

Sins of The Father - 5th Draft

By

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SUPER, BENTON, MISSISSIPPI 1966

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

The small quaint little town of Benton sits in the middle of the dusty hot Mississippi delta. Surrounded by miles of old cotton fields and scrub pines, it is isolated from the rest of the world.

The town square is filled with cars in front of the City Auditorium where a political rally is going on. Outside the building, plastered on the pillars are huge posters with a smiling man's picture on them.

The man is **CARL HENDERSON** and he is running for **GOVERNOR**. The sign reads **CARL FOR A BETTER TOMORROW**. Streamers, balloons and confetti litter the area. From inside there is the roar of an adoring crowd, a man's voice booms over it making an introduction.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The place is packed with supporters. It is standing room only, despite the heat people stand and cheer. On the podium is the town **SHERIFF** (50's) heavysset, and ruddy red complexion.

He sweats in the incessant heat, ceiling fans try and keep up but it's no use. Even at night the humidity hangs heavy in the air and is oppressive. Beside him, on the stage is **CARL HENDERSON** (50'S) in a white suit, graying blond hair, looking aristocratic.

The Sheriff heaps on the charm as he lauds Carl's accomplishments for the town.

SHERIFF

And who, ladies and gentlemen
brought a brand new cotton mill and
two hundred jobs here?

The Crowd answers cheering.

CARL!

SHERIFF

That's right! And who fixed the
roads and put up a new medical
facility?

The Crowd enthusiastically answers again.

(CONTINUED)

CARL!

SHERIFF

And who is the man to lead this
Great State of Mississippi?

The Crowd again, growing louder.

CARL!

SHERIFF

Ladies and Gentlemen I give you
Benton's favorite Son, Carl
Henderson!

The Sheriff has done his job and worked the crowd up into a fever pitch. They stand and applaud as the Sheriff relinquishes the podium to Carl. Carl stands to the adoring crowd who are throwing confetti and cheering wildly.

He steps to the podium clasping his hands above his head in a gesture of unity and victory. Then he attempts to settle the crowd so he can speak.

Like a maestro conducting a great symphony, Carl motions for everyone to sit down so he can begin. Everyone returns to their seats and it goes quiet. Carl surveys the crowd, waiting a full minute, building tension.

He feels the time is right and begins, slowly at first, in a calm voice that is full of authority, kindness and experience all rolled up into one.

CARL

Thank you Sheriff for those kind
words.

The Sheriff sitting down, acknowledges with a good old boy cheer.

SHERIFF

You get em Carl!

CARL

Friends we are in trouble, and I
don't mean here, but this country.
Liberals are selling out our
heritage and we need to make it
right!

The audience again cheers with a huge uproar.

CARL

We must be on constant guard
against the dark hoard and watchful
against the threat. If I am
elected, I will be that white
knight that will protect our way of
life!

The crowd is worked up into a frenzy and chants his name.

CARL! CARL! CARL!

In the back of the audience, a small man watches Carl with an intent glare. About twenty years old he keeps in the shadows. Only his eyes are visible in the half light of the corner.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Later the crowd has thinned and Carl is conversing with a **SENATOR** (50s) a White haired man with a matching mustache and goatee.

Dressed in a three piece pinstripe suit he is tall and the atypical archetype of Southern aristocracy. He carries an air of power and authority about him.

Carl's wife, **ANNE** (50's) an antebellum Matriarch, aging gracefully, is by his side.

SENATOR

Good speech Carl.

CARL

Thank you kindly.

ANNE

It was a good turn out tonight.

Carl looks at his watch.

CARL

Goodness gracious mother, it's late
and I'm starved.

Anne pats her husbands stomach.

ANNE

You know how cranky he gets when he
doesn't eat.

Carl and his wife head towards the exit, the Senator goes in the other direction to a separate door.

EXT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Carl helps Anne into an awaiting car. Carl goes to the driver's side and gets in. The car pulls away. Coming out of the Auditorium is the mysterious man from the crowd he watches Carl drive away.

EXT.- MANOR HOME - NIGHT

Rain pours in torrents outside a stately quintessential Southern Plantation style home. A throw back to the Old Antebellum era, with a wrap around porch, and two story high white alabaster columns.

There is a swimming pool behind it with a guesthouse.

A balcony runs along the whole outside edge of the house, with evenly spaced large windows, and big center entrance in the front.

One hundred year old oaks form a canopied path leading up to the home. Spanish moss hangs from them like so many stalactites. Thunder rolls and lightening flashes making the whole scene appear primeval.

INT. MANOR HOME HALLWAY - NIGHT

A long central hall dominates the center of the house, running straight through, from the front to back door. A grand staircase to the side leads up to the living quarters.

The interior is decorated with grand appointments of ornate mirrors, hand painted portraits and other fine artwork. A French Armories, and wet bar line the wall leading to dining room. This abode has all the trappings of extreme wealth.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

CARL sits at the long table eating a late supper. Anne is by his side flipping through the through Newspaper. Carl is quickly devouring some fried chicken.

ANNE

Don't eat to fast, dear.

CARL

Starving, the campaign is running me ragged.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

Really Carl, why do you want to be
Governor so badly?

CARL

This country is heading to hell in
a hand basket.

ANNE

And you're going to save the day?

CARL

Damn right.

INT. MANOR HOME - NIGHT

There is a break in the thunder, then a loud rapping at the front door. Carl leans his head out of dining room. In a lightning flash he sees a small beleaguered little man, through the screen door. He is soaking wet and shaking.

ANNE

Who is it at this hour?

CARL

I don't know.

Carl gets up and goes to investigate.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Carl passes a small credenza and opens the top drawer. He reaches in to retrieve something.

EXT. MANOR HOME - NIGHT

A shadowy individual stands on the front porch at the door. He beats on the door.

Then we see a gun we don't know who is holding it. Glinting in the lightning rain beads over its steel barrel.

The front porch door opens

The Gun comes up.

BAM! BAM!

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

The rain outside is picking up. Anne is indifferent and continues reading her paper. The thunder roars again, it startles her, and she gets up to look out window.

She turns back around and Carl has returned he is soaking wet with blood on his shirt.

Anne screams at the sight of him.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Heat radiates from the asphalt like a broiler set on high. The road ahead is bleached white hot.

A 1966 Yellow Chevy Impala whisks by.

INT. CAR - DAY

Driving the car is **TODD HENDERSON** (20) Carl's son. In the passenger seat is **ABIGAIL "ABBY" SPENCER** (20), a blond haired beauty, and Todd's fiance.

She lays her head back on the seat with large sunglasses covering her eyes. A blue bow controls most of hair from flying all over the place.

She remains still and tries to let the breeze cool her off, but she's miserable and it shows.

ABBY

Does it get any hotter than this?

Todd sports a straw fedora and black shades. With an effervescent smile full of charm, he replies in a practiced demeanor.

TODD

It ain't even August yet, honey.

ABBY

Are you sure this is a good idea, surprising them like this?

TODD

Don't worry, their gonna love you.

There is some tension between them.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY
And the other thing?

TODD
Come on, lets don't do this again.

Abby sits straight up.

ABBY
What, are you ashamed of me?!

TODD
No! That's not it at all!

ABBY
Then why don't you tell them?!

TODD
I will, but my folks are
traditional.

ABBY
You fucking bastard!

Todd slams on the brakes, and the car comes to screeching halt in the middle of the deserted highway.

Abby is totally put off by Todd, this is his typical reaction, to ignore the problem.

TODD
I'm sorry, but not during the
election.

ABBY
That's always the excuse.

TODD
Baby look where we are.

ABBY
Sooner or later your going to have
to tell them.

TODD
Oh and I suppose you told your Dad?

Abby is caught.

ABBY
Well, no, but.

Todd smiles at her and leans over.

TODD

Look, lets just play it cool and see how it goes, okay?

ABBY

Oh, Jesus, alright.

TODD

Be careful around Dad saying that.

ABBY

Ugh!

Abby rolls her eyes, Todd kisses her on the cheek, then puts the car in drive and continues on.

The couple share a smile as the car passes a billboard with happy family beside them in large letters it reads **WELCOME TO BENTON - A FAMILY TOWN!**

The car speeds on by it

INT. CAR - DAY

Todd is enjoying himself being in familiar surroundings. He whistles a happy tune. From his POV through the windshield he sees a large home in the distance.

ABBY

Is that your place?

TODD

Home, sweet home.

The couple continues on down the road to the next driveway the mailbox in front reads **HENDERSON** and the address **420 WILLOW LANE.**

EXT. MANOR HOME - DAY

As they approach, Todd sees the **SHERIFF'S CAR**, and an **AMBULANCE** sitting in front. Concerned and worried he steers the car closer.

Abby comes to full attention, taking off her sunglasses.

Slowing down, Todd stops his vehicle next to the Sheriff's car. He is nervous as he gets out.

Abby quickly comes around and takes his hand.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY
What's happened?

TODD
I don't know.

They proceed up the steps of the front porch. As they pass one of the columns, standing just out of sight, is Todd's older brother **HANK HENDERSON** (22).

Sporting jet black slicked back hair, he hovers there, like a vulture waiting on an animal to die.

Dressed in a T-Shirt with cigarettes rolled up in one sleeve and jeans, his appearance is everything Todd isn't. Despite his demeanor Todd is close to his brother.

He speaks up in a low Southern angry drawl that startles Todd.

HANK
Somebody tried to kill the old man.

Todd stops, pleased to see him, but wants more information.

TODD
Is Pop okay?

HANK
That old bastard? Sure, he's inside.

TODD
Mom?

HANK
Her too, glad here now I can leave.

TODD
Coward.

Hank smirks at the attempt at humor. But his irritation is bleeding through at having to hang around. Then he notices Abby and puts on the charm.

HANK
Who do we have here?

Todd in brotherly fun admonishes him.

TODD
Okay smoothie, this is Abby.

HANK
Hello Abby.

Hank tries to be a Southern Gentleman he takes her hand and kisses it. He then notices the ring on her finger.

HANK
My, my, look at that.

TODD
She's my fiance.

HANK
I didn't think you had it in you
little brother.

Hank smiles then gives them both a hug and its from the heart.

HANK
Does Dad know?

TODD
Not yet.

HANK
Good luck. I'm leaving this circus.
Welcome to the family Sis.

TODD
Hey!?

HANK
Just a rambling fool, and Abby, you
are some welcome sunshine.

Todd appreciates the comment and so does Abby. Hank sprints off to his awaiting hot rod and jumps in. He peels out, showing off, spraying gravel heading down the drive. Todd and Abby proceed on into the house. Abby looks perplexed.

TODD
Show off.

ABBY
What did he mean by that?

TODD
He likes you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Carl sits on the couch in a bathrobe with a brandy in hand. Anne sits beside him.

The SHERIFF questions Carl. Carl's LAWYER listens.

Abby hangs back as Todd approaches the group.

The DOCTOR is taking Carl's blood pressure.

DOCTOR
Your pulse is sky high.

CARL
Yours would be too.

This is an old argument between Doctor and patient. The Doctor gives Carl some pills.

DOCTOR
Take these, and take it easy for a couple of days.

CARL
Easy for you to say, you don't have a campaign to run.

Disgusted with Carl's flippant attitude, the Doctor closes up his little black bag and walks out.

SHERIFF
So, you never seen this fella before?

CARL
Never in my life.

SHERIFF
Why'd you even answer the door?

ANNE
You know how he is?

SHERIFF
Yeah, and this time it about got you killed.

Todd moves closer to the group. He catches Anne's eye. She stands and goes to embrace him with tears streaming down her face.

(CONTINUED)

TODD
What's going on Mom?

ANNE
It's just awful honey.

CARL
I scared him off.

TODD
You alright Pop?

CARL
Yes son, fine.

TODD
Hank came by to check on you.

Carl's face goes blood red.

CARL
I need to talk to that boy!

TODD
Easy Pop.

Carl downs some liquid courage from his brandy. Carl explains what happened to Todd.

INT. FRONT FOYER - DAY

Abby waits for Todd to give her a sign to join them. She looks around the foyer and admires one of the large paintings decorating the hall.

CLOSE ON PAINTING

She examines it and it looks like an original masterwork, she is impressed. She glances into the living room, from her POV Todd motions to her.

