now she can't yell at me
for drinking all her Jack.

Ms. Minnie raises her middle finger in Crazy John's
direction.

CRAZY JOHN

(CONT'D)

Oh Mama, you know I love you.
(under his breath, to Floyd)
Now that I don't have to take you
to choir practice.

FLOYD

I've got a new game plan.

CRAZY JOHN

What are we waiting around here
for?

Crazy John turns his back, picks up a pair of shorts from
the floor, drops his towel, and puts the shorts on.

The parrot begins squawking.

CRAZY JOHN

(CONT'D)

Mama, can't you hold it?

Ms. Minnie shakes her head.

Crazy John walks toward the door. Floyd follows.

EXT. CRAZY JOHN'S HOUSE - STOOP - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Floyd closes the fiberglass front door behind him. Behind
it, Ms. Minnie is visible. She sits on the couch, staring
straight ahead. The parrot's squawks can still be heard.

FLOYD

Did she say something?

Crazy John speaks over his shoulder.

CRAZY JOHN

Parrot tells me when she's gotta
piss.

EXT. TRAILER - BACK YARD - DAY

Bucky walks quickly to his truck, holding his shotgun in one hand, a box of shells in another.

J.T. exits the trailer through the back door. He follows Bucky, jogging to catch up.

Bucky opens the truck and pulls the front seat forward.

J.T.
Where're we going?

BUCKY
Somewhere. You know, kid, maybe you're right. Maybe we don't need a plan.

J.T.
I'm usually not right. Look where I got us.

Bucky pauses.

BUCKY
Who's the last person you sold to?
The last one who might know Sammy.

J.T.
I sold to a kid on the football team the other day, but he doesn't know her, not really.

A beat. Bucky hangs his shotgun on the gun rack.

J.T.
(CONT'D)
What about your friend? Floyd.

BUCKY
What about him?

Bucky returns the seat to the upright position.

J.T.
Tried to buy off me last week. I was low on supplies, but I took his money. Pre-pay, you know.

Bucky jumps into the driver's seat, cranking the ignition immediately. He throws the car into reverse, his door still open.

(CONTINUED)

BUCKY
What're you waiting for?

EXT. CRAZY JOHN'S TRUCK - DAY

Crazy John's 1995 Chevrolet Silverado drives along Highway 21. The road is flat, with one side lined by pines, the other lined with marsh and views of a winding river.

INT. CRAZY JOHN'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Crazy John drives, Floyd sits in the passenger seat.

CRAZY JOHN
So we ain't tryin' to find J.T.?

FLOYD
The boy's not stupid. He isn't gonna be at Mike's. But his boss will be.

CRAZY JOHN
We don't got business with him.

FLOYD
We're about to.

EXT. CRAZY JOHN'S TRUCK - MIKE'S SEAFOOD - CONTINUOUS - DAY

A weather-worn sign on the side of the highway reads MIKE'S SEAFOOD in large cursive font.

A small, seafoam colored shack sits along the marshland.

The Silverado makes a right turn off of the highway, pulling into the parking lot of Mike's.

Crazy John and Floyd exit the truck.

CRAZY JOHN
You know something I don't.

FLOYD
Listen, we're just gonna go in here and buy us a nice big redfish. Or are you feeling like trout?

CRAZY JOHN
We catch our own shit.

(CONTINUED)

FLOYD

Anything you ever caught worth over ten grand?

Crazy John begins to understand.

CRAZY JOHN

The source...

FLOYD

...of our future income.

INT. MIKE'S SEAFOOD - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Crazy John and Floyd enter Mike's. There is a long counter where various local seafood lays on ice behind the glass: snapper, flounder, grouper, Spanish mackerel, red fish, regular and jumbo shrimp, and so on.

Behind the counter, working at a metal table in the back, stands MIKE, 50s, thin and balding, wearing a blue short sleeve button down with a badge that reads "Mike."

Mike cleans a large red fish, cutting off the skin with a knife and spraying the fish down with a hose. The water runs into a drain in the middle of the table.

The store is relatively clean, the floor concrete. Behind the counter and to the left of the table, swinging doors lead to a back room.

Mike looks up and sets his knife on the table. He wipes his hands with a rag and approaches the counter.

MIKE

How can I help you fellas?

FLOYD

We heard you got a batch of reds.

MIKE

Yep, right off the boat. Even the chefs in town haven't got a look at 'em.

FLOYD

I'm talkin' about the really big redfish. The kind no chef would wanna cook up.

Mike begins to wring the towel in his hands.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

Listen...I...I'll be right back,
fellas.

Mike walks past the table, pushing through swinging doors to his left and exiting the scene.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - LATER - DAY

Sammy sits on the mattress in the corner of the room. She is sobbing. Andrés and Camerino lean against the sink. Santiago enters the room from the deck, placing his cell phone on the sink's counter.

SANTIAGO

Get the blond one.

Andrés opens the closet door. He reappears, dragging Liz across the floor.

SANTIAGO

(CONT'D)

I want her to watch.

Andrés leaves Liz beside the closed closet door. Liz slumps over.

Santiago motions to Andrés and Camerino.

SANTIAGO

(CONT'D)

Out.

The men nod and exit. Santiago pulls a knife out of his pocket.

Santiago sits beside Sammy on the mattress. He flips the knife in the palm of his hand. Sammy stares at the knife.

SANTIAGO

You know how I got this knife?

A beat.

SANTIAGO

(CONT'D)

My first DEA agent. Outside of La Angostura. Used a screwdriver...

Santiago twists his index finger against Sammy's forehead while imitating the sound of an electric screwdriver.

(CONTINUED)

SANTIAGO

(CONT'D)

Bssst...bssst...bssst...Still
wouldn't talk. So I killed the
bastard with his own knife.

SAMMY

You're disgusting...

SANTIAGO

You ain't seen nothin' yet.

Sammy scoots to the corner of the bed. He pushes Sammy
against the mattress.

SAMMY

No! No! Please don't!

Santiago takes off his yellowed wife beater.

Liz slowly opens her eyes. She opens her mouth, but no words
come out.

SAMMY

(CONT'D)

Don't touch me!

He ties the wife beater around Sammy's head and mouth,
muffling her cries.

Santiago lifts a piece of Sammy's hair with the blade of his
knife.

SANTIAGO

La morena, la morena. Just like all
the others.

