

THE HEART-SHAPED HOLE
by Stephen Gnojewski

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Based on an article in The Atlantic
by Hanna Rosin

FADE IN:

MONTAGE - DREAM OF THE WEST

-- Acre after acre of open, Ohio FARMLAND.

-- From a FIELD OF CROPS, a FLOCK OF BIRDS flutters into a CLEAR BLUE SKY.

-- A babbling BROOK leads to a quiet POND that is cloaked in an early morning MIST.

-- Rolling HILLS frame green PASTURES that are dotted with CATTLE and HORSES.

-- Far off in the distance, a RANCHER ON HORSEBACK surveys the bucolic COUNTRYSIDE.

END MONTAGE - DREAM OF THE WEST

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A silo stands tall next to a rustic barn. Somewhat faded, the side of the barn is painted with OHIO BICENTENNIAL 1803 - 2007.

A WHITE BUICK LESABRE races past the barn and down a long, straight highway.

CUT TO:

INT. BUICK - DAY

A BROKEN FENCE runs along FARM FIELD after FARM FIELD.

DAVIS, 48, sits in the backseat of the Buick, content - watching the rural scenery glide past an open car window.

A middle-aged man, Davis wears a worn and dusty jeans jacket. A pair of dark sunglasses hangs from his collar. His eyes are somewhat puffy, and his hair and beard are long and unkempt.

In the front of the car, a necklace of ROSARY BEADS dangles and dances from the rearview mirror.

BROGAN, 16, a giant of a teenager, with a soft, dough face, steers the car in silence, fixated solely on the destination ahead.

BEASLEY, a stocky middle-aged man, 52, sits sideways in the passenger seat. Beasley's left arm dangles over the bucket seat revealing a JESUS FISH TATTOO.

With his scraggly, white, goatee-beard, red baseball cap, and a mischievous twinkle in his eye, Beasley looks like a shopping-mall Santa.

He is overly chatty, betraying a nervous energy.

BEASLEY

...there's this buddy we both know
from Bible study, looks just like
Kenny Rogers. Am I right?

Beasley knocks Brogan's arm, breaking his concentration. Brogan nods in agreement.

BEASLEY

Spitting image. Swear to God.
Anyway, this one time... we were all
out together at this diner, and I
whispered to the waitress - pretty
little thing - I whispered to her
that he really was Kenny Rogers,
and we were on our way to his
concert...

Beasley slaps the bucket seat, slightly startling Davis.

BEASLEY

Well, I'll be damned, wouldn't ya
know it, all we could eat for
free!

Davis laughs politely.

Beasley, chuckling to himself, turns his attention to look out of the passenger side window. He absentmindedly whistles/sings a few lines from 'The Gambler', while tapping out the rhythm with his hand that still hangs across the bucket seat.

BEASLEY

(To Davis)
...so what else you got in that
trailer of yours?

DAVIS
Clothes mostly...some stereo
equipment, my Harley, and a bunch
of tools. I had to put a lot of my
landscaping equipment in storage
'cause the trailer was full...top to
bottom.

Beasley turns his head back to Davis with a sly grin.

BEASLEY
Glad to hear you brought along
your Harley. There are plenty of
dirt roads to putt-putt around in.

Davis grins in return, betraying a childish glee.

BEASLEY
Now, I forgot to mention, but the
main road leading up to the farm
split on account of that big
rainstorm a few weeks ago. We'll
have to repair it before we can
bring up your truck and trailer.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The WHITE BUICK slows down and turns onto a GRAVEL ROAD that is
almost hidden from the highway.

CUT TO:

INT. BUICK - DAY

In the back seat, Davis fishes out a crumpled PACK OF
CIGARETTES, and notices with disappointment that he only has two
left.

DAVIS
So when did you say I get paid?
(Pause)

My mom lives nearby - just outside
of Akron - was thinking I could
help fix up the old house from
time to time.

Beasley keeps his eye ahead on the road, as if searching for
something important.

BEASLEY

Don't you worry. You get an honest
day's pay for an honest day's
work.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

The gravel road gives way to a rural, DIRT ROAD. The WHITE BUICK
drives deeper and deeper into the wooded landscape.

CUT TO:

INT. BUICK - DAY

The Buick rocks back and forth on the uneven, dirt road, and the
ROSARY swings violently like a pendulum.

BEASLEY

(To Brogan)

Drop us off where we got that deer
the last time.

(Explaining to Davis)

Left some equipment down the hill
by the creek. We're gonna need it
to repair the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. "THE FARM" - DAY

The Buick breaks along a densely wooded and hilly stretch of the
road.

The passenger door opens, and Beasley, overweight, slides out of
the car with some effort.

Davis exits from the back, stuffing his pack of cigarettes back into the pocket of his jeans jacket. He pauses briefly to survey his new surroundings:

Rolling HILLS. A CREEK. From a FIELD OF TALL GRASS, a FLOCK OF BIRDS flutters into a CLEAR BLUE SKY.

BEASLEY
(Getting Davis's attention)
Follow me.

Davis follows Beasley down a hill through some tall, wet grass.

When they reached a patch of grass that has been trampled down near a creek, Beasley stops, seeming to have lost his way.

BEASLEY
(Shaking his head)
Shoot...this ain't right. Must be
further up the road a bit. Better
head back to the car.

Davis dutifully turns around and starts lumbering back up the hill.

Davis hears a DULL METAL CLICK that stops him dead in his tracks.

BEASLEY
Fuck.

Davis spins around just in time to see:

BEASLEY SLAMMING HIS HAND AGAINST A GUN THAT HAS JAMMED.

Beasley aims the gun at Davis's head.

THE CRACK OF A GUNSHOT.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - DEAD MALL

-- ECHOES from the gunshot.

-- VACANT STOREFRONTS shuttered and suspended in a last moment of forced cheer.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Wanted: Caretaker For Farm.

-- Big-box store names outlined above store-front entrances.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Simply watch over a 688-acre patch
of hilly farmland and feed a few
cows. \$300 a week and a nice 2
bedroom trailer...

-- A window sign advertises in large red letters: GOING OUT OF
BUSINESS.

JOE (V.O.)
Someone older and single preferred
but will consider all, relocation
a must.

-- A broken neon sign promises: EVERYTHING MUST GO.

JOE (V.O.)
Must have a clean record and be
trustworthy--this is a permanent
position.

-- A faded window sign invites: WALL TO WALL SAVINGS.

RON (V.O.)
The farm is used mainly as a
hunting preserve, is overrun with
game, has a stocked 3-acre pond,
but some beef cattle will be kept.

-- Another window sign with fireworks celebrates: TOTAL
INVENTORY BLOWOUT.

PAULEY (V.O.)
Nearest neighbor is a mile away,
the place is secluded and
beautiful, it will be a real get
away for the right person.

-- A vast empty PARKING LOT with row after row of available
spaces.

END MONTAGE - DEAD MALL

CUT TO:

INT. RICHARD LIVING ROOM - DAY

PAULEY (V.O.)
Job of a lifetime—if you are ready
to relocate please contact ASAP,
position will not stay open.

PAULEY, 51, sits on his brother's sofa, which also doubles as his bed. His graying hair and mustache are long and wiry.

From over his rimless glasses, he looks up from his laptop, and surveys his temporary situation with regret:

SEAFOAM-GREEN WALLS, FRILLY LAMPSHADES, A PLAQUE with a hand-painted message of affirmation:

DON'T LET THE WEEDS GROW AROUND YOUR DREAMS

RICHARD (O.S.)
Hey. Pauley. Dinner's ready.

Pauley is pulled away from his brooding.

PAULEY
Yep. Be there in a sec.

Pauley returns his attention to the laptop and eagerly types out an e-mail reply.

GEORGE (V.O.)
I grew up on a farm as a boy.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHONEY'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Traffic zooms past a SHONEY'S restaurant. The parking lot is packed with cars for the lunch hour rush.

V.O. (GEORGE)
Used to raise some of my own cattle
and horses as well.

INT. SHONEY'S RESTAURANT

GEORGE, age 50, sits upright in a booth, hoping his eagerness doesn't betray his desperation. His limp and faded polo shirt is baggy, which makes him look extra thin.

GEORGE

I'm still in good shape though,
mostly - not afraid of hard work.

In the same booth, opposite George, sits Beasley.

BEASLEY

Now, this farm...it doesn't have
cell coverage. Are you the kind of
fellow who can live by himself
alone?

CUT TO:

INT. MALL FOOD COURT - EVENING

RON, 58, wears a flannel shirt and a black do-rag. With a plastic fork, he shovels a bite of pork fried rice into his mouth.

RON

Wouldn't bother me one bit. I'm
recently divorced.

Beasley inspects Ron more closely.

BEASLEY

And how old are you?

RON

58, as of April.

While Ron is talking, Beasley fumbles with a manila folder and produces an official-looking sheet of paper.

RON

I worked construction for almost
25 years, until I fractured my leg
in an accident.

Beasley hands Ron the form and a pen.

BEASLEY
I'll just need you to fill out
this here application. It just
states that I'm an equal-
opportunity employer...

