

ABOVE JUSTICE

By

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ABOVE JUSTICE

FADE IN:

EXT. LAKE HARRIET, MINNEAPOLIS, MN [FEBRUARY 12, 2001] - DAY

Above snow-swept Lakewood Cemetery, SEAGULL glides toward and then above Lake Harriet's forested Bird Sanctuary, then above the ice-coated shoreline's castle-shaped Concert Pavilion.

Above the venerable mansions that encircle Lake Harriet, Seagull arcs toward the distant Minneapolis city skyline.

Above the tall lampposts lacing Lake Harriet's shoreline and its snow-swept pedestrian pathway, Seagull swoops southwest, above the puffing rooftop chimneys of posh residential homes.

EXT. XERXES CORNERS' INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS SCENE - DAY

SEAGULL descends and perches upon a tall street-corner sign, above cars parked in front of the antique shops that extend from the four corners of 50th Street and Xerxes Avenue.

PAUL (age 60) wearing a gray jacket and pressed gray slacks, slogs across Xerxes Avenue, toward an antique shop facing 50th Street, Paul cradling in his arms a manila envelope and a bouquet of red roses.

The 50th Street stoplight turns from yellow to red.

A 2001 Ford Crown Victoria speeds through the intersection's red light and SPLATTERS cold slush upon Paul's gray slacks and the slippery street's pavement.

A HONKING 2001 Buick, motoring south on Xerxes Avenue, slides within the intersection, narrowly missing Paul and avoiding a collision with the Ford Crown Victoria. And a Minneapolis city bus SCREECHES to a sudden stop at the intersection.

Paul trudges on, toward the antique shop's recessed entrance.

But upon confronting the shop's glass door, Paul hesitates.

His eyes fixate upon the floor inside the shop's glass door.

Paul inhales and exhales deep breaths, nudges the door open, and again pauses as the shop's door chimes RING.

Before entering the shop, Paul shakes sloppy slush from the soles of his splattered shoes, and then meticulously steps lightly upon the antique shop's varnished wooden floor.

INT. ANTIQUE SHOP - DAY

To PAUL'S right, the shop's large plate-glass window displays antique picture frames.

And to Paul's left, a brick flower planter extends 14 feet forward, waist-high, filled with dusty plastic daisies.

Paul rests his bouquet of roses amidst the dusty daisies.

Withdrawing one red rose from his bouquet, Paul kisses rose, kneels, and gently places rose upon shop's floor, near door.

Paul stands, marches seven paces to the end of the narrow passageway, executes an about-face turn, and again kneels.

Tucking his manila envelope between his torso and left arm, Paul folds his hands, gazes at rose resting upon the floor, and moves his lips in silent prayer.

Paul stands, lumbers toward ELDERLY WOMAN hunched over her shop's countertop, her bemused and kind eyes surveying Paul, her right hand resting upon her antique cash register.

ELDERLY WOMAN  
Those roses for Valentine's Day?

PAUL  
No. For this day.

ELDERLY WOMAN  
For Abraham Lincoln's birthday?

Paul slides his manila envelope upon her countertop.

Paul turns and meanders toward the antique picture frames displayed inside the shop's plate-glass window.

Clasping a mahogany picture frame, Paul caresses it, and with the frame secured in his hands, he strolls to his bouquet of roses resting upon the waist-high brick flower planter.

Paul withdraws a rose from the bouquet, ambles toward the elderly woman, and offers her the rose.

Paul's eyes move from the red rose held in the woman's hands, and gaze up at the shop's plaster ceiling.

Paul squints at a tiny round hole in the ceiling, directly above her head, heaves a deep sigh, and closes his eyes.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM [35 YEARS AGO, JANUARY 1966] - NIGHT

Seated side-by-side at mahogany baby-grand piano's keyboard, a vase of red roses atop the piano's closed lid, PAUL, now at age 24, and OSCAR, age 45, both SING the climactic chorus of "Old Man River."

Log embers glow within the nearby fireplace.

Oscar SUSTAINS THE LAST CHORD of "Old Man River" and then he rests his left hand upon Paul's right shoulder.

OSCAR

Now how 'bout moon river? Before ya  
phone Hayley. To let her know when  
you're drivin' back home tonight.

Oscar and Paul begin SINGING "Moon River."

INT. OSCAR'S LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

OSCAR PLAYS "Blowin' in the Wind" on piano while PAUL stands before a tall mahogany bookcase shelf, Paul admiring an old framed family photograph:

Paul, at age 10, seated before fireplace next to his brother Boris at age 8, sisters Sybil and Matilda, at ages 5 and 4; his infant brother Rick at age 1 held in the arms of Oscar, he at age 30, seated next to Paul's mother Mary, at age 30.

An antique mahogany clock atop fireplace mantle BONGS SOFTLY.

PAUL

Best be headin' back now. Eight  
o'clock class tomorrow morning.

OSCAR

What's that class for?

PAUL

For when I start teaching kids in  
September. Unless Uncle Sam wants  
me to be killing kids in Vietnam.

OSCAR

So how's it goin'? Gonna ace it?

PAUL

Doubt it. Had an embarrassing brain  
fart in the classroom last week.

OSCAR

Brain fart?

PAUL

When the professor was lecturing.  
On how to create a valid test.

OSCAR

So what's a valid test?

PAUL

He said a valid test only contains  
questions students should know how  
to answer. And no trick questions.

OSCAR

Makes sense.

PAUL

But dumb me. Raises my hand. And  
asks for an example. Of a question  
everyone should know how to answer.

OSCAR

And that embarrassed you?

PAUL

He said an American history test  
could contain a question asking  
what Abraham Lincoln's birthday is.

OSCAR

So what embarrassed you?

PAUL

Told him I don't know Lincoln's  
birthday. Then everybody in the  
class all roared February twelve.

OSCAR

(laughing)

Oh. By the way. Rick's birthday?  
It's next week. January twenty-two.  
Gonna be fifteen. How 'bout that?

PAUL

You givin' Rick that expensive  
target pistol he's always beggin'  
you for? That pistol Rick wanted  
you to give him for Christmas?

OSCAR

(raising hands above head)

A deadly pistol in your mom's  
house? No way Jose.

PAUL

Rick's gonna be ticked off at you.  
He said all his buddies have them.

OSCAR

Just givin' him a pellet pistol.

Oscar's fingers passionately PLAY "Blowin' in the Wind."

Paul shifts his gaze from the old framed family photo toward Oscar's framed Water Safety Instructor Certificate.

Paul admires more framed photos resting upon the bookshelf:

A framed photo of Paul's family sitting around a campfire,  
their three camp tents pitched beside a riverbank.

And a framed photo of Oscar wearing a scoutmaster uniform,  
proudly standing with his boy scouts next to riverbank.

And a framed photo of an attractive 35-year-old woman holding  
hands with Oscar, the two smiling and standing beside the  
paddlewheel of a double-decker riverboat docked behind them.

PAUL

How's Patricia feeling? Been months  
since I've been in touch with her.

OSCAR

Keeps askin' me to marry her.

PAUL

But isn't it the right thing to  
marry Patricia now? Now that you  
and Mom are no longer married?

OSCAR

(SLAMMING piano keys)  
You sound like a god damn Puritan.  
Patricia and me? We've never ever  
needed to get married.

Paul grabs coat, ambles over to Oscar seated at piano bench,  
stands behind Oscar, and gently rubs Oscar's shoulders.

PAUL

So what's the plan for Rick's  
fifteenth birthday party? Will it  
be held at Mom's new house?

OSCAR

Of course. Where else? And what ya  
gonna give Rick for his birthday?

Paul reaches into his shirt pocket, withdraws a baseball trading card, and shows it to Oscar.

PAUL  
This autographed Harmon Killebrew baseball card. How 'bout that?

OSCAR  
Grand. And I got us box-seats for the Twins' home opener this April. Rick. Your brother Boris. You. Me. For all four of us together.

PAUL  
Too bad they didn't win the World Series last year. See ya later Dad.

OSCAR  
Later gator. And Paul? Keep on knockin' 'em dead down in Mankato.

Oscar continues PLAYING "Blowin' in the Wind" on his piano.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT/EXT. HIGHWAY 169 - NIGHT

Behind steering wheel of his rusted 1950 Chevy, driving in a snow-swept blizzard, PAUL tries passing a 1965 Buick.

Paul swerves back behind the Buick's tail lights, avoiding a collision with an oncoming sedan packed full of TEENAGERS.

Driving behind tail lights of Buick, Paul squints at road sign: HIGHWAY 169. And another road sign: MANKATO 80 MILES.

Paul turns on Chevy's radio . . .

SUGGESTED SOUND-OVER: "LAST OF THE SILVER SCREEN COWBOYS" SUNG by Rex Allen Jr.

The blizzard's intensity increases, and as the tail lights of Buick grow blurry, Paul steers Chevy into highway rest stop.

Paul turns off the FLAPPING windshield wipers, hunkers down, and closes his eyes.

Paul drifts into a dream as "Last of the Silver Screen Cowboys" continues PLAYING . . .

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. FAMILY DINING ROOM [JUNE 1946] - DAY

PAUL, now at age 5, sits at dining-room table with brother BORIS, age 3, sister SYBIL, age 1, Sybil squirming in high chair between mother MARY and father OSCAR, both at age 25.

Paul makes a wish, blows out the five candles on his birthday cake, and rips away gift paper wrapping his birthday present:

Two toy Roy Rogers cap pistols within their leather holsters.

EXT. BACK YARD OF TWO-STORY HOME [JUNE 1946] - DAY

Wearing Roy Rogers jacket, cowboy hat, and Roy Rogers cowboy boots, five-year-old PAUL struts about his back yard, his two toy Roy Rogers cap pistols within two holsters on his hips.

Paul draws his two cap pistols and BLASTS them at SQUIRREL scampering up a tree trunk.

DISSOLVE FORWARD TO:

INT/EXT. FIVE & DIME STORE [JUNE 1951] - DAY

PAUL, now at age 10, wanders down aisle in five & dime shop.

Wooden Duncan yo-yos displayed on his left, toy cap pistols displayed on his right, Paul grasps a Stallion 45 cap pistol, and looks up at the expensive pistol's promotional poster:

"An exact replica of the Colt 45 that won the west."

Paul opens the cap pistol's revolving cylinder containing six toy bullets.

Paul extracts one toy bullet, and discovers the shell casing of the toy bullet can contain a single cap.

Paul slides the toy bullet back into Stallion 45's cylinder.

Paul glances at female CLERK helping female CUSTOMER.

Paul surreptitiously tucks the Stallion 45 inside his jacket and sneaks toward the front door of the five & dime shop.

Paul bolts from the five & dime shop's doorway, onto sidewalk of Xerxes Avenue.

Paul raises the Stallion 45 cap pistol above his head and dashes toward the nearby intersection of Xerxes Corners.

INT/EXT. BEDROOM WITH BUNK BED AND BABY CRIB - LATER SAME DAY

PAUL opens his bedroom's closet, pulls Stallion 45 cap pistol from old scuffed Roy Rogers cowboy boot.

Paul swaggers to window overlooking back yard.

Paul aims his cap pistol at anything that moves: squirrels, birds, a 1951 Ford pulling into the garage behind his house.

Paul's father, OSCAR, now at age 30, emerges from garage, cradling a watermelon in his arms.

Paul aims cap pistol at Oscar, BLASTS cap pistol four times.

Baby RICK, asleep in his crib, awakens and starts CRYING.

EXT. ALLEY TRASH CAN BEHIND GARAGE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Standing behind his family's garage, PAUL opens the lid of alley trash can, hurls the Stallion 45 into the trash can, and SLAMS the lid shut.

DISSOLVE FORWARD TO:

INT. FAMILY DINING ROOM [JANUARY 1956] - DAY

RICK, now at age 5, sits at dining-room table with brother PAUL, now at age 14, his other brother, BORIS, now at age 12, his sister SYBIL, now at age 10, his sister MATILDA, now at age 9, his mother MARY and father OSCAR, both now at age 35.

Rick makes a wish, blows out five candles on birthday cake.

Paul hands Rick a present and Rick rips off wrapping paper:

Two Roy Rogers cap pistols within their two leather holsters.

The same Roy Rogers cap pistols and holsters Paul was given for Paul's fifth birthday.

WIPE TO:

EXT. CAMPUS CHAPEL [TEN YEARS LATER, JANUARY 1966] - NIGHT

PAUL, now again at age 24, trudges through drifting snow, toward the lighted globe upon a lamppost illuminating a narrow walk-bridge spanning a moat in front of a chapel door.

Sign above entrance: Campus Lutheran Chapel.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

LUTHERAN PASTOR seated at a conference table with PAUL and SEVERAL COLLEGE STUDENTS, each holding a Holy Bible.

PASTOR

Thanks again. For you all taking time from your college studies to attend our Bible class tonight.

PAUL

Always enjoy being here with you. But I've a confession I must make.

PASTOR

Confession Paul? About what?

PAUL

About God's justification for our creation and existence. To be empathetic? To be compassionate? I've a problem with that.

PASTOR

Problem?

Paul rubs the leather cover of his Bible.

PAUL

How can I empathize with someone's pain if I've never experienced it?

PASTOR

Well that's how the Bible helps. And Greek tragedies like Oedipus Rex. And Shakespeare's Hamlet.

PAUL

But they only give us vicarious experiences. Until I experience the death of someone in my own family? I doubt I can fully empathize with anyone who's lost a family member. Sorry. But I'm afraid that's a valid fact.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

HAYLEY, age 24, slumbers beside PAUL in their bed.

Paul, hands folded, squints up toward the bedroom ceiling.

PAUL  
(whispering)  
And also forgive us our trespasses.  
As we forgive those who trespass  
against us. Thine's the kingdom.  
And the power. Forever.

Paul closes his eyes and drifts into dreaming. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OSCAR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

OSCAR sleeps in a twin bed while PAUL sleeps in a twin bed on the other side of the bedroom, a lamp on table dimly lighted.

Bedroom window slides open.

TWO MASKED TEENAGE LADS slide through window, each carrying a pillowcase in their left hands and in their right hands big Browning Marksman Medalist target pistols.

As the two lads tiptoe in bedroom, one bumps into lamp table.

And tipping the lamp from table, the light bulb EXPLODES.

Oscar, all of six-feet and 200 muscular pounds, bounds up from his bed.

Confronting the two teenage lads, his right fist clenched, Oscar points his left hand toward the open window.

Paul, his eyes now wide open, looks up at Oscar, grasps the blanket on his bed, and pulls the blanket to his chin.

OSCAR  
Boys? Leave my home. Now.

Both lads point their pistols at Oscar, and Oscar, crouched only three feet from them, swivels and kicks pistol from one lad's hand, and then kicks pistol from the other lad's hand.

Oscar clasps the teenage lads by the back of their necks, hurls each lad out open window, glances over toward Paul cowering beneath his blanket, and then SLAMS window shut.

INT. PAUL AND HAYLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

PAUL jolts up from his dream, SHOUTING and waking HAYLEY.

HAYLEY  
Nightmare?

PAUL

Dreamed I stayed overnight. In  
Minneapolis. Up at Dad's house.  
'Stead of driving back home. In  
that blizzard the other night.

HAYLEY

And?

PAUL

We talked baseball. Until midnight.  
And goin' to the Twins' home opener  
this April with Rick and Boris.

HAYLEY

Doesn't sound like a bad dream.

PAUL

Was like a dream within a dream.  
Dreamed we fell asleep. Then  
dreamed how two teenage burglars.  
With pistols. Both slipped through  
Dad's bedroom window. Oh forget it.  
You had to be there.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

PAUL wanders among stacks of matching six-piece bathroom  
towel sets displayed in department store's narrow aisle.

Paul grabs two large matching blue bath towels, two blue  
matching hand towels, and two blue matching wash cloths.

Paul strides toward checkout counter.

Female CASHIER frowns at her female CUSTOMER, the angry  
Customer pointing and jabbing a finger at her sales receipt.

Paul spreads two wash cloths flat upon Cashier's countertop.

Paul spreads two hand towels flat upon the two wash cloths.

Paul spreads two large bath towels upon the two hand towels.

Paul slides the entire matching set toward the distracted  
Cashier, the entire six-piece set now appearing to be only  
one large plush bath towel spread out upon the countertop.

Paul removes the paper price tag pinned on the top bath towel  
and hands the bath towel's price tag to distracted Cashier.

Paul grabs the handle of a huge shopping bag, SNAPS it open.

Paul slides from countertop the stacked two bath towels, two hand towels, and two wash cloths, all concealed beneath the top large bath towel, all into the huge shopping bag.

Paul hands Cashier a crisp new five-dollar bill.

Cashier glances at the large bath towel's paper price tag, PUNCHES keys on her cash register, RINGS up cash register, hands Paul change and his receipt, and then turns to again confront her agitated female Customer.

Paul clasps receipt and shopping bag containing the matched six-piece towel set, and hustles toward the store's door.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

HAYLEY enters bathroom while PAUL stands before towel racks, admiring new matching set of blue bath towels, hand towels, and wash cloths.