Abby walks softly into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Carl continues his explanation as Abby approaches Todd.

CARL
I was talking to him and he just lunged at me. We wrestled and he fled on foot guess he got scared.

(CONTINUED)

TODD

It was self defense Dad.

The Lawyer interdicts.

LAWYER

I agree with the boy.

SHERIFF

That's the way I see it.

Carl seems to come out of his funk, and has more of a commanding presence. He is more confident, and self controlled.

CARL

Well, I don't want this hanging over my head. Especially during an election.

LAWYER

Don't worry about it.

SHERIFF

We'll put out a warrant, but he's long gone.

CARL

I could have helped him, if he had only asked.

Todd feels the time is right to make his big announcement. Abby joins him.

Anne and Carl perk up seeing the girl.

TODD

(nervous)

Mom, Dad, I'd like you to meet Abigail Spencer, she's my fiance.

The air goes out of the room, but not in a bad way. Carl puts on an immediate heartfelt grin and bear hugs Abby. Carl gives her a huge kiss on the cheek. But Anne is not as warm, more shocked and stunned.

Carl turns to his Son and shakes his hand then hugs him too. Carl is overjoyed with the whole thing.

CARL

Congratulations! This is perfect!

Anne with some jealousy.

ANNE

What a surprise, when did this happen?

TODD

It just did.

ANNE

Let the girl speak.

It is clear Anne doesn't like that someone else has taken her son's heart.

ANNE

(coldly)

It's about time there was another woman around here.

Anne takes Abby the arm.

ANNE

When is the wedding? I insist we have it here, you and I have a lot to talk about.

ABBY

Well, we haven't discussed details yet.

Anne is trying, but having hard time being super happy about the situation like Carl.

ANNE

Fiddlesticks, you leave that to me.

Anne guides her away. Abby eyes Todd, in bewilderment. Todd shrugs and smiles.

CARL

Don't fret about your Mother, she'll come around.

TODD

Sorry I sprung this on you.

CARL

Son, don't ever worry about that. Now, I would love to stay and talk and find out all the details, but I have a lot to take care of. We'll all talk about it at dinner.

(CONTINUED)

TODD
Sure thing Pop.

Carl goes on upstairs, Todd takes the opportunity to go back outside.

EXT. MANOR HOME - DAY

A DEPUTY (20's) surveys the crime scene. The rain the night before has left the ground muddy.

The deputy bends down examining the footprints, he chews gum slowly, making mental notes.

Todd walks outside and joins him looking around.

TODD
Find anything?

The Deputy acknowledges him, but is irritated at the intrusion to his investigation.

DEPUTY
Not much.

The Sheriff hurries down the front steps to get in the squad car. He calls after his deputy.

SHERIFF
Come on boy!

The Deputy rolls his eyes.

DEPUTY
Sure thing Boss.

TODD
Duty Calls.

DEPUTY
If you find anything, let us know.

TODD
Yep.

The Deputy walks back to Sheriff's car, gets in and they drive away. The Doctor gets in the ambulance. The Lawyer gives him some instructions and he too leaves.

Todd turns back to scrutinizing the ground. He walks around the perimeter. Something catches his eye off to the side of the drive.

Walking over he bends down and sees tire marks, they are wide. He looks around for his father's car but doesn't see it.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone is gathered around the big dinner table. Carl is at head of table and his jovial self has returned.

Todd scarfs his food down, Anne looks pleased to have kids under her roof again. Abby pokes Todd to stop stuffing himself. Carl raises a glass of iced tea to make a toast.

CARL

To my son, and his new bride to be,
may your life be as rich as your
mother's and mine has been.

Todd is a little embarrassed by the attention.

ABBY

I believe your turning red.

TODD

I am not.

Anne playing with food and out of sorts.

ANNE

She's right.

Abby changing the subject.

ABBY

I love your house.

Carl reaches over and takes Anne's hand in admiration,

CARL

We have worked hard on it.

ANNE

It's a lot of work.

ABBY

I especially admire your taste in
art, that reproduction of the
Raphael is stunning.

Anne glares at her.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

That is no-

Carl cuts her off, smiling.

CARL

Yes it is, a little soldier I knew painted it from memory, he saw it once. Remarkable isn't it?

TODD

God, I'd forgotten what good tasted like.

CARL

Do not take the Lord's name in vain son.

ANNE

Do you cook Abby?

ABBY

I'm afraid I'm not any good?

ANNE

Nonsense I'll help you.

CARL

Your mother couldn't cook either when we got married.

ABBY

It's not that I don't want to, but I don't believe a woman's sole existence should revolve around her husband and house. I want to be a journalist.

Anne is shocked, and drops her fork at the absurdity of the idea. Carl not so much.

ANNE

Why that's ridiculous.

CARL

Now, Now mother, things are changing.

TODD

That's where we met, in class.

(CONTINUED)

CARL

Good thing I own a newspaper.

TODD

She's better at grammar.

ABBY

I would love to come down and look around. Maybe get my feet wet.

CARL

Well tomorrow should be kind of light.

TODD

We can stop by early.

Carl thinks for a moment. Anne is all a fluster.

ANNE

We're having another big party coming up, and I need some help.

CARL

We have lots of volunteers.

ANNE

But -

Todd understands her frustration, but does not pick up on his mother's jealous vibes.

TODD

Pop please, we won't take up too much time.

CARL

Sure, that will be fine.

ANNE

As for sleeping arrangements, you two aren't married yet, and not under my roof. Todd you stay in the pool house.

TODD

But Mom.

ANNE

But nothing. Abby will stay in your room. And that's all there is to it.

She gives them both a final look. Carl nods his head in agreement with her.

INT. MANOR HOUSE SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Anne escorts Abby up to Todd's bedroom. She opens the door and Abby timidly steps inside. She hesitates for a moment feeling awkward.

ABBY

Thank you, I didn't mean for you
think badly of me.

ANNE

Of course not, but you are young.

Abby getting her meaning.

ANNE

Sleep well.

ABBY

Good night.

Anne curtly leaves without anymore small talk.

INT. TODD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Abby closes the door and looks around. This was her fiance's private world. On the small shelves are trophies from little league. Various awards from life's small accomplishments.

A myriad of pictures of Todd at all stages of growing up. Most are with his father Carl. It is obvious he was the favorite son.

She smiles at seeing him so happy. She exhales knowing she has a lot to live up to. She takes her suitcase and places it on the bed and starts to get undressed. Then there is the sound of something hitting the window.

She turns and hears it again, a small little tap of a pebble hitting the glass. Abby goes to it and looks out. From her POV Todd is standing there below, in the yard smiling up at her.

She opens the window and whispers loud to him.

ABBY

What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

TODD
Oh Juliet, what light breaks from
yonder window.

ABBY
Boy you screwed that up.

TODD
It was my first try.

ABBY
Go to bed.

TODD
Come on down.

ABBY
Not on your life. I don't want to
ruin my first impression with the
in laws.

TODD
Don't worry about them.

ABBY
No, Goodnight.

Abby closes the window. Todd is disgruntled and disappointed and he walks away.

INT. NEWSPAPER - DAY

Todd and Abby enter **THE DAILY GAZETTE** holding hands. The newspaper has stood for over a hundred years. It, like the manor home, is Greek revival architecture. A columned marble facade with an out of place, rotating front door.

The Front hall is adorned with the usual plaques, awards and photos. A large painting of Carl, the current owner, hangs in a position of prominence in the very hall they are standing. There are many other photos of Carl with various people. Abby stops at one of the pictures.

ABBY
Who's that with your Dad?

TODD
Some Senator.

They proceed down the hall towards an office marked **EDITOR** above the door.

(CONTINUED)

The Sheriff exits the office in a hurry, and heads out the back not noticing their approach.

They stop at the door and Todd knocks, from inside his Dad replies.

CARL (V.O)

Come in.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Todd and Abby enter the large spacious room. Sitting behind the heavy fine oak desk is the Editor, his father Carl. He has his feet up on the desk talking on the phone.

Carl cups his hand over the receiver.

CARL

Come on in.

Carl returns to his conversation.

CARL

Yes Sir Mr. President, you'll have my complete support once I'm elected.

Todd and Abby share a look. Todd beams with a little pride. Carl hangs up the phone.

TODD

Was that really the President?

CARL

Yes, a good man, but he needs guidance.

TODD

We saw the Sheriff leaving, is everything okay?

CARL

I had to put my car in the shop he dropped me off.

Carl looks hurried.

CARL

What can I do for you?

Then Carl remembers.

(CONTINUED)

CARL
Oh, yes right, Abby.

ABBY
Can I look around?

CARL
Todd, can you show her?

TODD
Sure Pop.

CARL
You know the archives could use
some straightening.

TODD
Your not going to put her to work?

ABBY
Why not? It will be great looking
at old stories.

CARL
Of course.

Todd doesn't press the issue, but is irritated with his
fiance.

TODD
Come on.

INT. NEWSPAPER PRESS ROOM - DAY

Todd escorts Abby through the huge press room. The large
newspaper machine is quiet and the place deserted. Todd
admires it with a bit of boyish pride.

TODD
This is where it comes together.

Abby gets his vibe and teases him.

ABBY
Don't let me put you out.

TODD
Oh no we're not going there.

ABBY
Do I threaten you?

Todd gives her a look.

(CONTINUED)

TODD
Where did that come from?

BABY
I just got the feeling I was
intruding between you and your Dad.

TODD
No, of course not.

There is something, he is partially holding back.

TODD
I'm sorry.

ABBY
Okay spill it.

TODD
It's just that besides my Dad
nobody loves this place more than
me.

ABBY
Until I came along.

TODD
It was like a little secret just
between me and him.

Abby puts her arms around him.

ABBY
Let me into that world.

TODD
Right now I can't imagine you not
in it.

He smiles and they continue on through the building reaching the archive room. Todd opens the door, there are steps leading down. He flips the light switch on the wall just inside the door on.

They walk down the steps.

INT. ARCHIVE ROOM - DAY

Todd and Abby step down into the dingy dark archive, it is a mass of clutter. Filing cabinets are stuffed to overflowing. Stacks of newspapers sit rotting and yellowing with age next to the wall.

(CONTINUED)

Abby looks amazed at all of it.

TODD
And this is where it all ends, but
I think it holds secrets.

ABBY
It looks like organized chaos.

Abby steps over to one of the long tables used to hold the dead copy for old stories. She picks up one of the old manila folders and blows the dust away.

TODD
Pop needs to get people down here
to tidy up.

ABBY
Let's do it.

TODD
Are you kidding?

Abby teasing.

ABBY
Have you got anything better to do?

TODD
Yeah.

ABBY
Like what?

It's clear he's walked into this one and there is no use arguing.

ABBY
Come on it'll be fun.

TODD
Right.

ABBY
Get over it.

INT. ARCHIVE ROOM LATER - DAY

Abby is seated at the long metal table in the middle of the mess. She sorts through the piles of newspaper clippings and type written stories.

Todd sweeps up in the corner.

(CONTINUED)

She shuffles through the papers trying to make sense of everything. Digging through old stories, and matching up the newspaper clippings with the actual type written stories. She paper clips them together.

Close on Abby's hand flipping through the papers, her eyes catch the dates.

CLOSE ON DATES

March 1943

August 1944

April 1945

She looks surprised by what she sees and comments to Todd

ABBY

These go back to the war.

She continues to go through the papers straightening up till finally coming across one with a huge headline.

CARL HENDERSON LOCAL HERO RETURNS

ABBY

Here's a story on your Dad.

Todd steps over surprised.

TODD

What?

Abby begins to read. There are two pictures of Carl one in front of town being hailed as a hero and another of him leading captured **POW NAZI OFFICERS** into camp.

Todd smiles in admiration.

ABBY

(reading)

Local resident, Carl Henderson returns after years as a POW in Germany. He managed to escape and capture several high ranking Nazi officers in the process.

CLOSE ON NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPH of **NAZI POW'S** being interred into the camp outside of town.

TODD
Wow that is something!

ABBY
He needs to use this in his
campaign.

TODD
Definitely.

ABBY
Must have felt good.

TODD
Pop never said anything about it.

ABBY
You think he'd talk to me?

