

SAWGRASS WARS

Written by

KURT WEICHERT

Last REVISION 2/26/2026
FINAL SCRIPT

KURT WEICHERT
Website: Weichertmedia.com
Email: kurt@weichertmedia.com

PROLOGUE

INT. PODCAST STUDIO - NIGHT (2025)

A modern studio. LED backlighting. Iconic neon sign: THE DEEP CUT PODCAST.

Two mics. Two chairs.

Johnny Malone – now in his early 60s – sits confidently. Gray at the temples, scars softened by time, eyes still dangerous. A man who has lived too much and survived it all.

The HOST, early 40s, excited but trying to remain composed, shuffles his notes.

A PRODUCER counts down:

HOST

Today's guest is someone the world never expected to hear from again.

(beat)

A ghost.

(beat)

A myth.

(beat)

A man who vanished twice and became the center of one of the Florida's most infamous legends...

(beat)

Johnny Malone. Welcome to the show.

MALONE

Glad to be here.

HOST

Johnny, it's wild sitting across from you. Drug smuggler... fugitive.. ghost story... Florida legend... And now a bestselling author.

MALONE

Life's funny. I spend years hiding from the government... then one day I'm signing books at Barnes & Noble.

HOST

Your book – Blood in the Water – is already #2 on Amazon. You're telling stories people have only heard in rumors. Why now?

MALONE

Well most of the people I pissed off are dead. And the ones who ain't. They're too old, too tired, or too locked up to do a damn thing about it.

HOST

So you're safe now?

MALONE

Safe? Nobody who lived my life is ever safe.

(beat)

I'm just... less unsafe. Call it progress.

HOST

Your name turned into folklore. How did you get away with all of it? The drugs, the smuggling, the millions of dollars...

MALONE

(smiling)

You want the truth? I didn't get away with it. I eventually got caught.

HOST

Wait... what? You were never arrested.

MALONE

Sure was. Federal boys eventually cornered me. DEA, FBI, Homeland - whole alphabet soup. Told me they'd bury me so deep I'd be mailing postcards from Hell. Government boys slammed the door shut, threw away the key... then cracked it open and offered me a deal.

HOST

What kind of deal?

MALONE

The kind where you give'em ninety percent of your fortune... and you keep breathin'. I gave them enough to make Uncle Sam smile. And in return they let me walk out the back door.

HOST

So why tell the story now?

Johnny stares straight into camera – into the viewer’s soul.

MALONE

Because the truth always crawls
back to the surface. And Dawber
County’s truth? It ain’t pretty.
But it’s mine. And it’s time people
finally heard how the Sawgrass Wars
really began.

CUT TO BLACK.

ACT 1

EXT. GULF OF MEXICO – MORNING

Five miles off the Florida coast.

A twin-engine plane banks low, its belly opening. WATERPROOF
CONTAINERS packed with cocaine drop like torpedoes into the
waves below.

In the distance– SPEEDBOATS slice across the water,
converging on the drop zone like sharks in a frenzy.

SCULLY (40s)leathery and dead calm, grips the yoke as the
plane veers toward land.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. PASTOR BUB’S CHURCH – DAY

A rustic clapboard church on the edge of a field.

From the yard, a gaggle of CHILDREN spot the aircraft
approaching. They shriek with excitement.

MUSIC CUE: “SAWGRASS WARS SOUNDTRACK.”

The kids dash through the yard, arms flailing, jumping and
yelling like it's a parade.

Behind them, MILLIE (50s), Pastor Bub’s wife, hustles to keep
up–her sunhat flapping, her face flushed.

PASTOR BUB (50s), pulling weeds near the chapel, looks up as
the plane ROARS overhead. He winces, shielding his face.

The aircraft DIPS A WING in recognition. The children cheer louder, waving like mad.

Scully flies on.

MUSIC ENDS

CUT TO:

TITLE: TWO DAYS LATER

EXT. DAWBER COUNTY SWAMPS - DAY

JOHNNY MALONE (40's) and KENNY GREGORY (40's) are in a boat in a swamp near Bubs church known as Gethsemane.

NARRATOR(V.O.)

The year was 1992 and they had just come off a bumper harvest. In a few short years, the Dawber County boys went from dirt-poor to damn near royalty. All because of Johnny Malone's foresight.

Kenny checks to make sure the bags are properly sealed.

KENNY

We good?

Malone smirks, cigarette dangling.

MALONE

Relax, this ain't 'Nam. Charlie ain't out there, buddy.

He offers Kenny a cigarette.

KENNY

Not now, thanks.

MALONE

Suit yourself.

Malone hefts a black duffel bag, steadies himself, and tosses it overboard.

SPLASH. It floats briefly, bubbles rising, then sinks.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Pablo Escobar taught them this move. Cash in the drink. Disappear it deep enough, and nobody comes sniffing.

Malone hands another bag to Kenny.

MALONE

Over there. Keep 'em separated but close.

Kenny strains to toss it farther. Suddenly, a GIANT GATOR breaches—SNAP!—jaws wide.

Instinctively, Kenny draws his Uzi—

MALONE

Don't shoot!

RAT-TAT! The Uzi fires, grazing the beast. It vanishes—taking a bag with it.

MALONE

Dammit... Smiley!

KENNY

That was Smiley?

MALONE

Yeah. This is his spot. Check the ridge.

Kenny scans with binoculars.

KENNY

All clear.

CUT TO:

EXT. WIDOW'S WALK MARINA - NIGHT

Malone cracks a beer. Hands one to Kenny. They walk toward a beat-up Bronco.

MALONE

Pop the trunk.

Kenny stows the cooler. Chucks his empty bottle into the street—

SCREECH! A police car blocks them. Out steps SHERIFF BUCK DAWBER (50s).

BUCK DAWBER

What're you boys up to?

MALONE

Just taking care of some business, Buck.

Buck licks his lips.

BUCK DAWBER
That so, Johnny Malone? I wasn't
told of any shipments today.

KENNY
Wasn't a shipment. Just a check-in.

BUCK DAWBER
What, y'all fishin' now?

MALONE
Jones McNeely called in a lost
package. Just followin' up.

BUCK DAWBER
Jonesey's been up north all week.

MALONE
Just got around to it.

Buck closes his door and approaches.

BUCK DAWBER
You're full of shit. What you dump
out there, Malone?

LITTLE BUCKY (O.S.)
You know he's runnin' side action,
Pa!

LITTLE BUCKY (20s), Buck's hot-headed son, SLAMS the car door
and charges.

KENNY
What's it to you, Little Bucky?

Buck steps in-

BUCK DAWBER
Not on duty, boy! Internal Affairs
has been sniffin' lately.

LITTLE BUCKY
But he's always ridin' me, Pa!

BUCK DAWBER
And how do you get a donkey's
attention? You beat it with a
goddamn stick.

He SHOVES Little Bucky back toward the squad car.

KENNY (LAUGHING)
Yeah, listen to your daddy.

BUCK DAWBER
You two play nice.

Without warning, Buck CLOCKS Kenny with a right hook—Kenny SLAMS into the Bronco.

Malone stands frozen. Buck grabs his nightstick and BEATS Kenny brutally.

From the squad car, Little Bucky draws his weapon and points it at Malone.

LITTLE BUCKY
Get 'em, Pa!

MALONE (SHOUTING)
BUCK!

Buck pauses, heaving.

BUCK DAWBER
You got somethin' to say, Malone?!

MALONE
You're gonna kill him!

BUCK DAWBER
Nah, I won't kill'm. Just put'm a coma for insultin' my kin.

MALONE
Unless...?

Buck wipes spittle from his mouth.

MALONE (CONT'D)
Is there something I can do to make this problem go away?

Buck chuckles and looks over at his son with a quizzical expression. He then points the nightclub at Malone and pushes it into the square of his chest.

BUCK DAWBER
Are you offerin' to blow me, Malone?

MALONE
I'm offering to help make this problem disappear.
(MORE)

MALONE (CONT'D)

Clearly, something more than my partner's insults at your son has set you off. Perhaps I can mitigate any complications you may have experienced tonight.

BUCK DAWBER

Mitigate. Them are some big words you're throwin' around there, Malone. Almost like you ain't from 'round these parts. But you and I both know, you may be the goose that laid the golden egg, you may have traveled the world in service to the country, but you are still just another Cracker from Dawber County.

Buck spits out a large bit of phlegm onto the pavement, sending it splattering all over Malone's shoes.

BUCK DAWBER (CONT'D)

And we Dawber's... we own crackers like you, y'hear?

Malone doesn't flinch. He fights the urge to murder Buck.

MALONE

How can I help Sheriff.

BUCK DAWBER

Jesus-H-Christ, Malone. You really don't get rattled!

Buck puts his Billy club away and picks up his hat from the ground.

MALONE

I am always cool, Buck.

BUCK DAWBER

And why you tryin' to buy me off, Malone?

MALONE

I don't want you to kill Kenny.

BUCK DAWBER

Did you find anything out there, Malone?

MALONE

It was nothing.

BUCK DAWBER

I don't believe you, Malone. You a skilled liar. I'm gonna have to consult with my brother and find out if he knows anything about this.

MALONE

I'd really rather you not mention this to Bo.

BUCK DAWBER

(smiling)

Oh, now you are all kinds of mysterious, Malone.

Buck looks Malone over and then nods.

BUCK DAWBER (CONT'D)

Okay. I scratch your back, you massage mine.

MALONE

What do you need?

BUCK DAWBER

It's not 'what' I need Malone, but how much I need.

MALONE

How much do you need, Buck?

BUCK DAWBER

I'm so glad you asked, amigo! I want half of whatever you and your stallion here dumped in the water!

MALONE

How do you know that we dumped any money into the drink?

Buck laughs loudly and looks over at his son.

BUCK DAWBER

(laughing)

He's smart, but he ain't that smart! I know because you just told me you did!

MALONE

Right. So, you want half of the \$100,000 we just threw in the drink?

BUCK DAWBER
That's right, Malone.

Malone squirms, trying to pretend as though this was a painful proposition for him. He shakes his head and sighs.