HAYLEY

How in the world did you buy such  
an expensive set of bath towels?  
You know we can't afford these now.  
Maybe you can take them back?

PAUL

No way. They were a steal. Today's  
an Abraham Lincoln birthday sale.  
And when Howie and Carol show up  
for dinner tonight? They'll be  
impressed. They always have a  
matching set in their bathroom.

Hayley caresses the plush fabric of the hand towels.

HAYLEY

Did you call your dad to tell him  
we can't drive up to Minneapolis as  
he had hoped? Because we're having  
company for dinner tonight?

PAUL

He's not answering his phone. Maybe  
he's over at Patricia's apartment.  
But we don't have her phone number.

HAYLEY

And you haven't taken our trash  
bags to the dump. So get with it.

Hayley pulls one of the large bath towels from towel rack, furls it, and SNAPS it at Paul's butt.

INT/EXT. HIGHWAY 169 - DAY

Driving his 1950 Chevy alongside the western bank of the Minnesota River, trash bags stuffed on Chevy's back seat, PAUL glances at two road signs:

MANKATO CITY DUMP 3 MILES. MINNEAPOLIS 80 MILES.

Paul turns on the Chevy's radio. . .

SUGGESTED SOUND-OVER: "GHOST RIDERS IN THE SKY" SUNG BY Vaughn Monroe.

Paul gazes into the Chevy's rearview mirror and perceives a ghostly APPARITION OF OSCAR, seated in the Chevy's back seat amidst the trash bags.

Oscar glares at Paul, reaches forward, and SLAPS his left hand on Paul's right shoulder.

OSCAR

Why in blazes didn't ya pay her the full amount for that full bath set?  
Did I raise you to become a damn shoplifter? And you expect me to forgive you? Just cuz I always do?

Paul speeds past the Mankato City Dump Sign and continues on up Highway 169, cumulous clouds expanding on horizon as they mushroom higher and higher into the azure blue winter sky.

Paul glances at a Highway Sign: ST. PETER 10 MILES; slaps his forehead, and makes a U-turn.

WIPE TO:

EXT. LAKE HARRIET SHORELINE [35 YEARS LATER, JUNE 2001] - DAY

PAUL and HAYLEY, both now at age 60, sit side-by-side at a lake-side picnic table, each holding popcorn boxes.

JOGGERS stride past them, below a row of lampposts lining the pedestrian pathway alongside residential Lake Harriet's shoreline, the flags atop the castle-shaped Concert Pavilion blowing in the wind.

Paul and Hayley toss some popcorn to SEAGULL perched upon a park bench near their picnic table.

BUD BONN (age 55) wearing a police uniform with sergeant chevrons on his sleeves, strolls past Paul and Hayley, turns, pauses, and faces Paul.

BONN

Paul? Haven't seen you for years.  
How you doing? Still helping your  
clients advance their careers?

PAUL

Hey Bud. Bud? My wife Hayley.  
Hayley? Bud Bonn. Please join us.

BONN

Your husband wrote me my resume.  
Years ago. And that resume helped  
me get my promotion. To sergeant  
with the Minneapolis Park Police.

(beat)

By the way Paul. Did our homicide  
detectives ever get the teenage  
lads who murdered your father?

Paul turns his back to Sergeant Bonn, and gazes up at Seagull  
now perched upon the globe of a nearby lamppost.

Seagull CRIES OUT above joggers running past the lamppost.

PAUL

No Bud. Plus they never found my  
missing brother. Rick.

BONN

How old was Rick when he vanished?

PAUL

Twenty-one. After getting his share  
of money from our father's estate.

BONN

And Rick was only a teenager when  
your father was murdered? Right?

PAUL

Rick had just turned fifteen.

BONN

Why you suppose Rick disappeared  
after he turned twenty-one?

PAUL

After he got his share of our dad's  
estate I encouraged him to take off  
for awhile. Like maybe go west.  
Rick's been gone thirty years now.  
And's been thirty-five years now  
since our dad was murdered.

BONN

Murdered by teenage boys holding up  
a lady. Holding her at gunpoint. A  
grocery shop's cashier. Right?

PAUL

Was front-page headline in the next  
day's Minneapolis Sunday newspaper.

BONN

Did you take the advice I gave you?  
To talk with detectives about what  
they did to try to apprehend the  
teenagers who murdered your father?

PAUL

(turning toward Bonn)

Look Bud. The mayor awarded my  
father a posthumous medal of valor.  
For trying to protect neighbors.  
And the female cashier. So I figure  
the Minneapolis homicide detectives  
did the best they could.

HAYLEY

Paul has a way of not confronting  
the old mysteries. I think he just  
tries to shut them out of his mind.

Paul looks toward mallard ducks wobbling about on ground near  
picnic table, and tosses some popcorn to them.

BONN

Know what I think?

HAYLEY

What?

BONN

I think you both can solve the  
mystery of who murdered Paul's  
father. And you both can discover  
what happened to Rick.

PAUL

What makes you think I really want  
to discover who killed my father?  
And discover why Rick vanished?

BONN

You saying you might not like what  
you might discover?

PAUL

Rick may have vanished for reasons  
he never wanted me to know. Maybe  
secrets he never wanted me to know.

Paul gazes up at Seagull perched upon lamppost.

BONN

You ever suspected Rick knew the  
teenage boys who murdered your  
father? Have you ever suspected  
they may have later killed Rick?  
Afraid he'd eventually tell police?

PAUL

Look. I've spent thirty-five years  
trying to forgive whoever murdered  
my father. And thirty years trying  
to forgive Rick for vanishing. And  
also trying to forgive myself.

BONN

Forgive yourself? For what?

PAUL

For whatever I may have done to  
make Rick split and never return.

HAYLEY

How you figure we can find out who  
murdered Paul's father? And Paul's  
sister Sybil? She hired private  
detectives who couldn't find Rick.

BONN

By doing a complete investigation.

PAUL

But who's to say Minneapolis police  
didn't do a complete investigation?  
And all the private detectives my  
sister Sybil hired to locate Rick?

BONN

Who's to say they did? Tell me.  
What you doing these days? Still  
working as a career counselor?

PAUL

Yes.

BONN

Do you and Hayley ever have ten  
hours a week to spare?

PAUL  
Sometimes.

BONN  
I'm not assigned to the Minneapolis Homicide Unit. But with my guidance and with Hayley's help? You can do what's not been done.

PAUL  
So what's not been done?

BONN  
What's yet to be achieved. Justice.

PAUL  
Justice can't bring my father back. And the night my father was killed? The lights went out. You know what?

BONN  
What?

Paul crumples his popcorn box.

Paul stands, looks down at Sergeant Bonn seated on other side of picnic table, looks up at Seagull perched above them atop lamppost globe.

PAUL  
Last thing my father would have wanted is the lives of two teenage boys ruined forever. And for them? Prison woulda probably only become a college for crime.

Hayley stands, turns, and confronts Paul.

HAYLEY  
But I believe in justice. And I say it's now high time that you stopped procrastinating Paul. And so. Bud? Tell us. What's our first step?

EXT/INT. MINNEAPOLIS CITY HALL - DAY

PAUL and HAYLEY cross street to the Minneapolis City Hall.

Entering City Hall's vast majestic marble atrium, they pace toward the marble staircase, pause in the middle of the atrium, and admire the tall massive marble STATUE of the FATHER OF WATERS.

INT. HOMICIDE UNIT'S LOBBY - DAY

PAUL and HAYLEY sit in the lobby of the Minneapolis Police Department's Homicide Unit, near female RECEPTIONIST, as she, seated behind a bullet-proof window, hangs up her telephone, and slides a microphone toward her.

RECEPTIONIST

Sergeant White. Said he's on his way now to meet with you.

HAYLEY

(clasping Paul's hand)

Ready for this?

PAUL

Look. We're only doing what Bud Bonn advised us to do. But really? What good is this gonna do?

Interior door of the Homicide Unit's lobby opens and SERGEANT WHITE appears, holding a file folder.

SGT. WHITE

Mister and Misses Johnson? Sergeant White. I've a room we can meet in.

Hayley reaches into her large handbag, SNAPS on a concealed portable tape recorder, then offers her hand to Paul, as he reluctantly rises and follows her toward Sergeant White.

INT. SMALL ROOM WITH ROUND TABLE AND CHAIRS - DAY

SERGEANT WHITE sits down at table with PAUL and HAYLEY.

SGT. WHITE

Took awhile. But finally found the case file. Stashed way up in our clock tower's archives. We didn't have computers back in 1966.

PAUL

That the case file?

SGT. WHITE

Every document in this file was typed by detectives. On old manual typewriters. I've looked through their reports and . . .

(beat)

Not sure how to say this.

PAUL  
There a problem?

SGT. WHITE  
I'll just say your father's murder  
was not investigated the way we  
investigate homicide cases today.

PAUL  
What do you mean?

SGT. WHITE  
First one detective typed a report.  
And another typed up a report. And  
then another typed one. Then later  
other detectives typed reports.

PAUL  
So? And then?

Sergeant White raises his hands over his head.

SGT. WHITE  
And then by June of 1966 there's no  
more reports. And nobody seemed to  
be supervising the case.

HAYLEY  
What can you tell us about what  
happened that night?

SGT. WHITE  
Paul's father was simply at the  
wrong place. At the wrong time.

PAUL  
About all we know is what the  
Minneapolis newspaper stories  
reported. We were living down in  
Mankato back in 1966.

SGT. WHITE  
How much time you have?

HAYLEY  
We took today off.

SGT. WHITE  
I'll get you coffee. And leave you  
here with the case file. Okay?

HAYLEY  
May we read it?

SGT. WHITE  
Who knows? You might discover  
something that helps. Or maybe  
discover something interesting.

PAUL  
Like what?

SGT. WHITE  
Don't know. Maybe a familiar name?  
Maybe an important fact. You might  
find it interesting how one of the  
teenage suspects was the son of a  
Minneapolis police officer.

HAYLEY  
You saying a son of a cop was one  
of the murder suspects?

SGT. WHITE  
Let me get you some coffee.

As Sergeant White departs, Hayley opens the case file folder.

Paul looks away from the folder, RAPS his fingers upon table,  
and gazes up toward the ceiling.

Hayley pulls a notebook and pen from her handbag.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAME SMALL CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

PAUL and HAYLEY sit side by side at table, as Hayley examines  
a page in the case file and scribbles in her notebook.

SERGEANT WHITE cracks open door, peeks into the room, enters,  
and hands steaming coffee cups to Paul and Hayley.

SGT. WHITE  
How's it going?

HAYLEY  
Not even half done reading this.

SGT. WHITE  
I'll run a copy for you. To take  
home. If anything's in there you  
want to talk about? Give me a call.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAME CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

SERGEANT WHITE enters room, hands PAUL a file folder.

Paul hands the file folder to HAYLEY.

SGT. WHITE

Paul? Have you ever felt Rick's  
disappearing had anything to do  
with your dad's murder?

PAUL

Rick eventually told my sisters he  
was behind the Food Haven grocery  
shop when it happened. But Rick  
refused to ever again talk anymore  
about it with Sybil and Matilda.

Sergeant White removes his glasses and squints at Paul.

SGT. WHITE

When did Rick tell your sisters he  
was behind Food Haven when your  
father was murdered?

PAUL

Couple years after our father was  
murdered. When Rick was a high  
school senior.

(beat)

When I was in the Air Force. During  
the Vietnam War.

HAYLEY

Paul's sisters always felt Rick  
might have somehow been involved in  
killing his father. Or they felt he  
may have known who murdered him.

PAUL

And even as far back to when Rick  
came home that Saturday night.

SGT. WHITE

The night your father was murdered?

PAUL

On their way to a party that night  
Matilda and Sybil drove past Food  
Haven. Past the ambulance. And the  
flashing lights of cop cars. But  
they didn't know it was our father  
who had been shot and killed.

SGT. WHITE  
How'd they find out?

PAUL  
On the late-night TV news. While  
they were attending the party they  
were at that night.

SGT. WHITE  
Oh me. Oh my!

PAUL  
And when Hayley and I arrived at my  
mom's home from Mankato that night?  
Rick sat all alone. In a corner of  
Mom's living room. Like an island.  
Not saying a word. Not one word.

HAYLEY  
And the next morning Rick just sat  
alone in his bedroom. Playing a  
song on his record player. Playing  
the song over and over again.  
A Paul Simon song. A depressing  
song. A song called I am a rock.

SGT. WHITE  
There's no mention in the case file  
of any police investigators ever  
interviewing Paul's family. Not  
even Rick. Take it home. Read it.

White hands Paul his card and also gives his card to Hayley.

Hayley slips White's card into her large handbag and SNAPS  
off the portable tape recorder concealed within her handbag.

SGT. WHITE (CONT'D)  
There's a possibility I may no  
longer be assigned to the Homicide  
Unit. If so? Just phone my boss.  
Lieutenant Skanko.

INT. PAUL AND HAYLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

PAUL, clad in prison-striped pajamas, in bed with HAYLEY  
sleeping beside him, turns the last page within the case  
file, closes the folder, RAPS his fingers upon the folder.

Paul SLAMS folder on night stand, fluffs his pillow, SNAPS,  
off lamp on night stand, and drifts into a dream ...

INT. MALT SHOP - CONTINUOUS DREAM SCENE - NIGHT

MANNY, VINCE, NEAL, EARL and RICK, all teenage lads, seated in malt-shop booth, all wearing Navy pea coats, Navy knit caps, and gray knit scarves furled around their shoulders, all munching their French fries and sipping their malts.

RICK

No way gonna trade my autographed Harmon Killebrew card. No way Jose. My brother Paul gave it to me. Only a few weeks ago. For my birthday.

MANNY

But how 'bout you trading it for my signed Sandy Koufax card?

RICK

Killebrew's way more valuable. The Twins never woulda won the pennant last year without The Killer.

MANNY

But Koufax shut down The Killer and the Twins. In the seventh game of the World Series last year.

Earl dips straw into cherry malt, sucks straw, wipes lips.

EARL

Manny? Killebrew's Rick's hero. So no way Rick's ever gonna give up The Killer.

(laughing)

Not even for your Sandy Kotex.

NEAL

For sure Earl. Nobody hits homers farther than The Killer.

VINCE

Right on man. The Killer blasted a home run over Tiger Stadium's roof.

Rick waves a ketchup smeared French fry at Manny and Earl and Neal and Vince.

RICK

Damn straight. No way ever gonna give up The Killer. No way in hell.

ALICE (age 50) behind shop's counter, mixes a cherry malt GRINDING within metal canister; Alice MUTTERING to herself.

PAUL, clad in his prison-striped pajamas, washes and rinses dishes in the sink beside Alice.

Alice turns off the LOUD GRINDING malt mixer.

PAUL  
What Alice? Couldn't hear you.

ALICE  
I said notice how all the boys in  
here always all dress alike?

Paul looks up from sink, wipes his wet hands on his pajamas and blearily gazes at lads seated in the soda shop's booths.

PAUL  
Navy pea coats? They the fad now.

Teenage lads NORTON and GREG enter soda shop and sit down in booth across from Rick and Earl and Neal and Vince and Manny.

Norton and Greg, wearing knit watch caps, Navy pea coats, collars hoisted to ears, their gray scarves almost extending to the shop's floor, each grab a menu.

Norton places right hand inside his pea coat, near armpit.

NORTON  
Way too big, man. And too heavy.

GREG  
But way cool. So cool it. Just be  
glad our dads just gave 'em to us.  
Cost 'em a fortune.

NORTON  
Wouldn't ya rather just jump a bus  
to tonight's hockey game? 'Stead a  
goin' on down to Lake Harriet?  
And to shoot out lamppost lights?  
Ya gotta be nuts. My dad's a cop.  
And my dad's out patrollin' around  
the neighborhood tonight.

Greg tosses his menu upon the booth's table.

GREG  
But shootin' out them lamp lights  
way more fun than the dumb high  
school hockey game. And others be  
down at the lake doin' it too.

NORTON  
Like who?

GREG

Like Rick. And Neal. And Earl. And Manny. And that ass wipe Vince. All sittin' in that booth over there.

NORTON

Those rich candy asses? Bet they just gonna head on up to the Sadie Hawkins dance tonight. And then hope they get asked to dance.

GREG

(pointing at Vince)

Hey Vince. Yeah. You. Dipshit. Goin' to the Sadie Hawkins dance? Betcha not even the horny girls gonna ask ya ta dance.

Vince dips middle finger into paper ketchup cup and raises his ketchup smeared finger toward Greg.

VINCE

Suck this. Gregory Peckerhead.

Greg unbuttons his Navy pea coat, exposing the long vented barrel of his Browning Marksman Medalist target pistol.

GREG

Oh yeah? Well suck this meathead.

Vince unbuttons his Navy pea coat, saunters toward Greg and Norton, flashing his own Browning target pistol.

NORTON

Your's exactly like mine.

GREG

And mine too.

VINCE

We all got big irons. 'Cept Rick. His dad didn't buy him one. Only gave him a puny pellet pistol.