TODD
I don't know he's got a lot on his
plate.

Abby takes his hand from across the table.

TODD
I'll ask him.

INT. HALL WAY NEWSPAPER - DAY

Outside the Editor's office Todd is about to enter when he
hears Carl slam the phone down. Then the sound of Carl
walking towards the door.

Todd backs away to not startle his father.

Carl exits the office with his briefcase in hand. Todd
steps over to him.

TODD
Hey Pop could I ask you something?

CARL
Sure son what is it?

Todd produces the newspaper and the POW's.

TODD
Look at this.

Carl smiles in fond remembrance of his homecoming.

(CONTINUED)

CARL
Oh my goodness.

TODD
Why didn't you ever tell me.

CARL
The war had bad memories for me.

Todd sees his father's hesitation.

TODD
Abby wants to do an interview,
about it.

CARL
I don't know.

TODD
Sure it'll be good for your image.

CARL
You think so?

Carl thinks for a moment.

CARL
People might say I am bragging.

TODD
You're too modest.

CARL
Pride comes before a fall.

TODD
Stop with the Bible quotes.

Carl sees this means a lot to him.

CARL
Okay I'll be home later, we'll sit
down.

(pause, beat)
After all, she is my future
daughter in-law.

INT. DRUG STORE - DAY

Todd and Abby sit at a booth eating their burgers and fries. The **SHERIFF'S DEPUTY** is seated at the bar drinking a cup of coffee. The door swings wide open with a bang, startling the other customers, in walks Hank reeling drunk.

The Deputy looks at him disgusted, but doesn't bother getting up. Hank plops himself down across from his sibling and fiance.

Todd tries not to engage him and motions for Abby to do the same. This is an old story.

HANK

The prodigal son has returned!

TODD

Not today Hank please.

Abby under her breath to Todd

ABBY

What is he talking about?

HANK

My ears is fine little sister.

ABBY

Hello Hank.

HANK

So prim and proper.

TODD

Leave her alone.

HANK

I just want to see if she has fallen under Pop's spell.

TODD

I said shut up.

HANK

What did Pop do today?

TODD

We're trying to eat.

HANK

Always the favorite

(CONTINUED)

TODD
Leave Pop alone!

Hank whips a look at him and leans back contemplating his words.

HANK
Here to follow in the Old man's
footsteps kid?

TODD
At least I try.

HANK
I make my own money.

Hank roars out his sentiment.

HANK
And what about you sister? Have a
warm fuzzy feeling for the man who
saved this Town! Or has he figured
out you a little Jew whore.

Todd grabs his brother ready to punch his lights out.

All this has come out of the blue and scares Abby.

The Deputy has had enough, sets down his coffee and whirls around on his stool. He approaches Hank reaching for his handcuffs.

DEPUTY
Alright Hank, tone it down.

HANK
Ah! The law, sworn to hold up
justice for the good Christian
folk, or those with the most money.

The Deputy pulls him aside for privacy.

INT. DRUG STORE HANK'S POSITION - DAY

The Deputy gets right up into his face and addresses him in a menacing whisper.

DEPUTY
You need to watch yourself.

(CONTINUED)

HANK

Dirty secrets are buried deep.

The Deputy wrangles Hank, he flops around like a rag doll because he is so drunk. Hank gives him a crooked smile which angers the Deputy more.

Hank's anger is coming up, Todd sees a fist forming. Todd doesn't hesitate and interdicts pushing his brother back.

TODD

Come on Hank, don't do this.

HANK

Daddy's favorite Son. You're going to be just like him someday.

TODD

Your drunk!

Hank hauls off and slugs Todd, he falls to the floor. Abby jumps to his side to see if he's alright, this has totally taken her off guard.

ABBY

Stop it!

The Deputy is quick and grabs Hanks arms cuffing him.

DEPUTY

Just what I wanted.

Todd raises up in his brother's defense.

TODD

No, wait!

DEPUTY

After what he just pulled?

TODD

He's my brother.

Todd's intervention doesn't make sense to the Deputy.

TODD

He'll calm down.

Todd gets right in Hank's face.

TODD

Shut up and sit down.

(CONTINUED)

HANK

Whatever you say little brother.

TODD

Stop calling me that.

Todd is in complete defense of his brother.

DEPUTY

(to Hank)

Your one lucky son of a bitch.

The Deputy takes the handcuffs off and Hank returns to his seat. The Deputy starts for the door and Todd thinking on his feet stops him.

The disgruntled Deputy tries to calm down but he is almost too angry for words.

DEPUTY

He's always been bad news.

EXT. DRUG STORE - DAY

The Deputy stomps outside and lights a cigarette. Todd steps up beside him.

DEPUTY

Keep an eye on that one.

TODD

What is going on?

DEPUTY

Where was he night before last?

TODD

I just got into town, why?

DEPUTY

What happened with your Dad.

TODD

You think Hank had something to do with it?

DEPUTY

Your Dad and Hank never did get along.

(CONTINUED)

TODD
Pop would recognize his own son.

DEPUTY
Not in disguise, it was dark and
late.

TODD
(sarcastic)
And then hank just came by the next
morning?

DEPUTY
It beats a mysterious stranger
nobody can find.

TODD
I don't think he'd try to kill him.

DEPUTY
What if he just wanted money?

TODD
You know Pop.

Todd gives him a laugh.

TODD
Your stretching.

DEPUTY
Like I said, its just a feeling.

TODD
Well keep that to yourself.

The Deputy takes one long last drag off his cigarette and
flips it to the curb. He gets in his squad car and drives
off.

Abby joins Todd outside.

TODD
Sorry you had to see that.

ABBY
Don't worry.

TODD
He's a hot head sometimes.

Todd looks back into the drug store and from his POV sees
Hank passed out on the table.

(CONTINUED)

TODD

Shit, I got to get him out of here.

Todd looks around and spies Hanks car slammed up against curb down the street.

TODD

I'll take his car, you follow me.

ABBY

Okay.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Todd pulls up to the Service Station that sits just off the side of the road.

The station is closed but the garage is open. The old crusty owner **MR. ENLOE** comes out from the garage wiping his hands on a rag, hearing the car.

He's friendly enough but is a bit put off at the sight of a drunk Hank. Todd gets out of the car and walks around to get Hank out.

Abby pulls up behind Todd. She gets out, Mr. Enloe notices her. Todd wrangles Hank out and attempts to introduce Abby at the same time.

TODD

Mr. Enloe, Abby Spencer.

MR. ENLOE

Hello young lady.

Todd pulling Hank's arm over his shoulder and wrestling with the dead weight of his drunk brother.

TODD

She's my fiance.

MR. ENLOE

Well, congratulations.

ABBY

Thank you.

Mr. Enloe looks disappointed at Hank.

MR. ENLOE

Already drunk.

(CONTINUED)

TODD
I'm afraid so.

MR. ENLOE
Good thing we're not busy.

TODD
Sorry.

MR. ENLOE
Not your fault, if he wasn't such a
damn fine mechanic I'd fired him
long time ago.

Hank starts to wake up he pushes himself away from Todd.

HANK
Get off me man.

TODD
Be thankful you got a job.

HANK
He'd never fire me.

MR. ENLOE
Don't be so sure boy, out all hours
of the night.

Mr. Enloe looks away. Hank staggers back to the rear of the building.

MR. ENLOE
Better let him sleep it off.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

There is a car with the hood up in the service bay. Mr. Enloe starts working on the motor, completely changing the subject

MR. ENLOE
Your Dad is a good man we could use
more like him.

TODD
Yes Sir, I think so.

MR. ENLOE
I remember when your father didn't
have a pot to piss in.
(pause, reflecting)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR. ENLOE (cont'd)
When he came back from the war he
worked his butt off.

TODD
Dad never told me about the war.

Mr. Enloe continues to work.

MR. ENLOE
Really?

TODD
I didn't know he was a hero.

Mr. Enloe still deep in the engine working.

MR. ENLOE
You Dad never bragged.

TODD
(smiling)
No.

MR. ENLOE
Wasn't his style.

TODD
How did he make his money?

Mr. Enloe leans up on the hood of the car with a question on
his face.

MR. ENLOE
Didn't you ever ask your Dad?

TODD
Never thought about it.

Todd looks around the service bay looking for something.

TODD
Where's Pop's car?

MR. ENLOE
What?

Todd dismisses the question.

TODD
Never mind.

EXT. GARAGE - DAY

Abby looks around taking in her surroundings. The swampy looking landscape is far from what she is used to, it is almost primal. Across the street from her POV she sees an **OLD POW SIGN**.

Her eyes betray an odd apprehensive expression. There is a red dirt road that goes under the sign. The recent rain has left it muddy. From her POV in the distance there looks to be tire tracks leading in.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Todd goes to the ice box cooler and opens it up. He pulls out a bottle of cold POP and opens it. It's ice cold and takes him back.

TODD

God these still taste the same.

MR. ENLOE

Because you want them to.

Mr. Enloe goes and gets himself one.

TODD

That's deep.

MR. ENLOE

Not really. It tastes good because you expect it to.

TODD

No, because its hot and I'm thirsty.

MR. ENLOE

You have fond memories here.

TODD

Of course.

MR. ENLOE

I remember when you'd ride your bike out here just to get one.

TODD

Damn I had forgotten that.

(CONTINUED)

MR. ENLOE

A brand new red bike your Dad got for you.

TODD

I loved that bike.

MR. ENLOE

Yes, you did but you loved your Dad more.

Mr. Enloe takes a swig of his Pop.

MR. ENLOE

You see everything is connected.

TODD

Okay I get it.

MR. ENLOE

But it's still damn fine POP.

TODD

You never answered me.

MR. ENLOE

What?

TODD

How did my Dad make his money?

Mr. Enloe is hesitant but comes back quick.

MR. ENLOE

I don't know, never asked.

Todd studies him.

TODD

I better check on Hank.

INT. BACK ROOM SERVICE STATION - DAY

A little living area just off the side of main office. Really no bigger than a closet, with a cot for a bed, and a dresser and a hot plate to prepare food.

Hank sits on the cot with his head in his hands nursing a hangover. Todd walks in and leans on the dresser looking at him with disgust.

(CONTINUED)

HANK
God, my head.

TODD
Serves you right.

HANK
Get me some fucking aspirin will
ya, its in the top drawer.

TODD
Been drinking more?

Todd opens the dresser drawer. Looking in from his POV he sees a hand gun. He reaches in and pulls it out.

TODD
Where the fuck did you get this?

Though hazy eyes Hank looks up and sees Todd holding the gun. Hank jumps up and grabs it away from him.

HANK
Give me that!

TODD
What are you doing with a gun?

HANK
The world ain't safe little
brother.

TODD
That's a stupid excuse.

HANK
Real life ain't like on campus.

Hank is being belligerent and its useless to talk to him. Todd looks away then he sees in the corner, out of sight are muddy boots.

Hank looks up at Todd and gives a thin smile.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Todd looks out the large garage bay door across the street from his POV he sees Abby pondering the old POW Sign. Todd walks out to join her followed by Mr. Enloe.

EXT. GARAGE - DAY

Todd joins Abby and takes her hand.

TODD

What do you know about that place?

MR. ENLOE

Your Dad owns it. When the Government folded up shop he bought it for pennies on the dollar. See its mostly swamp.

(pause beat for effect)

Used it as collateral to buy more.

ABBY

Isn't that a little dishonest.

TODD

Abby stop.

MR. ENLOE

Not really the bank just sees land on the deed. Its solid, may not be worth anything now, but who knows in fifty years. Look at that Space center in Florida, built on marshland.

ABBY

I guess so.

TODD

Damn straight.

ABBY

So who was in there during the war?

MR. ENLOE

Mostly SS officers.

They step to the edge of the road and look out to the overgrown field.

The dirt road leading in is surrounded by tall grass. In the distance are the abandoned barracks that held the prisoners, that are falling apart.

MR. ENLOE

Wouldn't go out there. Grass is full of snakes, rattlers.

Todd and Abby consider it then turn back around.

(CONTINUED)

TODD
Well we've got to get back.

MR. ENLOE
Nice to meet you Abby.

Abby nods a friendly smile, Todd guides her to the car and opens the door for her. She and Todd get in and Todd pulls out onto the road and drives off.