Ron sets aside his food tray and starts to fill out the
questionnaire.

BEASLEY
Now, what kind of car did you say
you drive?

RON
I didn't...don't. Got rid of it a
few weeks ago. Kept breaking down
on me. Wasn't making enough money
to keep up with all the repairs.

Beasley tries to hide his disappointment.

CUT TO:

INT. BOB EVANS RESTAURANT - MORNING

A WAITRESS stops by a table to top off two coffee mugs.

BEASLEY
My uncle used to own the farm.

BEASLEY checks out the waitress.

BEASLEY
He had six brothers and sisters
with lots of kids and grandkids
running around...especially on
holidays and during hunting
season.

JOE, 45, half listens as he concentrates on completing Beasley's
questionnaire.

BEASLEY
Now, in your email, you mentioned
you own a laptop computer?

JOE
(Smiling)
Yeah.

BEASLEY
(Smiling as well)
Well, you should bring that with
you, but leave your car here
though. My nephew and I'll drive
you down to Caldwell.

Joes hands the completed questionnaire back to Beasley, who
pretends to scan the answers.

BEASLEY
Do you have a wife or kids or
anybody you need to keep in touch
with?

JOE
Just a girlfriend.
(Taking a sip of coffee)
We're engaged to be married. Been
saving up, so we haven't set an
official date yet.

CUT TO:

INT. SHONEY'S RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

George hurriedly completes Beasley's employment application.

BEASLEY
Do you have a criminal record?

GEORGE
No, sir. I used to work as a
security guard.

George reviews his answers and hands the application back to
Beasley.

GEORGE
I'm also an expert in martial
arts, so I'm pretty confident I
can guard all that property of
yours when no one else is around.

Beasley's mood suddenly sours. Irritated, he grabs the employment application out of George's hand.

GEORGE

I really hope you can give me a chance.

From his pants pocket, Beasley pulls out a couple of crumpled bills and tosses them down on the table.

GEORGE

Look, if for some reason I wouldn't work out, no hard feelings. I'd stick with you until you found help.

Beasley gets up out of the booth.

BEASLEY

I'll be making my decision in a couple of days. If you don't hear anything from me, assume that someone else got the position.

Beasley exits the restaurant, leaving George behind confused.

CUT TO:

INT. RICHARD LIVING ROOM - MORNING

A WALL CLOCK ticktocks the time: 6 something.

STATIC SOUND from a walkie-talkie disturbs the early morning quiet.

MAUL (O.S.)

Rise and shine, good buddy. Rise and shine.

Pauley slowly wakes up from his slumber, fumbling for his NEXTEL WALKIE-TALKIE that sits next to him on a side table near the sofa.

MAUL (O.S.)

After all, it's the early bird that gets the worm.

PAULEY

And it's the early worm that gets eaten.

MAUL (O.S.)

(Laughing)

Did someone wake up on the wrong side and of the sofa?

PAULEY

Morning, Maul. How's it hanging?

MAUL (O.S.)

Low and to the left if you really need to know. Catch NASCAR yesterday?

PAULEY

Nah. My brother decided it was a good idea to clean out the garage...and I decided it would be best for the both of us if I pitched in. How did, my man, Gordon do?

MAUL (O.S.)

Won again, per usual.

Pauley is distracted as his brother, Richard, comes down the stairs for breakfast.

Richard disappears into the kitchen without a word to Pauley.

PAULEY

(Whispering)

I gotta get out of here, man. I can't camp out on this sofa for much longer. My welcome has worn as thin as a promise.

O.S. (MAUL)

I hear ya.

PAULEY

I just need my own space, ya know...so I can put up my Heidi Klum

poster...or just walk around in my underwear once in a while. You know what I mean?

MAUL (O.S)
Keep the faith, my brother. If I can pick up after my divorce and start a new life, so can you. The worm will turn.

Pauley studies the hand-painted plaque that hangs on the wall in front of him:

DON'T LET THE WEEDS GROW AROUND YOUR DREAMS.

MAUL (O.S.)
The worm will turn.

CUT TO:

INT. RICHARD KITCHEN - MORNING

Pauley's brother, RICHARD, an ex-Navy man, sits at the kitchen table with his wife, JUDY. They both finish their bowls of breakfast cereal in silence.

Pauley shuffles into the kitchen and heads directly to the coffeemaker to pour himself a cup of coffee.

PAULEY
Mornin'.

JUDY
(A bit too cheery)
Good morning, Pauley.

The kitchen is too small and too crowded for three adults.

Richard gets up from the table. His chair makes a loud schreech as it scoots across the floor. He takes his bowl to the sink.

PAULEY
(To Richard)
Hey, I hate to ask, but would you happen to have a couple of bucks I can borrow to buy some toothpaste?

Richard rinses out his bowl and leaves it in the sink.

PAULEY

I'm meeting a guy this afternoon
about a caretaker job. Looking
after a large farm with livestock.

JUDY

(More for Richard's sake)
That sounds promising.

PAULEY

(To Judy)
Now, it'd be a lot of hard work,
but I'd have my own place, way out
in the country.

Richard takes out a few bills from his wallet and hands them to Pauley.

RICHARD

There's a little extra. Get
yourself a haircut while you're at
it.

Richard leaves the kitchen in silence, giving Judy a peck on the cheek goodbye.

PAULEY

I mean, who's gonna care if I have
long hair - the cows?

CUT TO:

INT. WAFFLE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Beasley and Pauley sit side by side at a counter. Pauley finishes filling out the questionnaire.

BEASLEY

...I run a small ministry. Started
it few years ago - a half-way
house of sorts. I take in homeless
youth off the streets, give 'em
something to eat, a place to
crash, and put 'em back on the
road to righteousness.

PAULEY

Been going to a prayer group
myself lately...with my brother and
his wife. It's really helped me
focus on finding work.

Pauley hands Beasley back his questionnaire.

BEASLEY

You ever handled livestock?

PAULEY

Just my ex-wife.
(Laughing off a bad joke)
Sorry, still a bit bitter, I
guess.

BEASLEY

No, I get it, man. Divorced
myself. So, tell me a little bit
more about yourself.

As Pauley rattles on about himself, Beasley looks over the
questionnaire.

PAULEY

Well, like I said in my email to
you, I'm fifty-one years young,
and I like the outdoors.
(Trying to convince Beasley)
I mean, being out on a farm by
myself wouldn't bother me at all.
You see, I used to drive a truck
for a wholesale distributor so
I've put in my fair share of miles
and time alone.

Beasley folds the questionnaire and stuffs it in his satchel.

PAULEY

What else can I tell ya? I own my
own pick-up truck, so hauling
things around wouldn't be much of
a problem, and I'm pretty handy
too. Can fix most anything - have
my own carpentry tools.

The mention of the pick-up truck renews Beasley's attention.

PAULEY

If chosen, I would work hard, real
hard to take care of your place -
treat it like it was my own.

Beasley takes a slow, deliberate sip of coffee and sizes up
Pauley.

BEASLEY

Well, you'll be happy to know that
you are one of the finalists for
the job.

PAULEY

No shit.

BEASLEY

I've narrowed it down to just
three candidates, and you're one
of them.

PAULEY

(All smiles)
You're kidding me?

BEASLEY

Now, if I go with you, I'll need
you to start right away -
immediately.

PAULEY

Not a problem. Not a problem at
all. Look, if there's anything, I
can do to help you decide-

BEASLEY

I'll give you a call by 2 p.m. on
Friday with my decision.

Beasley and Pauley shake hands.

CUT TO:

INT. RICHARD KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

JUDY is busy putting away the groceries from a brown paper bag.

Pauley sits at the kitchen table, watching and waiting by the PHONE.

Pauley checks his WATCH again:

2:30 PM.

He looks back at the phone, as if willing it to ring.

Silence.

PAULEY

(With a deep sigh)

Well, I guess he went with one of
the other guys.

With great weight, Pauley gets up from the table and shuffles back to his space in the darkened living room.

Disappointed as well, Judy crumbles the paper bag out of frustration.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RICHARD'S LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

The glow from the TV illuminates the living room with flashes and flickers of color and light.

Richard is sitting in his lounge chair watching television.

Pauley is lying on the sofa reading an auto mechanics magazine.

Judy relaxes in her lounge chair working on her needlepoint.

TV INTERVIEW

Economists will tell you that the
recession is over in America. It's
American's who wouldn't say that.
If you polled a hundred Americans,
I doubt you would find five of
them who'd tell you the recession
is over.

The telephone rings in the kitchen.

Judy gets up from her chair and goes to the kitchen to answer it.

TV INTERVIEW

One out of six Americans is unemployed. Everyone is looking for work.

JUDY (O.S)

Hello?

TV INTERVIEW

In the early morning hours, the employment agency is already full with job seekers.

JUDY (O.S.)

Pauley, it's for you.

TV INTERVIEW

It's a highly competitive environment. There can be a hundred applicants for just one position.

Pauley gets up from the sofa.

CUT TO:

INT. RICHARD'S KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

Judy hands off the phone to Pauley and returns to her chair in the living room.

