

BLOOD SELLS

by

X

BLACK.

JUSTINE (V.O.)

Dear Ray. Doctors are optimistic that I may walk again. Hallelujah. Wish you were here to share the news.

FADE IN:

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Two bunks. An empty table, small TV, toilet, sink. Homey in the prison kind-of way.

On the bottom bunk languishes a tall man with thick shoulders and tattooed arms. RAY WALKER, mid-30s.

He stands and walks to a cork board. Pins a 4x6 photo of a woman to the board. Next to dozens of other photos of the same woman. And next to dozens of handwritten letters.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Footsteps approach. Ray is roused from sleep.

A stout, older prison guard, MOORE, stops at the cell door.

MOORE

How ya feelin' today, Ray?

He gets no answer. Moore unlocks the cell door. Into Ray's cell steps WILLOUGHBY, 50s, meek, frail, wire-framed glasses.

MOORE

(to Ray)

Merry Christmas.

The door closes behind him. Willoughby turns to the guard.

WILLOUGHBY

I'm not who you think I am. My case is being...

Moore walks away.

WILLOUGHBY

...appealed.

The two new cell mates stare at each other.

RAY (V.O.)
Dear Justine. Got a new cell
mate today. Willoughby. Fuck
me.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Ray sits on his bunk. He looks peaked. Takes a breath, then stands and pins a new letter and photo to the board.

JUSTINE (V.O.)
I'm fixin' the house up like
you said and in no time we
should be able to take
boarders. I could use a good
carpenter, haha. Oh well.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Prisoners at various stations. A basketball game underway. Handball banging in another area. Bodybuilders flex their muscles. Barbells clang. Men sweat.

Armed guards stand on watch. Their eyes behind dark glasses.

Ray hangs out with some white guys, smoking.

Willoughby leans against a fence. Muttering to himself. Ray watches Willoughby, then drops his cigarette and steps on it.

JUSTINE (V.O.)
Dear Ray. Got some neighbor
boys to paint the rooms. Paid
'em a little money and some
chocolate-chip cookies. Funds
are getting tight. Darn bills.

INT. SHOWERS - DAY

Ray enters the steamy shower area. Laughter and snickers from a crowd of men, who hover over a fallen prisoner.

The men disperse and go back to their showering.

Willoughby struggles to pick himself up. Ray walks to him.

RAY
Get used to it.

Willoughby stands naked with sagged shoulders. His knees quiver. The cuts on his face ooze blood. Tears in his eyes.

There is writing all over Willoughby's upper body - numbers, codes, symbols, coordinates, latitude/longitude.

Ray stares at the markings. Willoughby looks ashamed.

RAY

What's all this shit on your body?

WILLOUGHBY

Ray. You can help me.

Ray shakes his head and walks away. He flips on a shower.

RAY (V.O.)

Dear Justine. Willoughby offered to pay me for protection. Ten a week. What a fuckin' joke. You need the money, so I'm thinking about it.

INT. LAUNDRY FACILITY - DAY

Men at work. Ray wheeling a cart of white towels to a wash area. Willoughby mops the floor.

WILLOUGHBY

Hear you got an illness. Terminal they say.

Ray gets in Willoughby's face.

RAY

Then I got nothing to lose, do I?

WILLOUGHBY

Easy, Ray. I'm just thinking how to make the most of your time left.

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Willoughby sits on his bunk. Glancing now and then at Ray's cork board of photos and letters.

He's got a ballpoint pen in his hands. He traces over the markings on his body.

He mumbles gibberish as he writes.

Ray springs to his feet. Stands over Willoughby.

RAY

Are you chanting? Huh? Don't even tell me you're a Buddhist. Are you a Buddhist?

WILLOUGHBY

I'm not a Buddhist.

RAY

Then shut up.

A long pause and then...

WILLOUGHBY

What I'm doing, it's called memory association.

RAY

Go to sleep.

Ray lies back down in his bed. Willoughby starts the low gibberish again. Then...

WILLOUGHBY

I'm a writer. I know things.

Ray doesn't respond.

WILLOUGHBY

This book I'm writing...you could be a part of it.

RAY

Fuck you.

WILLOUGHBY

You know why I killed my wife in a fit of rage? Allegedly?