NORTON

Guys goin' down to Lake Harriet tonight? And blast post lamps?

VINCE

Already been there and done that.

Within booth directly behind Rick and Earl and Neal and Manny, four more teenage boys sit wearing Navy pea coats: WILL CROSBY, FLIP LOCKLIN, BRAD BOLIN, and RON SMELTZ.

Ron Smeltz turns to Will Crosby, nudging Will's arm.

RON  
Those twerps all packin' pistols?

WILL  
Just a fad. And alls they do is  
shoot targets. And lamppost lights.

FLIP  
Next we knows day all gonna get a  
bright idea a holdin' up a store.  
But day don't have da balls.  
(laughing)  
Jus ball cards.

Ron points at Rick, Earl, Neal, and Manny.

RON  
Bet they don't even dare shoplift.

FLIP  
My dad? He owns a grocery store.  
So's if I held up a grocery store?  
Like maybe Food Haven next door?  
I'd do it on a night like tonight.

BRAD  
Why a night like tonight?

FLIP  
My dad can't take Saturday's cash  
to a bank 'til Mondays. So he takes  
all a Saturday's cash home wit him.  
An believe me. It's a mighty big  
bundle a money.

RON  
You live just up the alley next to  
Food Haven. Right Flip?

FLIP  
Yep. Live next ta da dry cleaners.  
Jus a huner-yard dash up da alley  
ta our garage.

WILL  
I got me a new part-time job. In  
that new super market just a mile  
up the street. In Edina. And  
Saturday's our busiest day. Our  
customers say we got a better  
butcher than Food Haven's butcher.

RON

But Food Haven's butcher? He busier  
at the back door dealin' dope than  
Ma Grossman at her cash register.

Brad sits back, nods, and bites a ketchup smeared French fry.

Will and Flip nod their heads in agreement with Ron.

They all suck their milk shakes through their straws.

Brad looks back over his shoulder, glancing at Earl, Neal, Manny, and Rick, seated in the booth behind him.

BRAD

(shouting)

Gotta have rich daddies to afford  
the butcher's weed. Like them  
fruitcakes sittin' behind us do.

Vince, strutting away from Greg and Norton's booth, returns to his buddies: Rick and Manny and Neal and Earl.

MANNY

(looking up at Vince)

Them assholes sittin' behind us?  
They be bad mouthin' us Vince.

VINCE

Will and Flip? And Brad?

MANNY

And that other dork sittin' with  
them. What's his name. Smells?

Vince glares at Will and Flip and Brad and Ron, all sitting in the booth behind him.

VINCE

Smeltz. Why's he sittin' with ninth  
graders like us? He's a senior.

MANNY

They sayin' we don't have the balls  
to do anythin' with our pistols  
'cept shoot lamppost lights. Sayin'  
we'd never dare hold up a store. Or  
like even shoplift.

VINCE

(turning to face Ron)

Hey Smeltz. You saying we don't  
dare hold up a store?

(MORE)

VINCE (CONT'D)

Betcha alls you dare is dip into  
that cash register where you  
sometimes work. Across the street.  
At the gas station.

RON

You donuts wouldn't know how. Like  
even Food Haven next door. And all  
Food Haven has is little old Ma  
Grossman behind her cash register.

MANNY

So how'd you stick up Food Haven?

RON

No different than shoplifting.  
All you need's a lookout. After  
customers clear the lookout signals  
through the window. To the stick-up  
guys waiting out on the street.

Manny folds his arms and nods to Vince.

Vince slides a coin into the Seeburg jukebox on booth's wall.  
"EVE OF DESTRUCTION" by Barry McGuire PLAYS on jukebox.

Earl flicks ketchup onto Neal's Navy pea coat. Neal flicks  
ketchup onto Earl's Navy pea coat. Rick flicks ketchup onto  
Manny's Navy pea coat. Manny flicks ketchup onto Vince's Navy  
pea coat. Vince flicks ketchup onto Rick's Navy pea coat.

Norton LAUGHS at the five of them.

Vince turns and glares at Norton.

VINCE

Whatcha laughin' at numbnuts?

NORTON

Your bleedin' bloody coats.

Vince stands, swaggers over to Norton, and wipes his ketchup  
smeared fingers upon Norton's Navy pea coat.

Norton and Greg rise up from their booth, circle Vince, then  
back away from Vince, toward the malt shop's glass door.

Vince and Manny strut toward the malt shop's glass door,  
while the song "Eve of Destruction" BLARES on the jukebox.

Ron looks up at Vince and Manny exiting the malt shop, and  
watches Vince and Manny as they strut past the malt shop's  
plate-glass window.

Vince and Manny pause outside the window and nod at Ron, motioning with their hands and heads for Ron to join them.

Ron nods back to them.

RON  
Time to fly.

Ron hustles toward the malt shop's glass door.

Flip watches Ron race past the malt shop's plate-glass window, in the same direction Vince and Manny were walking.

Flip rips off the tip of a straw's paper wrapper, dips the other tip of the straw's paper wrapper into his malt shake, aims the straw at ceiling, and blows.

The straw's paper wrapper shoots from the straw, sticking to the malt shop's ceiling.

FLIP  
What's say we get some candy bars  
next door at Food Haven? And hop a  
bus to da hockey game?

BRAD  
Not me. I'm gonna go up to the  
Sadie Hawkins dance.

FLIP  
But Brad. Hang tight. Somethin'  
might be goin' down at Food Haven.

As Flip, Will, and Brad shuffle toward the malt shop's door, Flip turns and looks at the empty booths.

FLIP (CONT'D)  
Where'd everybodies go?

WILL  
Vince scared off Greg and Norton.  
But where's Rick and Neal and Earl?

BRAD  
Probably scorin' dope at Butcher's  
back door. Building courage.

WILL  
Courage?

BRAD  
To head back down to Lake Harriet.  
And maybe blast away some more  
lamppost lights.

WILL  
 Or might get high enough to try  
 stickin' up old Ma Grossman?

Flip punches Will's shoulder.

FLIP  
 What say we get us some candy bars?

Will, Flip, and Brad head on out of the malt shop.

Alice, staring past Brad standing outside soda shop's glass door, gazes at tall handsome OSCAR stepping down from his 1965 VW Camper parked across the busy street.

Alice wipes ketchup from booth table, refills salt shakers.

Paul, clad in his prison-striped pajamas, yawns, rubs his eyes, shakes his head, faces the malt shop's popcorn machine, and POPS popcorn.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PICNIC TABLE NEAR LAKE HARRIET'S CONCERT PAVILION - DAY

SERGEANT BONN, PAUL and HAYLEY shake salt into their popcorn boxes while seated at a picnic table nearby Lake Harriet's castle-shaped and flag-festooned concert pavilion.

CHILDREN with PARENTS stroll past them.

Anchored sailboats bobble about near the lake's shoreline.

SEAGULL perches atop a banner extended from a lamppost, the banner celebrating the 2001 Minneapolis Aquatennial.

BONN  
 Sergeant White actually gave you a  
 copy of the confidential case file?  
 What you learn from it?

PAUL  
 The police stopped investigating  
 the case in June of 1966.

BONN  
 Stopped only four months after your  
 father was murdered? Any reason?

Paul nervously RAPS his popcorn box upon picnic table.

PAUL  
 Nope.

BONN  
Strange.

HAYLEY  
Here's what's stranger. All of the forensic evidence vanished from the police property room.

BONN  
What about the crime scene reports?

HAYLEY  
They're in the case file.

BONN  
Want to know how an unsolved murder that took place thirty-five years ago is investigated?

Hayley rests her popcorn box upon the picnic table.

HAYLEY  
How?

BONN  
Same way as a murder that took place thirty-five minutes ago. You start the investigation at the scene of the murder.

Paul CHOKES and SPITS popcorn from his mouth.

PAUL  
The murder scene hardly exists anymore. No longer a grocery store. Just an old picture-frame shop now.

BONN  
But the scene's in the case file. So tell me about the crime scene.

PAUL  
There were about a dozen witnesses. Some were interviewed at the scene. Some interviewed days later.

BONN  
From what they all saw and heard at the crime scene? What all happened?

PAUL  
And after reading that case file? I'm having nightmares now. But. Here's how I now see it.  
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

It all started around seven that  
Saturday night. February twelve.  
1966. Abraham Lincoln's birthday.

Paul gazes up at Seagull perched atop lamppost and lights a cigarette. Exhales a cloud of smoke.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. INTERSECTION OF XERXES CORNERS [FLASHBACK] - NIGHT

OSCAR, age 45, wearing a brown knit cap and tan suede jacket, steps from his 1965 VW Camper, waves goodbye to PATRICIA, an attractive 35-year-old woman sitting in the passenger seat.

OSCAR

Be right back Patricia. Need to get  
a few groceries across the street.

PATRICIA

Okay Oscar. I'll just wait here.

Avoiding oncoming cars, Oscar hustles across street toward the recessed entrance of Food Haven, waving at BRAD BOLIN standing in front of malt shop next to Food Haven.

Brad, wearing Navy pea coat, watch cap and knit scarf, turns his back to Oscar, Brad concealing a lighted cigarette.

INT. FOOD HAVEN - NIGHT

OSCAR enters Food Haven, strides narrow passageway between plate-glass window on his right and 14-foot-long waist-high brick flower planter filled with plastic daisies on his left.

At end of narrow passageway Oscar grabs a shopping cart and waves to MA GROSSMAN, standing behind the cashier counter.

OSCAR

How's Ma Grossman feelin' tonight?

MA GROSSMAN

Feeling fine Oscar. How 'bout you?

OSCAR

Need a few things. For if my son  
Paul and his wife arrive tonight.

MA GROSSMAN

Paul still livin' down in Mankato?

OSCAR

Yep. Still in college. How 'bout  
your son Joe? He here tonight?

MA GROSSMAN

Joe's workin' in the basement.

OSCAR

Say hi to him for me.

Oscar pushes his grocery cart away from Ma Grossman, as tall teenager, RON SMELTZ, saunters toward Ma Grossman, pauses, turns, and looks out the plate-glass window.

TWO TEENAGE LADS standing upon sidewalk outside the window, wearing Navy pea coats, knit watch caps pulled down to their eyebrows, gray knit scarves covering their necks and faces, bounce upon their toes, as though they have to take a pee.

WILL CROSBY and FLIP LOCKLIN, wearing Navy pea coats and knit watch caps and gray knit scarves around shoulders, enter Food Haven, scurry along the narrow 14-foot passageway inside store's entrance, and approach Ma Grossman and Ron Smeltz.

MA GROSSMAN

Hi Will. Hi Flip. Goin' to the  
Sadie dance at the high school?

WILL

No way. School's hockey game's  
tonight. Need some candy bars.

MA GROSSMAN

How come you don't get your candy  
bars at that new super market where  
you now work in Edina? And Flip.  
Your dad? He owns a grocery store.

FLIP

We jus likes givin' ya a hard time.  
We alls do. Me. My buddies. We jus  
likes ta rile ya up every now an  
then. Ya know. We's likes ta keep  
ya on ya toes.

MA GROSSMAN

A pain in my neck what's you are.  
You should be helpin' your dad at  
his grocery store tonight.

Will and Flip pay for candy bars, glance at Ron Smeltz, he looking out the plate-glass window at the two teenage boys fidgeting on sidewalk, caps and scarves concealing faces.

Will and Flip exchange apprehensive glances as Ron Smeltz motions to Will and Flip to get the hell out of the store.

Oscar pushes his grocery cart toward Will and Flip and Ma Grossman standing at the check-out counter.

OSCAR

Should you boys see Rick somewhere?  
Would you please tell Rick his  
brother Paul might be comin' up  
from Mankato tonight?

Will and Flip scurry toward the passageway to the front door.

Oscar pays Ma Grossman, hoists his grocery bag, and heads for the narrow passageway, glancing at Ron Smeltz.

Ron nods to the two lads outside on sidewalk, gray knit scarves around faces, wool caps covering their foreheads.

MA GROSSMAN

Said you wanted to cash your  
paycheck Ron? So where is it?

As Oscar reaches the front door, he holds it open for the two lads who have been standing impatiently outside the store.

As the two lads rush into the store, Oscar nods toward both, his grocery bag against his nose, they not looking at Oscar.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE RECESSED ENTRANCE OF FOOD HAVEN - NIGHT

OSCAR stands on sidewalk near street curb, looking left and right at the headlights of passing cars.

PATRICIA, seated in Oscar's VW Camper, smiles and waves toward Oscar, gazes at WILL and FLIP meandering toward BRAD standing in front of the malt shop, Brad smoking a cigarette.

Will and Flip pause, look back over their shoulders, and Brad, looking at Will and Flip, exhales a cloud of smoke.

INT. FOOD HAVEN - NIGHT

MA GROSSMAN behind counter, hand on her cash register, glares at the TWO TEENAGE LADS who entered her store while Oscar held the door open for them; their wool caps pulled down to their eyebrows, their knit gray scarves covering their faces. Only their eyes exposed.

MA GROSSMAN  
Quit kidding me. What ya mean this  
a stickup? Now put away your toy  
pistols. And get on out a here.

TEENAGE LAD # 1  
These ain't toys lady. So hand over  
your cash.

TEENAGE LAD # 2  
And all that baseball bubble gum  
behind you.

MA GROSSMAN  
Bet ya they just big toy pistols.

TEENAGE LAD # 2  
Oh yeah?

Lad # 2 steps back and points the long vented barrel of his Browning Marksman Medalist target pistol toward the ceiling, pointing it directly above Ma Grossman's head.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE RECESSED ENTRANCE OF FOOD HAVEN - NIGHT

OSCAR, holding his sack of groceries, waits patiently for stream of cars to pass so he may cross street to PATRICIA, who smiles at Oscar from the front seat of his VW Camper.

Oscar waves at MR. FINCH, across street filling his 1965 Buick with gas, and at MRS. FINCH wiping Buick's windshield, while GAS STATION ATTENDANT pumps gas into a 1965 Chevy.

SOUND-OVER: GUNSHOT!

Oscar turns, looks through plate-glass window at TWO TEENAGE LADS pointing their Browning Marksman Medalist target pistols at MA GROSSMAN, the long vented barrel of one pistol smoking.

Oscar places his grocery bag atop 1965 Ford parked at curb, shakes his head at Patricia seated in his VW Camper across street, raises his hands high over his head, sighs, and looks up at the moon.

Oscar turns toward Food Haven's recessed door, as MR. GEORGE MEYER approaches Oscar from the alley next to Food Haven.

OSCAR  
Stand back George. Do not move.

RON SMELTZ dashes from Food Haven's recessed entrance and scampers across street toward the gas station, HONKING cars nearly hitting Ron.

Oscar glances at MR. HAROLD JONES approaching Food Haven from Oscar's left, and Oscar extends his left hand.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
Stand still Harold. Do not go in.

INT. FOOD HAVEN'S CASHIER COUNTER - NIGHT

TEENAGE LAD # 1 and TEENAGE LAD # 2 both step back from MA GROSSMAN, her fists shaking. Ready to haul off on both boys.

TEENAGE LAD # 1  
Okay. Okay. Okay lady. You win.

The two lads back away toward the waist-high brick flower planter forming the narrow passageway to Food Haven's door.

Food Haven's door SLAMS open, OSCAR confronting the lads from a distance of only 14 feet, the two lads now in a face-off with Oscar blocking their escape.

Both lads kneel down on one knee, side-by-side.

Both lads FIRE their pistols:

ONE SHOT strikes Oscar's right arm.

ONE SHOT strikes Oscar's right cheek.

ONE SHOT strikes Oscar's chest.

ONE SHOT strikes Oscar's neck.

Oscar falls to his knees.

OSCAR  
Oh my God! Oh God!

Oscar slumps onto his right side, his twitching legs keeping the glass door ajar, his glazing eyes staring up at plastic daisies extending over the top of the brick flower planter.

Blood sprays from Oscar's neck.

The two lads, their big Browning Marksman pistols smoking, leap over Oscar's prone body in the ajar doorway.

EXT. GAS STATION ACROSS STREET FROM FOOD HAVEN - NIGHT

MR. AND MRS. FINCH, crouching beside their Buick, see the TWO TEENAGE LADS leap from Food Haven's recessed doorway, watch them turn to their left, racing toward MR. GEORGE MEYER.

One lad collides into Meyer, knocking Meyer to the sidewalk.

Mr. and Mrs. Finch turn, see WILL CROSBY and FLIP LOCKLIN and BRAD BOLIN across the street.

Mr. and Mrs. Finch watch Will and Flip and Brad raise their right hands toward the night sky, index fingers pointing up, thumbs jutting up, all three lads SHOUTING.

WILL

They did it! They did it!

FLIP

Yeah! They did! They did it!

BRAD

Man oh man! They did it.

GAS STATION ATTENDANT, Mr. Finch, and Mrs. Finch, watch the fleeing lads racing past Food Haven, and dashing into alley.

Mr. Finch, running to his right, watches the two lads race past the light cascading into the alley from Food Haven's open door at the rear of the grocery store.

Mr. Finch watches the two lads flee up the alley's slope.