INT. CAR - DAY

Todd grips the wheel, by his expression he is none too pleased. Abby picks up on it.

ABBY
What's wrong?

TODD
You know.

ABBY
No, I don't.

TODD
Don't give me that.

ABBY
Really I haven't a clue.

TODD
Are you jealous or something?

Abby is totally taken aback.

ABBY
What?!

TODD
That crack about my Dad.

ABBY
You are not making any sense.

TODD
The money and land thing.

ABBY
It was just a question.

She looks at him like he has lost his mind.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY
Quit being so defensive, I didn't
mean anything.

Todd keeps driving but remains silent thinking.

ABBY
Look I get your Dad and you are
close.

TODD
He's a good man.

ABBY
I didn't say he wasn't.

TODD
No, that he just did something
illegal.

ABBY
God, hero worship.

She turns around in a huff and crosses her arms

ABBY
And you still haven't told him
about me have you?

TODD
I knew you'd turn this around.

ABBY
Not only have I got to fight my
future mother in law, but your ego
too.

Todd realizes he's messed up.

TODD
I'm sorry.

ABBY
You should be.

TODD
What are you talking about?

Abby gives him another look.

ABBY
You don't get it do you?

TODD
What?

ABBY
Your mother.

TODD
Now whose talking in riddles.

ABBY
I've taken her baby.

TODD
(getting it)
Oh. yeah.

ABBY
Girl talk. She's been surrounded by
men for a long time. It's going to
be an adjustment.

TODD
If you say so.

ABBY
Ugh! I don't see how she hasn't
strangled you all.

INT. CAR - DAY

Todd and Abby pull up to the Manor House. Todd puts the car
in park. Abby opens the door to get out and leans over and
kisses him.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE - DAY

The curtains part on the front window, we see Anne looking
out at the car with jealous eyes.

INT. CAR - DAY

Abby and Todd continue to kiss, as they part Todd grabs her
hand.

TODD
Don't be rough on her.

Says Todd half teasing half serious.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY
Oh my God.

TODD
Sorry, I didn't pick up on it.

ABBY
One of us did dummy. Now go.

Abby gets out of car and flits up the steps.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE - DAY

The door opens and Anne appears. At first she startles Abby, but quickly makes an excuse.

ANNE
Go on in my Dear, I'll just be a moment.

ABBY
Yes Ma'am.

Anne walks down the steps in a stately manor and approaches the car.

INT. CAR - DAY

Todd knows the look.

TODD
Shit.

He gets out of the vehicle.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Anne folds her hands in front of her.

ANNE
Have you seen your brother today?

TODD
Yes.

ANNE
Drunk wasn't he?

(CONTINUED)

TODD
Maybe, a little.

ANNE
Don't defend him.

TODD
I'm not, but what's set him off?

ANNE
I don't know what you mean.

There is something she is holding back.

TODD
He and Pop have problems I know.
But he's never been drunk in the
middle of the day.

ANNE
It's gotten worse.

TODD
Why?

ANNE
Never mind that I am putting you in
charge of getting him here for the
campaign rally.

TODD
Oh shit no.

ANNE
Don't take that tone with me.

TODD
Yes Ma'am.

ANNE
And check on your brother.

INT. MANOR HOUSE - DAY

Abby steps through the front door.

From her POV there is an army of people decorating the house. Red, White and Blue streamers and balloons are everywhere. Carl's posters cover the walls.

Anne walks back into the house. She and Abby stand in front of one another in an awkward moment.

(CONTINUED)

Abby makes the first move.

ABBY
Mrs. Henderson.

Anne stops her, then like an order says.

ANNE
Call me Anne.

ABBY
Anne, I am not here to take him
away from you.

ANNE
I know that. But the family needs
protecting.

An odd statement but Abby continues.

ABBY
I love him.

ANNE
To be a part of this family endears
trust.

ABBY
Of course, and I hope I can earn
that.

ANNE
Be careful what your asking.

Anne's iciness is hard to break through.

ANNE
But lets sit down first.

Anne leads the way into the living room. Workers are buzzing
about. In a dictatorial fashion Anne issues orders them.

The workers maintain a look of stoic reserve.

ANNE
Leave us.

In perfect compliance, they stop what they are doing and
vacate the area. Their speed and obedience shocks Abby a
bit.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY

My that was easy.

ANNE

They know their place.

Anne sits down and makes herself comfortable.

ANNE

It wasn't always so, we had to work to get where we wanted. When I came down here I thought I was coming to the end of the world.

Abby understands she is opening up.

ABBY

How did you and Mr. Henderson meet?

ANNE

Well if you must know, it was on a USO boat bringing the boys back home. After my parents died I needed something to feel important after taking care of them for so long. So I joined my local Woman's auxiliary and packed my bags. I never intended to go back home. It was kind of fluke really, I didn't know if I would find someone but your Dad and I hit right off. We got married at the first port we came to and he brought me straight here. I never looked back and don't regret a minute of it.

ABBY

Thank you.

ANNE

For what?

ABBY

For trusting me.

Anne is still a little distant, but better.

ANNE

Now this party is important to your future father in law. A lot of important people are going to be attending.

ABBY
(happy)
Yes Ma'am!

ANNE
Remember my family comes first and
always must be protected.

The comment strikes Abby as odd she has repeated herself and she and considers pointing it out but holds back.

ABBY
Yes Ma'am.

Anne turns away reflecting, then the S/O the front door opening and footsteps coming up the foyer. Carl appears at the entrance to the living room.

CARL
I see you two are getting along.

ANNE
Of course we are.

CARL
Very good.

ANNE
What are you doing home?

CARL
I have an interview.

ANNE
With who?

Abby beams with excitement.

CARL
My future daughter.

Anne firms up, the coldness in her voice returns.

ANNE
I see.

Abby picks up on it, all her work for nothing, she tries to thaw the situation out.

ABBY
We can do it some other time.

(CONTINUED)

CARL

Nonsense.

Carl holds out his hand and motions for her to come along. Abby gets up and Anne follows her out with her eyes.

INT. CARL'S STUDY - DAY

The large paneled office is typical southern decor. A large fireplace and mantle adorned with family photos. It also is a small library. Bookshelves on either wall are filled with books.

Two leather cushioned wing back chairs sit in front of the fireplace. A huge oak desk sits at the opposite end with another well worn swivel chair, Carl's other thrown.

Abby then realizes in her excitement she has forgot something.

ABBY

I'm sorry I wasn't expecting this.

CARL

Remember a good reporter is always prepared.

There is an easiness about Carl. Abby feels completely comfortable with him. He goes to his desk and shuffles through some papers.

He finds what he is looking for, a **STENO REPORTERS PAD** and **PEN**. Carl comes back around the desk and hands them to her.

ABBY

Thank you.

CARL

Have a seat.

Carl and Abby sit down in the wing chairs across from one another.

CARL

I would have a fire going, but its too hot.

ABBY

That's fine.

(CONTINUED)

CARL
It's good that people feel
comfortable together.

ABBY
Yes it is.

CARL
So what do want to ask me?

ABBY
I don't know where to start.

CARL
How about that elephant in the
room.

Abby laughs at the little joke.

CARL
War, hero come back to save his
little town.

ABBY
Something like that.

CARL
Well there isn't much to tell.

ABBY
How about when you got captured?

Carl shifts in his seat.

CARL
It was stupid really, I went out on
a patrol by myself and got turned
around. The next thing I knew I was
surrounded.

ABBY
Okay.

Abby jots down what Carl said.

CARL
Come on my dear a first year
stringer can do better than that.

ABBY
Where was this?

CARL
Outside Mannheim.

ABBY
What unit were you with.

CARL
The American Army.

His answer is quick, curt and evasive. Carl looks at her for the longest wanting to pull that question out of her but she doesn't seem to get it.

CARL
A real question, one from the heart. The only kind that matters to readers.

ABBY
(realizing)
Were you scared.

CARL
Petrified.

ABBY
I bet.

CARL
I was younger than you, and all alone.

Carl's eyes look right through her.

CARL
You don't know how small you are until there is absolutely no one you can count on for help.
(pause)
Except yourself.

ABBY
At what point did you decide to escape?

Carl keeps looking straight through her.

CARL
You learn to survive. Like an animal, instinct kicks in at some point and is all that matters. Survival is also a skill set that you can use to your advantage, use
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CARL (cont'd)
the users. Make the disposable
indispensable a ticket out of the
abyss.

Abby writes intrigued by his flow of thought.

CARL
Hell was unleashed on earth and
only the strong were going to live.
Weaklings perished so they could
not pollute the blood, a cleansing
of the unwashed tribe.

ABBY
Excuse me.

Carl comes out of his little funk and back to reality.

CARL
Sorry my dear, they were hard
times.

ABBY
No, that's all right.

He continues.

CARL
I tried to remain unnoticed.
Keeping my head down and away from
the others. Never associating with
the other prisoners so that when I
made good my escape they wouldn't
realize I was gone till it was too
late.

ABBY
How long were on your own till you
were rescued?

CARL
Not long, as it happened the war
was coming to an end and I was
escaping just as the Germans were
fleeing.

ABBY
That's when you captured those
officers.

CARL
The captors became the captives.

ABBY
You like catch phrases don't you?

CARL
It's the politician in me.

ABBY
One more question.

CARL
Shoot.

ABBY
Why Governor?

CARL
Because change is coming and it is too fast. We need to slow things down.

ABBY
(aback)
Isn't that the opposite approach?
(beat)
Shouldn't we be moving forward?

Carl hesitates, scrutinizing Abby. Without missing a beat he looks at his watch.

CARL
Oh my goodness the time has gotten away from us. If you'll excuse me my dear I have some business to take care of.
(beat)
Have you phoned your parents?

Abby warms to his fatherly concern, they both stand and, he gives her a hug.

ABBY
Alright, thank you, I will.

CARL
You'll make a fine reporter someday. Work on your questions.

Abby being proper, gracefully walks out of the room.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Abby picks up the telephone receiver and dials the operator

ABBY

Hello, I'd like to make a collect
call to Emile Spencer, Brooklyn
450.

We hear the sound of the phone ringing then a click as
someone picks up.

VOICE (V.O.)

Hello.

Abby speaks in German, a tongue she has hidden from Todd.

ABBY

Hallo Papa, ich bin es.
(translating)
Hey Papa, its me.

EMILE (V.O.)

Sprechen auf Englisch.
(translating)
Speak in English.

ABBY

Yes Papa.

EMILE (V.O.)

How are you my Dear?

ABBY

Fine Papa.

INT. BEDROOM/EMILE'S OFFICE - DAY

Emile a 40 something Jewish gentleman, sits behind his desk
in a large office. The nameplate on his desk denotes CEO of
Manhattan Savings.

EMILE

What is it my girl?

ABBY

Nothing, just wanted to hear your
voice.

EMILE

And how is that nice young man?

(CONTINUED)

ABBY

Fine, Todd wanted to introduce me to his parents. We came for a visit.

EMILE

Daughter you know how I feel about that.

ABBY

Don't worry Papa they are fine Christian folk. Be assured Todd's mother doesn't even have us under the same roof.

EMILE

That is not what I meant.

ABBY

I know, but I love him Papa.

Emile closes his eyes visibly upset.

EMILE

He is not one of us.

ABBY

It's my life.

EMILE

Yes it is, but make the best decision.

ABBY

I will.

EMILE

Tell me about this new family.

ABBY

Well Todd you know him, is wonderful, and his father Mr. Henderson was a war hero. He and I seem to have hit it off pretty good, he owns a newspaper down here and is running for Governor.

EMILE

Sounds like fine people.

ABBY

They are but, Todd's mother, well I am not sure.

(CONTINUED)

Abby changes the subject.

ABBY
Tell me about the war Papa.

EMILE
What? That was a long time ago.

ABBY
Please.

EMILE
I was a prisoner at Sandhofen in
Mannheim.

ABBY
Mr. Henderson, was an American POW
there and escaped.

EMILE
I don't remember any American
prisoners. But memory fades.

ABBY
You could have forgotten.

EMILE
Probably.

ABBY
Do you recall anything else?

EMILE
Why all the questions?

She is embarrassed.

ABBY
Something Carl told me to do if I
was going to be a good reporter.

