

One Summer

Charles Meine

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Charles Meine
3045 SE 8th. ave.
Portland, OR. 97202
503-707-5187
clubchaz10@hotmail.com

FADE IN

EARLY SUMMER - 1983

EXTERIOR FOREST - NIGHT

It is the crack of dawn. The view is of the early morning light of a summer day breaking over treetops in the northern Rocky Mountains. The scene is absolutely still until we hear the sound of heavy footfalls, labored breathing, brush crunching underfoot. The tips of a great many elk antlers break the plane of growing light that is the horizon. A man, barely discernible as such in the faint light, labors under a tremendous stack of elk antlers, walking directly into the camera with the accompanying increase in volume of the sounds of a man working very hard, plowing through brush.

INTERIOR JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY

JACK KAISER wakes on the floor amidst party trash. What looks to be a golden boy fallen from grace brings himself to a sitting position, grabs a nearby open bottle of beer, eyeballs it for floating cigarette butts, then drains it. He regards the bottle lovingly, stands, and fetches another from the fridge. He empties it in one long pull. Truly happy now, he takes an open beer with him as he leaves a ramshackle hotel. We see the marquee; 'Getaway Hotel', the sign obviously altered from 'Gateway Hotel'.

Music cue; David Lindley/Warren Zevon "Monkey Wash, Donkey Rinse"

EXT. STREETS OF NORTH GATE - DAY

Jack walks dirt streets, nursing his beer, through a beat-up, ugly little western town, passing smoldering trash barrels, packs of mongrel dogs, hammered cars and pickups. He is dressed in fatigue pants and sandals with no shirt. He waves at various characters he passes as he makes his way uptown, where the architecture changes to tacky faux old western storefronts, restaurants, and tourist traps. There is a heavy street traffic on the main drag through town of cars and motor homes with license plates from the entire nation. Obvious tourists regard him with suspicion or mild contempt as he passes by. Jack strolls the sidewalk, still with beer in hand, and turns into the Ranger Bar, an ancient dive.

INT. RANGER BAR - DAY

Amidst all the trappings of an old-timey western bar, we see a handful of males sitting and standing at the counter. Half are young, half look to be a thousand years old and made of jerky. The old ones slump at the bar, clutching shot glasses, alcoholic shakes clearly visible. Jack greets the younger men with much bonhomie. They are a pack of misfits, in various garbs of the social refugee. His partner, SURFER JOHN, a beach bum gone to seed, hands him a bottle of beer. We see by a clock on the wall that it is 10 a.m.

JOHN

Celebrate with me, brother. I have just purchased a new car.

JACK

You know I'll celebrate anything, but you could never afford a new car even if you knew where to find one.

JOHN

I wouldn't want one. I only drive classics, which is why I now own a 1973 Pontiac Catalina.

JACK

A boat! Excellent. Let's have a look.

EXT. RANGER BAR - DAY

The pack of young men saunter out the door and cluster at the back of the car, which is parked in front of the bar. John opens the trunk with a flourish.

JOHN

Take a look at that.

The men, as a group, cross their arms and emit appreciative noises, gazing into the cavernous trunk.

The obese bartender, EEYORE, emerges from the bar and appraises the group.

EEYORE

You're looking at the wrong end. Normally, guys will look at the motor.

John looks the fat man up and down.

JOHN

What about us could you ever call normal? And we're not a pack of guys, fat man, we're horn-hunters. The square-heads up the hill in ranger-ville even say criminals.

John points into the trunk.

JOHN

We know our business, Eeyore. This is the important part. Guys like you have their priorities under the hood, where the substitute for their tiny dick resides. Secure in our manhood, we only want the goddamn thing to run fairly well, so it will get us into the park where we can fill the important part, the trunk, with highly valuable elk antlers, which we trade for cash, which we trade to you for the many drinks we dearly love.

Eeyore bends and peers about the trunk, making a great show of craning his head to look in every corner.

EEYORE

This is the most excellent beater...err...classic piece of shi...fine criminal chariot I have ever seen. Come back into the bar and celebrate by tipping me lavishly.

John drapes an arm over the fat man's shoulders as the group walks back inside.

JOHN

How's my credit?

As the men file back into the bar, a National Park Service cruiser idles by. Inside, a ranger with a disturbing smile plastered on his face takes in the scene.

INT. TRAPPER BAR - NIGHT

In The Trapper bar, crammed with park service memorabilia, two men in the gray uniforms of the National Park Service slump at the counter, exhaustedly drunk. The wreckage of an evening's heavy drinking litters the space around them; many glasses and bottles, filthy ashtrays, crumpled wrappers. Rangers WES TAYLOR and LES KELLER don't look well. Wes claps Les on the shoulder.

WES TAYLOR

I gotta go out back. I need some
air...or...something.

Wes rises and begins weaving his way toward a back door, then catches himself, stands ramrod straight, emphasizing his fit stature, and with a bizarre determination and disquieting smile on his face, marches outside into an alley. Les, older and chunky, follows, belching and massaging his back.

EXT. TRAPPER BAR - NIGHT

The alley is a one lane dirt street, the shards from a million broken bottles glinting in faint illumination from a streetlight at the end of the alley. Wes fishes a joint from the bottom of an ammo holder on his utility belt. We see insignia designating him as a park ranger, but he wears no weapon. Wes fires the joint and sucks deeply at it for three tremendous tokes, filling the air with smoke, until finally he hands it to Les.

WES

So. Did you hear the Gipper today? Truly, the end is near. Has to be. When bad actors are dictating policy in the republic, we are well and truly screwed. I will not be surprised to see Shiva, the destroyer, coming over the horizon any day now.

LES

Shiva? What the hell is a Shiva?

WES

Hindu master of the universe,
pal. And a spiteful prick.

LES

Whatever you say, officer.

WES

Whatever I say? Here's what I say.

Wes's face fills the screen. His eyes snap and he is talking very loud, yet the bizarre smile of fabricated geniality remains even as he rants.

WES

America is open for business. That's just what the leader said. Or what his handlers told him to say. Reaganomics. That's rich, literally. All the fat old white men running this land now get their ultimate way. A deregulated plutocrat's free-for-all. An industrialist orgy of a rape of the land. Open for business. That shill. That criminal. Well, let me tell you something, Mister Keller; not here.

LES

Not here, Wes? Not what?

WES

I saw that pack of criminal hippies today in front of their gin mill. Those godless reprobates are always planning another excursion to steal horns from the park. Well, I'll tell you this; the park is not open for business. Yes, upstanding citizens of this great land can always come and enjoy the wonders of nature, but that's it. Yellowstone National Park is not a bank where some unwashed malcontent can come and make a withdrawal any old time it suits him.

Les now looks very grim in the face of this onslaught of conviction.

LES

What's to be done, Wes? We're glorified traffic cops, at best, controlling the herds that roll through here. We don't have the manpower or funding to chase after antler thieves.

WES

That's where you are wrong, my friend. I have made key people in government, who share my concerns, aware of the problem. There is now a Lacey Act Task Force, led by me, and it's sole purpose is to eradicate horn-hunters, especially that smug bastard Jack Kaiser and his unshaven sidekick.

The shot dollies out from the two men and pans over a stone wall into a back yard. Jack and John, who have been listening there, silently mouth the words at each other; Lacey Act Task Force, looks of incredulity and mirth on their faces.

INT. OF CAR CONTAINING JACK AND JOHN - DAY

Jack and John motor up to the toll gate at the northern entrance to Yellowstone park in John's Pontiac. John flashes a pass, and they drive into the park.

JACK

You suppose the task force has a golden eagle pass?

JOHN

If there's funding, they do. This one ain't even mine.

JACK

Let's take the back route through Mammoth, avoid the tourons.

JOHN

Tourons?

JACK

A special creature known to frequent the highways and byways of the American summertime scene, bleating in confusion, blocking traffic. Cross between tourist and moron.

Soon they are idling through back-street residence and administration buildings. Jack gestures about him.

JACK

I grew up here, man. Fort Yellowstone it was first

(MORE)

JACK (cont'd)
called. Look at these
buildings. Italian stonemasons
were brought over to put them
up. Our government doesn't dick
around when it comes to spending
money and getting what they want.

JOHN
That's no shit. You suppose that
stuff WesWorld was saying behind
the Trapper last night is true?

ED
Jesus, that guy is goofy. Him and
his henchman LetsKill'em. It's hard
to tell. The task force may not
exist anywhere but in his damaged
head, but that's probably enough to
make it a reality.

JOHN
Huh. Or the reality the pigs are
doling out of these Italian stone
cop buildings.

ED
See? That's the reason I picked
you up hitchhiking and made you my
partner in thievery. You see
things my way.

JOHN
You didn't make me anything, dumb
ass. I was stealing stuff when you
were in grade school.

They motor very slowly past the open doors of a huge machine
shop. Inside, men in the gray work uniforms of the park
service are working on heavy equipment. The interior of the
building is a dim, smoky cavern. Jack spots school chums
inside and raises his arm in recognition. A couple young
men wave from the gloom.

JACK
I went to high school with those
guys. Their dads have worked for
that park service pension in that
black hole for thirty years and
those guys will too. That's slow
death right there, pal. That is
not a life.

JOHN

Tell me about it. I bet there'd be lots of cool tools to steal, though.

JACK

Well, sure.

EXT. SHOTS IN THE OPEN - DAY

They drive out of the area and into the interior of the park. The road is jammed with tourist traffic. They pull into a dirt parking lot at a trail head. Jack gets out, bringing a day pack with him. He is shirtless again, dressed in olive drab fatigue pants and heavy leather hiking boots. He gives John a parody of a salute and heads off down the trail. John returns to the highway and is gone.

