

Shooter on the Grassy Knoll
by
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FADE IN:

SUPER: November 22ND 1963

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

The sun blast down on a desert highway occupied by a lone vehicle that's seen its better days.

INT. OLD CAR - CONTINUOUS

The vehicle has a lone passenger, CARL MAYS, age 28. Carl is wearing a t-shirt, army khaki pants, unshaven and dead tired. He can barely keep his eyes open above the cigarette that dangles from his lips. The left side of his face has long SCRATCHES from below his eye to his jaw. The radio playing begins a newscast.

RADIO BROADCAST

November twenty-second, nineteen-sixty three, will long be remembered as the day America lost its innocence. President Kennedy was declared dead just after one pm. central standard time in Dallas, Texas. The victim of an assassin's bullet.

Carl turns the radio off. He picks up a prescription bottle from the car seat, removes the top. The bottle is empty. This upsets Carl.

CARL

Son of a bitch!

A WARNING LIGHT comes on. The vehicle is running hot.

CARL (CONT'D)

Shit.

SMOKE begins to escape from under the hood as the car loses power.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The vehicle pulls off the road and to a stop. Smoke pours from under the hood.

Carl exits the vehicle and slams the door.

CARL

Piece of shit!

Carl surveys his surroundings.

Just up ahead he sees a highway sign: 54 north. He looks to his left at another sign on the opposite side of the road: El Paso 236 miles.

Carl returns to the drivers door, opens it and retrieves his keys from the ignition.

AT THE TRUNK

Carl opens the trunk and pockets the keys. He moves a army khaki shirt and army duffel bag to one side that were lying atop a travel bag. He unzips the bag that lies beside a black briefcase and leather scabbard. His right forearm reveals a "Jesus saves" tattoo.

He pulls a Bible out of the bag from atop a carton of cigarettes and pint of whiskey. He holds the Bible in one hand and the pint in the other. He stares down at both. Carl throws the Bible back in the bag and takes a swig from the bottle.

CARL

Too late for the Bible. At least for me it is. But never too early for a drink.

Carl takes a big swig as his eyes scan the vast desert.

CARL (CONT'D)

Which way, Carl?

(laughs)

What fucking difference does it make?

He puts the bottle back in the bag and pulls a military style "Boonie" hat from the trunk and puts it on. He removes the travel bag, briefcase, and scabbard. He slings the strap from the scabbard over his shoulder.

Carl returns to the open drivers door, reaches in and grabs a canteen from inside the vehicle.

With canteen in hand and scabbard slung he walks away and down the highway leaving in the direction the car had traveled.

Carl has made it a good ways from the vehicle. He stops and looks back at the car now engulfed in smoke.

He watches as the car BURST INTO FLAMES.

CARL (CONT'D)

Piece of shit.

Across the endless desert something in the distance catches his eye.

EXT. OPEN DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Carl leaves the road and walks into the desert in the direction of his curiosity.

CARL (CONT'D)
 Hup-two-three-four, to the left,
 right, left.
 (yells)
 Get in step, god-dammit!

Carl eyes squint as they look to the sky.

CARL (CONT'D)
 How's that, Dad? Did I finally get
 it right?

FLASHBACK**EXT. HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY****SUPER: Years Past**

A ten year old Carl marches with a toy rifle on his shoulder as his father, a man in his thirties, barks commands.

CARL'S FATHER
 Hup-two-three-four, to the left,
 right, left.
 (yells)
 Get in step, god-dammit! Can't you
 do anything right?

Tears roll from Carl's eyes but he doesn't speak back to his father.

CARL'S FATHER (CONT'D)
 I'll make a man of you yet, you little
 shit!

BACK TO SCENE

Carl reaches the landmark that caught his eye: A weathered old wooden sign stuck in the sand that reads: HELL STRAIGHT AHEAD.

Carl yells to the sky.

CARL
 Hell got a bus that runs by here?!

He waits for an answer that doesn't come.

CARL (CONT'D)
 Guess not.

He looks behind him for the highway he can no longer see.

CARL (CONT'D)

No highway. If there ever was one.

He yells to the sky again.

CARL (CONT'D)

You ain't fooling me! I'm not walking
back for something that's not there!

Carl drops the scabbard, bag and briefcase to the sand then
falls to his butt.

CARL (CONT'D)

So this is the way it ends.
(laughs)
I'll drink to that.

He finishes off the remaining water from the canteen, tosses
it, then another big swig from the bottle.

CARL (CONT'D)

Nothing like chasing your water with
a bite of the spirit.

Carl spots a DUST DEVIL that has formed a distance away.

CARL (CONT'D)

What the fuck is that?

He watches as the spinning sand dissolves into the form of a
tall and slender OLD MAN walking his way.

Carl never takes his eyes off the man dressed in all black
clothing and a black hat. He knows this man.

CARL (CONT'D)

Sign should have said, "You've
arrived. Welcome to hell."

The old man stops within a foot of Carl and stares down at
him.

DESERT MAN

What makes you think you're in hell?

CARL

If you're here, where else could I
be.

DESERT MAN

Maybe I'm a mirage.

CARL

Maybe you are.

DESERT MAN

I'm not a mirage, Carl. I'm not here at all. I'm just what your mind wants to see. And that's all I am.

CARL

Now that's a lie. No part of me wants to see you. But since you're here I'll treat you decent. So what's up, Dad? What have you been up to? And where did you get those clothes? You look like a Quaker from an old western.

DESERT MAN

Took them off the bones in them. Lots of bones scattered about in this desert. What have you been up to? Any military? I see you're wearing the pants.

CARL

I was in the military every day of my life when you came home from the war, until you left.

DESERT MAN

I knew your mother would pamper you. Make you soft after I was gone. But I had to leave. I couldn't stand her any longer.

CARL

She tried to save you. That was her only sin.

The desert man notices Carl's tattoo.

DESERT MAN

Looks like she brain washed you.

CARL

She showed me the way. Jesus saved me.

DESERT MAN

Yeah, you look saved. How did you avoid the draft?

CARL

I didn't. I was drafted.

(MORE)

CARL (CONT'D)

Just never made it to training. First week was all test. The mental test got me ruled unacceptable for military service.

DESERT MAN

That made you happy, didn't it?

CARL

Happy as a ten dollar whore.

The desert man laughs.

DESERT MAN

You remember.

CARL

I heard it enough.

DESERT MAN

Never answered what you're up to these days.

CARL

Not much. Killed the president earlier today. That's about it.

DESERT MAN

Tell me all about that. Not the things that led to today. Just today. We both know you either hated him, or you did it for money. Just tell me how the action went down.

CARL

If you're not really here, why do you want to know.

DESERT MAN

As I said. I'm not here. But it's clear you want to talk about it. Get it off your chest. I'm your therapy. So let's hear it.

FLASHBACK

EXT. ELM STREET, DALLAS, TEXAS - DAY

SUPER: One Week Earlier

Carl stands on Elm street a block away from the book depository. He looks up and down the street from the depository to his left to Dealey Plaza and the picket fence on the grassy knoll.

CARL (V.O.)

I knew the route the procession would be taking. Everyone in Dallas knew. I knew there would be shots and figured about where Kennedy's car would be when I heard them. You see, there was another shooter. I knew he'd be in the depository on an upper floor and approximated the speed of the car and the angle the shots would come from.

GRASSY KNOLL - CONTINUOUS

Carl stands behind the picket fence on the grassy knoll at Dealey Plaza and looks up Elm street. He looks to the sky. He picks the spot he'll shoot from.

CARL (CONT'D)

That's when I decided not to use a scope. I knew how good a shot I was. I didn't need a scope. Just time enough to aim from the fixed sight and fire one shot. That would be all I needed. Looked at it like I was being a good sport. Giving him a chance if I did miss. I thought it only fair. I knew the other shooter wasn't a very good shot at all, but his first shot would let me know where the car was. I knew he'd keep trying. Keep firing. I also knew his fire would draw attention. My position wouldn't be known yet. The week before I had bought a pair of army khakis pants and shirt and a army duffel bag at the army navy store.

EXT. PICKET FENCE ON GRASSY KNOLL - DAY

SUPER: Friday, November 22nd

Carl sits behind the picket fence dressed in army khakis and finishing a sandwich by his duffel bag. The scratches on his face are still fresh.

CARL (V.O.)

I knew there would be so much chaos that I might as well be invisible. To say I was confident would be an understatement.

Carl takes a pack of M&M's from his sandwich bag just as he sees people moving toward the street at a brisk pace. He knows the procession is coming his way.

Carl lays the candy on the grass and places a nearby rock on top of it. He makes sure no eyes are turned his way as he removes his rifle from the duffel bag and lays it on the ground next to him.

Carl stands and peeks over the fence, then behind him. He sees there is no one in close sight to his rear and the procession is slowly coming his way. He places the rifle between him and the fence, and waits.

The SHOT Carl waits on rings out.

In a split second Carl steadies the rifle's barrel on the fence, takes aim and fires.

Action seen as from Carl's eyes.

Carl can see the president grab his throat as the procession speeds up and the secret service scurry.

Another SHOT rings out from the second shooter followed by another SHOT.

Carl sees the president's head explode.

Action to follow Carl's words-

CARL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The other shooter had gotten a lucky shot in. He made the head shot I had been low on. I put the rifle back in the duffel bag and calmly walked away never looking back, but I could hear all the screams and sirens and hoped the other shooter wouldn't get caught because I had no faith in him keeping his mouth shut. I had to do what I didn't want to do and use my real name. I didn't have any other choice if I wanted the money.

As Carl moves farther away from the chaos on Elm Street a black sedan stops on the street he approaches.

A man with a cigarette dangling from his lips holds a black briefcase out to Carl from the passenger side that Carl takes just before the sedan speeds away.

EXT. PARKING LOT - PARKED CAR - CONTINUOUS

Carl stands at the rear of his car and opens the trunk. He looks around him then puts the duffel bag and briefcase in.

Carl opens the briefcase and stares at the banded one hundred dollar bills that fill it.

BACK TO SCENE

DESERT MAN

So it wasn't hate. Or because he deserved it. You did it for money.

CARL

Cash is king and I was broke.

DESERT MAN

Was?

Carl hugs the black briefcase to his chest.

CARL

Not anymore.

DESERT MAN

Suppose you never thought about getting a job. That would have been out of the question.

CARL

I've had jobs. Just couldn't hold them. People always got scared of me. Then they'd let me go -- Thought you were dead. But I guess you just broke down too. Just never know who you're going to run into, do you?

DESERT MAN

You've been broke down for a while, haven't you, Carl?

CARL

Yes. With your help I became a fucking mess.

DESERT MAN

You were always a fucking mess. I knew it the first time I saw you. Did everything I could to make a man out of you. But you fought me all the way.

CARL

I should have killed you while you slept.

DESERT MAN

And the reason I slept with one eye open when you lived in my house. Knew you never had the guts to come at me head on. This president asleep in his car when you shot him?

CARL

Shot him while he waved to the crowd.

DESERT MAN

Crowd for what?

CARL

It was a parade and he was in a convertible with the top down

DESERT MAN

Now that's what I like to hear. You had a plan. Your target was a setting duck and the crowd was your cover for escape.

CARL

Pretty much.

DESERT MAN

So you did listen to me. I tried to teach you everything I knew. To make sure you'd be something a father could be proud of. But I was never certain if I was getting through to you.

Carl takes the pill bottle from his pocket and liquor from the bag.

CARL

Shit. Forgot my prescription is empty.

DESERT MAN

Out of pills, huh?

CARL

Seems so.

DESERT MAN

Hold on to the bottle. You may have a refill.

Carl pockets the empty bottle and drinks from the liquor.

CARL

I know that.

DESERT MAN
What were the pills for?

CARL
None of your business.

The desert man's eyes find the scabbard.

DESERT MAN
Okay to ask about the scabbard?

CARL
That, you can ask about.

DESERT MAN
Why that?

CARL
Because you already know what it is.
Carcano. Model 38.

DESERT MAN
Carcano, model 38. 6.5, 52 millimeter.
My old gun.

CARL
The one you taught me to shoot with.

DESERT MAN
Mind if I take a look at it?

CARL
Why would I care? Long as you
understand it's mine now.

DESERT MAN
I left it to you. Of course its yours.

Carl removes the weapon from the scabbard, pulls the bolt action back and hands it to the desert man.

CARL
Always clear your weapon before
another touches it.

DESERT MAN
Unless you want to be the next one
it kills.

CARL
That is the point.

The desert man's eyes take the rifle in like it's observing a beautiful woman.

Carl lights a cigarette. The desert man scowls at the act as his eyes remain on the rifle.

DESERT MAN

How many of those do you smoke in a day?

CARL

Never counted. Buy a carton every four days 'bout all I know.

DESERT MAN

You know those things will kill you.

CARL

Well that's it. I'm through with them.

DESERT MAN

When they put you in the ground you will be. I killed a lot of Germans with this rifle. Took it off a dead Italian sniper. Excellent weapon-

CARL

Do you know how many times I've heard this story?

DESERT MAN

If you're really good, like I was, you can bull's eye your target a good five hundred yards or better. How good are you?

CARL

Don't really know. Never killed anyone before today. And-

DESERT MAN

A live target is the only one that-

CARL

Matters.

DESERT MAN

I taught you well.

CARL

That you did.

DESERT MAN

How far was your target?

CARL

I calculated eighty to ninety yards.

DESERT MAN

And you missed a clean head shot?

CARL

I was a little off. Hid behind the fence I steadied the rifle on. When I took aim I had less than two seconds to squeeze off the round and retake my cover.

DESERT MAN

How do you know you even hit him if you didn't look?

CARL

I looked. After I shot I saw I was low. Targeted his forehead, caught him in the throat instead.