The two lads vanish in the dark, near a garage 300 feet atop the alley's crest.

EXT. FOOD HAVEN'S STOREFRONT - NIGHT

WILL, FLIP, and BRAD cautiously step toward Food Haven's recessed entrance, the door concealed from their view on the sidewalk by the alcove tucked into the storefront.

PATRICIA and MR. FINCH race across street.

Cars SCREECH to a stop, and narrowly avoid hitting Mr. Finch and SCREAMING Patricia.

Patricia falls to her knees in Food Haven's doorway, jarred open by OSCAR'S twitching legs, and she wraps her arms around Oscar, his neck spraying blood.

Mr. Finch dashes back across the street, toward gas station.

Will and Flip drop their candy bars and Brad drops his cigarette, their eyes fixed upon Oscar's bleeding body and Patricia soaked in Oscar's blood, clutching him in her arms.

PATRICIA

The blood! The blood!

MA GROSSMAN  
(shouting at Patricia)  
Tryin' to call an ambulance.

PATRICIA  
Somebody? Somebody? Please.  
Somebody stop the blood!

A city bus approaches and stops in front of the malt shop.

Will and Flip turn, sprint toward the bus, and hop in.

As the city bus pulls away from intersection, Brad flees.

JOE GROSSMAN, age 18, kneeling beside Patricia and Oscar, rips open a package of paper napkins, and presses the napkins to Oscar's bleeding throat.

Oscar's throat RATTLES. Blood foams from Oscar's mouth.

INT. GAS STATION ACROSS STREET FROM FOOD HAVEN - NIGHT

MR. FINCH on pay phone, GAS STATION ATTENDANT next to him, staring at CROWD forming around the front of Food Haven.

MR. FINCH  
Must I repeat myself? At Xerxes  
Corners. At Food Haven. Two kids.  
Teenagers. Shot him. Now running on  
foot. Toward you. Toward Edina.  
Maybe headin' to Minnehaha Creek.  
(beat)  
What?  
(beat)  
But you are the police.  
(beat)  
Not in your jurisdiction? We only  
blocks from you. Running in your  
direction. Pistols size of cannons.  
(beat)  
Not me. Them. In your direction.  
Toward Edina. Toward you.

Mr. Finch SLAMS down pay phone's receiver.

Mr. Finch looks across street, turns to Gas Station Attendant standing next to him.

MR. FINCH (CONT'D)  
She says we're not in their  
jurisdiction. She said call the  
Minneapolis police. That kid?  
(MORE)

MR. FINCH (CONT'D)

That kid standing in the store when the first shot was fired? Did I see him run toward here?

GAS STATION ATTENDANT

Yeah. He sometimes works here. That's him in mens room. Barfin'. I'm doin' his shift. Ron wanted to head up to the high school. To the Sadie Hawkins dance tonight.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PICNIC TABLE NEAR LAKE HARRIET'S CONCERT PAVILION - DAY  
SERGEANT BONN and HAYLEY watch PAUL mash out his cigarette.

BONN

And all that's in the case file?

PAUL

Including the three lads shouting at the teenage shooters. And all three are in Rick's high school year book. They gonna have a class reunion this summer.

BONN

What's the case file say about the weapons used to kill your father?

PAUL

Forensic report says expensive Browning Marksman Medalist target pistols. So did the witnesses.

BONN

You suspect Rick's teenage buddies may have owned the exact same kind of target pistols?

PAUL

Look Bud. Had I known back in 1966 what police knew? The case may have been solved in less than a week.

Paul throws his hands above his head, exasperated.

HAYLEY

The police never knew Rick's teenage buddies owned Browning Marksman Medalist target pistols.

BONN  
So now what's Sergeant White say?

HAYLEY  
White's been removed from the  
homicide unit.

BONN  
Probably to traffic duty. If Rick's  
high school class has a reunion  
coming up? I say it's now time to  
send a letter.

HAYLEY  
A letter? What letter?

EXT. BRIDGE ABOVE BOAT LANDING ON MISSISSIPPI RIVER - DAY

The sun looms low behind PAUL and HAYLEY as they lean on the railing of Plymouth Avenue Bridge.

They gaze at the Mississippi River flowing and shimmering below them, toward the eastern horizon and the glistening tall glass buildings of the Minneapolis city skyline.

Paul and Hayley look down at the boat landing where a large double-decker paddlewheel riverboat remains docked.

A CROWD OF PEOPLE, mostly around age 50, mill about on the riverboat's lower deck and the riverboat's extended gangway, all cheerfully conversing.

Upon the dock, near the riverboat's gangway, a LADY at a folding table hands out nametags to PEOPLE ARRIVING.

PAUL  
Look at them all. All celebrating  
they're now age fifty.

HAYLEY  
Good reason for a class reunion.

PAUL  
If it were not for this class  
reunion we never woulda got their  
addresses from their planning  
committee. Still want to do this?

HAYLEY  
Of course. There they are. Rick's  
old high school classmates. And  
each wearing a nametag.

PAUL

But their planning committee? They never knew we'd try to crash their reunion party.

HAYLEY

You saying back away now? After all those envelopes I hand addressed to each of them? This is our chance to meet and talk with them.

PAUL

But everyone's so upbeat. Happy. What they be like if we get on that riverboat? And spend the night talking with them? About who among them may have murdered my father?

HAYLEY

But we won't have another chance. And this was Bud Bonn's idea. You promised Bud we'd do this. And promised your sister Sybil too.

PAUL

And us asking why Rick vanished? Where he may have gone? They'll just see us as party poopers.

HAYLEY

Maybe. Maybe not.

PAUL

And Manny? Doubt he shows up. Never replied to our letter. Didn't even call to ask us what we found out.

HAYLEY

And Manny was Rick's best friend. And became your best friend too. You'd think he'd be asking us what we heard from his old classmates.

PAUL

Okay. Okay already. Let's go see if we can get on that riverboat.

EXT. NAMETAG TABLE ON RIVERBOAT DOCK - DAY

PAUL hands hundred-dollar bill to LADY sitting at nametag table and the lady hands Paul and HAYLEY blank nametags.

Paul and Hayley sign and attach nametags to their shirts.

Paul glances at EARL standing beside Paul at table, as Earl attaches Earl's nametag to Earl's shirt.

PAUL  
You the Earl who was Rick Johnson's friend? I'm Paul. Rick's brother.

EARL  
Paul? Hey! Got your letter.

PAUL  
Never really got to know you.

EARL  
But Rick and I would watch your dance band rehearse. Over in your family's house near Lake Harriet.  
(beat)  
And you were about ten years older than us. Right?

PAUL  
Still am. And after I graduated from our high school back in 1959 I never paid much attention to you and Rick's other friends.

EARL  
But I saw you at Manny's wedding.

PAUL  
After Rick vanished I sort of adopted Manny. Like a substitute brother for Rick. But never could get Manny to talk much about Rick.

EARL  
Getting on the riverboat?

PAUL  
We are.

EARL  
We?

PAUL  
Oh. Earl? Meet my wife. Hayley.

Hayley extends her right hand to Earl.

EARL  
Pleased to meet you Hayley.

HAYLEY  
Nice to meet you Earl.

Horns BLAST. Bullhorn BLARES "All ABOARD WHO'S GOIN' ABOARD."

Paul and Hayley cross gangway, step onto the riverboat, and glance at MAN in white shirt and jeans standing on the deck. Paul looks at his nametag: FLIP LOCKLIN.

INT. RIVERBOAT'S BALLROOM - DUSK

HAYLEY takes PAUL by his arm as they enter riverboat's large ballroom, its long dinner buffet surrounded by tables covered with white linen table cloths and daisy centerpieces.

A smiling handsome DJ, standing behind a table, wearing a tuxedo, places a vinyl record upon record turntable.

SUGGESTED SOUND-OVER: "MIGHTY MISSISSIPPI" by The New Christy Minstrels PLAYS as riverboat's huge paddlewheel churns the riverboat away from the dock.

Paul and Hayley approach the DJ, as he talks with a petite WOMAN, she twirling her fingers in her curly hair.

PAUL  
Excuse me. You accept requests?  
Maybe songs from the sixties?

DJ  
Absolutely. You name it I play it.

Paul hands DJ a slip of paper, a twenty, and a homemade CD.

PAUL  
Appreciate if you'd play these.  
First one's turn around look at me.

Woman standing near DJ turns toward Paul and Hayley, GIGGLES, and Paul and Hayley look at her nametag: KATHY RUBIC.

KATHY  
Anyone gonna to take a photo of all of us? Like all standing together?

PAUL  
Not Hayley and me. We crashed your party. We're only here because my brother graduated with you in 1969. We were hoping he might show up.

KATHY  
Who's your brother?

PAUL

Rick Johnson. Remember him? Tall.  
Golden hair. Big blue eyes?

KATHY

Far out! Was the love of my life!  
And you're who sent the letter?  
Askin' where Rick might be? And oh!  
About your father's murder.

HAYLEY

To everybody in your class who had  
a known address. Your class reunion  
committee gave us their addresses.

KATHY

I had to leave town the same day I  
got your letter. But you know what?  
I was there.

HAYLEY

Where?

KATHY

The grocery store. Food Haven.

PAUL

When it happened?

KATHY

With my dad. He drove me. When we  
arrived at the store? He was dead.

PAUL

My father.

KATHY

And just a week before I got your  
letter? Was at my mom's home. Going  
through old scrapbooks. Came upon a  
newspaper story my mom clipped out  
about your father's murder. My mom  
was a good friend of your mom.

(beat)

Anyone contact you after you sent  
your letter to all of us?

HAYLEY

We got calls from your classmates.  
And we have more to go on now.

Kathy steps back from Paul and Hayley, crosses her arms,  
tilts sideways, looks past Paul. Squinting. Her lips  
tightening as her hands squeeze her arms.

Paul turns toward where her eyes seem to be looking, toward FLIP LOCKLIN standing 40 feet behind, Flip staring at them.

KATHY

Excuse me. Maybe they're taking a group photo soon. Maybe out on the deck. Nice to meet you.

Kathy strides toward the starboard deck, Flip following her.

SUGGESTED SOUND-OVER: "TURN AROUND LOOK AT ME" by The Vogues.

HAYLEY

Let's see who's up on the top deck. You can smoke up there.

Paul and Hayley meander toward a spiral staircase.

EXT. TOP DECK OF RIVERBOAT - TWILIGHT

PAUL and HAYLEY upon riverboat's top deck, approach RALPH, age 50, standing by the starboard railing, drink in hand.

PAUL

Couldn't ask for a better evening. Stars be comin' out over the river. Ralph? I'm Paul. My wife Hayley.

RALPH

(pointing to deck below)  
My wife's down there. With her old classmates. For their group photo. Up here? Just spouses. We be the bozos on this boat.

PAUL

I know how you feel. We weren't in your wife's class. My brother was.

RALPH

So are you the fellow my wife's talking about with her friends?

PAUL

They talking about me?

RALPH

My wife was moved by your letter. And she's wishing she could help. She had a crush on your brother.

PAUL

Tell her thanks. We're hoping to meet people tonight who might help us find my brother. And maybe have an idea who murdered my father.

RALPH

How can they do that?

PAUL

The two teenagers who shot my father? They may be my brother's former classmates.

RALPH

You sayin' someone down there coulda murdered your father?

HAYLEY

Or may know who the killers are. Guys tell girlfriends things they'd never dare tell anyone else.

PAUL

And at fifteen. Afraid to tell a big secret. But maybe not at fifty.

Ralph gulps down his drink and nods at Paul and Hayley.

HAYLEY

Especially if it's a secret you've been carryin' like a sack of rocks for the past thirty-five years.

SUGGESTED SOUND-OVER: "NOWHERE TO RUN" SUNG by Martha Reeves.

RALPH

Gotta get another drink. Good luck.

Paul and Hayley follow Ralph down spiral staircase and toward the riverboat's open bar located in a corner of the ballroom.

Paul orders whiskey on the rocks at the open bar.

A redheaded woman, LAURA on her nametag, approaches Paul.

LAURA

Hi Paul. Hi Hayley. I'm Laura.

PAUL

Hi Laura. You know us?

LAURA

Was lookin' at your nametags.

PAUL

We weren't in your class. But my brother Rick was. Rick Johnson.

LAURA

Got your letter. Wondered if I should call you. Was at the store. Just after your father was shot. Lived only a block away. Had walked down the alley to Food Haven.

HAYLEY

See anyone running toward you?

LAURA

Me? No. No one. Nope. No one.

HAYLEY

Where you living now Laura?

LAURA

Colorado. Let me give you my phone number. In case you ever find Rick. Rick was the love of my life in high school.

Laura writes her number on napkin and hugs Paul and Hayley.

Paul and Hayley wander toward the dinner buffet.

SUGGESTED SOUND-OVER: "THE BALLAD OF BONNIE AND CLYDE" by Georgie Fame PLAYS, the DJ looking at the list of songs on Paul's homemade CD and giving Paul a smile and two-thumbs up.

HAYLEY

Can you believe this? Two already say they were there! And we know Flip was. After we eat? Go talk with Flip. Remember Will Crosby? He called us. And Will Crosby admitted he and Flip were standing outside Food Haven when your dad was murdered.

PAUL

But cut me some slack here.  
Will ya? I'm not Columbo ya know.

HAYLEY

Let's try some of the food.

Paul and Hayley sit down at a table next to the DJ.

FLIP LOCKLIN jerks microphone from the DJ's table.

FLIP  
 (shouting into mic)  
 Listen up. Afta weeb cleared da  
 floor fa danchin letch everybodies  
 starch da danch contes. You peoples  
 up der on da top deck? Ya alls hear  
 me? Ya alls come on down. An letch  
 starch da danch contes.

HAYLEY  
 Looks like Flip's already had way  
 too many. May not be able to dance.

PAUL  
 That's a tall beer he's spilling.

Flip turns, looks at Paul, Flip's crooked teeth smiling.

FLIP  
 Tink day got dat methage?

Flip staggers toward KATHY RUBIC who watches Flip from table  
 she's seated at, Flip carrying the mic until the cord plays  
 out and the mic falls from his hand, BANGING upon the floor.

DJ retrieves the mic and approaches Paul and Hayley's table.

DJ  
 Guy reminds me of a character. In  
 movie on TV just a few nights ago.

PAUL  
 What movie?

DJ  
 Machine Gun Kelly.

HAYLEY  
 Don't look now. But Kathy Rubic's  
 pointing at us. Pointing us out to  
 Flip. He looks disturbed. Don't  
 turn around! Flip's staring at you.

SUGGESTED SOUND-OVER: "SUSPICIOUS MINDS" SUNG by Elvis.

Paul and Hayley rise up from table, walk toward riverboat's  
 stern, past Kathy and Flip, sitting side-by-side, drinking.

EXT. STERN OF RIVERBOAT - NIGHT

PAUL lights cigarette, leans his elbows on stern's railing.

FLIP LOCKLIN leans in on the railing, next to Paul.

Both look down at the water churning and spraying from riverboat's paddlewheel.

HAYLEY steps back several feet behind Paul and Flip, and stands next to KATHY RUBIC, who lights a cigarette.

Flip, his shirtsleeves billowing in the wind, turns to Paul.

Paul turns toward Flip, the two now eye to eye.

PAUL

Hi Flip. I'm Paul Johnson. How you feeling tonight?

FLIP

Rubic's stoled me about you. Wisht I coulds remembad bout watch happen ended dat night. Not sure was eben dare. Maybe was. Maybees not.

PAUL

I talked with Will Crosby. Will has a vivid memory about what happened. He told me you were there with him.

FLIP

Really? Witch Will dat night?

PAUL

So he says.

Flip turns around and faces Kathy Rubic.

FLIP

I ditchen do it.

PAUL

What?

FLIP

I wisht I could rememba dat night. Don't know why. But jus can't. Maybe if I was hypnosized. And Crosby? Will? He not here ta night.

PAUL

Can't remember? Or won't remember.

Flip turns about again, glaring at Kathy Rubic.

FLIP

I didn't do it! Did not do it!

Kathy tugs Flip's shirt sleeve, pulling Flip from deck railing, and tows him toward the ballroom's glass doors.

Hayley joins Paul at the railing, both looking down at the paddlewheel churning the river water.

HAYLEY  
May have stirred something up here.

Paul and Hayley turn, look through ballroom's doors, at Flip and Kathy dancing to the Dells SINGING "OH, WHAT A NIGHT."

INT. RIVERBOAT'S BALLROOM BAR - NIGHT

PAUL and HAYLEY stand at bar as youthful appearing BETTY sashays toward Paul, glances up to his eyes, places her hands upon his arms, and shoots a sideways glance at Hayley.

BETTY  
My girlfriends. Ronica and Cynthia.  
Want you to sit with us. At our  
table. You're Rick's brother?

HAYLEY  
He is. And I'm his wife. Hayley.

BETTY  
Nice to meet you. I'm Betty.

INT. BALLROOM TABLE - NIGHT

SUGGESTED SOUND-OVER: "TOO MANY RIVERS" SUNG by Brenda Lee.

