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Charter Oak

A THESIS

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

WITH A MAJOR IN CREATIVE WRITING

By

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Edmond, Oklahoma

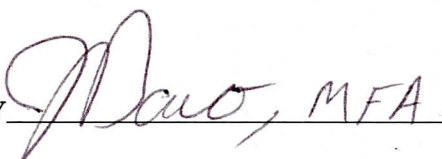
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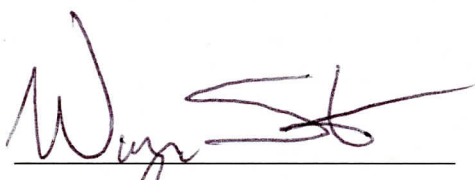
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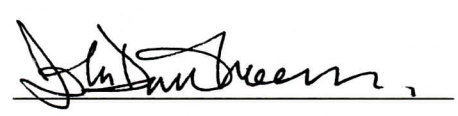
A THESIS

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Abstract

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Those in the film industry might define *Charter Oak* as a speculative ("spec") script. The spec screenplay serves to convey a narrative convincing and intriguing enough for producers to invest in it, directors to envision it, and actors to develop interest in performing the characters. Unlike shooting scripts, spec scripts use minimal, if any, stage directions and refrain from suggesting camera angles or editing cues. Such a document has but one goal: to tell the story in screenplay form.

Conflict, dialogue, and the conventional Hollywood three-act structure should always propel a spec script. After a series of opening scenes, an inciting incident sets the narrative in motion. The structure demands characters overcome increasingly difficult obstacles until the final, or act three, climax is resolved. Further, spec scripts have little space for exposition. Exposition should appear threaded throughout the narrative, and serves the dual purpose of keeping the audience

engaged and creating the platform for a developed reveal - either at the climax or within the dénouement.

Francis Ford Coppola transcended the barrier between young adult literature and film when he turned S.E. Hinton's novel *The Outsiders* into an intense and unforgettable film. Both *The Outsiders* and *Charter Oak* depict absent parents. In Hinton's story, the parents died in a car crash and Darry had to take control of the family. In *Charter Oak*, Slink repeatedly mentions his parents' absence. Further, he walks away from his parents twice: first at the opening, and again during the following scene. The young protagonist of *Charter Oak* replaces family with friends who very much resemble the Greasers of *The Outsiders*. Coppola intentionally used lighting in his film to reflect the emotions of the moment. In *Charter Oak*, I attempt to replicate Coppola's techniques in simultaneously shifting physical, emotional, and psychological themes. The early scenes of *The Outsiders* are darkly shot, contrasting shadows of black and white. As the film progresses, the audience sees fluidity and harmony via natural light sources, especially inside the location for the church, during the sunset scene, and at the climactic fire. An immense, uncontrollable fire symbolizes the shift from dark to light, the transcendence from bad to good, in each story.

With *Charter Oak*, I sought to create within the audiences, or readers, a nostalgic sense of a time when they may have thought they had all the answers, only to come to the understanding that they do not and must rely on others to help them. In that process, they realize the essence of life itself.

Throughout both my undergraduate and graduate screenwriting classes I read and studied *Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting* by Robert McKee. Although McKee dives into three types of plots - arch-plot, anti-plot, and mini-plot - he spends most of the book describing the most commonly successful arch-plot. I used the theory and structure of the arch-plot with *Charter Oak*. While, at its heart, the arch-plot represents a relatively simple form to understand, the technical aspect of structuring and formatting the story can become daunting. Arch-plot storytelling not only relies on an overall shaping of the narrative itself, but also on specific structure and format for every scene within the story. Each scene begins with a scene heading that indicates the location and time of day of the action, followed by brief descriptions of what the characters do in that section of the screenplay. In the action that follows, readers can actually begin to visualize the story. Each of these sections of the spec script should consist of no more than four lines, so the writer must work

toward the concise, with each word chosen to convey precision of image for readers. Lastly, the writer can use dialogue to set-up future conflicts, to create present conflict, to add exposition of a previous conflict, or to otherwise progress the story forward. The underlying necessity of dialogue remains to truthfulness of character. It also furthers and adds to the narrative as a whole.

Some refer to a technical problem I faced while writing *Charter Oak* as "directing from the page." Most screenwriters struggle with it at some point. This often happens when writers give direction to either actors or directors as to how the shot should look on-screen. Absolute refusal to direct from the page truly becomes the line of demarcation between the spec and the shooting script. Writers show images with words; whereas, directors and actors work in different ways to convey the story on film. In a few of my early drafts of *Charter Oak*, I unconsciously directed from the page by giving my actors signals, or hints, as to how I wanted their facial expressions to be during a certain scene. I solved this problem by using strong, descriptive verbs and eliminating the majority of adverbs from the action sequences and dialogue (sometimes known as "wrylies").

I pulled a number of aspects of *Charter Oak* from my own life experiences. For example, my friends and I did see a man

drive to a lake. Later that evening, he committed suicide by driving into that same body of water when no one was around to help him. So, with this narrative, I wanted to explore the identity of the man at that location while also revealing Slink's identity as young man shifting into adulthood. I conveyed this duality by having Slink embody the conscious desire to find the identity of the man in the sedan. Meanwhile, the protagonist's unconscious desire remained solving the mystery of his brother's death.

I also set out to write the story that I would like to see in a theatre. So, I knew from the outset that I wanted a climax that featured a standoff between at least three characters, the majority dying as a result of gunfire. Further, I wanted an element of the Mafia, or some type of organized crime, as well as a love interest for Slink. As I began to write the early drafts, I soon realized the script became confusing and overwhelming. Too many things happened at one time. So, I stripped it down to the bare essentials, composited a few characters, and created a more intense reading experience for my audience. I edited both the organized crime and the love interest out, as the object of Slink's romantic interest was the daughter of the Mafia figure. In their place, I created Aunt Kaci, both a sinister and manipulative character who also provides protection and support to her nephew Aaron. In later

drafts I also created Lane Brummer, a developmentally disabled "country simpleton" to act as a foil for Slink. I had originally intended to "kill off" Lane in the shootout at the climax, but upon further reading, I realized that I had wrote a sympathetic character who audiences would dislike seeing shot to death in the same way as more hardened and ruthless people. As a result, I re-wrote the climax that highlights three themes: 1) evil dies, 2) innocence gains understanding, and, 3) those in gray areas offer vengeance and wisdom.

Charter Oak stands apart because it is more than a coming of age story. It is more than a buddy story. It is a heavy dive into the realities of identity, control, alcoholism, and violence. These themes play off of one another throughout the narrative with the underlying momentum being that actions have consequences. Every character in Charter Oak is going through both an internal and external struggle. And, in the end, the struggles are put to rest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my brother, Ken Peacher, who sent me on a journey to find a story. This is that story. Thank you for seeing it before I could see it, and giving me the energy to Spearhead this operation.

My mother, Heather Peacher, for her open ears, understanding, and words of encouragement.

My father, Kenneth Peacher, taught me the morals of this story, and the life lessons only a father can give a son.

My friends, Blake Pope, Brett Jones, and Brennan Williams.

FADE IN:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Mourners gather for burial ceremony.

Picture of a MAN, mid-twenties, in a SHERIFF'S UNIFORM, rests on an easel.

PREACHER

We ask, Oh Lord, that you receive
into your glorious house, the
loving spirit of Paul Nichols.

DANIEL "SLINK" NICHOLS, 16 average build with anger and uncertainty in his eyes, glares. CHRIS JONES and AARON KENDALL, both 16 and stocky, stand close.

SHERIFF DEPUTIES blend with the crowd including a tall, overweight man with a wrinkled and battle-hardened face, SHERIFF PETERSON.

PREACHER

May he be with Michael and Gabriel,
protecting his family from wrongs
and sending Your guidance to any
and all in need, just as he did
with his short time on Earth. Amen.

The casket is lowered and Slink walks away from ceremony.

INT. SLINK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The living room is filling with mourners. Pictures of Paul from childhood through his days at the academy, as well as his professional picture in uniform, are scattered throughout the house.

Slink stares at a table of food in the living room.

Chris and Aaron approach from behind Slink.

CHRIS

Hey, Slink.

Slink turns around.

SLINK

What's up, guys? You hungry?
There's a lot of shit here to eat.
Look at all that shit.

CHRIS
Yeah, I know--

AARON
Do you want to get out of here?

SLINK
Where ya'll wanna go?

AARON
We were thinking about going out to
the lake. Get some space.

SLINK
Yeah, let's get the fuck out of
here.

EXT. COUNTRY DIRT ROAD - DAY

Aaron drives into a rural county of flat pastures and cows
watching the cars with deference.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Aaron turns onto a dirt road.

SLINK
You think they will ever pave this
damn thing?

AARON
This county doesn't have any money.

CHRIS
It's got a shit-ton of poison ivy,
ticks, and tweakers.

They arrive at a cattle gate with an electronic keypad.

Aaron punches in a code and the gate opens to CHARTER OAK, a
private collection of acreages with gravel roads that end at
a small LAKE.

The acreages are a mix of residents with manicured
landscapes and other plots with dilapidated campers and
trailers.

SLINK
Still the same code as last time?

AARON
Month and year. Too easy.

Aaron drives through entrance.

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE - DAY

Charter Oak Lake is a glorified pond about seventeen acres large with trees growing out of the shallows in the east, a makeshift boat ramp on the Charter Oak side, and a nice dock with aluminum boats and paddles on the opposite side.

Slink, Aaron and Chris begin unloading.

AARON
Looks like we still got some wood
and shit left over.

SLINK
God it feels good to be out here.
The quiet.

CHRIS
We got more than quiet, man. What's
a trip to Charter Oak without a
little sauce?

Chris opens an ice chest full of beer and whiskey.

SLINK
Damn, where'd you get all this?

AARON
I stole it from my aunt--

SLINK
And a shit ton of it, too.

Chris passes beers to Slink and Aaron.

Aaron lights the fire.

Chris opens the whiskey, and they pass it between one another.

SLINK
You know what?

Slink takes a long pull, then passes the bottle down the line.

SLINK CONT'D

No note. No signs. He was happy.

AARON

Every time I saw him he seemed to be enjoying his life, really, he did. That's no bullshit.

SLINK

He came over for dinner a couple days before. Good dinner, same old shit it's been for years. Telling us funny stories from work. Couple of them kind of got on the Mom's nerves, you know, "That's not appropriate for the dinner table." But he told them anyway just to mess with her.

CHRIS

I can see him doing that.

AARON

Cool ass guy.

SLINK

Last thing he told me was that if the Moms told him again that she got a phone call from school saying I fucked off a couple classes, he'd personally check me out and I could spend the day picking up highway trash with the convicts. He said it kind of jokingly, you know, but not really.

A beige sedan approaches from the acreages, and parks near the boat ramp.

A MAN sits in driver seat and looks at them.

SLINK

Who the fuck is that?

AARON

Shit, I have no idea.

CHRIS

You see many people around here?

Aaron waves. The Man shifts his gaze from them to the lake.

Chris takes a long pull.

AARON
Damn, Chris. You plan on passing
that bottle soon?

Chris takes another pull.

CHRIS
Yeah, here I forgot. Let's go to
the camper. This guy is creeping me
out.

EXT. AARON'S CAMPER AT CHARTER OAK - EVENING

Aaron drives to a DILAPIDATED CAMPER.

SLINK
You guys still have the guns here?

AARON
The nine-mil and twenty-two rifle
are here. My aunt just got a
shotgun, too, but it's at the
house.

SLINK
Is the nine-mil still up in the AC
vent?

AARON
Yes, sir. And the rifle is in the
bathroom.

Chris gathers kindling and throws it in a fire pit.

Aaron unlocks the camper. Slink and Aaron enter.

EXT. AARON'S CAMPER - EVENING

Chris lights the fire, then lies down.

A pickup truck with camper shell approaches, and parks in
the road by camper.

INT. AARON'S CAMPER - EVENING

Headlights shine though mold particles.

Slink moves to the vent.

SLINK
I'm ready to get some target
practice in.

Aaron looks out camper window.

AARON
Don't touch those guns. I'll be
right back.

Aaron exits.

Slink remains inside.

EXT. AARON'S CAMPER - EVENING

GEORGE, fit mid-sixties, ambles toward the camper.

Aaron approaches George.

AARON
What cause for the stop there,
George?

GEORGE
Didn't know you boys would be out
here tonight.

AARON
Kind of one of those things.

GEORGE
Your aunt's a touch behind on dues.

AARON
I will let her know come Monday.

George inspects the area.

GEORGE
How much you boys been drinkin'?

AARON
Enough to know I shouldn't ask.

George spits, coughs.

GEORGE
Your aunt know you're out here
sippin'?

AARON
I got no reason to believe she
don't.

Chris GROANS and sits up.

GEORGE
(to Chris)
And how are you doing, son?

AARON
He's more of a vodka guy, and I
could only get my hands on some
whisk.

George lingers.

GEORGE
That'll work. Mind the fire.

George saunters back to his car, drives toward lake.

EXT. CAMPER - NIGHT

Slink and Aaron stare into the fire.

SLINK
Thanks for getting me out of there,
man. And (pointing to his head)
here.

AARON
No worries, man.

Red and Blue LIGHTS bounce off the leaves.

AARON
Oh shit! George sent the fuckin'
cops on us!

Slink drags Chris into camper.

Aaron stomps out fire, runs into camper.

INT/EXT. CAMPER - NIGHT

Slink and Chris watch as Sheriff Peterson drives to the
lake.

SLINK
What the fuck is going on?

AARON
Hell if I know, but we're checking
it out.

SLINK
Fuck yeah.

They stumble toward the lake, using the treeline for cover.

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE - NIGHT

Slink and Aaron stay hidden in the trees and watch the beige sedan sink into lake.

George and Sheriff Peterson monitor the sinking car.

GEORGE
Why didn't anyone tell me?

SHERIFF PETERSON
Not everyone knows, boss.

GEORGE
I thought everything was fucking
handled!

SHERIFF PETERSON
Far as I knew it was...

GEORGE
Far as I knew. Jesus. Figure this
shit out!

Slink and Aaron hurry back to camper.