DESERT MAN

Tell me why you didn't use a scope.

CARL

Never use a scope if the sun is shining. The sun may reflect off the glass and give your position away.

DESERT MAN

Exactly right. Proud of you boy. I know you're down. But you'll find the right one, Carl.

CARL

What right one?

DESERT MAN

The right woman. The one that scratched your face isn't the one. But the right one, is out there. There's someone for everyone. Just have to find them. They may be blind. They may be deaf. They may be both. You'll know the right one when the time is right. It was your wife, right? The one scratched you.

CARL

Wife?

DESERT MAN

You have a wife, or not?

CARL

Of course I have a wife.

Carl's eyes become distant.

CARL (CONT'D)
Shit. I forgot. I killed her too.

FLASHBACK

INT. CARL'S HOME - MORNING

Carl is dressed in the army khakis, the scabbard's strap in his hand. He's having an argument with EMILY, a woman older than Carl in her late forties with platinum blonde hair.

EMILY
I know what's in that scabbard. Where are you going, Carl? And what's with the uniform?

CARL
None of your business, Emily. You better back off. I'm not in the mood for this today.

EMILY
Not in the mood? You better watch how you talk to me.

CARL
Or what, Emily. What are you going to do about it?

Emily raises her hand and stretches her fingers like a claw.

EMILY
I'll claw your eyes out you little shit!

Carl drops the scabbard. Both hands quickly find their way around Emily's throat.

CARL
You ever call me that again I'll kill you!

Emily claws Carl's face with her nails.

With brute force Carl slings Emily to the wall that she hits hard, then collapses to the floor, dead.

CARL (CONT'D)
I told you not to fuck with me! If you're not dead you can find somebody else to put up with you! I won't be back!

Carl waits for a response that doesn't come.

CARL (CONT'D)

You're not fooling me with that act.
You're not dead.

Carl steps closer to her.

CARL (CONT'D)

You really dead? Well you picked a
fine day for it. Like I haven't got
enough shit going on to have to deal
with you too.

Carl touches his hand to the scratches on his face then sees
the blood on his fingers.

BACK TO SCENE

The desert man hands the rifle back to Carl who takes a swig
from the liquor bottle.

DESERT MAN

That bottle won't help you out here.

CARL

I drank what water I had. The liquor
will do.

DESERT MAN

There's water in that canteen behind
you.

Carl turns quickly to his rear, to the canteen sitting upright
in the sand. He grabs the canteen filled with water and gulps
it down.

DESERT MAN (CONT'D)

Drink all you want. There's more
coming.

CARL

What do you mean there's more coming?

The desert man turns to walk away, but quickly turns back.

Something has caught the man's attention. His eyes scan the
desolate desert as Carl lights another cigarette.

DESERT MAN

She'll be along soon now.

The desert man turns his back to Carl again as he walks away
at a brisker pace than before.

Carl yells to the desert man-

CARL
 Who'll be along?
 (to himself)
 I am going crazy. He's not real. I
 know he's not real.
 (yells to man)
 You're not real, are you?!

The old man continues walking away but throws his hand up to Carl as he does.

CARL (CONT'D)
 I'll prove you're not fuckin' real!
 I'll put the bullet in you I should
 have put in you long ago!

The old desert man stops dead in his tracks and turns to Carl.

DESERT MAN
 Do your worst! You little shit!

He turns back and continues his retreat.

CARL
 Fuck you! I've always wanted to say
 that to you! Fuck you!

Carl digs into his travel bag and finds loose ammo.

He draws the bolt action chamber back on the rifle and inserts a round of ammunition then slaps the bolt into place and takes aim on the desert man's figure in the distance.

CARL (CONT'D)
 You ain't calling me names no more!
 This one is for old times sake!

Carl FIRES the one shot he has loaded.

He sees the desert man's body jolt from the shock of the penetrating round, then fall to the sand.

CARL (CONT'D)
 He was real. I did it! I finally
 killed the bastard!

Carl quickly places the rifle back into the scabbard and puts the liquor back into the travel bag. He slings the scabbard and grabs the briefcase, travel bag and canteen then starts for the downed man.

AT THE MAN'S BODY - CONTINUOUS

Carl stands over the desert man's weathered clothing that's filled with skeletal remains.

CARL
What the fuck?

Carl turns to the SOUND of a vehicle approaching.

He sees a vehicle speeding across the desert toward him.

Carl waves his arms and shouts to the vehicle.

CARL (CONT'D)
Hey! Over here! Over here!

The vehicle comes to a stop alongside Carl.

The tinted window rolls down.

Carl looks inside to find two women staring back at him.

CARL (CONT'D)
Where did you two come from?

The DRIVER, SELINA, looks to the woman next to her through her dark sunglasses. Selina is a pretty female with shoulder length dark hair in her twenties who wears a serious look about her.

SELINA
Hold on, hotshot. I need to confer
with my sister.

The WOMAN in the passengers seat is BLANCH, Selina's sister. Blanch is a plain Jane female, also in her twenties who smiles a lot. Blanch removes her sunglasses and stares back at Selina through beautiful eyes that say more than the words she lacks.

SELINA (CONT'D)
My sister says, "get in."

CARL
I didn't hear her say anything.

SELINA
No, you didn't. What's your name?

CARL
I'm Carl.

SELINA
I'm Selina. My sister is Blanch.
(MORE)

SELINA (CONT'D)

Get in, Carl, or stay. It's up to you but we're leaving in three seconds.

INT. VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS

Carl opens the rear door and throws his belongings in ahead of him. He breathes a sigh of relief.

CARL

Air conditioning.

SELINA

Whad' you think? We'd have the heat on?

Carl guzzles down the remaining water in his canteen.

CARL

That was the last of my water and I'm dying of thirst. You have any?

SELINA

Never go into the desert without water. Look beside you.

Carl looks to find a six-pack of glass bottled water beside him.

CARL

That wasn't there a minute ago.

SELINA

Your point?

Blanch's eyes are focused on Carl's face. A few moments later she stares her sister's way and passes along her thought.

SELINA (CONT'D)

Blanch wants to know why your face is scratched.

That's the second time you've said your sister said something that I haven't heard her say.

SELINA (CONT'D)

And again. No, you didn't.

Confounded, Carl holds a bottle of the water in his hand.

CARL

How am I supposed to open this?

Selina tosses a bottle opener over her shoulder to Carl.

SELINA

You want me to drink it for you,
too?

Carl pops the top off and guzzles down the water.

SELINA (CONT'D)

The scratches?

CARL

Not something I care to discuss right
now. Are you people real?

SELINA

Well I'm real blind, and my sister,
Blanch, is real deaf. Actually I'm
not totally blind, just legally. I
can make out images and figure out
what they are. I will tell a lie
occasionally, too.

CARL

If you're legally blind how did you
get a license?

SELINA

Never said I had a license. I'm in
the desert. What am I going to hit?
Besides, not likely to run across
any cops out here.

CARL

So you saw my image and stopped?

SELINA

Blanch told me where to stop.

Selina looks at her sister and sighs.

SELINA (CONT'D)

You and men.

(to Carl)

My sister wants to know how you found
your way out here?

CARL

I broke down on the highway. Got out
and just started walking. And again,
I didn't hear her say anything. If
she's deaf why do you speak to her
like she can hear?

SELINA

Just being polite and letting you in on the conversation. I see you're one of those that can't put two and two together. My sister communicates with me mentally. It's called telepathy. She can hear my thoughts and me hers. She just can't hear words physically spoken. But she can speak when she wants to. She just can't hear herself.

Selina grunts a laugh.

SELINA (CONT'D)

My sister says you're handsome. I wouldn't know. Are you?

CARL

I've seen this car in a magazine. Jeep Wagoneer, right? It's brand new isn't it?

SELINA

Of course its brand new. It's the first year of this model. My sister says you look to be in your forties. Are you?

CARL

Hell no. I'm twenty-eight.

SELINA

You must have lived a hard life.

Carl seems offended.

CARL

Is there a town where you can drop me off?

Carl digs out a cigarette from his pack and lights it.

SELINA

Doesn't work that way. If you must smoke that at least roll the window down.

Carl rolls the window down.

SELINA (CONT'D)

You have heard those will kill you?

CARL

And the very reason I'm quitting soon. What do you mean it doesn't work that way? Tell you what. Just let me out with a few bottles of water and I'll be fine.

SELINA

What you'd be is dead, just like that stack of bones you found.

CARL

How do you know about that?

SELINA

How do you think we found you? The old Quaker told us.

CARL

He's desert bones. He doesn't talk.

SELINA

Most of the time. But when he's not, he does.

CARL

Didn't notice any phone booths around here.

Selina replies her words like they are being sung-

SELINA

Telepathy.

CARL

That old Quaker was my father who didn't exist any more than you two do.

Carl pulls on the door handle, but it won't open.

SELINA

You can't open it unless I unlock it. Whether we exist or not isn't important. We exist to you. That's what is important.

Blanch adjust the rear view mirror to meet Carl's eyes with hers. Her words are similar to speaking through a mouth full of food, but understandable.

BLANCH

You're a real cutie.

SELINA

I told you she can speak she just
cant-

CARL

Hear herself. I know.

Blanch looks at Selina and smiles mischievously.

Selina shakes her head.

SELINA

My sister says she wouldn't mind
having sex with you.

CARL

She told you that?

Blanch turns her body so she can focus on Carl with intense
eyes that find him desirable.

SELINA

Not exactly. But I don't talk like
that so I cleaned it up.

CARL

To hell with the water.

Carl digs into the travel bag for his bottle.

CARL (CONT'D)

I need a drink.

Carl guzzles from the bottle.

SELINA

Are you an alcoholic?

CARL

If you saw that, you can see more
than an image.

SELINA

It's my sister's question.

CARL

I'm out of pills. The liquor is all
I have.

SELINA

So you're an addict?

CARL

It's my medication. I'm not an addict.

SELINA
Medication for what?

Carl doesn't care for the question.

CARL
My secret.

SELINA
Fine. I'll relay the information.

Blanche face shows concern as she receives Selina's thoughts.
Her eyes search Carl.

SELINA (CONT'D)
She wants to know your problem, and
she wants to know now.

CARL
And if I won't say?

SELINA
I don't know. Sometimes she's
unpredictable. Irrational to be
precise.

CARL
Like how irrational?

SELINA
Right now she's says she's holding
the barrel of the pistol in her hand
against the seat pointed at you with
the hammer cocked. She says tell
you, "You better answer."

Blanche's facial expression and eyes are dead serious.

CARL
I've had a really long day that's
not getting any better. Tell her to
go ahead and shoot.

SELINA
No.

A sigh of despair-

SELINA (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Blanch.

CARL
Can't shoot something she doesn't
have, huh?

SELINA

If I told her to shoot she would.
Right now she's on to something else.
She wants to know why you wear the
tattoo. I wouldn't test her again.

CARL

That I don't mind talking about
because it's true.

FLASHBACK

INT. CARL'S CHILDHOOD HOME - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Tears roll from ten year-old Carl as his MOTHER, a homely in appearance woman in her thirties, comforts him.

CARL

He won't leave me alone, Mother. And
he calls me names. I don't want to
be in the army and march around all
day.

Carl's mother pulls Carl to her and hugs him tight.

MOTHER

Don't cry, honey. I don't think he'll
be with us much longer. He wants to
leave us. I know this.

CARL

Then why doesn't he go?

MOTHER

I don't know for sure. He doesn't
really talk to me anymore. I think
he's just waiting for what he believes
to be the right time.

CARL

I'm afraid he's going to kill us.

MOTHER

No, no, Carl. He's not going to kill
us. The war did something to him. I
can't explain it but I know it. He
was different before and I thought
once he was home awhile his pain
would go away, but I don't feel it
will now. I think he'll leave us
soon.

CARL

Why can't we leave him?

MOTHER

Where would we go? I have no money without your father. He has to leave then I can make him take care of us. Do you understand?

CARL

I guess. I don't know.

MOTHER

You read your Bible every night don't you?

CARL

Yes.

MOTHER

And you say your prayers?

CARL

I do.

MOTHER

Always remember Jesus hears your prayers and will answer them. You know why?

CARL

Because Jesus loves me.

MOTHER

And?

CARL

Jesus saves.

MOTHER

That's right. Never forget that. I believe some things just take more time than others.

CARL

You really believe he'll be gone soon?

MOTHER

I do.

CARL

I hope so. Sometimes I feel like killing him.

MOTHER

You can't have murder in your heart and go to Heaven.

CARL

It's not in my heart. It's in my
brain.

Carl's mother kisses the top of Carl's head with the continued hug.

MOTHER

We'll just both pray heard, Carl.
Pray hard that Jesus saves us both.

BACK TO SCENE

CARL

My father finally left and never
came back. My prayers had been
answered. He sent my mother money
every month so our life only changed
for the better. That's the reason
for the tattoo. I can't tell everyone
I see but I deliver the thought if
they can read. You can relay that to
your sister.

SELINA

You really are fucked up, aren't
you?

CARL

I thought you didn't talk like that.

SELINA

I did mention I lie occasionally?

CARL

Yes you did. I am pretty fucked up.
They tell me I'm schizophrenic. That's
what the medication is for.

A long moment of silence-

SELINA

I relayed the information to my
sister.

Blanch smiles at Carl as she raises the pistol in her hand
into his view and eases the hammer back into place, then
sticks her tongue out at him before laughing hysterically.

SELINA (CONT'D)

She thinks you're very funny. That
was her sense of humor on display.

CARL

Has she ever shot anyone?

SELINA

Have you?

Carl laughs to himself and finishes off the bottle.

CARL

Don't know where we could get a drink
do you?

SELINA

You mean like a wild west saloon?

The desert sun is going down.

Carl's body relaxes as he sinks into the seat and closes his eyes.