TV INTERVIEW (O.S.)

People are desperate and frustrated. It's a tough situation being out of work - financial problems, family problems. All that kind of snowballs together.

Pauley hangs up the phone.

TV INTERVIEW (O.S.)

As a matter of course, housing
eviction notices are on the rise...

PAULEY

(Softly, almost convincing
himself)

I got it.

Pauley races back into the living room and pulls Judy up out of her chair, hugging her and clumsily dancing around the living room.

PAULEY

I got the job!

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK PORCH - EVENING

As the sun sets, the sky is full of color.

Energized with excitement, Pauley is unable to sit down and relax. He paces back and forth on the back porch smoking a cigarette and talking a mile a minute into his walkie-talkie.

PAULEY

I can't believe it. I just can't
fucking believe it. I start first
thing next week.

(Pause as Pauley listens.)

He's gonna call back, yeah,
sometime tomorrow about where to
meet. I swear to God, Maul, this
is the best thing that has ever
happened to me...

CUT TO:

INT. MAUL MAN-CAVE - EVENING

MAUL lounges in his man-cave, which is decorated with neon, beer signs, taxidermied fish, and pin-up posters.

MAUL, 51, is a burly man's man, slightly overweight with a gray beard.

PAULEY (O.S.)

I can't wait to just pack up and go...

MAUL

I'm so proud of you... I'm so...
(Holding back tears)
For the last couple of years, I was worried... I mean, you're my brother, man, my brother with a different last name... And... God dammit... I'm just so happy for you.

PAULEY (O.S.)

Maybe this it, Maul. Ya know, maybe this is that turning point you've been blabbering about. And things are finally going the right way.

Maul is overcome with tears of joy.

CUT TO:

EXT. RICHARD DRIVEWAY - DAY

A U-Haul trailer attached to a truck is parked in Richard's driveway.

Richard hands Pauley the remaining boxes marked: Model Trains and Christmas Lights.

As Pauley emerges from the back of the trailer dusting off his hands, Judy comes rushing out of the house with a small box.

JUDY

Don't forget Maxwell Edison.

Pauley gently takes the small box from Judy.

PAULEY

Such a good, old cat.

As Pauley places the box among his other belongs, Judy flashes Richard a look of encouragement.

JUDY

Well, I guess I'll just go double
check the basement...see if you left
anything behind.

Judy hesitates between the brothers.

JUDY

I am going to miss having you
around, Pauley. You drive safely,
now.

Judy hugs Pauley and gives him a kiss on the cheek. As she turns
to head back into the house, she gives Richard a supportive
squeeze on his arm.

Both brothers watch Judy leave, avoiding eye-contact and the
inevitable goodbye. Richard breaks the tension.

RICHARD

The group took up a collection the
other night - our "helping hands"
fund.

Richard presents Pauley with a small envelope of money.

RICHARD

It's to pay for the U-Haul...and
other moving expenses.

Pauley takes the envelope and thumbs through the money again and
again.

PAULEY

Ya know, for weeks, I've been
praying - not to win the lottery,
not to find a girlfriend - but for
work. Praying for a good, steady
job...to earn back a little self-
respect.

Richard gives Pauley a hug.

Pauley climbs into the driver's seat, and puts on his LEATHER
COWBOY HAT. He starts up the engine and rolls down the window of
his truck.

From the radio:

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL "UP AROUND THE BEND"

PAULEY

Ya know, my new boss's a preacher.
Feels like the Lord is finally
pointing me toward a place of
peace.

Pauley tips his hat and places the truck in drive.

The TRUCK and U-HAUL pulls out of the driveway.

CUT TO:

INT. U-HAUL - EARLY EVENING

Pauley sits behind the wheel of his truck. "UP AROUND THE BEND"
blast from the radio.

THERE'S A PLACE UP AHEAD AND I'M GOIN'
JUST AS FAST AS MY FEET CAN FLY
COME AWAY, COME AWAY IF YOU'RE GOIN'
LEAVE THE SINKIN' SHIP BEHIND

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

COME ON THE RISIN' WIND,
WE'RE GOIN' UP AROUND THE BEND

The truck with the U-Haul trailers drives past a billboard in a
plowed October cornfield that proclaims:

FORGIVE MY SINS, JESUS, SAVE MY SOUL

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUCK AND U-HAUL - EARLY EVENING

The truck drives down a commercial highway.

BRING A SONG AND A SMILE FOR THE BANJO
BETTER GET WHILE THE GETTIN'S GOOD
HITCH A RIDE TO THE END OF THE HIGHWAY
WHERE THE NEON'S TURN TO WOOD...

As the song fades out, the headlights from the pickup truck lead the way into a Red Roof Inn parking lot.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Exhausted, Pauley lays on the hotel bed with his hands tucked behind his head. He yawns loudly, and then grabs his walkie talkie.

PAULEY

Maul? You there? It's me.

Sound of STATIC.

MAUL (O.S.)

...was hoping to hear from you? How was the drive?

PAULEY

Not too bad. There was an accident near exit 43. Took a bit longer than expected.

(Yawning)

Looking forward to catchin' some Zs.

MAUL (O.S.)

I'll bet. Big day tomorrow.

PAULEY

We're meeting up for some breakfast early in the morning, and then plan to head on out to the farm.

MAUL (O.S.)

Cool. Now, as soon as you're done talking and settled in, give me a call. Let me know your location, and I'll bring down my hot rod this weekend, so we can drive around on some of those empty dirt roads and hang out.

PAULEY
Will do, Maul.

MAUL (O.S.)
All right, big buddy. Get some
rest. And good luck!

PAULEY
'night.

Pauley sets down the walk-in talkie. He spreads out on the hotel
bed, weary but content.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE - DREAM OF THE WEST

-- Acre after acre of open, Ohio FARMLAND.

-- From a FIELD OF CROPS, a FLOCK OF BIRDS flutters into a CLEAR
BLUE SKY.

-- A babbling BROOK leads to a quiet POND that is cloaked in an
early morning MIST.

-- Rolling HILLS frame green PASTURES that are dotted with
CATTLE and HORSES.

-- Far off in the distance, a RANCHER ON HORSEBACK surveys the
bucolic COUNTRYSIDE.

END MONTAGE - DREAM OF THE WEST

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. "THE FARM" - EARLY MORNING

An October mist rises across the countryside. The peacefulness
is interrupted by the sound of shoveling.

Brogan stands knee deep in a hole. Beasley stands close by
supervising Brogan's labor.

Brogan finishes digging. Sweating and panting heavily, he steps
out of the grave, using his shovel for support.

Without a word between them, Beasley and Brogan trudge back up the hill to the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. "THE FARM" - EARLY MORNING

As Beasley and Brogan approach the car, Beasley pulls out a \$20 BILL from his wallet and puts it under a nearby rock.

BEASLEY

(To Brogan)

If it's gone when we get back, we
know someone else has been here.

Brogan and Beasley get into the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOD EMPORIUM - MORNING

From the high vantage point of a security camera, the white Buick with Brogan and Beasley can be seen driving into the empty Food Emporium parking lot and parking in the furthest corner.

Moments later, the truck with the U-Haul driven by Pauley follows and parks next to the Buick.

As Pauley gets out of his truck, Beasley gets out of the Buick. Beasley approaches Pauley, and they shake hands.

Beasley gestures to Brogan, and Brogan gives Pauley a half-hearted wave.

Pauley gets into the backseat of the Buick, and Beasley heads back to the passenger side.

The white Buick backs up and drives out of the parking lot disappearing from the view of the security camera.

CUT TO:

EXT. "THE FARM"

The Buick drives down a bumpy, dirt road and slowly comes to a halt.

Beasley and Pauley are first to exit the vehicle. Brogan reluctantly gets out of the car.

BEASLEY

(To Pauley)

It's just down this hill a ways.

Brogan notices the \$20 BILL still under the rock.

BROGAN

(Nervous)

I gotta take a leak. I'll catch up.

Brogan ditches behind a nearby tree to relieve himself.

Beasley and Pauley continue walking and disappear below the crest of the hill.

As Brogan finishes pissing and zips up, he hears:

THE CRACK OF A GUN

Brogan closes his eyes.

Brogan approaches the crest of the hill and sees:

PAULEY LYING FACEDOWN TWISTED AND TWITCHING WITH BEASLEY
STANDING OVER HIM HOLDING A SMOKING GUN.

Pauley's COWBOY HAT hangs in a nearby tree branch.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK:

INT. U-HAUL - DAY

From the darkness, the sound of a key in a metal lock.

With a loud rattle, the back gate of the U-haul opens up revealing boxes of Pauley's personal items.

Beasley stands in the background surveying his haul, wearing Pauley's cowboy hat.

Beasley hoists himself into the U-Haul and begins rummaging through the boxes and other belongings—Christmas lights, model trains, some tackle boxes, Jeff Gordon NASCAR memorabilia.

Beasley sorts through the items, creating piles of things to keep and things to discard.

Beasley's shopping spree is interrupted by the RINGING of his disposable cell phone. He doesn't recognize the number and ends the call.