INT. GEORGE HOUSE - DAY

George sits at table with KACI, mid-forties and stocky. LANE BRUMNER, mid-thirties, developmentally disabled with uncanny strength, shuffles a deck of cards.

GEORGE
How many times you plan on
shuffling them cards there, Lane?

LANE
Shuffling them good enough to get
all mixed up.

KACI
What's the deal on that fresh
lightning?

GEORGE
Oh, now I may have an extra jar
around here.

George walks to the kitchen.

LANE
This batch has a good burn.
Strawberry burn.

KACI
That's what I like to hear.

George returns with a mason jar of moonshine.

GEORGE
See what you think there, Kaci.

George slides the moonshine to Kaci.

Kaci takes a short taste, then a long pull.

KACI
I'd say Lane is right about the
burn, but damn that is a tasty
batch.

GEORGE
Yeah, I was hoping to bottle it a
couple nights ago. Glad it didn't
spoil on me.

EXT. GATE TO CHARTER OAK - DAY

Sheriff Peterson stops at the electronic keypad, enters
code, drives to George's house.

EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DAY

Sheriff Peterson exits his cruiser and KNOCKS on George's
front door.

INT/EXT. GEORGE HOUSE - DAY

George looks toward the front door.

GEORGE

Well, we just might have enough for
a real poker game here.

George walks over and opens the door.

SHERIFF PETERSON

Good evening, sir.

GEORGE

Hey, Sheriff. Come on in.

Sheriff Peterson enters.

GEORGE

We were about to maybe get a game
going. Lane's been shuffling the
cards a'plenty.

SHERIFF PETERSON

Nice to see you again, Ms. Kaci.

KACI

No need for pleasantries here.

SHERIFF PETERSON

Well alright, then.

Peterson sits at table.

SHERIFF PETERSON

What are we playing tonight, Lane?

LANE

I can deal any game.

GEORGE

How about we start with a basic
Texas Hold 'em?

SHERIFF PETERSON

And how about you pass that jar
over here?

Kaci stands, sets jar in front of Sheriff Peterson, walks
toward the front door.

KACI
It's all yours.

GEORGE
Sure you don't want to stay for a
few hands?

Kaci exits.

SHERIFF PETERSON
She can really be a bitch
sometimes.

GEORGE
She's a strong bitch, though.
Smart.

SHERIFF PETERSON
What's her problem?

GEORGE
I'd say it's you.

INT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT - DAY

Slink, Aaron and Chris eat their lunch.

AARON
What are we doing this weekend?

CHRIS
Probably trying to find a party,
just like every other weekend.

AARON
Have you heard of any?

CHRIS
Slink, have you heard of any
parties?

SLINK
We gotta find out who that guy was.

AARON
What?

SLINK
You know what I'm talking about.
You said you've never seen him
before.

AARON

I haven't been out there for months, man. I think we should just let it go.

CHRIS

Hell, we didn't see it happen, we didn't see anything.

SLINK

We were probably the last people he saw alive.

AARON

Hell, we don't even know he's dead.

SLINK

You think he just ditched his car and wandered off into the middle of nowhere--

AARON

Fuck if I know, but I still don't want no part of it.

CHRIS

Me neither. And I don't think you need in it either.

SLINK

I'm going to find out who that man was. Come on, I gotta stop by the liquor store on the way back.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Slink walks into a dark, bleak liquor store with dust on the bottles. A female, mid-20s, CASHIER, stands behind the counter.

Slink grabs a bottle of vodka and walks to the Cashier.

SLINK

Is Maureen here today?

CASHIER

Not today. Do you have your I.D.?

Slink retrieves a fake I.D.

CASHIER
Louisiana, huh?

SLINK
That damn Katrina brought me up
here.

CASHIER
You've been here for a while not to
get a state I.D.

SLINK
I'm still on the fence about
staying here.

CASHIER
And I'm not so sure that bottle
will make that decision any easier,
Carl.

SLINK
What?

CASHIER
This is fake as shit. Nice try.

Cashier hands Slink his I.D.

Slink slides the Cashier cash, waits for his change.

CASHIER CONT'D
It's not gonna happen, kid.

SLINK
Been buying here since I moved up.

Slink grabs bottle and turns to the door.

Cashier storms from behind the counter.

CASHIER
You walk out of here with that and
I'm calling the law!

Cashier attempts to grab bottle from Slink.

Slink pulls back, pushes Cashier down.

SLINK
Fuck if I care.

EXT. CAR - DAY (PARKED)

Slink rushes to his car, turns engine, peels off through parking lot.

INT. CAR - DAY (MOVING)

Aaron and Chris sit in the car staring at Slink.

Aaron has his mouth slightly open.

CHRIS

What the fuck is going on?

SLINK

New cashier.

AARON

We gonna have the cops on us in no time.

SLINK

We will be back in class before they get in their fucking cruisers.

CHRIS

You plan on drinking that right now?

SLINK

Nah, this is for after school today.

CHRIS

Cool.

INT. KACI'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Aaron walks into the house he shares with Kaci.

Kaci rocks in a recliner watching T.V. on SILENT.

A half-empty bottle of liquor sways in her lap.

KACI

They sent me some type of progress report today. From your school.

AARON

Not sure hundred percent what you mean.

Kaci takes a long pull of booze.

KACI

Look, kid. I get that you're flunking government. I don't understand it either, but history? Come on! It's nothing but a goddamn story!

AARON

Sorry, Aunt Kaci. I'll get them grades up and pass before the end of the term.

KACI

Do what you need to do. And you will get your grades up and you will graduate. After that, well...

Aaron walks upstairs.

Kaci continues to watch T.V.

INT. SLINK'S ROOM - MORNING

Slink wakes up, downs the last two shots of the bottle.

He drags himself to the closet, retrieves a box and begins taking out liquor bottles. He inspects each bottle, pours the remaining liquor into an empty water bottle.

The liquor concoction turns a light brown as it half fills the water bottle.

Slink grimaces as he gulps the mixture.

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

Slink walks into his first hour high school classroom adorned with motivational posters, pictures of William Shakespeare, Mary Shelley, and Ernest Hemingway.

Slink saunters past sleeping classmates to his desk.

A GIRL next to him turns and gives Slink a once-over.

GIRL

Hey, Slink. Are you okay?

SLINK
Yeah, what's up?

GIRL
Are you drunk?

SLINK
No.

GIRL
Slink, you reek, really bad. Maybe you should just go home.

SLINK
I'm fine, really.

MRS. SHEELY, mid-thirties, walks in to the classroom.

MRS. SHEELY
I'm sorry for being a little late today, but go ahead and get out your *Romeo and Juliet* and find where we left off.

Mrs. Sheely watches Slink.

MRS. SHEELY
Slink, do you remember where we left off?

SLINK
Um, no I don't want to read today.

Slink slouches.

MRS. SHEELY
We would need to know where we left off before we could start reading, don't you think?

SLINK
Oh, yeah, um. We were past the balcony scene and um. Oh, here it is, act three, scene two.

MRS. SHEELY
Is that where we are?

The Girl 'face palm' reacts as the rest of the class snicker under their breath.

MRS. SHEELY CONT'D
I didn't think so.

SLINK
Well, then, I don't know where we
are, then.

MRS. SHEELY
That's okay, Slink. You guys find
out where we are while I take role.

Mrs. Sheely sits at her desk and sends a text to PRINCIPAL
DENTON while the class discusses where they are in the play.

MRS. SHEELY
(via text message)
I have a student, Daniel Nichols,
drunk in class.

Mrs. Sheely's phone BEEPS.

MR. DENTON
(on phone)
Okay. I will send someone down.

Mrs. Sheely puts phone on her desk.

MRS. SHEELY
(to class)
Alright, everyone find it?

A smattering of "yeah's."

MRS. SHEELY CONT'D
Alright where are we?

There is a KNOCK at the door. Mrs. Sheely opens the door and
is handed a call slip.

MRS. SHEELY CONT'D
Slink, it's for you. You can go
ahead and take your things.

Slink slides out of his desk and struggles to the door.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - MORNING

Slink walks into the Principal's office. MR. DENTON, the
assistant principal, in his forties, built like a man that
let his body go after his athletic days, waves Slink into
his office.

MR. DENTON
Come on, Daniel. Go ahead and come
on in.

Slink attempts to compose himself.

INT. MR. DENTON'S OFFICE - MORNING

The trophy-laden shelves and windowless confines of the
office force Mr. Denton close to Slink.

MR. DENTON
How are we feeling today, Daniel?

SLINK
My name is Slink.

MR. DENTON
Okay, Slink. You know I'm Mr.
Denton, right? One of your
principals?

SLINK
Yeah.

MR. DENTON
Anything going on this morning?

SLINK
No.

MR. DENTON
Been drinking?

Slink looks down.

MR. DENTON
Okay, we can handle this one of two
ways. We can call your mom, or we
can call the police.

SLINK
I will call my mom.

Mr. Denton motions him over to the phone.

MR. DENTON
Come on, give her a call and tell
her what happened. Look, Dan...
Slink, this isn't the end of the
world, okay?

SLINK
(into phone)
Mom? I need you to come pick me up
at school. I'm drunk. Okay. Bye.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALL - DAY

Aaron and Chris stand by their lockers.

AARON
The hell we supposed to do about
Slink?

CHRIS
What do you mean?

AARON
He's losing it. He's wasted before
noon? In public?

CHRIS
Hell, man. His brother just off'd
himself. Maybe being in school
isn't the best thing for him right
now.

AARON
And drowning himself is, right?

CHRIS
I never said that, dude.

AARON
Jesus, Chris. He's our friend!
Don't you think maybe he needs a
little support right now or
something?

CHRIS
I don't know what you want from me
or what he wants, either. Support?
I don't know how to do that...

AARON
God, you are selfish...

CHRIS
Why are you pissed at me? He's the
one that got busted, and for all we
know the rest of the teachers know
we're boozers as well!

AARON

I'll talk to him. I guess you can just watch out for yourself.

INT. DINER - DAY

Kaci walks toward Sheriff Peterson.

SHERIFF PETERSON

I didn't think you were going to show.

KACI

I sure as hell didn't want to.

SHERIFF PETERSON

But you did.

The WAITRESS hurries to their table.

WAITRESS

Can I get you something to drink, hon?

KACI

I will just have a coffee, please.

WAITRESS

For you, sir? More coffee?

SHERIFF PETERSON

Yes ma'am, I like a little heater here and I'll go ahead and order your Everything Omelet.

WAITRESS

Sounds good. I'll have that right out.

The Waitress walks away.

KACI

I'd rather not be here to see you eat.

SHERIFF PETERSON

I thought we might have a little discussion in light of some recent activities.

KACI
Here? In a damn diner?

SHERIFF PETERSON
We can still speak in general
terms, no? I asked you here to
apologize.

KACI
Are you shitting me?

The Waitress returns with coffee.

WAITRESS
And here's your coffee. Your
omelet'll be out shortly.

The Waitress walks away.

KACI
You think you can just sit there
and offer an apology and I'm going
to forgive you for what did to me?

SHERIFF PETERSON
Well, I'd figure there'd be some
time to process and everything...

KACI
You are some piece of work,
Sheriff. Let's try and keep our
distance from one another.

Kaci storms out of diner.

INT. COMMUNITY LIBRARY - DAY

Slink approaches JANE, mid-forties librarian, looking
intensely at the computer while writing notes on a legal
pad.

SLINK
Excuse me.

JANE
How can I help you?

SLINK
I got kicked out of school, so now
I have to stay here all day.

JANE

Well, that's not very good, but I'm at least glad you are here. My name is Jane.

SLINK

Cool, I don't really care. Got any old newspapers?

JANE

How old?

SLINK

A week or so.

JANE

We have paper copies from the last thirty days along the south wall there. Anything I can help you out with?

SLINK

No, but I will be here for a while, if that's cool.

JANE

That's fine, honey. And it wouldn't hurt to stop and grab some chili-cheese flavored snacks. They mask the booze-breath the best.

Slink walks past vending machines towards the back of the library.

He stops at a bulletin board and recognizes the face of the Man at the lake on a "Missing Persons" flyer.

He takes the flyer.

EXT. ABANDONED CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Aaron and Chris are standing beside the bed of Aaron's truck, waiting.

Slink pulls up behind Aaron's truck, gets out of his car.

SLINK

What's up, honyoickers?

CHRIS

You tell us, dude. We got this 911 message from your crazy ass.

SLINK

Well, it's not really 911, but I figured I would get your attention.

AARON

Great.

SLINK

I've been doing some looking-into for our boy out at Charter Oak the other day. There's nothing about it in the papers.

CHRIS

Probably best to let that shit go, man. I think you got other things you need to focus on.

Chris looks to Aaron.

SLINK

We need to go back and check things out.

AARON

What, exactly, do you hope to find, huh?

SLINK

Hell, I don't know. There has to be some reason why he was out there. Some way he had to get the code to get in there, Jesus. Am I the only one that sees something fucked up here?

CHRIS

I think you are the only one looking into all of this.

Slink looks to Aaron.

Aaron stares at Chris.

SLINK

Can I steal a pinch from you?

Aaron tosses a can of tobacco to Slink.

Slink places a heavy pinch between his lip and gum.

SLINK CONT'D

I don't think Paul killed himself.
If he wanted out he would have
left. Paul would never put someone
through the torment of finding him.

AARON

What does that have to do with
Charter Oak?

SLINK

I don't know, probably nothing. But
something's not working out.

Aaron nods.

CHRIS

Oh, shit you can't be thinking this
is a good idea! We were drinking!
We are underage--

AARON

--And your dumb ass was passed out
in the camper! Stay the fuck out of
this!

Chris stops.

CHRIS

Slink, look, I'm not going to
pretend about anything. I'm trying
to look for the point of this, and
I'm not doing a good job of seeing
it. If you do, or can, have at it.
I don't want anything to do with
this man.

Aaron nods to Slink, spits. A subtle unspoken confirmation.

Slink walks to his truck and drives off.

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE - DAY

George casts his fishing line into the lake.

Kaci parks her truck behind George, exits.

GEORGE

That entrance probably scared the
fish to not bitin'.

KACI

Oh, calm your pity shit. We all know the fish don't bite from you regardless.