CARL

I'm really tired.

SELINA

Then go to sleep.

CARL

Not sure that would be in my best
interest.

SELINA

Then stay awake.

CARL

Can you turn the radio on?

Selina turns the radio on.

RADIO BROADCAST

Today's high in the Chihuahuan Desert
was eighty-nine with an expected low
of fifty-nine. Not bad for a late
November day that saw our 35th
president, John F. Kennedy
assassinated in the streets of Dallas,
Texas.

The radio goes to a commercial.

CARL

Never mind the radio. Just turn it
off please.

SELINA

Sure.

Selina turns off the radio.

SELINA (CONT'D)

Off we go.

CARL

You find the radio fast for someone who's blind.

SELINA

If you were blind do you think you could still find your dick?

CARL

Thanks for the analogy.

SELINA

Well you know, when you know where something is-

CARL

I understand. You don't have to explain it to me.

SELINA

Blanch wants to know what you have in the briefcase.

CARL

Briefcase? That, what is usually in a briefcase.

Conversation ceases.

CARL (CONT'D)

Cat got your tongue?

SELINA

My sister and I are conferring.

CARL

Well excuse my interruption.

SELINA

She says she doesn't believe there's anything usual about you at all. Just tell me what's in there. I'll tell Blanch and we can all move on.

CARL

Documents.

SELINA

What kind of documents?

CARL

Personal.

SELINA

As in-

CARL

For my eyes only.

SELINA

I see. Did you get the pun? I see?

CARL

Hilarious.

SELINA

Any cash in the case?

CARL

Yes.

SELINA

How much?

Carl thinks, but only for a moment.

CARL

Eighty-nine dollars and fifty-nine cents.

Selina forwards the information to Blanch.

Blanch laughs out loud. Selina chuckles.

SELINA

Blanch says, "You must be a hell of a date with money like that." How did you come up with eighty-nine fifty-nine?

CARL

That was the check amount I cashed this morning. The bank teller put it in a little white envelope and I threw it in the briefcase.

SELINA

Where were you coming from when you broke down?

CARL

I don't care for the interrogation.

SELINA

Wouldn't happen to be Dallas, would it?

Carl doesn't answer.

SELINA (CONT'D)

And silence is confirmation.

CARL

All right. It was Dallas. So what?

SELINA

Getting testy are we?

CARL

Do you mind if we cease with the conversation? As I said, I'm tired of this day, and this conversation.

SELINA

And the high in the desert today was eighty-nine with an expected low of fifty-nine. Strange. That would be the exact amount you claim to have in your briefcase.

CARL

You have any idea where you're driving to?

SELINA

You wanted a drink. Remember?

CARL

Where, are we going?

SELINA

To the Wild West Saloon.

Twilight illuminates the desert as Carl's eyes and thoughts return to past days.

SUPER: Weeks Earlier

EXT. RIFLE RANGE - DAY

Carl loads, points and fires at the target one-hundred yards away on the firing range. The shot is a bull's-eye, dead center. Carl clears the shell from the rifle.

A young man, LEE HARVEY OSWALD, is on the shooting pad in the firing lane next to Carl on Carl's left. Oswald is in his early twenties.

OSWALD

(to Carl)

Nice shot. I've been watching. You never miss do you?

CARL
If I missed I'd be wasting my time
out here.

Oswald appears to be taken by Carl's confidence. He extends his hand.

OSWALD
I'm Lee Oswald.

They shake hands.

CARL
Uh, I'm Carl. Carl Baxter.

OSWALD
Well, Carl Baxter, where'd you learn
to shoot like that?

Carl loads a round into his bolt-action rifle. He turns to his target and fires. Another bull's eye.

Carl clears the rifle.

CARL
Father taught me. This was his rifle.

OSWALD
That's Italian made, isn't it?

CARL
You got a good eye. It's a Carcano
model 38 6.5x52 millimeter.

OSWALD
That's a sniper's rifle.

CARL
How do you know so much about it?

OSWALD
I read a lot. Guns are my interest.
How much you pay for it?

CARL
Inherited it.

OSWALD
From your father?

CARL
Yeah. He took it off a dead Italian
sniper. He was a sniper too. His
tool the rest of the war.

OSWALD

How many he kill?

CARL

Don't know for sure. Always just said he killed a lot of Germans with it. We didn't talk. I just listened.

OSWALD

What other guns do you have?

CARL

I don't. Don't have the interest you have. Just have this one. When I fire it I can feel the same sensation my father felt. It's the only thing I can say I had in common with him.

OSWALD

Had? You mean he's dead?

CARL

He's dead to me. I imagine he's dead somewhere. Don't really know or care. He left my mother and me just before my eleventh birthday. Just left one day and never came home. He left me a note taped to the rifle. Said he had no use for it any longer. Told me to find a way to make it part of my legacy. I never could figure what he meant by that. He always told me I was worthless, so I couldn't understand why he thought I would have a legacy.

OSWALD

What do you do for a living?

Carl gives a slight laugh.

CARL

What do I do for a living? I go from one job to the next. Never keep one long.

OSWALD

We got a lot in common. You want to get a beer. Place just down the street where we can throw one back and talk. What do you say?

CARL

I don't drink with friends.

(MORE)

CARL (CONT'D)

Mainly because I have none. Kind of funny to think I'd drink with a stranger.

OSWALD

Like I said. We have a lot in common. Who knows. Maybe we could find that pot at the end of the rainbow together.

CARL

The one filled with gold?

OSWALD

The one filled with gold.

INT. STREET BAR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Carl and Oswald sit across from each other in a booth in a run down street bar with a mug of beer in front of each as they puff on their cigarettes.

CARL

You come here often?

OSWALD

I wouldn't call sometimes often. Usually don't have the cash.

CARL

But you do now?

OSWALD

Little bit.

CARL

You said we have a lot in common. Like what?

OSWALD

I never had a real father. He died before I was born. My mother, least that's what she was called, had a lot of boyfriends. She had one longer than the rest. He liked me. Would have liked to have had a chance to know him better, but it wasn't in the cards. He eventually left and my mother and me moved, and we moved and we moved and we moved.

CARL

My mother was a good mother. Was yours?

OSWALD

Don't really think she cared anything about me. Just an obligation to her by law. You may be the best I've ever seen with a bolt-action. That is, on a target range. Could you do that in real life? To a person?

CARL

You mean like in war? Like a sniper?

OSWALD

You could look at it like that. Like you got somebody you've never met, don't know nothing about in your cross-hairs, and you have to take their life because that's your job. Could you do it?

CARL

I got kicked out of the army. I don't have to worry about that.

Oswald looks around the bar to make sure no one is paying them any attention.

OSWALD

Let me put it another way. For enough money, could you do it?

Carl looks down at his beer and thinks.

CARL

Why are you asking me this?

OSWALD

Because you shoot that rifle like you were born to do it. And because that's where the pot of gold comes from.

They stare at each others face for a long moment.

CARL

Would that make me famous?

OSWALD

That, you don't want. But you could call yourself pretty much rich. At least by your standard of living now.

CARL

Why would someone pay to have this person dead? They do something to somebody that bad that it's pay-back?

OSWALD

It don't matter why it's wanted done. Just matters could you do it.

Carl leans back against the booth and laughs.

CARL

You're full of shit, or just talkin' it. How would you know somebody that would pay like that? Was there an ad in the newspaper I missed? I mean, how would you know?

Oswald stares hard and long at Carl.

OSWALD

Looks like I made a mistake. Thought you were maybe like me. But if you're happy with your life-

CARL

I ain't happy with my fuckin' life. But I don't like to be lied to or to be made out to be a fool-

OSWALD

Then stop acting like one. I'll set up a meet and you'll find out everything you need to know. You just have to trust me. And one more thing. I give a shit less if your name is Carl Baxter but you better have something to say that it is if it's not. Because the person you'll be meeting is going to make sure he at least thinks he knows who he's talking to. Understand?

CARL

Yeah. I understand. I got nothin' to hide.

Oswald takes a napkin from the napkin holder. He writes a address on the napkin.

OSWALD

This is the address of the Carousel Club. Meet me out front at seven pm. tomorrow. We'll go in together.

Carl wads up the napkin.

CARL
I know where it is.

BACK TO SCENE

INT./EXT. JEEP WAGONEER - DESERT - NIGHT

The vehicle drives on through the desolate desert.

Carl has fallen asleep in the back seat.

SELINA
Wake up, handsome.

Carl stirs awake, groggy from lack of sleep.

CARL
What? What is it?

Blanch turns to Carl with a big smile.

SELINA
The Wild West Saloon.

Carl's eyes focus on the bright neon lights just ahead that spell out, Wild West Saloon. He looks confused.

SELINA (CONT'D)
Still want a drink?

CARL
Still want a drink. What is this?

SELINA
The saloon you wanted.

CARL
But how could that be possible? We're
in the middle of the desert. There's
no electricity out here.

SELINA
Your point?

CARL
The neon lights. How's that possible?

SELINA
You tell me, it's your vision.

Blanch turns her eyes to Selina, then to Carl.

SELINA (CONT'D)

Blanch says you need to loosen up.
Enjoy what you have.

The vehicle pulls up to the front of the saloon.

SELINA (CONT'D)

I doubt the drinks are free. Better
take your eighty-nine fifty-nine in
with you.

Carl puts the briefcase in his lap and partially opens it.

Blanch strains to see what's inside but can't make it out.

Carl pulls a one hundred dollar bill from one of the bands
then closes the case back.

CARL

You can lock this car, right?

SELINA

Yes, Carl. I can lock the fucking
car. Your documents are safe.

EXT. WILD WEST SALOON - CONTINUOUS

The three exit the vehicle.

Carl and Blanch stare through the windows of the saloon filled
with people as the piano music blast from inside an upbeat
tune.

CARL

Where did all these people come from?
There's not one vehicle parked out
here.

SELINA

How many is these people?

CARL

A lot.

SELINA

I don't know for sure, but I would
guess they all arrived on the same
bus.

INT. WILD WEST SALOON - CONTINUOUS

The three enter through the swinging bar doors.

The saloon is filled with cowboys and dance hall girls.

Men stand drinking along the long bar.

Other men sit around the tables playing poker.

The pianist bangs the piano's keys bringing loud music from old west times.

Two dance hall girls stand by the piano moving their bodies to the music and lifting their skirts exposing their legs and buttocks.

Other dance hall girls mill around and flirt with the patrons.

Carl stops dead in his tracks. A memory has been stirred.

FLASHBACK

EXT. CAROUSEL CLUB - DALLAS - NIGHT

Carl and Oswald make their way up the stairs to the club entry-

INT. CAROUSEL CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Inside the club Carl's eyes take in the scantily clad woman on stage singing to the patrons and the likewise dressed waitresses scurrying around the tables.

OSWALD

Just follow me.

They continue through the club past the stage where they are stopped by a large, CLUB BOUNCER.

OSWALD (CONT'D)

(to bouncer)

I'm Lee Oswald. Jack's expecting me.

CLUB BOUNCER

Who's he?

OSWALD

He's Carl. Jack's expecting him, too.

CLUB BOUNCER

Knock on the door. He'll yell to you when he wants you to enter.

OSWALD

No problem.

They continue down a long hallway to a closed door. Oswald knocks and waits.

A few moments later the door opens. A well built blonde in a tight sweater brushes by them followed by JACK RUBY, age fifty-two, 5'9, balding and stout built. Ruby stops in the doorway.

JACK RUBY

Come on in.

Carl and Oswald enter.

Jack steps out into the hallway and yells to the bouncer.

JACK RUBY (CONT'D)

No body else comes!

The bouncer waves his acknowledgment.

JACK RUBY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jack closes the door and takes a seat behind his desk as Carl and Oswald take the two chairs in front of the desk.

JACK RUBY

I don't drink, or smoke, so that means you don't smoke in here. But if you need a drink-

OSWALD

I'm good.

CARL

I could use one.

OSWALD

He don't want one either.

Carl looks caught off guard, but follows the lead.

CARL

I'm good.

JACK RUBY

I know pretty much all there is to know about Lee. Who are you?

CARL

I'm Carl.

Carl looks over at Oswald.

CARL (CONT'D)

Carl Mays.

JACK RUBY
(to Oswald)
Is that who this is?

OSWALD
Told me his name was Carl Baxter.

Jack leans back in his chair.

JACK RUBY
(to Carl)
Ball's to you.

CARL
I didn't know who I was meeting when he introduced himself. I don't generally talk to strangers and I don't trust anybody. So I changed my name a little.

JACK RUBY
So if Mays is your real name why are you telling me now. I'm a stranger.

CARL
I was told you'd make sure you knew who you were talking too. I can only prove who I am.

JACK RUBY
You're fuckin' right I would. So prove it.

CARL
Drivers license okay?

JACK RUBY
It's a start.

Carl digs his license out and hands it to Jack.

JACK RUBY (CONT'D)
Lee tells me you're a crack shot.

CARL
Better than that.

JACK RUBY
Confidence I like. You a hunter?

CARL
No. Not a hunter.

JACK RUBY
I got a feelin' you've never killed
anything in your life. Have you?

CARL
No. But I wanted too.

JACK RUBY
Well that's a start. What held you
back?

CARL
I've thought about that -- Opportunity
I believe.

JACK RUBY
It was your father you wanted to
kill, wasn't it?

CARL
What makes you think that?

JACK RUBY
Because you been carrying that with
you for a long time. You can see it
in the way you said it.

Jack looks down at Carl's license he holds.

JACK RUBY (CONT'D)
This still your address?

CARL
It is.

Jack copies the information off the license.

JACK RUBY
Ever been arrested?

CARL
No.

JACK RUBY
I have. Military?

CARL
I went in but was kicked out.

JACK RUBY
What the fuck did you do?