MALONE
Well, Buck, you drive a hard bargain. If that's your price to keep quiet-

BUCK DAWBER
It is. \$50,000. Hard cash.

MALONE
I'll have it sent over to the station first thing in the morning.

BUCK DAWBER
By 9 a.m.! Not a minute later! Otherwise, I will call Bo and let him know the shit you two were up to out here tonight.

Buck and his son walk back to their squad car.

After Sheriff Buck leaves, Malone kneels on the ground beside his bruised and bloodied friend.

MALONE
You okay, Kenny?

KENNY
Why'd you pay him?

MALONE
Because he could've killed you. Buck has no idea we just dumped 5 million in the swamp.

Malone helps Kenny to his feet.

MALONE (CONT'D)
I just bought off the Sheriff for \$50,000. I know he'll keep quiet and from now on he'll do my bidding.

KENNY
But he's Bo's brother.

MALONE
And he hates Bo more than anyone.

Kenny is holding his ribs.

MALONE (CONT'D)

Trust me, if we throw him a bone or two from this point forward, he'll be our little pet. He'll owe me for life.

FREEZE JOHNNY MALONE'S FACE

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That's when Johnny Malone hid five million dollars in the Dawber County swamp. But my story started years before that...

MAIN TITLE: SAWGRASS WARS

UNFREEZE

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. THE JUNGLES OF VIETNAM - DAY

MUSIC CUE: A song from the Sawgrass Wars soundtrack.

TITLE: Hill 861, Vietnam. 1968

Gunfire cracks overhead. YOUNG KENNY GREGORY lies half-submerged in mud and blood, hidden beneath a thicket of bamboo.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Johnny Malone era started in 1968. When a group of friends from Dawber High School enlisted into the marines because they wanted to fight in the Vietnam war. More than half of the 27 million men eligible for the draft during the Vietnam War were deferred, exempted or disqualified. While the other young men across the United States were burning their draft cards to light peace candles. These country boys were volunteering to fight in the war. These were good ole' boys from Dawber County, Florida.

Young Kenny catches a glimpse of a young marine standing above the mutilated corpse of a private who had been bayoneted earlier.

A pack of Marlboro red cigarettes rested in the band around the helmet. And "Sorry Charlie" had been written with permanent marker on the front of the helmet.

A cigarette dangles from the marines mouth as surveys the dead American private.

Young Malone is looking for his old friend, young Kenny Gregory.

Young Kenny cannot talk. He can barely breath. He begins coughing madly. Young Malone looks around feverishly as hears the coughs. Young Malone rushes over to the pit at looks in.

MUSIC ENDS

YOUNG MALONE

Christ! Medic! Medic!

(beat)

Kenny! Kenny Gregory!

(beat)

You're a sight for sore eyes.

(beat)

No, no, no bro. You've been through the shit.

(beat)

I thought we lost you.

YOUNG KENNY

I knew you'd come brother.

YOUNG MALONE

Well, us county boys got to stick together, right.

(beat)

Looks like you finally punched your ticket home.

(beat)

You tell Mary, I sent my best, alright.

(beat)

You really stirred up the snake pit here.

(beat)

Boss says we've got six enemy battalions crawling around the entire area.

YOUNG KENNY
I guess I did, Johnny.

YOUNG MALONE
You know it.

YOUNG KENNY
My platoon got wiped out.

YOUNG MALONE
Welcome to Vietnam.
(beat)
Looks like we're actually gonna
being hunkerin' down here for a
little while until a helo can come
back and pick us up.
(beat)
Extending your stay in 'Nam bro.
(beat)
Kenny, hey talk to me. Are you
still with me?

YOUNG KENNY
This place kinda reminds me of
home.

YOUNG MALONE
Yeah.
(beat)
But it's not.
(beat)
Listen, Kenny.
(beat)
The next one is going to hit us
right up the middle.

EXPLOSION NEARBY

YOUNG MALONE
Frag out! Frag out!
(beat)
Come on Kenny! Come on! We're not
going to die in this soup. Not
today!

SERGEANT SANCHEZ (20s) yells to his men with urgency. Young
Malone's squadron comes running back to the site at full
speed. Releasing suppression salvos of their own toward enemy
entrenched positions.

Young Malone grabs the discombobulated Kenny.

SANCHEZ

We're moving out! Sergeant Malone
on the double!

Before Malone can say anything the click of a rifle can be heard in the eery silence of the jungle. Seconds later a devastating array of gunfire explodes out from the jungle around them.

SANCHEZ

CONTACT RIGHT! Defend yourself
Marines!

Young Timmy Dawber (20s) joins young Malone and Young Kenny.

SANCHEZ

Keep moving! Timmy Dawber how is it
looking behind us?

Young Timmy is covered in the enemies blood. A sign of hand to hand combat.

TIMMY DAWBER

Situation unclear. Still fucked in
the drag but I do think we have
maintained rear safety for now.

SANCHEZ

Follow me! Move forward now! We
have a new LZ! Scully has
commandeered a medvac and he is
flying in to pick up Kenny and the
rest of the wounded!

Suddenly, a loud gunshot pierced the air causing Young Malone to clutch his rear end in agony.

FREEZE ON JOHNNY MALONE'S FACE.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It was a case of friendly fire and
that one shot to Malone's rear end
ultimately lead to him being sent
home from Vietnam with Kenny.

CLOSE ON MALONE'S FACE

CUT TO:

INT. DAWBER CIVIC CENTER - DAY

MUSIC CUE: "Sawgrass Wars Soundtrack."

BOCEPHUS DAWBER (50s) has arranged a hero's welcome for his younger brother, Young Timmy, returning home from Vietnam.

MALONE (V.O.)

Bo and Sheriff Buck Dawber took great pride in their baby brother, Timmy. He gave up a shot at the big leagues to go to Vietnam. Around here, that made him a hero. Handsome, athletic, natural leader. Bo thought Timmy would come home and help him run Dawber County. What Bo didn't know was the war had shattered something inside Timmy. Only guys like Scully and Sanchez could reach him after that.

Sheriff Buck Dawber steps up, arms wide.

BUCK DAWBER

Timmy! Timmy! Come here, brother!
We're proud of you.

He hugs Young Timmy, who rests his head briefly on Buck's shoulder.

His arms hang limp at his sides.

BUCK DAWBER (CONT'D)

I missed you, baby brother. I'm proud of you.

Timmy pulls away and walks toward Bo. Bo places both hands on his shoulders.

BOCEPHUS

Come here, brother.

A LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER readies his camera. Timmy pushes Bo's arm away and walks past the crowd.

BOCEPHUS (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

SANCHEZ

He's having a bad day.

BOCEPHUS

Who are you?

SANCHEZ

I am Sanchez. Timmy's brother in arms.

Sanchez follows Timmy. BO grabs Scully.

BOCEPHUS

Scully, what the hell is going on with Timmy?

SCULLY

Timmy's all messed up in the head right now but he's gonna be okay, Bo. He's shellshocked. The last few months Timmy and Sanchez were in some nasty battles. I asked Sanchez to come on back with us.

Across the room, Young Malone and Young Kenny wave to Timmy, Sanchez, and Scully.

INT. CIVIC CENTER BAR - LATER

The group tosses back shots together.

YOUNG KENNY

Welcome home! Somehow we all made it out of 'Nam alive.

SCULLY

Now what are we all going to do back home?

YOUNG KENNY

Tell 'em, Malone. Tell'em your plan to make us rich.

Young Malone leans in, animated, laying out his idea.

Across the room, Bocephus Dawber stands beside his enforcer, ATTICUS SHELTON (30s).

They stare at Malone and his friends—watching, waiting.

Close up on Atticus Shelton's face.

NARRATOR

Everyone in Dawber County feared Atticus Shelton. He didn't talk much—didn't have to. A look from Atticus could stop a man cold. They said he'd spent too long in tunnels during the war and never fully came back. Bo Dawber always kept him close. Atticus was his shadow, his hammer, and his last line of defense when words failed.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

In a county ruled by fear, Atticus was the reason people kept their distance.

FLASHBACK SCENE: "TUNNEL RAT" - VIETNAM, 1969

INT. VIETNAM JUNGLE - TUNNEL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Rain pours. Thunder cracks. Trees sway like ghosts.

A younger Atticus Shelton, face blackened with charcoal, stands barefoot at the mouth of a Viet Cong tunnel. Around him, a squad of wide-eyed Marines stares, terrified.

SERGEANT

You sure you don't want a rope, Atticus?

Atticus doesn't respond. Just nods, opens a folding knife, and tucks a red bandana into his waistband like a priest donning robes.

He disappears into the hole.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - NIGHT

Pitch black. Only the flicker of a Zippo lighter. Claustrophobic. Dirt walls breathe with heat. Rats squeal.

Atticus crawls without hesitation, inching forward like he's been down here before.

SOUNDS in the distance: whispers in Vietnamese. Breathing. A match being struck.

He kills the light.

INT. TUNNEL CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

A dim room where three VC SOLDIERS sit silently, unaware. One lights a cigarette.

A faint movement behind them.

Atticus emerges from shadow like a ghost, blade flashing in silence. No screams. Just the wet sound of finality.

He wipes the knife on his sleeve.

Then he sees it: a mirror-cracked-his own eyes staring back.
Not frightened. Not proud. Empty.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That tunnel never ended. Just
changed shape. Got hotter. Wetter.
Grew teeth.

INT. EVERGLADES SWAMP - PRESENT DAY - NIGHT

Atticus awakens suddenly in a tin shack deep in the swamp. No
sound. No expression. Just sweat and silence.

He opens a drawer. Inside: that same folding knife, still red-
stained. A swamp rat scurries by, and he doesn't even blink.

NARRATOR

Only two places Atticus ever felt
peace. That tunnel. And this swamp.

EXT. SHELTON'S GATOR PIT - DAY

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In Dawber County, Florida, Bo
Dawber relied on the Shelton family
and the Brody clan to maintain
order. But after the death of their
tyrant father Jedediah, things
unraveled. The county's violent
criminal underworld exploded.
Atticus Shelton was Bo's Luca
Brasi. But instead of sleeping with
the fishes, Bo's enemies ended up
gator food in the Shelton pit.