Jack stays on the trail for a short time, then leaves it abruptly, walking quickly up a steep hill so he is out of sight of the trail. Stopping, he pulls a sleeveless camouflage shirt from the day pack and puts it on, then liberally smears his upper body with army-issue insect repellent. He ties a camouflage bandanna around his head and hangs a pair of high-powered binoculars around his neck, then puts the day pack back on. He begins walking through the woods in a nearly aimless way, obviously in no hurry to cover ground. His attention is wholly occupied with scanning the terrain in the immediate and near vicinity. He is looking for something. The woods almost resemble a manicured park. There are no low shrubs or lower branches on the mature pine and aspen trees, so sight lines extend quite far through the country. At the edge of a meadow, he stops, hunkers down, and glasses the surrounding land. The entire northwest border of the park spreads out and below him in rolling country down to the Yellowstone river miles below, then climbs out of the river canyon into the snow-covered Absaroka range. The view is epic, but he is scanning the near area. He concentrates briefly on the tip of a nearby promontory. Satisfied, he stands, walks ten feet, and bends to pick up a huge brown elk antler. In the same vicinity, he gathers 5 more and stacks them together, securing the bundle with elastic cord. He hefts the bundle to one shoulder and walks away. It is a flawless summer day in the woods; the sun beats down, but growing thunderheads on the horizon tell of an impending, refreshing shower. There is birdsong, light breezes, and Jack looks like nothing less or more than a ragamuffin soldier of fortune strolling through a rocky mountain wonderland, carrying a pile of elk antlers. The shot dollies out, panning across the highway to a spot a few miles away, dollying in to focus on Ranger Taylor crouching in a

thicket, covered head to toe in Special Forces camouflage, intently watching the country below him through a huge spotting scope. The same demented smile is on his face, which crawls with flies and mosquitoes, unheeded.

EXT. ED IN THE WOODS - TWILIGHT

It is twilight at the trail head where John dropped off Jack. The shot is from the parking lot, where we see Jack, carrying a huge stack of antlers, emerge from a gully near the trail head parking lot. He stashes his load at the foot of a large sagebrush, then moves off a few feet. He pulls a jean jacket and sandals from the day pack, trades outfits, then trots the short distance to the highway and starts hitchhiking. He is immediately picked up by tourists.

EXT. RANGER TAYLOR'S CRUISER - TWILIGHT

Wes Taylor is sitting cross-legged on the roof of his cruiser, which is parked on an access road hidden from the highway and commanding a view of a great deal of land. On a tripod before him is a massive starlight scope pointed across a couple miles of open sight line at the trail head Jack has just left.

WES

I see you, scofflaw. I've got you figured out, criminal prick. Your modus operandi will remain a mystery no more. Tonight, justice will prevail.

Wes, wearing his creepy grin, slides off the roof of the car and lands in a crouch. A trench knife has materialized in his hand. He is still in full camouflage, and makes a very strange picture as he leaps and whirls silently, flailing with the knife. The only sound is gravel grinding under his feet. He stops, straightens, collects himself, then sits in the cruiser and begins issuing instructions over the radio in a professional, clipped manner.

EXT. JACK IN HIS CAR - NIGHT

Jack is at the wheel of a large old car. He turns into the trail head and quickly kills the lights and motor. Checking his watch, we see it is 4 a.m. Jack gets out and stands, listening, to the utterly still night. There is no traffic on the highway. Satisfied, he walks to the sagebrush, retrieves his antlers, and tosses the load in the trunk of the car. The trunk lid will not close, so he has to undo

the bungee cords and distribute the antlers about the trunk. While he is doing this, we see the uniformed figure of Wes Taylor materialize out of the gloom behind him. He is in a combat stance, one hand on his holstered pistol.

WES

You are under arrest for violating the Lacey Act.

Jack startles, but doesn't turn around. He slams the trunk lid shut, then slowly starts for the drivers door.

WES

Resisting federal arrest carries a minimum sentence of ten years.

Flashing light bars can be seen coming from both directions on the highway. Jack pockets the car keys, and ranger Taylor handcuffs him, the unwavering, joyless smile on his face.

INT. PARK SERVICE OFFICE - DAY

Ranger Wes Taylor is standing at rigid attention before the desk of a quintessential upper-echelon federal authority whose face is an aged monolith of stone capped by a gray brush-cut. We see a brass name plaque on a huge but utilitarian desk; Colonel Sever. As he speaks to Taylor the man does not deign to raise his eyes or pen from a substantial pile of paperwork before him.

COLONEL SEVER

Ranger Taylor, you know Cal Buckle, the prosecuting attorney for this region of the park?

To one side and a pace behind the colonel stands a rail-thin, bespectacled man with a rat face. He is holding an open, gigantic book, and regarding Wes with contemptuous pathos.

WES

Yes, sir.

COLONEL SEVER

And do you know what he is holding in his hand?

WES

Sir, it is the annotated code of law of the United States. L volume, I believe...

COLONEL SEVER

That's right, it is. L as in Lacey Act, which if you had read it in it's entirety, would have saved us all a portion of this paperwork I am slaving at. Ranger Buckle, read aloud to ranger Taylor the pertinent paragraph, please.

CAL BUCKLE

The removal of wildlife, wildlife parts, natural features, or vegetation from a federally protected area shall constitute..

COLONEL SEVER

That's plenty, Cal. Please give myself and Ranger Taylor a moment alone, will you?

CAL BUCKLE

Yes, sir.

Cal Buckle leaves the room, locking his gaze with Taylor's as he walks by him, sneering.

COLONEL SEVER

'Removal', Ranger Taylor. What does that word mean to you?

WES TAYLOR

Sir, as I stated in my report, I clearly saw Jack Kaiser bring those antlers out of the interior of the park and load them into the trunk of his car...

COLONEL SEVER

Where they needed to stay until he left the boundaries of the park, you gung-ho nitwit. Cal tells me it can't be prosecuted. Every tin-horn public defender in Park County wants to sharpen their claws on us. Kaiser walks and you get to spend an unpaid week at home reading law books. Get out of here.

EXT. YELLOWSTONE JAIL - DAY

Jack and John are standing at the entrance to the Mammoth Hot Springs jail, a stone block building with iron bars on tiny windows straight out of a western movie. It is the middle of a hot, sunny day.

JOHN

I suppose your Italian pals built this dungeon, too?

JACK

Hell, they probably lived in it. Man, it's hot.

JOHN

It is hot. Where to, convict? The river? The pen stock?

JACK

Convicts are guys nailed for their crimes. I have committed no crime, not according to our new friend mister Lacey, anyhow. This requires a beach party.

JOHN

The dredge it is.

EXT. 'THE DREDGE' - DAY

The Dredge is an abandoned gravel pit filled with water. There is a beach along one bank and a fire ring. As a backdrop, the spectacular Absaroka mountain range rises behind. A half-dozen of the horn hunters and a like number of young women are partying on the beach. Jack has his arm around Candice Taylor, WesWorld's daughter and a small-town beauty. They are talking to Wild Bill, a Blackfoot Indian with the look of a natural athlete.

JACK

Are you removing that beer from it's native habitat, being the cooler? Because if you are, federal law might come into play.

BILL

That beer can live in there forever, as far as I'm concerned. For my birthday, and your freedom, I have brought champagne and happy pills.

Bill holds aloft a bottle of champagne in one hand and rattles a tiny bottle of tablets in the other.

BILL

Remember that guy Chris?

JACK

Oh yeah. He of the high quality acid.

BILL

This is the remainder of his stash. He said, "I'm handing in my wings," and sold it to me at cost.

JACK

What a noble soul. What are you going to do with them?

BILL

Not me; we. Everybody gets one that wants one. If you want more, you can have more.

JOHN

I'll have more. Lay two of those bad boys on me, brother.

JACK

Two for me, too.

CANDICE

Oh boy. You clowns are going to be priceless tonight. I don't suppose a girl can expect some love before your brain turns to mush.

Jack gives her a peck on the cheek.

JACK

I'll see what I can do.

CANDICE

Heard it. Come find me when you've got some new material.

Candice walks away. The remaining young people crowd around Bill, who stands at the center of the group, dispensing micro tabs. We see the party continue on the beach, spiraling into hilarity. As the sun goes down, we see Bill drop four tabs into a bottle of champagne. He sips at the bottle, then sidles over to Jack.

BILL

Let's pass this bottle around, pal.

Jack snatches the bottle from Bill and drains it; a trick of opening his throat and dumping the bottle in. He smacks his lips and plants the empty bottle in the middle of Bill's chest.

JACK

They don't deserve it! Better I laid that soldier to waste myself.

BILL

Yep. Somebody's going to be laid to waste, alright. You're not driving anywhere, right?

JACK

Drive? Are you insane? Don't answer that. No. Jesus, we've got bags and blankets and a pile of firewood. I'm not going anywhere. I may be an idiot, but I'm no fool.

BILL

Oh, you're going somewhere, buddy. But a car won't be of any use when you get there.

JACK

What the fuck are you talking about? I've tripped plenty. This is going to be a legend night.

BILL

Legend. I like that. For you, the legend has just begun.

JACK

That's the talk. Anymore of that acid left?

BILL

Definitely not.

The group reels about the fire. Some are thrown in the water. Some dive into the water. After the group as a whole has lost all its psychedelic steam and are crashed on the ground about the fire, Jack is left as the sole conscious person. He stares long into the fire, mesmerized. In a scene that morphs into CG, Jack cocks an ear at the fire, nods his head yes, then leans his head into

the flames, where it is melded with the smoke and fire, his body drawn as a long tendril of flame into the fire pit.