Santiago unbottons his jeans.

LIZ

(softly)

St-stop...

SANTIAGO

(to Liz)

Don't be jealous.

Just as Santiago climbs on top of Sammy, Andrés enters
holding his phone.

SANTIAGO

Fuck, Andrés! What did I tell you?

Andrés doesn't meet Santiago's eyes.

(CONTINUED)

ANDRÉS

Mike needs you at the shop. Someone
he don't know trying to buy. Scared
it's a sting or somethin'.

Santiago sighs, rising from the bed and bottoning his jeans.

SANTIAGO

We'll have to wait until tonight,
my *morena*.

Santiago kisses Sammy's forehead.

SANTIAGO

(CONT'D)

Don't cry. Papi will be home before
you know it.

As Santiago exits, he kicks Liz in the stomach. Liz falls to
her side, curling into the fetal position. She moans.

SANTIAGO

(CONT'D)

I'll let you bleed to death next
time, blondie.

EXT. HOUSEBOAT - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Santiago stands in the jonboat tied to the houseboat. Andrés
stands on the houseboat's deck.

ANDRÉS

Let me go out. Camerino can babysit
the little *putas*.

SANTIAGO

Yeah, leave it to the one-armed
pussy.

Santiago unties the jonboat from the houseboat and pushes
away from the dock.

ANDRÉS

What you gonna do? Kill some cop by
yourself?

Santiago pulls the outboard motor's starter cord. The motor
grumbles.

SANTIAGO

Don't touch the girls while I'm
out. They're mine. Just like this
business is mine.

Santiago twists the throttle and speeds off.

INT. BUCKY'S TRUCK - DAY

Bucky drives the truck. J.T. checks his pistol, making sure it is fully loaded.

They are speeding down Highway 21: pine trees on one side on the road, marshland and winding rivers on the other.

BUCKY

Floyd'll be here. I know that money-hungry bastard.

J.T.

Surprised he didn't try to kill me after the way I screwed him over.

BUCKY

He did try. Then he found a better solution.

J.T.

Mike won't sell it to him.

BUCKY

Doesn't matter if Mike does or doesn't. I got a feeling Floyd knows something...

Out of J.T.'s window, we see the sign that reads MIKE'S SEAFOOD.

Bucky makes a hard right into the gravel parking lot.

EXT. HOUSEBOAT - DECK - DAY

Andrés stands on the houseboat deck, canvas bag on his shoulder, a tequila bottle in hand.

A boat motor is heard.

A light blue, brand new Sea Fox pulls up next to the houseboat.

Camerino steps onto the deck.

Three women are in the boat. GLORIA, late-30s, Hispanic, wearing large sunglasses and a floppy straw hat, captains the boat. PROSTITUTE 1, late 20s, Hispanic, with bleach blond hair, lies across the front of the boat. PROSTITUTE 2,

(CONTINUED)

mid-20s, Hispanic/Jamaican, lies beside her. All three women wear string bikinis.

CAMERINO

What?

Andrés pushes Camerino aside.

ANDRÉS

Hola chicas.

The two women at the front of the boat wave languidly. Gloria puts the boat in reverse. Andrés catches the boat with one hand, throwing his tequila and bag in it.

Camerino rubs his eyes.

CAMERINO

Am I dead? Am I in heaven?

Andrés jumps into the boat.

ANDRÉS

No. but I wish you were.

CAMERINO

Where you going?

Andrés whispers into Gloria's ear. She nods. He then approaches the front of the boat, taking his shirt off. Prostitute 1 and Prostitute 2 pat the cushion they rest on. Andrés takes a seat between them.

ANDRÉS

Catch some dinner while I'm out.

The two women begin rubbing oil on his hairy chest and back. The boat pulls off.

CAMERINO

(yelling)

Fuck you!

Camerino stands alone on the deck. He grabs his injured arm and winces.

INT. MIKE'S SEAFOOD - DAY

Floyd and Crazy John lean against the counter. Floyd checks his watch.

(CONTINUED)

FLOYD
(yelling)
Hey, Mike! Hurry up with that
order.

Mike is still in the back. He does not respond.

CRAZY JOHN
This is stupid. You can't sell
coke. You got about as much street
cred as mid-August roadkill.

FLOYD
Shut up. I know what I'm doin'.

Bucky enters the shop, J.T. following behind. Bucky
approaches Floyd aggressively.

FLOYD
(CONT'D)
Holy hell.

BUCKY
Tell me what you know.

FLOYD
Why should I?

BUCKY
Because if you don't, I'll have
your ass arrested for attempted
murder, with some drug charges
sprinkled on top.

FLOYD
Aw, Bucky, you really think I'm
gonna believe that.

Bucky pushes Floyd into the glass case. The case cracks.
Floyd jumps out of the way. The glass shatters over the fish
and floor.

BUCKY
I'd do anything for Sammy.

Floyd looks at the broken glass.

MIKE
(V.O.)
You bastards!

Mike enters the scene from the swinging doors. He holds a
pistol in his hand. His hand trembles.

(CONTINUED)

BUCKY

Mike, it ain't no thing. I'm just trying to clear something up here.

Mike notices J.T. His eyes widen.

MIKE

(to Bucky)

You're...you're an officer, ain't you?

BUCKY

Put the gun down.

MIKE

I'm not afraid to shoot. In a second, I'll have backup.

BUCKY

Mike. Gun. Down.

Mike closes his eyes and shoots. The bullet hits the ice, sending three flounders flying into the air.

EXT. MIKE'S SEAFOOD - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Bucky, Floyd, J.T., and Crazy John run out of the store. Mike follows them.

Bucky runs toward his truck, which is closer than Crazy John's. Mike approaches Bucky's truck and shoots the tires out.

Floyd runs to Crazy John's truck. Crazy John, Bucky, and J.T. follow. Crazy John pulls his keys out.

Bucky and Crazy John run on either side of J.T. Mike aims at J.T. and fires.

Crazy John buckles. He drops the keys. His calf begins bleeding.

CRAZY JOHN

Shit!

J.T. grabs Crazy John's arm and continues to run with him. Bucky scoops the keys from the ground, tossing them to Floyd.

CRAZY JOHN

(CONT'D)

Let go! You makin' me a fuckin' target.

(CONTINUED)

Mike aims at J.T.'s feet and shoots.