CARL
I didn't do anything.
(MORE)

CARL (CONT'D)

Just didn't fit in. They picked up on it in processing. Best thing that ever happened to me.

JACK RUBY

Don't believe in fighting for your country?

CARL

No, I don't.

JACK RUBY

What do you think about politicians?

CARL

I don't know any.

JACK RUBY

In general.

CARL

Never really gave it any thought.

JACK RUBY

You believe you have a conscience.

CARL

Never gave that any thought either.

JACK RUBY

You never felt bad about doing something you shouldn't have?

CARL

Not that I can recall. But if I did do something like that it would be because I needed to. Not so much because I wanted to.

JACK RUBY

And that would make it all right?

CARL

That would make it bearable because it was what I had to do.

JACK RUBY

Now that I understand. I've got to do something I don't want to do. But if I don't do it nothing else will matter for me because I won't be around. It's a position I put myself in and I can't change it.

(MORE)

JACK RUBY (CONT'D)

So I'm going to offer you some advice. You ever hear anyone say, "if you can't stand the heat get out of the kitchen?"

CARL

I've heard it.

JACK RUBY

If we meet again they'll be no turning back for you. You'll know too much. So my advice to you is to walk out of here right now and go about your life.

Carl doesn't move.

JACK RUBY (CONT'D)

You did understand what I said?

CARL

I understood. If I leave my chance at the pot of gold goes with me. Whatever I have to do to get that, it's what I have to do for me.

JACK RUBY

Pot of gold?

OSWALD

It's reference I gave him to more money than he's ever seen. That's all.

JACK RUBY

So you would be doing, whatever, just for yourself?

CARL

I don't do anything for anybody except myself. I did for my mother, but she's dead. So no, now, just for me.

JACK RUBY

Tell you what. A cop I know is going to check you out from the information on your license. You got a problem with that?

CARL

No problem.

JACK RUBY

If you were a cop, you would tell me, right? Because I'm going to find out who you are.

CARL

I'm nobody particular. But I can assure you I'm no cop.

JACK RUBY

Sound like you don't like cops. I like cops. A lot of my friends are cops.

CARL

I don't know any to like or not like. I'm only interested in the pot of gold?

JACK RUBY

(to Oswald)

I hope you're not one that talks too much. This pot of gold thing makes me wonder.

OSWALD

No. I'm not. It was more like, imagine this type thing. An example of what could come.

JACK RUBY

You say nothin' else. Not one fuckin' thing. I do the talkin'. You understand?

OSWALD

Understood.

JACK RUBY

(to Carl)

You pretty much available anytime? Got a work schedule or anything like that?

CARL

I'm unemployed at the moment.

JACK RUBY

Lee will get back with you at the appropriate time for another meet. It may be here, it may be somewhere else. And that only happens if everything checks out on you.

BACK TO SCENE**INT. WILD WEST SALOON - NIGHT**

Carl makes his way quickly to the long bar.

CARL
(to bartender)
Whiskey. And leave the bottle.

The BARTENDER pulls up a glass and bottle.

Carl lays the one hundred dollar bill on the bar.

The bartender picks up the bill and examines it.

BARTENDER
What the hell are you trying to pull?

CARL
Excuse me?

BARTENDER
This ain't real.

CARL
Of course it's real.

The bartender slaps the bill to the bar and points to the date stamp.

BARTENDER
The date stamp says nineteen sixty-three.

CARL
Because that's when it was minted.

The bartender takes hold of the whiskey bottle.

BARTENDER
Anybody ever mention to you the possibility you may be fucked up mentally?

Carl retrieves the money and pockets it. He removes his watch from his wrist.

CARL
How about the watch for the bottle?

BARTENDER
Why ain't it on a chain and in your pocket?

CARL

Because its not a pocket watch. Its
a wrist watch.

BARTENDER

You're not from around here, are
you?

Selina comes to Carl's aid.

SELINA

I sense there may be a problem.

BARTENDER

You with him?

SELINA

I am.

BARTENDER

What's that covering your eyes?

SELINA

Sunglasses.

CARL

She's blind. At least legally.

Blanch approaches and stands alongside Carl.

Selina looks at Blanch and shakes her head.

CARL (CONT'D)

(to Selina)

What did she ask you?

SELINA

If anything was wrong.

The bartender examines the watch a little closer.

BARTENDER

I ain't never seen a watch like this.

CARL

And you would be the first to own
one here, all for the price of the
bottle.

Carl pulls a cigarette from his pack and lights it.

BARTENDER

Where'd you get the cigarette from?

CARL
From the pack it came in.

BARTENDER
You roll 'em and stick them in there?

CARL
Where I'm from you buy them like
this.

BARTENDER
Give me one.

Carl gives the bartender a cigarette. He smells the tobacco and puts it into his mouth, then searches for his matches.

Carl holds out his lighter.

Selina takes the lighter from Carl's hand and lights the bartender's cigarette.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Thought you were blind?

Carl speaks for Selina-

CARL
Just legally.

SELINA
I can make out images and estimated
the placement of the cigarette from
your voice.

CARL
No different than finding your own
dick.

BARTENDER
Pretty good cigarette.

CARL
Anybody famous in here?

BARTENDER
Hickok has a game going, corner table
in the rear.

CARL
Wild Bill?

BARTENDER
Only Hickok I know of. Why are you
people dressed so funny?

CARL

Do we have a deal for the watch?

The bartender thinks for a moment.

BARTENDER

Throw them cigarettes in and we do.

CARL

Gladly.

Carl hands the pack over as a DANCE HALL GIRL steps up to Carl and lays her hand on his shoulder.

DANCE HALL GIRL

You looking for a date, handsome?

Blanch's eyes stare hard at the woman as they narrow, her anger obvious.

SELINA

Really, Blanch?

(to Carl)

For your benefit, remember?

CARL

What did Blanch just say?

SELINA

Not sure you want to know.

(to dance hall girl)

I'd get my ass away from him as fast as I could if I were you.

The dance hall girl sizes Selina up.

DANCE HALL GIRL

Why don't you just shut up and stay hidden behind your dark glasses before I show you what fucked up really looks like.

The bartender laughs.

Blanch pulls her pistol from her purse, the barrel to the girl's head. The GUNSHOT rings out. The dance hall girl falls dead.

Blanch stands over her kill and through her thick voice-

BLANCH

That's my boyfriend!

The saloon goes dead quiet.

Carl grabs the whiskey bottle.

CARL
 (to bartender)
 We'll be leaving now.

The bartender just stares hard at Carl.

Blanch grabs the bottle from Carl's hand and breaks it on the bar top.

CARL (CONT'D)
 (to Selina)
 Do you know what Blanch just did!?

SELINA
 She told me.

Carl picks up the neck of the broken, empty bottle. He's really upset.

CARL
 Why would she do that!?

Selina sighs and makes thought contact with Blanch.

SELINA
 She says you drink too much. And if the bottle doesn't exist, neither does this saloon.

The saloon and all but the three dissolve.

EXT. DESERT - CONTINUOUS

The three stand alone in the desert by the Wagoneer.

CARL
 Shit! Mother-fucker! I bargained for that bottle!

Selina unlocks the vehicle.

SELINA
 Get in, or stay. Blanch and I are leaving.

The girls get into the Wagoneer.

CARL
 If the saloon wasn't real, what makes the both of you real?

SELINA
 You know why we're here.

CARL

I'm sorry but I wasn't informed on that, only that you'd be along shortly by the hallucination of my father.

SELINA

We're here because you need us. Now are you getting in, or staying?

CARL

You're not leaving with all my things in the car.

Carl notices his wrist watch is back.

CARL (CONT'D)

My watch is back.

SELINA

In five seconds I'm putting the petal to the metal and you'll be eating desert dust.

CARL

Now you just wait-

SELINA

Five, four, three, two-

Carl grabs the door handle-

CARL

Alright-alright!

He almost leaps into the vehicle.

CARL (CONT'D)

I'm in!

Selina floors the gas pedal as the Wagoneer speeds away and into the desert.

INT. JEEP WAGONEER - CONTINUOUS

The three are quiet of conversation. The only sound is the static interfering with the radio signal.

Carl is dead tired and can barely keep his eyes open. He tries to remain alert.

CARL

(to Selina)

You do know it's night?

Selina laughs-

SELINA

Well of course I do. Why wouldn't I?

It hits Carl what he has said.

CARL

I wasn't thinking. I just meant it's night out and you're driving without lights.

SELINA

Would it make you feel better if I turned them on?

CARL

No. I would just see what we were about to hit.

SELINA

That's funny. You like being in the dark even though you have a choice.

CARL

I'm sorry. I'm just dead tired. I haven't slept in two days.

Sarcasm creeps into Selina's tone-

SELINA

Then why don't you sleep.

(to Blanch)

Nothing. We were just talking. Nothing worth repeating.

CARL

That was to, Blanch?

SELINA

The words were to you. Being polite and keeping you informed of what's being said between us. Remember? I'm getting tired of telling you that.

CARL

How did she know you were talking to me if she's deaf?

SELINA

She saw my lips moving you idiot!

Carl lays his head back.

CARL

Sleep sounds good.

Carl's sleep is restless.

CARL (CONT'D)
What day is this?

SELINA
A day later than when we picked you
up.

CARL
That means it's Saturday. Can you do
something about the radio? The static
is driving me crazy.

SELINA
You're becoming a real pain in the
ass.

Selina tries to tune the station in better. The static is
reduced but still present.

SELINA (CONT'D)
That's as good as I can get it.

The radio is giving a news broadcast on the assassination.

SELINA (CONT'D)
Why don't I just turn it off.

CARL
No wait. I want to hear what they're
saying.

Carl leans forward to better hear the broadcast.

CAR RADIO
President Kennedy's accused assassin
remains in the Dallas jail awaiting
arraignment. Lee Harvey Oswald was
arrested just before two pm yesterday
while hiding in a downtown Dallas
theater. In the hour before, Oswald
is also accused of gunning down a
Dallas police officer.

CARL
That stupid bastard.

SELINA
You knew him?

CARL
Unfortunately. No use hiding it
anymore. It's all going to come out
anyway. I was the second shooter.

SELINA

They say there was only one and they have him.

CARL

Well they're wrong.

SELINA

You know you do have this problem, Carl. Everything you see isn't always there.

CARL

It's called schizophrenia. Yes. I do recall.

SELINA

If you did this why do you think you'll be caught? You're not in Kansas anymore. Oh wait. That's the witches line. You're not in Dallas anymore. Did you leave a confession somewhere?

CARL

I may as well. The one in jail will tell it all.

SELINA

They still have to catch you. And by chance they never, you'll still have your glory. Your name will never be forgotten.

Carl likes that thought.

CARL

That's right. And I'll have the money, too.

Carl opens the briefcase beside him. It's dark in the car and can't see into it well. He runs his hand through the inside. It's empty. Carl slams the briefcase shut.

CARL (CONT'D)

My money! You stole my fuckin' money!

SELINA

You mean the eighty-nine, fifty-nine?

CARL

You know what the fuck I mean!

SELINA

No, I don't know what the fuck you mean. And stop yelling at me.

(to Blanch)

I'll tell you in a minute when your boyfriend stops yelling at me.

(to Carl)

Before you ask I'm repeating what we're discussing. I do not have your money. If you had any money it's still there. You just overlooked it.

CARL

I can't see it to overlook it! It's too fuckin' dark! I stuck my fuckin' hand in to feel for it and there was nothing fucking there!

SELINA

Then you're either having a fucking hallucination or there was never a fucking thing in there to begin with. Now stop fucking yelling at me!

CARL

Don't talk like that, huh?!

SELINA

I-

CARL

I know! You occasionally lie!

SELINA

Turn on the goddamn dome light and look again! If there was ever any fucking money it's still fucking in there!

In anger, Carl turns on the dome light and looks again. The money is all there.

CARL

I don't understand. It was gone. It was all gone.

SELINA

Oh boo-who. The little shit found his fucking money.

CARL

Don't you call me that! Don't you ever fucking call me that again!

SELINA

(to Blanch)

I said I'll tell you in a minute.

(to Carl)

What are you going to do if I do?
Shoot me with your little toy gun
you carry around? You little shit!

Blanch can't stand it any longer. She wants to know what's happening. In her thick voice she turns to Carl-

BLANCH

What's wrong honey?

CARL

(to Selina)

I'll show you a fucking toy gun!

Carl unzips the scabbard and pulls out a plastic toy gun.

CARL (CONT'D)

What the fuck!

SELINA

Little shit! Little shit! Little
shit!

CARL

Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!

Carl wakes himself, screaming.

CARL (CONT'D)

Shut up!

SELINA

Jesus Christ!

She slams on the brakes.

SELINA (CONT'D)

(to Carl)

You're beginning to weigh on my
nerves. You were dreaming. Are you
back in the real world now? Excuse
me. That's impossible for you. Are
you awake now?

Frantically, Carl unzips the scabbard and finds his rifle. He sighs his relief.

CARL

Sorry. It seemed so real.

SELINA

Yes. I can imagine.

(to Blanch)

I will tell you in a minute.

(to Carl)

You're both getting on my nerves.

Stop talking. I'm going to tell Blanch

the same and go back to driving. You

can go back to sleep, or stay awake.

If you cause me to have a heart attack

be decent enough to hallucinate an

ambulance for me.

Carl checks the briefcase again. The money is there.

CARL

It just seemed so real.

SELINA

Do tell.

EXT. JEEP WAGONEER - DESERT - CONTINUOUS

The Wagoneer speeds through the desert night.

INT. JEEP WAGONEER - CONTINUOUS

Carl's restlessness continues behind closed eyes.

FLASHBACK

EXT. ONE WAY STREET - DALLAS - NIGHT

A taxi travels down a one way Dallas street.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Carl and Oswald are in the back seat of the taxi.