EXT. JACK'S CAR - DAY

Jack wakes with a start. He is lying on the roof of his car at the edge of the gravel pit. The sun is coming up on another perfect summer day. Sliding on his belly, he slithers off the roof, into the open window, onto the front seat, and pulls a full beer from beneath it. He opens it, drinks deeply, and looks into the camera with a thousand yard stare.

EXT. JACK AND WILD BILL DRIVING INTO THE PARK - DAY

BILL

So! No nose to the grindstone, the old straight and narrow, after WesWorld got the jump on you and nearly ruined your summer?

JACK

Nah. Any idiot can get a job and behave. Smuggling antlers is the warrior's way.

BILL

The warrior's? Wow. That must have been a good little fry you had the other night.

JACK

I saw and felt the meaning of life.

BILL

Felt? Okay. And it is...

JACK

That's confidential information.

BILL

Confidential... Oh fuck you. You wouldn't have felt shit if I hadn't given you all that acid. What happened? What did you see?

JACK

How's your Hindu philosophy?

BILL

Hindu? I'm a graduate of a Montana high school, Sahib. You're the one who reads too much. Ask me something about basketball.

JACK

When a devout Hindu is cremated, Shiva comes to them on their funeral pyre and whispers the meaning of life.

BILL

And that is...

JACK

I don't want to ruin the end of the book for you.

BILL

Oh. Thanks. Thanks a lot.

Wild Bill drops Jack at a different trail head. Jack makes a quick run into thick trees, hiding himself from the heavy traffic on the road, then dons his camouflage gear. He hikes off at a rapid pace, clearly making time to get to a remote tree line he surveys from time to time through binoculars. Reaching the distant woods, Jack picks his way through heavy downfall and dense thickets to emerge into a small valley of verdant meadows with a small stream meandering through it. There are fat elk everywhere, sleek in their summer coats. Jack pans the valley with the binoculars and smiles broadly at what he sees.

JACK

Secret Creek. All to myself.

Jack leaves his pack at the edge of the woods and systematically gathers a tremendous pile of antlers, which he buries under piles of brush and dead trees back in the woods. His work done, he eats a sandwich and stretches out on the forest floor.

EXT. JACK ASLEEP ON THE GROUND - DAY

Panning up from Jack's sleeping face, we see the tip of a claw, then a massive furry paw. The shot dollies back to reveal a very large CG grizzly bear sitting in a lotus position, levitating inches from Jack's head.

BUDDHA BEAR

Wake up. I want to tell you some things.

Jack cracks an eye open, focuses on the tip of the claw, squeezes both eyes shut, then opens them wide as he sits up.

JACK

Alright. This is for sure a dream, or hallucination, so I'll humor you.

BUDDHA BEAR

Dream, hallucination, illusion. Different layers of the same cake. The default waking reality is just one layer. I'm in the cake, but maybe hiding under the coconut frosting layer of your beloved German chocolate.

ED

My favorite!

BUDDHA BEAR

So how was your visit with Shiva?

JACK

That was a visit? It felt like an event on another planet.

BUDDHA BEAR

An event on another plane, my friend. Anyway, the important thing is that you now have your cosmic head pulled out of your monkey butt, and can proceed accordingly.

JACK

Proceed accordingly? With what?

BUDDHA BEAR

With life, nipple head.

JACK

Oh, great. It's about time there were some instructions. What are they?

BUDDHA BEAR

What did Shiva say?

JACK

"Forget all you have been taught." No, wait, it was the other way around. "Teach all you have forgotten."

BUDDHA BEAR

Hmm. He is an enigmatic shit, er, soul. Best not to question, though, or you'll end up like me.

JACK

What happened?

BUDDHA BEAR

Oh...I'd been through about a billion trillion incarnations, and he said I could pick my next guise for a last physical manifestation on earth and I made some smart-ass remark about the chain of command in heaven and he made me a bear. A bear with all the options, but a bear.

JACK

Options?

BUDDHA BEAR

All the stuff a realized soul knows that you've forgotten. Flight, transmutation of matter, time, and space. That sort of thing.

Buddha Bear looks evenly at Jack for a long beat. He leans back, opens his tremendous arms and takes a deep breath, truly appreciative of the day, the setting, the moment.

BUDDHA BEAR

It's a gift to be born in this America at this time. A wonderland of a temperate continent. A society with too much time and money on it's hands. An apathetic, permissive government. True Buddhists say it is a great reward to be born an American; the riches reaped from untold previous lives of suffering and toil. Live it up! It's all for you!

JACK

I do! It is!

Buddha Bear picks at his fur, extends a paw and admires the huge claws.

BUDDHA BEAR

Actually, this is about the best physicality I've ever had. This body is impervious to the weather. I can kill and eat anything that comes my way.

JACK

What about the Park Service? Rangers?

BUDDHA BEAR

Rangers are a non-issue, as you well know. It's the papered biological people that won't be denied their tax-funded studies. Those Craigheads were a pain in the ass. Where do those assholes live? I've a mind to go attach some tracking collars of my own.

Jack gives Buddha Bear an appreciative once-over, then gets to his feet and shoulders his pack.

JACK

I won't be back out here until fall. Will I see you then?

BUDDHA BEAR

We will be seeing a great deal more of each other, brother. Don't you worry.

Buddha Bear winks and disappears. Jack stares at the spot where he was for a moment, shrugs, turns, and walks off.

INT. RANGER BAR - NIGHT

It is a lackluster Friday night. A weary band is thumping out classic rock covers with little enthusiasm. Jack is slumped at the bar, smashed, propping his head up while he talks to Candice.

JACK

Nobody else gives a shit about taking a few antlers out of the park. What's your dad's damage?

CANDICE

Damage is right. Vietnam did not do my dad any favors.

JACK

He was there?

CANDICE

Decorated combat officer, as I keep getting my nose rubbed in.

ED

Huh. And what's with the creepy smile?

CANDICE

My mom says he pasted it on when he came back and it's been there ever since.

JACK

Fucking WesWorld. Crazy bastard.

CANDICE

Watch it. He's still my dad. And you can keep that WesWorld shit between you and your unwashed pals.

JACK

A thousand pardons, darling. The man does seem rather deranged, though.

CANDICE

You don't know the half of it. He's always lurking around in the back yard at night, muttering about 'enfilading fire' and 'dinks' and bunkers and shit. But he's always been a good provider. The whole sense of duty thing.

Candice looks around the forlorn scene; a handful of young people barely entertained by the tired band.

CANDICE

This bites. I'm going home.

JACK

Naw, it'll get better. Hang out, baby. Later we can tear one off in the car.

CANDICE

In your state? We should go do something sober once, just to see what it's like.

JACK

Aww, don't be like that. Hell, I was drunk when you met me.

CANDICE

And you're drunk now. I'll see you some other time.

Candice flounces out of the saloon. Jack remains, holding up his head and watching the band, which has started a cover of "Rocker" by AC/DC. They are out of time and out of tune, slaughtering the opening bars. During a prolonged feedback wail, in a CG scene, the lead singer smacks and kicks the amps and speakers, which inflate to comical proportions. With each blow, the wail gets clearer, in tune, and louder. Also with each blow, a member of the band instantly transforms into an animal caricature. The lead singer becomes a rangy coyote in David Lee Roth costume, the drummer is a buffalo, the bass player a moose. The lead guitar player, still holding the feedback wail, walks behind a gargantuan speaker at stage left. The Buddha Bear emerges an instant later, continuing the raucous chord progression into the guitar solo, doing a Chuck Berry duck-walk in Angus Young mufti (boys school beanie, oxford tie, short pants). The guitar is minuscule against his huge furry body, but he plays with reckless precision, flailing about the stage in full-on Angus imitation. The dance floor is crowded with cartoon gophers dancing in a synchronous rock line-step. Jack gawks at the scene, then literally sails backward off his bar stool.

EXT. JACK'S CAR - NIGHT

Jack's eyes pop open. He is sitting in his car, alone, in the dark. He nurses the beer he finds between his legs, rubbing at his brow.

EXT. A THICKET - NIGHT

WesWorld and LetsKillem are crouching in heavy brush, taking turns watching a trail through a large night-vision spotting scope mounted on a tripod. Wes is decked out in full Special Forces camouflage, face paint and all, which does nothing to mask his perpetual grin of false cheer. Les is in jeans and a Park Service issue drab green jacket. LetsKillem is a hateful, friendless redneck with a badge. He moves his head away from the scope and regards Wes, a Cheshire set of teeth floating in the darkness.

LES

Wes, we've been working together a long time, so I'm just going to lay some things out to you in a straightforward manner.

The Cheshire grin pivots Les's way.

WES

Absolutely. Let's hear it.

LES

You're greatly respected and somewhat, ah, feared within the department because of your service record. It allows you to get away with some rather hinky shit.

WES

Hinky, Les?

LES

This little operation here comes to mind. We won't talk about the altercations with tourists...

WES

Criminals, all of them.

LES

You really shouldn't yank people out of cars at gunpoint for littering...

WES

Criminals.

LES

Anyway...oh hell with it. Wes, what the fuck is with the smi...that weird grin you keep plastered on your face?

WES

Oh, that.

Wes's mouth becomes a thin, clenched line. He starts speaking in a completely different manner; a flat monotone the direct opposite of his usual brittle cheer.

WES

I believe in the United States Government. I believe in all it stands for and all the actions it takes to support that stance.

He is silent for a long beat. The shot closes in on his eyes, which are dead, dead, dead.

WES

There were...problems...in Southeast Asia.

LES

You mean Vietnam?

Wes slowly nods. He turns from Les and puts his eye to the spotting scope. He grasps the scope and begins making a very slow, deliberate sweep as he speaks.