PAUL and HAYLEY sit down at table across from BETTY, RONICA, and CYNTHIA.

RONICA  
(looking at Betty)  
Told you he's Rick's brother. Laura  
pointed him out. Paul? I'm Ronica.

PAUL  
Looks like you're all having a good  
time here tonight.

BETTY  
But better time if Rick were here.

RONICA  
We'd be all dancing with Rick.  
Close dancing.

CYNTHIA  
And probably fighting over him.

HAYLEY  
You three were Rick's friends?

RONICA  
Um. You could say that. I guess.

BETTY  
What Ronica means is more than just  
Rick's friends. Much more.

CYNTHIA  
What Betty means is. Well. Rick was  
a major heart breaker. Not just our  
hearts. Laura's. Kathy's. And. Who  
else Ronica? Maybe Nancy?

RONICA  
And Felicia.

Cynthia frowns at Betty and Ronica.

CYNTHIA  
Felicia's not here tonight. Felicia  
never shows up for class reunions.

BETTY  
A heart breaker. And that's why I  
got involved with Rick. After he  
went and broke Kathy's heart.

PAUL  
Kathy Rubic?

Betty nods.

BETTY  
Kathy Rubic and me. We planned it.  
Planned to get Rick to fall in love  
with me. And then drop him like a  
rock. To let Rick know what it's  
like to have a broken heart.

HAYLEY  
And what happened?

BETTY  
Rick kissed me. That's all it took.

HAYLEY  
To break his heart?

BETTY  
His kiss? Rick's kiss made me fall  
in love with him.  
(laughing)  
No way was gonna break his heart  
after I fell in love with him.

RONICA  
Fantastic kisser. Gawd!

CYNTHIA  
(sighing)  
Yeah. Fantastic.

BETTY  
And he had that VW Camper.

CYNTHIA  
With the fold-out bed in the back.

Betty, Cynthia, Ronica GIGGLE and SIGH.

RONICA  
Wonder where Rick is now. Probably  
in a band. Loved how he would play  
his guitar for me in his bedroom.

CYNTHIA  
You too?

BETTY  
Always into songs about escaping.

LAURA joins them at table.

LAURA  
Talkin' 'bout Rick?

HAYLEY  
And his favorite songs.

RONICA  
Sitting on the dock of the bay and.  
Oh! And that Doctor Zhivago song.

CYNTHIA  
Somewhere my love!

Laura jumps up and runs toward the DJ.

RONICA  
And that midnight cowboy song.

BETTY  
And midnight confessions. And cast  
your fate to the wind.

CYNTHIA  
And a Peter Paul and Mary one.  
Blowin' in the wind?

Laura returns and sits down at the table.

LAURA  
DJ's gonna play it. Play it now!

BETTY  
Play what?

LAURA  
Laura's theme.

CYNTHIA  
A song about you?

SOUND-OVER: "LARA'S THEME" from Dr. Zhivago.

BETTY  
The Doctor Zhivago theme song.  
Somewhere my love.

LAURA  
But it's called Laura's theme. Rick  
told me it's called Laura's theme.

RONICA  
Right. Oh my god! If Rick had  
showed up tonight I would've . . .

BETTY  
Only in your dreams Ronica. Only in  
your dreams.

PAUL  
We want to meet more of your  
classmates. Before the boat docks.

HAYLEY  
We'll leave you with your dreams.

EXT. BOW OF RIVERBOAT - NIGHT

PAUL and HAYLEY look at EARL standing alone at the bow of the riverboat, Earl's back to Paul and Hayley, Earl lost in thought; gazing up at the lights of the Minneapolis skyline and the lights on the bridge ahead.

Paul whispers to Hayley.

Hayley nods and walks toward DJ.

Paul approaches Earl, Earl's arms resting upon deck railing.

SUGGESTED SOUND-OVER: The Hollies SINGING "HE AIN'T HEAVY, HE'S MY BROTHER."

Paul places his left hand on Earl's right shoulder and gives Earl's shoulder an affectionate squeeze.

Earl turns, looks up at Paul.

EARL

Saw you chatting with Betty. And her friends. And Kathy Rubic.

Paul grins and sighs and sips his whiskey.

PAUL

Had no idea Rick had so many girlfriends. How'd he have any time to spend with you and your buddies?

EARL

After your dad. After your dad died? Pretty much kept to himself. Once in a while we'd pile into his VW camper. Cruising for burgers. Rick, Manny, Vince, Neal, and me.

PAUL

He'd never talk about you guys. But then again he never told me about all his girlfriends.

EARL

We pretty much fell out of touch. Rick became kinda like an island.

PAUL

He seem troubled to you?

EARL

For sure. Who wasn't? Who isn't?

PAUL

When's last you talked to Manny?

EARL

Who knows. Been years. Years.

PAUL  
And Vince? Ever talk with Vince?

EARL  
Heard tonight he's doin' time in a California prison. For drug deals.

PAUL  
Rick got busted. Got high and went and got himself caught shoplifting.

EARL  
And cost your mom a fortune. For some fancy lawyer who got him off. Think Rick might be in a prison?

PAUL  
He knew some drug dealers.

EARL  
Like Vince?

PAUL  
And maybe Manny was too. I first met Manny when I was teaching. After I got out of the Air Force. When living in a farm house. Away up north. One autumn afternoon Rick and Manny come bustin' into our kitchen. Both higher than kites.

EARL  
They drove up from Minneapolis spaced out?

PAUL  
Their hands and faces covered with dirt and mud. Laughin'. Dizzy. And Manny? He's holdin' this old rusty toy dump truck in his hands.

EARL  
Toy dump truck?

PAUL  
Said he found it in the potato patch next to our farm house.

EARL  
Crazy.

PAUL

Manny gets on his knees. And starts moving the toy dump truck round and around under the kitchen table.

EARL

How'd you deal with that?

PAUL

Manny cried "Take me home Rick."

EARL

Unreal. And when was this?

PAUL

Year before Rick vanished. Rick waiting to be twenty-one. So he could then collect his financial share of our father's estate.

EARL

You never met Manny before he found that dump truck?

PAUL

Manny. Vince. Neal. You. Were all just Rick's twerp friends. All only six or seven when I was seventeen.

The riverboat slowly approaches its dock.

EARL

Oh my. Look. The boat's docking. Gonna have to get off. I'm bushed. Stay in touch. You have e-mail? Here's my card.

PAUL

Remember a guy in your class whose nickname was Coke Can?

EARL

Was a friend of Vince and Manny's.

PAUL

After I mailed that letter he called me. Was Rick's college roommate down in Mankato. And Coke Can and Rick? They stayed close after they moved back. Back to Minneapolis.

EARL

No kidding?

PAUL

And he said he was with Rick the night before Rick disappeared.

EARL

Far out. Heavy. You know? I think Coke Can's father . . .

PAUL

What? What about his father?

EARL

Oh nothing.

PAUL

Coke Can's father. What about him?

EARL

Coke Can worked for his father.

PAUL

Doing what?

EARL

His father owned a trash disposal company. Waste management. Anyway. Coke Can drove one of his father's dump trucks. Sometimes with Rick.

Paul staggers back from the riverboat railing, looks up at soaring SEAGULL, silhouetted against the moon, and hurls his whiskey glass into the Mississippi River.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MINNEAPOLIS CITY HALL - HOMICIDE UNIT OFFICE - DAY

SERGEANT O'REILLY (age 64) leans back in his swivel chair, his right foot planted upon his cluttered desk.

PAUL, seated beside O'Reilly's desk, glances at the open cardboard boxes near O'Reilly's chair, boxes containing framed photos of O'Reilly standing beside uniformed cops.

SGT. O'REILLY

I doubt the shooters were kids from the neighborhood. Who in their right minds would hold up a store in their own neighborhood?

O'Reilly lifts an award plaque from his desk, dusts it, and flips it into a cardboard box.

PAUL

Do kids in their right minds murder a man? Just for a shop's cash? And some bubblegum baseball cards? And in the case file it says ---

SGT. O'REILLY

Stop reminding me you got a copy of our confidential case file. It's against our departmental policy. And face it. Anyone would be just simply stupid to holdup a store in their own neighborhood.

PAUL

Ever hear of stupid criminals?

SGT. O'REILLY

Okay. Okay. I'll get back to you. After I review the case file with Lieutenant Skanko.

PAUL

And another thing. Ron Smeltz. Ron Smeltz was the only customer in the store during the attempted holdup.

SGT. O'REILLY

So?

PAUL

So I phoned Smeltz. He said there were people who spread false rumors he was in on the robbery attempt. And the owner of the gas station across the street from Food Haven? Told me he suspected Smeltz dipped into his cash register while Smeltz was working for him back in 1966.

SGT. O'REILLY

It's things like this why we must keep our case files confidential.

PAUL

Things like this?

SGT. O'REILLY

Last thing we want is you snooping into our confidential case file. And you interviewing people in it?  
(beat)  
That's our business. Not yours.

PAUL

But my father's killers are my business. And your business went out of business only four months after my father was murdered.

SGT. O'REILLY

We ran out of leads.

PAUL

Some were not fully looked into.

SGT. O'REILLY

Oh? Such as?

PAUL

Will Crosby. Flip Locklin. And Brad Bolin? All three seen and heard by a married couple across the street. All three raising their thumbs and shouting "They did it." Repeatedly.

SGT. O'REILLY

That's in the case file?

PAUL

Have you actually read it?

SGT. O'REILLY

Could have been just pointing and yelling at the fleeing shooters.

PAUL

But the married couple got the clear impression Will and Flip and Brad knew the shooters. Knew they intended to hold up the cashier. The couple was there. You weren't. Have you even read the case file?

SGT. O'REILLY

I gave it a glance.

O'Reilly snaps up a paper clip from his desk and starts bending and twisting it.

PAUL

And Will? And Flip? And Brad? They gave my dad's bleeding body a glance. And fled. But a week later a detective tracked them down.

SGT. O'REILLY

Oh?

PAUL

He got a tip that Will and Flip were in the malt shop next to Food Haven. So he goes into the malt shop and takes them downtown. But he didn't include their statements in the case file.

SGT. O'REILLY

Did the detective interview Brad?

PAUL

The detective only typed that Brad fled the murder scene. And that his father insisted Brad get a lawyer.

SGT. O'REILLY

We can't call them valid witnesses.

PAUL

Not valid? Why not?

SGT. O'REILLY

They didn't see the shooters shoot. Just saw them running away.

PAUL

But running with pistols. And after Sergeant White was removed from the Homicide Unit I wrote a long letter to your boss. Lieutenant Skanko. He never responded. So I sent another. Are my letters to Lieutenant Skanko in the case file?

SGT. O'REILLY

I'd have to look. He's not in now. What your letters to him about?

PAUL

Rick begged our father to give him a Browning Marksman Medalist target pistol for his birthday. Just weeks before my father was murdered.

SGT. O'REILLY

So?

PAUL

Because Rick's buddies owned them. So? I sent Skanko their addresses. And their phone numbers. Seems each should be interviewed.

SGT. O'REILLY  
You have any other reasons the case  
was not fully investigated?

PAUL  
Two suspects were eliminated as  
suspects. One had an alibi from his  
girlfriend. Said she was on a phone  
with him at the time of the crime.

SGT. O'REILLY  
And the other suspect?

PAUL  
The other had an alibi from his  
mother. Last people I'd want for an  
alibi are a girlfriend or a mother.

SGT. O'REILLY  
An alibi is an alibi.

Paul leans forward in his chair, pointing at O'Reilly.

PAUL  
But in this case? A case in which  
the forensic evidence vanished from  
your Property Room? The kid's  
mother? She was a wife of a  
Minneapolis police officer.

SGT. O'REILLY  
What? Who?

PAUL  
Guy's in Rick's high school year  
book. Norton. And his buddy Greg.  
Whose girlfriend insisted she was  
on the phone with him during the  
time my father was murdered.

SGT. O'REILLY  
Let me get back to you.

PAUL  
Like don't call me I'll call you?

Sergeant O'Reilly shrugs his shoulders and tosses twisted  
paperclip into nearby waste basket.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. DECK OF NORTHERN MINNESOTA LAKE-SIDE RUSTIC HOME - DAY

PAUL and HAYLEY and TIM SWANSON (Age 70) seated on deck of home overlooking northern Minnesota lake, drinking Bailey's Irish Cream from tumblers, LOONS CALLING from across lake.

HAYLEY

Nice of you to let us come up here to your home Lieutenant Swanson.

SWANSON

Just call me Tim. I'm retired now. Enjoying the good life up here in northern Minnesota.

Swanson pours more Bailey's Irish Cream into his tumbler.

SWANSON (CONT'D)

Have some more Paul? Hayley?

HAYLEY

No thanks. I only sip Bailey's. In what do you call them? Sniffers?

PAUL

Sniffers.

SWANSON

Why bother with a snifter whens alls I'm gonna do is refill anyway?

PAUL

We appreciate how you've taken an interest in my father's case.

SWANSON

Had an interest in your father's murder case ever since your sister Sybil first met with me years ago.

PAUL

How did Sybil get you involved?

SWANSON

Sybil thought she saw Rick singing on Johnny Carson's TV show.

PAUL

Sybil seemed to be seeing Rick everywhere.

SWANSON

And Sybil thought she saw Rick working as a park ranger.

(MORE)

SWANSON (CONT'D)  
Along St.Croix River at Taylors  
Falls. Where your father took your  
family camping. On an island?

PAUL  
Rock Island. Just downstream from  
Taylors Falls.

HAYLEY  
Sybil moved to Seattle and thought  
she saw Rick on a ferry boat.

SWANSON  
And she got me involved with a guy  
who works with the Social Security  
Department. What was his name?

PAUL  
Sybil had me talking with him too.

SWANSON  
What you want to talk about today?

Paul hands Swanson a file folder.

PAUL  
About this copy of the case file  
Sergeant White gave us.

HAYLEY  
And we made a copy for you.

SWANSON  
You're not supposed to have a copy.  
It's against departmental policy.

HAYLEY  
Sergeant White liked us.

SWANSON  
We never gave civilians a copy of  
any case file. Not even newspaper  
reporters. Sergeant White coulda  
been burned for that.

HAYLEY  
White was moved out of the Homicide  
Department. Paul's tried to work  
with someone else now.

SWANSON  
Who?

PAUL  
Sergeant O'Reilly. Know him?

SWANSON  
O'Reilly's retiring next month.

PAUL  
Seems like he's already retired.

SWANSON  
What you mean by that?

PAUL  
O'Reilly's apathetic.

SWANSON  
Apathetic?

PAUL  
O'Reilly has no interest in talking  
with four men who were Rick's old  
high school buddies. Insists they  
will just lie to him.

Swanson gulps down another slug of Bailey's Irish Cream.

HAYLEY  
Two live near here. In Duluth. One  
in Minneapolis. The other one's  
doing time. In a California prison.

PAUL  
What we need now is your help.

SWANSON  
O'Reilly's apathetic?

PAUL  
He said my father's homicide case  
gets resolved only if someone comes  
forward and tells what they know.

SWANSON  
And that's probably true.

PAUL  
So I gave him names and addresses  
of Rick's old high school buddies.  
And phone numbers too.

SWANSON  
What O'Reilly say to that?

PAUL

He doubted they'd ever tell him anything. So I asked him to suggest someone I could hire. To interview Rick's old high school buddies.

SWANSON

Did he?

PAUL

Said it would cost me too much.

HAYLEY

But we'd be glad to pay you.

PAUL

We wrote some questions you could ask. I'm no Sherlock. But here. Tell me if you could ask Rick's former buddies these questions.

Paul hands Swanson several pieces of paper.

Swanson puts on reading glasses and scans the pages of questions while he gulps more Bailey's Irish Cream.

Paul and Hayley exchange apprehensive glances.

SWANSON

This a long list of questions. And they could just lie to me.

PAUL

Sergeant White told us he cautions anyone he interviews that if they get caught in a lie they could be accused of obstructing justice.

HAYLEY

And in Minnesota that means they can do half the time for the crime.

SWANSON

But why would Rick's old high school buds agree to meet with me?

HAYLEY

They got the letter we sent them. Asking about what they may know about who killed Paul's father. And about Rick's disappearance.

SWANSON

So?

HAYLEY

So tell them you're investigating  
the murder of Oscar Edward Johnson  
and the disappearance of his son.

SWANSON

But then what?

HAYLEY

Then you say to them people who  
graduated in their class responded  
to the letter Rick's brother Paul  
mailed them and their classmates.

SWANSON

Then what?

HAYLEY

Then they tell you they don't have  
any information to help you.

SWANSON

Right. And?

HAYLEY

And then you say that's what others  
told you when you called them. Then  
you say as you continued to talk  
with them they gave you valuable  
information. Information they never  
thought was valuable.

SWANSON

But if they refuse to meet with me?

HAYLEY

You ask them three easy questions.  
One. You want to help me discover  
who killed Rick's father? Right?  
Two. You also want to help me  
discover where Rick is. Right?  
Three. Okay. Then when would be the  
best time for you to meet with me?