Kaci attempts to quell a smirk as George makes eye contact and bursts with laughter.

GEORGE

Oh, you already know!

KACI

Others would say you're a shitty fisherman.

GEORGE

Now that's just harsh.

Kaci pulls a flask from her back pocket, takes a long pull.

KACI CONT'D

So, what's the word?

GEORGE

Thanks for offering a drink.

KACI

You want a drink?

GEORGE

I need help with the bottling coming up. Big batch. Got anyone?

KACI

What do you mean?

GEORGE

Your boy's getting stronger, capable. Thought of asking him?

KACI

Aaron ain't my boy and by no means will I bring him into this. Already ruined his parents.

GEORGE

But he's in the know.

Kaci drinks.

KACI

To a degree.

GEORGE
To a degree, right.

KACI
That Peterson had me doing some
shit and I'm of the mind that you
had a hand in it as well.

GEORGE
I have no idea what you are talking
about.

KACI
Right, well I did my piece.
Anything extra is extra and that
will take a re-negotiating of
prices and terms.

Kaci drinks.

George casts his line again.

GEORGE
Sometimes there is a little
brother. And oftentimes this is
something that needs to be
addressed. And we need to.

Kaci takes another pull.

KACI
Is Peterson in on this as well?

GEORGE
Not unless he needs to be.

KACI
I'm thinking so. Let's get some
lightning. This store-bought ain't
itchin' the scratch.

Kaci walks back to her truck.

George collects his reel and chair, and follows Kaci to his
house.

EXT. COUNTRY ROADS - DAY (MOVING)

Slink drives toward Charter Oak.

INT. CAR - DAY (MOVING)

Slink pours soda out of gas station styrofoam cup.

He uncaps a bottle of whiskey and pours it into cup.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. CHARTER OAK GATE - AFTERNOON

He enters the code.

EXT. CHARTER OAK - AFTERNOON

Slink drives toward the lake.

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE - AFTERNOON

Slink parks facing lake, drinks, and refills his cup with booze.

INT./EXT. CAR - (PARKED)

Slink exits the car and walks toward an abandoned trailer near the lake.

EXT. ABANDONED TRAILER - AFTERNOON

Slink struggles to see through the mold and mildew on the windows.

He sees a LARGE MOONSHINE STILL in the living room.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DUSK

George sits across from Aunt Kaci at his dining room table.

Lane is seated on the other side of the table watching T.V. on MUTE.

GEORGE

What's the vitriol with Peterson?

Kaci sits silent sipping a glass of moonshine.

GEORGE CONT'D
I was under the impression you all
got along alright, huh?

LANE
I like Sheriff Peterson--

GEORGE CONT'D
Stop talking, Lane.

Silence.

GEORGE CONT'D
Well, the hell, Kaci?! Ain't got no
input on this?

Kaci watches through the dining room window as Slink's truck
approaches George's house.

KACI
I don't have much to say about that
whatnot, but I'd say you need to
take a look at this.

Kaci points out the window toward Slink's truck driving
towards the gate.

GEORGE
Who the fuck is this?

George stomps outside, cutting off the direct exit to
Charter Oak.

Lane follows, stays on porch.

Kaci takes a long, slow pull, follows Lane.

INT. SLINK'S TRUCK - DUSK

Slink drives slow to the gate looking in mirrors and
scanning the layout of the acreages and their state of
upkeep.

Slink sees George with a hand raised in the universal "stop"
gesture.

SLINK
Oh, fuck me. Shit.

EXT. CHARTER OAK - DUSK

George walks up to the driver's side as Slink rolls down his window.

SLINK
How are you, sir?

George peers into the car, breathes deep.

GEORGE
I'd have a mind to ask you the same, son.

SLINK
What--

GEORGE
The hell you doing here?

SLINK
I, uh, I came out here camping a while ago and I needed to come pick up some equipment I left behind because, uh, I--

George deadpan stares into Slink.

SLINK CONT'D
Honest, sir. I just had to stop by and now I am out of here.

GEORGE
I had a man when I was about your age tell me that every action you make has a consequence. And whether that consequence is positive or negative depends on your action.

Kaci lights a cigarette.

She hands one to Lane as they watch.

Lane focuses on Slink.

GEORGE CONT'D
Sometimes you just have to feel it. Smells to me like you're afraid of your next breath. And rightly so.

SLINK
Not sure I'm much afraid of my breath.

GEORGE

Well, shit. I would be if I was in your seat. Underage, trespassing. Drunk.

SLINK

I just want to leave.

GEORGE

Well, that ain't gonna work.

George waves Kaci over from porch.

Kaci walks to driver's side next to George.

GEORGE CONT'D

Smell anything off?

Kaci takes heavy drag on cigarette.

Kaci leans into Slink's truck, exhales plume of smoke, turns and enters code into keypad.

KACI

Nah, George. Just some rancid smoke.

Slink drives off.

GEORGE

How the fuck did he get in here?

LANE

Who was that, George?

GEORGE

Shut up, Lane!

KACI

Hell if I know.

GEORGE

Seems to be about your boy's age.

KACI

No need bringing Aaron into this.

GEORGE

He was scared.

KACI

I'm going home.

GEORGE
The hell, Kaci? We ain't leaving
this like this.

Kaci enters her truck.

KACI
Yeah, we are.

George is livid.

GEORGE
I'm in charge here! I make the
rules! This is my place!

Kaci drives past George and through gate.

EXT. ABANDONED CONSTRUCTION SITE - AFTERNOON

Chris and Aaron lean against the bed of Chris's truck
drinking beer at an abandoned construction site in various
stages of completion.

Aaron has a large black eye.

CHRIS
I didn't want to bring it up at
school.

AARON
What makes you want to bring it up
now?

CHRIS
Maybe trying to find out if someone
needs their ass beat or not.

AARON
Not on this one, man.

Chris nods.

Slink's truck pulls up.

CHRIS
Jesus, Slink? What the hell you
doing here?

Slink exits his truck.

SLINK
Figured I'd have a chance to see
y'all out here. What's up?

Slink looks at Aaron.

SLINK CONT'D
Damn, Aaron. You alright?

AARON
I'd have to say so, man. How are
you?

SLINK
Alright, I guess. Have you heard
any more about that man?

CHRIS
Jesus Christ. What is it with this,
huh?

Slink grabs a beer, pops the cap and chugs it.

CHRIS CONT'D
Dude, your drunk ass is already
expelled. Does that register to
you? At all? And you are so wrapped
up in this guy, but you have no
idea who he is.

AARON
Chris, shut the hell up for a
second.

Slink grabs another beer from the cooler.

AARON
What's going on, Slink.

SLINK
I'm still looking for that man.

CHRIS
Fuck this. I'm done.

Chris storms to truck.

AARON
Why the fuck did you go out there
without me?

SLINK

I had to be there. Don't really know why, yet. But something drew me there. To the spot--

AARON

Never fucking go back there again by yourself. Probably one of the stupidest things you could've done.

Slink chugs the remainder of his beer, throws the empty can in the bed of Aaron's truck.

AARON CONT'D

Look, man. God knows the shit, but no one wants to see this. You gotta find out how to handle yourself.

Slink pulls a few beers out of the case and climbs into his truck.

SLINK

That'll be the day.

INT. KACI'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Aaron enters. Kaci sits in the recliner, drunk, with the TV on MUTE.

Aaron tries to sneak into the kitchen.

KACI

No need to try and be quiet.

AARON

What's up? You hungry?

KACI

I was hungry earlier, yeah. But I didn't get around to the store, so we still ain't got much left. And I guess I'm not really hungry much anymore.

AARON

I'm gonna go see if I can find something.

Kaci takes a long pull of whiskey.

KACI

I need you to be stayin' right there. I gotta let you in on a little something I've had a bit on my mind.

AARON

And what is that? I got myself a good grade last test in history. Think I'm a "C" now.

Aaron stands next to Kaci.

KACI

There's things you learn as you go on, you know, like how sometimes things get easier the more you do them? That's how it was in the army. You get in the groove and just remain fluid. I could shoot anything that needed to be shot, but that was about it.

AARON

What are you getting at?

KACI

The trick I've found is figuring out the masks people wear. I've tried to wear many over the years.

Kaci takes another long pull.

KACI CONT'D

But I've only found that out here not too long ago. I just wish someone told me about the masks when I was your age, so I guess I figured I would tell you before I forget.

AARON

Well, I will be on the lookout.

Kacie takes another pull, stares into the SILENT TV.

INT. MR. DENTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Denton sits typing at his computer.

Slink sits on the other side of the desk, watching.

MR. DENTON
Nice to see you again, Daniel.

SLINK
My name is Slink.

Mr. Denton looks at his file, back at the computer.

MR. DENTON
I'm sorry, here. Looks like they
have your preferred name listed
here, and I just didn't look at it.

SLINK
No worries.

MR. DENTON
Any thought on why you were asked
to come talk to me today?

SLINK
No.

MR. DENTON
How've you been?

SLINK
I know about alcoholism and the
genetic aspect and about starting
at a young age, but I spent my time
looking into other things.

MR. DENTON
Such as?

SLINK
Stuff and things. It doesn't really
concern you.

MR. DENTON
I'm the one deciding whether or not
to let you back into school.

SLINK
I'm looking for the identity of a
man.

MR. DENTON
Is that man you?

SLINK
You read all of these books here?

Mr. Denton scans the bookshelves behind his desk.

MR. DENTON
Some more than others.

SLINK
Any favorites?

MR. DENTON
No, Slink.

SLINK
Which one you learn the most from?

MR. DENTON
Something calling your name?

SLINK
Not right now.

Slink stands to leave.

MR. DENTON
I'm not sure this meeting is over.

Slink walks out of office.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE - AFTERNOON

Slink sits on the opposite side from Charter Oak acreages, looks at the "Missing Person" flyer, and pushes boat into water.

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE - ABOVE WATER - AFTERNOON

Slink pushes row-boat into water and rows toward Charter Oak.

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE - AFTERNOON - CHARTER OAK SIDE

Slink beaches the rowboat, wades into the water, and dives where the sedan sank.

UNDERWATER

Slink swims to driver's side door. The Man is buckled in his seat with empty eye sockets and his mouth open.

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE - AFTERNOON

Slink breaks through the water, gasps, and swims to shore.

He walks toward the camper at Aaron's acreage. He stops at six or seven abandoned campers and trailers along the way.

Large and small stills, in full operation, fill the campers and trailers.

EXT. AARON'S CAMPER - AFTERNOON

Slink attempts to open windows, climbs on top of camper, disables air-conditioner, and jumps into camper.

INT. AARON'S CAMPER - AFTERNOON

Slink hurries to retrieve the 9mm in the vent, checks the magazine, and puts gun in his waistband.

EXT. CHARTER OAK ROAD - AFTERNOON

Lane drives through Charter Oak. He sees the disabled air-conditioner on top of Aaron's camper.

He stops and walks toward camper.

EXT. AARON'S CAMPER - AFTERNOON

Slink climbs out of the roof of the camper, lands on ground.

Lane watches from a distance.

LANE

Who are you?

Slink stops, turns to Lane.

SLINK

Who are you?

LANE
Lane Brummer. Who're you?

SLINK
I'm a friend here.

LANE
You look kinda familiar.

SLINK
Yeah?

LANE
Yeah. Friends of who?

SLINK
Friends of everyone. George, too.

LANE
Have I seen you before? You's a
kid.

SLINK
Right, well, not really, but yeah.

LANE
You've been here before? Where's
your car?

SLINK
I had to park it outside the gate.

LANE
What about the code? Does George
know you're here?

Slink looks at Lane, to the lake, and sprints to the boat.

Lane hurries to his truck and drives toward George's house.

EXT. CHARTER OAK - DUSK

Slink sprints toward lake.

EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DUSK

Lane stops in George's driveway.

LANE
George! Come on, George! We got
another someone here!

EXT./INT. GEORGE HOUSE - DUSK

George spits out a pull of moonshine as Lane barges through front door.

LANE

George! There's a kid here! Who has kids?

GEORGE

Jesus, Lane! Why didn't you grab him?

LANE

I'm not sure I knew to, George...

GEORGE

Oh, Jesus fuck me! Where did he go?

LANE

He ran to the lake, but he told me he parked outside the gate--

GEORGE

You talked to him!?

LANE

Yeah. He seemed nice.

GEORGE

Goddammit, Lane! Get in the truck!

George pushes Lane out of house while grabbing a rifle by door.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE - DUSK

Slink pushes row-boat onto the lake.

George's headlights appear from Charter Oak acreages.

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE - ABOVE WATER - DUSK

Slink rows boat frantic across the lake.

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE SHORE - DUSK

George jumps out of driver's side, loads rifle, targets Slink, fires.

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE - ABOVE WATER - DUSK

Bullets slam into the water near Slink's boat.

Slink clamps gun barrel with his teeth, jumps into the lake, and pulls boat by the tow-rope.

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE SHORE - DUSK

George continues to reload and fire his single-shot rifle at Slink.

LANE

You really trying to hit him, boss?

GEORGE

God dammit, Lane! What do you think?

LANE

I don't think we should be shooting kids much.

GEORGE

You don't fucking think, Lane!
Jesus! I'm in charge here, and I don't want that kid talking!

LANE

You aim to kill him?

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE - DUSK

George shoots Slink's boat.

The boat takes on water.

Slink can touch the lake floor with his feet.

He covers behind the boat and fires entire magazine at George.

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE SHORE - DUSK

George and Lane take cover behind truck.

GEORGE
You ever tell me he had a gun?!

LANE
Not sure, sir, if I did--

GEORGE
Well, you didn't! Get in the truck!

LANE
I'm sorry, boss...

GEORGE
You should be fucking thankful.

LANE
Thankful?

GEORGE
That the kid doesn't know how to
shoot.

George reloads and takes another shot.

EXT. CHARTER OAK LAKE OPPOSITE SHORE - DUSK

Slink runs to his truck.

INT. SLINK'S TRUCK - DUSK

Slink starts engine, hits steering wheel, peels out.

SLINK
Now that is a fucking Tuesday!

INT./EXT. KACI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Slink parks and walks up to Kaci's house, KNOCKS on door.

Kaci opens the door.

KACI
What do you want here, kid?