WES

I was just a kid when I got there for my first tour. We were all kids. Kids with guns sent to fix a problem. The biggest problem was the gooks. Solve the problem by shooting the gooks, if you could see them. So that's what clicked in my head. Problem...shoot it. NVA, Viet Cong, civilian collaborators, dangerous fellow soldiers, incompetent officers...blam. Problem solved. I was young, but not stupid. I observed how the green machine worked and saw that it didn't, and modified my behavior accordingly. After a while I made it into the long range reconnaissance patrol, a machine unto itself. Five tours later, it's back to the world, where my main problem solver is not allowed. America wants a smile and a happy ending, so that's what I give them, every day.

In an instant, the Howdy Doody grin is back. Les looks at him sidelong in the blackness, visibly disturbed. Over his shoulder is the faintest huge outline of Buddha Bear.

EXT. IN THE WOODS - DAY

BUDDHA BEAR

Your nemesis is not to be trifled with. This may all be a jolly game to you, but he's playing on a completely different level.

Buddha Bear and Jack are sitting on a dramatic mountain top overlooking Mammoth Hot Springs. There is a pile of antlers behind them and Jack is poring over a map.

JACK

That's right, and that's the way we want to keep it. He thinks like a ranger, I think like a horn hunter. Never the twain shall meet, in my experience.

BUDDHA BEAR

He is a sullied product of the machine, the indoctrination device you so actively rebel against, and that makes him dangerous in ways that can't be predicted.

JACK

Like grizzly bears? Talking grizzly bears that live in my head?

Buddha Bear reaches over and baps Jack on the back of the head.

BUDDHA BEAR

I'm as real as any other illusion you put up with. Look; I'm here to remind you of the very flexible boundaries between states of being. Life can be a ball, doing this kind of nutty shit, playing outlaw and messing with the mind of the man. It can also be a slow march into the jaws of hell like your pals that have mortgaged their souls for a life-long job with the park service. And everything in-between, including drawn-out alcoholic death. You do realize you're an alcoholic?

JACK

Nah. I'm a drunk, I don't have to go to meetings.

BUDDHA BEAR

I hate that fucking stupid joke. Just know that you're dulling the apparatus of perception with your bacchanals. You can look forward to being eaten by the gray machine down there in park headquarters if you don't sharpen up.

JACK

Yeah, well, right now the machine is the least of my worries. I need to get a whole lot of antlers out of the park and replace my dying car. Packing this bunch out on my back tonight ain't going to cut it. Time for a big car pull.

Jack looks around and sees the bear is gone. He picks up the stack of antlers and walks out of the shot.

EXT. STREETS OF NORTH GATE - NIGHT

It is very late at night. The bars are closed and the streets of North Gate are totally deserted. Jack and John are leaning against a battered Ford sedan in a dirt lot across from the Ranger bar, smoking and killing time. Jack nods and they get in the car and drive into the park. Down the street from where they had been parked, a uniformed young man emerges from his yard and watches the tail lights fade.

INT. OF THE CAR - NIGHT

We are looking out through the windshield between Jack and John, who is driving. Many mice, visible in the headlights, run across the road in front of the car, a curious phenomenon of driving in Yellowstone at night.

JACK

Try to miss the mice, if you can.

John does a slow turn to regard Jack, and gives him an exaggerated questioning look.

JACK
Reincarnation. Any one of those
mice could be friends past or
future.

Still looking fixedly at Jack, John jerks the wheel. There
is a tiny thump.

JACK
Next time around you'll be a
fucking hamster.

JOHN
Perfect. Then I won't be wasting
any time driving a borrowed,
clapped-out 64 Ford to smuggle elk
antlers.

JACK
This is the perfect car for
it. What a boat. You suppose
Billy has made the last payment on
it?

John grins broadly. They turn off the highway and pull up
to a locked gate. Jack gets out and walks to the pivot side
of the gate, where it is nothing but a wide pipe planted in
the ground. With a heave, he pulls the pipe out of the
ground and walks the entire gate open. John drives through,
and Jack drops the pipe back into its hole. He gets in and
they drive a short distance up a dirt road. We see a sign;
"Blacktail Plateau Drive" in the headlights.

JOHN
I always liked this road. When did
you figure out that trick with the
gate?

JACK
Many years ago our family went on a
backpack trip out to some geyser
basin in the middle of the
park. Got permits, filed an
itinerary, the whole government
cluster. Poured rain the entire
two days we were out there. When
we got back to the trail head in
the middle of the night, soaked,
freezing, here's the fucking gate
locked. Me and my brother yanked
that piece of shit right out of the
ground and went home. Stop right
here.

EXT. A LONG SHOT OF THE CAR IN THE DARK - NIGHT

John kills the motor and lights. The two men get out. Jack walks to a clump of brush very close to the road and picks up two bundles of antlers. John opens the trunk. Jack sets the bundles by the trunk and returns to the brush, where he picks up two more bundles and brings them to the car. John is breaking apart the bundles and stacking the antlers neatly in the trunk. Jack makes one more trip and sets down two more bundles. They work quickly and efficiently at stacking the antlers in the trunk, close it, get in the car, make a three point turn, and drive off the way they came.

INT. OF THE CAR - NIGHT

Jack and John are smoking, nursing beers and watching the mice scurry in the headlights. They do not speak, and there is a palpable tension in the car they are doing their best to ignore. They pivot their heads around as they drive through Mammoth Hot Springs, looking for any activity. There is none; the homes and buildings are dark.

EXT. A LONG SHOT OF MAMMOTH - NIGHT

As their tail lights drop out of sight, two cruisers start, turn on their lights, and motor out from behind a building. They follow the Ford down the hill and out of sight.

INT. OF RANGER CRUISER LOOKING OUT WINDSHIELD - NIGHT

The back of the Ford is illuminated in pulsing blue and red with a bright spotlight focused on the trunk, where Jack, WesWorld, and LetsKillem are gathered. There are two more rangers off to the side, one keeping an intent eye on John in the driver's seat. Jack's body language is defiant, arms crossed, shaking his head no. Ranger Taylor is stabbing the lid of the trunk with a forefinger and yelling in Jack's face. We can hear his bellowing, but it is indistinct. LetsKillem walks behind Jack and handcuffs him. A ranger holds his open palm to John, who drops the car keys there. The trunk is opened and the rangers, en masse, look inside. Jack ignores it. John is hauled bodily out of the car and handcuffed. Jack is walked back toward the cruiser we are looking out of and shoved in the back seat. On the walk to the car, and as he is pushed into the back seat, repeatedly, Jack is yelling.

JACK
 Just keep your mouth shut,
 John. Just keep it shut.

INT. JAIL VISITING ROOM - DAY

Jack and John are in orange jumpsuits, looking pallid and somewhat defeated. They are seated at a table across from two clean cut men in suits in their late 20's. Lawyer 1 and Lawyer 2 have an understated supremely confident air. They are looking over Jack and John like they are a mildly difficult problem to be solved.

LAWYER 1
 So you haven't told this to anyone
 else, correct?

JACK
 No.

LAWYER 2
 Your celly? Your girl? Other guys
 in the cell block?

JOHN
 We've done this before. At least I
 have, and I know how it goes.
 That's why we want a jury
 trial. The truth can be made to
 fit the circumstances. That's how
 it's been in my criminal career.

LAWYER 1
 Keep that 'criminal career' crap to
 yourself, Dillinger. But, yes,
 reality is subjective, especially
 in a federal courtroom.

At the phrase 'reality is subjective,' Buddha Bear instantly materializes in the room. He fills the available space behind the lawyers, literally bigger than life, clutching a gavel, wearing a powdered wig, pince-nez, and a flowing black judge's robe. Jack's eyes widen, then his face resumes normalcy.

LAWYER 2
 Well. Your little story
 there? That's not what happened at
 all.

JACK

It's not?

The lawyers shake their heads no, John looks at Jack and shakes his head no, Buddha Bear looks very grave, peering over the top of the pince-nez, and shakes his head no.

LAWYER 1

No.

LAWYER 2

This is what happened.

INT. THE COURTROOM - DAY

We are in an ornate federal courtroom. Jack and John sit bolt-upright at the defendants table, dressed in ill-fitting suits. Their lawyers are impeccably dressed, and move about the courtroom with practiced insouciance. Cal Buckle sits at the prosecution's table. He is visibly uncomfortable and out of his element. There are very few people in the gallery; nobody we recognize, and Ranger Taylor is conspicuous by his absence. The jury is a group of bored standard-issue citizens. The judge looks like somebody's kindly grandfather. He has a bemused look on his face. Lawyer 2 is speaking to Les Keller, seated on the witness stand.

LAWYER 2

So my clients, who live in the area, are known to you to drive in and out of the park with a great deal of frequency, correct?

LES

Their not up to any fucking good, I can tell you that.

LAWYER 2

Your Honor...

JUDGE

Mind your manners, Mr. Keller.

LES

Sorry.

LAWYER 2

Answer the question, Mr. Keller.

LES

Yes. They're in and out of there all the time.

LAWYER 2

The citizens of North Gate do that a lot, don't they? It's a very rural area, and there aren't a lot of places to go, are there?

The judge glances at Cal Buckle, who has his face in a folder and is not paying attention.

LES

No, there aren't.

LAWYER 2

So if a couple guys couldn't sleep and wanted to take a drive to unwind, the park is a place they might do it, yes?

LES

Yes.

LAWYER 2

No further questions, your honor.

JUDGE

Mr. Buckle? Anything?

Cal Buckle, a million miles away, looks up to the judge, uncomprehending, then is drawn back to the situation.

CAL BUCKLE

Oh! Uhh...no, thank you.

JUDGE

The witness may step down. We will now hear closing arguments. Mr. Buckle, you have the floor.