Beasley pushes the pile of discard boxes to the end of the trailer.

Beasley lowers himself out of the trailer and carries the discard boxes to a nearby dumpster.

Beasley cell phone rings again. He cautiously answers.

BEASLEY
(Out of breath)
Hello?

MAUL (O.S.)
Jack?

BEASLEY
Who's this?

MAUL (O.S.)
I want to speak to Pauley.

BEASLEY
How did you get this number?

MAUL (O.S.)
From Pauley's brother.

BEASLEY
Pauley?

MAUL (O.S.)
The guy you hired for the caretaker job. Haven't heard from my friend in a while.

BEASLEY
Oh, yeah, yeah. Pauley. Well, I can't help ya there, man. He's gone.

MAUL (O.S.)
Gone?

BEASLEY
Yeah.

MAUL (O.S.)
What'd ya mean, gone?

BEASLEY
It's the craziest thing. When I
got out to the farm the other day,
all his stuff was packed up in his
truck.

Beasley looks down at the pile of Pauley's discard boxes.

BEASLEY
Apparently, he met some guy in
town, who was headed to
Pennsylvania to work on a drilling
rig, and decided to follow him
there.

MAUL (O.S.)
Pennsylvania?

BEASLEY
Yeah. That's what he said. Now, I
am out of a caretaker and gotta
start searching for someone else
all over again.

Beasley ends the call abruptly. He takes several deep breathes,
convincing himself that all is okay.

Beasley heaves the boxes into the dumpster, and then tosses his
disposable cell phone in as well.

Beasley angrily stomps back to the trailer and slams the gate
shut.

CUT TO:

INT. DARKNESS

DARKNESS. STATIC from a walkie-talkie breaks the silence.

MAUL (O.S)
Pauley? It's Maul. Are you there?
Are you there?

No response, just STATIC.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CHAPEL - DAY

A LARGE CROSS welcomes all believers to The Chapel, an Akron-based megachurch.

Jubilant singing emanates from inside the church.

CONGREGATION (O.S.)
WE GATHER TOGETHER
TO ASK THE LORD'S BLESSING
HE CHASTENS AND HASTENS
HIS WILL TO MAKE KNOWN

CUT TO:

INT. THE CHAPEL - DAY

A large congregation stands in an enormous amphitheater joyously singing their praise.

Among the congregation, Beasley and Brogan stand side by side.

Beasley sings out confidently.

Brogan, dressed in a slightly rumpled suit is a bit more reserved.

CONGREGATION
THE WICKED OPPRESSING
NOW CEASE FROM DISTRESSING
SING PRAISES TO HIS NAME
HE FORGETS NOT HIS OWN

STAINED GLASS WINDOW of Jesus's resurrection.

CUT TO:

INT. MCDONALD'S - MORNING

Brogan carries a tray of breakfast meals to a booth where Beasley is already seated.

Beasley is busy scoping out the other patrons.

Brogan sits down and immediately unwraps his breakfast sandwich and starts eating. Beasley turns his attention back to Brogan.

BEASLEY

You've been keeping up with your school work?

BROGAN

Sure.

BEASLEY

(With mouth full)

Grades still good?

BROGAN

For the most part, yeah.

BEASLEY

You better. It's important. If you don't get good grades, then you don't got a good future.

(Pause)

And I better not catch you messin' around with drugs either. They're addictive and dangerous.

BROGAN

Yes, sir. You gonna eat your hash brown?

BEASLEY

Help yourself.

Beasley watches over Brogan like a father.

BEASLEY

How long would you say we've been going to The Chapel?

BROGAN
For about eight years now.

BEASLEY
Eight years. I reckon, you're
right. You're a part of a family,
now, you know. A family that looks
out for one another.

Beasley rifles through his satchel, that sits next to him in the
booth, and produces a crumpled, wrapped present.

BEASLEY
I got you something - a gift.

Beasley slides the PRESENT across the table.

BROGAN
For me?

BEASLEY
Well, go on, now. Open it.

Brogan unwraps the present:

A BIBLE.

BEASLEY
It's a road map to salvation. God
has been the one constant in my
life. His word is the key to peace
of mind. You remember that, when
times are tough, like they are
now.

BROGAN
Thank you.

BEASLEY
I accepted Jesus as my savior when
I was about your age, and it was
all the baptizing I ever needed.

Brogan and Beasley continue their breakfast together.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAFFERTY DRIVEWAY - DAY

With the garage door wide open, RAFFERTY, Brogan's father, works on his motorcycle, listening to Deep Purple, "Smoke on the Water".

Rafferty is a middle-aged man in his early 40's. He is stocky but fit and sports a mustache.

A beat-up station wagon pulls up into the driveway.

Brogan gets out of the car. Quick to avoid his father, he heads directly into the house, giving Beasley a wave of appreciation.

While the car idles, Rafferty approaches the passenger-side window, wiping his greasy hand with a rag.

RAFFERTY

See you at the motorcycle club on
Friday?

BEASLEY

I don't know. Maybe. I've got a
few things to take care of, if you
know what I mean.

Beasley puts the station wagon into reverse.

BEASLEY

But if you see Donnie, you tell
that cocksucker he still owes me
\$50 bucks.

Beasley drives away.

Rafferty watches him leave and then disappears back into the garage.

CUT TO:

INT. RAFFERTY LIVING ROOM - DAY

Brogan lounges on the living room couch watching a WWE wrestling match with his new Bible beside him.

Rafferty enters the kitchen from a side door that leads to the garage. He washes himself up in the kitchen sink.

RAFFERTY
You guys get breakfast?

BROGAN
McDonalds.

Rafferty turns off the faucet and dries his hands.

RAFFERTY
He pay?

BROGAN
Forgot his wallet.

Rafferty grabs a beer from the refrigerator and pops opens the can.

RAFFERTY
Just keep your eye on him. Seems like he always has a little bit of an angle going on, ya know what I mean?

(Taking a drink)
Some people would rather make a crooked nickel than an honest dollar.

BROGAN
Why you gotta dog the guy like that. He's just trying to put his life back together after a bad car accident...doing the Lords work...

RAFFERTY
Don't be so naive.

BROGAN
And he's looking out for mom too. Gonna make sure she doesn't get into any more trouble.

RAFFERTY
I swear to God, boy, if you had half a brain cell, you'd be dangerous.

Grabbing his Bible, Brogan storms up the stairs to his bedroom.

RAFFERTY

Your mother will always be a crack
addict. Has been since the day you
were born. And there's no climbing
out of that hole.

Brogan's bedroom door slams shut.

Angry at his own reaction, Rafferty takes a long drink of beer
as he struggles to calm his temper.

RAFFERTY

(Too authoritative)

Brogan!

With no response, Rafferty makes his way up the stairs
to Brogan's bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Rafferty lightly knocks, but there is no response. Defeated, he
leans his head against the bedroom door.

RAFFERTY

We're never going to be the kind
of family that that church of
yours holds up as some holy
example.

(Pause)

I know I put a lot of
responsibility on you. But, god
dammit, it's just the two of us.
And someone's got to put food on
the table.

(Pause)

Brogan? Are you crying?

BROGAN

(Angry)

No!

CUT TO:

INT. BROGAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Brogan sits on his bed clutching his Bible. He wipes away a few tears.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEASLEY'S HALF-WAY HOUSE - DAY

The station wagon pulls up in front of dilapidated, green, two-story house.

Beasley gets out of the car with a bit of difficulty. He slowly makes his way up the steps and path to the front door, holding his lower back in pain.

CUT TO:

INT. BEASLEY'S HALF-WAY HOUSE - DAY

Beasley enters the run-down house, which is practically empty except for a few pieces of mismatched, thrift-store furniture.

SAVANNAH, 17, lounges on a loveseat that is draped with a white bed-sheet. She is scantily dressed in cut-off jeans shorts and a worn tank top. Her eyes are red, and her skin is covered in sweat.

SAVANNAH

It's not working, you fat fuck. I
need another rock.

Beasley is caught off guard by the unexpected attack.

AMY, another prostitute, 23, appears from a kitchen area, smoking a cigarette and drinking from a jar.

AMY

Pay no attention. She's been like
that all day.

BEASLEY

(To Amy)
How much has she had?

AMY

How the hell should I know? Two,
three...?

BEASLEY

(To Savannah)
How much you had?

SAVANNAH

I need more!

BEASLEY

You were supposed to have only two
today. Two for the next couple of
days, and then down to one.

Savannah gets up from the couch and starts rummaging around the
room for her coat, boots, and keys.

SAVANNAH

To hell with this fucking
bullshit. I'm outta here. I'm
gonna leave and just get 'em
myself!

BEASLEY

(Angrily)
No! No, You're not! You're not
going anywhere. You both are gonna
just stay put, you hear!

Both Savannah and Amy are a bit afraid of Beasley's sudden
temper. Beasley notices their apprehension and changes his tack
and tone.

BEASLEY

(To Savannah)
I'll buy you some more. Okay? And
you can smoke 'em right here.