Gravel flies behind J.T. and Crazy John.

MIKE

You ain't goin' nowhere til 'Iago
gets here.

Floyd jumps in the truck and immediately cranks the
ignition.

Bucky enters the cabin via the passenger's side door.

J.T. and Crazy John, lagging behind, climb into the back of
the truck.

The truck pulls away. Mike tries to shoot at the tires, but
hits the bumper instead. J.T. and Crazy John lie flat in the
truck's bed.

INT. CRAZY JOHN'S TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

In this scene, we can see Bucky and Floyd in the cabin, as
well as J.T. and Crazy John in the back of the truck
(through the window at the cabin's rear).

Throughout the scene, Crazy John and J.T. sit at opposite
corners of the truck, as far as they can get from one
another.

Floyd and Bucky breathe heavily. Bucky wipes the sweat from
his forehead.

FLOYD

She's at Otter Island.

BUCKY

You know for sure?

FLOYD

Word'a mouth. Nothin' for sure.

BUCKY

Nothing's ever for sure. Gotta take
a chance though. Get us to my
place.

Floyd pushes on the gas pedal until the speedometer reaches
90.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - DAY

Sammy rocks on the mattress, biting the wife beater and shaking her head.

Camerino approaches her, holding the First Aid kit in his hand.

CAMERINO

You...*mi brazo*...my arm...fix?

Sammy stops rocking. She looks Camerino in the eye, then her eyes fall on the first aid kit. Sammy nods.

Camerino unties the wife beater around Sammy's head. Sammy gasps for air.

Camerino opens the First Aid box.

SAMMY

I took a First Aid class last year.

Camerino stares at Sammy's tied hands.

CAMERINO

I must untie you...You will be good, *sí*?

SAMMY

Sí.

Camerino picks up Santiago's knife from the mattress.

CAMERINO

Or I will finish the blonde.

Sammy nods.

Camerino cuts the thick rope binding Sammy's hands.

EXT. MIKE'S SEAFOOD - DOCK - DAY

Santiago docks his jonboat. The back of the seafoam colored building is visible.

INT. MIKE'S SEAFOOD - BACK ROOM - DAY

Santiago enters Mike's through the back door.

(CONTINUED)

SANTIAGO

Yo, Mike!

INT. MIKE'S SEAFOOD - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Santiago enters the shop through the swinging doors. Mike stands over the counter, picking glass off of the fish.

MIKE

They're gone.

SANTIAGO

Who's they?

MIKE

Well, there's Crazy John and Floyd. You don't know 'em. Then, all the sudden this cop, or ex-cop, he shows up. And guess who come with him?

A beat.

MIKE

(CONT'D)

J.T.

Santiago grimaces.

SANTIAGO

And you let the bastard get away.

MIKE

I tried to get 'em! I did.

Santiago approaches Mike. Mike panics.

MIKE

(CONT'D)

You know how I shake so bad. Can't hardly cut a decent fillet.

SANTIAGO

I told you what to do if he came into this shop.

Santiago backs Mike against the wall.

MIKE

I know but...there were four of 'em...

Santiago grabs Mike's throat.

(CONTINUED)

SANTIAGO

Four of them and one of me. Who you more scared of?

Mike's eyes grow wide. He begins gasping for air, his hands trying to pry loose Santiago's fingers.

Mike continues to struggle until his movements become less frequent and frantic. Finally, he is still.

Santiago lets go of Mike. Mike falls to the floor. Santiago takes a pack of cigarettes from Mike's front pocket. He pulls a cigarette out and lights it with his own lighter.

Santiago inspects the counter. He gathers four large redfish in his arms, turns, steps over Mike's body, and exits through the swinging doors.

EXT. BUCKY'S YARD - AFTERNOON

Crazy John's truck pulls into the yard. J.T. jumps out of the truck bed before the vehicle reaches a complete stop.

J.T. offers a hand to Crazy John. Crazy John gets out on his own, opening the driver side door before Floyd can.

INT. CRAZY JOHN'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS - AFTERNOON

Crazy John rests his arm on the door, leaning into the cabin. His forehead is sweaty.

Bucky and Floyd pause.

CRAZY JOHN

Made me ride in the back of my own truck with a nigger.

Crazy John looks up. He sees J.T. standing outside of Bucky's window.

BUCKY

I'm glad you're alive to relay information we already know.

CRAZY JOHN

Get out so I can get some Yankee doctor to fix my leg up.

Crazy John forcefully grabs the keys from Floyd's hand.

EXT. BUCKY'S DOCK - MOMENTS LATER - AFTERNOON

Bucky, J.T., and Floyd approach the dock. J.T. runs ahead of Bucky and Floyd, who walk quickly side-by-side. Behind them, Crazy John's truck peels away, sending red clay flying.

FLOYD

I was only gonna get those fish for the money. You know I've been in a tight spot.

BUCKY

If something happens to me tonight, and if something...if Sammy...you get the trailer, boat, everything.

FLOYD

I don't deserve that.

Floyd and Bucky descend the ramp to the floating dock. J.T. is untying the boat's ropes from the dock cleats.

BUCKY

I don't know who deserves what anymore. Sammy's the only one I can count on...and even she had something to hide.

Both men look toward J.T., who is already cranking up the jonboat's motor.

FLOYD

Good luck, Big Buck.

Floyd slaps Bucky's shoulder as Bucky steps into the boat. J.T. pulls away from the dock as Bucky takes a seat at the front of the boat.

Once a few feet away from the dock, J.T. twists the throttle as far as it will allow.

Bucky turns around in his seat.

BUCKY

(yelling)

You know how to get there from here?

J.T. nods.

Bucky looks behind J.T.

In the distance, Floyd stands on the dock, waving goodbye with the amputated hand.

(CONTINUED)

BUCKY

Whatever you do, kid, don't look
back.

J.T. stares straight ahead. CLOSE ON: J.T.'s eyes narrowing
in the wind.

EXT. WIDE RIVER - LATE AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON: Santiago's bloodshot eyes.

Santiago pilots the jonboat, four red fish at his feet.

The sun is low in the sky. Santiago follows its long
reflection.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

The scene opens with a white ceramic bowl full of blood,
skin, and lead shot, balanced atop the blue mattress.

Sammy holds a pair of bloodied tweezers in her blood-covered
hand.