RAY

Don't know, don't care.

WILLOUGHBY

Because she was destroying my notes. She forced me to memorize everything.

Willoughby lowers his voice. Takes Ray into his confidence.

WILLOUGHBY

I had interviews with a man named Robert Steincooler. A dairy farmer from a small town in Nebraska. Steincooler milked his cows before sunrise and tore people to pieces after sundown. Mostly women. He is history's most warped serial killer, period.

RAY

So? World's stock full of killers, rapists and fiends. Just look around you.

WILLOUGHBY

This is a unique case. Nobody knows Steincooler exists. Except me. He told me stuff only the killer would know. Like, where he buried his victims. All eighty-two.

Ray crawls off his bunk. Stands and faces Willoughby.

RAY

Are you shittin' me?

WILLOUGHBY

No, sir. We had a deal, me and him. He wanted to be born again, blessed by God and all that shit, so he confessed everything... with the royalties from the book, I swore I'd give half to his mother. But we never got that far. Steincooler just up and vanished. Poof. He was a frail, sickly bastard. I figure he went off and did himself in.

RAY

What's your point?

WILLOUGHBY

You could be Steincooler. You could slide into his spot.

(MORE)

WILLOUGHBY (CONT'D)

Be the serial killer the world never heard of. I'll write my book, reveal all the burial sites, all the grisly details and you become the most infamous killer in world history. For that, you get half the royalties and movie right. Settle all your debts.

RAY

Why me?

WILLOUGHBY

We put a face with the crimes. Only a smart SOB could pull this off. You're in the perfect situation. You got nothing to lose and everything to gain... that pretty wife of yours can live like a queen till the day she dies.

Ray studies Willoughby, as if waiting for a punchline.

RAY

...what if this guy was lyin'? Maybe he didn't do shit.

WILLOUGHBY

Oh, he did more than shit. I still have all of Steincooler's notes, where the world can't touch it.

Willoughby jumps off his bunk. He removes his shirt. Spreads his arms wide.

Ray squints to see the ink-markings on Willoughby's body.

WILLOUGHBY

A serial killer's story is worth more if he's alive. We'll say you have a cloudy memory, Ray. Every month you'll reveal five more victims. We prolong the suspense. Parents will wonder if their missing sons and daughters are on your list. You'll have the media by the balls. It's unprecedented.

(smiles)

(MORE)

WILLOUGHBY (CONT'D)
 And your soul is whistle
 clean. Cuz all you're doin' is
 assuming a dead man's violent
 history.

Ray pulls away. He looks perplexed. Paces the cell.

RAY (V.O.)
 Dear Justine. I'm undertaking
 a journey. It won't be
 pleasant, but in the end, it's
 gonna be worth it. Promise.

INT. LAUNDRY FACILITY - DAY

Willoughby mops a floor. Ray pushes a bucket of soapy water.

RAY
 Got a light?

Willoughby pauses and lights Ray's cigarette.

WILLOUGHBY
 (softly)
 Tell me about victim forty?

RAY
 Maria De La Cruz. Forty-six. A
 nurse from Joplin. I strangled
 her, then smashed her face
 with a rock. Cut off her head.

Willoughby smiles.

RAY
 I need proof Steincooler
 wasn't lying.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Ray stands under an eave. Rain hitting the recreation area
 like bullet jackets. Men huddled together, some smoking.

JUSTINE (V.O.)
 Dear Ray. Your friend was a
 hundred percent right. I drove
 to Sheridan station. Got into
 the locker and there it was, a
 necklace and pendant.

Ray looks up at the brooding sky. Rain pellets his face, a
 wan smile gracing his face.

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Ray stares at a code number on Willoughby's chest.

WILLOUGHBY

Last one, Ray. Almost home.

Ray mumbles to himself. Walks away. Stands at the cell door.

JUSTINE (V.O.)

Dear Ray. The house is all
fixed up. Taking in boarders
now. You never said what
you're big surprise was. Might
you be coming home? I hope, I
hope.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Deafening chants and chatter in the prison. Jeers and whistles.

Ray is escorted from his cell by several armed security guards. His wrists and ankles shackled.

They walk the cell block.

Prisoners stick their arms out of their cells. Try to touch Ray as he passes.