Savannah throws a minor temper tantrum and collapses back on the
couch.

BEASLEY

(To Amy)
Where's her money from last night?

AMY

On the kitchen table.

Beasley limps into the kitchen and counts through a bunch of cash that has been strewn about.

BEASLEY

It's my mission, the mission of
this house to save all you
beautiful girls out there on the
streets. I am your savior,
remember?

AMY

Our savior, or our pimp?

Beasley turns to stare down Amy.

AMY

I mean, come on, who exactly is
using who around here?

Choosing to avoid a further confrontation, Beasley storms out the front door slamming it shut.

CUT TO:

INT. RAFFERTY BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

A 5:00 AM alarm rings.

Rafferty struggles to wake up and slowly rolls out of bed.

CUT TO:

INT. RAFFERTY KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Rafferty shuffles into the kitchen and carefully sets out breakfast for Brogan.

From the cupboards, he fetches a bowl and a box of cereal. From the refrigerator, he grabs a pitcher of milk.

CUT TO:

INT. RAFFERTY HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

Dressed for his blue-collar job, Rafferty lightly knocks on Brogan's bedroom door.

RAFFERTY

Time to get up.

(Knocking again)

Breakfast is on the table.

CUT TO:

INT. BEASLEY BEDROOM - MORNING

Beasley wakes up in a heavy sweat. His hands tightly clenching the wrinkled bedsheets.

In great pain, he struggles to slide out of bed and heads to the bathroom.

CUT TO:

INT. BEASLEY BATHROOM - MORNING

Beasley open the medicine cabinet, revealing a stash of OXYCONTIN.

He takes out a vile and shakes a couple of PILLS into his hand.

He swallows the pills and scopes handfuls of water from the faucet to wash them down.

CUT TO:

INT. BEASLEY HALF-WAY HOUSE - MORNING

Beasley carefully makes his way down the staircase using the bannister for support.

He reaches the landing and heads towards the kitchen area.

In the background, a coffee table is littered with DRUG PARAPHERNALIA. SAVANNAH LIES DEAD from an apparent overdose, crumpled between the couch and the floor.

Suddenly, the front door bursts open and several COPS charge into the house with guns drawn.

COP #1

On your knees, you're under
arrest!

Beasley surrenders, sinking to the floor.

COP #1
Put your hands up! Hands up, where
I can see them!

Beasley slowly raises his hands, while COP #2 quickly cuffs
Beasley from behind.

COP #1
You have the right to remain
silent. Anything you say can and
will be used against you in a
court of law. You have the right
to an attorney. If you cannot
afford an attorney, one will be
provided for you...

COP #3 investigates the dead body of Savannah in the living
room.

BEASLEY
How right was Jesus when he said
to give unto Caesar what is
Caesar's.

DISSOVLE TO:

INT. JAIL - DAY

Beasley sits in a jail cell reading from a bible.

An OFFICER approaches the cell and unlocks the door.

OFFICER
You posted bail.

Beasley stands up proudly. He is escorted out of the cell and
down the hallway by the officer.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Beasley and Brogan walk through an old cemetery on a hot and humid July afternoon.

Small AMERICAN FLAGS and red, white, and blue FAKE FLOWERS decorate the various grave sites.

BEASLEY

It's coming back to haunt me.

Beasley pauses before a large TOMBSTONE OF A CROSS and confesses to Brogan.

BEASLEY

The first time I got in trouble was down in Texas, when I was just 25. A series of stupid robberies. Then a gun charge, which wasn't my fault, a misunderstanding, really.

Beasley continues walking between the graves. Brogan follows.

BEASLEY

There's a warrant out for my arrest. When they come for me, and they're comin' for me. When they get me, they're going to put me away for good...for some old shit, I just didn't do.

BROGAN

It ain't right.

Beasley stops before a statue of a praying ANGEL.

BEASLEY

I'm going on the run. I gotta disappear. You're a good kid. I want you to know that. I'm gonna miss you, but I just can't go back to jail. I can't. I don't deserve to be in that hell-hole.

BROGAN

It ain't right! Goddamnit, it just ain't right!

Seething with anger and at a loss for expressing his feeling, Brogan kicks over a HEADSTONE.

BROGAN

Damn cops! They don't care about
whose lives they ruin!

Beasley takes full note of Brogan's rage and realizes he can harness the ferocity.

BROGAN

They messed with my mom! And, now
they're messing with you!

Beasley hugs Brogan, holding him close in an attempt to calm him down.

BEASLEY

(Whispering)

"I will follow You wherever you
go."

Beasley releases Brogan and stare at him directly in the eyes.

BEASLEY

I've been praying...for some kind of
miracle. But I need help. I need a
new identity.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - RUST BELT

-- A closed factory surrounded by a chain-link fence that has a rusted lock around the gate.

-- Smashed windows and graffiti scar the factory's brick façade.

-- Grass and weeds sprout up through cracks in the asphalt.

-- Along a suburban street, vacant and boarded up, row-houses that have been split into apartments.

-- An eviction notice is stuck to a door.

END MONTAGE - RUST BELT

CUT TO:

INT. BUICK - DAY

On the hunt, Beasley and Brogan cruise down the rough streets of Akron in the white Buick.

CUT TO:

EXT. AKRON STREET - DAY

The Buick passes a HOMELESS MAN on the sidewalk leaning against a street lamp. Next to him is a cardboard sign that reads:

I LOST EVERYTHING
PLEASE HELP
AND GOD BLESS

CUT TO:

EXT. TENT CITY - EARLY EVENING

The Buick parks along a tree-lined street that is littered with trash. Beasley and Brogan exit the car and enter the TENT CITY:

Between two wooden fences, ROWS OF CAMPING TENTS covered in blue tarps line an alley. The tents sit on platforms of shipping crates.

BONFIRES burn from metal BARRELS.

Beasley and Brogan cautiously walk through the Tent City. The bleak environment is alive with singing and conversation.

Some of the homeless lounge on make-shift, found furniture, while others quickly disappear inside their tents.

A HOMELESS MAN approaches Beasley and Brogan from behind.

HOMELESS MAN
Hey, Geiger. Geiger!

Beasley and Brogan quickly turn around, and the Homeless Man stops dead in his tracks.

HOMELESS MAN
(Confused)

You're not Geiger.

Over Beasley's shoulder, in the back of the alley, the Homeless Man spies GEIGER, warming himself over a fire. Geiger, 56, is somewhat overweight just like Beasley.

HOMELESS MAN
(Shouting across the alley)
Hey, Geiger!

The Homeless Man pushes his way between Beasley and Brogan.

HOMELESS MAN
Summer had her baby. It's a girl!

BEASLEY watches the Homeless Man and Geiger as they converse.

Geiger and the Homeless Man share a parting hug, and Beasley makes his move.

BEASLEY
Mind if I join you.

GEIGER
Help yourself.

Beasley warms himself by the fire. The FLAMES from the bonfire gives him a somewhat demonic glow.

BEASLEY
Couldn't help hearing.
Congratulations on the baby.

GEIGER
Thanks. The kid ain't mine though.
Used to help out her mother when
she was just a wild little rascal.

Beasley takes out a bottle of booze from his jacket, and takes a swig.

Beasley offer the bottle to Geiger, and he takes a swig.

Geiger gives the bottle back to Beasley.

GEIGER
Thanks, man.

BEASLEY
You looking for work?

GEIGER
Isn't everyone around here?

Geiger gestures around to the Tent City community.

GEIGER
It's always the working man that
gets left behind...like fish
stranded along the shore.

Beasley notices Geiger's JESUS FISH TATTOO.

BEASLEY
I own a little farm down South.
Looking for a caretaker to feed a
few cattle, mend some fences..
Interested?

GEIGER
Well, if you're in need of a handy
man, I can fix about anything. Ran
a maintenance business, until all
the jobs dried up. How much?

BEASLEY
...\$200...a week.

Beasley offers the bottle to Geiger again, and Geiger takes
another sip.

GEIGER
(Smiling)
Used to live on a farm when I was
a boy.

BEASLEY
How old are you, anyway?

GEIGER
56.

BEASLEY
In good shape?

Geiger give the bottle back to Beasley.

GEIGER
More than most around here.

BEASLEY
How much do you weigh?

GEIGER
How in the hell should I know,
man?

Brogan approaches Beasley and Geiger. Beasley quickly stuffs the bottle back into his jacket.

BEASLEY
(To Brogan)
Hey, buddy.
(To Beasley)
Let me introduce you...to my nephew.

Beasley gives Brogan a knowing glance.

BEASLEY
(To Brogan)
Kind of look alike. Don't you think?

BROGAN
(Slow to catch on)
Yeah.

GEIGER
Shoot. Maybe we're long lost brothers.

Beasley offers Geiger his hand.

BEASLEY
Well, welcome to the family,
brother.

Beasley and Geiger shake hands.

The bonfire CRACKLES and SPARKS.

CUT TO:

INT. RAFFERTY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rafferty, dressed in his work uniform, opens the front door. He hangs up his jacket and walks in the darkened living room.