CARL

(to Oswald)

Where are we going?

Oswald puts a finger to his lips to shush Carl.

OSWALD

(to taxi driver)

Pull over to the curb, right side,
when you can.

EXT. COMMERCE STREET - CONTINUOUS

The taxi pulls to the curb.

Carl and Oswald get out of the taxi.

Oswald pays the driver.

The taxi pulls back into traffic and away.

Carl reads the street sign: Commerce St.

OSWALD

We don't ever say anything, and I mean anything around people we don't know. Okay?

CARL

Sure.

OSWALD

We're going to stand here for a minute until all the traffic that would have been behind us has passed. Look for anything that pulls to the curb on either side.

They both light a cigarette.

CARL

What are we doing?

OSWALD

We're standing on the corner smoking a cigarette, watching all the girls go by.

(laughs)

What does it look like we're doing?

CARL

Hell if I know.

OSWALD

Follow my lead. Just walk slow.

The two walk back the way the taxi had traveled.

Carl sees the Carousel Club sign up ahead.

CARL

We-

Oswald cuts Carl off-

OSWALD

Don't say anything.

They walk on and past the club's entrance. They stop at the entrance to the adjacent alleyway.

OSWALD (CONT'D)
Watch the street. Remember, anything
that stops and pulls to the curb.

Carl keeps his eyes on the traffic.

Oswald turns his eyes down the alley.

OSWALD (CONT'D)
Okay?

CARL
Nothin' unusual.

OSWALD
Then lets go.

They walk into the alley at a slow pace.

About halfway in a man in a suit stands outside a door at
the top of a fire escape. The man throws his hand up to
Oswald.

Oswald nods back to the man who enters the building through
the door behind him.

OSWALD (CONT'D)
Follow behind me up the fire escape.

Carl follows to the top. They stand outside the closed door
and look back up the alleyway. They see nothing.

Oswald taps on the door, twice, then once, then twice again.

The door is opened by the man in the suit who holds his finger
to his lips.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Oswald and Carl enter. Two more men in suits wait in the
hallway inside. One turns Oswald to the wall, the other Carl.
They both are frisked.

The first man who had opened the door puts his finger to his
lips again when Oswald and Carl turn around. The man motions
for them to follow him.

They stop outside of a closed door down the hallway. The man
in the suit puts on a pair of sunglasses and knocks once on
the door.

After a moment the door is opened by Jack Ruby. BLINDING
LIGHTS on portable stands to each side of Ruby's desk make
seeing past them impossible.

JACK RUBY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

JACK RUBY

Come on in, guys. Both of you walk straight ahead, reach out and you'll feel the chair you'll be sitting in. Take a seat. I'll tell you when to say anything. Until then, keep your fuckin' mouths shut.

Carl and Oswald find their chairs and take their seats. They shield their eyes with their hands and by looking down.

JACK RUBY (CONT'D)

(to men in hallway)

Nothing comes down that hallway. Not even a fucking mouse.

The men nod and take positions outside the door that Ruby shuts. Ruby shields his eyes as he moves behind the lights to his desk.

JACK RUBY (CONT'D)

Okay. So mister Carl Mays, you have been checked and rechecked. In other words you pass the test. And since you didn't take my advice and you're here, you are in for the haul. Do you know what that means, Carl? You can speak now.

CARL

Means there's no way out.

JACK RUBY

That is true. But it actually means much more than that. You just don't want to know the rest. You fulfill your obligation and go about your way. You never even attempt to come back here. That goes for the both of you. There is one question, Carl, that we cannot find an answer to. And if my associate, who is sitting beside me, can not find the fucking answer it's worrisome. So you're going to tell the fucking answer to the question I'm going to ask. Now I could have been lying and we know the answer already. Maybe we just want to see who we're really dealing with. A liar. Or someone we want to trust. It is to your benefit to answer truthfully. You understand this? You may speak.

CARL

I understand.

JACK RUBY

So we have discovered you have a medical condition. What exactly is it?

CARL

It's called, schizophrenia.

JACK RUBY

And how does that affect you?

CARL

Some days are better than others. My medicine will help most of the time.

JACK RUBY

Most of the time?

CARL

Yes. Unless I'm really stressed. But it's nothing you have to worry about.

JACK RUBY

How so?

CARL

When I hallucinate I pretty much know now what's real and what isn't. I make myself ignore what isn't. Seems to work for me.

JACK RUBY

But you still see what's real?

CARL

I still see what's real.

JACK RUBY

How are you today?

CARL

I doubled up on my medication. I wanted to be okay tonight.

JACK RUBY

How's that make you feel, doubling up?

CARL

Tired, but unable to sleep.

JACK RUBY

You're going to have to take a life.
Can you do it?

CARL

For the pot of gold? Yeah.

JACK RUBY

You and this fucking pot of gold.

Jack turns to the man unseen that sits at the end of the desk next to him.

JACK RUBY (CONT'D)

(to unseen man)

What do you want to do?

The man taps his fingers on the desk as they wait. The tapping suddenly stops.

The man's hand comes into view with a gun in it. He lays it down hard on the desk top.

JACK RUBY (CONT'D)

(to Carl and Oswald)

You two know what that was? You both can speak.

OSWALD

I don't have a clue. Look. I didn't know he had a fucking problem. All's I ever said was he could fuckin' shoot.

CARL

I know what it was.

JACK RUBY

So what was it?

CARL

A gun.

JACK RUBY

You can see a gun?

CARL

I can't see anything through the damn lights. It's been slammed down in front of me many times by my father. So I knew the sound.

FLASHBACK

INT. CARL'S CHILDHOOD HOME - KITCHEN

Child Carl sits in his chair at the kitchen table as his father stands to his side badgering him. Tears rolls from Carl's eyes.

Carl's father slams the gun in his hand to the table in front of Carl.

CARL'S FATHER

If you were a real man instead of a little shit you'd pick the gun up and blow your brains out. Save the world of one less piece of shit!

RETURN TO SCENE

JACK RUBY

Why didn't you just pick it up and shoot him?

CARL

I never believed it was loaded. Figured he was baiting me. Setting me up to shoot me in self defense. I thought about killing him all the time. But I wanted it to be with my weapon when I did, and I didn't have one.

JACK RUBY

Do you know the purpose of the gun, here today, Carl?

Carl thinks for a moment-

CARL

Awareness?

JACK RUBY

Mother fucker. That's right. Your awareness is important. You passed.
(to Oswald)

Lee, you failed. But you fill a need and you mostly already know everything.

(to Carl)

Carl, you and lee shoot together, correct?

CARL

At the same gun range, yes.

JACK RUBY

How would you rate him? How good of a shot?

CARL

Average.

OSWALD

Thanks a lot, pal.

JACK RUBY

How would you rate yourself, Carl?
How good are you?

CARL

I've never seen one better.

OSWALD

He can shoot. That's for sure.

The unseen man suddenly breaks his silence-

UNSEEN MAN

Carl. Are you a Democrat?

Ruby looks surprised the unseen man has spoken out.

CARL

I'm not affiliated with anyone.

UNSEEN MAN

Do you know what a Democrat is?

CARL

Part of a political party.

UNSEEN MAN

In part, that's true. What they really are is a curse on our country and everything that made it great. You are aware the president is a Democrat?

CARL

I'm aware.

Ruby's eyes aren't happy with what he's hearing.

The unseen man taps on the desk, turns his hand palm up and gestures toward Carl.

Ruby gives a deep sigh before speaking.

JACK RUBY

A week from Friday President Kennedy will be in a motorcade. He's your target. You'll never know why or anything else other than where you'll shoot from. And that's exactly where you'll shoot from. You don't make any changes for any reason. You do and you never have to worry about your fucking pot of gold. Never seen a dead man spend a dime. You'll be paid immediately after, ten-thousand dollars. There is no up front money. You have to trust you'll be paid. We trust you, or you wouldn't be leaving here alive. Now we'll go over the details and you can even chime in with your thoughts and we'll consider them. You don't speak of anything you've heard here, anywhere, or to anyone. You will memorize the details and act on them at the proper time.

(to Oswald)

Same goes for you, Lee.

Oswald nods.

CARL

I have a question.

JACK RUBY

For lack of a better word. Shoot.

CARL

Isn't that car, like, bullet proof?

JACK RUBY

No. It is not.

CARL

But it has a hardtop, right?

JACK RUBY

It has a removable top. It's like pieced together. It won't be used that day. It will be removed, making the car into a convertible.

CARL

How could anyone know it won't be used that day?

A few moments of silence and a glance from Ruby to the unseen man.

JACK RUBY

We know. That's all you need to know.

CARL

And if it rains?

OSWALD

Good question.

JACK RUBY

The long term forecast calls for a clear, sunny day. But should that change we adjust. You don't need to know any of that until it's necessary. In fact look at anything you may be questioning this way. You both are on a need to know basis. If we haven't told you. You don't need to know. Anything else?

Carl and Oswald shake their heads.

JACK RUBY (CONT'D)

Then lets get to it.

The unseen man interrupts-

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)

Just a moment.

Ruby settles back in his chair.

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Carl, when you fix your sight on your target I want you to replace Kennedy's face with your father's. Think of everything he did to you, then do your job.

CARL

If I do that he'll be out of sight before I get the shot off. Focusing on the target is all I need to do.

MINUTES LATER

JACK RUBY

That's it. If you have any other questions you'll ask them before you leave. You two will not leave here together. You will not see each other again or communicate in any way with each other. This is both before or after the fact.

(MORE)

JACK RUBY (CONT'D)

You both do everything in the way you've been told to do and you should be fine. But you fuck up and get yourself caught somehow, you better just take the fall and deal with it. From this point on you will both be under surveillance day and night, but you will never know we're there. You will receive everything you've been promised. We keep our word. We expect you to honor your commitment and keep your mouths shut. I need you both to acknowledge you understand.

OSWALD

I understand.

CARL

I understand.

JACK RUBY

Lee, you leave first. Out the front, not the way you came in. Don't linger, don't be looking behind you. Don't look suspicious. Just leave.

OSWALD

Go now?

JACK RUBY

Go now.

Jack gets up and walks Oswald to the door. Jack opens the door and steps out into the hall with Oswald. After a few moments Ruby returns and closes the door. He retakes his seat behind his desk.

JACK RUBY (CONT'D)

Carl, you're not getting ten-thousand for your part.

CARL

Why not? I don't understand.

JACK RUBY

Because you'll be paid fifty-thousand. Lee isn't worth the ten he's getting but he serves a purpose. You know he works at the book depository, right?

CARL

He's mentioned it.

JACK RUBY

That's why he's shooting from there. Just an employee going about his job. He won't be noticed. He may get lucky with a shot, who knows. But he probably won't hit a fucking thing. He will draw attention and his shots will tell you the motorcade is coming your way. You'll be behind the picket fence like we just discussed and you'll take care of business then get your shit and get the hell out of there. Look for a black sedan to pull up on your way out. It will have your money. Go back to your car and on your way. And that's it. You have anything to say or ask you do it now before you leave.

CARL

The president. He has a family. A wife and kids, right?

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)

He also has a brother, who together, have put everyone at risk. They brought what's coming on their own selves. When you step on the wrong toes your ass pays the price. Simple math.

CARL

Is he a good father?

Silence-

JACK RUBY

We wouldn't fucking know, Carl. It's not a part of the equation.

INT. JEEP WAGONEER - NIGHT

Carl's eyes shoot open from the nightmare he's relived.

CARL

Stop the car!

Selina slams on the brakes and jerks her head to Carl.

SELINA

Jesus Christ! What is it now?!

CARL

I want to go back to where you picked me up.

Selina turns back and tries to crush the steering wheel with her hands. Through gritted teeth-

SELINA
To where we picked you up?

CARL
To where you picked me up.

Selina communicates with her sister.

Blanch looks shaken as she turns on the dome light and stares at Carl. Through her thick voice-

BLANCH
What's wrong, honey?

CARL
(to Selina)
Tell her I have to go back to Dallas.

SELINA
Why would you want to do that? Let them find you if it comes to that.

CARL
I have a very good reason to do the right thing now.

SELINA
And pray tell what would that be?

CARL
I've developed a conscience.

Selina relays the information to Blanch.

Blanch turns back to the front in a huff and adjust the rear view mirror so her angry, burning eyes, can stare into Carl's before she turns off the overhead dome light.

INT./EXT. JEEP WAGONEER - DESERT - MORNING

The sun is already high in the sky as the Wagoneer stops adjacent to the weathered, Hell Straight Ahead, sign.

CARL
(to Selina)
This is where you picked me up?

Selina's mood is sour.

SELINA
Close enough.

CARL
How did you know where to stop?

SELINA
How do you think?

Carl leans forward and puts his hand on Blanch's shoulder.

CARL
Tell her I'm going to miss her.

SELINA
I will not.

CARL
Why not?

SELINA
I don't like to hear her cry. Now
get the hell out.

Carl leans over the seat and kisses Blanch on her cheek.
Tears roll from Blanch's eyes.

SELINA (CONT'D)
Get the fuck out!

Carl opens the rear door and stands outside the vehicle.

SELINA (CONT'D)
Shit! I'm only doing this because my
sister has asked me to and if I don't,
because she'll know, I'll have to
listen to her cry until god knows
when. So, if you change your mind
come back here and call my name as
loud as you can. Maybe we'll come
back. Maybe we won't. No guarantee.
Just doing as she asked me.

CARL
I don't want to go back. I really
don't. But I have to.

SELINA
You really are a little shit.

Selina floors the accelerator and speeds away.

Carl suddenly realizes-

CARL
Oh my god. Oh my god! Selina! Selina
come back! You've got my things! My
money! Selina!

Carl drops to his knees, overcome with grief.