Atticus, the terrifying swamp enforcer, drops the bound man
from the jail into a literal alligator pit to be eaten alive,
while calmly sipping from a can of beer, delivering something
akin to a Southern-fried proverb or scripture quote.

Atticus is quietly, kneeling by the pit.

ATTICUS

Gators don't kill fast. They drag
you down, spin you, crush you soft.
(beat)
You feel your lungs fill with mud
before your bones even break.
(stands, calmly)
You can beg for mercy, boy but I
ain't merciful.

The gator thrashes, the victim screams, and Atticus casually lights a cigarette—like he's taking out the trash.

He steps back. Doesn't flinch as the gator lunges.

The man screams as he's thrown around in the alligator pit. Atticus Shelton stands, watching with a sinister grin as the gators rip him apart.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Atticus faced a threat even he couldn't ignore— Bo's inbred cousins from the Everglades, outnumbered Bo's muscle ten to one. Johnny Malone wasn't just Bo's accountant, he was now caught between warring clans. Malone proposed to Bo to enlist his war buddies Kenny, Sanchez, Scully and his brother Timmy—to do the dirty work.

CUT TO:

INT. REDNECK BAR NEAR THE EVERGLADES - NIGHT

Roughly twenty of Cletus's men sit inside, oblivious.

Outside, the loudspeakers begin blaring—

LOUDSPEAKER (O.S.)

From the Halls of Montezuma... To the shores of Tripoli...

They rise and investigate the sound.

EXT. REDNECK BAR - CONTINUOUS

Bo's cousin CLETUS hangs from a tree. Gasps. Panic.

A HELICOPTER swoops in—Scully at the controls. Young Timmy mans an M-60.

Bullets rain down. Chaos erupts. The bar shatters under gunfire.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Vietnam Veterans skills impressed even Atticus. Within two weeks, Bo's cousins gang were gone. Down in Dawber County, You don't inherit land.

(MORE)

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

You inherit bodies buried in it.
Order restored. Blood bought peace.

INT. MALONE'S ACCOUNTING OFFICE - FLASHBACK - DAY

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Dawber County's only law was the
Dawber patriarch. When the federal
government banned fishing in the
Glades, families starved. That's
when Sanchez told Malone about
Colombian coke. That's when
Malone's plan was born.

EXT. GULF OF MEXICO - DAY

A LOW-FLYING PLANE drops waterproof containers of cocaine
into the sea. BOATS speed to retrieve them.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Scully coordinated the first drop.
Kenny's father's marina handled
transport.

EXT. BATTENBERG SUGAR PLANTATION - DAY

Young Kenny and VINCENT DEL VECCHIO (30s) laugh near a car as
men load cocaine into trucks.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Vincent Del Vecchio was Kenny's
brother-in-law-married to a
Battenberg daughter. So was Kenny.
The old man, Forbee, couldn't find
out. Vincent was Jersey mafia. He
bought the product, and everyone
made a fortune. Kenny met his
brother-in-law Vincent Del Vecchio
at the Battenberg plantation. Both
married to Battenberg daughters,
they had to keep things quiet
around the old man. Vincent's
Jersey mob blood made him an ideal
buyer. The profits were...
significant.

INT. MALONE'S ACCOUNTING OFFICE - DAY

Malone and Sanchez unload pallets of cash into a hidden room.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But when Bo found out. He came storming into Malone's office with Atticus and Forbee Battenberg. Bo needed Malone for his books—but the sight of Atticus with him? That was trouble.

Bocephus Dawber, Atticus Shelton, and FORBEE BATTENBERG (60s) enter.

MALONE

Gentlemen. It's not tax season, so I assume you're here to set up an LLC?

Sanchez chuckles. Atticus scowls.

ATTICUS

Shut up, Malone.

FORBEE

You runnin' dope through my plantation, boy?!

MALONE

Come on, Forbee. Your granddaddy smuggled rum here during Prohibition. That's what brought your family from the Virgin Islands. We all know the tales.

BOCEPHUS

That was alcohol. You brought cocaine into my county! Who the hell are you?!

MALONE

You're not wrong, Bo.

BOCEPHUS

So you admit it?!

MALONE

Yeah—but we're not selling it locally. It just passed through.

BOCEPHUS

I oughta let Atticus kill you right now.

Sanchez stands up. Malone signals him to stand down.

MALONE

Easy, Sanchez. This is how Dawber County does business.

(to Bo)

Bo, I leaked it on purpose—to Forbee's son. I knew you wouldn't approve.

FORBEE

Atticus, hearin' this fool?! If your daddy were alive—

MALONE

Forbee. This will make us all rich—including you, Atticus.

BOCEPHUS

I don't allow drugs in my county.

MALONE

Come see this.

Malone opens a door revealing stacks of CASH.

BOCEPHUS

How long you been runnin' this?!

MALONE

One time. Trial run.

BOCEPHUS

That's from one drop?!

MALONE

Nine hundred grand. Give or take.

Bo stares, then turns to Forbee and Atticus. They smirk.

NARRATOR

I brought jobs back to the fishermen. And I know your books, Bo. You and Battenberg are both bleeding cash.

Bo walks up to Malone.

BOCEPHUS

Sixty percent.

MALONE

Of the take? Shouldn't it be 50-50?

BOCEPHUS

Don't push me. Sixty percent.
Starting now.

MALONE

(beat)
Deal.

BOCEPHUS

We'll be back in a couple of hours.
Have it counted.

MALONE

\$540,000. Waiting.

They leave. Malone and Sanchez chuckle.

SANCHEZ

They won't ever know we pulled ten
million.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The drug smuggling operation ran
smooth for years. Everyone got
rich. Then when Timmy died. It all
fell apart. One night, Del
Vecchio's men came to town. Scully
found himself in a high stakes
poker game that he couldn't win.
Timmy was drunk and angry. When the
mob pressed Scully for payment,
Timmy snapped. Chairs flew and
Timmy killed the brother of a
powerful mob boss. A stupid but
noble gesture that started the end.
And in that chaos... the beginning
of our unraveling.

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - NIGHT

An OLD PICKUP TRUCK is parked under the moonlight. Inside,
Young Timmy Dawber sits alone in the cab, a silhouette in the
dark.

Bocephus Dawber approaches his brother. He opens the
passenger door and slides in.

The two argue—heated words, broken trust. Then, without
hesitation, Bo draws a weapon from his side and SHOTS Timmy
in the face.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Timmy's death marked a turning point. He'd warned Bo to back off. Said if anything happened to Scully, he'd come for Del Vecchio himself. While Scully and his daughter Eileen fled to Widow's Walk Marina, Kenny tried to broker peace with Vincent Del Vecchio at the sugar plantation. Vincent agreed—but his men didn't. They hit the marina. Scully and Sanchez fought back. Amid the chaos, seven-year-old Alex—Kenny's boy—saved Scully's daughter from a hitman. The kid pulled the trigger. That night changed everything. Knowing his daughter wasn't safe, Scully faked his own death and vanished to South America. Eileen ended up with Pastor Bub and Millie. Timmy's death was ruled a suicide. But not everyone bought that story. With the network fractured, Bo turned to a new ally—Mack Donnelly. A smooth-talking Texan with big promises: expansion, pro baseball, and profits. He gave Bo something else too—the truth. Mack sniffed out the real books. Turned out Sanchez and Malone had skimmed over \$100 million dollars. Bo was owed sixty percent. Sanchez paid with his life. Bo blamed it on a rival cartel. But Malone knew better. And all Malone wanted after that... was revenge.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Kenny Gregory (40's), and MACK DONNELLY (40'S) are trying to stop a deranged looking Johnny Malone from bursting onto the stage where Bo was readying to address the crowd.

KENNY

(sympathetically)

C'mon Johnny...

MACK

(dismissive)

Man, you smell of Jim Beam!

MALONE
(Exasperated)
That jerk killed Sanchez, y'hear?!

MALONE (CONT'D)
(to Kenny)
Did you hear what I just said, Ken?
That bastard killed our brother!

MACK
(coldly)
You really need to step back.

MALONE
(Shaking head)
I like you, Mack, but you weren't
with us in 'Nam.

KENNY
(calm)
I'm telling you, John boy, you got
this one wrong.

MALONE
(angry)
I ain't got shit wrong! I know!

MACK
C'mon, Johnny, this isn't how you
make things square with Bo.

Malone pushes back away from the two men, curling his fist
and glaring madly at Mack.

MALONE
What does that mean, you son of a
bitch?!

EXTERIOR. CENTER STAGE - CONTINUOUS

In the background, the music swells, trying to mask the
growing commotion backstage.

Bocephus Dawber stands center stage, gesturing with his left
hand to raise the volume of the music. The attempt is futile-
murmurs and heads turning tell the crowd that something more
intriguing is happening behind the curtain.

BOCEPHUS
(trying to stay calm)
Looks like some of us have had our
fill of fun tonight...

More noise. Bo clenches his jaw, glancing toward the overweight lead singer of Larry Skinyard, a Lynrd Skynrd tribute band.

BOCEPHUS (CONT'D)

Why don't y'all keep playing? I'll make my announcement after the next set.

Bo tosses the microphone to the singer, who catches it—then fumbles it, producing an ear-splitting feedback squeal. The crowd winces. Bo scowls.

BOCEPHUS (CONT'D)

Just keep these people distracted.

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Bo storms in, face tight with rage, as he approaches Mack, Kenny, and Johnny Malone, who are locked in a heated argument.

BOCEPHUS

What is he still doing here?!

MACK

Johnny was just leaving, Bo.

MALONE

Like hell I am!

BOCEPHUS

You're drunk, Johnny.

MALONE

And you're a damn murderer!

Malone lunges at Bo. Mack and Kenny push him back. Off balance and drunk, Johnny stumbles and crashes onto the floor.

Bo glances toward the stage—still performing.

BOCEPHUS

You watch your mouth, Malone!

Kenny extends a hand. Malone swats it away and rises on his own.