Camerino holds the knife in one hand, his lower arm in the
other. Blood runs down his arm from the open wound.

Liz remains outside the closet, curled in the fetal
position.

Sammy's hand trembles. Sammy digs the tweezers into the
wound.

CAMERINO

Ahhh!

Blood flows down Camerino's arm.

Sammy begins to cry. Camerino slides his hand up his arm, so
that it covers Sammy's.

CAMERINO

(in a soft voice)

Shhh. You do good work. Go on.

Sammy wipes the tears with the back of her blood-covered
hand, leaving a smear of blood on her cheek. She nods,
refocuses.

Sammy digs the tweezers deeper into the wound.

(CONTINUED)

CAMERINO

Ahhh! *Madre de Dios!*

Sammy squeezes the tweezers together. She pulls the tweezers away, successfully extracting a small, spherical lead shot. She drops the lead shot into the bowl.

EXT. RIVER - SANTIAGO'S BOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

The sun is low in the sky - near sunset. The brilliant orange sky reflects across the smooth water.

A great blue heron stands at the edge of the marsh.

The sound of a boat motor is heard.

The great blue heron cranes its neck. The motor sounds become louder.

Santiago's jonboat breaks through the still water. The great blue heron takes off across the water.

Santiago lets go of the throttle. He raises his pistol and shoots at the large bird.

The bullet clips the bird's wing. The bird falls into the water with a large splash. Santiago smiles and replaces the gun into his holster. He twists the motor's throttle.

The heron floats in the water, wings sprawled, one wing bloodied and damaged from the bullet. The heron flaps its good wing, so that the bird begins to spin in a circle with the river's current. Despite its struggle, the heron's bright yellow eye is wide and unmoving.

EXT. NARROW CREEK - BUCKY'S BOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

J.T. pilots the jonboat. Bucky sits in the front. Bucky turns around. The sky is still clear.

The men yell over the boat motor's roar.

BUCKY

Fixing to storm.

J.T.

What?

BUCKY

I said -

(CONTINUED)

J.T.

I know. But there isn't a cloud
around.

Bucky points to his nose.

BUCKY

Smell it.

J.T.

You can't smell rain.

BUCKY

You been snorting too much of that
stuff you sell...

INT. HOUSEBOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

Sammy sets the tweezers in the white, blood-filled bowl. She pulls a package of sterilizing wipes from the first aid kit. She opens the package and wipes the wound gently.

Liz has not moved. Her hair covers her face.

Camerino winces. He is white faced and weak. When he speaks, his voice is soft and shaky.

CAMERINO

My *hermana*...sister. She not
different from you. She always take
care of me.

Sammy cleans Camerino's arm down to his wrist.

CAMERINO

(CONT'D)

When we were *niños*, we walked to
school every *mañana*. She always
walked ahead. I struggled to hold
her books and mine.

Sammy wipes her hands with the wipe, then throws it in the white bowl.

Sammy reaches in the first aid kit, pulling out a gauze pad and roller bandage. She places the gauze pad on the wound.

CAMERINO

(CONT'D)

And we always passed this big black
perro...this black dog...tied to a
pole.

(CONTINUED)

Sammy wraps the wound with the roller bandage, keeping the gauze pad in place.

CAMERINO

(CONT'D)

One mañana, the big black perro - I hear him growling. I turn and he's not beside the pole. He's in my face. He's eating at my face.

Sammy stops winding the bandage. She looks into the first aid kit. She picks up a sharp pair of scissors in her shaking hand.

CAMERINO

(CONT'D)

Then I open my eyes and I realize the dog is crying. Not me.

Sammy begins to cut the bandage.

CAMERINO

(CONT'D)

I sit up, and my sister is kicking the perro. I hear this...

Camerino stomps his foot on the ground.

CAMERINO

(CONT'D)

Thwack...

Sammy pauses. She lifts the scissors above her head.

Camerino stomps his foot.

CAMERINO

(CONT'D)

Thwack...

Camerino stomps his foot.

Sammy drives the scissors into the back of Camerino's neck.

SAMMY

Thwack.

Camerino tries to grab the scissors behind his head. Sammy twists her wrist, driving the scissors deeper into Camerino's neck.

Camerino's eyes are large with panic, a vein protrudes from his forehead.

(CONTINUED)

He turns his head violently, tearing the skin around the wound. The bowl filled with blood and lead shot spills on Sammy's leg.

Camerino hits Sammy in the stomach with his good arm. Sammy lets go of the scissors.

Camerino pulls the scissors from his neck. Blood gushes from the wound.

Camerino picks up Santiago's knife from the floor. He stands, turning toward Sammy on the mattress, holding the knife in one hand.

He stumbles toward Sammy. Sammy's feet are still bound. Unable to do anything else, Sammy rolls onto her side and covers her face. Camerino cuts her shoulder with the knife. Sammy grabs Camerino's hand, ripping the knife away and causing him to lose balance.

Camerino falls onto the mattress, clutching his neck. Sammy stabs Camerino in the back.

Camerino turns his face toward Sammy.

CAMERINO
(whispering)
El perro, el perro.

Camerino closes his eyes. His movements slow.

Sammy sits up, pressing her back against the wall. She touches her shoulder gently and winces. She looks over to where Liz is lying.

Sammy scoots across the mattress to Camerino's body. She pulls the knife from his back. Camerino does not move.

Sammy takes the knife and begins cutting at the rope that binds her feet.

INT. GLORIA'S BOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

The boat's cabin is tiny, windowless, and filled with silky red cushions. The cabin is lit by a red overhead light.

Andrés lounges naked against the red pillows, smoking a fat cigar. Prostitute #1 and Prostitute #2 are also naked. The women lick either of Andrés's ear lobes. Andrés smiles, his eyes rolling back in ecstasy.

(CONTINUED)

A door opens. Soft sunlight streams into the cabin. Gloria appears at the cabin's entrance, hunched over, peering inside. She looks as though she has been sleeping: her eyes bloodshot, her hair messy.

GLORIA

You told me to tell you when it's
5:00.

ANDRÉS

Yeah?

GLORIA

It's 7:30.

ANDRÉS

Dumb bitch!

Andrés sits up angrily, pushing the prostitutes off of him.

GLORIA

Don't call me a dumb bitch.