EMILE
There was this German Lieutenant
who took a liking to me. He managed
to get me out and hid me till the
American's came.
(pausing in recompense)
I always wondered what happened to
him.

ABBY
What was his name?

(CONTINUED)

EMILE

I never knew.

ABBY

You never talked about it.

EMILE

It was something I didn't want to expose you to.

ABBY

Why didn't you ever tell me?

EMILE

Painful memories are the first you try to forget.

Another moment of silence.

EMILE

I haven't thought of that in years.

ABBY

Give Momma a hug for me.

EMILE

I love you daughter.

Emile hangs up the phone and so does Abby.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Anne is on the other phone listening in, and quietly hangs up the phone. She looks upstairs towards the bedroom. Then with purpose goes back to working on the upcoming party.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Abby releases the receiver thinking, she goes to the window to look out at the pristine yard. A small breeze blows in, as she looks out from her POV she sees Carl walking out onto the porch.

He stands there waiting as his car drives up. Mr. Enloe gets out all greasy looking. He parks parallel to the porch Carl gets in the car and they drive away.

INT. CAR - DAY

Todd sits in his car outside the Newspaper. He is disgusted and pissed. His face looks is like a giant question mark and he is puzzled.

From his POV he sees his father's car parked directly in front, in his usual spot. There are no other cars around.

Then the Sheriff's car pulls up and parks next to his Dad's car. The Sheriff gets out and walks into the building.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Carl pours himself a Brandy from a bottle. The Sheriff sits across from him. Carl downs the glass in one gulp. The Alcohol seems to calm him down.

SHERIFF

That only works so much.

CARL

I tell you I don't like it.

SHERIFF

You don't have anything to worry about.

INT. NEWSPAPER FRONT HALL - DAY

Todd enters the building and walks up the hall towards his father's office. The door is cracked and he stops outside listening.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The men continue their conversation.

SHERIFF

I wasn't your fault.

CARL

Oh yes it was, a long time ago.

SHERIFF

You were young.

CARL

Does that make it right?

(CONTINUED)

SHERIFF

Boy, you made a better life for
your family, and you're going to
make a great governor.

Carl goes to the window from his POV he sees Todd's car and
goes a little quieter.

CARL

If only she had told me.

SHERIFF

We all pay for our sins.

INT. NEWSPAPER FRONT HALL OUTSIDE EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Todd looking guilty, finally decides to knock and goes on
in.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Carl spies Todd and quickly puts on a smile.

CARL

Ah Son, there you are.

The Sheriff averts his attention to Todd and stands. He
doesn't wait around.

SHERIFF

I got to go. Talk to you later.

CARL

Yes.

SHERIFF

Good seeing you Todd boy. Take care
of your Dad ya hear.

TODD

You too Sheriff, thanks.

The Sheriff pauses and turns around.

SHERIFF

Oh we caught the guy.

CARL

That's great, where?

(CONTINUED)

SHERIFF

Next county, matched the
description and everything.

The Sheriff seems in a bit of a hurry to get out of there and leaves the office quickly. Carl always pleased to see his son puts on a welcoming smile.

Todd looks relieved one burden gone.

TODD

Good news.

CARL

Yes, what are you doing here?

Todd looks awkward, Carl sees right through him. Carl sits down. Todd takes a seat across from him.

CARL

You look like a man with a problem.

TODD

Well, one is gone now.

Carl looks at him funny.

TODD

Something I heard.

CARL

But that's not the real problem.

Todd shifts in his seat.

TODD

It's tense around here.

Carl leans forward and crosses his hands on top of the desk. His big blue eyes looks straight into Todd's.

CARL

You mean Hank.

TODD

How did -

CARL

I'm his father.

TODD

What's with you two? Mom is
completely undone.

(CONTINUED)

CARL
It happened a long time ago.
Something I'm not proud of.

TODD
Can't you tell me?

Carl leans back a large exhale.

CARL
Your a man, you should know.

TODD
Please.

CARL
I was once part of the Klan.

TODD
The KKK?

CARL
Yes, and your brother found out
before he was ready to handle it.

TODD
Ready, I'm not sure I am.

CARL
He was young and didn't understand.

Todd a little defensive and angry.

TODD
What is there to understand?

CARL
They yield considerable clout in
Washington.

But your not still part of it?

CARL
Heavens no, but they still pander
my support.

TODD
(under his breath)
This complicates things.

Carl cranes to hear, studying his son.

CARL
Okay that's settled, now the real
reason your here.

TODD
It's about Abby.

CARL
You mean the fact she's Jewish?

TODD
Damn.

CARL
Don't use such words its beneath
you.

TODD
Sorry but how did you know?

CARL
Again, I'm your father.

TODD
You've been checking up on me.

CARL
That's my job.

TODD
I don't like that at all.

Todd is angry.

TODD
I expect it from Mom but not you
Pop.

CARL
Son don't get upset. I didn't mean
anything. I'm sorry.

Carl's eyes relate his sincerity. But Todd's youthful
hotheadedness prevails. He stands up in defiance and leans
down into his father's face

TODD
Dammit first I find out my Dad is a
bigot, and the next he's spying on
me!

Carl surges up.

(CONTINUED)

CARL
You will not address me like that.

TODD
Damn, first Mom now you.

Todd storms out of the office. Carl realizing a mistake fumbles around his desk and chases after him.

CARL
Son I'm sorry forgive me.

But Todd is already out the door. Carl keeps calling for him.

CARL
I'm sorry! Please!

INT. CAR - DAY

Todd swings open the door and climbs in his face is red with anger. He sits down closes the door and beats on the steering wheel. After getting his frustration out he cranks it up and drives away.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Abby walks down the grand staircase. She is met by Anne at the bottom.

ANNE
My dear, could you help me?

ABBY
I'd be glad to.

ANNE
My legs are killing me, could you get a vase down from the attic?

ABBY
Sure where is it?

Anne points out the directions and Abby jaunts back up the steps.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

The Attic is cramped and musty, filled with old memories. Dusty pictures of Abby's future in laws when they were young are stacked against wall.

Boxes marked clothes, sit taped shut in middle of room. Mrs. Henderson's wedding dress neatly pressed in a plastic bag hangs next to a tuxedo.

It is an organized mess, Abby carefully maneuvers the maze.

She steps on an old toy rubber duck, it quacks. She smiles at the object, probably a toy from Todd's childhood.

She looks around confused and mumbles to herself.

ABBY

Okay, where is it? Sure, it will be easy to find.

She looks harder in the dim light, and finally spots the vase in the corner, on top of an old dresser.

Stepping over to retrieve it, she stumbles into other boxes.

Disgusted with her lack of grace she pats the dust from her dress. As she looks down, she sees an old army foot locker. She kneels down for a closer inspection.

Pondering the old locker for a moment, curiosity finally gets the better of her and she opens it up.

Abby's POV -

Inside is a carefully preserved GI Uniform, Old boots and a Dress Hat. Various other personal items, a shaving kit, hair brush, old socks and underwear. Everything is scattered around the uniform.

Then something else catches her eye. There is another article of clothing folded up and laying under everything else. It is red and shiny.

She pulls it out.

It is a cloak or Robe of some kind, decorated with a round white badge sown into it, bearing an insignia of the Holy Cross. Underneath the cloak is a pointed hat that includes a full-faced cloth mask with eye holes.

Abby recognizes it is the garment worn by the KKK.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY
(to herself)
KKK.

She is immediately nervous, this is a dark secret. Downstairs Anne calls for her. Abby quickly puts everything back and tries to compose herself before she answers.

ANNE (O.S.)
Did you find it?

ABBY
Yes Ma'am.

Abby closes up the foot locker. She reaches up and takes down the old vase.

She secures the vase tightly under her arm and climbs down the stair well.

INT. MANOR HOME - DAY

Coming down the steps, Abby is the look of composure, and puts on a large friendly smile. Anne intercepts her at the bottom of the steps.

ANNE
Ah, you found it good.

ABBY
Right where you said it would be.

ANNE
All things have their proper place my dear.

ABBY
I suppose so.

ANNE
Now if you'll excuse me, I have to take care of something.

ABBY
What else do you need me to do?

ANNE
There isn't much right now, but I will let you know.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY
Yes Ma'am.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE GARDEN - DAY

LATER - Todd pulls up to the house. Abby is picking flowers from the Front Garden. The garden is large and formal with pebbles lining the walkways between the rows of flowers. A magnificent splendor of colors from many different varieties of flowers.

INT. CAR - DAY

Todd watches Abby for a moment, her golden hair sparkles in the late sunshine. He turns off the ignition and gets out.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Todd walks over to Abby. She looks up and sees him coming and puts on a smile.

He comes up and kisses her and gives her big hug.

TODD
I see Mom put you to work.

ABBY
Yes, I think the ice is melting.

TODD
She takes time.

ABBY
I noticed.

He makes a comment with trepidation. His face is still a fluster.

TODD
You and Dad are hitting it off.

Abby glances away, her face is more troubled than his.

TODD
What is it?

ABBY
Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

TODD

Come on.

ABBY

Your mother had me go up to the attic and get a vase.

TODD

So what's wrong with that?

ABBY

I found something else.

Innocuous and disturbing.

TODD

What?

ABBY

Your Dad's footlocker. I looked in it and found a KKK cloak.

Todd upset.

TODD

You shouldn't be snooping around.

ABBY

I didn't mean to, it just happened.

TODD

Don't worry about it.

ABBY

(aghast)

You knew?!

TODD

Only just, but that's the way things are down here.

Abby pushes away from him.

ABBY

Did you ever think to tell me?

TODD

I would have.

ABBY

(sarcastic)

Eventually.

(CONTINUED)

TODD

Baby, if your not Klan you don't go anywhere. These guys have influence in politics all the way to Washington.

Todd is growing intense with his frustration, trying to make her believe an argument he can't justify.

TODD

That was a part of his life a long time ago. You are worrying for nothing.

ABBY

Why don't I believe you?

TODD

Look, you guys hit it off fine. Lets ask him together.

ABBY

Are you going to tell him about me?

TODD

God, why do you keep bringing that up?

ABBY

God is exactly the reason. You and me, what we believe.

TODD

Dammit Abby, you had no right to dig into all that.

(pause)

Besides he already knows.

Abby is shocked by the news and has to do a double take.

ABBY

Oh?! How long?

TODD

A while.

ABBY

When?

TODD

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY
You mean he's been spying on us?

Todd is regretful, but tries to make an excuse.

TODD
He's my Dad, he just wants the best
for me.

ABBY
What about us.

TODD
They're family baby.

His statement hurts Abby, a tear starts to stream down her cheek. Todd tries to make ammends.

TODD
I'm sorry.

ABBY
I thought I was family too.

TODD
Baby, you are, this is all nothing.

INT. POOL HOUSE - NIGHT

Everything is quieter now. Todd lies in bed.

Moon light drifts in from an open window, curtains flutter in the breeze. Todd tosses and turns from the heat. He gets up in a sweat and goes to the window. He ponders the pool for a moment it looks cool and inviting.

He lies back down and takes a pack of cigarettes from the night stand pulls one out and lights it. He takes a long drag, and puts his hand behind his head on the pillow thinking.

He glances out the window at the Manor house and sees one light on, in his room, where Abby is staying. He can't stand her being angry and decides to venture over.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Todd pushes open the door in the darkened house, careful not to make a sound. He closes it back then walks quietly into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY MANOR HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is still and only the moonlight through the windows lights his way. He goes to the stairs. Then looks towards his father's study. Something compels him to go to it.

INT. CARL'S STUDY - NIGHT

Even at night the room is ordered and free of clutter. He looks at the large desk and the leather swivel chair, he smiles remembering sitting in it as a child.

FLASHBACK BEGINS:

NIGHT

A very young Todd sitting in the chair that is too big for him. He swirls and spins around in it. His father comes in the room and smiles at him. He comes over and picks Todd up over his head, a loving embrace.

Todd laughs and Carl sits down with Todd in his lap and they both spin around. A happy father and son moment.

Then outside there is the S/O of **CAR HORNS**. Carl with Todd spins around in the chair to look out the window. From Todd's POV he sees a bunch of men in a convertible dressed in **WHITE SHEETS**.