MALONE

I know it was you who murdered Sanchez. I know it was.

BOCEPHUS

Your buddies at the cartel did that, Johnny... Sent a message. To you.

MALONE

Ah, bullshit, Bo!

Kenny steps in again, trying to de-escalate.

KENNY

Johnny, I've been with Bo all week. He ain't said a word about Sanchez.

Bo nods in approval. Malone isn't convinced.

MALONE

He didn't need to say anything. He's got the Sheltons. The Brodys. He knows how to get things done without sayin'a word.

KENNY

(uneasy)

I don't know about this one, Johnny...

BOCEPHUS

(stern)

You stole from me!

(beat)

You breached our agreement.

(beat)

You've been skimming from our business.

(angry)

I told you that the cartel would find out about your double dipping and make you pay.

(beat)

And I told you that if you wanted my help on this one, you'd have to give me the full cut of what you owed me!

MALONE

(chuckling)

I want nothing from you, Bo!

BOCEPHUS

(shrugging)

Them cartel boys are still out there. All I've gotta do is tell them that you've gone renegade and ran off with the money you owed us.

(beat)

Then them Colombians are gonna come back here and go after your lovely wife and little boy!

Malone's face hardens. Mack leans in close.

MACK

This ain't worth it, friend. Sleep it off.

MALONE

You think you could've stood in my foxhole? Any of you? Or Sanchez's? You boys ain't got nothin' on us.

BOCEPHUS

No, but we also ain't got a target on our back like you.

MALONE

(smirking)

Oh really?

BOCEPHUS

Empty threats and loose talk, Johnny. That's all you are these days. Get us our money—you didn't just rob me, You robbed all of us. Or I call the Colombians, and they will finish what they started.

KENNY

(gently)

Mack's right, Johnny. Sleep it off, man. I'll check in tomorrow.

MALONE

Nah, Ken. We've been asleep for a decade. Not anymore. You'll see, buddy.

Bo spits chewing tobacco onto the floor. The music starts to fade out.

BOCEPHUS

Get him the hell outta here!

Mack nods and nudges Malone forward.

BOCEPHUS (CONT'D)

You get me my cut by week's end—you
hear? Then you get your ass out of
my county. Do that, your family's
safe. Don't... and the
Colombians'll do what they do best.
Kenny, you and your boys only work
for me now
(beat)
God knows they can't rely on
Malone.

The music dies down. Bo turns, heading back toward the stage.

BOCEPHUS (CONT'D)

Sounds like the music's coming to
an end...

MALONE

That's one way of putting it.

KENNY

Johnny, let me take you home,
man...

MALONE

I'm out, Ken. You won't see me for
a while.

KENNY

Johnny, don't be like that—we've
got to stick together.

BOCEPHUS

Let him go, Kenny.
Your buddy's lost it.

Malone Vanishes.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Bocephus EXITS to center stage. Mack and Kenny remain as
MERLE SHELTON (20s), a scruffy, nervous redneck in ripped
jeans, rushes in with panic in his eyes.

MERLE

(worried)
Bo! Come back here! Atticus said
something bad is happening. My dad
said that you have to come, now.

It's too late. Bocephus has already gone back on stage.

MACK

(annoyed)
What is it, Merle?

MERLE

(frantic)
I gotta talk to Bo! Now!

KENNY

Sorry, Merle. Bo just walked on stage.

MERLE

(upset)
Dammit! I've got news!

MACK

About what?!

MERLE

My dad said the Coast Guard ordered all of Dawber County- registered fishing boats back to port-half an hour ago! The Feds blocked off the county road. No one's getting in or outta Dawber!

KENNY

(laughs)
You been drinking that Shelton moonshine again?

MERLE

(furious)
I ain't playing, Kenny! There's a fuckin' army out there- Looks like the Panama invasion! They're looking for Bo. And rest of us!

The music outside cuts out. The crowd goes quiet. In the distance-sirens. Kenny's smile vanishes.

Kenny bolts for the stage.

EXT. CENTER STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Bocephus Donnelly kneels center stage, hands raised. A DEA AGENT, OSCAR FUENTAS (40s). Agent Oscar Fuentes is still pointing his gun at Kenny.

OSCAR
(commanding)
Don't move another muscle until I
tell you!

KENNY
Easy pal, I'm a lover, not a
fighter.

OSCAR
Yeah, sure, Mr. Gregory.

Kenny is surprised that DEA Agent Fuentes knows his last
name.

Bo's fingers inch closer to the gun behind his back.

CLOSE ON Bo's tense face—until the click of a pistol breaks
the tension. Mack stands behind Bocephus, gun pressed to the
back of his head.

MACK
Don't even try it, Bo.

BOCEPHUS
(shocked)
What the hell are you doing Mack?

MACK
I'm DEA, prick. You... and all your
boys are under arrest.

OSCAR
(nods)
You did real good here, Mack.

MACK
Thanks, Oz.
(beat)
Johnny Malone was here ten minutes
ago. He slipped out the back.

OSCAR
Yeah, let him go.

MACK
He's the brains of this whole
operation—!

Bo laughs bitterly.

OSCAR

Mack, Johnny Malone is no longer your concern. Let's get you to HQ for debrief.

MACK

Oz, Johnny Malone is the real threat. We've got to take him down before—

OSCAR

Mack, I've got hundreds of suspects here. Bo Dawber's the big fish. Johnny Malone isn't even on the list.

MACK

(mortified)
Why the fuck not, Oz!

OSCAR

(dismissive)
Not here, Mack. Just let the accountant go.

MACK

This is bullshit Oz. Don't be such a bureaucrat! Johnny Malone is much, much more than an accountant, Oz!

Oscar hands Mack a pair of handcuffs.

OSCAR

Please cuff Mr. Gregory.

Mack hesitates, staring at Oscar, shocked.

Mack stares at the cuffs in his hand, stunned.

MACK

(suspicious)
Did Johnny call you in?

OSCAR

Someone tipped off the FBI earlier this week about the drug smuggling in Dawber County. We had to make our move tonight— before the Bureau claimed credit and shut us down.

MACK

(boiling)
I'm gonna kill Johnny Malone!

OSCAR

C'mon, Mack. Your night is over.
Let's get you back to Miami and
debrief.

Oscar gestures toward the perimeter. Bocephus, still on his knees, is now surrounded by agents.

They pull Bo and Kenny off stage, walking them through the now silent, emptied field toward a fleet of DEA and FBI vans.

MACK

If we don't get Johnny... he'll
vanish with all that drug money.
He'll start again—somewhere else.

OSCAR

Johnny Malone has a long list of
enemies. Cartels, crooked cops,
smugglers. They all want him dead.

BOCEPHUS

(darkly amused)
They're gonna have to get in
line...

OSCAR

(To Bo)
Shut up Bo!
(to Mack)
At least we ended this goddamn
smuggling ring. Do you know how
many kids we'll save? How many
families won't fall apart?

Bocephus laughs.

BOCEPHUS

Just remember... You ain't never
gonna find any of Malone's money
without me.

Mack punches Bocephus in the gut.

Oscar GRABS Mack by the collar, pulling him away.

OSCAR

Don't you dare, Mack! Bo's lawyer
will eat us alive!
(shouting to another
agent)
Come get these criminals out of
here!

Bo and Kenny are tossed into the cars. The door SLAMS shut.

Mack and Oscar lock eyes.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

You better get your head on straight, Mack... Don't ruin this for all of us. You are going to be a legend after this. You did great work here my friend.

MACK

(cold, seething)
Yeah. Fine.

EXT. DAWBER COUNTY ROAD - DAY

We open in silence. A BLOODIED, near-unconscious Atticus Shelton lies sprawled on the gravel shoulder. One arm clutches his abdomen where dark blood pools beneath him. The silence is broken by slow footsteps-Agent Mack Donnelly limps into frame, pistol shaking slightly in his bloodied hand. His shirt sleeve is shredded and soaked in red, his arm clearly injured. A single drop of sweat falls from Mack's chin.

FLASHBACK - STYLIZED FIGHT - MOMENTS EARLIER

-- A blade flashes in Atticus' hand. -- Mack ducks just in time, but not before it slices his arm. -- The two men crash into an old fence, splintering wood. -- Fists thunder like gunshots. -- Atticus pins Mack to the hood of a truck, snarling. -- Mack smashes a whiskey bottle across Atticus's face. -- Blood sprays. -- The pistol falls to the dirt-both men dive for it.

-- Atticus punches Mack across the jaw-his head whips sideways. -- Mack gasps for breath, crawling. -- Atticus cocks a revolver. Mack grabs a rock and hurls it. -- The shot goes wide. -- Mack tackles Atticus into a ditch, rolling in blood and mud.

-- Mack grabs the pistol, screams, and FIRES. -- Atticus stumbles back, clutching his gut, stunned. -- His legs give out.

BACK TO PRESENT

ATTICUS

I knew you couldn't be trusted.
First time Bo brought you around, I told him no outsiders. Should've listened.

Atticus is coughing up blood.

ATTICUS (CONT'D)

You DEA rat bastard!

MACK

That's all true.

(beat)

And I'm gonna miss hangin' with all
you sons of bitches.

ATTICUS

Do your bosses know you helped me
kill people?

MACK

I left that part out of my reports.

(beat)

Truth is... you scared the shit
outta me, Atticus.

ATTICUS

You better kill me now, boy.

(spits blood)

'Cause if you don't-I will kill you
later.

MACK

(nods solemnly)

I know you will.

(beat)

That's why I can't take you in.

Mack raises the pistol and EMPTIES THE CLIP into Atticus.
Gunfire echoes across the empty county road.

FREEZE ON MACK'S FACE

Blood-smearred. Haunted. Unflinching.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That was the end of Atticus
Shelton. They say Mack got lucky.
Killed one of the meanest bastards
the South ever spawned. But I don't
think it was luck. I think it was
war.