SLINK
Is Aaron here?

KACI
What'd you want with Aaron?

SLINK
I'm one of his friends.

KACI
Got a name, friend?

SLINK
I'm Slink.

Kaci closes door.

KACI (O.S)
Aaron! Get down here! Someone's
here for you!

The door opens.

AARON
The fuck you doing here?

SLINK
We need to talk.

AARON
Fuck happened to your phone?

SLINK
I don't have it anymore. Come on,
we gotta get some stuff clear.

Aaron walks outside with Slink.

EXT. SLINK'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Slink hands Aaron a cigarette.

SLINK
What goes on at Charter Oak?

AARON
Oh, Jesus. Did you go back there?

SLINK
What goes down there?

INT. KACI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kaci watches the interaction between Slink and Aaron through the living room window while sitting behind the glow of a MUTE T.V.

EXT. SLINK'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Aaron takes a heavy drag off his cigarette.

AARON

How many times do I have to fucking tell you not to go out there.

SLINK

Who is Lane Brummer?

AARON

Oh shit! You ran into Lane.

SLINK

I didn't really run into him. Just curious if you know about him.

AARON

Lane was born with Fetal Alcohol some shit, I don't know. He has a wet brain, and he's never really developed. You know? He helps George around Charter Oak.

SLINK

Do you know what goes on out there?

AARON

You have no fucking idea who these people are. Stay the fuck away from that place, alright?

Slink hands Aaron the Missing Person flyer.

SLINK

The Man in the car is listed as a missing person now. But he's not missing, Aaron. He's dead--

AARON

Jesus! With this guy again! You gotta let this go, man.

SLINK

Peterson was there. So was that old man George. How can he be missing?!

AARON

Shady shit happens out at Charter Oak.

SLINK

Well, that fucking George tried to kill me tonight.

AARON

Serves you right, dumbass! It's a little thing called trespassing and it's illegal--

SLINK

He tried to kill me, Aaron!

AARON

Jesus, keep it down.

SLINK

This man is dead. Sheriff Peterson was there. My brother is dead. My brother was a goddamn deputy!

AARON

I don't think you're thinking straight, man.

Slink looks at Aaron, then to the front window at Kaci.

SLINK

You've never been able to lie.

Slink gets in his truck, drives off.

INT. KACI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kaci sits watching T.V. on MUTE and watching Aaron approach through the window.

Aaron walks into living room.

KACI

What was that all about?

AARON

Nothing. Haven't seen him in a while so we were just catching up.

KACI
Seemed pretty intense from here.

AARON
It's nothing, really.

KACI
You sure about that?

AARON
Yeah.

Aaron starts walking upstairs.

KACI
I don't believe you.

AARON
I guess you can believe what you
want.

Aaron continues to walk upstairs.

KACI
You need to stop and listen to me.

Aaron stops midway up stairs.

KACI CONT'D
I'm going to find out what is going
on.

AARON
Is that it?

KACI
Is it?

Aaron walks upstairs.

EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Sheriff Peterson parks in front of George's house.

Lane is raking leaves.

LANE
Hey Sheriff! Playing poker today?

SHERIFF PETERSON
Not sure if we are or not, Lane. I
will let you know. You want to try
the lights?

LANE

Oh, yeah? Sirens, too?

SHERIFF PETERSON

Let's let the sirens be. Sheriff's got a touch of a headache today.

Lane hurries to police cruiser and begins flipping switches.

George walks onto front porch.

GEORGE

You guys hiring?

SHERIFF PETERSON

Not right now, but I always got stuff for Lane to do. Like checking for burnt-out globes and whatnot.

Lane is in and out of the cruiser.

LANE

Look at them go, George! Look at it!

GEORGE

I see it there, Lane. And I also see a lot of leaves here needin' rakin', huh?

LANE

Oh, yes sir. I will get those raked up soon.

SHERIFF PETERSON

(to George)

Oh, now George. Leaves will be leaves. Nothing wrong with letting the guy play with some lights.

GEORGE

You might be right, Sheriff. But I'm not keen on takin' much advice when it comes to my yard, my property.

SHERIFF PETERSON

Didn't mean no offense there.

GEORGE

Come on in and we can talk of a few other things. Lane! Get over here and finish rakin' these fuckin' leaves!

Lane turns off cruiser lights while Sheriff Peterson approaches George, hand outstretched.

SHERIFF PETERSON

Good to see you again, George. For what do I have the honor of stopping by?

GEORGE

Let's come inside and I will fill you in.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DAY

George and Sheriff Peterson sit at the table.

GEORGE

Need a bite?

SHERIFF PETERSON

I'd never turn down a nice bite.

George retrieves a mason jar of moonshine from a cabinet.

GEORGE

My timin' has been a little off here lately.

SHERIFF PETERSON

Hell, you said that about the last batch and it was spot on.

GEORGE

Well, not much has changed since the last batch.

Sheriff Peterson takes a sip.

SHERIFF PETERSON

What is that supposed to mean?

GEORGE

Means there is still a problem.

SHERIFF PETERSON

And who is the problem now?

GEORGE

There's a brother.

Sheriff chokes on the moonshine.

GEORGE CONT'D
And this brother is in the know
about some things, I think.

SHERIFF PETERSON
Jesus.

GEORGE
Yeah. This one is not good. Seen
him out here two fuckin' times.

SHERIFF PETERSON
Jesus.

GEORGE
Can you think of anythin' else to
say?

Sheriff takes a long pull.

SHERIFF PETERSON
You talked to Kaci?

GEORGE
I did, but I'm of the mind she's
not much on board.

SHERIFF PETERSON
I can't say that I am either.

GEORGE
What? What are you talkin' about?

SHERIFF PETERSON
Doesn't seem like good business, to
me.

GEORGE
What the fuck am I hearin'?
Business? They came in here, they
came into what is mine, uninvited,
many times...

SHERIFF PETERSON
You own a lot out here, George. But
you don't own everything. Not by a
long shot.

GEORGE
Oh, you gotta be outside your
fuckin' mind to turn your back on
me!

SHERIFF PETERSON

I'm not turning on anything. I'm just telling you that it's not a good idea. It's actually a fucking horrible idea.

Sheriff Peterson stands and leaves.

INT. MR. DENTON'S OFFICE - MORNING

Slink sits across from Mr. Denton.

MR. DENTON

Well Slink, I was thinking that your parents might attend this meeting.

SLINK

Doesn't look like it.

MR. DENTON

Have any thoughts about what's going on? Come across anything interesting yet?

SLINK

Not really anything.

MR. DENTON

You haven't really thought about the situation you've managed to find yourself in, huh?

SLINK

I got some books from the library.

MR. DENTON

Have you opened them?

SLINK

I opened one. It was more a self-help deal and not really anything about young adults.

MR. DENTON

Did you connect with some things from the book?

SLINK

Yeah.

MR. DENTON

Then maybe age doesn't really matter all that much. The damage is being done regardless of when it happens.

SLINK

Makes sense.

MR. DENTON

There are three ways out of this if you keep doing what you are doing. Dead, incarcerated, or in a psych ward somewhere.

SLINK

Two of those don't seem too bad.

Mr. Denton reaches for a pamphlet and piece of paper.

MR. DENTON

This is a list of meeting times and locations across the county. And this is an Attendance Verification sheet. Have someone sign it at the meeting. Three a week.

SLINK

Are you serious?

MR. DENTON

Now you have to see it firsthand.

Slink takes the pamphlet and sheet, and walks out of office.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Jane is behind the counter, waves to Slink as he enters the library.

JANE

How's it going?

SLINK

Pretty good.

JANE

You still trying to get back into school?

SLINK
Somewhat.

Jane notices a SHERIFF DEPUTY approaching the front door.

JANE
Hey, do yourself a big favor and go
buy some chili-cheese chips right
now from the vending machine.

Slink turns his head to see the Deputy opening the door.

Slink dashes toward the vending machine while fumbling with his wallet.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

INT. LIBRARY ENTRYWAY - DAY

The deputy approaches Slink.

Slink feeds the vending machines.

The deputy walks to the water fountain.

Slink tears open bag and devours a handful of chips.

The deputy takes notice.

Slink walks to the computer station.

The deputy takes notice.

INT. LIBRARY ENTRYWAY - DAY

Slink looks over to wall, reads BRADLEY SMITH on the Missing flyer, types name into search bar.

Slink begins scanning a few of the articles written by Bradley Smith.

The Deputy walks up behind him.

DEPUTY
You think you're gonna be the one
to break this case open?

SLINK
Huh?

DEPUTY

We've been all over the web reading his stuff.

SLINK

Maybe you weren't looking in the right places.

The Deputy inhales deeply through his nose.

DEPUTY

Do you know where the right places are, son?

SLINK

No, sir.

DEPUTY

Shouldn't you be in school right now?

SLINK

Yeah, well, I had a doctor's appointment this morning and my parents, well, they work, and I don't drive, so they told me to come here...

DEPUTY

Why don't you drive?

SLINK

I don't have the, um, means right now, sir.

The Deputy nods and saunters toward the exit.

DEPUTY

Is that so, son? Maybe gettin' a job would help.

INT. GUN STORE - DAY

An overweight EMPLOYEE, mid-fifties, stares at Slink on the other side of counter.

EMPLOYEE

What'd you say you wanted?

SLINK

I need a box of nine-mil bullets.

EMPLOYEE

What?

SLINK

I need some nine-millimeter ammo.

EMPLOYEE

Son, I can't sell you that.

SLINK

Why not?

EMPLOYEE

Hell, how old are you?

SLINK

Sixteen.

EMPLOYEE

You have a couple more years to go, boy.

SLINK

This is just for a one time thing.

EMPLOYEE

I don't need to know that! And I can't sell them to you regardless.

Slink sighs and exits the store.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - DAY

Slink sneaks into Chris's backyard, breaks into a shed.

INT. CHRIS'S BACKYARD SHED - DAY

He rummages for 9mm ammunition.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - DAY

Chris's mom, MRS. JONES, mid-forties and athletic, pulls up and begins unloading groceries.

INT. CHRIS'S BACKYARD SHED - DAY

Slink freezes.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - DAY

Mrs. Jones walks into the house.

Slink squeezes through the back window of shed, then moves along the driveway to the road.

Mrs. Jones walks out the front door.

MRS. JONES

Slink?

Slink turns around.

SLINK

Hi there, Mrs. Jones.

MRS. JONES

Are you looking for Chris? I didn't hear the bell.

SLINK

Oh, I didn't think he'd be up there.

MRS. JONES

Did you try calling him?

SLINK

My phone is sort of messed up right now.

MRS. JONES

Alright, let me go get him.

Mrs. Jones walks into the house.

Slink looks at the sidewalk.

Chris walks out the front door, storms to Slink.

CHRIS

What the hell are you doing here, man?

SLINK

I came by to see what's up--

CHRIS

--Don't give me that shit--.

SLINK

--I came over to ask a favor and then realized you wouldn't go for it.

CHRIS

Does it have to do with that same shit?

SLINK

Not directly. I was going to ask if I could borrow some of your dad's ammo.

CHRIS

Look man, you have some sort of death wish?

SLINK

No, why?

CHRIS

Everything you've done since your brother died has been nothing short of insane! Aaron told me you went back to Charter Oak. Are you trying to get yourself killed?

SLINK

I just want to know the truth about what happened.

CHRIS

Constantly drinking liquor, trespassing, and looking for ammo. How'd you get a gun?

Slink looks at sidewalk again.

CHRIS CONT'D

Oh, Jesus. Please tell me you didn't--

SLINK

Just don't tell him, not yet.

Chris shakes his head and walks toward front door.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Slink walks on sidewalk.

Sheriff Peterson pulls up to him and paces alongside.

SHERIFF PETERSON
You need a lift somewhere, son?

SLINK
I'm fine, Sheriff. Thank you.

SHERIFF PETERSON
Well, how much farther trip you got?

SLINK
My house is just up here a bit.

SHERIFF PETERSON
No it ain't, son. Come on, hop in.

Slink gets in Sheriff Peterson's front seat.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Sheriff Peterson drives cruiser with Slink in front seat.

INT. SHERIFF PETERSON'S CRUISER - DAY

Sheriff Peterson turns down the radio.

SHERIFF PETERSON
How've you been, son?

SLINK
I'm fine.

SHERIFF PETERSON
Heard you been spending some time at the library.

SLINK
Who told you that?

SHERIFF PETERSON
Oh, I have my eyes and ears all over this county.

Slink looks out the window.

SHERIFF PETERSON CONT'D
I apologize for not making it over
to the house after the funeral.

SLINK
That's fine. There were a lot of
deputies there anyways.

SHERIFF PETERSON
I'm sure there was. Paul was
well-liked on the force. All the
way around.

SLINK
That's what I've heard.

SHERIFF PETERSON
Did you stay very long?

SLINK
What?

SHERIFF PETERSON
Were you at the house for a while
after the ceremony?

SLINK
Yeah, why do you ask?

SHERIFF PETERSON
Seems I remember you left the
burial pretty quickly.

SLINK
Have you ever had to put your
brother in the ground?

SHERIFF PETERSON
I have, son. And a sister, both
parents, couple nephews, a few
deputies. I've seen a lot of death.

Sheriff Peterson pulls in front of Slink's house.

SLINK
You plan on giving me some moral
send off about using this
experience for the best or
something like that?

SHERIFF PETERSON
No, son. I just hope you find what
you are looking for, that's all.
And best of luck with it.

Slink exits the car and walks toward his house.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DUSK

George and Kaci watch T.V. on MUTE.

KACI

Lane told me you had another visit
the other day.

GEORGE

Sure did, and no one seems to be
doing much about it.

KACI

You tell Peterson yet?

GEORGE

Shit yeah he knows!

KACI

Give the job to him.

Kaci takes a long pull on the moonshine.

GEORGE

Jesus, Kaci. Thought about giving
it a rest here for a bit? You have
been dieseling down the 'shine for
the last couple of weeks.

Kaci looks at George, takes a shorter pull.

KACI

Weeks? That's all you gonna give me
credit for?

GEORGE

Becoming a boozier ain't that lofty
of a goal, I'd say.

KACI

If that isn't one of the most
hypocritical things I've heard
said. Have Peterson clean up your
mess.