Gloria rubs her nose. Andrés furiously grabs his clothes from the foot of the cabin.

ANDRÉS

Get a move on it, eh? Gotta get
back before Santiago.

GLORIA

Don't forget to tip my girls.

Gloria turns, leaving the cabin door open.

Andrés pulls two powder-filled plastic baggies from his shorts and throws them at the prostitutes.

PROSTITUTE #1

Gracias.

PROSTITUTE #2

Thank you.

Andrés slides the shorts on.

ANDRÉS

Don't thank the one who controls
you.

The boat motor rumbles to life. Andrés exits the cabin.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

Sammy crouches beside Liz. Her voice trembles.

SAMMY

Liz. Liz!

Sammy pushes the hair out of Liz's face.

Liz opens her eyes and moans.

SAMMY

It's going to be okay now.

Sammy begins cutting the thick rope around Liz's ankles.

EXT. CREEK - BUCKY'S BOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

Large clouds begin to roll in swiftly, covering any signs of the approaching sunset.

The marsh grass begins to blow to one side, then the other.

The water begins to whitecap. The jonboat cuts through the small waves. The waves hit the bottom of the boat, creating a rhythmic sound.

Throughout the scene, Bucky and J.T. yell over the motor and the gentle pant of waves.

Bucky points to the sky and smiles.

BUCKY

Told you.

J.T. notices something floating in the water, ahead and to the left.

He begins to loosen his grip on the throttle. The boat slows.

J.T.

You see that?

BUCKY

What?

J.T.

Nothing...

J.T. twists the throttle. The motor roars. J.T. looks behind his shoulder, watching the floating object move with the current in the opposite direction.

(CONTINUED)

The jonboat continues up the creek.

ON: the floating object - the motionless great blue heron. The heron's wings are spread wide. Its head and long neck have sunk beneath the murky water.

EXT. INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY - SANTIAGO'S BOAT - L. AFTERNOON

Clouds cover the sky, moving swiftly. The wind gusts. Santiago steers the jonboat down the wide intracoastal waterway. There is more boat traffic on the intracoastal, though with the storm brewing, only two large boats can be seen in the distance.

The waves on intracoastal are significantly larger than those on the smaller creeks. Santiago's boat rises and falls, slapping the water and sending a fine mist into the air.

Santiago wipes water from his brow. His black hair is damp.

The motor makes a popping noise. The boat slows. The motor dies.

Santiago pulls the outboard motor's starter cord. The motor makes no sound at all.

Santiago slaps the side of the motor.

He pulls the outboard motor's starter cord once again. The motor makes no sound at all.

A rumble of thunder rolls across the water.

SANTIAGO

Chingada!

Santiago raises the motor. He retrieves a wooden paddle from the side of the jonboat.

Sitting on the bench facing the back of the boat, Santiago places the paddle into the water. He begins paddling into the wind, switching sides every third or fourth stroke, the muscles in his arms bulging.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

Liz has moved to a sitting position, though she is weak.

Sammy unravels the rope at Liz's arms. Sammy places the knife in the pocket of her shorts.

(CONTINUED)

SAMMY
Now we're going to stand up. Okay,
Liz? We're going to stand up.

LIZ
(mumbling)
Go.

SAMMY
What?

LIZ
Get...yourself out.

Sammy lifts Liz from the floor. Liz falls on Sammy's bad shoulder. Sammy yells in pain.

SAMMY
Ahh!

Sammy tries to shift Liz to her good shoulder. The houseboat rocks gently. Sammy stumbles backward, falling to the floor, Liz on top of her.

LIZ
They'll be back soon.

SAMMY
I'm not leaving you.

LIZ
Please.

SAMMY
I left you before. I'm not making
the same mistake twice.

Sammy stands, lifting Liz onto her good shoulder.

We hear a sharp, loud crack of thunder.

EXT. INTPACOASTAL WATERWAY - SANTIAGO'S BOAT - L. AFTERNOON

Santiago continues to paddle the jonboat. A light rain falls, stinging Santiago's face.

Gloria's light blue boat approaches.

Santiago stops paddling, looking in the direction of the boat.

Two figures are visible: Gloria and Andrés.

EXT. INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY - GLORIA'S BOAT - L. AFTERNOON

Gloria pilots the boat. Andrés stands next to her. The boat cuts through the waves swiftly.

GLORIA

I also need gas money.

ANDRÉS

I got nothin' else to give you.

Gloria looks down at Andrés's shorts. She quickly reaches for the pocket.

EXT. INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY - SANTIAGO'S BOAT - L. AFTERNOON

Santiago lifts one paddle into the air, waving it. Santiago yells as loud as he can.

SANTIAGO

Andrés! Andrés!

EXT. INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY - GLORIA'S BOAT - L. AFTERNOON

Andrés pushes Gloria away. No one is steering the boat. The boat turns slightly to the left.

ANDRÉS

You filthy bitch.

Gloria reaches for Andrés's pocket again. Andrés pushes her with both hands. Gloria falls against the boat's wheel. The boat turns sharply.

EXT. INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY - SANTIAGO'S BOAT - L. AFTERNOON

Santiago continues to wave the paddle.

SANTIAGO

Andrés!

The blue boat turns sharply to the right, then turns sharply to the left. Gloria's figure disappears. The boat passes Santiago.

Santiago lowers the paddle into the water.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

Liz cannot upright herself. Sammy struggles under Liz's weight. They approach the door to the houseboat.

Liz turns her head. She sees Camerino on the mattress.

LIZ
You killed the almost nice one.

SAMMY
Had to.

LIZ
They're always the first to go.

Sammy and Liz reach the door. Sammy twists the knob. The wind rips the door open. Outside, rain pours in slanted sheets.

EXT. WATERWAY - OTTER ISLAND - GLORIA'S BOAT - L. AFTERNOON

Andrés pilots the boat. Gloria lies at the bottom of the boat, unconscious, her lip bloodied.

Ahead, about 100 yards away, Otter Island comes into view. The houseboat is not visible.

EXT. HOUSEBOAT - DECK - LATE AFTERNOON

Sammy carries Liz onto the deck. She sets Liz down on the floor of the deck.

Liz closes her eyes. Her body sways with the rocking of the boat.

Sammy pats Liz's cheek.

SAMMY
Stay with me.

Liz nods her head.