Cal Buckle scoops up a sheaf of papers, heads for the jury box, stops, crumples the papers in his fist, turns around and in an attempted dramatic moment, misses the table completely as he throws them down. Beet-faced, empty-handed, he scurries back to face the jury, who regard him with alarm.

CAL BUCKLE

These are thieving horn hunters! Any idiot could see that! They drive into the park in

(MORE)

CAL BUCKLE (cont'd)
the middle of the night, and when they're pulled over... Well, whadya know, the trunk's full of horns. These are the facts. It's as plain as the nose on your face. I can't even believe I have to be here to point it out to you. You people do your job and find them guilty. Thank you.

Cal strides imperiously back to his seat, the entire courtroom looking on him as a man deranged. The judge glares at him, then turns to the defense table in obvious relief.

JUDGE
Your closing arguments, please, counsel.

LAWYER 1
Thank you, your honor.

Lawyer 1 rises and strolls to the front of the jury, the picture of confidence. His hands are in his pockets as he smiles broadly at the jury. They smile back.

LAWYER 1
Well! Mister Buckle told you, didn't he?

The jury, as a group, chuckles.

LAWYER 1
He has told you about the unsavory nature of my clients. It's all in the eyes of the beholder, I suppose. Boys will be boys, after all. He has told you about all the elk and elk antlers in Yellowstone National Park, ignoring the fact that the national forest surrounding the park holds as many, if not more, elk and their antlers, which can be gathered legally. He has spun a sinister tale of criminals stealing from the government.

Lawyer 1 strolls back and forth once in front of the jury, stroking his chin.

LAWYER 1

It's a great story, but that's all it is. The prosecution has made a fabrication from whole cloth, relying on conjecture and speculation to make you think it happened.

Lawyer 1 stands front and center of the jury, staring them down.

LAWYER 1

Beyond a reasonable doubt, my friends. That phrase is the true letter of the law and the only terms by which anyone in our great land can be convicted. My clients were out for a moonlight drive in a borrowed car with a trunk full of antlers that they did not know were there. That's what happened. Can Mister Buckle's contradictory story be proved beyond a reasonable doubt? A story based on conjecture and speculation?

Lawyer 1 raises a hand with one finger pointed skyward. The jury is transfixed.

LAWYER 1

Conjecture and speculation!

Lawyer 1 drops his hand, puts it in his pocket. He smiles at the jury. They smile back.

LAWYER 1

I know you'll do the right thing. Thank you.

EXT. THE SIDEWALK OUTSIDE THE FEDERAL BUILDING - DAY

Jack and John are blinking in the sunlight, crumpled paper bags under their arms. Lawyer 1 and Lawyer 2 stroll out of the front doors.

JOHN

You guys make me want to become a lawyer.

LAWYER 1

There goes the neighborhood! Do us all a favor and take up drywall or

(MORE)

LAWYER 1 (cont'd)
something, I can't pull one of
those out of my ass at will, you
know.

JOHN
I am a dry waller. It sucks.

JACK
I stand humbled before thee. I
thought court-appointed attorneys
would have us walking the plank for
sure.

LAWYER 2
Pro bono stuff keeps us
sharp. Plus that federal
prosecutor is really
terrible. That guy is just the
worst. I can't imagine why they
keep him around, but year after
year, here he is.

Lawyer 1 stares off into space, a thought occurring to him.

LAWYER 1
Well, what it is...most people go
'ooh, the federal government has
filed charges against me, I'll play
dead and hope for the best.'

Lawyer 2 looks pointedly at him for a long beat, raises his
hand and points at him.

LAWYER 2
That's right. Plea bargain before
they think they've awakened the
beast.

LAWYER 1
Never mind looking at precedents
and the official record...

The two lawyers walk off, deeply engaged in law
argument. Jack and John watch them go, then turn to look at
each other.

JOHN
Let's get the fuck out of here.

JACK
You got it, partner. Sheridan,
Wyoming ain't no place to be.

EXT. SIDE OF THE FREEWAY - DAY

Jack and John are taking turns standing on the shoulder with a thumb out while the other sits on a cooler. They both have beers in their hands and are visibly tipsy.

JOHN

Don't even talk to me about a bus again. I'll drag myself on bloody stumps before I ride the gray dog anywhere ever again.

JACK

That bad, huh?

JOHN

I got on in Butte with 3 fifths of vodka and a paid ticket to San Diego. I was literally in tears when we got there. It took a year of surfing to get my mind back. Never, ever, ever, ever.

JACK

Calm down. We spent any ticket money on this cooler full of beer, obviously the best possible investment we could have made on a hot day with three hundred miles between here and home.

JOHN

Shiva will look after us.

JACK

Glad to hear you're on board. You didn't say that with the greatest of conviction, though.

JOHN

It's mostly speculation.

JACK

Not to mention conjecture.

A pickup with Montana plates pulls over and the men grab the cooler between them and sprint to the truck.

EXT. IN THE WOODS - TWILIGHT

Jack and John are in ragtag camouflage garb, sitting on bundles of antlers on a high ridge overlooking town. While they talk they take turns glassing the country around them.

JOHN

That month in the pokey didn't do my muscle tone any favors. This was a tough day.

JACK

Ah, you'll be fine. A couple more hikes like this one and we'll be in fighting trim with pockets full of dough.

JOHN

Sure. You can't keep a good surfer down.

JACK

Meanwhile, I say we sack out and walk into town very late tonight.

JOHN

I was afraid you'd say that. Man, I'm dying for a beer or ten.

JACK

Me too. Just think about tomorrow with an ice-filled cooler on the river with the girls.

JOHN

Girls. Funny how none of them came to visit us in Sheridan.

JACK

Yeah, it's a regular riot. We're just summer sport for those honeys working in the park, partner. Colorful locals.

JOHN

Speaking of colorful locals, how's things with Candice?

JACK

Oof. I'll need to do something heroic to get back in her graces.

JOHN
Like quitting drinking?

JACK
Don't get hysterical.

JOHN
I'm sacking out.

John stretches out on the ground and is promptly asleep. Buddha Bear materializes, standing on all fours beside Jack.

BUDDHA BEAR
That Candice is an awful nice girl. Perhaps a sacrifice is in order. Your alcoholism could use some addressing, anyway.

JACK
They're all sweet as pie while they're hearing the right sounds. I'll have to say no, just as a default act of rebellion.

BUDDHA BEAR
Rebellion infers open resistance to authority. Your alcoholism has no resistance in it. It's caving to the very basest of human cravings and...

Jack stands so he is face to face with Buddha Bear. The grizzly is truly gigantic, six feet at the shoulder, but Jack pushes his face into the bear's.

JACK
Whadaya mean, 'my' alcoholism. It's 'the' alcoholism. It's a general condition in this country, especially if you're poor and rural. It's a national sport, pal. I don't have a monopoly on it. It's affordable entertainment and escape. This is a drunk land run by drunk old guys.

Buddha Bear raises a monstrous paw to swat Jack into oblivion. Jack snaps awake. John is crouched next to him, smoking and nursing a warm beer. Seeing Jack is awake, he passes him the beer. Jack kills it, then wordlessly they shoulder the stacks of antlers and head downhill, threading their way through the sparse trees by starlight.

EXT. A RIVERBANK - NIGHT

Jack and John are at the confluence of the Gardiner and Yellowstone rivers. Above them, we see scattered house lights on the fringes of town. The Gardiner is no mountain brook; as Jack wades in with his antlers held overhead and reaches the middle, the water is nearly to his armpits. He bounces once, twice, at the limits of traction on the riverbed, the prospect of being swept into the giant current of the Yellowstone mere yards away seemingly imminent, then he is on firm footing and walking to the opposite bank, streaming water. Shivering, he watches John do the same, then they trudge up the hill in the dark. They make no sound during the entire episode, and all we hear is the roar of rapids on the Yellowstone.

INT. RANGER BAR - NIGHT

Jack is with Candice and they appear to be affectionate and having a good time, canoodling at a private table in a back corner of the bar. There is a weekend crowd milling about and the band can be heard in the downstairs dance hall.

JACK

I've got a great big ol' pile of antlers stacked up out in the back country now. Money in the bank, so to speak.

CANDICE

Mmm. Interesting. And how does a person get those big ol' piles out of the park?

JACK

Oh... Big ol' piles is a relative term, my turtle dove.

As Jack speaks, we see a montage of scenes. First there is a pack train of mules loaded with bundles of antlers making it's way through wilderness, then a large horse trailer crammed with antlers, then a pair of men with Asian features stand with a briefcase inside a sizable warehouse stacked to the rafters with tens of thousands of antlers.

JACK

Me and Surfer John like to horn hunt, but mostly we don't like to work a regular job. There are guys who get after it in a very serious way, and make very serious money. They're out there on

(MORE)

JACK (cont'd)
 horseback for weeks on end, picking every bone in the woods. They come out at night with pack trains, haul them to a wholesaler, and cash fat ol' checks from the Koreans.

CANDICE
 Koreans? What would a Korean want with an elk antler? I thought they were all made into those ugly lamps and stools and shit that you see in gift shops.

JACK
 A Korean, and pretty much any male of an Asian persuasion, wants an elk antler to make his dick hard.

Candice's hand darts between Jack's legs and she brings her face right next to his. Jack's face is a mask of false alarm.

CANDICE
 Don't be vulgar, my outlaw friend. Men...I don't care where they're from...don't need any help with that.

JACK
 These are not young men, my siren of the saloon, and rigidity is not all that is sought. They seem to think that prolonged consumption of antlers, along with many other animal parts, will make the damn thing bigger.

CANDICE
 Other animal parts?

JACK
 Rhino horns, tiger dicks, bear paws, shark fins... All kinds of stuff.

Candice releases Jack's crotch and sits back in her chair, eying him with disdain.

CANDICE
 Well...that's just fucking nonsense.