Kaci coughs a few times.

GEORGE

Hell, he ain't gonna do it. It's
too close.

KACI
Too close to what?

GEORGE
Give me a rip of that.

Kaci downs the remainder of the jar.

KACI
Too close to what, George?

INT./EXT. KACI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kaci exits her truck coughing.

She vomits a pool of blood onto the grass.

KACI
Oh, shit. This ain't good.

Kaci walks to and opens the front door.

KACI CONT'D
Aaron! Get down here! We goin' to
the hospital!

INT. KACI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Aaron storms downstairs.

AARON
What the hell's going on?

KACI
Throwing up some pretty nasty shit.
Grab some shoes and let's go.

AARON
Jesus. How much did you drink
today?

KACI
Couple of drinks. Not that much.

EXT. KACI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Aaron helps Kaci into passenger seat and then jumps in the
driver's seat.

EXT. CITY ROAD - NIGHT

Kaci struggles to maintain consciousness.

INT. KACI'S CAR - NIGHT

Aaron approaches hospital.

AARON
Hang in there, Aunt Kaci!

Kaci MOANS.

AARON
Come on! We are almost there.

Kaci spits up another stream of blood.

AARON
Blood?! What the--

KACI
--Oh, yeah. I feel better now.

EXT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM BREEZEWAY - NIGHT

Aaron runs into Hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Nurses respond to Aaron's presence.

AARON
My aunt keeps throwing up blood!

Two nurses rush outside with Aaron.

EXT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM BREEZEWAY - NIGHT

Aaron helps the nurses get Kaci into a wheelchair.

AARON
Come on, we're almost there. Just
gotta get you inside and they will
check you out, okay?

Kaci MOANS.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Aaron rushes with the Nurses toward an Observation Room.

NURSE #1
How long has she been like this?

AARON
I don't know. She just came home
and yelled and now we are here.

NURSE #2
Where was she coming from? A bar? A
friends house?

AARON
Hell, I don't know! Probably both!

NURSE #1
Alright, calm down. We'll take it
from here.

The Nurses take Kaci to another room.

Aaron walks over to the Reception Desk.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Kaci is plugged into a number of monitors and Aaron sits
beside her.

A DOCTOR, in his mid-sixties, fit, walks into the room.

DOCTOR
Good afternoon, sir. My name is Dr.
Wilson.

AARON
I'm Aaron.

DR. WILSON
And how has she been doing?

KACI
I'm fine, Doctor.

DR. WILSON
I'm afraid you are not fine, Ms.
Kendall. Your blood work has come
back and it shows you have
significant liver damage.

KACI

I can't say I'm really surprised.

DR. WILSON

How about you get some rest, huh?
And Aaron, can I speak with you
outside for a minute?

Aaron follows Dr. Wilson to the hallway.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Aaron closes the door to the hospital room.

DR. WILSON

Your aunt is dying, Aaron. Her
liver is no longer functioning. I
can see about putting her on the
transplant list, but I will tell
you now it will be a long shot.

AARON

How long you think?

DR. WILSON

If we can detox her safely and she
stops drinking she will have some
time. If she leaves here and
continues to drink I would start
making funeral preparations
immediately.

AARON

We can't afford no detox.

DR. WILSON

I can give you detailed
instructions on how to detox her at
home, but you have to stay with her
for a few days to monitor her.

AARON

Okay. How about you put her on the
list then?

DR. WILSON

We will need to see if the detox
works first. Can I ask you a
question?

AARON
What's up?

DR. WILSON
Are you drinking?

AARON
No.

Dr. Wilson looks at his chart.

DR. WILSON
And your parents?

AARON
Seems they didn't get their
diagnosis in time.

DR. WILSON
I've reviewed their files and would
like to send a copy of them home
for you to read. We keep quality
records at this hospital...

AARON
I'd hope so.

DR. WILSON
I'll get the copies made and send
them with you along with how to
care for your aunt.

AARON
Okay.

DR. WILSON
I will put your aunt on the
transplant registry if you agree to
follow the detox plan. And take a
look at the files.

AARON
That seems fair enough.

DR. WILSON
Hang tight. I will have a nurse
bring them over shortly.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

George, Sheriff Peterson, and Lane sit in the dining room passing a bottle of moonshine.

GEORGE

I'm not sure how many times I need to prod you into getting this done.

SHERIFF PETERSON

It ain't right.

GEORGE

I've never really been concerned with what's right, Sheriff. I am concerned about the Feds snooping around here!

SHERIFF PETERSON

And you have cause to be worried about that for sure, but that is not under my control.

GEORGE

Lane, can you please go in the other room?

Lane stands, walks into living room, and continues to listen to conversation.

GEORGE CONT'D

You are damn right this is under your control! That was our deal!

SHERIFF PETERSON

I understood that our deal was for me to keep our boys under control and cooperating. I never said anything about the Feds.

GEORGE

I need that boy taken out! Immediately!

SHERIFF PETERSON

I'm not of the mind to be killing kids. And if you are, then I'll need to re-think our longstanding partnership.

Sheriff Peterson stands to leave.

SHERIFF PETERSON CONT'D
And I'm guessing you wouldn't want
me thinking too much about that.

Sheriff Peterson saunters to front door.

SHERIFF PETERSON CONT'D
See you later, Lane! Maybe next
time we can play with the radio and
sirens. (to George) Maybe.

Sheriff Peterson exits.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Slink sits at a computer typing.

Jane approaches Slink with a manila folder in hand.

JANE
Hey, you have a minute?

SLINK
What's up, Jane?

JANE
Can we talk in the Group Learning
Room real quick?

SLINK
Sure.

Slink closes the computer and follows Jane to the Group Learning Room.

INT. LIBRARY GROUP LEARNING ROOM - DAY

Slink follows Jane into a large, open room where a few people sit at tables.

Slink sits across from Jane at a table far from the people.

JANE
How have you been?

SLINK
Oh, I've been better and I've been
worse. How about you?

JANE
I'm well, thank you. I know you
have been looking into Bradley
Smith.

SLINK
No shit? How?

JANE
Librarian secret. But I've been
doing some research as well.

Jane slides manila folder to Slink.

Slink looks through the folder.

JANE
Bradley Smith was a freelance
reporter who primarily wrote about
government corruption, corporate
finance laws, and a number of
similar topics.

Slink scans the contents of the folder, which includes a few
pictures of Bradley Smith.

JANE CONT'D
I did some more digging and found
that his last job was to write an
article about modern-day
moonshiners.

SLINK
No shit?

JANE
Do you know something about this?

SLINK
No, I just, I don't know anything
about that.

JANE
Well, I contacted the editor of the
magazine he was to do the article
for and he mentioned that the last
time he spoke to Mr. Smith was the
day before his disappearance.

SLINK
Okay?

JANE

He was to meet with a Sheriff's
Deputy named Nichols.

SLINK

What? Who told you that?

JANE

The editor of the magazine. This
Deputy Nichols might have been the
last person to communicate with
Smith that we know of.

SLINK

So, he talks to Deputy Nichols and
less than a week later he is dead?

JANE

No one said he was dead.

Slink shuffles papers back into folder.

SLINK

I gotta go. Thank you for all this,
though.

JANE

Slink, wait a minute. I wasn't
giving you the file!

SLINK

Thanks again.

Slink stands and hurries out of the room with the file.

INT. KACI'S ROOM - DAY

Kaci rests in her bed.

She shakes, battling withdrawal symptoms while Aaron opens a
beer and brings it to her lips.

KACI

It's taken control of us, Aaron.
All of the Kendall's have it.

AARON

You need to calm down, Aunt Kaci.
Take another sip.

KACI

Never been so cold and so hot. Got the shakes! Got to get me a couple shots of lightning!

AARON

I can't do that. Beer only.

Kaci leans over and retches into a wastebasket.

KACI

God I hate beer. Got the shakes. Can't sleep. Can't think. Your parents had it easy not having to raise no kids on their own.

AARON

What?

KACI

Your father fucked his system up so that he couldn't produce nothing. And the only thing your momma wanted more than another drink was a baby. You gotta break the chain, Aaron. You have a good look here at how it is going to end for you otherwise.

AARON

Don't say that, Aunt Kaci. You're strong as fuck. Just gotta power through these withdrawals. Few more days, honest.

KACI

Us Kendalls have the devil's touch. Your grandparents had it, your aunts and uncles had it, your mom has it. And now it's up to you to break. Fuck the devil. Give me a shot of 'shine. I'd never want to see his face straight.

Aaron walks downstairs.

INT. KACI'S HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Aaron retrieves a bottle from the freezer and takes a long pull.

He notices the medical files on the counter.

He takes the medical files and booze upstairs.

INT. KACI'S ROOM - DAY

Aaron sits next to Kaci, pours her a tablespoon of booze, lifts it to her mouth.

Aaron takes a drink and begins reading the file.

EXT. SLINK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sheriff Peterson KNOCKS on front door.

Slink answers.

SLINK

Yes?

SHERIFF PETERSON

How are you doing, Slink? Are your parents home?

SLINK

Who told you my name?

SHERIFF PETERSON

Oh, well, I remember your brother mentioning it a few times before.

SLINK

He never struck me as the type that would do that.

SHERIFF PETERSON

Well, I may have picked it up somewhere else. I can't remember. How's your research coming along?

SLINK

What all do you know about me, Sheriff?

SHERIFF PETERSON

Are your parents here or not?

SLINK

No.

SHERIFF PETERSON

Well, then I guess I can cut the shit, huh?

SLINK

My thinking is you should've done that a long time ago.

SHERIFF PETERSON

And what led you to that thinking, son?

SLINK

I ain't your son.

SHERIFF PETERSON

That's right. You're not my son, so let me rephrase that. What led you to that thinking?

SLINK

The same thinking that's leading me to tell you to leave. Unless you got business here.

SHERIFF PETERSON

I was hoping to speak to your parents.

SLINK

They're still not here. So, I guess that solves your business problem. You got any personal reasons?

Peterson steps back, reflects.

SHERIFF PETERSON

Personal? Not really. Somewhat, I guess.

SLINK

Somewhat?

SHERIFF PETERSON

I have deputies all over this county, son. And they have been told to keep an eye on you.

SLINK

I'm still not your son.

Sheriff Peterson walks toward his cruiser.

EXT. COUNTRY ROADS - DAY

Aaron drives his truck to the metal gate at Charter Oak.

INT. AARON'S TRUCK - DAY

Aaron reaches through driver's side window and punches in code.

EXT. CHARTER OAK ROAD - DAY

Aaron drives through the open gate, and parks in front of George's house.

EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DAY

Aaron KNOCKS on George's front door.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DAY

Lane opens the door.

LANE

Hey there, Aaron! How have you been?

AARON

I'm good, Lane. Been good. How are you? It's been a minute.

LANE

Yeah! It's been a minute, for sure.

GEORGE (O.S)

Who the fuck is it, Lane?

Lane ignores George.

LANE

Come on in, Aaron. Do you want some iced tea? We're frying some catfish out back. Do you want some catfish, too?

AARON

I'm fine for right now, Lane. Is George around?

LANE

Yes, sir. He's in the back minding
the fryer. I got some good ones
this morning. He was really--

George storms into the kitchen.

GEORGE

--Answer me when I call you, Lane!
What the fuck is...

George notices Aaron in living room.

GEORGE CONT'D

Well, I'll be damned, Aaron. What
brought you out here, huh?

AARON

I was out buying some bait and
figured I might as well swing by
and see what's new around here.

LANE

We're having a catfish fry right
now!

GEORGE

Lane, go keep an eye on that fryer
out there, will you?

LANE

Just make sure it don't bubble
over, right?

GEORGE

That's right, Lane. Now go on.

Lane exits through the kitchen.

GEORGE

Haven't heard from your aunt for a
minute.

AARON

She fell pretty ill not long ago.

GEORGE

Is that so?

Aaron looks around.

GEORGE

Well, bait or no bait, I know you didn't come all the way out here for catfish.

AARON

I came looking for a job.

GEORGE

There's not much around here that Lane and I can't do.

AARON

I was thinking more of the general upkeep, you know. And distribution.

GEORGE

Distribution, huh?

AARON

Yes, sir.

GEORGE

Well, the buying and selling is primarily my part. Lane mainly keeps an eye on things and bottles when the batch is ready.

AARON

I have a large clientele list in my back pocket. Kids from the city tired of fucking with fake I.D.'s and all the shit that goes with it.

GEORGE

Is that so. And your aunt knows about this?

AARON

She's the one to ask if I could help out.

GEORGE

Come on into the kitchen and we'll take a look at that client list.

George leads Aaron into kitchen.

INT. GEORGE'S KITCHEN - DAY

George opens a cabinet and retrieves a jar of moonshine, takes it to the table.

GEORGE
Let's take a look here.

George unscrews the jar, inhales the moonshine, slides jar to Aaron.

Aaron takes out list of names from his pocket.

AARON
These are mostly friends, but I have a few professionals on there that don't like the risk of the lightning, but like the effect.

George surveys the list.

Aaron takes a pull of moonshine.

GEORGE
This is a nice list. I recognize a few of the names. Curious as to why they would rather go with you than buy direct from me.

AARON
You really wonder that, George?

GEORGE
Hell, not really. You have a valid I.D. right?

AARON
Of course.

GEORGE
Ever been in trouble with the law?

AARON
No, sir.

George stares at Aaron.

Aaron takes another long pull.

GEORGE
Things are a little different out here, Aaron. Sometimes a lot different.

AARON
I understand that, sir.

GEORGE
Lane!

Lane pops into kitchen.

LANE
Yeah, George?

GEORGE
Why don't you take a few of those strips of fish and throw 'em in a tortilla and show Aaron here around the lay of the land, so to speak.

LANE
Like, the lake and stuff?

GEORGE
Dammit, Lane! No, he doesn't need to see the lake! He has property out here! Show him around the campers and trailers we have!

LANE
You want me to show him the booze?

GEORGE
Jesus, Lane. Okay. I need you to fuckin' focus for a second! Show him what you do here. Everyday. The rounds you make and what you do. Okay?

LANE
Oh, well that's easy enough. Come on, Aaron! I'll get the tortillas and hot sauce!

AARON
Sounds good, Lane! You lead the way!