UNFREEZE

TITLE: 2003

Act 2 The Reckoning Begins

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In the 1990's the drug trade in Dawber County was stopped. The friends who started running drugs for the Colombians were arrested along with many of the townspeople. Johnny Malone, who started the drug smuggling empire, disappeared the night the DEA came to town and arrested everyone. Because Malone was never charged with a crime a lot of the locals blamed him for the arrests. His disappearance has become Florida folklore. Some say he was killed by the cartel. Others say he is in the witness protection program. The ones who knew him the best are confident he is living under another false identity somewhere on a sandy beach spending his ill-begotten gains. Malone has not be seen in a decade. Rumors have it that Malone also buried \$5 million in the swamps around Dawber County. A decade later, the children of the original friends who started the drug trade in Dawber County seek to find the buried \$5 million hidden by their parents in the swamps. Word travels fast in Dawber County - faster than the current through the swamp. Lately, folks been whisperin' that Johnny Malone's boy, Bones, knows where the old man's money's buried. Truth is, he doesn't. But a rumor like that don't need to be true - it just needs to be loud. They say a kid named Alex Gregory's been talkin' too much, tellin' anyone who'd listen that he's got a plan to find the lost millions. Said he's bringin' Bones Malone along to help him track down his father and force him to spill the secret. By the time the story made its way through the bars, bait shops, and backroads, it changed.

(MORE)

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

Now everyone - from crooked cops to broke fishermen - believes Bones Malone knows where the treasure lies. And in Dawber County, a rumor that rich can get a man killed.

EXT. WIDOW'S WALK MARINA - DAY

TITLE: 2009 EXTERIOR. WIDOW'S WALK MARINA - DAY

A small skiff hums toward the docks, cutting across the glassy water. BILLY DAWBER (17), rugged but quiet, steers the boat. In the back, ALEX GREGORY (17) eyes BONES MALONE (17), thick-necked and twitchy, like a coiled spring.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That's Billy Dawber- son of Timmy Dawber, a war hero turned shotgun statistic. He was told that his daddy, Timmy Dawber killed himself when they were kids. His Mama vanished after that. Never came back. He was raised by his uncle.

(beat)

Whole county's named after his granddaddy. He's county royalty, which don't mean much around here anymore.

(beat)

And that slab of muscle? Bones Malone. Son of Johnny Malone-the ghost with a bounty on his head and millions buried in these swamps.

(beat)

Bones don't say much. Pretends he don't know a damn thing about his daddy. But Kenny Gregory's son, Alex, knows he does.

Billy docks the skiff. The boys step off. Alex stays back, boiling with frustration.

ALEX

(blurting)

We gotta quit screwin' around and get serious.

Alex points at Bones.

ALEX (CONT'D)

We need to head into the swamp and find that money. That's our shot. Our way outta this hellhole.

BONES

(gritted)

Told you not to bring that up
again.

ALEX

Yeah, well, I'm broke. Like you.
Like Billy. Only difference is—I'm
willin' to do something about it.

BILLY

What money? That Malone treasure's
just a swamp legend, man.

ALEX

Feds never found it. You know it. I
know it. And Bones sure as hell
knows more than he lets on.

BONES

(dark)

Stop talkin' about my daddy. I'm
tired of hearing this bullshit
every time I'm with you.

Bones and Alex climb off of the boat and onto the dock. Alex
wraps the rope around the cleat. Bones shoves Alex and starts
walking away.

BILLY

Where you headed?

BONES

Over to Jasper's.

ALEX

(sarcastic)

Figures. Gonna eat roadkill with
the Sheltons? Maybe they'll toss
you in the gator pit for dessert.

Bones dismisses Alex and leaves the area. Billy jumps off the
boat, grabs the empty rope and ties it to the other cleat.

BILLY

You good?

ALEX

I'm peachy.

BILLY

(quietly)

Why's he hangin' with the Sheltons
anyway?

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

You know that the Brodys and the Sheltons are fixin' for war.

ALEX

Who gives a shit? And thanks for nothing, by the way.

BILLY

What'd I do?

ALEX

It's what you didn't do. You're the only one that freak listens to.

BILLY

I don't know what you're talking about.

ALEX

Malone's millions, man.

BILLY

Alex, that shit's a myth.

ALEX

No it ain't.

EXT. THE SHELTON PROPERTY - DAY

A dilapidated stretch of land smolders in the Florida heat. A rusting gator pen sits at the edge of the property. The sound of buzzing flies mixes with the lazy grunt of a nearby swamp beast.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

When the feds cracked down on the Dawbers, it gutted their empire. What rose from the ashes was worse.

(beat)

The Sheltons had to pivot quick. Jasper and Merle's daddy, Atticus, killed in a shootout with DEA agent Mack Donnelly. Since then, his boys been sellin' gator meat outta a muddy hellhole, barely keepin' the lights on.

(beat)

They weren't dumb... but they were desperate.

We TRACK across the back of the property - swampy, overgrown, a rusted-out smoker billows greasy smoke. A rickety sign reads: "SHELTON'S SWAMP SELECTS - EXOTIC MEATS."

Somewhere in the distance, a faint motor echoes.

EXT. THE SHELTON PROPERTY - MOMENTS LATER

The faint drone of an engine grows louder, then erupts into an obnoxious HONK-HONK-HOOOONK as a jacked-up, mud-caked pickup truck comes barreling into view – rebel flag decals, bullet hole stickers, and a lift kit that screams overcompensation.

Inside the outhouse, hidden behind a crooked door, we hear the CLINK of a belt buckle. Bones Malone (17) zips up, grimacing as the weight of the COLT .45 digs into the small of his back.

NARRATOR

That Colt was Malone's parting gift to Bones. Something old and heavy – like his family name.

(beat)

Kid had been drinkin' some of the Shelton clan's gut-melting moonshine, killin' time with Jasper. He didn't know it yet, but time was about to kill back.

Bones cracks open the outhouse door, squinting toward the truck now idling in the yard. The driver revs once, then kills the engine. The silence after is menacing.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And that's Dale Brody. Forty-five, domestic terror enthusiast, part-time orange farmer – full-time psychopath.

DALE BRODY (40s), bloated with ego and sweat, climbs out of the truck. He's got militia fatigue pants, a Glock on his hip, and a smug look like he's already won.

Behind him, his younger brothers – GARTH, JESSUP, and CLAYTON – fan out casually like they've done this kind of intimidation tour before.

EXT. THE SHELTON PROPERTY - CONTINUOUS

JASPER SHELTON (19), strong, husky and watchful, stands firm in the yard, arms crossed, deadpan gaze fixed on Dale Brody.

Dale slowly reaches into the right pocket of his camouflage pants. The bulge is round – suspiciously grenade-shaped.

Jasper's confidence flickers. His right hand subtly moves toward the handle of the KNIFE strapped at his side.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Dale liked to toy with folks. Push 'em to the edge just to see who'd jump and who'd fight.

(beat)

He knew Jasper was armed. Knew the kid had scrapped before. But Dale also knew fear – and he was real good at sniffin' it out.

Dale teases the object from his pocket – slowly, deliberately. Jasper tenses, bracing for a blast.

JASPER

Wh-what do you want, Dale?

GARTH BRODY (30s), leaner and sharper-eyed than his brother, speaks up from behind Dale.

GARTH

Where's your brother, Merle?

JASPER

Out back.

Garth nods, eyes flicking toward the two youngest BRODY BOYS – JESSUP (17), lanky and twitchy, and CLAYTON (19), barrel-chested with a baby face.

GARTH

Go get Merle and bring him back here.

Dale finally reveals the mystery item: a beat-up, slightly squashed ORANGE.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Of course it wasn't a grenade.

(beat)

Just one of Dale's precious citrus babies – fresh from the family grove they used to launder their real trade: illegal arms.

Dale chuckles to himself, then unsheathes a stubby, curved KNIFE from his belt with a loud SNAP. He begins peeling the orange, blade gleaming in the sun.

JASPER

What do you want, Dale?

DALE

I don't like your tone, boy.

(steps closer)

Your brother and I got business to attend to. Instead of staring at me with them big, dead eyes - why don't you just rest up against that piece of shit pickup of yours.

Jasper gives a subtle nod and plods over to his late father's battered ANTIQUE CHEVY PICKUP. The old truck GROANS under his weight as he leans against the door.

Dale chews a slice of orange as he stares down at the dirt, then glances up.

DALE (CONT'D)

Who else is here?

Jasper glances around, shrugs. Dale spits an orange seed onto the ground.

JASPER

Just me and my brother! Why you bustin' my balls?

DALE

Then whose drink is that?

JASPER

It's Merle's.

Jasper tenses, his hand slipping discreetly to the hilt of the large knife hidden on his belt.

Dale stalks closer, gritting his teeth. He's nearly face-to-face with Jasper, eyes wild.

Dale is consumed with fury. His face flushes red. His breath shortens. He trembles with hatred.

Jasper, quick and tough despite his husky frame, reacts instinctively. He draws his knife in a blur of muscle and sweat, ready to slash.

DALE

Where is he?

I know you're lyin' to me, Jasper.

(beat)

I know there's someone else here.

(beat)

There's that damn look again.

(beat)

(MORE)

DALE (CONT'D)

I fucking hate your face, shit-bird!

Dale lunges.

A clash of steel and brute force. DALE blocks the strike with surprising skill and counters—his blade slashing downward with precision.

Jasper grunts as the knife tears into his leg.

A burst of blood. Jasper collapses onto the muddy ground, gasping. The fight is over before it really began.

Dale, calm now, almost smug, bends down to retrieve the ORANGE he dropped during the scuffle.

He wipes it against his fatigues and casually takes a bite, then flicks his blade closed and points it at the downed Jasper.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Jasper knew the second that blade hit—warm blood gushing down his leg like a faucet left on.

(beat)

Then came the cold. And he understood. That was the body giving up.

DALE

You, big boy, almost had me there. Almost. Then again, you're fat and dumb. Just like your whole shit heel family. You ever hear of the femoral artery?

Jasper shakes his head, feeling lightheaded and weak.

DALE (CONT'D)

Yeah, well, it's a pretty important part of the body. It supplies blood from your heart down to your legs.

Dale takes another bite of his orange.

DALE (CONT'D)

I just sliced it.