SAMMY
(CONT'D)
(calmly)
We're going to sit on the edge of deck now, okay. I need you to keep yourself upright.

(CONTINUED)

Sammy helps Liz scoot to the boat's edge. Liz's toes touch the water. Liz grasps the edge of the boat.

SAMMY
(CONT'D)
Good.

Sammy approaches the edge of the deck and dives into the water. Sammy swims - primarily using her good arm - back to the boat.

The faint sound of a boat motor is heard.

The boat motor becomes slightly more audible. Liz looks across the river.

LIZ
Shhh...

SAMMY
It'll be fine.

LIZ
Don't you hear that? That motor?

SAMMY
I hear a storm.

LIZ
No, I'm sure -

SAMMY
Liz, I can't hear it. I think you're just getting used to - you know - having one...

LIZ
Ear.

Liz scoots on her bottom to the boat's very edge and plunges feet-first into the water.

INT. RIVER - UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Liz is underwater. Air bubbles escape from her mouth.

Underwater, the sound of the motor is more audible. (Sounds travels faster and farther by water than by air.)

The water is murky and full of life. The shadow of a fish flashes by Liz's leg. A cannonball jellyfish bobs with the waves near the water's surface. A dozen shrimp swim by. Everything seems to be moving...except for Liz.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Sammy treads water. She dives underwater.

The boat motor can faintly be heard, but Sammy doesn't seem to notice.

INT. RIVER - UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Sammy swims toward Liz. The sound of the boat motor is loud and distinct.

Sammy wraps her good arm under Liz's arm pit. Sammy kicks frantically, struggling under Liz's weight.

Liz seems to regain some strength. She slowly kicks her her legs.

The girls rise to the surface.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Sammy reaches the surface, pulling Liz with her. Both gasp for air. Liz coughs up salt water. The sound of the boat motor can be heard.

Liz grabs the side of the houseboat.

LIZ

Go, Sammy.

SAMMY

I'm sorry. I'll come back, okay? I won't leave you -

Sixty yards away, Gloria's boat appears around a bend in the river.

LIZ

Now!

Sammy looks at the boat, then toward the marsh-lined shore, some forty yards away. She dives underwater.

EXT. WATERWAY - BUCKY'S BOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

J.T. pilots the boat. Bucky sits up front. Both men are soaked with rain. Rain falls steadily. The water whitecaps.

Otter Island comes into view.

{CONTINUED}

The men yell over the boat motor.

BUCKY
Almost there.

J.T. wipes the rain from his eyes.

J.T.'s POV: Santiago's boat comes into view, far in the distance. Santiago is a speck.

J.T.
Looks like someone's stranded.

J.T. points toward the other jonboat.

EXT. RIVER/HOUSEBOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

Gloria's boat is fifteen yards away from the houseboat. Andrés places his hand over his eyes, looking through the rain.

ANDRÉS
(yelling)
Putas! Camerino! You fucker you -

Andrés throws the boat into neutral, raising his pistol.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Sammy rises to the surface for air. She sees Andrés. Andrés aims his pistol.

EXT. GLORIA'S BOAT - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Andrés fires his pistol almost at the same time that Sammy disappears from the surface.

INT. RIVER - UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Sammy swims underwater. A bullet enters the water near Sammy. She turns her head at the sound and continues to swim underwater, gaining speed.

EXT. GLORIA'S BOAT - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Andrés tries to follow Sammy's path with his pistol. However, it is still raining, and after a few seconds he loses track. The sky is growing darker as evening approaches.

ANDRÉS
(under his breath)
Gotta breathe sometime.

The two prostitutes exit the cabin.

ANDRÉS
(CONT'D)
Get back in there.

Andrés motions to the cabin with his pistol. The prostitutes reach toward Gloria. As Andrés talks, he surveys the water.

ANDRÉS
(CONT'D)
Get your lady, then back in.

The prostitutes grab each of Gloria's arms and drag her into the cabin.

Andrés raises his pistol again.

INT. RIVER - UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Sammy begins floating toward with water's surface.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Sammy surfaces, inhaling quickly.

EXT. GLORIA'S BOAT - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Andrés sees Sammy. He steadies his pistol.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Sammy disappears from the water's surface.

EXT. GLORIA'S BOAT - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Andrés fires his pistol.

INT. RIVER - UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Sammy performs a "pencil dive." Her feet are pointed, her palms pressed together above her head.

The bullet enters the water at an angle. It just misses Sammy's fingertips.

EXT. WATERWAY - SANTIAGO'S BOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

Santiago watches as Bucky's boat approaches. He begins to wave the paddle.

As the boat nears, the passengers become more distinct. Santiago throws the paddle to the bottom of the boat.

Santiago retrieves his pistol from his holster. The waves beat against the boat. Santiago tries to steady himself. He raises the firearm.

EXT. WATERWAY - BUCKY'S BOAT - CONT. - LATE AFTERNOON

Bucky squints his eyes. J.T. looks straight ahead, toward the island.

Bucky retrieves his pistol from his side.

J.T. looks confused. J.T.'s POV: J.T. sees Santiago in the boat, his pistol raised.

EXT. WATERWAY - SANTIAGO'S BOAT - CONT. - LATE AFTERNOON

Bucky's boat approaches. Santiago aims at J.T. and fires.

The bullet misses J.T.

Bucky's boat passes ahead of Santiago's.

Santiago turns, aiming his pistol at the back of Bucky's boat. He fires once.

Another gun shot is heard. A bullet splashes into the water six feet away from Bucky's boat.

Bucky's boat is no longer within firing distance. Santiago replaces his gun in its holster.

Santiago retrieves the paddle from the bottom of the boat.

EXT. GLORIA'S BOAT - NIGHT

Andrés watches the water. The rain has lightened to a sprinkle. He throws the throttle out of neutral and steers the boat toward the houseboat.

EXT. HOUSEBOAT DECK - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Andrés pulls the boat up next to the houseboat's deck. He jumps out. Prostitute #1 exits the cabin and takes over the wheel.

The light blue boat speeds down the river, away from the island.

Liz is still in the water, grasping the deck.

Andrés approaches. He looks down at Liz. She does not look up at him.

Andrés steps on Liz's fingers. She screams, losing her grip. Andrés grabs her arm and throws her onto the deck. Liz does not move.