JACK
 So say you and I, darling, but it
 is a huge world-wide industry.

Candice tosses off her drink and looks around the bar in disgust.

CANDICE
 Men.

Candice quickly rises from the table and marches out of the bar. Jack watches her go with mild amusement on his face, then gets up and joins a raucous pack of his fellows at the bar.

EXT. AN ALLEY - NIGHT

Jack is reeling drunk, staggering about under a second floor window which he is trying to hit with beer cans and rocks. His aim is way off, and a couple rocks ricochet back to land on his head. In a hoarse whisper he calls up to the window.

JACK
 Candice. Candice. Hey,
 Candice. Yo, Candice.

No response from the window, Jack crouches, hanging his head in drunken frustration. The Buddha Bear materializes nearby, standing on a propane tank, strumming the opening chords to "It's Late" by Queen. Jack stands, looks at Buddha Bear, then breaks into the opening lines of the song, serenading the window.

JACK
 You say you love me, and I hardly
 know your name. And if I say I
 love you in the candlelight,
 there's no-one but myself to blame.

The window is lighted. Jack and Buddha Bear look at each other and continue in the song.

JACK
 But there's something inside that's
 turning my mind away. Oh how I
 could love you, if I could let you
 stay.

As the music changes from the lone strumming of Buddha Bear, in sync to the five heavy beats in the song, the remainder of the band materialize on an adjacent low roof; the buffalo

drummer and moose bass player, and three CG elk with tremendous racks of antlers, dressed in flamboyant 70's rock star garb. They stand close together, as backup singers would in a stage production, and belt out the chorus harmony.

SINGER ELK

It's late.

The window is flung open. Candice sticks her head out. Jack wails the next line, clutching his heart, beseeching Candice overhead.

JACK

But I'm bleeding deep inside.

The elk, now standing at a microphone, crush their heads together.

SINGER ELK

It's late.

Jack turns to the elk. In mock bewilderment, he sings the next line at them.

JACK

Is it just my sickly pride?

The elk regard him with a touch of scorn as they sing the next line.

SINGER ELK

Too late.

Jack turns to Buddha Bear, imploring him with the next line.

JACK

Even now the feeling seems to steal away.

The elk, as a group, lower their heads and shake them in mild shame as they sing the next line.

SINGER ELK

So late.

Jacks spins around to direct the next line up to Candice.

JACK

Though I'm crying I can't help but hear you say.

The elk throw their heads back, fling arms wide, and belt out the end of the chorus.

SINGER ELK

It's late, it's late, it's late,
but not too late.

In time to the music of the bridge, the back-up singer elk do a synchronized shuffle-step, their arms around each others shoulders.

JACK

The way you love me is the sweetest
love around. But after all this
time, the more I'm trying, the more
I seem to let you down. Now you
tell me you're leaving, and I just
can't believe it's true. Oh, you
know that I can love you, though I
know I can't be true. Oh, you made
me love you, don't tell me that
we're through.

As Jack sings, the singer elk light cigarettes, pull at beers, and watch Jack with great appreciation. The band hammers out the song. We see Candice's perspective from the window above, which is of a lone Jack singing up to her. The fantasy is not visible to her, but Jack's singing is in tune. At the end of the verse, on each of the five heavy beats, the fantasy tableau appears to Candice. Buddha Bear, the band, the back-up singers, each instantly materializes on one of the beats. Candice's eyes widen, but she is not startled. A wry smile settles on her face as she watches the ensemble belt out the final verses.

SINGER ELK

It's late.

JACK

But it's driving me so mad.

Between their turns at the chorus, the elk make theatrical gestures concerning the time; one taps at a wristwatch, another shows his watch to the others, one fishes out a stopwatch, etc...

SINGER ELK

It's late.

JACK

Yes, I know, but don't try to tell
me that it's...

SINGER ELK

Too late.

JACK
Save our love, you can't turn out
the lights...

SINGER ELK
So late.

JACK
I've been wrong, but I'll learn to
be right.

The shot dollies back to take in the entire alley scene as the elk, Jack, the band, and even Candice wail out the final chorus.

JACK, CANDICE, BUDDHA BEAR, SINGER ELK
It's late, its late, it's late, but
not too late.

At the final syllable, there is utter stillness. The band and back-up singers disappear. Candice is looking down at a lone Jack, who is looking up at her with his arms wide. She gives him a nod, and he scurries around the side of the building to a door.

INT. RANGER TAYLOR'S HOME - DAY

Ranger Taylor is pacing the floor in front of Candice, who is sprawled on a couch in the living room, idly flipping through channels with a t.v. remote. Wes is extremely agitated. Candice appears bored to tears. The shot pans around the walls of the living room as WesWorld harangues his daughter. We see picture after picture of rangers standing before huge piles of seized antlers. Every photo features a grinning Ranger Taylor holding a placard declaring the weight of the pile.

WES
How can you consort with the
enemy? My enemy? A known
criminal?

CANDICE
The enemy? Jesus, dad, we're not
in Saigon anymore. They're just
elk antlers the elk aren't even
using anymore.

WES
It goes far beyond the stealing of
antlers...

CANDICE

Stealing? How can you steal what nobody owns?

WES

Everything in the park belongs to the people of this country. Does the term 'National Park' mean anything to you?

CANDICE

Don't patronize me, dad. But, yes, you have a point.

WES

It's THE point, Candice. It may sound like quaint, old-timey moral values, but the idea that an antler lying on the ground, or a flower in a meadow, or even a rock on the side of the road in a national preserve will be there when anybody in the world wants to come look at them, and not have been hauled off by some character to trade for a pint of whiskey, is the basis of trust in public institutions.

Candice is visibly moved by her father's little speech. She rises and goes to him, wrapping him in a warm hug. He remains rigid, then melts in his daughters arms.

CANDICE

Jeez, you put it that way...

WES

If the guy just had a job...

CANDICE

He hates to work. He doesn't even really like to go hiking for antlers, but he likes it out in the woods.

WES

I could put a word in up on the hill. A trail crew would be a great place for him.

They release and hold each other at arm's length.

CANDICE

If only the whole world took it's job as seriously as you.

WES

Yes. Well. Your mother said the same thing the day she left.

EXT. A BEACH ON THE RIVER - DAY

Jack and Candice are basking on a blanket. There are the trappings of a fancy picnic and many empty bottles strewn about. Candice props herself on an elbow and regards Jack, who is the picture of relaxed, drunken leisure, sprawled on his back.

CANDICE

My dad says he can get you a job on a trail crew.

JACK

That's nice.

CANDICE

You know, once you get on with the park service, you've pretty much got a job for life.

Jack rolls on his side to face Candice and lazily reaches for her, cupping a haunch in his hand.

JACK

Yeah. Me in the park service. That's fucking close. Get those clothes off and scooch on over here, babe. Let's make some more whoopee.

Candice leaps to her feet. Her hands go to her hips and she stands over Jack, fuming. Behind her, Buddha Bear has appeared, and mirrors her every move as she berates Jack. He is wearing an apron and there are curlers everywhere in his thick fur. He brandishes a rolling pin.

CANDICE

Drinking and screwing! That's all we do! What the hell do you think life is going to be like ten years from now if you don't get a fucking plan! You think I'm going to hang around for more of this?

Candice sweeps her hand to encompass the scene; a beach picnic, the river, the gorgeous rocky mountain scenery around them. Jack peers about, nodding in a very satisfied way. Buddha Bear stuffs his paws in the pockets of his apron and regards the scenery with true happiness.

JACK

I'd say this will do just fine for the rest of my days. What is it you think this plan of yours is going to bring? A little pink house? Forty years of the government grindstone? A chicken in every driveway and a Chevy in every pot?

CANDICE

Don't you mock me, buster. I'm talking about reality. And an actual reality is your ass rotting in jail when my dad finally puts you there on charges that will stick. He's on a mission, you know, and he is very single-minded.

Jack flops onto his back and pours beer into his mouth.

JACK

That's putting it mildly. Jesus, look at what a lifetime of working for the government has done for him. He's nuts.

Candice kicks sand over Jack. So does Buddha Bear.

CANDICE

He is not! He's a hard worker! Something you know nothing about!

Jack slowly stands and brushes sand off his face and out of his hair. He is seething with the same frustrated rage as Candice.

JACK

You can work until you fall over dead and the world will call you a slacker ten minutes after they plant you in the grave. I'm living in the moment, my love, and there's nothing the united states national park service and your crazy dad can do for me but get the fuck out of the way.

Candice thrusts her face into Jack's. She is livid, fists balled in rage at her sides as she screams full into his face.

CANDICE

Grow up!

JACK

Never!

Candice spins on her heel and runs to the car, tearing up the road in a cloud of dust and flying gravel. Buddha Bear sits down next to Jack on the blanket and together they watch the river flow by for a moment. Jack drains the bottle in his hand then casts his gaze around the picnic site. His eyes light up.

JACK

Hallelujah, the cooler's still here.

BUDDHA BEAR

And it's only a ten mile walk back to town.

EXT. JACK AND JOHN IN THE WOODS - DAY

It is near the end of a fabulous late summer day. Jack and John are dressed in camouflage, leaning against two large stacks of antlers. They are at the edge of a high mountain meadow. A spectacular view stretches before them. They are sharing a joint and being silly. John is doing a parody of an officious person speaking into a two-way radio, cupping his hand in front of his mouth and making static noises.

JOHN

Ahh...roger your position, Task Force 5, proceed to checkpoint Alpha and determine location of your ass, over.

Jack copies the authoritative voice and making the sound of blasts of static into his cupped hand, where the joint smolders.

JACK

Affirmative, Task Force 3. Ass located. Head of Task Force 5 appears to be jammed, repeat, jammed inside ass, over.