DALE (CONT'D)

Now don't worry. I can get you to the hospital before you bleed out and die. That is, if we leave in the next 15 minutes.

(MORE)

DALE (CONT'D)

And we're only leaving here if your brother does exactly what I want.

Jessup and Clayton march up to Dale with Merle Shelton (40s). Merle sees Jasper Shelton lying on the ground, pale, sitting in a pool of his own blood.

MERLE

Jasper!

MERLE (CONT'D)

What have you done to my little brother, Dale?

Merle cradles his dying brother, feeling the blood pooling from the open wound, panic building in his eyes.

DALE

He's gonna die if I don't get him out of here in exactly 10 minutes. For such a skilled fighter, he went down pretty quickly. You should've sent him over to my camp. I would've made a real warrior out of him, like Jessup and Clayton over there.

MERLE

At least get Jasper a towel so I can slow the bleeding down, dammit!

DALE

Where's the kid?
Johnny Malone's kid! Bones.

MERLE

How the fuck should I know, Dale?!

DALE

Jasper and Bones hang out. I know he was here tonight, drinking that shit with your idiot brother here.

MERLE

I ain't saying another word till you help my little brother, you son of a bitch!

DALE

Jessup! Bring over the towel from the truck!

(beat)

He's gonna die if I don't get him out of here in 10 minutes.

Dale turns around as he sees Jessup fumbling around the cabin of the truck.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

What those Brody boys didn't know was that Bones had been takin' a leak when they rolled up like they owned the swamp.

(beat)

He ducked into the brush and just watched. Real quiet. Real still. Like a predator waitin' for a mistake.

(beat)

And when he figured out they came sniffin' for him, he slipped into the truck like a shadow, snatched that towel, and stuffed it straight into the gas tank.

(beat)

Kid lit it like he'd done it a hundred times.

(beat)

Boom. Just like that—the backwoods went biblical.

Bo then pulls out his lighter and lights it, he intends to detonate the massive fuel tanks in the truck.

It works like a charm. The truck explodes, killing poor Jessup, sending his right leg, flying into the air and hitting Dale in the chest, sending him flying back into the Antique Chevy pickup he was standing by.

Merle dives on top of his brother to shield him from any debris the explosion had generated. When the dust settles Merle looks around frantically, to see what had happened. He sees Dales's knife sitting on the ground. He reaches forward to grab it. At that moment, Dale dives forward, the fire of the exploded truck is washing over them.

The two men wrestle violently in the dirt. Dale's bulk gives him the edge—Merle fights like hell, but it's not enough. Dale pins him down, knife poised, inches from Merle's throat.

Merle grits his teeth, straining, bloodied, desperate.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Merle fought with everything he had, but Dale had that kind of sick adrenaline that only shows up when a man's getting off on the kill.

Dale's face twists with animal rage, his arm thrusting the blade down, inch by inch.

DALE
Almost there...

The knife point touches skin. A thin trickle of blood forms. Merle's eyes widen in terror.

Another second, and that knife would've punched right through Merle's throat...

BANG!

Dale jerks violently, a red bloom opens in his back. He lets out a howl of pain and collapses next to Merle, writhing.

He turns to see Bones, shaking, holding the Colt .45 with a plume of smoke rising from the barrel.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Alex told Bones they'd come lookin' for him. Guess he finally believed him. That boy had no choice now. He was in it, all the way. He had to run—and fast.

Dale grits his teeth and tries to rise, still drunk on rage.

BONES
Stay down. Next one's for your head, Dale.

DALE
Bones, you and I ain't finished, boy...

Dale's eyes roll. He goes limp, unconscious.

Bones shoves him aside, then looks to Merle.

MERLE
Wait! What about Jasper?!

BONES
Load him up in the truck and help me start it—before Garth and Clayton get back from the gator pit.

MERLE
This old piece of shit won't work!

BONES

Fine. Die here, then.

Merle shakes his head, realizing he has no good options here.

MERLE

Damnit!

Merle loads his dying brother into the dirty bed of the truck. Bones frantically begins searching for a set of keys. He finds them tucked in the driver's side sun visor. Bones tries fruitlessly to start the antique vehicle. He starts pumping the gas pedal madly and miraculously the old beast roars to life.

Music Cue: "Sawgrass Wars Soundtrack" is playing on the radio.

MERLE (CONT'D)

Bones, you better get going cause them Brody brothers are coming in hot!

Before another word could be spoken, a bullet from Clayton's distant AK-47 penetrates the glass behind Bones' head and takes out the windshield, shattering it, missing Bones' head by inches.

Bones' heart stops at the thought of having nearly died. Bones accelerates the truck, gaining speed and gathering distance away from the raging Brody boys, until they clear the property and are on the main country road, heading towards the hospital.

Bones switches the radio off and looks in the dirty old rearview mirror, to see Merle sitting with his head in his hands.

BONES

What's wrong?

MERLE

Jasper is gone, man.

BONES

We don't know that. We'll be at the hospital in a few minutes. Keep pressure on his wound and keep talking to him!

MERLE

That took a lot of balls, Bones.

BONES

What?

MERLE

Going at Dale like you did. He
could've whooped your ass the way
he whipped Jasper.

BONES

Dale's a bitch.

INT. ALEX'S BOATHOUSE - WIDOWS WALK MARINA - DAY

Alex sleeps in a recliner. A loud CREAKING noise from the back jolts him awake. Instinctively, he grabs a LOUISVILLE SLUGGER bat from behind a tiny TV and tiptoes toward the main door.

He hears SHUFFLING just outside. He raises the bat, heart pounding, ready to swing.

The door opens slowly.

BONES (O.S.)

Alex.

ALEX

Jesus-H-Christ. Bones!

Alex lowers the bat. Alex is wearing his tighty-whities underwear.

BONES (LAUGHING)

Your in tighty-whities underwear.

ALEX

Back off! I was asleep. What the
hell happened to you?

Bones is disheveled-sweat-soaked, blood-caked shirt, and Johnny Malone's army pistol tucked into the back of his sagging shorts.

He runs blood-slick hands through his hair, smearing more blood on his scalp.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Are you shot? What's going on?
(reluctantly touching
Bones's arm)
You're bleeding.

BONES

It's not my blood. Jasper's.

ALEX
Where is he?

BONES
Hospital.

ALEX
Is he alive?

BONES
There was a lot of blood. I helped Merle drag him to the ER... then I bailed.

ALEX
Did you shoot Jasper?

BONES
What? Hell no!

Alex tosses a sweaty towel to Bones. Bones wipes his face.

BONES (CONT'D)
This smells like a used jockstrap.

ALEX
How do you know what that smells like?

BONES
I don't know why I came here.

ALEX
Yeah, why are you here, covered in blood.

BONES
I was with Jasper, working on his dad's old truck. Went to use the outhouse. Brody brothers showed up—lookin' for me. Dale said the Sheltons owe 'em money. They think I know where the stash is.

ALEX
What money?

BONES
My daddy's.

ALEX
You know where it is?!

BONES

I ain't got no fuckin' clue!

Bones paces. Alex motions for calm.

ALEX

Did you tell them that?

BONES

Didn't get a chance. Dale jumped Jasper. Knifed him good. Jasper went down fast.

ALEX

What'd you do?

BONES

What I had to.

(beat)

Snuck behind their truck. Grabbed a towel, shoved it in the gas tank... lit that fucker like a Christmas tree!

ALEX

What'd the Brodys do?

BONES

I got one of 'em when the truck blew.

ALEX

Which one?

BONES

Fuck if I know. They all look the same.

ALEX

Of all the inbred assholes in these parts, the Brodys are the worst.

BONES

Then I went right at Dale...

Bones reenacts it—dramatically pulling out the Colt .45 and aiming it.

ALEX

Jesus, quit pointing that damn gun at me!

Bones lowers it sheepishly.

BONES

I popped that bastard Dale.

ALEX

You killed Dale Brody?!

BONES

Don't know. He went down hard.
Didn't get up.

ALEX

And the others?

BONES

Didn't stick around to find out.

ALEX

How'd you get Jasper to the
hospital?

BONES

Boosted old Atticus' truck. Hauled
ass.

(beat)

I think Jasper and Merle wanted me
to spill about my daddy's money.

ALEX

So they all know now?

BONES

Yes.

ALEX

And you really don't know where it
is?

BONES

Not a clue.

ALEX

But it exists?

BONES

How should I know?

Bones is quiet. Alex sees the fear under his bravado.

Alex puts a hand on Bones's beefy shoulder.

BONES (CONT'D)

But I do know where Johnny is...

Alex freezes.

ALEX

Where's your daddy?

BONES

Across Alligator Alley. Miami. Got his address. Gave it to me. Wants me to visit for an early birthday gift.

ALEX

When are you going?

BONES

Wasn't plannin' on it.

ALEX

You've got to go.

BONES

That's why I'm here. I'm not doing it alone.

ALEX

(laughing)

Good. No you ain't.

Alex puts on his jeans.

BONES

What are you doing?

ALEX

We're going to see Johnny in Miami!

BONES

I gotta clean up. Sleep. We leave in the morning.

ALEX

First light.

BONES

Got it.

ALEX

And we're doing it my way. You hear?

EXT. MIAMI SKYLINE - DAY

A high-end black sedan weaves through the bustle of downtown MIAMI. DEON CHILDRESS (30s), sharp in a tailored suit and sunglasses, grips the wheel. Focused. Tense.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Deon Childress. Kid beat every odd Dawber County threw at him— and that's saying something. Smart. Tough. And just decent enough to piss off everybody else who came up broke and angry.

(beat)

He had a real shot once I took him under my wing. Saw myself in him— minus the bad habits.

INT. DEON'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Deon glances at a PHOTO clipped to his dashboard. It's of a couple — PASTOR BUBS and his wife — smiling in front of a small church.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

When the feds dropped the hammer on Dawber County, Malone went underground. Malone only two people where he was: Deon... and recently his boy, Bones.

(beat)

Malone left a stash with Bubs for the community. Told 'em: don't spend it unless the devil's at your door. Well... the devil finally knocked.