SWANSON

All they have to say is buzz off.

HAYLEY

Then they go to the top of the list  
of who has something to hide.

SWANSON

But I can't even give them lie  
detector tests.

HAYLEY

But you'd give them a chance to tell some truth. And if you get some truths on the table you might see the picture to the puzzle.

SWANSON

And I'm not used to investigating cases with so many suspects.

HAYLEY

Why not begin by eliminating some?

Swanson takes another swig of Bailey's and shrugs.

FADE TO:

INT. MINNEAPOLIS HOMICIDE UNIT'S RECEPTION ROOM - DAY

PAUL and HAYLEY enter the Homicide Unit's reception room, female RECEPTIONIST sitting behind a bullet-proof window.

RECEPTIONIST

How may I help you?

PAUL

We're here for a three o'clock appointment. With Sergeant Dykstra.

RECEPTIONIST

I'll let her know you're here.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOMICIDE UNIT'S RECEPTION ROOM 30 MINUTES LATER - DAY

PAUL and HAYLEY skim magazines; wall clock showing 3:30.

A door in reception room opens and SGT. DYKSTRA, age 29, holding a file folder, keeps door ajar with her big hip.

PAUL

Sergeant Dykstra?

SGT. DYKSTRA

Was in a long meeting.

PAUL

I'm Paul Johnson. My wife Hayley.

Paul and Hayley rise from sofa, step toward Sgt. Dykstra.

Sgt. Dykstra holds up her right hand, traffic-cop style.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Misses Johnson? You wait here.

PAUL  
Sergeant White let Hayley and me  
meet with him. Hayley actually  
knows more about the case than me.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
I'm not Sergeant White. For now I  
only want to talk with you Mister  
Johnson. Your wife can wait here.

INT. SMALL ROOM WITH LARGE MIRROR - DAY

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Have a chair. That one there.

PAUL struggles to sit himself down upon the chair, wedged  
between the table and the wall, Paul's back pressed against  
the wall, his stomach pressed against the table top.

SERGEANT DYKSTRA pulls back a chair from her side of the  
table, places her right boot upon chair, presses her right  
hip against the table top, brushes back her jacket, revealing  
her holster and handgun.

Dykstra hands Paul a one-page document, crosses her arms,  
looks at herself in wall mirror, examines her fingernails.

Paul begins reading the document.

PAUL  
This something you wrote?

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Has my signature.

PAUL  
But it states no more can be done?

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Not unless and until Eric shows up.  
And gives us valid information.

PAUL  
I never called him Eric. Always  
called him Rick.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Far as I'm concerned I don't want  
you to waste your time on this.

PAUL  
You're not wasting my time. But I  
see this differently than you.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
You can always have a different  
opinion. But I'm telling you now  
there's nothing more to do.

PAUL  
May I ask a few questions?

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Will entertain a few. But not going  
to stand here debating with you.

PAUL  
I don't want to argue with you.  
I've always respected detectives.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
I don't need to hear compliments.

PAUL  
A week after my father was murdered  
a Terrance Anderson who at the time  
was thirteen told the police - - -

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Know what?  
(beat)  
Am not going to stand here and  
listen about a witness to a murder  
thirty-five years ago.  
(beat)  
The facts and the problems of the  
case? Always remain so. The key. If  
there's any further information? Is  
your brother Eric.

Sergeant Dykstra looks at her image in the wall mirror,  
throws back her shoulders, looks down at Paul.

PAUL  
Hey! One of the suspects was a son  
of a Minneapolis police officer.  
And his mother gave him an alibi.  
She said when my dad was murdered  
he was at home with her that night.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
So?

PAUL  
That's the worst alibi a kid could have. Yet the Minneapolis police then cleared him as a suspect.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Know what? It happens. Parents alibi for their children all the time. Wives for their husbands. Husbands for their wives. It happens. And in any court of law? It stands.

Paul exhales, draws in a deep breath. Crumples Sergeant Dykstra's one-page document, glaring at her.

PAUL  
Look. I have reason to believe the Minneapolis Police Department has been embarrassed by the way they poorly handled this case and - - -

Sergeant Dykstra STOMPS her boot upon chair and waves her hands about.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Okay. That's it. That's it. I'm not going there.

PAUL  
But I am!

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Then you certainly may. But not me.

PAUL  
I'll go back to Lieutenant Hondo in Internal Affairs.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
That's fine. You may do that.

PAUL  
And to Captain Alternat and - - -

SGT. DYKSTRA  
You may. You may do that.

PAUL  
And tell them you can't see any further way to progress from here.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
You may do that.

PAUL  
But you? A young police officer?  
Why must I get pissed off at you?

SGT. DYKSTRA  
It wouldn't bother me if you were.  
It's not personal. It's how I look  
at this cold case. The same way as  
the investigators who have had many  
more years of experience than me.  
(beat)  
And Tim Swanson too.

PAUL  
Tim Swanson?

SGT. DYKSTRA  
He told my boss he sees it the way  
I see it. And Lieutenant Skanko. He  
reminded Swanson he's retired now.

Paul SMACKS a hand on the file folder on the table.

PAUL  
Does this folder contain letters I  
mailed to O'Reilly and Skanko? The  
Mayor? The Police Chief? And to his  
assistant? Lieutenant Hondo? And  
information I sent to Lieutenant  
Skanko's boss? Captain Alternat?

SGT. DYKSTRA  
(grabbing file folder)  
This case folder's confidential.

PAUL  
May I ask another question?

SGT. DYKSTRA  
(Glancing at her watch)  
What?

PAUL  
What do you know about the victim?

SGT. DYKSTRA  
In the wrong place. At wrong time.  
(beat)

PAUL  
That's it? That's all?

SGT. DYKSTRA  
That's how Sergeant White and  
Sergeant O'Reilly saw him.

PAUL  
And as a father of five children?

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Look. Was an unpremeditated random  
murder. He was just a man in the  
wrong place at the wrong time.

PAUL  
Oh? And is that only what was said  
when a mayor of Minneapolis then  
went and presented his children  
with a posthumous medal of valor?  
On the WCCO TV evening news?

SGT. DYKSTRA  
That's not in the case file.

PAUL  
Know what else was not in the case  
file back in 1966?

SGT. DYKSTRA  
What?

PAUL  
Had an investigator interviewed my  
family? We coulda told him Rick's  
teenage buddies owned pistols. The  
exact kind of pistols witnesses  
confirmed looked exactly like  
Browning Marksman target pistols.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
What witnesses say is not always  
valid. And what's to say they  
actually saw such pistols?

Paul pushes the table away from his stomach, shoving the  
table against Sergeant Dykstra's hip and holster.

Sergeant Dykstra clasps her right hand around her holster.

PAUL  
The forensic report. Says the shell  
casings have unique markings caused  
when ejected from Browning Marksman  
Medalist target pistols. And do you  
know what those pistols look like?

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Like target pistols.

PAUL  
Long vented barrels. Supported by  
hand carved wood. Wood hand grips.  
Sculpted to conform to one's hand.  
And too expensive for a kid to buy.  
Unforgettable.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
I can imagine.

PAUL  
Here's what I imagine. My father  
may have known the teenage boys.  
He was a scoutmaster for ten years.  
Often took Rick's buddies camping.  
Up at Taylors Falls. So. There on  
the street? In front of the store?  
Could he turn his head and pretend  
he just doesn't see? If you knew  
anything about his nature. Oscar  
Edward Johnson. On that street. Was  
not in the wrong place. And not at  
the wrong time. To him he was in  
the right place. And at the right  
time.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
But we see it as a random event.

PAUL  
Random? As random as when my father  
was walking around Lake Harriet on  
a cold day? And rescued two teenage  
boys from drowning after they'd  
tipped their canoe? Those drowning  
boys saw my father as being in the  
right place. And at the right time.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
But don't you see? Your father's  
case is an unpremeditated random  
murder. It is what it is.

PAUL  
Sergeant? How many times must you  
look up before you can see the sky?

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Sounds like a line from a song.

Dykstra glances at her watch, glances at mirror on the wall, removes her booted foot from chair, and adjusts her jacket to cover the pistol on her hip.

Dykstra places her crumpled document into the file folder, turns to door, opens it, and motions to Paul to follow her.

LIEUTENANT SKANKO, outside and near door, adjusts his tie as Dykstra's eyes make contact with Lieutenant Skanko's eyes, and she gives him a quick thumbs up.

LT. SKANKO  
Good afternoon Sergeant.

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Good afternoon Lieutenant.

Paul glares into Skanko's eyes as their eyes meet.

INT/EXT. CITY HALL - CONTINUOUS SCENE - DAY

PAUL and HAYLEY stomp down staircase leading to atrium lobby of City Hall and rush by huge STATUE of THE FATHER OF WATERS.

Leaving City Hall, Paul and Hayley approach their parked Subaru, a parking ticket under windshield wiper, blowing in the wind. Paul yanks the ticket from the windshield wiper.

Paul and Hayley enter Subaru and Paul turns on the radio.

SOUND-OVER: "I FOUGHT THE LAW" SUNG by Bobby Fuller.

Hayley shuts off car radio as rain starts pelting windshield and Subaru pulls from curb, BURNING RUBBER, and speeds off.

HAYLEY  
Careful. Don't need another ticket.

EXT. PARK HILLTOP OVERLOOKING LAKE HARRIET - RAIN-SWEPT DAY

PAUL and HAYLEY approach SERGEANT BONN as he writes upon a note pad while seated at picnic table beneath roof of shelter that overlooks Lake Harriet, rain sweeping across the lake.

BONN  
Didn't expect you to show up here  
for another half hour. So how did  
it go with Sergeant Dykstra?

Paul and Hayley sit down at the picnic table, facing Bonn.

Bonn puts down his pen and looks from Paul to Hayley.

HAYLEY

The bitch wouldn't let me meet with her and Paul. Told me to wait in the reception room.

PAUL

She sees no reason to investigate the case until Rick shows up.

BONN

But Rick's been missing thirty years now. What's she thinking?

HAYLEY

She doesn't want to think.

BONN

Know what I now think? Lieutenant Skanko sent Dykstra into a room with you today for only one reason. To shut you down.

PAUL

And she has no interest in talking with any witness to a murder that took place thirty-five years ago.

HAYLEY

But something a fifteen-year old was afraid to tell police could now be something he wants to tell. As hard as it is to tell a secret? It's harder to keep a secret.

BONN

They don't want their previously poorly conducted and tainted investigation to resurface. A cop's son was a suspect until his mother provided him an alibi. And then? The forensic evidence vanished.

HAYLEY

So what do we do now?

Bonn rips page from his note pad and hands it to Paul.

BONN

Here's a writer. Jack Ellison. He can get your story into a magazine. Like Atlantic Monthly. Punch his phone number. Set up a meeting.

INT. PAUL AND HAYLEY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS SCENE - NIGHT

PAUL in bed with HAYLEY, looks at clock. Midnight.

Paul stumbles from bedroom into kitchen, then into dining room, where he places record player's needle onto a record resting upon turntable.

SOUND-OVER: "RIVER OF DREAMS" by BILLY JOEL begins PLAYING.

BILLY JOEL (V.O.)  
 IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT  
 I GO WALKING IN MY SLEEP  
 FROM THE MOUNTAINS OF FAITH  
 TO THE RIVER SO DEEP.  
 I MUST BE LOOKIN' FOR SOMETHING.  
 SOMETHING SACRED I LOST.  
 BUT THE RIVER IS WIDE  
 AND IT'S TOO HARD TO CROSS.

Paul shuffles toward dining-room window.

BILLY JOEL (V.O.)  
 EVEN THOUGH I KNOW THE RIVER IS  
 WIDE I WALK DOWN EVERY EVENING AND  
 STAND ON THE SHORE.  
 I TRY TO CROSS TO THE OPPOSITE SIDE  
 SO I CAN FINALLY FIND WHAT I'VE  
 BEEN LOOKING FOR.

Paul stares out rain-swept window at glowing street lamps.

BILLY JOEL (V.O.)  
 IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT  
 I GO WALKING IN MY SLEEP.  
 THROUGH THE VALLEY OF FEAR  
 TO A RIVER SO DEEP.  
 I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING  
 TAKEN OUT OF MY SOUL.  
 SOMETHING I'D NEVER LOSE.  
 SOMETHING SOMEBODY STOLE.

Paul rubs his eyes.

BILLY JOEL (V.O.)  
 I DON'T KNOW WHY I GO WALKING AT  
 NIGHT BUT NOW I'M TIRED AND I DON'T  
 WANT TO WALK ANYMORE.  
 I HOPE IT DOESN'T TAKE THE REST OF  
 MY LIFE UNTIL I FIND WHAT IT IS  
 I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

PAUL and HAYLEY and JACK ELLISON seated at table, sip coffee in Dunn Brothers Coffee Shop.

PAUL

Thanks for listening Jack. So is our story one you'd want to write?

JACK

It's just another unsolved crime story. Just another missing-person story. And just another story about a police department's cover-up.

HAYLEY

You saying all that's not enough? What more do you need?

JACK

My editors want stories that end with a resolution. Closure.

HAYLEY

It could end with Paul no longer clinging to his false notions. Such as his once false notion that some of our city's homicide detectives are as conscientious as Columbo.

PAUL

But that's not what's making me wake up in the middle of the night. Justice attained cannot heal pain. Something greater's needed now. Something greater than justice. Something far more powerful than just justice.

JACK

More powerful? What could that be?

Paul adds sugar to his coffee and slowly stirs it.

PAUL

Maybe the power to forgive crimes of others against us? Just as we need others to forgive our crimes against them. How's that sound?

JACK

Sounds more like fiction than fact.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

SUGGESTED SOUND-OVER: Aaron Copeland's "GROVER'S CORNERS."

JACK, HAYLEY and PAUL emerge from coffee shop and stroll down Xerxes Avenue toward the intersection of Xerxes Corners.

PAUL

Mostly just antique shops along here now. And that coffee shop? When I was younger it used to be Southwest Hardware Store.

JACK

Back when your father was murdered down there around the corner?

PAUL

Back when kind hearts and gentle people cared about their neighbors.

As Paul and Hayley and Jack continue toward intersection of Xerxes Corners, Jack halts them in front of an antique shop's window display, Jack peering into the display window.

JACK

My dad gave me an old snow sled. Just like the sled in this window. Was his sled. When he was a boy.

PAUL

And that mahogany clock there? It's just like the clock that ruled the mantle over my family's fireplace. Intoning mellow bongs on the hour.

JACK

It's as though each artifact holds something mysterious within it. A secret perhaps. A story. And look at those wooden yo-yos.

PAUL

This store was a five and dime. There'd be as many as forty boys lined up along this sidewalk.

JACK

What for?

PAUL

The District Duncan Yo-Yo contests. And when a kid couldn't do a trick? The kid would be eliminated.

JACK  
But what if it got down to several  
kids who could do all the tricks?

PAUL  
There'd be a sudden death.

Jack stands back from store window, turns, looks at Paul.

JACK  
A sudden death?

PAUL  
The 1953 District Champion Contest.  
Me standing along side Steve Bash.  
And we did all the required yo-yo  
tricks. So it became sudden death.

HAYLEY  
What was sudden death?

PAUL  
Who could do the most loop the  
loops. And I did about one hundred.

HAYLEY  
And Steve?

PAUL  
He did about fifty loop the loops.  
But Steve's yo-yo string snapped.  
Smashed window of a passing car.  
Had the driver not had his car  
window rolled up? Steve's yo-yo  
coulda killed him.

CUT TO BLACK:

EXT. - LAKE HARRIET SHORELINE - DAY

PAUL, HAYLEY, and SERGEANT BONN skip stones upon a smooth  
surface of Lake Harriet as JOGGERs run by them on pathway.

BONN  
Jack said your story lacks closure?

HAYLEY  
So who do we go to now?

BONN  
The mayor.

## PAUL

But I've already gone to the mayor.  
With your list of nine steps a  
detective could take. Like a map.  
And then Sergeant Dykstra? She  
never took the nine steps when  
assigned the case.

## HAYLEY

And Paul tried to get Lieutenant  
Hondo involved. Hondo worked for  
the mayor and in Internal Affairs.  
So no way to back to the mayor.

## BONN

But the mayor's holding a City Hall  
meeting next week. The mayor's  
looking for a new police chief.  
He's inviting suggestions from the  
public. About what a police chief  
should be most concerned about.

## HAYLEY

And Paul can be heard once again.

SEAGULL swoops above Hayley, Bonn, Paul, flying above Lake  
Harriet toward downtown Minneapolis skyline and City Hall.

INT. MINNEAPOLIS CITY HALL - CONTINUOUS SCENE - DAY

Carrying a leather satchel, PAUL enters atrium of City Hall,  
pauses to admire STATUE of FATHER OF WATERS, reclining upon  
its coffin-shaped pedestal. Paul turns toward the open door  
of assembly room, enters, and strides toward the 40 PEOPLE  
seated before the room's platform.

Paul sits in the front row, next to a middle-aged woman,  
ANGIE, and engages Angie in an inaudible conversation.