JOHN

Roger that, Task Force 5. Your head is jammed up your ass. Objective Whiskey Tango Foxtrot has been achieved, over.

JACK

Outstanding work, Lacey Act Task Force. Rendezvous at checkpoint dingle-berry for a celebration circle-jerk.

They fall back, laughing uproariously. John fishes a beer out of his pack and the men split it, silently regarding the scenery.

JACK

Man, that Sheridan jail was fucking grim, brother.

JOHN

It's hard to make the connection that being out here, picking up bones, can end in that.

JACK

A guy only gets so many summers. That cluster nearly ended this one before it began.

JOHN

So many summers?

JACK

You only get so many. There are a finite amount of summers in your life and that's it. I don't know how they are anywhere else, but here in Montana they're short and hot and I feel like...I've always felt like if I didn't get out in it and enjoy every second that I was cheating myself. To spend part of it in a cinder block cell, buried alive in concrete... Well, shit, that's not only stupid; it's immoral... blasphemous.

John kills the beer and rises, strapping on his load of antlers. Jack does the same. They stand together sweeping the country before them with binoculars, looking for an unseen enemy.

JOHN

We'll just have to be better
criminals and not get caught.

JACK

Affirmative, Task Force 3. Jail is
not an option, over.

INT. THE RANGER STATION - DAY

Wes and Les are poring over a huge model map of the park. It is ten feet on a side and labeled with the prominent features of the park. They are trying to determine the boys' hiking routes, hovering over the northern end of the map. We see Everts Mountain, Blacktail Plateau, the Gardiner and Yellowstone rivers.

WES

You and I are going to split up and
begin an active interdiction
campaign.

LES

I don't know what that means.

WES

We need to see these guys in the
act of picking up antlers in broad
daylight. That will mean extensive
periods of surveillance in the back
country. We are going to hike
where they hike and catch them in
the act.

Les' gaze moves from Wes to the map, his shoulders slumping with exhaustion.

LES

Aw, jeez, Wes. I've already got
ten billion mosquito bites. I'm
really tired of the back
country. I hate hiking. I like a
nice, air-conditioned patrol car.

Wes is glaring at the map. He turns his fierce gaze on Les, who holds his ground.

WES

Then quit, pansy.

LES
I already have. I'm transferring
to D.C. I don't want to see
another goddamn elk as long as I
live.

Les spins on his heel and leaves the room. Wes' eyes dart around for a moment, but he displays no real emotion. He turns back to the map and traces routes with his finger.

WES
Solitary mission. As usual.

EXT. JACK AND WESWORLD IN THE WOODS - DAY

Jack is carrying a small load of antlers and actively searching the woods for more. He is in a stretch of country that is a series of low ridges covered with large sagebrush and scattered pine trees. He is approaching the top of one of these when a raven rises, cawing and scolding, from the top of a tree fifty yards away. Jack stops and watches the raven. It circles a small area, looking down and loudly berating something on the ground. Jack drops his pack and retraces his steps down the hill, then hikes quickly away.

EXT. LOOKING DOWN ON JACK AND WESWORLD - DAY

In an overhead shot, we see WesWorld stretched out on the ground below. Behind him, a hundred feet away, Jack can be seen creeping to the top of an adjacent ridge, threading his way through the sagebrush. He is upright, then drops to hands and knees, crawling the last few feet to the ridge top, then slowly slithering along the ground on his belly until he spots Wes and freezes. The two men, wearing camouflage and partially obscured beneath large sagebrush, blend into the ground cover. As we are watching, the quick shadow from a cloud moves over the scene and when it has passed, neither Wes or Jack can be spotted.

EXT. JACK AND BUDDHA BEAR ON THE GROUND - DAY

In a ground-level shot, Jack is flat against the dirt, binoculars glued to his face as he watches Wes. Sweat is streaming off his head. In a shot through binoculars, we see the soles of ranger Taylor's boots, some camouflage clothing, and small movements of the back of Wes' head as he scans the country in front of him.

Buddha Bear materializes beside Jack in the dirt, his huge grizzly bear head stretched out, chin to the ground, looking in Wes' direction. Their conversation is in whispers.

BUDDHA BEAR
This is called stalking.

JACK
No shit.

BUDDHA BEAR
He's stalking you. You're stalking
him. Somebody has to pounce.

Jack lowers the binoculars and looks at the bear, who's gaze
remains straight ahead.

JACK
You suppose that guy would leap on
me, pounce, if he had a chance?

BUDDHA BEAR
I know he would. He has been a
very aggressive animal for billions
of reincarnations. Jackal, hyena,
baboon, wolverine...thus his nature
and tenacious obsession with
catching you. With the right
equipment...fangs, claws...he'd
take you down and crush your
windpipe.

JACK
And yet he has that creepy smile
pasted on his mug all the time,
like he's trying to make friends.

Buddha Bear rolls to one side and props his head on a paw so
he is looking at Jack.

BUDDHA BEAR
Everywhere else in the animal
kingdom, a baring of the teeth is a
sign of fear or submission. Funny
how modern humans have turned it
into a rictus of insincerity.

Jack goes back to looking at WesWorld through the
binoculars.

JACK
Rictus. Rictus. I've heard that
somewhere before.

BUDDHA BEAR
It's usually associated with pain.

JACK

You think WesWorld is in pain?

Buddha Bear rolls back onto his stomach and rests his head on his folded paws, looking towards WesWorld.

BUDDHA BEAR

I think Ranger Taylor is in a great deal of pain.

EXT. JOHN IN THE WOODS - DAY

Surfer John is wandering through the woods, horn hunting in a lackadaisical manner. He has none of the focus that Jack displays. He smokes, mutters to himself, and generally seems distracted. There are a small bundle of antlers and a day pack attached to the pack frame he carries on his back. He plunks down at the base of a tree to eat his lunch; a can of sardines and a beer. We see a CG tendril of fish stench leave the can of sardines and waft downwind. It weaves through trees and over a small hill where a real grizzly bear is overturning boulders, looking for something to eat. The scent tendril stops above the grizzly's head, morphs into a fist, and bangs it on top of the head. The bear immediately starts sprinting in John's direction. In a shot over John's shoulder, we see the very large and hungry grizzly barreling toward him. We hear a strangled sort of scream and the sound of John literally shitting his pants. He leaps to his feet and with a super-human standing jump grasps an overhead branch and hauls himself up into the tree just as the bear arrives. John climbs frantically while the bear chews and swallows the entire can of sardines, then slices open the day pack with one swipe of a paw. Finding nothing more in the pack and enraged about it, the bear looks up at John, who is still climbing. With one leap, the bear embraces the tree six feet off the ground and starts up after John, climbing like a six hundred pound cat. John is hysterical, gibbering as he flails his way to the very top of the tree, where the thin branches no longer support the huge bear and begin breaking.

In a shot from a distance away that takes in the entire tree, we see John at the very top, and the massive bear dropping in increments as branches give way beneath it, ending with the bear crashing to the ground amid a tangle of branches. The bear leaps to its feet, swats John's pack away in rage, then runs off. The shot dollies in on John in the top of the tree, a stain spreading down the back of his pants. His face, numb with horror, fills the screen. He is muttering something over and over.

JOHN

Grizzlies can't climb. Grizzlies
can't climb. Grizzlies can't
climb.

INT. RANGER BAR - NIGHT

Jack and John are seated at the bar. In front of Jack is the evidence of much drinking. John is uncharacteristically sober and looking shell-shocked, still dressed in his camouflage shirt but with a change of pants.

JOHN

I tell you, man, that thing
shinnied up the tree like it did it
all day long. Whoever said
grizzlies can't climb never saw it
done.

Jack is nearly hammered. He gives John no more than a bleary glance while he tries to flag the bartender down.

JACK

One of the most unpredictable
animals in the world. Besides
women, which are the most
unpredictable animal. Grizzlies do
climb and women must meddle. Or
maybe it's the other way around.

Jack throws his arms open, teetering dangerously on his bar stool.

JACK

Come to Yellowstone and see the
meddling bears! Wonder at the
geysers of humorless concern!

John gets off his stool and steadies Jack, placing his hands on his shoulders.

JOHN

I filled my pants with my sense of
humor today, and I doubt I regain
it until I'm far away from this
place. I'm headed back to
California, man. Find a job or
something.

Jack closes one eye and focuses on John.

JACK
That bad, huh?

JOHN
That bad.

John sits back down. The bartender is standing in front of them. John holds up two fingers on each hand. The bartender fills two shots for each of them, then fresh beers.

John drinks deeply, then, visibly calmed, takes a long look at Jack.

JOHN
So what's your problem?

JACK
Love, life, and money.

JOHN
That's an old song.

JACK
None of it is worth it. You go out to make a little money and get run up a tree...

JOHN
Shit my pants.

JACK
...shit your pants, and get so rattled that you invoke the j-o-b word. Me, I just want to have lots of great sex with a terrific girl, drink and live it up, and her father comes around with the same bad idea. A job. Fuck a job.

John finishes his shots and puts the shot-glasses to his eyes like he's holding a pair of binoculars.

JOHN
Aha. I see what's going on. Candice.

The shot switches to the view through the bottom of the shot glasses. Jack's face is distorted in strange ways by the thick glass.

JACK

It never ends. With her or any other girl. You'll do any dumb damn thing to be around her. Then you have some sex, and maybe it's good sex, so that's about all you can think about. You are sure you will literally lose your mind unless you can get your face between her legs again, nibble on her nipples, taste the inside of her mouth. It's just torment, and I don't ever see an end to it. This girl, some other girl. There will always be a Candice or Allison or Cindy or Melissa or a billion other women you know you can't live without. Always. Gorgeous women will torture you right up until the brink of the grave; long, long past any age when anybody would ever have any interest whatsoever in playing with your dick. Nah. Women are great. Women are wonderful, but right now I'd rather drink.