LANE
Give me sec to get the fish out of the fryer!

Lane exits.

GEORGE
We'll be bottling and transporting
in three to four days. Hope to have
you on board.

AARON
Hope to be so, sir.

Aaron exits.

EXT. CHARTER OAK ROADS - AFTERNOON

Lane drives through the gravel roads of Charter Oak.

INT. TRUCK CHARTER OAK ROADS - AFTERNOON

Lane drives as Aaron retrieves a pocket journal and pen from
his pocket. Aaron creates an overhead map of Charter Oak.

LANE
I haven't seen you in a while, man!
How are you?

AARON
Not a lot has changed in my world,
Lane. How about you?

LANE
Some things change. Most things
stay the same, you know. Make sure
the water flow is cold and that
it's actually flowing. Maintain
temperatures. Bottle slow and move
fast. That's what George tells me.

AARON
Bottle slow and move fast?

LANE
I'm not sure what it means either,
but I think I figured out what he
wants me to do at least. I don't
know.

AARON
What else is new around here?

LANE
People showing up. I get in trouble
when that happens, and I'm not much
liking getting in trouble with
George.

AARON
Who showed up?

Lane slows in front of an abandoned trailer.

LANE
This trailer has three stills that should be ready in, let me think, two or three days. Big stills, too.

Lane continues down gravel road. Aaron makes notations in his pocket journal.

AARON
Aren't we gonna stop and check them out?

LANE
I checked that one this morning. I will show you the rest and then we can check the last ones.

AARON
Sounds good.

LANE
Here's another one on the left. Five smaller stills. And on the right, that little camper has one big one.

AARON
You guys have a lot going on here, huh?

LANE
Oh, yeah. A lot. We've had some deputies and a kid over here not too long ago. George was really mad. But Sheriff Peterson calmed him down and now it is okay again.

AARON
Sheriff Peterson?

LANE
Oh yeah, Sheriff comes by every now and then.

AARON
Really? Does he have land out here?

LANE

No. He likes to talk to George.
Play cards.

AARON

What do they talk about?

LANE

Lightning. But he always leaves
when George gets mad.

AARON

Does George get mad a lot?

LANE

He gets mad at me quite a bit, but
I'm a mess-up. He's been mad at
Peterson and Kaci and a few other
friends. Sometimes I just think he
is a mad person.

AARON

Has George ever hit you real hard?

Lane is quiet.

AARON CONT'D

You know it's not nice to hit
people real hard, right? To hurt
people? That's not the right, or
nice, thing to do.

LANE

I deserve my hittins, but some
people don't.

AARON

Who doesn't deserve the hittin's,
Lane?

Lane looks out window.

LANE

Behind that tree line there are
five trailers and they have four
big stills in each one.

Aaron makes another notation in his journal.

EXT. ABANDONED CONSTRUCTION SITE - AFTERNOON

Slink and Aaron lean against bed of truck drinking beers.

SLINK

You think he's going to show?

AARON

He was pretty pissed last time I talked with him.

SLINK

Yeah, he was pissed at me, too.

Slink grabs another beer.

AARON

How are you doing, Slink?

SLINK

I'm scared, man.

AARON

Of what?

SLINK

That's it, man. I'm just not fucking sure what to believe anymore with all this shit.

AARON

What did you find out?

A car pulls beside Slink's truck.

SLINK

I'll be damned.

Chris exits.

CHRIS

What's up, fuckers?

AARON

Damn, dude. Didn't think you'd show.

CHRIS

Well, one of you yahoos sent me a message from a blocked number. I figured if it wasn't one of you I'd be arrested and finally able to tell the truth of what went down.

(MORE)

CHRIS (cont'd)

Even though I didn't see it. I believe it.

Slink gives Chris two beers.

SLINK

Chris, come with me to the truck. I got some smokes in there that I think you need.

Chris follows Slink.

Slink stands between Chris and Aaron.

SLINK CONT'D

I'm going to say this once, and I'm going to say this slow.

Chris looks at Aaron.

SLINK

Don't look at him, dude. Look at me. You are here. Okay?

CHRIS

Okay.

SLINK

I have the nine-mil in my front waistband. I'm going to hand you a cigarette. I need you to take it out of my pants. Put it in your waistband or something. I don't care.

CHRIS

The fuck am I supposed to do with it?

SLINK

I need you to help me, okay?

CHRIS

Fuck, Slink. God you piss me off--

SLINK

--I can't get ammo for it. You can--

CHRIS

--What the hell is this all about--

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. ABANDONED CONSTRUCTION SITE - AFTERNOON

Slink shifts, hands Chris a cigarette.

Chris takes the 9MM handgun.

Chris slides gun into waistband, and follows Slink back to Aaron.

Slink opens the cooler, and passes out beers to Aaron and Chris.

SLINK

You guys are gonna need a couple
for this, so I might as well keep
it open.

FLASHBACK - INT. CHURCH GYMNASIUM - EVENING

Bradley Smith enters an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting with typical AA posters on the wall with sayings: "Easy Does It" and "One Day at a Time."

He catches the eye of Jane, sitting in the back, and lighting a cigarette.

Mr. Denton is standing at the podium.

SLINK O.S.

The man we saw at the lake that day
was Bradley Smith. A reporter on
assignment here.

MR. DENTON

Our speaker tonight is Paul. Come
on up and tell us how you got here
and how you did it.

Paul Nichols walks to the podium.

Bradley makes his way close to Jane.

PAUL

Thank you, Tim. They told me to
tell my story. But there's not a
lot to tell. Grew up in a loving
home. Loving parents and friends.
But something was always off. Can't
really explain it, but I get that
most you understand.

Bradley and Jane continue to give glances at one another.

PAUL CONT'D

I found it after a Christmas party at my parents' house. Thirteen years old and drank half a bottle of whiskey. I loved the burn. I loved the effect.

Jane stands to refill her coffee.

Bradley follows, approaches Jane.

BRADLEY

Hi, I'm Bradley.

JANE

Hi Bradley. It's nice to meet you.

BRADLEY

You new here?

JANE

No, but I have a feeling you are.

BRADLEY

I'm here for work.

JANE

An AA meeting is a strange place to go for work.

BRADLEY

This part is more to keep me from raiding the mini-liquor cabinet in my hotel room.

JANE

That makes sense. My name is Jane.

BRADLEY

It's nice to meet you, Jane.

FLASHBACK - INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Bradley is hovering over the computers.

SLINK O.S.

Bradley was researching moonshiners and stumbled onto Charter Oak while at the library. He called the Sheriff's office, and my brother just happened to answer the call.

Bradley is on phone at the Reception Desk.

BRADLEY

(into phone)

Yes, thank you for looking into that for me, Deputy Nichols. Yes. Right. Thank you and I'll be waiting to hear back from you.

Bradley hangs up phone and hands it across the counter.

BRADLEY

Thank you for letting me use the phone, Jane. Will I see you tonight?

JANE

I still have a lot of work to do.

FLASHBACK - EXT. CHARTER OAK GATE - DUSK

Paul pulls up to gate.

SLINK O.S.

That's all I really know right now. But I have a feeling, based on some material I stumbled upon, that this might be how it all went down.

Lane begins to leave George's driveway.

Paul exits his cruiser and waves to Lane.

Lane stops.

PAUL

How are you doing today, sir?

LANE

Sheriff Peterson? You forget the code?

PAUL

No, sir. I am not Sheriff Peterson. I'm Deputy Nichols. I work for Sheriff Peterson.

LANE

Do you know the code?

PAUL
I'm not sure I do, sir.

LANE
You know Sheriff Peterson?

PAUL
Well, yes sir, I do. He's my boss.

LANE
I have a boss.

PAUL
And what is his name?

LANE
George.

PAUL
Does George have a last name?

LANE
No.

PAUL
Is he here?

LANE
I think he's at the lake fishing.

PAUL
Can I come in and talk to him?

LANE
Did Sheriff Peterson send you to
talk to him?

PAUL
Well, yes, sir, he did.

LANE
I'm not supposed to let anyone in
here in uniform that ain't Sheriff
Peterson.

PAUL
Oh, well that makes sense. But, you
see, he sent me on his behalf. He,
uh, wasn't feeling well today.

LANE
I can take you to George if I can
ride in the front seat.

PAUL
Sure! What's the code.

LANE
It's the month and year. Use zeroes
before October and then it is one
first. But it only goes to one-two
for December. Then zero first
again.

Paul punches in the code, drives through gate.

Lane jumps in passenger seat, and they drive toward Charter
Oak lake.

REAL TIME - EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Slink tosses another empty beer can to the growing pile of
aluminum and glass in the back of his truck.

Chris downs his beer, lights a cigarette.

CHRIS
Jesus Christ.

AARON
No fuckin' shit?

SLINK
Not certain. But something happened
out there and somehow my brother
ended up dead. And he didn't do it
himself.

CHRIS
Where does it go from here?

AARON
I got an in with George and his
moonshine operation. My aunt's been
working for him for years.

SLINK
What the fuck?

AARON
I never thought much of it, Slink.
Honest.

CHRIS
You got to be shitting me! Your
aunt works with murderers! Oh,

(MORE)

CHRIS (cont'd)
fuck! Just when I thought I was on
board with this!

SLINK
Shut the fuck up, Chris! You were
never on board so shut the fuck up!
Aaron, please tell me you have no
idea about what happened to Paul.

Aaron sets down his beer.

AARON
I tell you, man to man, friend to
friend, that I haven't the
slightest clue of what happened to
him.

Aaron opens his arms.

AARON CONT'D
I promise, Slink. Or Daniel, or
whatever will get through to you,
yourself. I never knew anything
about your brother.

Slink cries as he chugs beer.

Slink embraces Aaron, crying.

AARON
They kill everyone, Slink. They'll
kill us all now if they find out we
know the truth.

Slink pulls away from Aaron.

SLINK
Alright, let's figure out a plan.

AARON
I say we burn the the place down.
One still at a time, the three of
us at a different spot. Just sheer
confusion for George and Lane.

CHRIS
I'm down.

SLINK
You know I'm in.

EXT. SLINK'S TRUCK - CITY STREET - DAY (MOVING)

Slink drives from construction site to his house.

INT. SLINK'S TRUCK - DAY (MOVING)

Slink notices red and blue lights cascading off his mirrors.

SLINK

You gotta be shittin' me right now.

Slink pulls over.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A SHERIFF'S DEPUTY, mid-twenties, approaches Slink's car.

INT. SLINK'S TRUCK - DAY (PARKED)

Slink rolls down window, and retrieves the required paperwork.

EXT./INT. SLINK'S TRUCK - DAY

The Deputy peers into bed of the truck and the backseat.

DEPUTY

How are we doing this afternoon,
sir?

SLINK

Just fine, sir. How are you,
officer?

Slink hands the Deputy his I.D. and paperwork.

DEPUTY

That's Deputy, sir. And I will need
a second to run this information
and we will go from there.

SLINK

What is the problem?

DEPUTY

Sit tight, and we can get this
taken care of quickly.

The Deputy walks back to his cruiser.

INT. DEPUTY CRUISER - DAY

The Deputy enters Slink's information into portable computer.

DEPUTY
(into radio)
216 on a possible 2100. Occupied
one time, Nichols, Daniel. I
have a message here to detain.

RADIO VOICE O.S.
Confirm. Detain suspect. Peterson
en route.

The Deputy exits his vehicle.

EXT. SLINKS TRUCK - DAY (PARKED)

The Deputy approaches Slink's truck.

DEPUTY
Can you go ahead and step out of
the vehicle, Mr. Nichols?

SLINK
What? Why did you even pull me
over?

DEPUTY
I can smell trace amounts of
alcohol on your breath and you are
underage. So please step out of the
vehicle.

Slink exits.

DEPUTY CONT'D
Go ahead and place your hands
behind your back. I am just
detaining you for right now until
my supervisor arrives on scene.

SLINK
Who is your supervisor?

The Deputy places Slink in handcuffs and leads him to his cruiser and opens the rear door.

DEPUTY
Can you sit right in there for a
second? I'm gonna conduct a
(MORE)

DEPUTY (cont'd)
 probable cause search of your
 vehicle.

Deputy begins walking toward Slink's truck.

INT. DEPUTY'S CAR - DAY

Slink wiggles out of his pants.

EXT./INT. DEPUTY'S CAR - DAY

Deputy walks back to and enters front seat of cruiser.

DEPUTY
 Dude, the whole cab of your truck
 smells like beer.

DEPUTY CONT'D
 (into radio)
 216. How much longer on the
 supervisor.

RADIO VOICE O.S.
 He is en route, 216.

Slink begins to urinate.

DEPUTY
 Goddammit! Quit pissing back there.

SLINK
 Fuck your stupid puppet voice!

The Deputy storms out of the driver seat, pulls Slink out of the backseat.

EXT. DEPUTY CRUISER - DAY

The Deputy takes Slink out of backseat, throws him against cruiser, and slaps Slink three times.

INT. SHERIFF PETERSON'S CRUISER - DAY

Sheriff Peterson watches the beating as he slows behind the Deputy's cruiser.

Sheriff Peterson exits his cruiser.

EXT. DEPUTY CRUISER - DAY

Sheriff Peterson saunters toward his Deputy and Slink.

SHERIFF PETERSON

Alright, now, Deputy. I can take it from here. He's a bit drunk, I take it?

DEPUTY

He's got alcohol on his breath and a bit of a mouth on him as well.

SHERIFF PETERSON

What else is new, Deputy?

Sheriff Peterson grabs Slink.

SHERIFF PETERSON CONT'D

Come on, boy. We get to take a little ride tonight. How does that sound.

SLINK

Fuck you.

SHERIFF PETERSON

Well, sounds like you are on board.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Aaron drives along city road, passing Sheriff Peterson hauling Slink into back of cruiser.

Sheriff Peterson notices Aaron.

EXT./INT. AARON'S TRUCK - DAY

Aaron makes eye contact with Slink.

Aaron peels off down the street.

INT. KACI'S HOUSE - DAY

Aaron storms into Kaci's house.

AARON

Alright, Kaci! We need to get going, right now! Let's go.

INT. KACI'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kaci rises unsteadily from her chair.

KACI
Did they get to you?