EXT. JOHNNY MALONE'S HOUSE - LITTLE HAVANA - DAY

Deon pulls up to a modest home surrounded by a rusted chain-link fence. He steps out, cautiously peering through some foliage toward the BACKYARD.

The screen door CREAKS open. A stunning woman in a bikini, CHANDRA (20s), strolls to the pool with a drink in hand.

MALONE (O.S.)

Alberto, that better not be you peepin' again!

(beat)

I can hear you breathin'.

DEON

Johnny, it's me.

A beat.

MALONE (O.S.)

"It's me" is what every stalker
says before they ruin your day.

DEON

It's Deon.

A longer pause. The fence GATE CLICKS and slowly swings open.
Deon steps in.

MALONE (O.S.)

You alone?

DEON

Yeah. It's about Pastor Bubs.

MALONE (O.S.)

What happened?

DEON

Can I come in?

INT. MALONE'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Deon enters the lush, slightly overgrown yard. Johnny closes
the gate behind him, locks it.

MALONE

You look like your stressed out.
This doesn't sound like it's going
to be good. Let's hear it.

They head toward the poolside patio. Deon glances around at
the tropical opulence - half luxury, half paranoid hideout.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Deon was the only one Malone
trusted to bring him the truth. And
whatever he came all this way to
say... Malone knew it wasn't good.

EXT. JOHNNY MALONE'S BACKYARD - DAY

Johnny lounges with a cigarette hanging from his mouth. He
wears brown sandals, shorts cut above the knee, an unbuttoned
shirt revealing his army tattoo, and a flashy gold watch from
his glory days. A .38 revolver peeks from the back of his
waistband.

Two gorgeous women, KANDI and CHANDRA (20s), are throwing on
shorts over bikinis. They make their exit.

KANDI
(to Johnny)
Fuck you, asshole!

MALONE
Already did that, honey!

CHANDRA
In your dreams.

They slam the gate behind them. DEON watches, confused.

DEON
Who were they?

MALONE
Hell if I know. Kandi or Cindy.
Tonya or Chandra. Doesn't matter.

DEON
What were they doing here?

MALONE
Had myself a little party last
night. My girl and two of her
friends. Got drunk. Woke up naked.

Deon frowns, visibly uncomfortable.

MALONE (CONT'D)
(defensive)
Lighten up, kid. You live my life,
you blow off steam. Sometimes I
think Pastor Bubs made you too
good.

DEON
Pastor Bubs is in trouble. He's
filing for bankruptcy.

MALONE
Bullshit. There's no way he blew
through all that money I left him.

DEON
He didn't touch a cent. Calls it
"blood money."

MALONE
I told him to use it! Tell Bubs to
take whatever he needs. That money
was for the community.

DEON

He's talking about giving it to the feds.

MALONE

Why the hell would he do that?

DEON

Because you left a Baptist minister with dirty money.

MALONE

Can you stop the bankruptcy?

DEON

No. There are procedures. I can stall... maybe a few days, but...

MALONE

When did you become such a damn pessimist? I remember that hook-and-ladder you ran in the Sugar Bowl. You had guts then.

DEON

That play tore my ACL. Ended my career.

(beat)

I'll stall it, but break too many rules and I'm no good to anyone.

MALONE

You're no good to me now, Deon.

Before Deon can reply, his phone buzzes. He checks the caller ID.

DEON

(into phone)

Deon Childress. Who is this?

DEON (CONT'D)

When did this happen?!

(beat)

And you're just now telling me?!
No. No. You wait for me to arrive.
That wasn't an accident and we both know it. I'll be there in an hour.

Deon hangs up the phone.

DEON (CONT'D)

Kenny Gregory just tried to kill himself.

MALONE

Kenny? No way. That boy ain't the suicidal type. Wasn't he getting out soon?

DEON

Something's wrong at that prison. That warden... he's off.

Deon dials quickly. After a beat:

DEON (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Tiana Ross? It's Deon Childress. Meet me at the prison. Now.

(beat)

Good. See you in an hour.

EXT. MIAMI HIGHWAY - DAY

TIANA ROSS (mid-20s, polished, no-nonsense) drives her sleek sedan near the old Tamiami Trail. Her phone is on speaker.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Tiana Ross came from the silk-and-silver world of Key Biscayne. Top schools. Top grades. Fast-track law fellowships. And still... the one thing she couldn't outrun was her boss's contempt.

(pause)

Deon Childress—born broke, bred tough. Saw Tiana's pedigree as a threat. Maybe even a betrayal. He rode her hard. But hell, she took it.

(pause)

Then she met Trent. Thought he was just a fling. She didn't know the man was a goddamn wolf in uniform.

INT. TIANA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

TIANA (WARMLY)

Hey, baby.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. TRENT'S UNMARKED SEDAN - DAY

TRENT DIETRICH (30s, handsome, smarmy) adjusts his rearview mirror—Tiana's car is visible a few car lengths ahead. He speaks into his headset.

TRENT
Where you at?

TIANA
Can't make dinner. Deon's dragging me to the prison on 41. Client emergency.

TRENT
You mean Deon's client, not yours.

TIANA (SMIRKING)
He's the boss.

TRENT
You heading to Everglades Alcatraz Correctional?

TIANA
Yeah. Just a few hours.

TRENT
(softly)
We'll make it up later.

TIANA
Count on it.

They hang up.

Trent's smile fades. He dials another number.

INT. PRISON WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

WARDEN KINDER (50s, cruel eyes, cold soul) picks up.

WARDEN KINDER
Yeah?

INTERCUT WITH
TRENT:

TRENT
She's en route. Highway 41. Told me herself.

WARDEN KINDER

Anyone else know?

TRENT

Just her. Deon's keeping it tight.

WARDEN KINDER

You sure she ain't talking to him on the side?

TRENT

I don't think she's screwin' him, if that's what you're asking.

WARDEN KINDER

Don't care who she's screwin'. She can't show up.

TRENT

Want me to wait till she's inside?

WARDEN KINDER

Hell no. Cameras'll flag her. Clock her in. Then we got questions when she don't clock out.

(beat)

We intercept. Before the gates.

TRENT

Isn't it risky? Her and Deon disappearing the same day?

WARDEN KINDER

You want your piece of the pie or not? Loose ends get tied. Tonight.

(beat)

Handle it.

Trent hangs up. His eyes lock on Tiana's car ahead, cruising unsuspectingly toward danger.

FADE OUT.

EXT. JOHNNY MALONE'S HOUSE - DAY

Deon pivots, heading for the chain-link fence gate. Johnny follows cautiously.

Deon grabs the handle—but pauses, turning back.

Before he can open it fully, two young men appear on the other side.

DEON

Bones?

BONES

Yeah, I didn't do anything.

ALEX

We're just here lookin' for a friend.

MALONE (O.S.)

Who is it?

Deon steps aside. Johnny sees the boys—and stiffens.

All three freeze, as if seeing a ghost. Johnny forces a grin, raises his hands.

MALONE (AWKWARDLY) (CONT'D)

Hey, boys...

DEON

You are a piece of work, Johnny.

Deon walks out past the boys.

MALONE

Stay safe, brother.

Johnny waves the boys inside, then shuts and latches the gate behind them.

INT. JOHNNY MALONE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Alex surveys the place—disbelief written on his face.

ALEX

Shit.

MALONE

What's that?

ALEX

You ain't rich.

MALONE

Watch it, kid. I don't go to your boathouse and rag on your décor.

ALEX

This can't be all there is.

MALONE

You're right. There's more.

(grins)

There's a gorgeous Cuban girl in
the other room.

Malone winces, catching Bones' look.

MALONE (CONT'D)

Don't tell your mom, Bones.

ALEX

Everyone back home thinks you ran
off with millions...

...but look at this shit-hole!

BONES

Take it easy, man.

ALEX

Where's the money, Johnny?

BONES

Chill out!

MALONE

How've you been, Bones?

BONES

Not good, Dad.

MALONE

What happened?

ALEX (SHOUTING)

We're all broke, for starters!

BONES

We came looking for you.

ALEX

We've been through a lot.

MALONE

Life's tough, huh?

ALEX

Yeah, it is.

MALONE

You come all this way to whine?

ALEX

I came to change my circumstances.

MALONE

And you, son?

BONES

Same.

MALONE

Well, I can't blame you for running from Dawber County.

(beat)

You boys eat yet?

BONES

We didn't eat anything yet dad.

MALONE

I've got some tamales in the kitchen.

They follow Johnny through the house—frozen in time from the 1970s.

INT. JOHNNY MALONE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The heat and aroma of warm tamales hit Bones and Alex.

MALONE

Make yourselves at home, boys. Mi casa, su casa.

CARMEN (20s), wearing tiny shorts and a bra, enters. She looks like Penelope Cruz.

CARMEN

You gonna get that out of the oven?

MALONE

You boys ever seen a naked woman before?

CARMEN

I'm not naked. Who are they?

MALONE

My son, Bones. And his friend, Alex.

CARMEN

Your son?

Bones and Alex introduce themselves. Carmen grabs a T-shirt, pulling it on.

CARMEN (CONT'D)

Now you're taking visitors?

MALONE

It ain't like that, baby.

CARMEN

Oh, right, Papi. What about last week, when you couldn't meet my parents?

Carmen throws the tamales at the wall.

MALONE

Was that necessary, Carmen?

CARMEN

You say security reasons, but you asked those putas over and now your kid is here?

MALONE

Those were your friends. It was a fun party. I think we all had a good time last night!

CARMEN

You passed out drunk. Nothing happened besides you walking around the house naked in front of them!

MALONE

That's not how I remember it.

CARMEN

Nothing happened last night!

ALEX

(embarrassed)
Probably had whiskey dick.

CARMEN

You're an awful man.

She SLAPS Johnny then yanks at his hair. Malone is holding onto his hair piece with both of his hands. She then storms out.

MALONE

She'll be back. Fiery Latin blood, y'know?

ALEX

What the Hell?

MALONE

What?

BONES

What are you doin'?

MALONE

Cartels, Italians and now the Haitians are looking for me... I stayed gone to keep you safe.