They are holding torches and look to be drunk. They call for Carl to come out.

Carl turns Todd to face him and says.

CARL

You be a good boy, I'll be back
later.

Carl sets Todd down and walks out. From Todd's POV he sees his Dad join the men. They shake his hand and slap him on the back.

FLASHBACK ENDS:

Todd shakes his head, coming back to the present. The image is something he hasn't recalled before and it clearly bothers him. It is a buried memory of his father's association with the KKK.

(CONTINUED)

Todd turns to leave then thinks a moment. He goes to his father's desk and contemplates the top drawer. He has never snooped on his Dad before and for some reason is compelled to.

He opens the drawer, the moon shines brightly through the window. From his POV there is the usual stationary with his families name in a nice font across the top. Business letters addressed to Carl.

Then in the half light he sees a photo. He pulls it out for a better examination. Todd holds it up to the light to get a better look.

It is a picture of his Dad with another woman, they look like a couple and happy. The landscape behind them looks to be European.

A disturbed look spreads across Todd's face. He puts the picture back and closes the drawer and leaves.

INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Todd climbs the steps going upstairs.

INT. HALLWAY UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

He quietly walks past his parents room. Todd lightly knocks on his bedroom door. Abby opens the door almost like she was expecting him.

Her nightgown is just sheer enough that the moonlight coming through the window outlines her figure. Abby studies him, her eyes seem luminous in the dark.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Todd steps into the room and closes the door behind him.

TODD
I couldn't sleep.

ABBY
Neither could I.

The conversation they started needs to be reconciled, but not now. Todd takes a long, slow breath before he answers, and when he does his voice has a new quality, not a boy but a man with quiet tenderness.

(CONTINUED)

TODD

At first glance, I knew you were
the one I'd want to spend the rest
of my life with.

Todd takes her hand, he closes his eyes, reaches toward her. His fingertips trace the contour of her nose, chin, cheeks.

Pulling back. He opens his eyes, looking right at hers.

TODD

Family be damned, there is nothing
I would do to ever hurt you.

Abby leans forward and kisses him. She continues, tenderly. He begins to respond. The anger from the afternoon dissipates and he holds her in a tight, trembling embrace, clinging to her like life itself.

Todd picks her up and carries her to the bed. She kisses his neck and chest.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

LATER

Abby and Todd in each others arms. Lying across his chest, she surveys his face as his eyes close drowsily.

ABBY

Ticklish?

TODD

Oh hell no.

Abby's hand moves around down his chest to his rib cage. Todd looks perturbed trying to hold back. Finally he begins to squirm.

Todd is becoming desperate. A grimace spreads across his face. It becomes a grin. Then he's laughing, trying to escape but she won't let him, and they roll, laughing together.

Abby smiles and gazes at his grin. A moment later their grins vanish, the other part of their lives has interrupted this peaceful loving interlude.

ABBY

We've got to talk.

(CONTINUED)

TODD

Yeah.

ABBY

I called my Papa today. He said there were no Americans at Mannheim.

Todd bolts up in bed and swings his legs over the side.

TODD

Well maybe he wasn't there. Dad could have forgotten, it was a long time ago.

ABBY

That's what I said. He also told me there was this young German Lieutenant that saved his life.

Abby gets on her knees with Todd's back to her she wraps her arms around him. A soul mate who would not lie to him.

INT. HALLWAY UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

The Bedroom door is cracked slightly, beside it in the hallway another pair of eyes, glows in the dark. The person is listening in on Todd and Abby's pillow talk.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Todd is thinking hard his face is troubled and he doesn't know where to direct it.

TODD

I'm worried about Hank.

ABBY

How so?

TODD

I'm not sure.

ABBY

What else?

TODD

He had a gun hidden in a drawer.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY
Is that unusual?

TODD
For him it is.

Todd gets up and goes to the open window looking out. Abby joins him wrapping her arms around him again.

TODD
The Sheriff said they found the guy
who tried to rob Pop.

ABBY
That's good right?

TODD
Something doesn't click.

ABBY
How?

TODD
It's the way everybody's been
acting.

ABBY
Maybe it's the campaign.

TODD
No that's not it.

Abby leans closer to him kissing his shoulder.

TODD
And the Deputy suspects Hank.

ABBY
But the Sheriff said -

TODD
I know.
(pause)
Truth is I didn't know about Klan
till today. Then I remembered the
night they came for him when I was
little. Just now in the study. A
suppressed memory I guess.

Todd hangs his head low.

TODD
I found a picture of my Dad with
another woman.

Abby holds him close.

TODD
We have no aunts and uncles.

ABBY
None? Grandparents?

Todd thinking.

TODD
No, I've never thought of that
before.

ABBY
She could be a friend or something.

TODD
I don't think so.

LATER

Abby and Todd lie nude under the sheets of the bed. The morning breeze blows through the open window.

The sun filters through the curtains and lands on Todd's face. The brightness wakes him. He pulls himself up and sits on the edge of the bed.

He remains there for a moment with his eyes closed, easing into consciousness.

Then the sound of someone clearing their throat. Without opening his eyes Todd realizes who it is and grimaces.

He opens his eyes and his Mother Anne is standing in the open doorway.

In an uncharacteristic growl of contempt.

ANNE
I am disappointed in you.

Todd is at a loss for words. Hearing someone speak, Abby rouses. Startled by the sight of Anne she sits up next to Todd and pulls up the covers around her. Abby starts to make an excuse but Anne cuts her off sharply.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE
(looking at Todd)
Don't say a word.

Anne storms away, and Todd plops back down on the bed.

TODD
Mothers know everything eventually,
its a gift or curse for everyone
else.

ABBY
Depends on how you look at it.

They smile and kiss.

TODD
I'm going to see Hank.

ABBY
And leave me here alone, hell no.

The two of them quickly don their clothes and are out the door.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Not surprisingly they find the Deputy sifting through the interior. His signature distrustful countenance bleeds through upon seeing them.

DEPUTY
Where's your brother?

TODD
I don't know.

ABBY
Why are you here?

DEPUTY
My job.

Todd takes him nonchalantly

TODD
You don't have worry about Hank.

DEPUTY
Right.

Todd looks around for his brother but doesn't see him.

(CONTINUED)

TODD
Need to talk to your boss.

DEPUTY
What for?

Still irritated Todd gets right in his face.

TODD
He ain't here.

DEPUTY
I've got questions.

TODD
Unless you got a warrant, leave.

DEPUTY
Not yet, but I will.

TODD
Now!

ABBY
Todd, easy.

TODD
I'm tired of his attitude.

DEPUTY
You can't keep defending him.

The Deputy stares at Todd through the mirrored sunglasses and chews on a toothpick. With a cool gate he swivels and retreats out the door.

Todd breathes heavy from the confrontation. Abby tries to offer some comfort, Todd jerks away.

ABBY
What's the matter?

Then another voice comes up from behind them, it's Hank

HANK
Good job little brother.

Todd whips around, Hank stands there wiping his hands, there is mud on his boots.

TODD
Where you been?

(CONTINUED)

HANK
Unlike you, I work.

Hank walks past him to his tool box. Todd tenses up, wanting to ask him a question.

TODD
Wait stop.

HANK
(irritated)
What?

TODD
Did you know about Dad?

Hank doesn't turn around and keeps fiddling in his tool box.

HANK
He told ya, or did you figure it out?

TODD
Doesn't matter.

Hank is belligerent and turns around, he crosses his arms and leans against the toolbox.

HANK
Did it bust your bubble kid?

TODD
Fuck you.

HANK
Not a shiny white night is he?
(pause, sarcastic)
Well, white and a sheet.

TODD
You knew and never told me.

HANK
Why should I?

Hank pauses.

HANK
Besides, would it make a difference?

TODD
To me it would.

HANK
He's not an honest man kid, grow
up!

TODD
He built this town!

Hank laughs looking at him like a fool.

HANK
All hail the great Carl Henderson.

Abby pulls at Todd.

ABBY
Come on let's go.

HANK
Ever wonder why no grandparents or
aunts and uncles, no family
history.

TODD
They died before we were born.

HANK
No pictures either?

Hank begins to move forward. Abby keeps tugging at Todd.

HANK
There's more too him than you or I
know.

TODD
Did you try and kill him?

Hank looks to the side incredulous.

HANK
Hell no, I hate him but not that
much.

TODD
Why the gun?

HANK
What gun.

Todd gets right up too him. Abby senses it's coming to
blows. She pulls hard and yanks Todd back.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY
Come on lets go!

She breaks the spell and pulls Todd along heading outside.

TODD
Asshole!

HANK
Don't look to deep kid.

EXT. GARAGE - DAY

Todd and Abby shuffle out of the garage. Todd is red faced and fuming. Abby straightens him up in front of her.

ABBY
You need to calm down.

TODD
I can't.

ABBY
Why didn't you tell the Deputy?

Todd doesn't answer and he guides her quickly to the car.

TODD
Let's get out of here.

He opens the door for her and she gets in. He pauses for a moment and looks across the street. From his POV he studies the old POW sign. He looks back at the Garage. Hank is walking out.

Todd looks at his muddy boots again, then across the street to the muddy red road leading into the camp. The gears are turning in his head. He walks around to the drivers side and gets in the car.

EXT. NEWSPAPER - DAY

Todd's car pulls up to the newspaper and parks across the street.

INT. CAR - DAY

Todd sits there looking at the building, it is getting late and most of the people have left. Only the night reporters and printing crew are drifting in. From his POV he doesn't see his Dad's car. Abby looks at him concerned.

ABBY

What are we doing here?

Todd does not answer, lost in thought chewing on his lip.

ABBY

Hey you in there?

(louder)

Hey.

Todd comes out of it, he turns and looks at her with a serious expression.

TODD

My Pop has never lied to me.

ABBY

We all have secrets.

Abby begins to understand.

ABBY

You think he's hiding something?

TODD

It hasn't felt right since I got home.

Todd leans back unable to put into words what he's feeling. With determination he gets out of the car. Abby quickly follows him.

INT. NEWSPAPER - DAY

Todd storms through the front rotating door with purpose, with Abby right behind him. The interior front offices are deserted and he goes right past them heading to his Dad's office.

ABBY

What are we doing?

Todd doesn't answer her they stop in front of the door marked Editor. Todd stares at the name plate Editor on the front of the door.

It's a boundary he's never crossed without his father there. He turns the door knob and as expected, its unlocked. Slowly he pushes it open, more out of respect than anything else.

INT. EDITORS OFFICE - DAY

Abby steps in behind him. Todd stands there looking at his father's empty desk in silence and with reverence. He glances around the room and the myriad of photos of his father in them with important people at events.

CLOSE ON EACH PICTURE:

Carl in hard hat with shovel digging with many happy officials around him clapping. One person holds a sign that says Opening Soon **CARL HENDERSON MEDICAL FACILITY**.

The next picture Carl shaking hands with new **CONGRESSMAN**.

Carl shaking hands with young **JACK KENNEDY**.

Carl with school children in front of **BRAND NEW SCHOOL BUILDING**. Teacher all around clapping.

On and on pictures of Carl and the good he has done for the community.

Abby steps up to him admiring the array of accomplishments by his father. Todd looks a bit ashamed at himself.

ABBY

Tell me, please.

TODD

He's a god to me you know.

ABBY

Most father's are to their sons.

Todd stops his idol worship, and walks over to Carl's desk. Todd sits down in the big leather swivel chair. He looks around on top of the desk searching for something.

Abby is puzzled by his strange behavior.

ABBY

What are you looking for?

TODD

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

His eyes scan the top of the desk not seeing anything. He looks down at the desk drawer. Todd hesitates before opening it.

TODD

I have never distrusted my Pop.

ABBY

Until now.

He doesn't give Abby a chance to respond. Todd opens the drawer. From his POV there is a large **BIBLE**. Todd gazes at it, a little guilt comes across his face. He reaches in and pulls it out. He sets it on the Desk.

Inscribed on the front is **KARL HENDERSON**, Todd considers it a moment then a grin on his face.

TODD

Bet this pissed him off.

Abby looks over his shoulder.

ABBY

What?

TODD

His name, look its misspelled.

Abby's eyes narrow. He opens it up and there someone has personalized it for him with a short inscription.