CARL (CONT'D)
Selina, come back! Come back!

Carl gets to his feet and watches the flying sand from the Wagoneer's wheels conceal the vehicle itself.

Carl goes into a rage-

CARL (CONT'D)
God dammit! Son of a bitch! Mother
fucker!

Carl's hands search his pockets-

CARL (CONT'D)
My cigarettes! Selina! You've got my
cigarettes! Selina!

Carl does an about-face and storms away.

CARL (CONT'D)
Shit! Good time to quit! Shit!

Carl, still enraged, steps a brisk pace back toward the highway.

EXT. HIGHWAY RUNNING THROUGH DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Carl makes it back to the highway he abandoned his car on. He looks to his right, then left. His eyes fix on his vehicle still off the side of the road with a tow truck parked behind it. Carl begins to walk back toward his vehicle.

A man, the TOW TRUCK DRIVER, sloppy, grubby looking, in his 30's, comes into his sight walking back to his truck from Carl's vehicle.

Carl picks up his pace-

CARL
Hey!

Carl's in a run now-

CARL (CONT'D)
Hey! What are you doing?!

Carl is almost to his car.

CARL (CONT'D)
Hey!

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
Well hello. This your car?

Carl is out of breath as he faces the driver.

CARL
Yes.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
Slow down. You're going to have a heart attack. How long have you been out there?

CARL
Little over a day I think.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
Hold on I'll get you some water.

The driver goes to the cab of his truck and grabs a jug of water.

Back to Carl-

TOW TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)
Drink it slow, don't guzzle it.

Carl grabs the jug and guzzles it.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)
Not so fast. You have to drink it slowly.

Carl slows.

CARL
Thank you.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
You break down?

CARL
It started running hot. Smoking. I pulled off the road and just started walking. Looked back and it was on fire. I was a little disoriented. Found myself wandering in the desert. I made it back to the highway somehow. Saw my car and you.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
Might have looked like fire to you because of the smoke but there were no flames. Nothing is scorched.
(MORE)

TOW TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)

Your radiator ran out of coolant and your engine over heated. My company is contracted by the highway patrol to pick up abandoned vehicles. That's why I'm here. I checked the radiator first thing because out here that's usually what it is. We carry extra coolant so I filled you up with a water and coolant mix.

CARL

It will run again?

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

Don't know. Haven't cranked it up. Don't have the keys. Listen. I can't just leave this with you unless you can prove you're the owner.

CARL

Will car keys do it?

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

That will do it.

Carl digs into his pocket for his keys. When he pulls them out the shell casing from his shot behind the picket fence comes with them and hits the highway.

The tow truck driver retrieves the casing.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)

You been hunting out there?

CARL

I, uh, had a rifle in the trunk. Didn't want to leave it so I took it with me. Saw a rabbit. Just took a shot at it.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

And you saved the casing in the middle of a desert?

Carl nods.

CARL

I don't litter. An OCD thing.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

It must be.

Carl holds his hand out-

CARL

May I have the casing back please. I do my own reloads.

The man hands the casing back-

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

Where's your rifle?

CARL

Good question. I lost it in the desert somewhere. I don't know where.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

Why don't you see if your car will crank.

CARL

Good idea.

INT. CARL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Carl puts the key into the ignition-

CARL

Please God, let it start.

The car turns over.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

That's a nice sound.

CARL

Yes it is. What do I owe you.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

State gets billed. It's their highway. It's their patrol we work for. Glad to help. How's your gas?

Carl checks the gas gauge. It shows less than a quarter of a tank.

CARL

Not very good.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

There's a gas station about two miles up.

He looks at his watch.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)

The old man that runs it won't open up for another hour, but you can wait there until he does.

CARL

Thank you, I will.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

Better get him to check your coolant level too. You probably got a leak somewhere, unless you just don't check on your level to begin with.

CARL

I'm not very good at vehicle maintenance.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

Where you trying to get to?

CARL

Just going to head back to Dallas. Got some business to take care of.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

Then why did you leave?

CARL

Marriage thing.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

Yeah, been there done that. Well good luck to you. Be sure you have the old man check your coolant level. You're full now but if it's gone down you got a leak somewhere. He can put some stop leak in it if you do have a leak. That will get you back to Dallas. But you need to have a mechanic look into it as soon as you can.

CARL

Thank you again for your help. What's the old man's name? I'll tell him you referred me.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

He's just "old man" far as I know. Just laugh at his jokes and he'll go out of his way for you.

The tow truck driver goes back to his truck and drives away in the opposite direction.

INT./EXT. CARL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Carl drives the desert highway.

To his right just ahead he sees a billboard plastered with, "Jesus Saves."

Just past the billboard sets the gas station.

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Carl pulls into the station and up to a pump. He looks at his watch, turns the car off and waits.

A man, the STATION MANAGER, early 30's with shoulder length hair and a distinct face that is a duplicate of dollar store photographs of Jesus, emerges from the office area. The man wears typical khaki work clothes and no hat.

At Carl's car-

STATION MANAGER

Fill her up?

Carl is taken with the man's appearance.

CARL

Yes.

The manager grabs the pump hose, flips the turn on lever, and begins fueling.

Carl gets out of his car.

CARL (CONT'D)

I was told it would be another hour before you opened.

STATION MANAGER

You got lucky. Came in early today.

The manager notices Carl's tattoo.

STATION MANAGER (CONT'D)

Do you believe that?

CARL

Believe what?

STATION MANAGER

The tattoo on your arm.

CARL

Yes, I do.

STATION MANAGER

Good for you.

CARL

There is supposed to be someone called "Old Man" here, but that couldn't be you. Too young.

STATION MANAGER

Some call me that. I just never correct them. Let it go. One name is as good as the other. I go by "J.C." to those who know me.

CARL

I'm sorry but I just have to ask -- Has anyone ever mentioned to you how much you resemble artist renditions of Jesus?

The manager laughs-

STATION MANAGER

You know how many Jews it takes to screw in a light bulb?

Carl looks befuddled for a moment before he answers-

CARL

I would say, one?

STATION MANAGER

It's a trick question. Jews don't do manual labor.

Carl's stare turns into laughter, followed by knee slapping laughter.

CARL

That's the funniest thing I've ever heard! I don't know when the last time I laughed was. Thank you.

STATION MANAGER

Oh, you're welcome, Carl. Glad you liked it.

It hits Carl-

CARL

How did you know my name?

STATION MANAGER

You told me when you introduced yourself, after I told you mine.

CARL

I did? Of course I did. I'm sorry.
I've had a rough stretch lately.
It's amazing I even still know who I
am.

The manager finishes pumping the gas.

STATION MANAGER

That'll be four dollars and twenty-
three cents.

CARL

Would you mind checking my coolant
level? I broke down a-ways-back and
a tow truck driver said it was because
my coolant was gone. He filled it up
but said I should have it checked.

STATION MANAGER

Be glad to.

The manager lifts the hood and sight checks.

STATION MANAGER (CONT'D)

Your reservoir is full so that means
your radiator is too. You're fine.

He slams the hood.

Carl digs into his pocket and finds the one-hundred dollar
bill.

CARL

I hope you can break this. It's all
I have.

STATION MANAGER

Too early to break that. Wouldn't be
able to make change for the rest of
them.

That just sounds odd to Carl.

CARL

You get that many customers here?

STATION MANAGER

You wouldn't believe it. Tell you
what. You just keep it until the
next time you see me.

That makes Carl think.

CARL

Will I, be seeing you again?

The manager looks into Carl's eyes and smiles.

STATION MANAGER

Go back to Dallas and make things right, Carl. You drive safe now. The next hour isn't promised.

CARL

How did you know I came from Dallas?

The station manager looks up at the clear blue sky.

STATION MANAGER

Looks like rain.

With that the manager walks back into the station's office and closes the door behind him.

Carl mutters to himself-

CARL

I must have told him I came from Dallas.

(looks up at sky)

Rain?

Carl's car pulls out of the gas station and back onto the highway the opposite way he had arrived just as a pickup is pulling into the station.

INT. PICKUP PULLING INTO STATION - CONTINUOUS

An old man driving the pickup fixes his eyes on Carl as he passes him.

INT./EXT. CARL'S CAR - DESERT HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Carl drives. His eyes fixed trance like on the highway as his thoughts race.

Carl fiddles with the radio knob to dissolve the radio's broadcast static-

CAR RADIO

At 12:20 pm today, eastern standard time, President Kennedy's assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, was shot to death in the basement of the Dallas Police Department while in transport to a more secure county jail.

(MORE)

CAR RADIO (CONT'D)

Further details have not been released at this time. Stay tuned for updates as they come in.

CARL

Shit.

Suddenly, POURING RAIN hits the car's windshield-

CARL (CONT'D)

Shit!

Carl pulls to the side of the road and comes to a screeching stop.

He jumps out of the vehicle. The rain stops as suddenly as it had begun.

He searches the sky to find the one, small, dark cloud above him that evaporates to the blue sky that had surrounded it.

EXT./ CARL'S CAR ON HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

Carl's car passes the Dallas city limit road sign.

CAR RADIO

Dallas police have just released the name of Lee Harvey Oswald's killer as Jack Ruby, a Dallas nightclub owner.

CARL

Shit!

EXT. DALLAS PHARMACY - MORNING

SUPER: Monday Morning, November 25th

Carl's car pulls into a parking space outside of the pharmacy.

Carl gets out of his car. He looks ragged and needs a shave.

INT. DALLAS PHARMACY - CONTINUOUS

Carl makes his way to the drug pick-up area.

A FEMALE EMPLOYEE, heavy set and in her 40's, approaches from the other side of the counter.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

May I help you?

Before Carl can answer a LARGE SNAKE slithers across the counter between Carl and the woman.

Carl reacts and quickly jumps back, obviously shook.

CARL
Did you see that?!

FEMALE EMPLOYEE
See what? Are you all right?

Carl digs his empty prescription bottle out of his pants.

CARL
Can you refill this, please?

The woman takes notice of Carl's appearance.

CARL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I must look a fright. I got into Dallas yesterday, but you weren't open.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE
We're closed on Sunday.

CARL
I discovered that. I had to sleep in my car in a park all night so I had no where to clean up. Could you please fill the prescription so I can be on my way.

The woman takes the bottle and reads it.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE
This is considered a narcotic. Is the doctor's name here still your doctor?

CARL
I hope so. I really need that refilled. Please.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE
If you'll have a seat I'll check with the pharmacist on this.

CARL
Thank you.

The employee walks to the PHARMACIST, a tall man, middle 30's with a stern face. They speak but Carl can't hear them.

The pharmacist comes to the front counter.

PHARMACIST

I'll make a call to the doctor for you to see if he'll refill the medication, but that's all I can do without a prescription.

CARL

Okay. I'll just wait right here.

The pharmacist gets Carl's name off the bottle.

PHARMACIST

You are Carl Mays?

CARL

The one and only on that bottle.

PHARMACIST

I'm afraid I'm going to need some form of identification that can verify that before I can make that call for you.

A deep sigh from Carl-

CARL

Drivers license do?

PHARMACIST

Perfectly.

Carl digs his wallet and license out of his pants. He hands it to the pharmacist.

PHARMACIST (CONT'D)

Thank you, Mr. Mays. I'll be back shortly. Just have a seat.

CARL

I'll just stand. Thanks.

The pharmacist starts to walk away, but turns back.

PHARMACIST

When did you take your medication last?

Carl thinks for a moment.

CARL

I have no fucking idea. It's been a few days.

PHARMACIST

Now you listen to me, Mr. Mays. This is a family pharmacy where mothers come in with their children. We do not tolerate that language in here. Now if you want me to help you, you need to sit down and keep your mouth shut. Can you do that?

CARL

I can do that.

PHARMACIST

Tell me what this medication is for?

CARL

You don't know?

PHARMACIST

I do know. I want you to tell me what you think it's for.

CARL

I know I look bad. I explained to your associate I had to sleep in my car in a park because you weren't open yesterday-

PHARMACIST

You don't live in Dallas?

CARL

I do. I did.

Carl's voice gets louder.

CARL (CONT'D)

The wife and I had a fight. I left. Left town. Just got back yesterday. I didn't know you had to know everything about my life to get a prescription filled!

PHARMACIST

Lower your voice.

CARL

Really?

Carl moves closer to the pharmacist and whispers.

CARL (CONT'D)

I'm going to sit my ass in that fucking chair behind me and wait on
(MORE)

CARL (CONT'D)
 you to call my fucking doctor. Okay?
 We good now?

The pharmacist sits the bottle and Carl's license on the counter in front of Carl.

PHARMACIST
 You take your prescription bottle to your doctor yourself and get him to write you a prescription for this medication. And when you can return here in a civil manor I'll consider filling it for you. Or you can stay here until the police arrive which I'm going to call if you don't leave this moment. Understand, asshole?

Carl grabs his prescription bottle and license-

CARL
 You'll not get Carl Mays' business again. You have no idea who you're fucking with-

PHARMACIST
 Get out of here!

Carl makes his way through the startled customers with a final shout-

CARL
 You're all going to know who Carl Mays is shortly! The whole world is going to know!

INT./EXT. CARL'S CAR - STREETS OF DALLAS - SAME MORNING

Carl drives. He suddenly realizes he smells of body odor.

CARL
 I need a bath.

Carl spots a motel just ahead and pulls into it.

INT. DALLAS MOTEL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Carl enters the motel office and is promptly greeted by the MANAGER, a woman in her 50's.

MOTEL MANAGER
 May I help you?

CARL

I certainly hope so. I just need a room long to get cleaned up. I haven't had a bath in a few days.

The woman has already noticed-

MOTEL MANAGER

You're kidding.

CARL

Nope. Not kidding.