Rafferty turns on a lamp, and is a bit startled to find Brogan just sitting there in the dark.

RAFFERTY

What's wrong with you?

Brogan doesn't answer.

RAFFERTY

Did something happen?

Brogan just stares at his father trying desperately to express his feelings.

BROGAN

I don't know. I'm not sure.

CUT TO:

INT. BAIS'S APARTMENT - DAY

BAIS, 35, a short, plump man, opens a door to a small studio apartment and ushers Beasley in.

BAIS

As you can see, it ain't much, but you have your own entrance and bathroom. It's \$100 a week with a security deposit, of course. You can move in at the end of the week, Mr....

BEASLEY

Geiger.

BAIS

You can move in at the end of the week, but I will need to know by tomorrow morning. Someone else is interested.

CUT TO:

INT. STOW-MONROE FALLS HS CLASSROOM - DAY

Brogan sits in English class staring off into the distance as the TEACHER reviews the lesson.

TEACHER (O.S)

You could say, Dreiser's novel depicts a darker side of the American Dream—of what can happen when a man's desire for wealth and status overwhelms his moral sense.

The other STUDENTS flip through pages of the books or jot down notes.

Brogan just stares straight ahead into an abyss.

TEACHER

In pursuing a better life for himself, Clyde is doing exactly what's expected of him by society - however, in killing Roberta, he overstepped the boundaries of the very society in which he wanted to excel.

CUT TO:

INT. TATTOO PARLOR - NIGHT

A BUZZING sound of needles.

SKULLS, CROSSES, KNIVES,

Beasley lies in a chair, as a TATTOO ARTIST finishes drawing a JESUS FISH TATTOO.

The Tattoo Artist wipes blood from Beasley's arm.

Beasley admires the work with a smile.

BEASLEY

Christ told his apostles to be
fishers of men.

CUT TO:

INT. YVETTE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is sparsely decorated.

YVETTE, Brogan's mother, sits at the kitchen smoking a
cigarette, watching Brogan play with his food. Yvette is tall
and rail thin.

YVETTE
Thought my spaghetti was your
favorite?

Brogan is distracted from his dark thoughts.

BROGAN
Just not that hungry.

Yvette stubs out her cigarette into an ashtray. She gets up from
the table and takes their dishes to the kitchen sink.

YVETTE
I've been seeing this guy over in
Cuyahoga Falls... Some famous dog
breeder - German Shepherds.
Anyway, I'd really like you to
meet him sometime. I think you
guys would hit it off well.

Yvette turns around to notice Brogan just staring off into space
again.

YVETTE
How was Homecoming, baby?

BROGAN
All right, I guess.

Yvette continues to just watch him, concerned.

YVETTE
Yeah. It's never all that it's
cracked up to be. Shoot, I

remember your father showed up to my house in the ugliest of ugly tuxedos, and my dad kept grilling him about where we were going and when we would be back...

Yvette lights another cigarette, and exhales a large stream of smoke.

BROGAN

We all went out to the quarry after. Everyone was having so much fun - drinking and partying... And all I could think about was driving my car, radio blaring crashing against the guardrail on Dead Man's Hill, and flipping over into the deep ravine below... Then, I would be with Grandma Rita again.

Brogan turns and looks at his mom for the very first time.

BROGAN

I miss her so much.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUICK - NIGHT

RITA'S ROSARY swings back and forth as the Buick bounces along the dirt road.

A ghostly glow from the dashboard illuminates the faces of Brogan and Beasley. In the backseat, shrouded in shadows sits Geiger.

CUT TO:

EXT. "THE FARM" - NIGHT

The WHITE BUICK creeps along the rough, dirt road like a car in a funeral procession.

The Buick brakes along the same densely wooded stretch of the road and parks.

Beasley, Brogan, and Geiger all get out of the car.

As they head down the slopping hill, Beasley pulls out a pistol and executes Geiger, shooting him point blank in the back of the head.

Geiger falls to the ground face first.

BROGAN STANDS STILL FROZEN WITH FEAR.

A PANTING SOUND crescendos as the Brogan surrenders to the DARKNESS.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE - "MIDNIGHT SHIFT"

-- A SHADOWY FIGURE runs through WOODS of overgrown BLACK TREES.

BROGAN (V.O)
We took him out to the woods on a
humid summer's night.
I walked in front of them.

-- As the SHADOWY FIGURE runs and stumbles over the uneven ground, the PANTING and sound of FOOTSTEPS increases.

BROGAN (V.O)
They were going back to the car.
I didn't turn around.
The loud crack echoed and I didn't
hear the thud.

-- ECHOES OF GUNSHOTS: GUNSHOT, GUNSHOT, GUNSHOT...

-- The SHADOWY FIGURE halts in fear, alert, and then keeps on running.

BROGAN (V.O.)
The two of us went back to the car
for the shovels.
He was still there when we
returned.
He threw the clothes in a garbage
bag along with the personal items.
I dug the hole.

-- The SHADOWY FIGURE skids down into a CREEK BED and hides under thick vegetation.

-- A BLACK SUN slowly sinks behind distorted, DARK CLOUDS.

BROGAN (V.O.)
We showered him with lime like a
Satanic baptism
it was like we were
excommunicating
him from the world

-- The SHADOWY FIGURE stumbles out of the BLACK WOODS on to the BLACKTOP of a deserted HIGHWAY.

-- Leaving A TRAIL of DARK BLOOD, the SHADOWY FIGURE crosses the highway and disappears into the BLACK WOODS on the other side.

BROGAN (V.O.)
We drove out of there discarding
evidence as we went

-- The pace and PANTING of the SHADOW FIGURE wanes as it collapses against a BLACK TREE.

BROGAN (V.O.)
felt terrible until I threw up
in the gas station bathroom where
I was supposed to throw away the
bullets and shell.
I emptied myself of my guilt, with
my dinner, but not for long.

-- A faint LIGHT flickers through the BLACK TREES of the DARK WOODS.

BROGAN (V.O.)
When I got home, took a shower
hotter than hell itself.
prayed like hell that night.

-- The SHADOWY FIGURE limps towards the LIGHT of the HOUSE deep in the DARK WOODS.

END MONTAGE - "MIDNIGHT SHIFT"

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOCKLING LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

In a dark living room, SCHOCKLING, an elderly man in his 60's, lounges watching:

WHEEL OF FORTUNE.

Schockling's young NEPHEW, 7, lies on the floor coloring.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

Schockling looks up confused.

The DOORBELL RINGS again.

SCHOCKLING

(To Nephew)

Go see who it is.

Irritated, the NEPHEW gets up and goes to the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The nephew's way through the house is punctuated by several more RINGS OF THE DOORBELL.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOCKLING LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Schockling lowers the volume on the TV in order to eavesdrop on the conversation.

Instead, the nephew comes running back into the living room yelling.

NEPHEW

There's a guy at the door! He's
been shot, and he's bleeding right
through!

Assuming his nephew is playing a prank, Schockling reluctantly gets up and makes his way to the front door.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

A wave of horror hits Schockling as he steps out on to his front porch.

In the spotlight from the porch light, Davis paces back and forth in the front yard. He is pale and fidgety, and holds his right arm across his body. His sleeve and pant leg are soaked with blood.

Davis looks up at Schockling, drained of everything.

DAVIS

Call 911.

CUT TO:

INT. BUICK -DAY

Brogan sits the driver's seat of the Buick.

With each GUNSHOT, GUNSHOT, GUNSHOT Brogan tenses.

From the passenger side window, Beasley can be seen hustling up the hill, cussing up a storm.

Beasley climbs into the Buick breathing heavily.

BEASLEY

He got away, god dammit!

(Exploding)

God dammit to hell!

CUT TO:

EXT. "THE FARM" - DAY

The Buick spins around on the dirt road and heads back to the highway, trailing a cloud of dust in its wake.

CUT TO:

INT. BUICK - DAY

Brogan white knuckles the steering wheel, staring straight ahead. Beasley is still catching his breath and sweating up a storm.

BEASLEY
If you see him on the side of the
road...hit him.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY

The car peels out on to the highway.

SHOVELS are tossed to the side of the road from an open car door.

CUT TO:

INT. BUICK

In his panicked state, Beasley tosses more and more things out of the car - A LEATHER JACKET, an AIR FRESHENER, his own LAPTOP..

Beasley reaches for the ROSARY BEADS hanging from the rearview mirror, but Brogan intervenes grabbing Beasley's hand forcefully.

BEASLEY
(With a quiet desperation)
I was counting on that haul.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT LAWN OF THE SCHOCKLING HOUSE - NIGHT

The flashing of EMERGENCY RED and BLUE lights illuminates the dark night.

The sound of radio chatter emanates from the open door of a sheriff's cruiser.

Davis sits against a picnic table. An EMS WORKER attends to his wounded arm.

SHERIFF HANNUM towers over Davis, sizing up the situation.

DAVIS

All my stuff, man... my Harley, my stereo equipment... He's probably going to steal it.

SHERIFF HANNUM

Who?

DAVIS

The guy who shot me! That preacher...and his fucking nephew.