Close on Inscription, but its in German.

All meine Liebe Karl. Emma

ABBY

That's German.

TODD

I wonder what it says.

ABBY

(translating)

All My Love Karl. Emma

Todd turns around and looks at her surprised.

ABBY

What did you think?

TODD
I don't know.

ABBY
You knew Papa was from Germany.

Todd caught being stupid.

TODD
Well I guess I -

ABBY
It's not important.

TODD
Okay.

ABBY
Papa wanted to forget all things
German. We only spoke English at
home but I learned anyway.

Todd understands.

TODD
I'm sorry.

ABBY
Don't worry about it.

There is something else in the Bible. Some paper, folded
between the pages. Todd opens it further to the page. It
drops out on the desk.

It is a Newspaper clipping, there is a photo of two dead
German SS officers lying in a pool of blood in one of the
POW prison shacks.

The title of the story reads:

GERMAN POW'S MURDERED

Abby reads the story.

ABBY
(reading)
Interred German Officers found
murdered last night, the discovery
was made by Lieutenant Carl
Henderson.

Todd scrutinizes the story.

ABBY

He was the one who captured them.

TODD

Yeah.

Todd puts the folder back in its place and closes the drawer. It is getting late, outside the window the sun is going down. Todd and Abby walk out of the office.

INT. NEWSPAPER HALLWAY - DAY

They pass the restroom just as Carl is coming out wiping his hands. Todd and Carl are both surprised at seeing each other.

CARL

Son what are you doing here?

Todd hesitates but Abby thinks fast.

ABBY

He just wanted to apologize.

CARL

(understanding)

No, it is me who should.

TODD

Pop -

Carl doesn't let him finish he puts his arm on Todd's shoulder. The loving gesture of a parent.

CARL

Son, I'm sorry I should never have raised my voice.

He turns to Abby.

CARL

And you too my dear. It was unforgivable of me to intrude on your privacy.

ABBY

(firm)

That's okay just so long -

Carl picking up.

(CONTINUED)

CARL
As it doesn't happen again, of
course, of course.

Todd has his head down and sees Carl has red mud on his shoes.

TODD
Where's your car Pop?

CARL
Oh I had to get it serviced.

TODD
Still out at the garage?

CARL
Uh, Yes.

Todd thinking.

TODD
What happened to those prisoners?

CARL
Not now son, we have people
waiting.

ABBY
Please it will help with the story.

CARL
Oh alright, but be quick.

TODD
Sure.

CARL
We put them in the camp.

TODD
The one across from the garage.

CARL
Yes.

ABBY
Then what?

Carl studying her.

CARL
How do you mean?

TODD
She means what happened to them.

CARL
I think they remained there for
about a year, then they were
repatriated.

TODD
Repatriated?

CARL
Sent back home.

Todd keeps his gaze on Carl their eyes fix on each other.
Abby doesn't say another word.

CARL
We need to go.

Todd holds back and inhales deep.

TODD
Can we give you a lift?

CARL
No, the Sheriff will be bringing
the car back soon.

TODD
Sure Pop.

Todd has caught him in a lie and is about to bust a gut, but
maintains a stoic reserve. He then makes an off hand comment
to illicit a reaction.

TODD
Better get you shoes shined.

Carl quickly looks down caught off guard.

CARL
Right Son thank you.

The sound of a car horn beeps outside. Carl looks towards
the glass door, from his POV the Sheriff has pulled up with
his car.

CARL
There he is, got to go.

Carl quickly scurries towards the door. Abby thinking fast.

ABBY
(in German)
Viel Glück, Sir

Carl walking away with his back to them doesn't hesitate.

CARL
(in German)
Danke schoen.

He pauses, caught, then keeps going, pushing through the door.

Todd grabs Abby's arm.

TODD
What was that all about?

ABBY
Carl spelled with a K is German.

TODD
So?

ABBY
It fits.

Todd rolls his head back.

TODD
You're saying he's German?

ABBY
I don't know.

TODD
He probably learned it in the war.

ABBY
Possibly. Why did he lie about the Officers?

TODD
He may have forgotten, he's got a lot on his mind.

ABBY
A lot of ifs.

Abby looks into his eyes wanting to convince him.

TODD
I didn't see his car at the garage.

ABBY
And the mud on his shoes?

TODD
Hanks too.

Both of them are thinking the same thing.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Todd and Abby ride along the road. Through the windshield the headlights pierce the darkness. Up ahead from their POV they see the **OLD POW** sign and the dirt road leading in.

Todd steers the car towards the road and pulls in.

EXT. POW ROAD - NIGHT

The old dirt path is bumpy and muddy, the car bounces and slides along.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Todd and Abby jostle around from the rough ride. Tall pampas grass, waist high, obscures any clear view of what is to the left and right of them. It is an eerie place that looks primordial and forbidden.

Home more to alligators and other reptiles than to man, a swamp surrounds the perimeter. There was no fence to keep the prisoners in, none was needed.

From their POV ahead of them is a ramshackle old Prison hut. It looks to be falling in on itself and rotting.

With caution they slowly approach the structure. Todd parks the car. He reaches in the back seat and retrieves a flashlight. He and Abby look at one another with a little fear at what they will find.

They get out of the car.

EXT. CAR/ROAD - NIGHT

The cicadas chirp and whine in the background. Bullfrogs bloat and bellow. Todd and Abby meet in front of the car. Todd takes her hand and flips on the flashlight.

A low lying fog has drifted in from the swamp and covers the ground. Then there is the sound of a car coming up the road behind them.

Todd and Abby turn around and the headlights from the approaching car catch them. The beams are bright and both of them have to shield their eyes. The car stops right behind his and cuts off its lights.

It takes a moment for Todd's eyes to adjust he sees its one of the Sheriff's squad cars. Todd holds his breath the squad car door opens. Todd angles his flashlight on the person getting out. It is the Deputy.

Todd breaths a sigh of relief.

TODD

What are you doing out here?

DEPUTY

I could ask you the same thing.

The Deputy closes his door and takes his flashlight out and walks towards them.

DEPUTY

I got a call to take a look back here.

TODD

From who?

A voice calls out from behind them. It's Hank.

HANK (V.O.)

From me.

The Deputy quickly whips out his gun and spins around. Hank approaches them with his hands up.

HANK

Easy we all gonna have a party.

His humor seems misplaced and grim.

(CONTINUED)

TODD
What's going on Hank?

HANK
It's over here.

The group heads towards the dilapidated old Prison Shack. The Deputy keeps his gun trained on Hank.

HANK
Ain't me you gotta worry about.

Walking around to the back, they see a depression in the earth. It is up close to the building and out of the way. Soil is piled in a mound over it.

Todd takes a breath. The Deputy looks grimly at it, then kneels down. With his hand he starts to sweep away the soil. It doesn't take long and he reveals a hand.

HANK
There's your missing guy.

TODD
Who is it?

HANK
The gun was his.

Hank points with his finger to a spot.

HANK
I found it over there. Must of dropped it when they were getting him out of the trunk.

ABBY
Who?

Hank continues to explain.

HANK
The other night the thunder woke me up. I looked out the window and I thought I saw the old man's car pull into the camp. But I couldn't be sure, I was pretty drunk.

Hank keeps going.

HANK
Anyway, next morning I walked over and that's when I found the gun.

(CONTINUED)

(pause)

But I still wasn't sure it was Pop,
so I left a note in his mailbox
saying the gun was missing.

TODD

When we left him he had red mud on
his shoes.

HANK

Yep he and the Sheriff came back
out here. I hid and watched them,
when they left I found that.

DEPUTY

Good story, but it seems more like
something you would do.

HANK

But I didn't.

Todd looks sick

TODD

He's right, leave him alone.

DEPUTY

You gonna buy that bull?

The Deputy gets his cuffs out and starts for Hank.

HANK

Hold up hos!

TODD

Stop!

DEPUTY

Stay out of this.

Hank reaches around his back and pulls out a gun leveling it
at the Deputy.

ABBY

Hank put the gun down!

HANK

I figured something like this would
happen.

DEPUTY

You piece of shit

(CONTINUED)

TODD
Stop, both of you, Hank put that
away.

HANK
Only if he does.

Todd being logical.

TODD
Why would he get us out here just
to implicate himself.

DEPUTY
He wouldn't

TODD
Exactly.

The deputy backs down and holsters his side arm. Hank lowers his gun.

ABBY
The question is why, and who was
he?

TODD
I don't know, but I'm going to find
out.

Abby looking around spies something not far away. From her POV its several elongated mounds.

ABBY
Hey look over there.

Todd and the Deputy throw their flashlight beams in the direction. Todd's expression changes and is the first to express what everyone is thinking.

TODD
More graves.

DEPUTY
Can't be, they didn't bury any
prisoners out here.

HANK
An older cover up.

Todd walks over he kneels down thinking. His face goes white putting things together in his head. He ponders the moment his mind drifts back imagining the scene.

(CONTINUED)

EXT. POW CAMP (FLASH BACK)

US troops surround and corral German Prisoners of war. There are German officers in the mix. A young Lieutenant **CARL HENDERSON** approaches the prisoners, he leads them away pushing them along with the barrel of his rifle.

Todd watches them pass by, and through him like ghosts.

Gun shots ring out **BAM! BAM! BAM!**

Todd imagines the men in reverse rolls and his father is in a **GERMAN POW CAMP** and being tortured.

Then Abby saying there weren't any **AMERICAN PRISONERS** at Mannheim.

The Bible with his father's name in German and the inscription.

The Woman's picture

Then a voice bleeds through the flashback.

VOICE (V.O)

Todd, Todd?

FLASH BACK ENDS

Todd turns and Abby's face fills up his field of view. He looks at her, soft eyed, lost in thought.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE - NIGHT

The place is all lit up. Supporters are arriving by the droves, cars are parked everywhere on the front lawn. Valets busily escort people inside.

It is a carnival atmosphere of the political kind, there is excitement everywhere.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Todd pulls into the drive.

DEPUTY

Let me out, I'll angle my way in.

HANK

I'm going with you.

(CONTINUED)

TODD
keep this civil we don't know
anything yet.

DEPUTY
(incredulous)
We have bodies.

TODD
Not in front of everybody.

DEPUTY
I'm doing my job!

TODD
He's my Dad.

The disgruntled Deputy and Hank get out. Todd looks terrible and turns to Abby.

TODD
I don't know how to deal with this.

ABBY
It wasn't your fault.

TODD
You never question your parents, ya
know. Always thinking they can do
no wrong.

ABBY
But people keep secrets.

TODD
Yes they do.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Todd parks the car, he and Abby get out. They spy the Deputy and Hank standing on the patio just outside the doorway. They walk on as more cars arrive.

Todd spies the Sheriff, who is not in uniform, he eyes him with disdain. The Deputy and Hank hang back watching. The Sheriff sees the Deputy, giving him an off glance. The Sheriff continues to shake peoples hands as they arrive.

Todd lets go of Abby's hand.

(CONTINUED)

TODD

You mix with the crowd, I have to do this.

Todd stares at the Sheriff, scrutinizing him. The Sheriff proceeds up into the house. Todd is right behind him at a discrete distance.

Hank intercepts Todd.

Hank pushes him aside, Todd grabs his arm. His eyes fix on Hank with a gaze of uncompromising dominance. Some ancient communication seems to pass between them. Brother to Brother, I got this.

TODD

Let me go first.

Hank backs down, but the Deputy intercedes.

DEPUTY

Maybe I need to go too.

TODD

No, you handle the Sheriff. This is my problem.

ANGLE ON SHERIFF

He feels the Deputy's eyes following him into the house.

INT. MANOR HOUSE FRONT HALL - NIGHT

Guests keep coming in, and the house is filing up.

A waiter walks by with a tray of drinks. Todd needing liquid courage for what he has to do, takes one from the passing waiter.

Todd continues on in, moving amongst the visitors. The crowd is getting thicker. The interior is decorated with more of the campaign posters of Carl, with balloons, confetti and streamers everywhere.

INT. MANOR HOUSE - FRONT DOOR ENTRANCE

Entering the house is Hank, and he is not dressed properly the Deputy is by his side.

ANGLE ON ANNE

(CONTINUED)

Anne sees the two of them and goes to stone, she walks over to them.