VISITATION ROOM

Ray is escorted into the room. A throng of reporters waiting like sharks. Camera lenses thrust in his face. Flashes burst light. A roar of voices asking questions.

A stern expression on Ray's face. He lowers his head.

INT. WARDENS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Ray standing before a desk. Men in suits flank him right and left. The warden, COMSTOCK, 60s and intense, stares at Ray.

COMSTOCK

My God, Ray. All this time I
thought we knew each other.

Ray nods his head. Lifts his weary eyes to Comstock.

RAY

You been good to me here. I don't know what else to say. I guess, a burden's been lifted.

COMSTOCK

Doctors say you got six months, if that. They're gonna speed up your trial.

RAY

Figured that much.

COMSTOCK

Weird. You leave here the worst criminal in modern history and your cell mate goes home free and clear.

RAY

Willoughby was freed?

COMSTOCK

His conviction was overturned. Don't that beat all.

Ray nods.

EXT. MAXIMUM-SECURITY PRISON - DAY

A sprawling facility in the middle of nowhere.

INT. RAY'S CELL, MAXIMUM-SECURITY PRISON

A sterile environment with no hint of anything personal. Ray lying back on his bed.

A knock at the cell window and then it opens. A GUARD presses his face close to a security screen on the window.

GUARD

Hey, you got a post card. Want me to read it?

RAY

Do I got a choice?

GUARD

I'll try to do her voice.

The guard chuckles. Ray waits. He says nothing else.

GUARD

Dear Sweetie Pie Ray. The newspapers come by every day. And the news stations, too. If only you could be here. It's really, really hard...the bills are finally getting paid. The boarding house is working out fine. Hallelujah. I filled the last room. The fella says he knows you. Kisses and smooches.

Ray stands up.

RAY

What's that last thing you said?

GUARD

Fuck you, sweetheart.

The guard slams the window shut.

INT. CELL - DAY

Ray writes on a sheet of paper. Stands and crosses another day off a calendar.

RAY (V.O.)

Dear Justine. I'm sorry it all went down like this. It's not what you think, but I had to do it. You deserve a better life. As soon as the money comes in, sell the place and get out. Find your paradise.

INT. PRISON LIBRARY - NIGHT

Ray sits at a table. He glances at a few newspaper headlines.

INSERT:

—SERIAL KILLER REVEALS GRAVES OF LATEST VICTIMS.

—MASS MURDERER GIVES CLUES TO BODIES IN SEVENTH STATE.

—'CROSS-COUNTRY KILLER' SAYS HE WAS ORDERED TO KILL BY SATAN.

INT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Ray jogging in an open recreation area. All alone.

A guard steps out and stops Ray. The guard shackles his wrists and ankles.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, MAXIMUM-SECURITY PRISON - DAY

Ray seated at a table. Agents MACK, mid-30s male, and KELLY, early 30s female, sit across the table.

Ray smokes nervously.

MACK

It was easy, wasn't it, Ray?

KELLY

The style of the homicide fits your M.O.

RAY

I told you everything.

KELLY

Oh please. We know how this works. You got a partner working the shadows.

RAY

Say what?

MACK

Nobody can dissect eighty-plus victims without help.

KELLY

How'd you do Ed Willoughby?

MACK

I bet it was a woman that did him. Right, Ray?

RAY

Willoughby...? What the fuck?

MACK

Come on, Ray. You let him into your life. He wrote your story. And then you turned on him like a shark.

KELLY

Who's your accomplice?

RAY

NO. I didn't --

KELLY

Willoughby was butchered in
his home. Nasty.

MACK

My money's on your wife. She's
the second killer, right?

Before Ray can answer, a knock on the door. A man in a suit enters. He whispers something to Mack and hands him a cell phone.

Then the man leaves.

Mack smiles and turns to Ray. He hands him the cell phone.

MACK

Your fuckin' attorney.

Mack offers the phone and Ray grabs it.

RAY

Yeah?

On the other end of the phone, is a frazzled woman's voice.

JUSTINE (FILTERED)

Ray, oh God. That new boarder--

RAY

What, baby?! What is it?

MAN'S VOICE (FILTERED)

You took my life...now I take
yours.

FADE OUT.