Davis notices the Sheriff's skepticism.

DAVIS

I came here for a job, watching over some cattle ranch. I went to help him get some equipment, and he shot me. The guy who gave me the job. He shot me, and they just kept on coming...

Davis tenses momentarily as he recalls the event.

DAVIS

...I ran. I hightailed it out of there until I couldn't hear 'em any more. Hid in a creek for hours.

SHERIFF HANNUM

(Confused)

But there is no cattle ranch in Noble County - nothing even close.

DAVIS

I'm telling you, this maniac promised a dream job. I answered his Craigslist ad.

CUT TO:

INT. BEASLEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Beasley sits in front of a computer illuminated only by the light from the screen. He frantically types.

BEASLEY (V.O.)
Simple watch over a 688-acre patch
of hilly farmland and feed a few
cows. \$300 a week and a nice 2-
bedroom trailer.

MONTAGE - DREAM JOB

-- A long LINE OF WORKERS outside an unemployment office.

BEASLEY (V.O.)
A real get away for the right
person. Someone older and single
preferred but will consider all,
relocation a must.

-- Ron sits in the unemployment office filling out some
paperwork.

BEASLEY (V.O.)
Must have a clean record and be
trustworthy--this is a permanent
position.

-- Joe fights with his FIANCEE. She throws her engagement ring
at him.

BEASLEY (V.O.)
The farm is used mainly as a
hunting preserve, is overrun with
game, has a stocked 3-acre pond,
but some beef cattle will be kept.

-- George sits in his car crying.

BEASLEY (V.O.)
Nearest neighbor is a mile away.
The place is quiet-secluded and
beautiful...

-- GEIGER lying face down dead.

BEASLEY (V.O.)
It will be a real get away for the
right person.

-- PAULEY lying dead.

END MONTAGE - DREAM JOB

CUT TO:

INT. BEASLEY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Beasley stares at his finished CRAIGSLIST AD.

BEASLEY (V.O.)
Job of a lifetime—if you are ready
to relocate please contact ASAP,
position will not stay open.

Beasley hits submit.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAUL'S MAN-CAVE - NIGHT

Maul sits in front of his computer scrolling through a news article with the headline:

MAN SAYS HE WAS LURED HERE FOR WORK, THEN SHOT

He scans the article, catching various phrases:

688-ACRE RANCH

\$300 A WEEK

JOB OF A LIFETIME

CONTACT SHERIFF HANNUM

Maul grabs his cell phone that lies next to his lonely WALKIE TALKIE.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Sheriff Hannum sits at his desk surrounded by piles of file folders. He examines a map.

The office phone rings. Sheriff Hannum answers.

SHERIFF HANNUM
This is Sheriff Hannum.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEASLEY APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

The white Buick pulls up in front of Beasley's house.

Beasley comes lumbering across the front lawn, expelling steamy breath into the dark morning.

CUT TO:

INT. BUICK - EARLY MORNING

Beasley slides into the front seat. Brogan says nothing as Beasley buckles up. Brogan puts the car in drive.

CUT TO:

EXT. ITALO'S PIZZERIA PARKING LOT - EARLY MORNING

A 'Help Wanted' sign is taped in the window of the small mom-and-pop pizzeria.

Under a lone street lamp, a run-down, late 80's sedan is parked in the vacant lot.

CUT TO:

INT. SEDAN - EARLY MORNING

From the back seat, where he has spent the night, KERN, 47 years old, wakes up and immediately checks his text messages.

LOVE YOU, DAD.

Kern smiles and texts back:

THANKS FOR THE \$. DON'T BE 2 COOL 4 DAD. TEXT ME WHEN YOU
WAKE UP. LOVE YOU. LEAVING SOON.

The early morning darkness is chased away by headlights that flood the inside of the sedan with a blinding light.

Kern, thin and wiry, gets out of the car to greet his new employer.

CUT TO:

EXT. ITALO'S PIZZERIA PARKING LOT - EARLY MORNING

Beasley is the first to get out of the white Buick. Kern approaches, hand extended.

KERN

Mornin'.

BEASLEY

Good Morning. Nice to meet you.
I'm Jack. This is my nephew,
Brogan.

Kern shakes hands with Brogan.

KERN

How do you do?

Brogan doesn't answer.

Beasley brakes the awkward moment by clapping his hands together.

BEASLEY

All right then. Let's get you
loaded up. What'd ya bring?

Kern makes his way to the back of the sedan and opens up the trunk.

Beasley peers in, clearly disappointed, if not a bit annoyed.

Beasley points to a toolbox and box television.

BEASLEY

Well, you'll need this and that
for sure.

Kern grabs his tool box, while Brogan, the muscle, grapples with the box TV and loads it into the trunk of the Buick.

Beasley points to an open box of cassette tapes.

BEASLEY
Leave that. What in the bags?

KERN
Clothes.

BEASLEY
Well, take those then. The rest,
we'll come back to pick up later.

Beasley closes the trunk of Kern's car.

BEASLEY
How much cash you got on you to
get by with?

KERN
(Embarrassed)
Just a twenty.

BEASLEY
Twenty bucks?

Beasley pats Kern on the back.

BEASLEY
It is, what it is. Come on.

The three of them get into the white Buick and drive out of that parking lot into the still-sleepy morning.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOD CENTER EMPORIUM - EARLY MORNING

From the same security camera angle, Sheriff Hannum gets out of his cruiser, and approaches the parked truck and trailer.

He unlocks and lifts the trailer gate, revealing all of Davis's personal belongings - the Harley, stereo equipment, tools.

Sheriff Hannum looks around the parking lot and notices the security camera above.

CUT TO:

INT. BUICK - EARLY MORNING

Beasley and Brogan up front, with Kern in the back, like a kid.

Beasley quizzes Kern.

BEASLEY

You didn't bring the laptop you'd mentioned?

KERN

No, sir. Left it behind with my sons.

BEASLEY

What about the flatscreen? You said you were bringing a flatscreen TV.

KERN

Yeah. No. I left it with them too. I just brought along the other TV, the bags of clothes, and some cassette tapes. What about my car? It barely runs.

BEASLEY

Don't you worry about that, I gotta plan for your car. My nephew and I'll come back and scrap it. I'll take the cash, and you can have the Ford truck that's down at the farm. It's a better vehicle anyway, for the terrain.

Beasley leans back and smiles.

BEASLEY

You can pay off the difference in installments that I'll take out of your wages.

Kern's cell phone pings. He checks his phone and discovers a text from his son:

SO PROUD OF YOU, DAD. GOOD LUCK.

Kern smiles.

KERN
(Back to Beasley)
Sure. Sounds good.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - EARLY MORNING

An FBI CYBER-CRIMES SPECIALIST enters Sheriff Hannum's office, and drops a file folder on his desk.

Sheriff Hannum pours a cup of coffee.

FBI SPECIALIST
We were able to trace the IP
address for the computer. The ads
originated from an apartment
outside of Akron.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUICK - EARLY MORNING

The Buick drives down a commercial street.

CUT TO:

INT. BUICK - EARLY MORNING

Brogan quickly peeks at Kern in the rearview mirror.

Beasley leans back to address Kern.

BEASLEY
Turns out we were hunting for
squirrels the other day, out by
the old mall. And wouldn't you
know it, I lost my watch. It's got
a lot of sentimental value. You
don't mind, would you, if we go
over and look for it real quick,
before we head down to the farm?

Kern catches Brogan's nervous eyes in the rearview mirror.

KERN

Nope. Don't mind at all.

CUT TO:

INT. BAIS HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

BAIS sits at his kitchen table with Sherriff Hannum.

FBI AGENT #1 looms over Bais interrogating him.

BAIS

I'm telling you, I never posted
any ad about a job, just a room
for rent. I don't have the
slightest clue what you are
talking about.

FBI AGENT #1

Do you know anyone that goes by
the name Richard Beasley or Jack?

BAIS

No. No, I don't.

SHERRIFF HANNUM

Here. Take a good look at this picture.
Can you identify this man?

Sherriff Hannum shows Bais a picture of Beasley taken in the
Food Emporium parking lot.

BAIS

Yeah, but that's Geiger. Ralph
Geiger. He rented the room
upstairs, but moved out a couple
weeks ago. Said he found a job out
of town.

FBI Agent #1 heads up the stairs to investigate.

BAIS

Real nice guy. First Sunday he was
here, he went to church. Ya know,
when he moved out, he left me a
note with his new cellphone
number.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROLLING ACRES MALL - EARLY MORNING

The white Buick drives through the abandoned parking lot of the Rolling Acres Mall.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - DEAD MALL

-- Vacant storefronts shuttered and suspended in a last moment of forced cheer.

-- A window sign advertises in large red letters: GOING OUT OF BUSINESS.

-- A broken neon sign promises: EVERYTHING MUST GO.

-- A window sign with fireworks celebrates: TOTAL INVENTORY BLOWOUT.

-- A torn window sign invites: WALL TO WALL SAVINGS.

-- Outlines of big-box store names silhouetted onto entrance brickwork.