Andrés throws open the houseboat's door.

ANDRÉS
(yelling)
Camerino! You lazy bastard!

INT. HOUSEBOAT DECK - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Andrés enters the houseboat cursing at Camerino. The door remains open, Liz curled outside of it.

ANDRÉS
All you had to was -

Andrés sees the blood tracked across the floor. He follows the tracks with eyes, ending with the bloody mattress - and Camerino's face-down body spread across it.

Andrés approaches Camerino. He presses the heel of his boot into Camerino's backside.

ANDRÉS
Let two worthless putas be the end
of you...

EXT. HOUSEBOAT - DECK - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Liz lies on her side. She opens her eyes.

Liz's POV: Liz sees a light - a flashlight's beam - in the distance. It flashes quickly against the darkness. Then, it is gone.

She smiles weakly.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Andrés looks out of the open door to where Liz lies.

ANDRÉS

Putá! Time for a manicure.

EXT. OTTER ISLAND - NIGHT

The sky has cleared. A sliver of moon illuminates the island. Carrying a small anchor tied to the bow, J.T. wades through knee-deep water, pulling the boat behind him. Bucky walks ahead, holding a flashlight. He points its beam across the island's shore.

BUCKY

No houseboat 'round here.

J.T.

Sure it's hidden.

BUCKY

Start with the marshes. An inlet seems a likely place.

J.T. sets the anchor down in the shin-deep water.

J.T.

Split up?

BUCKY

Two're better than one.

EXT. INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY - NEAR OTTER ISLAND - NIGHT

Santiago paddles the jonboat.

Santiago lifts the paddle from the water. He sits up straight, grabbing his side and breathing heavily.

(CONTINUED)

He looks up. Otter Island is no more than one hundred yards away.

He begins paddling on the other side of the boat.

EXT. OTTER ISLAND - PERIMETER OF MARSH - LATER - NIGHT

Bucky and J.T. walk the edge of a marsh. Bucky shines the flashlight across the water.

J.T.
(under his breath)
Seems like we've already walked
around this whole island.

Bucky slows. He squints his eyes.

BUCKY
Shhh...

J.T.
What?

BUCKY
You hear that?

J.T.
What?

BUCKY
That splash.

J.T.
No.

BUCKY
Probably just some gar coming out
to eat...let's move on.

A small splash is heard.

J.T.
Wait, I heard something too.

The sound of wet mud being stirred becomes audible.

Bucky turns off his flashlight. He grabs J.T.'s arm, pulling him down. The men hide behind the marsh grass. Both J.T. and Bucky draw their pistols.

EXT. MARSH NEAR OTTER ISLAND - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Sammy's POV: We hear heavy, panicked breathing. Sammy's hands sink in the mud. She grasps a handful of marsh grass and tries to pull herself up. She falls. She reaches for the marsh grass once again. A beam of light falls on the grass above her hand.

EXT. MARSH NEAR OTTER ISLAND - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Bucky points the flashlight's beam toward the moving marsh grass. He rises from his kneeling position, holding his pistol at his side.

J.T. rises as well.

J.T.
Some kind of animal?

EXT. MARSH NEAR OTTER ISLAND - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Sammy is still on all fours. She looks up. She smiles.

SAMMY
Daddy!

EXT. MARSH NEAR OTTER ISLAND - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Bucky runs through the marsh, pushing the marsh grass aside. He keeps his flashlight focused on the area where Sammy's voice was heard.

Bucky reaches Sammy. Sammy looks up at him with tears in her eyes.

Bucky shines the light on Sammy's shoulder. He crouches and shines the light down her body, until he reaches her feet.

Sammy's feet are badly cut and bloodied.

SAMMY
Those're just from the oysters. I'm okay.

Bucky scoops Sammy into his arms as if she weighs nothing. Sammy begins kicking her legs.

SAMMY
No, I'm fine. Leave me here. Go get Liz.

(CONTINUED)

Bucky begins walking back to the shore with Sammy in his arms. Sammy stops kicking her legs.

BUCKY

Liz?

SAMMY

She's at the houseboat.

BUCKY

Where is it?

SAMMY

I'll go with you. I can -

Sammy sees J.T. for the first time. She stares at him.

A beat.

She turns to Bucky.

SAMMY

(CONT'D)

I can show you where it is.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

Andrés drags Liz across the houseboat floor. Liz seems hardly conscious, her breath slow and unsteady, her body limp.

Andrés pulls Liz onto the blood-soaked bed. Liz lies beside Camerino's corpse.

Andrés pulls a knife from his side.

ANDRÉS

You're gonna tell me where that other puta is.

Andrés touches the blade of the knife to Liz's good wrist. He makes a quick, small cut. A thin line of blood rises.

LIZ

You saw. She's gone. Drowned. Shot.

ANDRÉS

Where'd her body go then? Huh?

LIZ

I don't know. It was storming.

(CONTINUED)

ANDRÉS

I don't need the weather forecast!

Andrés cuts deeper into the wrist. Liz swallows hard and tries to scream but only a hoarse sound comes out.

EXT. RIVER - NEAR HOUSEBOAT - BUCKY'S BOAT - NIGHT

Bucky pilots the jonboat. Sammy sits at his side. J.T. sits on the bench at the front of the boat. He sits facing the back of the boat, looking at Sammy's feet.

The boat approaches a bend in the river. The river narrows on either side.

SAMMY

Around this bend.

Bucky turns the outboard motor.

J.T. takes off his damp wife beater. He rips the shirt in half.

SAMMY

(CONT'D)

What are you do -

J.T. cradles Sammy's foot in his hand. J.T. wraps half of the wifebeater around her foot, tying the ends together at the top of the foot.

He does the same thing to her other foot. As he knots the ends, he looks into Sammy's eyes. He gently places the foot down, then turns around in his seat, facing the port of the boat.

A dim light and the outline of the houseboat come into view.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

The knife cuts deeper into Liz's wrist.

Liz sobs, shaking her head from left to right against the mattress.

Andrés leans over her on all fours, pinning her to the bed.

ANDRÉS

You know something I don't. I can tell.

Liz moans.

(CONTINUED)

ANDRÉS

(CONT'D)

It's not like the other times, when we asked you where J.T. was.

Andrés opens the wound wider so that the tissue is visible. Liz gasps in pain.