AARON
Peterson has Slink.

KACI
Oh, Jesus. Fuck.

AARON
I have to get out to Charter Oak
before Peterson gets there and
tells that fuck George that he has
Slink in custody.

Kaci retches a thick stream of bile into a spit-cup near her.

AARON
Jesus, are you alright?

KACI
Oh, that's just the nerves, honey.
And an empty stomach.

AARON
I think the plan just got pushed
forward.

Kaci presents a weak smile.

KACI
Are we killing tonight?

AARON
We gotta get Slink tonight. But
yes, I'm thinking so.

KACI
Who's first? I want Peterson.

AARON
Hittin' the sauce again, huh? Look
what happens all unmonitored.

KACI
I don't need no moderation.

AARON

You need to bail Slink out of jail
before they transport and kill him.
Okay?

KACI

They will never release him to me.

AARON

Then give them a fucking reason!
Jesus fuck me! They will kill him!
Tonight!

Aaron heads toward the door.

Kaci remains still.

KACI

They won't give him to me, I'm
telling you.

AARON

You are in no place to tell me
anything, understand? Go get him
out of jail. Get him to Charter Oak
within two hours.

Aaron runs upstairs.

INT. KACI'S ROOM - DAY

Aaron finds the modified SAWED-OFF SHOT GUN in Kaci's
closet. He grabs a bathrobe, and shoves bathrobe belt
through a hole in stock.

He loads the shotgun and puts a box of shells in the
bathrobe pocket.

Aaron walks downstairs.

INT. KACI'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Aaron storms into living room.

Kaci is standing in her pajamas, drinking a cup of coffee.

KACI

The caffeine is kicking in, Aaron.
Who we killing first?

Aaron adjusts the sawed-off shotgun, sling and bathrobe on
Kaci.

KACI
Bathrobe is heavy.

AARON
Well, case you need more than two
shots, you have some backups in
your pockets.

KACI
Jesus. Two shots?

AARON
Shoot, shoot, reload. Try and get
Slink one of the cop guns. He's had
a bit of practicing with the
nine-mil last summer.

KACI
Where'll you be?

AARON
I'm helping Lane with the bottling.
You will know where I am soon
enough.

KACI
That, I guess, sounds like a plan.

AARON
Just go get Slink. He will know.

EXT. AARON'S HOUSE - DAY

Aaron jumps in driver seat of truck, calls Chris.

INT. CHRIS'S BACKYARD SHED - DAY

Chris loads 9mm bullets into magazines.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED

CHRIS
What's up, dude?

AARON
They got Slink.

CHRIS
You got to be fucking with me.

AARON
What are you doing?

Chris continues to fill multiple magazines.

AARON CONT'D
I need you to call into the police station and report you saw two deputies gunned down in their cruiser. That'll get the cops out of the station, hopefully, for a bit.

CHRIS
Hell, I'm not ready for all of this, Jesus!

AARON
Well, get your ass ready. They are about to kill Slink. Make the phone call and meet us at Charter Oak within the hour.

CHRIS
Ah, Jesus! I'm not ready for this!

AARON
You're ready! Motherfucker you are the readiest of us all! Wooohooo! Bring something to kill with other than your looks, motherfucker! Maybe a bat or some knives. I don't know what you have lying around your house, but it'll be kill or be killed tonight! Wooohoo!

Aaron hangs up.

Chris takes stacks of full magazines from the table, dials 911.

911 OPERATOR (O.S)
911, what's your emergency.

CHRIS
I just watched two deputies get murdered on the corner of Carver and County Line Rd. Middle-aged white guy gunned them down and ran north on Carver.

Chris hangs up fast, storms out of shed, and gets into his car.

He drives towards Charter Oak.

END INTERCUT

EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DAY

George sits on his porch as Sheriff Peterson pulls into his driveway.

Sheriff Peterson exits his cruiser.

GEORGE

Well, what a fine little surprise
this afternoon, Sheriff.

SHERIFF PETERSON

I thought about calling, and then I
just told myself to swing by and
give you the good news.

GEORGE

Oh, now I love good news.

SHERIFF PETERSON

We got your boy down at the
station.

GEORGE

No shit. Well bring him on up here,
huh?

SHERIFF PETERSON

I'm gonna go ahead and say I did my
part.

GEORGE

What the hell is that supposed to
mean?

SHERIFF PETERSON

I got him booked under the name
Jeffery Kemper. And I'm sure you
can pull a few strings with some of
the boys down there and get him
out.

GEORGE

You gotta be shittin' me! You have
him and you won't finish the task?!

SHERIFF PETERSON

How about we go have a bite or two
and think over, uh, prices.

Sheriff Peterson walks past George and into George's house.

GEORGE

I can't believe this shit, Sheriff!
What is going on!

SHERIFF PETERSON

I'll tell you that kid ain't going
anywhere. Now let's calm down and
have a chat.

George follows Sheriff Peterson.

EXT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE STATION - AFTERNOON

Deputies storm out of station and sprint to their cruisers.

Kaci eases out of her car, ambles to front door of station.

A Deputy attempts to help her as she nears the door.

DEPUTY

Can I help you ma'am?

KACI

I ain't no ma'am! I just need to
get my nephew out of here!

DEPUTY

I apologize. Now come right in here
and what is the name of your
nephew?

KACI

I will tell you when I get in
there!

INT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE STATION - AFTERNOON

A Sheriff Deputy guides Kaci to the Reception Desk where
Deputy Harris, a short and skinny deputy with a shrill voice
sits behind a computer.

The County Sheriff's Department is sparse with the exodus of
deputies to assist two of their own.

DEPUTY

Deputy Harris, this woman is trying to bail her nephew out of jail.

DEPUTY HARRIS

And what was she charged with, ma'am?

KACI

She? He's my nephew! That's a man! And I ain't no goddamn ma'am! Who the fuck let you out of the academy! Both of y'all! Disrespectful pieces of shit!

DEPUTY HARRIS

I am very sorry for disrespecting you, but I just need to know his name and what he was booked for.

KACI

His name is Cliff Garble and they say he was drinking and driving, but I know he wasn't. He left my house sober an hour ago!

Deputy Harris types on his keyboard.

DEPUTY HARRIS

That name is not coming up on our booking list.

Kaci saunters toward the gate.

KACI

Cliff Garble!

DEPUTY HARRIS

Excuse me, we can't have you yelling in the station and we do not have anyone booked under that name.

KACI

Maybe if I can take a look and see if he's in here. I was told he was.

DEPUTY HARRIS

Have you had anything to drink today?

Kaci relieves the deputy on her right of his service gun, holds the gun under his chin while pointing the shotgun at his crotch.

KACI

Alright, fuckers. I'm going to kill this guy or you are going to let me in there.

DEPUTY HARRIS

Okay, wait. Big mistake, here. You do not want to do this. We don't know where he is!

Kaci blasts Deputy's groin with shotgun, shoots Deputy Harris in the face with Deputy's service weapon, and picks up weapons and magazines from fallen deputies.

She throws up a batch of bile and blood.

KACI

Oh, here we go. Now the nerves are kicking in.

Kaci methodically walks through the small town sheriff department killing deputies and staff and collecting their weapons and ammo.

Kaci makes her way to the cells.

INT. CELL CORRIDOR SHERIFF STATION - AFTERNOON

Kaci walks into the corridor.

KACI

Slink! Slink! You in here?

INT. CELL - AFTERNOON

Slink runs to the bars.

SLINK

I'm Slink! Help! I'm right here.

INT. CELL CORRIDOR SHERIFF STATION - AFTERNOON

Kaci walks through the corridor on the other side of bars from Slink.

She recognizes Slink and begins trying the keys.

KACI

How'd you find yourself here, son?

SLINK
Shit, are there more out there?

KACI
Hell yeah, there's more! There's
always more cops!

SLINK
Give me a gun.

KACI
We gotta get you out first.

Shots fire down corridor.

Kaci is hit in the side.

KACI
Oh, that fucker just nicked me! Get
down.

Kaci returns with two shotgun blasts, reloads.

SLINK
I'm ready for a gun now.

Kaci opens the cell, walks in.

INT. CELL - AFTERNOON

Kaci is close in front of Slink.

KACI
I need you to listen really hard
right now.

Slink nods.

KACI
Now take one of these...

Kaci hands Slink a 9mm.

KACI
...and wear this.

Kaci takes off robe and shotgun and gives it to Slink.

KACI
Two shots, okay? Boom, boom,
reload. There are also a few more
9mm magazines in the the other
pocket.

SLINK
Oh, fuck yeah.

KACI
I need you to follow me out of here, okay. Cover the rear. I got the front.

SLINK
You think we can just walk out of here?

KACI
No. I don't think so at all. We need a hostage.

Kaci and Slink look around.

SLINK
I don't see too many people alive.

Kaci and Slink make their way out of the Sheriff's Department and into the parking lot.

EXT. SHERIFF STATION PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Far in the distance Sheriff's Cruisers continue to rush to the location of the officer involved shooting Chris reported.

KACI
Go get my truck and pull it over here.

Kaci tosses Slink her keys.

He sprints to the truck, starts it, peels out of a parking space, and stops in front of Kaci.

KACI
We gotta get to Charter Oak fast.

SLINK
I know. Let me see your phone.

Kaci hands Slink her phone.

Slink dials a number while speeding down gravel roads.

EXT. COUNTRY DIRT ROAD - AFTERNOON

Kaci holds tight.

EXT. CHARTER OAK GATE - AFTERNOON

Chris arrives at the gate of Charter Oak.

His phone rings.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED

SLINK
(into phone)
Chris! Where are you?

CHRIS
Hell, I'm just outside of the
gate. Where are you?

SLINK
Drive past the gate and park off
the road. Then walk across and go
to the camper.

CHRIS
What? You are breaking up? What?

SLINK
Do not go through gate! But get to
the camper and wait!

CHRIS
Wait at the camper?

SLINK
Yes! Jesus! Wait at the camper! I
will be there in ten minutes!

END INTERCUT

INT. KACI'S TRUCK - AFTERNOON

Slink hands Kaci her phone back.

SLINK
How bad are you hit?

Blood dampens her shirt.

KACI
My liver's shot.

Kaci retrieves flask and pours booze on wound, MOANS.

KACI
Aaron told me you guys had a plan
of some sorts.

SLINK
Well, yeah. Keep pressure on that.

KACI
He said something about a signal.

SLINK
I think he knows what he is doing.

KACI
That makes one of us.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. CHARTER OAK GATE - AFTERNOON

Chris drives past the gate.

He notices Aaron's truck at George's house.

He parks and exits the car, pockets gun and magazines, and
walks towards Aaron's camper.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

George and Sheriff Peterson sit at a table with a bottle of
moonshine.

GEORGE
This one's being bottled as we
speak by Lane and a fresh hand I
picked up the other day.

SHERIFF PETERSON
It's a good batch, George. They all
are, but I can't be having much
more with having to bring our
problem child up here in a bit.

GEORGE

Well, that'll work. There'll still be plenty for afterwards.

SHERIFF PETERSON

Who is the new hand?

GEORGE

Oh, it's Kaci's neph-

Sheriff Peterson's phone rings.

SHERIFF PETERSON

(into phone)

Peterson. What? The fuck did you just tell me? Where the fuck are they? They're gone? Gone fucking where?

Sheriff Peterson slams phone on table.

SHERIFF PETERSON

We have a big fucking problem.

INT. ABANDONED TRAILER - AFTERNOON

Aaron helps Lane stack the mason jars under the still.

LANE

I sure do appreciate you helping me, Aaron.

AARON

No problem, man.

LANE

It's not hard work, but it can be lonely, you know?

AARON

Are you lonely, Lane?

LANE

I can be, sometimes. But I have George to talk to and sometimes Sheriff Peterson comes by and that is fun.

AARON

Do you ever get out of Charter Oak?

LANE

Not usually, no. George says there's too many people for me to talk to out there.

AARON

Is George nice to you?

Lane busies himself screwing lids on jars.

AARON CONT'D

Does George ever make you do things that you do not want to do?

LANE

Not always.

AARON

But sometimes?

LANE

Sometimes, yes.

AARON

Do you ever want to get out of here and see something else? Like maybe the things you see on T.V.?

LANE

Yeah, sometimes, but George...

AARON

Let's not worry about George right now. And let's stop putting those lids on the jars, huh?

Lane looks at Aaron.

AARON CONT'D

Yeah, let's go to another still, come on. Then we can come back and finish all of them at once. Come on.

Lane looks at lidless jars, follows Aaron out of trailer.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

George loads a shotgun while Sheriff Peterson retrieves another handgun from the gun safe.

GEORGE

How the fuck did you let something like this happen?

SHERIFF PETERSON

Don't know how it happened, but I got a mind on how it's going to end.

GEORGE

And what's that? With him and that fucking Kaci running to the Feds, huh? Helicopters and shit surrounding my land!

SHERIFF PETERSON

Jesus, George! This isn't all about you--

GEORGE

--You're goddamn right it is! This is my life! And I'm not having some kid come and fuck up everything that I built on my own!

SHERIFF PETERSON

Fuck you George. My deputies are out there dead or dying! Fuck you!

Peterson storms to the door.

GEORGE

Where the fuck you going?

SHERIFF PETERSON

Your new hand has a role in all this, and I aim to find him and Lane!

Sheriff Peterson exits.

EXT. COUNTRY DIRT ROAD - AFTERNOON

Slink nears Charter Oak gate.

INT. KACI'S TRUCK - AFTERNOON

Slink keeps his eyes forward as Kaci scans the rear.

SLINK

You need to call Aaron and tell him we're almost here and that we'll be meeting Chris at the camper.

Kaci calls Aaron.

KACI

(into phone)

We'll be at the camper in five minutes. Okay.

Kaci hangs up.

SLINK

That was it? What the fuck?

KACI

He said he's working on the signal, he's almost done.

SLINK

Good.

KACI

At this point I'm just along for the ride.

SLINK

No, no you're not.

Kaci reaches into glove compartment and retrieves a flask.

She takes a long pull, passes it to Slink.

KACI

I'm already dead, hon. If I can take Peterson out with me I'd consider that a life well lived.

Slink takes a long pull.