Jack turns back to the bar and the mess in front of him. He waves the bartender down and the shots and beers are repeated. He picks up a shot and holds it in front of him, contemplating the whiskey.

JACK

Drinking is a finite torment. I'll run out of money, or pass out, or both, and it will be over for the night. Tomorrow will be a different reality and I can choose to drink or not drink when it arrives.

John has his elbows planted on the bar, staring straight ahead.

JOHN

Yeah, well, I can take or leave either of them. Women, whiskey, I don't give a shit. Bears and cops, though, those things bother me.

JACK
As they should.

EXT. THE GETAWAY HOTEL - DAY

John is packing his car in front of the hotel. We see a pile of sorry possessions in the back seat. Jack walks out of the hotel with his backpack and joins him. They drive into the park.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

The shot is looking out the windshield between Jack and John as they talk. The roads are jammed with tourist traffic and their progress is erratic.

JOHN
Look at this shit. The 405's got nothing on this place.

JACK
405?

JOHN
Freeway in L.A.

JACK
And you're going back to it?

JOHN
The 405 may be crammed with rats, weasels, and chickens, but there are no, I repeat no, grizzly bears.

JACK
Well, in two, three months this place will be abandoned. The park in fall and winter is really when it's at it's best.

JOHN
What do you do for money when the bones are covered in snow?

JACK
Starve. Go to the ski hill and get some idiotic job.

JOHN
You? A j-o-b?

JACK
The horror.

Jack swivels in his seat so he is facing John. He regards him with new interest.

JACK
Southern California, eh? I'll bet
it's warm there in the winter.

John gives Jack a look of utter wearisome incredulity.

JOHN
Endless summer? Ever heard of it?

JACK
The surfing movie? Sure.

JOHN
It's a way of life, man. Not just
some surfing movie.

JACK
I can relate.

JOHN
You can't, really, unless you've
lived there. All the illusion that
you and Shiva are so wound up
about? They manufacture it down
there, my friend. Wholesale.

JACK
How weird can it be?

JOHN
About as weird as things are going
to get right now.

Two ranger cruisers have bracketed John's car front and back. There is a great show of flashing lights on both of them as John eases his car into a pull-out. The shot is still through the front windshield, and we see WesWorld get out of his cruiser, open the back door, and lead out a huge German Shepard. WesWorld and the dog approach John's car, Wes with his creepy grin. Jack is monitoring the cruiser behind them.

JACK
LetsKillem comin' up behind us,
buddy.

EXT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

The shot is through Jack's window, looking over his shoulder at LetsKillem's face framed in John's open window. WesWorld is slowly leading the police dog around the car.

LES

Whatcha up to today, girls? Off to the bank to make a withdrawal?

JACK

We're goin' to California with an achin' in our hearts.

LES

Yeah? Enough of the Rockies for you, Surfer John? Back to Orange County to sell used cars?

JOHN

You got it, pal. Fun in the sun.

LES

That's good. That's real good.

WesWorld stops at Jack's door and the dog takes a deep sniff of his arm, which is hanging out the window. Jack yanks his arm in when the dog's wet nose touches his elbow, but says nothing. He does not acknowledge the dog or WesWorld.

JACK

I'm going with him, Les. No more snowy winters for me.

LetsKillem eyes the pile of stuff in the back seat.

LES

Uh huh. Lighting out for the territory with nothing but a backpack full of bungees?

JACK

Oh, there's a sandwich and a beer in there, too. I'll be fine.

LetsKillem looks up as WesWorld strolls to his cruiser and loads the dog in the back seat, then accelerates rapidly into traffic. He smacks the roof of the car above John's head.

LES

You girls have a real good day.

LetsKillem marches to his cruiser and takes off, whipping a u-turn against the heavy tourist traffic, nearly causing many wrecks. Jack stares straight ahead, pondering.

JACK

That fucker let that dog get my scent. What's he up to?

JOHN

I can't believe a dog could track you fifteen miles through the Yellowstone back country and the thousands of tons of elk, deer, and bear shit it contains while keeping your scent.

JACK

I don't either. WesWorld's just messing with my mind. But I will have you drop me off in a different spot.

John drops the car into gear.

JOHN

Roger that, Task Force 5, psy-ops now in play, over.

JACK

Affirmative, Task Force 3, strange days ahead.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - DAY

John's car pulls into a paved pull-out. Jack gets out, bringing his backpack with him. He looks up and down the busy road, then squats beside the car, speaking to John through the open window.

JACK

I'll see ya on the flip side, buddy.

JOHN

Better get to cover. WesWorld could come along any minute.

JACK

Yeah. Well, don't get all emotional on me.

JOHN

I'm betting we'll see each other
sooner than later. Knock 'em dead,
tiger.

John punches the gas and is gone in traffic in an instant. Jack lopes into the woods bordering the pull-out and is quickly concealed by brush. He squats, looking toward the road and monitoring the traffic. When he hears a lull, he quickly walks out of the woods, across the pull-out and highway, and scrambles up a steep embankment to a plateau above the road, where he walks back to a point that conceals him from the traffic below. He switches clothes, putting on his camouflage hiking gear, then walks on hands and knees to a point where his line of sight allows him to see the pull-out and the road. He drops to his belly and watches the traffic. WesWorld drives into the pull-out. He unloads the K-9, which signals on Jack's scent at the edge of the woods. WesWorld and the dog move slowly into the woods, then stop where Jack did. The dog seems confused, and drags Wes back to the edge of the pull-out where it first picked up the scent. Wes brings the dog to heel and stands at the edge of the pull-out, looking into the woods. In a shot looking directly into WesWorld's face, with his head nearly filling the screen, we see the tiny, unfocused figure of Jack's head at the horizon line behind Wes. Jack scoots backward and slowly disappears from view. WesWorld's eyes dart about as he concentrates fiercely, the same manic grin on his face. It begins to rain.

EXT. THE RIVERBANK - NIGHT

The scene opens with the guitar blast at the beginning of The Rolling Stones' "Cantcha Hear Me Knockin'." It is dark and pouring rain. The shot is of WesWorld, in full camouflage, perched in a large juniper tree. He is not smiling. The shot dollies out so that we see Wes' tree among others on a high embankment above the Gardiner river and the footbridge across it. The river is swollen and roaring.

The shot pans right, then dollies in on Jack, who is crouched at the base of a huge pine tree. He has taken off his backpack, bristling with antlers, and is glassing the footbridge and the approaches to it with his binoculars. We see what he sees, a shot through the binoculars, revealing a murky, jerking view. He leaves the pack and walks to the copse of trees where WesWorld lies in wait. Stopping directly below Wes, Jack glasses the footbridge and the terrain on the other side of the river. He walks down to the footbridge and climbs under the structure that

buttresses it to look beneath. Satisfied, he returns to his tree and shoulders the pack full of antlers. It is a large and unwieldy load. He staggers beneath it, but makes his way to the footbridge. As he begins crossing, we see Wes slip out of the juniper behind and above Jack, a shadow moving quickly in the dense rain. He rapidly closes the distance to Jack, who senses him behind him in the middle of the footbridge and spins around to confront him, sloughing off the pack as he turns. Wes moves toward Jack in a menacing combat stance, looking wholly terrifying in full camouflage face paint. Jack turns toward the far end of the bridge. LetsKillem has materialized there, hands on hips in his full ranger uniform. Jack looks back at the approaching Wes, glances again at Les, and swings himself over the handrail of the bridge, landing in the violently churning river ten feet below. He is swept downstream at an alarming rate. Wes and Les hurry down the riverbank, keeping pace with a now clearly drowning Jack. Wes, with super-human, crazy-man strength, wades out to intercept a flailing Jack and drag him by his collar to shore. Jack is like a rag doll flopping at the end of Wes' arm, coughing up water. Wes stands Jack up and bellows into his face.

WES

I'm with the government! I'm here to help!

INT. RANGER TAYLOR'S CRUISER - DAY

The shot is looking at Ranger Taylor's cruiser from the rear. Wes is at the wheel, patiently waiting. Candice is leaning into an open back window. Jack is in handcuffs. Buddha Bear, wearing the horizontal striped jumpsuit of a 1930's convict and holding a large black ball and chain in his lap, sits beside him.

CANDICE

Well, at least you have somewhere to spend the winter now.

JACK

Thanks for looking on the bright side, darlin'. You can keep that up in the letters you send to Sheridan.

Candice plants a soulful kiss on Jack, then steps back from the cruiser.

CANDICE

You boys have a nice drive. And be nice to each other.

Wes, with a smile of genuine happiness on his face, turns to his daughter and gives her a thumbs-up. They drive away.

INT. RANGER TAYLOR'S CRUISER - DAY

The shot is looking in Jack's window. Out Buddha Bear's window we see the throngs of tourists milling about. The car is crawling through the heavy foot traffic. Jack turns to look at Buddha Bear.

JACK

So. Today you decide to turn up. Where the hell where you at the river?

BUDDHA BEAR

Some bridges have to be crossed alone.

JACK

That's perfect.

BUDDHA BEAR

This too shall pass.

JACK

Oh shut the fuck up.

WesWorld eyes Jack in the rear-view mirror.

WES

Who you talking to back there?

JACK

My conscience. Just mind the road, officer.

WES

Yes, sir.

The car is stopped by the crowds. Jack and Buddha Bear look out the window at the herds wandering the hot springs boardwalks. A fat kid is finishing a Popsicle as he stares blankly at the geothermal wonders around him. His gaze meets Jack's, he tosses the Popsicle stick into the hot pool at his feet, and he winks.