ANDRÉS

(CONT'D)

We're getting to the nerve. Don't you want to tell me something?

Liz shakes her head from side to side.

Andrés begins cutting into the nerve. Liz screams so loudly that the sound of boat motor is only heard when it nears the houseboat.

Liz lifts her head from the mattress. She looks toward the closed front door.

ANDRÉS

(CONT'D)

What you looking so happy for? Think Santiago gonna feel bad for you? Gonna save you?

Andrés points the bloody knife at Camerino.

ANDRÉS

(CONT'D)

There's the guy who would'a save you. You killed him.

The sound of someone jumping onto the houseboat's deck.

ANDRÉS

(CONT'D)

Now that 'Iago's back, I'll take care of you so he won't have to.

Andrés lifts the knife above his head. Liz throws her arms over her face. She screams.

We hear the door swing open. Andrés does not turn around.

Bucky stands inside the door, raising his pistol. He aims at Andrés's back and pulls the trigger.

Liz's POV: The gunshot is heard. Andrés moans. His body sways slightly before falling on top of Liz.

(CONTINUED)

Bucky lowers his pistol. Blood spreads across Andres's back, growing like red wings.

Sammy pushes past Bucky. Bucky follows Sammy.

SAMMY

Liz!

Sammy tries to push Andrés off of Liz. Bucky touches Sammy's shoulder. She moves out of the way.

J.T. enters the houseboat. He sees Liz and approaches the bed.

Bucky pushes Andrés off of Liz. Andrés's body rolls onto Camerino's.

Liz does not move or open her eyes. Bucky takes hold of her bloody wrist, checking her pulse. He places his ear to her heart.

BUCKY

We gotta get her to a hospital.

J.T. steps forward and lifts Liz in his arms. Bucky approaches the door, followed by J.T. and Sammy.

The outline of a figure appears in the doorway.

SANTIAGO

Ah, you've finally come to settle your debt.

Santiago steps into the light, his firearm raised in J.T.'s direction.

Santiago pulls the trigger just as Bucky steps in front of J.T. (and Liz).

Bucky is hit in the gut. He falls to the floor.

J.T. shifts Liz to his left shoulder. With his right hand, he grabs his pistol from his side.

Sammy falls to her knees, leaning over Bucky's body. Bucky holds his hand over the right side of his stomach. It seems as though she is mourning her father.

J.T.

I got your money. But I'll never get out of this debt.

J.T. fires, but loses balance while doing so, aiming too high. Santiago remains unharmed.

(CONTINUED)

A second shot is heard. At first, it seems as though it must have been fired by Santiago.

Santiago stumbles forward, his hand on his heart. He falls to the floor.

From a crouching position, Sammy lowers her father's gun. She replaces the gun in Bucky's holster.

BUCKY

That's my Sam Girl.

Sammy takes her father's hand. Tears form in her eyes.

SAMMY

We'll get you to a hospital. It'll be okay.

BUCKY

Get Liz...to hospital.

Bucky lifts his other hand. Dark blood spreads across his shirt.

Bucky's breath becomes shorter and shorter, his voice so soft it sounds like he is whispering.

BUCKY

You know how I always said I'd like my ashes...to be sprinkled in the river? In the salt water...where I belong.

J.T. carries Liz out of the houseboat.

Bucky closes his eyes. He gasps for air one last time.

SAMMY

Don't talk like that, Daddy.

BUCKY

That's where I want to be...always moving...always alive. Even when you think I'm gone.

SAMMY

Shhh...

Bucky's face falls slack. Sammy holds the back of his hand to her cheek, crying into it.

J.T. returns. He approaches Sammy from behind, placing a hand on her shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

J.T.
I'm so sorry.

Sammy doesn't look at J.T.

J.T.
(calmly)
(CONT'D)
Liz is in the boat. We need to get
her to a hospital.

Sammy nods her head. She lets go of her father's hand. She stands, hooking her arms under her father's.

SAMMY
Help me.

J.T. grabs Bucky's legs. The two raise Bucky off of the ground. Working together, they exit through the door.

EXT. BUCKY'S DOCK - WEEKS LATER - SUNSET

The sun is low in the sky. The sky is streaked orange, blue, pink, and purple.

Sammy stands at the edge of the floating dock with a cremation urn in her hands.

She opens the urn and looks across the river. The river seems especially alive tonight, the surface rippled with schools of shrimp and mullet and croakers.

Sammy slowly sprinkles the ashes into the water. Her eyes fill with tears as she watches the ashes float down creek, the current sweeping them west, toward the sunset.

EXT. SHALLOW CREEK - SUNSET

Floyd and Crazy John have anchored a jonboat in a shallow creek.

Crazy John gathers shrimp bait from a large white bucket, molding it into a bait ball.

Floyd casts a shrimp net off the side of the boat. He waits a moment and then pulls the net in. The net contains about a dozen shrimp.

Floyd shakes the net out in the bottom of the boat. The shrimp fall against the metal, flicking frantically.

INT. BEAUFORT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - SUNSET

A NURSE, 30s, in uniform, wheels Liz down a fluorescent-lit hallway in a wheelchair.

Liz looks healthier - her wounds are wrapped and the color has returned to her skin. She wears a cotton hospital gown.

At the end of the hallway, a large window looks out over the waterfront.

The nurse stops before the window. Liz looks across the system of winding rivers. She smiles.

EXT. CREEK NEAR BUCKY'S HOUSE - AFTER SUNSET

The sun has set, the pink-streaked sky turning a darker purple.

J.T. pilots his jonboat, a bucket full of crabs at his feet.

The boat approaches Bucky's dock. Sammy is sitting at the dock's edge, crying into her knees, the urn at her side.

J.T. loosens his grip on the throttle. The boat slows.

EXT. BUCKY'S DOCK - MOMENTS LATER - AFTER SUNSET

Sammy watches as J.T.'s boat approaches the dock. Her cheeks are streaked with tears.

Sammy turns her attention back to the creek, looking west. She does not move.

J.T. docks the boat. He steps onto the dock and takes a seat beside Sammy. Sammy continues to look westward, even as J.T. speaks.

A large, full, orange-colored moon rises.

J.T. seems nervous, unsure of what to say.

J.T.
Current's really somethin.'

A beat.

SAMMY
Spring tide, after all.

The sound of cicadas rises.

THE END.