END MONTAGE - DEAD MALL

CUT TO:

EXT. ROLLING ACRES MALL - EARLY MORNING

The white Buick pulls around an outbuilding and parks near a narrow, wooded area.

Beasley, Brogan, and Kern exit the car. The sound of car doors shutting is amplified in all the emptiness.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODED AREA - EARLY MORNING

Kern follows Beasley into the woods, which is littered with plastic cups, beer cans, and overturned shopping carts.

Brogan keeps his distance.

Beasley pulls back a branch and lets it slap back at Kern. Kern holds the branch back for Brogan so he can walk by.

In a clearing, Beasley kicks around a pile of fallen, November leaves.

BEASLEY

We were around here somewhere.

While Kern is searching the ground, he notices the shallow grave.

Kern turns to look at Brogan, but Brogan avoids his gaze, acting like he's searching through a thick layer of leaves as well.

Brogan hears a POP.

Kern falls to his knees holding the side of his head that is splattered with blood.

Beasley aims his gun at Kern.

BEASLEY

(Feigning concern)

You all right?

Like a fish out of water, Kern takes several, enormous gulps of air.

Beasley shoots him again and again and again.

Choking on his own blood, Kern collapses to his knees and slumps over onto his side, still gasping for air.

BEASLEY

There's something wrong with this gun.

Beasley gets up close and shoots Kern again directly in the face.

Kern lies on the ground, EYES OPEN WIDE, staring up at the LEAFLESS BRANCHES above.

Eventually, his desperate, drowning noises subside. Silence.

Brogan stares at Beasley in bewilderment.

BEASLEY

Don't just stand there. Grab a leg.

BROGAN

(Almost a question)
He didn't have anything.

Beasley grabs a leg and struggles to drag the body.

BEASLEY

He was a dead man as soon as he got in the car.

Brogan reluctantly grabs the other leg.

Together, they drag Kern into the hole, which is only a couple of feet deep. Kern's body doesn't completely fit in the shallow grave.

November, LEAFLESS BRANCHES above.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEASLEY'S HOUSE - MORNING

The white Buick pulls up alongside Beasley's House. Beasley gets out of the car and makes his way up to the house.

CUT TO:

INT. BUICK - MORNING

Brogan sits idling in the car, watching the street outside as the day gets brighter and brighter.

His melancholy is interrupted by the ringing of his cell phone. He answers it.

BROGAN

Mom...?

YVETTE (O.S.)

(Through tears)

Hey, baby...

BROGAN

Where are you?

(Listening)

I'll pick you up on the way home.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - MORNING

Along the side of the road, Yvette carefully walks home in high heels. Under her coat, she wears a cheap, gaudy dress.

The white BUICK slowly pulls up beside her.

Yvette opens the passenger and slips inside.

CUT TO:

INT. BUICK - MORNING

Brogan drives the car focused forward. Yvette is a mess of emotions.

YVETTE

That mother-fucker. He was
partying with a bunch of his dick
friends last night...such an
asshole.

Yvette sobs uncontrollably. She gets a hold of herself and looks to Brogan, as if for the first time, suddenly realizing he is her child.

YVETTE

I'm so sorry, baby. I'm sorry I
wasn't there last night. I swear,
I didn't know you were coming over
this weekend, or I would have-

BROGAN

It doesn't matter, Mom. It doesn't
matter.

They drive off in silence.

CUT TO:

INT. BEASLEY'S APARTMENT

Having just taken a shower, Beasley is getting dressed when his cell phone rings.

BEASLEY

Hello?

CUT TO:

INT. BAIS APARTMENT - DAY

BAIS

Hey, man, it's Bais. Was just cleaning up your room and found your note.

Bais looks at Sherriff Hannum for reassurance, as the FBI Agent #1 traces the call.

BAIS

How are you making out at your new place?

CUT TO:

INT. BEASLEY'S APARTMENT

Suspicious of the call, Beasley hangs up.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE CHAPEL - DAY

An organ plays as the congregation sings joyfully.

CONGREGATION

AMAZING GRACE HOW SWEET THE SOUND
THAT SAVED A WRETCH LIKE ME
I ONCE WAS LOST, BUT NOW I'M FOUND
WAS BLIND, BUT NOW I SEE

In the sudden quiet that resonates after the organ, the PASTOR makes his way to the pulpit and gazes out upon the congregation.

PASTOR
Deep inside our hearts is a
hole...that only God and faith can
fill.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE - DREAM OF THE WEST

-- Acre after acre of open, Ohio FARMLAND.

PASTOR (V.O.)
Our desires tell us that there was
once in us a true happiness, of
which all that remains is now a
memory.

-- From a FIELD OF CROPS, a FLOCK OF BIRDS flutters into a CLEAR
BLUE SKY.

PASTOR (V.O.)
Still, we try in vain to fill that
emptiness with everything around
us -

-- A babbling BROOK leads to a quiet POND that is cloaked in an
early morning MIST.

PASTOR (V.O.)
Mansions, motorcycles, jewelry -
all elusive illusions.

-- Rolling HILLS frame PASTURES that are dotted with CATTLE and
HORSES.

PASTOR (V.O.)
We seek in things that are not
there the help we cannot find in
those that are.

-- Far off in the distance, a COWBOY ON HORSEBACK surveys the
bucolic COUNTRYSIDE.

END MONTAGE - DREAM OF THE WEST (WESTERN DREAM)

CUT TO:

INT. STOW-MONROE FALLS HS - DAY

Brogan walks down an empty high school hallway.

PASTOR (V.O.)

The universe was created by a
gracious Heavenly Father, who
filled it with good things to
enjoy and moral laws with which to
structure our lives.

CUT TO:

INT. STOW-MONROE FALLS HS - DAY

Brogan pauses before entering the PRINCIPAL's OFFICE.

PASTOR (V.O.)

But the chief aim of life is
neither to enjoy these gifts, nor
to obey these laws, but to know
and be known by our creator.

The PRINCIPAL gestures to an open chair next to FBI agent #1.

PASTOR (V.O.)

This loving relationship between
man and God is our purpose, our
fulfillment, our delight.

CUT TO:

EXT. STOW-MONROE FALLS HS - DAY

FBI AGENT #2 and FBI AGENT #3 search Brogan's Buick.

FBI agent #2 opens the back of the trunk and discovers Kern's
BOX TV.

PASTOR (V.O.)

Adam's sin separated him from God,
and the relationship between man
and our Heavenly Father was
irreparably broken.

A car pulls up and parks.

Rafferty gets out of the driver side, just in time to see FBI Agent #2 lifting the box TV from the Buick's trunk.

PASTOR (V.O.)
The hole in the heart, which had
been filled by God himself, was
now empty.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CHAPEL - DAY

Beasley walks a path towards the entrance of The Chapel.

He looks up and notices a HELICOPTER hovering over the CROSS.

PASTOR (V.O.)
But for all those who would believe,
God sent his only son to restore all
things broken by sin.

From seemingly out of nowhere an FBI SWAT TEAM confronts Beasley, badges and guns drawn.

PASTOR (V.O.)
Christ repairs the ruin. He
restores our relationship with
God.

Perhaps in prayer or in surrender, Beasley collapses to his knees in the SHADOW OF THE CROSS.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CHAPEL - DAY

The congregation listens intently.

PASTOR
He fills the hole in each of our
hearts, allowing us to experience
the abundant life both here and
now and in the life to come. Amen.

CONGREGATION
Amen.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. "THE FARM" - DUSK

Through a torrential down pour of rain, a crew of FBI agents with cadaver dogs descend the crest of a hill.

In the distance, the faint sound of COYOTES HOWLING can be heard.

Investigators and agents approach a patch of DISTURBED SOIL overlaid with TREE BRANCHES.

Two agents begin digging with their hands in the mud, until BLOOD starts seeping up from the wet earth.

A SOCKED FOOT appears.

Not far from this grave, and the partially excavated body, is a SECOND GRAVE.

A DARK, EMPTY HOLE.

THE END

LAY ME DOWN

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Gnojewski

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LAY ME DOWN IN (C minor)/ SHEETS OF LINEN (G minor)
LAY ME DOWN IN (C minor)/ FIELDS OF RYE (G minor)
WHEN YOU'RE GONE YOU'RE (G#) / GONE FOREVER (G Minor)
THOUGH YOUR LOVE MAY (F)/ NEVER DIE (G#)

THERE'S A TIME FOR / GROWING GARDENS
THERE'S A TIME FOR / SOWING SCHEMES
THERE'S A TIME FOR / WORK AND LEISURE
THERE'S A TIME FOR / DREAMING DREAMS

COME THE EVENIN' / SAY YOUR PRAYERS
IN THE LORD'S LOVE / WE BELIEVE
COME THE MORNIN' / COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS
IT'S IN GIVING / WE RECEIVE

LEAD ME DOWN NOW / TO THE RIVER
LEAD ME DOWN THROUGH / SKIES OF BLUE
AS I DRIFT ON / CLOUDS OF GLORY
MAY THIS PEACE BE / WITH YOU TOO