Paul glances around room and sees LIEUTENANT HONDO standing  
against back wall wearing a three-piece suit. Paul waves to  
Lieutenant Hondo and Lieutenant Hondo waves back at Paul.

MAYOR WHEATLY enters the assembly room and sits behind table  
on the platform as the assemblage of 40 people hush.

## MAYOR WHEATLY

As you all know I'm holding this  
meeting to receive your welcomed  
suggestions about who should be our  
next police chief. I see Angie's  
here again. So we may as well begin  
with you Angie.

## ANGIE

I yield my time to the gentleman beside me. Our police department fails to properly investigate his father's murder case. Despite that a Minneapolis mayor had given his father a posthumous medal of valor. He should sue your pants off.

Paul stands and glances at a note pad in his hands.

## PAUL

Thanks Angie. I request the new chief be someone who increases the Homicide Unit's budget. So more murder cases get solved. I want a Homicide Unit that has the time and the talent and the leadership to properly investigate the murder of my father. We don't have that now.

## MAYOR WHEATLY

Increasing the police department's budget is indeed important. So who else has a suggestion?

Angie stands, note pad in hand, as Paul exits assembly room.

Lieutenant Hondo follows Paul out of the assembly room.

INT. CITY HALL'S MARBLE ATRIUM - DAY

LIEUTENANT HONDO pursues PAUL as Paul lumbers toward the STATUE of THE FATHER OF WATERS.

## LT. HONDO

Paul? Hold up. Did Captain Alternat ever respond to your complaint?

Paul unclasps his satchel and pulls a document from it.

## PAUL

Captain Alternat sent me an e-mail. And here's her own words: "After Sergeant O'Reilly retired Sergeant Dykstra reviewed the entire case file and met with several other investigators. The conclusion of each was a thorough investigation was done at the time of the murder and all possible avenues of investigation were attempted."

LT. HONDO  
But in 1966 the case was poorly---

PAUL  
And get a load of what else she wrote to me: "I found the initial investigators, given the resources available in 1966, conducted a full investigation. And took steps to try and track where the murder weapons originated. But without records automation at manufacturer found that not possible."

LT. HONDO  
But you gave Homicide a list of your brother's buddies who owned the same exact kind of pistols.

PAUL  
And all the spent shell casings? All five? They vanished from the police department's Property Room.

LT. HONDO  
Seems unreal.

PAUL  
Unreal? Know what's really unreal? My father raised his sons and daughters to respect policemen.

LT. HONDO  
What's so unreal about that?

PAUL  
Your police department's unreal.

LT. HONDO  
What about that retired homicide detective you hired. Swanson?

PAUL  
Swanson only talked to two of Rick's former high school buddies. Said the first guy. Neal. Broke down. Crying. While he and Neal had lunch together. Neal told Swanson my father was the father he had always wished was his father. Swanson felt Neal is way too nice to have ever murdered a man.

LT. HONDO

But did Swanson ask nice Neal if he and Rick's teenage buddies had access to Browning target pistols?

PAUL

No. And know what else amazed me?

LT. HONDO

What?

PAUL

Swanson told me he didn't feel qualified to continue on with investigating Rick's buddies.

LT. HONDO

Why?

PAUL

Said he's only investigated cases involving bad guys. Rick's buddies? The two he talked to? They don't seem to him to be like bad guys.

LT. HONDO

Oh? And so who's the other nice guy Swanson met with?

PAUL

Manny. And after Rick vanished? Manny became my best friend.

LT. HONDO

Is Manny still your best friend?

PAUL

After I told my brother Boris I was working to find out who may have killed our father? Manny's never called me. Not one phone call.

LT. HONDO

How many of Rick's former high school classmates responded to your letter you sent to them?

PAUL

More than twelve. Most suggested I should call Manny.

LT. HONDO

So did you call him?

PAUL

No. And I won't. I refuse to.

LT. HONDO

Why?

PAUL

I wanted Manny to call me. After  
Swanson had spoken with Manny.

LT. HONDO

Why's that?

PAUL

Swanson told Manny we had received  
new information about my father's  
murder. And new info about Rick's  
disappearance. But Manny? He never  
once asked Swanson what that new  
information was.

LT. HONDO

Why you suppose Manny didn't ask?

PAUL

Maybe there's some things we can be  
afraid to hear.

Paul turns, looks up at the STATUE of THE FATHER OF WATERS.

Hondo places his left hand upon Paul's right shoulder.

LT. HONDO

Afraid to hear?

PAUL

(turning, facing Hondo)  
You asking me? Asking me if I'm  
afraid to hear something I might  
not want to hear?

LT. HONDO

Takes courage to ask questions can  
result in answers you don't want.  
Courage. Especially if the answers  
you don't want are valid. And from  
people you love. Or had loved.

SUGGESTED SOUND-OVER: "LET IT BE" by The Pianos of Cha'n.

PAUL

Oh Lieutenant Hondo. A wise old  
woman gave me a prayer to say.  
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

It goes like this: Give me flawless  
courage. Wild reckless generosity.  
And a light heart.

LT. HONDO

A good prayer.

PAUL

She said courage comes from love.  
And so does generosity. And said  
when you give away your last nickel  
Paul, you'll need a light heart.

LT. HONDO

Know what gives me a light heart?

PAUL

Cops can have a light heart?

LT. HONDO

Sometimes.

PAUL

So what can give you a light heart?

LT. HONDO

The power to forgive.

PAUL

I know a magazine writer who would  
say that sounds like fiction.

LT. HONDO

Know what the difference is between  
fact and fiction?

PAUL

Facts are only about facts.  
History's mostly about facts.  
So are homicide detectives.  
Like Sergeant Friday in Dragnet.  
Just the facts ma'am. And fiction?  
Fiction's mostly about feelings.  
Compassion. Empathy.

LT. HONDO

And? Where does that come from?

PAUL

Straight from the heart.

Hondo hugs Paul and Paul's right hand clasps Hondo, below and along-side the left armpit of Hondo's suit coat.

LT. HONDO  
Careful Paul. That's my pistol  
you're hugging. And that's a fact.

Paul smiles, steps up to the statue of the Father of Waters, Hondo looking up at the Father of Waters from behind Paul.

Paul gazes up at Father of Waters reclined atop coffin-shaped pedestal, and rubs The Father of Waters' big toe.

LT. HONDO (CONT'D)  
It's good luck to rub his big toe.  
Least that's what I've been told.

PAUL  
It is? Who was he?

LT. HONDO  
Not was. Is. The Father of Waters.  
Someone told me that the word  
Mississippi is an American Indian  
word. It means Father of Waters.  
During the Civil War the Battle of  
Vicksburg opened the Mississippi  
River for the Union's navy. And  
Abraham Lincoln declared the Father  
of Waters now again goes unvexed.  
And toward the sea.

Paul smiles, shakes Hondo's hand, and strides toward the City Hall's doors.

Paul abruptly stops to fasten the clasp of his satchel.

A BURLY MAN striding behind Paul collides into Paul's back.

A stack of manila envelopes cradled in Burly Man's arms SPLATTERS upon marble floor.

Burly Man falls to his knees.

Paul turns, looks down at the Burly Man and all the manila envelopes scattered upon the floor.

Paul bends down upon one knee, gathers up all the envelopes from the floor, and extends them to the Burly Man, as he grimaces and rubs his knees.

PAUL  
Sorry sir. My fault. Shouldn't have  
suddenly stopped before getting to  
the doorway.  
(beat)  
Oh my god! You Harmon Killebrew?

BURLY MAN  
Hey. I've survived much worse  
collisions. And yep. I'm Harmon.

Paul, still down upon his bent knee, gazes up at Harmon, as Harmon smiles and pats Paul's head.

Harmon limps toward City Hall's doors, as Paul glances back, over his right shoulder, at The Father of Waters.

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

PAUL holds open City Hall door for HARMON, and follows him onto sidewalk in front of City Hall.

As Harmon limps down sidewalk Paul approaches LIEUTENANT SKANKO and SERGEANT DYKSTRA, the two smoking cigarettes near the City Hall's front doors.

PAUL  
Lieutenant Skanko?

LT. SKANKO  
Yes?

PAUL  
See that man limping away from us?

LT. SKANKO  
What about him?

PAUL  
He's The Killer!

LT. SKANKO  
The killer?

PAUL  
Yes!

LT. SKANKO  
Oh my god! Yes! Harmon Killebrew!

SGT. DYKSTRA  
Who's Harmon Killebrew?

LT. SKANKO  
Dammit Dykstra. You telling me you  
don't know who The Killer is?

CUT TO:

EXT. INTERSECTION NEXT TO CITY HALL - DAY

PAUL stands behind HARMON at intersection as the traffic light turns green, and follows Harmon across the intersection toward a 2001 Buick parked across the street.

Harmon bends down in front the Buick's passenger door, tries opening it, but can't, because of the chest-high stack of manila envelopes he cradles in his arms.

Paul rushes toward the Buick, opens passenger door.

Harmon places the pile of manila envelopes upon the Buick's passenger seat and turns toward Paul.

HARMON

Thanks. You didn't have to do that.

PAUL

Let's say I was in the right place.  
At the right time. Let's just call  
it a random act. Let's just call it  
a random act of kindness.

HARMON

God bless you.

PAUL

He often has. And you too. You sir.  
You are loved.

WIPE TO:

INT. WINDOWED THIRD-FLOOR OFFICE - DAY

FELICIA, age 51, seated and facing PAUL at his office desk, wall calendar showing the day's date being June 9, 2002. Engraved upon open door: PAUL JOHNSON - CAREER COUNSELOR.

FELICIA

Really appreciate your kind advice.

PAUL

And we're almost done gathering  
what I need to write your resume.  
But Felicia? There's just one more  
thing to include. Seeing as you  
never attended college? Did you  
graduate from high school?

FELICIA

From Southwest High School. Here in  
Minneapolis. Near Lake Harriet.

PAUL

Really? And what year?

FELICIA

Must we include what year?

PAUL

No. But it's best we do.

FELICIA

Well. Okay. I guess. 1969.

PAUL

Southwest High School? 1969?

FELICIA

I try not to admit I'm that old.

PAUL

Any chance you knew Rick Johnson?

FELICIA

We graduated together.

PAUL

Rick's my youngest brother.

FELICIA

You kidding me?

PAUL

Did you know him well?

FELICIA

Rick was my lover in high school.

PAUL

Oh my god! Amazing!

FELICIA

You really his brother?

PAUL

Don't recall you. But back then was  
in the Air Force. When Rick was in  
senior high school. During Vietnam.

FELICIA

Mostly spent time in his bedroom.  
Where he'd sing to me. And his  
bedroom? Had a baby-grand piano.  
And a fireplace.

PAUL

You go to your class reunion last year? The reunion on the riverboat? On the Mississippi River?

Felicia fidgets in her chair.

FELICIA

Never go to reunions. And you're the Paul Johnson who mailed me a letter about your father? And Rick?

PAUL

He talk with you about our father? How he was murdered by teenagers? Who may have been Rick's age?

FELICIA

He never wanted to talk about it. Any clue where Rick may have gone?

PAUL

Weeks before Rick vanished he got a letter from a girlfriend who was living in Ames Iowa. Back in 1972.

FELICIA

And did you read her letter?

PAUL

Was tucked next a photo. In a old dusty photo album my mom gave me last Christmas. A letter my mother had found in Rick's apartment. Just after Rick mysteriously vanished.

FELICIA

Who was she?

PAUL

His girlfriend? Was Nanette Nibs. And in her letter to Rick Nanette expressed she could not join him. On a trip he had asked her to take with him.

FELICIA

You able to contact Nanette?

PAUL

Contacted her sister. Her sister told me Nanette had disappeared for four years. And she got involved with some big-time drug dealers.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

Nanette disappeared soon after she had written that letter to Rick.

FELICIA

Where'd she disappear to?

PAUL

Colorado. Keystone. And a private investigator got me a computer printout from the Department of Motor Vehicles. The printout showed a guy with Rick's full name. Born same day and year Rick was born. Had warrants out for his arrest.

FELICIA

What for?

PAUL

For failing to pay traffic fines in California and Colorado.

FELICIA

When were those traffic fines?

PAUL

Years after Rick disappeared.

FELICIA

So what you do with that report?

PAUL

Gave it to my brother Boris.

FELICIA

Don't remember him.

PAUL

Boris was in Boston when Rick was in high school. Getting a PhD in German at Harvard. Then got a law degree. Then went off to Seattle. To become a prosecutor for King County. Then my entire family moved there. All living in Seattle now.

Felicia bites the index finger of her right hand.

FELICIA

So you gave Boris that report? An Eric Palmer Johnson? Birthday January twenty-two? With warrants in California and Colorado?

PAUL  
Did I say his middle name's Palmer?  
And yes. Born January twenty-two.  
So I gave the report to Boris. He  
said he'd be going to Sacramento.

FELICIA  
And? And so what happened?

PAUL  
Boris said he misplaced it.

FELICIA  
Misplaced it? You keep a copy?

PAUL  
Should have. But the damn computer  
printout was way too wide to place  
on my copy machine.

(beat)  
Truth is? I often blame myself for  
Rick vanishing.

FELICIA  
How's that?

PAUL  
Fact is I encouraged him to vanish.  
Told him if I were him I'd head  
west. Become your own man Rick. Not  
just someone we want you to become.

FELICIA  
Think he did that?

PAUL  
For all I know? Could be in prison.  
Maybe doing time for drug dealing.  
Or could just as well be dead.

FELICIA  
I'm with a man who just got out of  
prison for dealing drugs. He's on  
probation now. Looking for work.

Paul looks up at calendar on wall, showing it's June 9th.

PAUL  
I'll have your resume ready by the  
eleventh. Tomorrow's my birthday.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PAUL'S WINDOWED THIRD-FLOOR OFFICE - DAY

PAUL seated at his desk, types at his computer.

The flip calendar on wall shows June 10th.

Paul's office door opens and female RECEPTIONIST enters.

RECEPTIONIST

Excuse me Paul. Man's out here. A  
Mark Peters. Says needs help with  
his resume. But doesn't have an  
appointment. Have time to see him?

PAUL

I'm writing. But okay. Send him in.

MARK PETERS, seemingly early fifties, tall, lanky, wearing jeans, western-style shirt and cowboy boots, sits down in chair before Paul's desk, brushing back his shoulder-length golden hair from his bearded and haggard face.

Paul rubs his arms as though the office temperature has suddenly chilled by more than 20 degrees.

MARK

(whiskey voice)

Hi. Mark Peters. I'm needin' to  
make me look good on paper. My  
resume sucks. How much ya charge?

Paul presses his fingers to forehead and squints at Mark.

PAUL

Most often? Hundred-fifty dollars.  
But you only pay me if and when you  
like what I've written for you.

MARK

Here's mine. How's it look?

As Paul examines Mark's resume, Paul's hands tremble. He offers Mark a Pall Mall cigarette, and they both light up.

Mark stares intently at Paul. But lowers head, his long golden locks of hair cascading over his face whenever Paul looks up from the resume and steals furtive glances at Mark.

PAUL

It lacks what employers look for.

MARK

What they look for?

PAUL

Results you can deliver. Results they require. Verifiable results. What you've been accomplishing during the past thirty years.

MARK

I've kinda skipped around a bit.

Paul points to Mark's resume.

PAUL

Some California surf-board shops. Some ski shops in Tahoe. And then owning some ski shops in Colorado during the past ten years. But it's not clear what you achieved and did with those shops you owned.

Mark takes deep drag from cigarette, exhales cloud of smoke.

MARK

Mostly coatings.

PAUL

Coatings?

MARK

Coatings.

PAUL

What do you mean by coatings?

MARK

Chemical applications. Coatings for surf boards in California. Coatings for skis in Colorado.

PAUL

Looks here you went to college in Seattle. Back in 1973. I have a brother who moved out to Seattle back in '73.

MARK

(lowering face)

Took some chemistry courses in Seattle. Learned about coatings.

PAUL

That include paint? Varnishes?

MARK

Paint. Lacquers. Sealants. Anything  
that's a protective coating.

PAUL

A protective coating.

MARK

Uh huh.

Paul looks long and hard at Mark as Mark avoids eye contact.

Mark's face slowly morphs into an image of Rick's face when Rick was 21, goes out of focus, and returns to the bearded image of Mark's face.

Paul shakes his head, removes his glasses, and rubs his eyes.

PAUL

Ever considered working for  
Cargill here in Minneapolis? My  
mother married a chemist after my  
father died. He worked in their  
chemical coatings lab.

MARK

Could he help me get a job there?

PAUL

Their marriage only lasted a few  
years. My mother had a hard time  
being accepted by his two sons.  
Their mother died less than a year  
before their father married my mom.  
The man's gotta be retired by now.  
If he's still alive.

MARK

Think you can make a resume make me  
look good? Make me look successful?

PAUL

What made you decide to come here  
to Minnesota?

MARK

Had friends here once.

PAUL

High school friends?

MARK

Connections.

PAUL  
There's nothing here about where  
you went to high school.