ANNE

What are you doing here dressed like that?

HANK

Where's Dad?

ANNE

Upstairs getting ready.

The Deputy and Hank move around her.

ANNE

Wait a minute, you need to leave.

It's a diversionary tactic.

With his mother's attention averted, Todd scoots around her heading up the stairway undetected.

INT. MANOR HOME UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Todd heads towards his parents room. He stops outside their door and hears his Dad humming a tune and it is in German.

Todd stops and listens.

CARL (V.O)

SA marschiert mit mutig-festem
Schritt
SA marschiert mit ruhig festem
Schritt.

The door is cracked, Todd peeks in before knocking.

From his POV his father is shirtless and in a Wife Beater T-Shirt. Carl lifts his arm to put on the shirt. Then Todd see's it and freezes. There on the underside of the left arm, near the armpit are **TWO LIGHTENING BOLT SYMBOLS** it is the **SS RUNE TATTOO** of the Nazi's.

Todd leans against the doorway looking faint.

INT. MANOR HOME - NIGHT

Abby walks into the festivities, trying to avoid eye contact with Anne. She spies Hank and the Deputy who are keeping close surveillance on the Sheriff, she joins them.

The Party is getting louder as more people file in. A small band is in the corner drumming out Patriotic Songs and Dixie.

EXT. CARL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Todd finally pulls himself together and knocks.

CARL (V.O.)

Come in.

INT. CARL'S ROOM - NIGHT

With all the energy he can muster after an emotional crash, Todd walks into the room.

TODD

Hey Dad.

Carl quickly puts on trousers and tucks his shirt in. He flips a necktie around his collar. He looks at himself in the mirror above the dresser as he nervously attempts to tie it.

He is having a hard time with the collar.

CARL

Ah Son, glad your here, help me with this.

TODD

Didn't know you spoke German.

Carl unfazed taking it in stride.

CARL

Yeah picked up during the war. You had to, to survive.

Todd trying to be strong and believe him.

TODD

I bet.

There is a nervous quality in the air.

(CONTINUED)

Todd steps up behind his father to adjust the collar.

He works his fingers around it and shoves the tie underneath then overlaps the collar.

Carl looks at Todd in the mirror, his eyes betray his suspicion.

CARL

(hard)

Something you want to ask me?

Todd the moment of truth - for both of them. No longer speaking as father and son but for the first time on opposite sides of the fence.

Todd is unsteady.

TODD

The truth, all of it.

His words are final, this a moment Carl looks like his been dreading. All the color goes out of his face.

INT. MANOR HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Anne is busy socializing and drinking. The Sheriff comes up to her.

SHERIFF

Wonderful turn out.

ANNE

(pleased)

It sure is.

SHERIFF

Carl is a sure fire winner.

The music is getting louder and the guests begin to chant Carl's name.

ANGLE ON GUESTS

Carl!

Carl!

Carl!

Anne begins to get into the act and goads the Sheriff to join in, he does so happily.

(CONTINUED)

Anne waves her hands like a conductor bringing up the chant in cheerleader fashion.

ANNE
Car!, Carl!

The Sheriff holds up his glass.

SHERIFF
Carl! Carl!

The Deputy starts to move in on the Sheriff.

INT. CARL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Carl tries to avoid the question.

CARL
Not tonight son.

TODD
Then when Pop?

Todd puts extra emphasis on the last word with a tone of cynicism.

CARL
You don't need to know!

TODD
Pop I already do!

Carl whips around.

TODD
You killed that boy tell me it was self defense.

CARL
Son, don't do this!

TODD
Tell me!

Carl has no answer.

Nothing.

He stands there facing his son and for the first time seems to be lost.

But then comes back self assured, and with the quiet confidence.

(CONTINUED)

CARL
I am not responsible.

TODD
Avoiding the question.

Todd pushes away from his father, their bond permanently broken. Now two men facing off.

TODD
The man that raised me to believe
in truth above all else. I remember
Pop, that night when the Klan came.

Carl surging up.

CARL
Don't talk back to me!

TODD
I saw the tattoo Dad!

Carl feels his arm.

TODD
Yeah you managed to hide it all
these years, pretty good.

CARL
Yes the MAN who brought you into
this world put food in your belie,
clothes on your back, a roof over
your head an education and a
promising future.

TODD
God Damn You! God Damn You!

Carl hauls off and slaps Todd hard.

INT. MANOR HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The crowd continues to chant.

Carl! Carl!

Anne picks up the campaign cheering, getting into it and all the revelry. She moves away from her perch on the steps and into the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE
We Want Carl!

The celebration is growing in intensity and getting louder.

ANGLE ON CROWD CHANTING

WE WANT CARL! WE WANT CARL!

Abby sensing something maneuvers through the mass of people carefully trying to avoid Anne.

But she gets turned around and comes face to face with Anne.

Fire blazes in Anne's eyes, but Abby is able to scoot around her and flies up the steps.

Hank seeing an opportunity, also glides up the stairway.

Anne shuffles her way to the Sheriff and whispers something into his ear. His eyes dart up, from his POV Hank and Abby are disappearing to the second floor.

The Sheriff starts to move towards the stairs. The Deputy moves to intercept him.

The Deputy walks straight up to the Sheriff and blocks his escape. With a hard look he glowers at him.

DEPUTY
We need to talk.

The Sheriff looks sick knowing he is caught.

SHERIFF
Don't threaten me boy!

DEPUTY
You want me to cuff you in front of everybody.

INT. CARL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Todd is completely undone and disheveled, pleading with his father to tell him everything. He is almost in tears.

TODD
Who the fuck was he Pop!

CARL
Stop!

(CONTINUED)

Todd almost faints dead away. He stumbles around, frustration is building in him, he wants to pounce on Carl.

TODD
You killed him?!

CARL
It was an accident.

TODD
You hypocrite!

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Abby hearing the raised voices moves to the bedroom door. Hank comes up from behind, he startles her.

INT. CARL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Carl is crashing and coming unglued.

TODD
You buried him like trash!

Todd presses on hard.

TODD
Emma! I saw her picture, for Christ sakes! and the Bible.

CARL
Watch your language!

TODD
He was your Son!

CARL
Oh God!

TODD
Why!?

CARL
There is a truth you don't need to know.

Todd disbelievingly.

TODD
My whole life is a lie.

(CONTINUED)

CARL
It was necessary.

TODD
I saw the body Dad!

Todd knows the answer.

TODD
He was your Son! Yours and Emma's!
Who was she?

CARL
A neighbor, we knew each other for
years! Then she was interred at
Mannheim

TODD
She was Jewish?

CARL
I was a guard at the camp, and kept
it hidden from your mother. I did
not know she was pregnant till
later.

TODD
He showed up here and you killed
him.

CARL
I did no such thing.

Abby and Hank step into the room. Hank growls at him.

HANK
Who did Dad?

Carl regretfully coming clean.

CARL
Carl Henderson was an identity I
created before the war when I was
here majoring in Journalism at
Mississippi state. I put Benton as
my home town. I visited here
several times and the people got
used to seeing me. I liked the
order of the South. Then the war
came. I saved your father Abby, and
kept tabs on him, you wouldn't be
here if it wasn't for me. I pulled
some strings for a lot of refugees

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CARL (cont'd)
when nobody else would. And how do
think a Jew got in Journalism
School at Mississippi State when
all the other colleges turned you
down. I wanted you here to be my
daughter and wife to my son!

Hank isn't buying it.

HANK
Oh so noble.

CARL
I don't see you complaining I saved
this town.

HANK
I never wanted your damn money.

ABBY
You stole the money from the Jews
didn't you!

CARL
Enough! I did no such thing!

Carl turns and faces both his sons.

CARL
Your mother was from a wealthy
Prussian aristocratic family. We
were engaged long before Emma. It
was arranged.

TODD
Mom too?

HANK
No grandparents or family.

CARL
When things started going bad, they
transferred their money here. But
the Russians got to them.

HANK
And you and Mom escaped.

ABBY
With Emma?

CARL
Correct, but she on a refugee boat.
(pause)
Along with her brother Emile.

A shocker for everyone.

ABBY
Papa never told me.

CARL
It was agreed not to.

ABBY
You helped us all along.

TODD
You're still a murderer.

CARL
I didn't kill him I loved him?

INT. MANOR HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The crowd continues to chant.

CARL! CARL!

Anne picks up the campaign cheering.

ANNE
We Want Carl!

The celebration is growing and getting louder.

ANGLE ON CROWD CHANTING

WE WANT CARL! WE WANT CARL!

INT. CARL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Abby thinking hearing the S/O Anne's voice.

ANNE (V.O)
Remember my family comes first and
always must be protected.

ABBY
(repeating)
Family comes first and always must
be protected.

(CONTINUED)

TODD

What?

ABBY

Something you mother said.

Hank entreats Todd who is a little swayed by his father's confession and Hank sees he is.

HANK

He's playing you man.
(beat to Abby)
Remember the KKK.

CARL

Enough!

Carl is boiling mad.

INT. MANOR HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The political rally continues.

Carl! Carl!

CROWD CHANTING

We want Carl! We Want Carl!

INT. CARL'S ROOM - NIGHT

ABBY

Your mother, she wanted me to find
the foot locker and when I saw what
was in it, leave.

Abby looks at Carl, then Anne enters the room. Her eyes are glazed with the look of a crazed person who denies the truth.

ANNE

What are you all doing up here?
Carl they are waiting.

ABBY

It was you all along?

ANNE

I beg your pardon?

(CONTINUED)

TODD
God! Mom, you killed him?!

ANNE
(in German)
Was ich getan habe war für die
Familie!

ABBY
(translating)
What I did was for the family.

Anne is teetering on the edge of insanity.

ANNE
Yes, that little Jewish whore Emma
should have kept that boy at home.

Anne gets right up to Abby.

ANNE
I stopped one Jew, your not going
to take my boy.

Anne slaps her, but Abby doesn't flinch or back down.

TODD
Why?

ANNE
Like all Jews they want money.

Hank to Carl

HANK
Then you and the Sheriff concealed
the crime.

CARL
(crying)
Yes.

Todd turns away disgusted with his parents, Abby puts her arms around Todd, showing Anne she is now in control. The S/O of the crowd is getting louder chanting **WE WANT CARL.**

HANK
Like I said this is fucking zoo.

Carl goes to Anne and wraps his arms around her, she is shattered.

The S/O the crowd continues

(CONTINUED)

WE WANT CARL

WE WANT CARL

WE WANT CARL

But the campaign is over, everything is, as Carl takes Anne and leads her out of the room. Their world destroyed and gone.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE FRONT PORCH - DAY

A bright sunny morning and a new week. However, it is an ending for Todd's former life. But a beginning for he and Abby as they walk out of the home, suitcases in hand.

A new life and uncertain future for both of them. But also their own.

Everywhere there are the left over signs of the night before celebration. Streamers, posters of Carl litter the ground, muddy and trampled on of no use to anyone, least of all Carl anymore.

From their POV -

The Deputy leans next to the squad car with his arms crossed. The sunglasses have returned, but he does not carry himself in victory.

Todd gives him a smile and they walk down the steps to him.

DEPUTY

It's a mess, the trial will last for weeks. They'll plead insanity and she'll get it. As for the money and everything else who knows. With that kind of cash your Dad could fight it for years and still probably win.

ABBY

What about the Sheriff?

DEPUTY

Conspiracy to conceal a crime. But down here no jury is ever going to convict a sitting Sheriff and a Preacher. But he won't win the next election. I know somebody who'll take his place.

The Deputy smiles at him.

(CONTINUED)

TODD
Best just to start over.

DEPUTY
Where will you go?

ABBY
New York, I know people there.

From the side comes the long Southern drawl of Hank

HANK
Dumb hick from Mississippi in the
Big Apple, I'd like to see that.

Hank walks up to them and Todd gives his brother a hug.

TODD
What about you?

HANK
I'm staying here, wouldn't miss
this show for the world. I believe
I can pick up a gas station at a
good price.

Todd looks back at the house a final farewell.

TODD
You never really know people.

He opens the car for Abby and she gets in. He goes to the
drivers side and gets in as well.

Todd cranks the car and just like before speeds down the
driveway.

FADE OUT

THE END.