EXT. CHARTER OAK ROAD - AFTERNOON

Sheriff Peterson drives looking for Aaron and Lane.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - AFTERNOON

Sheriff Peterson turns down the frantic voices of deputies returning to the blood-bath at the station blaring over his radio.

INT. ABANDONED TRAILER - AFTERNOON

Aaron and Lane finish emptying another still.

AARON

Hey Lane.

LANE

What's up?

AARON

We haven't really known each other that long, huh?

LANE

I guess not.

AARON

But you know I would never hurt you, right?

LANE

I never really thought you would.

AARON

Do you think Sheriff Peterson would hurt you?

LANE

Oh, no. Sheriff is nice. I don't think he would want to do something like that.

EXT. ABANDONED TRAILER - AFTERNOON

Sheriff Peterson stops behind George's truck.

INT. ABANDONED TRAILER - AFTERNOON

Aaron sees Sheriff Peterson stop and exit his cruiser.

AARON

Well, Sheriff Peterson and George are not good people. They are not

(MORE)

AARON (cont'd)
nice. If you want something more
than Charter Oak and moonshine you
can come with me to the city
later.

Aaron walks toward the back bedroom with a jar of moonshine.

Aaron bites and tears a piece of his shirt, jams it into the
moonshine, and retrieves a lighter.

EXT. ABANDONDED TRAILER - AFTERNOON

Sheriff Peterson approaches the door to the trailer.

SHERIFF PETERSON
Lane?! You in here working?

INT. ABANDONED TRAILER - AFTERNOON

Aaron waits by back window for Peterson to enter.

LANE
I'm in here, Sheriff!

AARON
Lane, these are not good people!
Come on! Get over here! Let's go!

LANE
I like the Sheriff. I like George.

Sheriff Peterson opens front door.

AARON
Come on, Lane! Last chance!

Aaron kicks out a back window, lights the rag in the
moonshine, and slams mason jar into lidless jars full of
liquor.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Aaron jumps out of back window.

The trailer explodes.

Peterson is thrown from front door.

Lane is blown through the window.

Aaron runs toward previous still.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

George hears EXPLOSION, looks out window.

GEORGE

God! I'm gonna kill them! Coming to
my property! Fuck! I'm going to
kill them all!

George runs out of his house with shotgun in hand and a
handgun holstered around his waist.

EXT. CAMPER AT CHARTER OAK - AFTERNOON

Chris hides behind the camper, loads magazine into 9mm.

CHRIS

There it is, man. There it the fuck
is.

EXT. CHARTER OAK GATE - AFTERNOON

Slink pulls up to gate, enters code, gate opens.

INT. KACI'S TRUCK - AFTERNOON

Kaci takes a pull from her flask, re-caps the lid, and puts
flask in her pocket.

KACI

I take it that was the signal.

SLINK

Hell of a signal. Let's go get
Chris.

KACI

Think we should go toward the
signal?

SLINK

Nah, he will lead them to the
camper. Hell, fuck if I know.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. CHARTER OAK - DUSK

Aaron arrives at first still, and firebombs the trailer.

George redirects course to new explosion.

Sheriff Peterson rises at the sound of the explosion.

Lane lies motionless outside the trailer.

EXT. CAMPER AT CHARTER OAK - DUSK

Slink and Kaci arrive at camper as the second explosion takes place.

SLINK

Chris! Chris! You out here? Where
the fuck are you?

Chris appears from behind the camper.

CHRIS

Jesus, Slink. What the fuck is
going on?

Kaci stumbles out of truck.

KACI

We're in the process of figuring
that out, hon.

CHRIS

Where is Aaron?

SLINK

Jesus, Chris! He's over there
somewhere blowing shit up!

CHRIS

I guess that works.

Slink throws Chris a lighter.

SLINK

Go down this road toward the lake.
Any abandoned camper you see, light
it on fire.

CHRIS
I can do that.

SLINK
Then loop around through the woods
and come back. Aaron's trying to
lure them in here.

CHRIS
I got it.

SLINK
Now get the fuck out of here.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. CHARTER OAK - DUSK

George cuts across road toward an abandoned trailer.

Aaron loops behind same trailer as George.

Aaron wraps a rag around a rock, lights the rag, and throws
it through the window of the trailer.

Chris begins setting fire to a camper five acreages away.

George intercepts Aaron's flight and raises shotgun at
Aaron.

George fires at Aaron as trailer explodes.

Aaron is struck in his right torso.

Peterson moves toward the sound of the shotgun blast.

Aaron struggles toward his camper.

George gains on Aaron.

Chris's camper explodes.

EXT. CHARTER OAK - DUSK

George, shotgun raised, narrows in on Aaron.

GEORGE
You stop your stupid fucking ass
right there.

Aaron continues to struggle toward the camper.

GEORGE
You looking for a closed casket?

AARON
Fuck you!

EXT. CHARTER OAK - DUSK

Sheriff Peterson moves toward George's VOICE.

EXT. BURNING TRAILER - DUSK

Lane rises, confused and shaken. He surveys the fires.

GEORGE (O.S)
Get your stupid ass up and show me
where the rest of the fuckers are!

Lane walks toward the sound of George's VOICE.

EXT. CHARTER OAK - DUSK

Chris HEARS George yell at Aaron, finishes setting another fire, then moves back to the camper where Slink and Kaci are positioned.

EXT. CAMPER AT CHARTER OAK - DUSK

Slink runs to Kaci's location on the other side of camper.

SLINK
I have a feeling Aaron will lead
George right down this road.

Kaci spits up a blood and bile mixture.

KACI
Where should I be?

SLINK
Stay back in that treeline about
twenty yards or so. Don't move
until I do.

KACI
What the fuck is that supposed to
mean?

SLINK

You're shot. Wait for Chris. He should be coming back from that direction.

KACI

Sit and wait?

SLINK

For right now.

Slink runs in the opposite direction from Kaci.

KACI

Fuck that shit.

EXT. CHARTER OAK ROAD - DUSK

George has shotgun at the back of Aaron's head.

Aaron leads George to the camper.

Fire and smoke engulf Charter Oak.

GEORGE

Where they at?

AARON

Who?

GEORGE

Whoever! I know you didn't blow up those stills over there.

AARON

I don't know anyone else out here!

GEORGE

Horseshit!

EXT. CHARTER OAK WOODS - DUSK

Peterson watches George lead Aaron down road.

Peterson steps out of the woods pointing handgun at George.

PETERSON

Why you gotta be such a fucking coward, George?

George clutches Aaron like a shield.

Aaron YELLS in pain.

GEORGE

You fucking piece of shit,
Peterson! Are you behind all of
this?!

PETERSON

I tend to think you're behind all
of this, George. All of everything
that goes down here seems to have
you at the goddamn center of it.

Kaci walks toward the road aiming at Peterson.

KACI

And you're one to talk, Peterson.

George shifts to aim his shotgun at both Peterson and Kaci.

Kaci aims 9mm at Peterson.

Peterson's handgun is fixed on George.

KACI

Let the kid go, George.

GEORGE

Hell no.

SHERIFF PETERSON

He's shot, you fuck! Let him go!
And why you got that thing pointed
at me, Kaci?

KACI

You know damn well why.

SHERIFF PETERSON

If I did I wouldn't be asking. That
thing should be pointed at George.
(to George) Let her nephew go!

KACI

In the last moments of your life,
you still won't tell the truth.

AARON

What the fuck is that supposed to
mean?

Slink sneaks away from road into woods, walks parallel to
road away from standoff.

GEORGE

Shut the fuck up! Everybody! Shut up! I'm in charge here! I'm in control!

KACI

A coward in control! Everybody look at the big-man boss! Holding kids as shields.

George shifts aim to Kaci.

GEORGE

Dammit Kaci! I'll kill you with this in a second.

KACI

I'm already dead.

SHERIFF PETERSON

We're all dead, honey. Why don't you just tell me why you want to kill me and not the person that started this whole shit-storm?

KACI

Why I want to kill you? I've wanted to rip your balls off and watch you bleed for close to two decades! Then you knock on my door with a dead deputy and ask for help staging his body!

SHERIFF PETERSON

That wasn't my doing. That's on George.

KACI

Oh, bullshit! Trying to pin it on someone else! You came to my house! George wasn't there.

SHERIFF PETERSON

George was here consoling Lane.

Slink approaches the action from behind George.

GEORGE

Shut up! Don't bring Lane into this!

SHERIFF PETERSON

Fuck you, George! I'm telling the truth!

KACI

Oh, now you want to tell the truth. I'm about to take your head off just to keep from hearing your voice.

Kaci coughs and spits out a blood mixture.

SHERIFF PETERSON

That kid's brother. The kid George wanted us to kill, the deputy I brought to your house, came over here one night on a tip that there might be some moonshinin' going on.

GEORGE

Shut the fuck up, Peterson...

SHERIFF PETERSON

...You shut the fuck up you coward-ass bitch! Fuck you! Anyway, Lane let him in. He found the stills, came to talk to George.

FLASHBACK - EXT./INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Paul knocks on George's front door.

Lane is beside the house in the shadows.

George opens the door.

GEORGE

Well, good evening deputy. Is everything alright?

PAUL

Yes, sir. Would you mind coming out here and speaking with me for a minute?

GEORGE

No problem.

George walks onto his porch, looks at Lane in the shadows.

PAUL

My name is Deputy Nichols with the County Sheriff's Department. And I need to ask you a few questions about these abandoned trailers around here.

GEORGE

Well, those are abandoned, sir.

PAUL

I'm afraid they are not. Do you know what is in them?

GEORGE

I have no idea, sir. I keep to myself.

PAUL

Alright, well, go ahead and place your hands behind your back. I'm just detaining you until my backup arrives and we can gather some more information.

George turns around, places hands behind his back.

GEORGE

Lane! Lane! Choke! Now!

PAUL

Calm down, sir. If you cooperate we can have you on your way.

GEORGE

Lane! What the fuck! Choke! Now!

Lane jumps from the shadows behind Paul as Paul is retrieving his handcuffs.

Lane places Paul in a chokehold from behind.

George secures Paul's arms with a bear hug.

Paul struggles until Lane strangles him to death.

PRESENT DAY - EXT. CHARTER OAK ROAD - DUSK

Slink approaches George from the back and side and places the shotgun barrel behind George's ear.

SLINK

Let Aaron go.

George stiffens, releases Aaron.

GEORGE

Easy now, son. No need to do something you will regret for the rest of your life.

SLINK

You killed my brother. Then you killed the reporter. For what?

GEORGE

None of this is true, son!

Slink cocks the shotgun.

SLINK

I asked you why you're killing people. You wanted to kill me, too. Why?

GEORGE

I didn't kill no one!

SLINK

The sauce got you a wet brain, old timer. Thinking you can kill yourself clean.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXXT. CHARTER OAK - DUSK

Slink looks at Kaci and Sheriff Peterson.

Kaci focuses on Sheriff Peterson.

Sheriff Peterson HEARS a RUSTLE in the woods behind him.

Lane appears, burnt and disorientated.

Lane grabs a large log, watches, and waits.

SHERIFF PETERSON

Get out of here Lane!

GEORGE
Lane! Get out! Go!

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. CHARTER OAK - DUSK

Slink shoots George in the head.

Sheriff Peterson aims, fires at Kaci.

Kaci fires and shoots Sheriff Peterson.

Kaci falls to the ground.

Lane rushes Slink.

Slink cocks shotgun, pulls trigger.

Shotgun dry fires, out of shells.

EXT. CHARTER OAK ROAD - DUSK

Chris runs from opposite side with the 9mm aimed at Lane.

CHRIS
Get down! Get the fuck down!

Slink dives.

Chris unloads magazine at Lane.

Lane falls.

EXT. CHARTER OAK ROAD - DUSK

Aaron stands.

AARON
Jesus, Chris! The hell did you come
from!

CHRIS
You alright, Slink?

Slink rolls over, MOANS.

SLINK
I think I'm good.

AARON
Jesus Christ! Not the way I had
envisioned at all!

KACI
Am I dead?

Aaron moves over to Kaci, checks for wounds.

Blood dribbles from Kaci's mouth.

AARON
Not dead yet, Kaci. But you're not
getting any farther away.

CHRIS
Did I kill him?

Slink crawls over to Lane, checks pulse.

Lane MOANS.

SLINK
No, man. I think he is scared
shitless, though.

LANE
What happened? George?

Aaron moves near Lane.

AARON
It's me, okay? George and Sheriff
Peterson are dead. And we need you
to help us load up the bodies.

LANE
What happened, Aaron? We were
bottling and then it all went
black!

Slink, Chris and Aaron struggle dragging George's body to the
bed of the truck.

Lane stands, and heaves Sheriff Peterson's body into the bed
with ease.

Aaron helps Kaci into the cab.

KACI
I'm sorry, Aaron. I'm sorry for
everything. I should have told you.

AARON
It's okay. Everything is going to
be alright.

Aunt Kaci dies.

Aaron gets behind the wheel. Slink and Chris jump in the
bed.

INT./EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DUSK

Slink, Chris, Aaron and Lane drag the bodies into the living
room.

AARON
Slink, go in the garage and get all
the gas you can find. Chris, get
all the moonshine out of the
cabinets.

Slink exits.

CHRIS
I can't believe this shit! We are
done. So done.

AARON
Shut up Chris and focus. Pour that
shit all over the place.

Slink returns with gas.

AARON CONT'D
You too, Slink. Douse this place.

Slink and Chris saturate the interior with gas and
moonshine.

Aaron takes a jar of moonshine. All three exit the house.

EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DUSK

Aaron assembles a Molotov cocktail with the moonshine jar.

LANE
You gonna burn down my house,
Aaron?

AARON

That's what I think needs to be done.

LANE

Well, where am I gonna go?

AARON

You can come home with me, Lane. Come over and hang with buddy Aaron for a bit, huh?

LANE

Okay. Do you live far away?

AARON

I live pretty close.

LANE

Okay.

Aaron hands Slink the mason jar.

AARON

Here you go, man.

Slink lights the rag, throws jar into house. The house erupts.

SLINK

A lot of shady shit goes on at Charter Oak, huh?

AARON

Yeah, and aside from you, no one really asks any questions.

Slink laughs.

FADE OUT