MOTEL MANAGER

Our rooms are not rented by the hour, sir. You may check out any time you'd like but the daily rate is twelve dollars if you stay one hour or until check-out time tomorrow.

Carl lays his one hundred dollar bill on the counter.

CARL

I'll take a room, please.

The woman picks up the bill and examines it.

MOTEL MANAGER

This is a brand new bill.

CARL

Your point?

MOTEL MANAGER

I'll need to see your I.D., please. Drivers license preferred, to check you in.

Carl hands his license to the woman.

MOTEL MANAGER (CONT'D)

You have a Dallas address. Your girlfriend out there, too?

CARL

I just need a room, lady. You don't need to know my history.

The woman makes change from the bill. She doesn't like Carl.

MOTEL MANAGER

Checkout is ten a.m. tomorrow.

She slams the room key onto the counter.

MOTEL MANAGER (CONT'D)

Take a left out of the door. Bottom floor, halfway down.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carl unlocks the door to his room. He sees the ROOM MAID, a young woman in her 20's, just coming out of the room next door.

CARL

(to maid)

Excuse me.

ROOM MAID

Yes sir?

CARL

I need these clothes washed really bad. They're all I have with me. Any way you could get that done for me?

ROOM MAID

I'm not supposed to do anything but clean the rooms. Washers and dryers are at the end of the building.

CARL

I would have to stand there naked to do that.

The woman giggles.

ROOM MAID

You going to tip me?

Carl holds out a five dollar bill. The maid takes it.

ROOM MAID (CONT'D)

Guess I could do it between my rooms.

CARL

I'll leave everything outside my door. Just knock when you're back with them. Can you get me a razor too? I need to shave.

ROOM MAID

Disposable one in the bathroom drawer.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carl, covered with the top spread from the bed, goes through the yellow pages of the phone book.

He makes a call. The call is answered.

INT. ANSWERING SERVICE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A young woman in her 20's works the phone at an answering service.

ANSWERING SERVICE
Doctor Miller's office.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

CARL
Yes. I'm a patient of Dr. Miller and I need a prescription refill.

ANSWERING SERVICE WOMAN
This is the doctor's answering service. The doctor and his staff are on holiday for Thanksgiving.

CARL
Well that's wonderful, but I need a prescription refilled, like, yesterday.

ANSWERING SERVICE WOMAN
If this is an emergency, sir, I have been advised to direct you to the nearest hospital emergency room.

CARL
I don't need a fucking emergency room! I need a fucking prescription refilled!

The woman quickly hangs up her phone.

Carl becomes enraged-

CARL (CONT'D)
Mother fucker! Shit!

EXT./INT. LIQUOR STORE - CARL'S CAR - DAY

Carl comes out of the liquor store and gets into his car.

He immediately takes a big swig from the pint bottle he bought.

EXT./INT. DALLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT - AFTERNOON

The sign outside the building reads: Dallas Police Department

Carl walks into the front lobby of the police department cleaned up like a new person, and walks up to the DESK SERGEANT, an older officer in his late 50's.

DESK SERGEANT

Yes?

CARL

I'd like to-

Carl stops in mid-speech. He's rethinking.

DESK SERGEANT

Like to what?

Carl takes a deep breath and pulls himself together.

CARL

I'd like to turn myself in.

DESK SERGEANT

You want to turn yourself in?

CARL

Yes.

DESK SERGEANT

What are you wanted for?

CARL

I'm not presently wanted. I mean, no one knows what I've done. That is a few do but they don't count.

DESK SERGEANT

What is is you've done?

CARL

I, uh, shot the president. Pretty sure I killed him actually.

DESK SERGEANT

Which president? The new one or the old one?

CARL

President Kennedy. I know there was another shooter that shot, that you arrested. I shot from the grassy knoll at Dealey Plaza.

The desk sergeant does a long cold stare at Carl before picking his phone up.

DESK SERGEANT
 (on phone)
 Got another one in the lobby,
 Lieutenant.

The sergeant listens to the voice on the other end-

DESK SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 Grassy knoll.
 (listens)

DESK SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 Yes, sir.

He hangs the phone up and lays a wooden bowl on his desk.

DESK SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 Empty your pockets and put the
 contents in the bowl. Someone will
 be down to get you.

Carl empties his front pockets.

DESK SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 Back pockets too.

Carl lays his wallet in the bowl.

DESK SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 Turn all your pockets inside out.

Carl does.

DESK SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 Slowly, turn completely around.

Carl obeys.

The sergeant goes through the contents in the bowl. He picks up the prescription bottle and reads it.

DESK SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 This is a narcotic.

CARL
 It was. It's empty.

He holds up the shell casing.

DESK SERGEANT
 And this is a shell casing.

CARL
 That's not just any shell casing.
 It's the one-

The elevator door in the lobby opens. TWO DETECTIVES walk out and up to the front desk. Both are tall and lanky in their early 40's.

The desk sergeant puts the contents of the bowl in a large plastic bag.

DESK SERGEANT
(to detectives)
This came out of his pockets.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR takes the bag.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR
Has he been searched?

DESK SERGEANT
No.

SECOND DETECTIVE
(to Carl)
Interlock your fingers on top of
your head. And don't move.

Carl obeys.

The second detective body frisk Carl.

SECOND DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
He's clean.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR
(to Carl)
What are you trying to pull here?

CARL
Excuse me?

DETECTIVE TAYLOR
You just want your fifteen minutes
of fame? Is that it? Get your name
in the papers while you waste our
time?

CARL
I came here because I decided it was
the right thing to do. To tell what
really happened.

SECOND DETECTIVE
Well let's go tell it.

INT. HOMICIDE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The name plate on the desk reads, "Lieutenant Evans."

LIEUTENANT EVANS sits behind his desk. His hair is gray, his eyes tired. He's retirement age. He doesn't look happy. He goes through the contents of the plastic bag in front of him.

The two detectives that brought Carl to the homicide office stand close to the lieutenant's office door.

Carl sits in a straight back chair across from the lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

You have heard we arrested President Kennedy's assassin?

CARL

Yes. I know Oswald was arrested.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

And now resides where he should be. Jack Ruby actually did us a favor, but you didn't hear that from me.

The lieutenant takes Carl's license from Carl's wallet.

LIEUTENANT EVANS (CONT'D)

I can smell alcohol on you from here. How much have you had to drink?

CARL

One swallow when I bought the bottle. Another before I walked in here.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

So who are you, Carl Mays? You wanting to go down in history alongside Oswald's name?

CARL

Not next to his. I want my name to stand alone. He got a lucky shot in. My shot was a little low but my timing was pressed. The result was the same.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Your prescription here. This is a controlled substance. Why are you taking it?

CARL

I have a medical condition.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

What's it called?

CARL

Excuse me-
 (reads desk name plate)
 Lieutenant Evans. Could we just get
 to my confession?

LIEUTENANT EVANS

When I say it's time to, Mister Mays.
 Right now I want to know why you're
 taking this medication.

CARL

I've been diagnosed as-

Carl hates to say it-

CARL (CONT'D)

as schizophrenic.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Schizophrenic. And the Valium does
 its job?

CARL

Most of the time. But I've been out
 of it for a few days.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

What happens-

CARL

And the fucking doctor that gave me
 the prescription is closed for fucking
 Thanksgiving. So I can't get it
 refilled because I can't get a fucking
 prescription!

The two detectives become alert to what sits in front of
 them.

The lieutenant eyes them back. The detectives relax.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

That's too bad, Carl. You hallucinate,
 don't you?

CARL

That's what I'm told. It doesn't
 happen all the time.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Did you hallucinate shooting President
 Kennedy?

CARL

No.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Is it possible you could have?

CARL

I used up the last of my medication that day. But there was still enough in my system to keep it from happening.

The lieutenant holds up the shell casing.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Where did this come from?

CARL

My rifle. I only fired one shot at Kennedy using a bolt action. Aimed at his forehead but was too high. Hit him in the throat instead. I never miss but as I said my time was pressed. I don't litter. I picked up my shell casing and got the hell out of there.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

You don't litter but you can commit murder without a problem?

CARL

As bad as I hate to admit it that does seem my makeup. Can we get to my confession now?

LIEUTENANT EVANS

There are things we need to learn about you first, Carl. And we're doing fine with that so just be patient. Tell me about the scratches on your face.

CARL

The scratches?

Carl suddenly remembers and becomes angry.

CARL (CONT'D)

God dammit! I keep forgetting! The scratches came from my wife. I killed her too.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

You killed your wife?

CARL

She just pushed me to far and she wouldn't stop. I grabbed her, she clawed my face and I threw her against the wall. Guess she hit her head. I don't know. When I checked on her she was dead. I didn't mean to kill her. That was an accident.

The detectives and the lieutenant are very concerned.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Your license says you live on Cactus Lane. Still a good address?

CARL

It was until last Friday. When I left that morning I wasn't coming back. We were just renters. The guy next door was like the landlord I'd guess you'd say.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

What's your wife's name?

CARL

Emily. Her name was Emily.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Where's the key to the house?

CARL

I left it there. Like I said, I wasn't going back. Didn't need it anymore.

The lieutenant holds Carl's license out to Detective Taylor.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Check this out. See if you can get into the house.

Detective Taylor takes the license and leaves.

Carl's eyes widen to the sight of the Giant Spider crawling down the wall behind the lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT EVANS (CONT'D)

(to Carl)

What do you see?

The spider disappears.

CARL

Just a wall. Nice color.

LIEUTENANT EVANS
All right, Carl. Start at the
beginning.

The clock on the wall reads 2:20 pm.

EXT. HOUSE ON CACTUS LANE - SAME AFTERNOON

A detective car pulls into the driveway of Carl's rental home.

Detective Taylor gets out and approaches the house.

He tries the door but its locked.

He goes to a window and tries to look into the house.

A man in his 50's, the NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR, approaches the detective.

NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR
Can I help you with something?

The detective identifies his self and shows his badge.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR
I'm Detective Taylor with the homicide
division, Dallas Police Department.
Who are you?

NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR
This is my rental. I was watching
the president's funeral and saw you
looking around. Is there something
wrong?

DETECTIVE TAYLOR
Do you recognize the name, Carl Mays?

NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR
Of course I do. He's my renter.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR
We have reason to believe his wife
may be inside, injured or worse. I
need to get into the house.

NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR
What makes you think someone is hurt
inside? Did you say you're with
homicide?

DETECTIVE TAYLOR
Yes, sir, I did.
(MORE)

DETECTIVE TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Carl Mays is in our office at this moment confessing to killing his wife who he says is still inside the home.

NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR

That's impossible. At least someone in there being his wife. Look, Carl's a bit strange, eccentric maybe, or even worse. But he doesn't have a wife, I can tell you that.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR

When's the last time you saw him?

NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR

I saw his car driving away last Friday morning. Didn't actually see him but no one else drives it.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR

You have a key to the house, right?

NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR

Of course I do. Give me a minute and I'll be back with it.

INT./ CARL'S HOUSE ON CACTUS LANE - CONTINUOUS

The detective and neighbor enter the home.

NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR

What's that smell?

DETECTIVE TAYLOR

Death.

The drapes are closed. When the neighbor pulls them back the detective is quick to find the source of the odor. He points it out.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR (CONT'D)

There's your odor.

A white cat lies dead by the wall.

NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR

Emily!

DETECTIVE TAYLOR

That's Emily?

NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR

That's Carl's cat.

INT. HOMICIDE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The clock on the wall reads 3:10 pm.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

That it?

Carl nods.

LIEUTENANT EVANS (CONT'D)

So to recap everything.

(reads from his notes)

You left Dallas Friday afternoon and drove west where your car broke down somewhere in the Chihuahuan desert. You then abandoned the vehicle that appeared to go up in flames and took to the desert on foot where you ran into the ghost of your father. Shot him as he walked away and discovered his clothing wrapped around skeletal remains. Shortly there after you were picked up by a new jeep Wagoneer being driven by a blind female, accompanied by her deaf sister.

CARL

She said she could make out images but was considered legally blind.

The lieutenant gives a long sigh-

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Continuing on. You then were driven around in the desert for two days before, at your request, being taken back to where you were picked up and dropped off.

CARL

Yes.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

You then, after making it back to the highway, discovered your abandoned vehicle about to be towed away but was released to you instead-

CARL

I had the keys to the car in my pocket. The car just needed coolant which the driver of the tow truck had with him.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

You then drove to a gas station two miles ahead where you met Jesus.

CARL

I said he looked like Jesus. Like pictures of him. I can't say for sure if he was or not.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

But you believe he was.

CARL

I do.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

You think your tattoo made you want to see Jesus?

CARL

I guess it's possible. I'm always looking for him. But I really think he came to comfort me in my time of need. He told me to go back to Dallas and make things right. He even told me a joke that made me forget my troubles for the moment.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Well lets hear it.

CARL

Okay. Sure. How many Jews does it take to screw in a light bulb?

LIEUTENANT EVANS

I give up.

CARL

It's a trick question. Jews don't do manual labor.

The lieutenant only stares for a moment but then a small laugh builds that turns into a rip-roaring knee slapper from both the lieutenant and the detective in the office.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Son, I've got to hand it to you. We've had some characters come through this office but I do believe you beat them all.

CARL

I'm just telling you the truth.

LIEUTENANT EVANS
So Jesus has a sense of humor.

CARL
It does seem so.

The phone on the lieutenant's desk, RINGS. Lieutenant Evans answers.

LIEUTENANT EVANS
Lieutenant Evans, homicide.
(listens)
Ah-huh. Okay. You check the entire house? And that's all you found? Put everything in your report.

The lieutenant ends the call.

LIEUTENANT EVANS (CONT'D)
Carl, you don't have a wife do you?

CARL
Not anymore.

LIEUTENANT EVANS
Truth is, Emily is your cat, not your wife.