MARK  
Ames. Ames Iowa.

PAUL  
Ever meet or know a Nanette Nibs?

Mark glances at his watch. Stares up at ceiling.

MARK  
There once was a Nibs sporting  
goods store down there in Ames.

PAUL  
Nanette was close to my youngest  
brother. But I never met her. And  
according to her sister? Nanette  
passed away. Only a few months ago.

Paul places his elbows upon his desk, covers his eyes with his hands, and peers through his spread fingers at Mark fidgeting in his chair and avoiding eye contact with Paul.

Mark glances at his watch.

MARK  
Gotta split, man. A meter to pay.  
Sorry. But thanks for the advice.

Mark leaps from chair, spins, and hustles out of office.

Paul SLAMS Mark's resume upon his desk.

Paul rises from his chair, stumbles toward his office door, turns, teeters toward his office window, opens window blinds.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT/EXT. PAUL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

PAUL watches MARK PETERS fold himself into a mint-condition green 1966 Ford Mustang parked three stories below.

SUGGESTED SOUND-OVER: "BLACK SHEEP BOY" SUNG by TIM HARDIN.

TIM HARDIN (V.O.)  
HERE I AM BACK HOME AGAIN.  
I'M HERE TO REST.  
ALL THEY ASK IS WHERE I'VE BEEN  
KNOWING I'VE BEEN WEST.

RECEPTIONIST enters and hands Paul a small sealed envelope.

Paul rips open the envelope.

TIM HARDIN (V.O.)  
I'M THE FAMILY'S UNOWNED BOY.  
GOLDEN CURLS OF ENVIED HAIR.  
PRETTY GIRLS WITH FACES FAIR  
SEE THE SHINE IN THE BLACK SHEEP  
BOY.

Paul watches Mustang motor from parking lot and vanish.

Paul closes his window blinds.

TIM HARDIN (V.O.)  
IF YOU LOVE ME  
LET ME LIVE IN PEACE.

Paul pulls a baseball card from the envelope, an autographed card. An autographed baseball card of Harmon Killebrew.

TIM HARDIN (V.O.)  
PLEASE UNDERSTAND  
THAT THE BLACK SHEEP  
CAN WEAR THE GOLDEN FLEECE  
AND HOLD A WINNING HAND.

Paul places the baseball card in his shirt pocket.

Paul phones number on Mark Peters' resume. HEARS automated phone message: "THE NUMBER DIALED IS NO LONGER IN SERVICE."

Paul gently places telephone's receiver into its cradle.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. PAUL AND HAYLEY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

PAUL and HAYLEY wash and wipe dinner dishes at kitchen sink.

HAYLEY  
Why didn't you simply ask him?

PAUL  
Wanted him to tell me. To confess.  
All he had to do was confess.

HAYLEY  
Maybe he was afraid to explain why  
he vanished.

PAUL

Could have admitted it. Without me asking. Instead he just sat there.

HAYLEY

You could have told him that you understand why he vanished.

PAUL

Before someone can be forgiven they have to confess. Don't they? Dammit. He didn't confess.

HAYLEY

You're the one needs forgiveness. You and Boris. You both fail to seize truth. When it sits right in front of you. Boris never checked into Rick's traffic violations. And you failed to ask this Mark Peters if he's Rick? Makes me wonder if his middle name's Art.

PAUL

Art?

HAYLEY

Art. The man who married your mother. The man whose sons are named Mark and Peter. Duh.

Paul tosses dish towel onto kitchen countertop.

PAUL

Maybe I am afraid of the truth. Afraid to discover Rick became a god damn drug dealer. And then got his ass slapped into a prison.

HAYLEY

Or maybe he's now in the Witness Protection Program. And can't let you know. How many times must you and your brother Boris look up before you see the sky?

PAUL

Sounds like a line from a song.

HAYLEY

Blowin' in the wind.

Paul trudges from kitchen into dining room, grasps book on table, plops upon chair, opens book to a book-marked page.

EXT/INT. COURTYARD IN FRONT OF TALL BUILDING - DAY

Flags fly in stiff wind before entrance of tall building.  
PAUL enters the building and strides toward elevators.

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

PAUL pauses before door sign: MINNESOTA BUREAU OF CRIMINAL APPREHENSION, opens door, waves at female RECEPTIONIST.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

PAUL seated at table beside MARY, age 40, her ID card attached to her suit jacket, Mary paging through documents within case-file folder, Paul rubbing his clasped hands.

MARY

Before we investigate homicide cold cases? We first need an official request from a police department.

PAUL

But can't you just ask them?

MARY

And most cold cases we investigate now involve DNA. Your father's cold case? Doesn't have any DNA. Sorry.

PAUL

So where can I turn to now?

Mary hands Paul a glossy brochure, the large logo of the University of Minnesota upon its cover.

Paul glides his index finger beneath the brochure's title: "Center for Restorative Justice."

MARY

I suggest they may help you.

EXT/INT. UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MINNEAPOLIS CAMPUS - DAY

PAUL on campus mall, enters Mayo Building, and approaches sign above a door: CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE. Paul hesitates before opening the door, shrugs his shoulders.

PAUL

Oh well. Why not?

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Seated at office table next to PAUL, ANTONIA, age 58, hands Paul a University of Minnesota course catalog.

ANTONIA

The course begins next week.

PAUL

The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension says the class might help me.

ANTONIA

Our Restorative Justice Class is for those victimized by a crime. It primarily facilitates participation in restorative practices.

PAUL

Restorative practices?

ANTONIA

Practices that foster forgiveness. And healing. Restorative practices often used within ancient cultures.

PAUL

How's that work?

ANTONIA

Through small-group participation. Sharing and healing circles rooted in Native American traditions. And meditation rituals. Native American meditation rituals that facilitate forgiveness and healing.

PAUL

You know what Mississippi means?  
It's a Native American word.  
Meaning Father of Waters.

INT. PAUL AND HAYLEY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS SCENE - MIDNIGHT

PAUL in bed with HAYLEY, wakes up, looks at clock. Midnight.

Paul sits up in bed. Rubs his face.

Tottering from bedroom into kitchen, Paul wobbles into the dark dining room.

Paul places record-player's needle onto vinyl record resting upon his record player's turntable.

SOUND-OVER: "RIVER OF DREAMS" by BILLY JOEL begins PLAYING.

BILLY JOEL (V.O.)  
 IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT I GO  
 WALKING IN MY SLEEP.  
 THROUGH THE JUNGLE OF DOUBT TO THE  
 RIVER SO DEEP.

Paul stumbles into dining-room table, plops upon chair as lightning silently flashes outside the dining-room windows.

Paul grasps book upon table, opens book, and turns pages, although the room is too dark to read the pages.

BILLY JOEL (V.O.)  
 I KNOW I'M SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING.  
 SOMETHING SO UNDEFINED THAT IT CAN  
 ONLY BE SEEN BY THE EYES OF THE  
 BLIND.  
 IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.

Paul SLAMS the book upon dining-room table, intermittent cloud-to-cloud lightning flashes illuminating the book's title on the book's cover: Oedipus Rex.

BILLY JOEL (V.O.)  
 NOT SURE ABOUT A LIFE AFTER THIS.  
 GOD KNOWS I'VE NEVER BEEN  
 A SPIRITUAL MAN. BAPTIZED BY THE  
 FIRE I WADE INTO THE RIVER THAT IS  
 RUNNING TO THE PROMISED LAND.

Paul lumbers to dark kitchen, pauses before sink, turns on faucet, splashes water upon face, shuffles toward bedroom.

BILLY JOEL (V.O.)  
 IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT  
 I GO WALKING IN MY SLEEP  
 THROUGH THE DESERT OF TRUTH  
 TO THE RIVER SO DEEP.

Paul reclines upon bed, turns toward slumbering Hayley.

His right arm around Hayley's waist, Paul closes his eyes.

BILLY JOEL (V.O.)  
 WE ALL END IN THE OCEAN.  
 WE ALL START IN THE STREAMS.  
 WE'RE ALL CARRIED ALONG  
 BY THE RIVER OF DREAMS.  
 IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. RIVERBOAT DOCKED ON WESTERN EDGE OF THE ST. CROIX RIVER AT MINNESOTA INTERSTATE PARK, TAYLORS FALLS, MINNESOTA - DUSK

SUGGESTED SOUND-OVER: "THE WATER IS WIDE" by Mark Knopfler.

A rusting 1966 VW "Bug" motors into an empty parking area, below and between steep canyon walls embracing the flowing water of the St. Croix River at Minnesota Interstate Park.

PATRICIA, now at age 72, parks the tiny VW, HAYLEY beside her in passenger seat, PAUL seated in the VW's back seat.

Alone in the parking area, they unfold from the VW and amble toward the river dock and a moored paddlewheel riverboat.

SEAGULL perches near nest, on branch of tree wedged high above and behind them on the canyon's western wall.

Hayley and Patricia pause, gazing at river's eastern canyon wall shimmering from the light cast by the setting sun.

Paul ambles on alone, toward the riverboat's dock.

Paul sits down upon the riverboat's dock, his legs dangling over the dock's edge.

Paul slips off tennis shoes, socks, dips toe into the river, and serenely slips into deep meditation.

AN APPARITION OF OSCAR slowly appears, an apparition of Oscar sitting beside Paul, Oscar's left hand upon Paul's right shoulder, Oscar giving Paul's shoulder a gentle squeeze.

Oscar leans into Paul and whispers into Paul's right ear.

Paul rubs his right ear with his left hand.

Hayley and Patricia turn and traverse smooth rock slabs along the river canyon's pathway, leaving Paul alone with Oscar.

The sun sets as Mark Knopfler's instrumental rendition of "The Water Is Wide" FADES.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT/INT. PATRICIA'S VW BUG - CONTINUOUS SCENE - NIGHT

PAUL seated in VW's back seat, PATRICIA and HAYLEY in front seats, as Patricia drives the VW into another parking area: The Scenic Overlook high above the St. Croix River.

Patricia parks the VW under the globe of a lighted lamppost.

PAUL

Patricia? Bet you don't know what  
my father loved most about you.

PATRICIA

How we could both sit in silence.  
Together. While never ever feeling  
uncomfortable.

Paul nods at Patricia's wet eyes reflected in the rear-view  
mirror, and then gazes up at the first night star.

HAYLEY

Should we ask him now?

PATRICIA

Sure. Why not?

HAYLEY

We want to ask about back there. By  
the river. Don't get upset but ---

PAUL

Upset?

HAYLEY

His hand on your shoulder. And him  
whispering in your ear. Oh my god.  
So we just stood there. Afraid we'd  
break the spell.

PATRICIA

First I only sensed him sitting  
beside you. But then. I swear.  
There he was. Sitting with you. The  
two of you. Side by side. What did  
he say to you?

PAUL

Let it be.

PATRICIA

I can't. What did he say to you?

Paul leans forward, his head between Patricia and Hayley.

PAUL

He whispered let it be.  
Whispered everything's okay.  
Whispered let it be.  
Whispered it reassuringly.

Paul gently rests his left hand upon Patricia's right  
shoulder, his right hand upon Hayley's left shoulder.

Light cascading from the lamppost globe above the VW "Bug" sparkles Hayley's wet blue eyes and glitters her wet cheeks as Hayley sighs and smiles brightly.

HAYLEY  
We didn't dare break the spell.

Patricia wipes her eyes and gazes up at evening's first star.

PATRICIA  
What else you hear him say?

Paul looks up at the lighted globe atop the nearby lamppost.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVERBOAT DOCK ON WESTERN EDGE OF THE ST. CROIX RIVER AT MINNESOTA INTERSTATE PARK, TAYLORS FALLS, MINNESOTA - SUNSET

OSCAR, seated beside PAUL on the riverboat's dock, rests his left hand on Paul's right shoulder, Paul's eyes glowing in a serene meditative trance as Oscar whispers to Paul.

OSCAR  
Forgiveness doesn't undo what's been done Paul. Forgiveness accepts what's been done. And flows onward from there.

A large branch extending from a dead maple tree wedged upon ledge of the eastern cliff wall on other side of river SNAPS, RUMBLES down cliff, and SPLASHES into the flowing river.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Unless you forgive you cannot love.  
Without love life has no meaning.

(beat)

Through forgiveness you gain freedom. To learn from experience. Forgiveness is not a form of charity. It benefits both ways. It's as beneficial to forgive as it is to be forgiven.

(beat)

Forgiveness illuminates every moment of living. Forgiveness illuminates the best in you.

(beat)

Forgiveness is power.

Paul rests his right hand around Oscar's right shoulder, smiles, and exhales a serene sigh.

EXT. TREE WEDGED UPON THE WESTERN CLIFF'S WALL - NIGHT

SUGGESTED SOUND-OVER: "FLOW LIKE A RIVER" SUNG by Bunny Hull.

SEAGULL perched beside nest on tree branch, spreads wings, and takes flight, soaring southward, above the St. Croix River's canyon.

Seagull circles above lamppost at river's Scenic Overlook.

Below circling Seagull, Patricia's VW "Bug" motors away from the Scenic Overlook, and out onto the curving highway, high above the shimmering river, and toward the rising full moon.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANTIQUE PICTURE-FRAME SHOP AT XERXES CORNERS - DAY

PAUL enters picture-frame shop that once upon a time in 1966 was Food Haven, Paul waving at the smiling ELDERLY WOMAN standing beside her antique cash register.

She hands Paul a mahogany framed portrait of Oscar.

Together they admire Oscar's handsome portrait.

Paul hands her a one-hundred-dollar bill.

She hands Paul a receipt and a crisp five-dollar bill.

Paul gazes at Abraham Lincoln's portrait on the bill.

She slides Oscar's framed portrait into gift box, reaches for vase of red roses on countertop, and hands a rose to Paul.

CUT TO TEXT:

"I like to tell the story of my mother Katie, who often said, 'We are here to help each other. What other reason could there be? So get with it, son.' "

- Harmon Killebrew

FADE OUT.

As the end credits scroll, the song "WE CAN BE KIND" plays, SUNG by NANCY LAMOTT.

NANCY LAMOTT (V.O.)  
SO MANY THINGS WE CAN'T CONTROL.  
SO MANY HURTS THAT HAPPEN EVERY  
DAY. SO MANY HEARTACHES THAT PIERCE  
THE SOUL. SO MUCH PAIN THAT WON'T  
EVER GO AWAY.

HOW DO WE MAKE IT BETTER? HOW DO WE  
MAKE IT THROUGH? WHAT CAN WE DO  
WHEN THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO?

WE CAN BE KIND.  
WE CAN TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER.  
WE CAN REMEMBER THAT DEEP DOWN  
INSIDE WE ALL NEED THE SAME THING.

AND MAYBE WE'LL FIND IF WE ARE  
THERE FOR EACH OTHER  
THAT TOGETHER WE'LL WEATHER  
WHATEVER TOMORROW MAY BRING.

NOBODY REALLY WANTS TO FIGHT.  
NOBODY REALLY WANTS TO GO TO WAR.  
IF EVERYONE WANTS TO MAKE THINGS  
RIGHT THEN WHAT ARE WE ALWAYS  
FIGHTING FOR?

DOES NOBODY WANT TO SEE IT?  
DOES NOBODY UNDERSTAND? THE POWER  
TO HEAL IS RIGHT HERE IN OUR HAND.

WE CAN BE KIND.  
WE CAN TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER.  
WE CAN REMEMBER THAT DEEP DOWN  
INSIDE WE ALL NEED THE SAME THING.

AND MAYBE WE'LL FIND IF WE ARE  
THERE FOR EACH OTHER THAT TOGETHER  
WE'LL WEATHER WHATEVER TOMORROW MAY  
BRING.

AND IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO TALK ABOUT  
IT. NOT ENOUGH TO SING A SONG.  
WE MUST WALK THE WALK ABOUT IT.  
YOU AND I. DO OR DIE.  
WE'VE GOT TO TRY TO GET ALONG.

WE CAN BE KIND.  
WE CAN TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER.  
WE CAN REMEMBER THAT DEEP DOWN  
INSIDE WE ALL NEED THE SAME THING.

(MORE)

NANCY LAMOTT (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
AND MAYBE WE'LL FIND IF WE ARE  
THERE FOR EACH OTHER THAT TOGETHER  
WE'LL WEATHER WHATEVER TOMORROW MAY  
BRING.

AND MAYBE WE'LL FIND TRUE PEACE OF  
MIND IF WE ALWAYS REMEMBER WE CAN  
BE KIND.

OBLIGATORY DISCLAIMER:

Above Justice, an original spec screenplay inspired by actual events, contains some locations and timeliness modified for dramatic purposes.

The actual names of most of the characters have been changed. Some characters are composites or fictitious.

The suggested insertion of specific songs and orchestral music (often regarded as bad form within spec screenplays) generally function as a Greek Chorus served within ancient Greek tragedies: to enhance and advance a scene's theme.

Each must remain optional and subject to artistic approval of movie producer, movie director, and movie music supervisor.

All music insertions require contractual agreements with their composers, performing artists, music publishers, and recording companies prior to production and distribution.