CARL
My cat?

LIEUTENANT EVANS
Emily the cat, scratched your face and you slung Emily, the cat, to the wall and killed her.

CARL
How could I imagine I have a wife and not have one?

LIEUTENANT EVANS
You're psychotic, Carl. You hallucinate. See things that aren't there. That's one of the things schizophrenic's do. You can't help it. It's a disease you can't control without your medication.

CARL
Do you not believe I'm capable of murder because I sometimes see things that aren't there? Why won't you believe me? You have the shell casing from the round I fired.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Which is worthless without the weapon that it was ejected from that you lost in the desert.

CARL

I didn't lose it! I left it in the car along with my money and everything else.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

An ejected shell casing rarely leaves an identifying mark so even with the weapon it wouldn't matter. Now if the bullet were found it could be traceable to the weapon if we had it, which we don't. By the way, you didn't mention what weapon you used at the picket fence.

CARL

It was a Carcano, model 38, 6.5 x 52 millimeter, infantry carbine.

The lieutenant becomes still, his face stern. His eyes raise to the detective in the room whose face is just as stern.

The detective returns the lieutenant's stare with a shake of his head.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Where did you buy this rifle?

CARL

My father left it to me. He taught me to shoot with it. He was a sniper in the world war and took it off a dead German sniper in Italy.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

You have any idea what weapon Oswald used?

CARL

Same one. I told you we shot a the same range. I told you that's how I met him. He saw how good of a shot I was and asked me about the rifle. He wouldn't have been a good shot no matter what rifle he used.

The homicide office is dead silent.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Tell me something that can prove you were on the grassy knoll. Anything out of the ordinary that might still be there.

CARL

I'm not sure. I took everything with me but the lunch bag, and I threw that in a garbage receptacle. I don't litter.

The lieutenant thinks for a moment, then picks up his phone.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

(on phone)

This is Lieutenant Evans, homicide. Put me through to Lieutenant Brown, uniform division.

INT. UNIFORM DIVISION - CONTINUOUS

The phone RINGS on Lieutenant Brown's desk. LIEUTENANT BROWN answers.

LIEUTENANT BROWN

Lieutenant Brown.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Ben, this is Tom. I need a uniform officer at the picket fence in Dealey Plaza. I need it checked for anything just laying around that shouldn't be there. Something odd, out of place.

LIEUTENANT BROWN

Got something to do with the assassination?

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Could be. Don't know for sure. Just send someone we can depend on.

LIEUTENANT BROWN

I got one on desk duty I'll send. His radio number will be fourteen if you need to reach him.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Thanks, Ben. I owe you one.

EXT. GRASSY KNOLL - LATER

A uniform officer in his late 40's walks the picket fence staring at the ground. He's heavyset, his uniform too tight, and he's disgruntled. He looks at his wristwatch.

UNIFORM OFFICER FOURTEEN
Five fuckin' minutes until the watch
ends and I'm out here doin' this
shit.

Something catches the officer's eye. He kicks the rock off the bag of M&M's holding them down.

INT. HOMICIDE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

CARL
Lieutenant. When I finished my lunch I took a bag of M&M's from my lunch sack. Before I could open it people began moving from the park to the street, fast. I knew the procession was coming. So I remember I set the candy on the ground and placed a rock on top of it. I never got back to it. Its probably still there.

LIEUTENANT EVANS
M&M's?

CARL
Yes.

The lieutenant takes a police radio from a desk drawer. He keys the radio.

LIEUTENANT EVANS
Unit two to detective radio.

DETECTIVE RADIO (V.O.)
Go ahead, unit two.

LIEUTENANT EVANS
Patch me into uniform radio.

DETECTIVE RADIO (V.O.)
Go ahead, unit two, you're on uniform.

LIEUTENANT EVANS
Unit two, to fourteen.

EXT. GRASSY KNOLL - CONTINUOUS

The uniform officer empties the M&M's into his mouth, crumbles the bag up and throws it on the ground.

He hears his radio number being called and grabs his radio.

UNIFORM OFFICER FOURTEEN
 What the fuck does he want?
 (into radio)
 Go ahead unit two.

INTERCUT - RADIO CONVERSATION

LIEUTENANT EVANS
 Unit fourteen, have you come up with anything at all?

UNIFORM OFFICER FOURTEEN
 Negative.

LIEUTENANT EVANS
 Are you close to the picket fence at the point it faces Elm street?

UNIFORM OFFICER FOURTEEN
 Right on top of it.

LIEUTENANT EVANS
 Check the ground closely. You're looking for a rock resting on a pack of candy. M%M's to be precise.

UNIFORM OFFICER FOURTEEN
 (to himself)
 Shit.

The officer takes a few moments as he retrieves the empty bag and pockets it.

UNIFORM OFFICER FOURTEEN (CONT'D)
 Fourteen to unit two. There's nothing here. Checked it twice. There's nothing to report.

LIEUTENANT EVANS
 Thank you, fourteen. You can return to your normal duty.

Lieutenant Evans places the radio back into the desk drawer.

LIEUTENANT EVANS (CONT'D)
 Carl, if there ever was anything there it isn't there any longer. Would you like us to drop you off at the hospital emergency room? We can't sign you in ourself because you're not charged with anything, but you can voluntarily go in yourself and try to get your prescription refilled.

CARL

I would be there the rest of the day
and probably the night being
evaluated. I know how it works.

LIEUTENANT EVANS

You're probably right. Carl, I believe
you think you had something to do
with the assassination, but I think
it's just your medical problem.
Everything we have points to Oswald
as the lone shooter. Easy. Case
solved.

The lieutenant hands Carl his card.

LIEUTENANT EVANS (CONT'D)

This is my card. You find anything
we can use you call me. I truly
believe you want to make things right
in your mind, but I see nothing that
would tie you to any of this. Any
thing else before you leave?

CARL

You mean my final thoughts on it
all?

LIEUTENANT EVANS

Sure. Go ahead.

CARL

I'm still a nobody. A nothing. My
father was right.

INT. DALLAS MOTEL / CARL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Carl lies on top of the bed, propped up against a pillow as
he holds another pillow in his hands. He watches a black &
white TV replaying President Kennedy's funeral procession
from earlier in the day.

Tears stream down Carl's face-

CARL

I caused all this. Me. They tell me
I didn't do it. But I had to do it.
How else would I remember everything?
I don't think I imagined it. How
could I? I remember everything,
clearly.

Carl buries his face in the pillow he holds and bawls.

CARL (CONT'D)

He was smiling when I shot him. I saw him grab his throat. I took a good man from his family. Why did I do it? Why, why, why! I'm not a fucking killer! Yes I am a fucking killer! I am! I am! I am! God damn me! I'm doomed! I'm going to burn in hell!

Carl guzzles down the reaming liquor in the pint bottle and throws it at the wall.

Carl beats his head with his fist.

CARL (CONT'D)

I'm doomed, I'm doomed, I'm doomed!

Carl slings the pillow across the room-

CARL (CONT'D)

I've got to find the rifle! It's the only way to prove it was my shot! The first shot that hit him came from me!

INT./EXT. CARL'S CAR / DESERT - DAY

Carl drives the familiar highway from the past Friday. He looks ragged.

He sees a roadside sign coming up on the opposite side of the road. He slows down to read it as he passes. It's not the one he's looking for.

CARL (CONT'D)

Where is it? Where is it?

He's almost frantic.

CARL (CONT'D)

God, please help me find it. Please help me find it!

The WARNING LIGHT on the instrument panel comes on. Smoke begins to pour from under the hood. The car loses power.

CARL (CONT'D)

Not again! This can't be happening again!

Carl pulls the car off the highway and comes to a stop.

CARL (CONT'D)
This is fucking beyond bad luck!
Nobly could have this happen to them
twice!

Carl sees a highway sign up ahead from him. It reads, 54 north.

CARL (CONT'D)
Not in the same location!

It suddenly hits Carl-

CARL (CONT'D)
Same location?!

Carl jumps out of his car and runs a few feet toward the sign when he suddenly stops and looks to his left where he finds the highway sign he's been searching for: El Paso 236 miles.

Carl jumps up and down!

CARL (CONT'D)
I found it! I fucking found it!

Carl looks to his right where he had tracked days earlier. And back to his car still pouring smoke.

CARL (CONT'D)
I'm right back where I was. I just
have to walk back into the desert.

Then Carl remembers-

CARL (CONT'D)
I don't have any water. If I go in
there I won't come out. If I don't
go in there I won't find the rifle.
Selina said to yell for her. She has
the rifle. That's all I have to do.
Just yell for her.

Carl leaves the highway for the desert.

EXT. OPEN DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Carl hasn't traveled far when he can see something rising from the sand ahead.

CARL (CONT'D)
That has to be the sign I came upon
before.

Carl walks in the direction of the waiting sign, the words on the weathered wooden sign finally coming into sight: HELL STRAIGHT AHEAD

Carl stands in front of the sign.

CARL (CONT'D)
And so I'm back.

Carl's eyes search to his right, his left, and straight ahead. He walks past the sign and calls out-

CARL (CONT'D)
Selina!

His eyes search in every direction with every step-

CARL (CONT'D)
Selina! I need you!

But there's nothing in view.

CARL (CONT'D)
Selina!

Carl's foot kicks something with a step he takes. He looks down at his feet and finds a canteen lying in the sand.

He picks up the canteen. It's filled with something. He takes off the top and finds water.

One swallow from the canteen then replaces the top.

CARL (CONT'D)
Selina!

Carl falls to his butt and stares across the desert.

CARL (CONT'D)
Selina!

The day passes until the sun begins to set.

Carl finishes the remaining water in the canteen just before he catches sight of the DUST DEVIL coming his way.

Carl never takes his eyes off the swirling sand that passes to his right then comes back around from behind him. Soon he can hear the sound of a car's engine emitting from the sand.

The Wagoneer slows to a stop alongside Carl who is still on his butt. Selina is behind the wheel.

SELINA

Blanch says you look like you're taking a break.

CARL

Where have you been? You said to call out your name and you would come back. I've been waiting all day.

SELINA

I said, "Maybe, I would come back."

Blanch has moved almost on top of Selina to see Carl clearly. Her eyes are worried.

SELINA (CONT'D)

Blanch says you found the canteen we left for you.

CARL

You, left the canteen?

SELINA

Who did you think left it? Santa Claus?

Carl jumps to his feet.

CARL

Just guessed I'd be back, huh?

SELINA

No guessing involved. We knew you'd be back.

CARL

You drove off with all my things. My rifle, my money. Everything.

SELINA

Before you go crazy with questions let me just fill you in. We do not have any of it. We have no use for money. Or rifles. Or any of your other items you may have left. If you wanted them you should have taken them with you.

CARL

You drove off before I could!

SELINA

You said you wanted out of the car.

(MORE)

SELINA (CONT'D)

You did not say I need to get my things. So you no longer have them.

CARL

Where did you leave them?!

SELINA

Somewhere out there. I don't know where. I'm blind. Remember?

CARL

Maybe Blanch would know!

SELINA

Blanch told me it was the dark of night. She won't know either. Right now she wants to know what we're saying. Give me a second to tell her, please.

Blanch's eyes become sad. She leans across Selina and meets her eyes with Carl's. In her thick voice-

BLANCH

I'm sorry, Carl.

Carl reaches for the backdoor handle-

SELINA

If you get back in you can't get back out. Not until we reach our destination. Do you understand?

Carl opens the door and gets into the Wagoneer.

Blanch rushes out the passenger side door and into the back seat where she slides as close as she can get to Carl.

CARL

I'm where I should be.

SELINA

You are where you should be.

Blanch pats her chest, her eyes locked on Carl.

SELINA (CONT'D)

Blanch says-

CARL

I know what she said. Tell her, I love her, too.

SELINA
Message delivered.

Tears roll from Blanch's eyes.

SELINA (CONT'D)
I... I...

She can't get the words out.

SELINA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I called you a little shit.

CARL
I thought you were trying to say,
"You love me, too."

SELINA
You wish.

Unexpectedly, tears roll from below Selina's sunglasses. She takes a deep breath and slowly exhales.

SELINA (CONT'D)
Ready, Carl?

Carl puts his arm around Blanch and kisses her cheek softly. Blanch grabs Carl and kisses him hard on his lips, then bawls her eyes out.

CARL
Ready.

Selina puts the Wagoneer in gear and floors it.

The dust devil from the Wagoneer's tires follow the speeding vehicle into the setting sun as it moves farther and farther away from the wooden sign: HELL STRAIGHT AHEAD.

The swirling sand and vehicle appear very small now and almost out of sight.

A distance away from where the Wagoneer had left with Carl the dust devil dissipates into the air along with the Wagoneer.

Carl stands alone in the vast desert. His eyes look confused. Sweat pours from his face. A desert breeze blows sand at Carl forcing him to shield his eyes.

CARL (CONT'D)
Where's that heat coming from?

The breeze now past, Carl opens his eyes and finds himself standing within a few feet of a cliff that has appeared from out of nowhere.

CARL (CONT'D)

That wasn't there a minute ago.

Carl takes a few steps toward the edge of the cliff and looks down. His eyes wide open now. He trembles as fear overtakes him.

In the BURNING VALLEY below the FIRES OF HELL EXPLODE into rising BALLS OF FIRE.

SHADOWED FIGURES from the valley floor begin their climb up the steep cliff like a pack of wild dogs on a flat-out run.

Carl screams out in the fear he's overcome with and falls to his knees his arms outstretched to the desert sky above as it changes to dusk.

CARL (CONT'D)

Forgive me!

The desert sun sets in the distance as dusk turns to night.

Carl lies flat on his back in the vast desert surroundings with no cliff in sight, dead, his eyes open in a frozen stare.

FADE OUT