BONES

Bullshit. All these years you could've checked in on Mom and me. You were only a couple of hours away from us.

MALONE

Son, you need money?

ALEX

Yes!

BONES

I don't want your damn money!

MALONE

Nothing I do can bring back lost time.

ALEX

Do you have the drug money?

MALONE

Sure.

ALEX

Can you take us to it?

MALONE

No I can't

BONES

So it's real?

MALONE

I left it in the swamp.

ALEX

Great! Let's get it.

MALONE

I can't go back to Dawber County.

BONES

You left us.

MALONE

I had people watching out for you.

BONES

We've been living like peasants!

MALONE

That message? It was for your 18th birthday.

Johnny grabs a duffle bag, throws it on the table. Opens it.

MALONE (CONT'D)

\$80,000. For you, Bones.

ALEX

Tip of the iceberg?

MALONE

Real estate.

BONES

Huh?

MALONE

Stock market or real estate. You ain't ready for stocks.

ALEX

We don't want any Real estate?

MALONE

Not 'we.' This is for my son.

BONES

What the Hell am I gonna do with real estate?

ALEX

He knows where the \$5 million dollars is!

MALONE

I left it with Pastor Bubs.

ALEX

Help us get it back.

MALONE

I can't go back.

ALEX

Then it's gone for good.

EXT. JOHNNY MALONE'S HOUSE - DAY

Bones stares blankly out the top window, lost in thought - until something catches his eye.

Across the street, a black sedan eases to a stop.

FOUR HAITIAN MEN - armed with UZIs - exit calmly and start walking toward the house.

INT. JOHNNY MALONE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Bones turns back to Johnny, tension hardening his expression.

BONES

Dad, did you say the Haitians were looking for you?

Johnny peers outside. His face drains.

MALONE

What the hell...

Realization crashes over him. Malone grabs the duffle bag of cash.

MALONE (CONT'D)

We need to go. Now.

INT. JOHNNY MALONE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The first bullets SHATTER the windows.

Glass rains down. Wood splinters. The walls come alive with gunfire.

Johnny stays calm. He draws his revolver smoothly, ready.

Bones crouches low, clutching his Colt .45 with shaky hands.

Alex scrambles for cover, ducking behind the kitchen island.

ALEX

Bones! Crawl over to me! We've gotta get outta here!

Bones nods and begins moving - too high.

Alex waves frantically, motioning lower.

INT. JOHNNY MALONE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Johnny rips open the hallway closet. He pulls out black wire - a TRIPWIRE - and strings it near the front door.

MALONE

When these assholes reload, shoot
at 'em, Bones!

ALEX (O.S.)

What the hell are you doin',
Johnny?!

MALONE

Clearin' us a path, kid!

The gunfire pauses.

Whispers in Haitian. The CLACK of magazines reloading.

Johnny finishes wiring the TRIPWIRE to a buried charge behind the drywall.

MALONE (CONT'D)

Shoot, Bones!

INT. JOHNNY MALONE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A raspy voice rings out from the front yard.

HAITIAN GANGSTER 1 (O.S.)

We come for the money, Malone!

MALONE

Mwen pa gen lajan ou! I ain't got
your money! I gave it to Etienne!
Mwen te bay Etienne li!

HAITIAN GANGSTER 1 (O.S.)

We don't work for Etienne anymore.
Etienne is dead. Now we 'gon take
your soul!

Bones suddenly ROARS and stands, firing wildly.

Bullets blast out the shattered window.

A SCREAM from outside.

HAITIAN GANGSTER 1 (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You shot me, you white devil!

Johnny grabs Bones and yanks him toward the bedroom.

MALONE
Move! Let's go!

INT. JOHNNY MALONE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Johnny SLAMS the door and locks it.

ALEX
How the hell are we gettin' outta
here?!

Johnny raises a finger: SHH.

He points to a window and pulls it open.

Alex hesitates, eyes Johnny.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Is this all part of your plan?

BOOM - the tripwire charge goes off.

MALONE
Yes, Alex. This is part of my plan.
Where's your car?

ALEX
At the end of the block!

MALONE
Keys?!

ALEX
What?

MALONE
Car keys, dammit!

Johnny flicks open his army lighter and sparks a fuse.

MALONE (CONT'D)
My whole house is wired to blow.
You boys ready to run?

BONES
Yes.

Johnny ushers Bones out first.

MALONE

Jesus, Bones, what's your mama been
feedin' you?

EXT. SIDE YARD - CONTINUOUS

Bones is already crouched behind a palm tree.

Johnny gives them both a shove. They sprint for Alex's car.

INT./EXT. ALEX'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Alex fumbles with his keys, unlocks the door, and jumps
behind the wheel. Bones scrambles into the passenger seat.

Without waiting for Johnny, Alex slams the car into gear.
JOHNNY MALONE dives headfirst into the backseat just as-

HAITIAN GANGSTER 2 (O.S.)

There those fuckers are!

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Alex peels off down the street.

BOOM! A fiery explosion erupts behind them as Johnny's house
goes up in flames.

INT. ALEX'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Johnny exhales, catching his breath, singed and rattled.

MALONE

You can ease up now, Rambo. They're
not behind us.

BONES

How can you be so sure?

MALONE

I doubt any of them are still
breathing. And they don't know who
I really am. Neither does Carmen.

MALONE (CONT'D)

So... where are we headed?

ALEX

Dawber County.

BONES

(snapping)

He's not crashing with me and Ma!

ALEX

No he's not. That'd be too obvious.
He stays with me. Widow's Walk
Marina.

(beat)

No one would think to look for him
there.

MALONE

Just drop me in Homestead. I'll
catch my bearings.

ALEX

Uh-uh. You're not calling the shots
anymore, Johnny.

MALONE

Guys, if you take me back to Dawber
County-

ALEX

(cutting him off)

You're staying with me... and
you're gonna help us rebuild.

MALONE

Rebuild what?

ALEX

The drug empire. From scratch.

A long silence hangs over them. Johnny stares forward,
absorbing the weight of what his past has resurrected.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Quittin' crime's like quittin
oxygen. You can fake it for a
while... But your body knows
better.

Smash cut to black.

EXT. OLD HIGHWAY 41 - DAY

Alex, Bones, and Johnny speed toward Dawber County in Alex's
car. Rain pours in sheets. The old highway winds endlessly
through swamp and brush.

INT. ALEX'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Johnny glares at the speedometer.

MALONE

Kid, you gotta slow down or you'll
get us pulled over!

Alex doesn't respond. His grip on the wheel is tight, his jaw
clenched.

MALONE (CONT'D)

Did you hear me?

BONES

Alex?

ALEX

I've got to get back to Dawber.

MALONE

We don't want to be pulled over.

Bones points ahead.

BONES

That looks like an undercover cop.

ALEX

He's a half mile up. He ain't
stoppin' us.

INTERIOR. TIANA'S CAR - MOVING - SAME TIME

Tiana blasts music. Rain pelts her windshield. Visibility
drops to near zero.

She gasps. Panicking, she flicks on her hazards and SLAMS the
brakes, pulling to the roadside. Her hands tremble. She parks
and lays her head on the wheel.

She doesn't see Trent Dietrich's unmarked cruiser lurking
back.

INT. TRENT'S CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Trent watches Tiana's car jerk to a stop.

He hits his brakes, activates his undercover lights.

INT. ALEX'S CAR - MOVING - SAME TIME

MALONE

What's the plan when we hit Dawber?

ALEX

Boathouse. Regroup. Start planning.

MALONE

For what?

ALEX

Rebuilding the empire.

MALONE

Empire? You mean being a damn accountant?

ALEX

No. I mean being the fuckin' kingpin.

MALONE

That's a terrible plan.

BONES

That's what you want?

ALEX

Hell yes. We've lived like peasants long enough.

MALONE

You're talkin' crazy. We didn't do all this for our kids to inherit the dirt.

BONES

Did you call the Feds on Billy and Alex's dads?

MALONE

Not Alex's dad.

ALEX

But you did call the Feds?

MALONE

On Bo Dawber, yeah.

Bones turns pale. Rages.

BONES

WHAT?!

Bones raises the pistol.

ALEX

Whoa! Bones, don't do it! That man
is our meal ticket!

Johnny points forward, panicked.

MALONE

Look out!

Alex turns just in time to see—

EXT. OLD HIGHWAY 41 - CONTINUOUS

Alex's car SLAMS into the stopped unmarked cop car.

WHAM! The cop car rockets forward—

—CRASHING into Tiana's BMW.

The BMW is sent careening into the swamp, tearing through a
chain-link fence.

EXT. SWAMP - CONTINUOUS

The BMW splashes down into the murky water, sinking fast.

INT. TIANA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Water rushes in. Tiana screams.

TIANA

Oh my God! Oh my God!

Her seatbelt SNAPS. She thrashes, claws the door.

EXT. SWAMP - CONTINUOUS

Tiana BREAKS the surface, gasping. Covered in algae, she
swims for the bank-gators visible in the shadows.

FADE OUT.

EXT. HIGHWAY SHOULDER - MOMENTS LATER

Trent recovers from the chaos, weapon drawn. He inches toward
the gap in the chain-link fence, gun aimed downward. Below,
TIANA'S BMW sinks into the swamp.

TRENT
(shouting)
You there! Out of the car with your
hands up!

INT./EXT. ALEX'S CAR

Alex throws his hands up.

ALEX
I didn't do nothin'!

TRENT
Get on the ground! Interlace your
fingers!

ALEX
I know you! You're no cop—I seen
you at the prison!

TRENT
What the fuck—?

From below Tiana can be heard screaming for help:

TIANA (O.S.)
Help me!

Trent turns toward the swamp. He doesn't see Bones or Malone slipping around the side of the car.

INT. ALEX'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

MALONE
Let me talk to him! I can—

BONES
No time, Pa.

MALONE
What the hell does that mean—?

EXT. SWAMP - CONTINUOUS

Tiana stares up, horrified, as Trent points the pistol down at her. Rain pours. She squints.

TIANA
Trent?

Suddenly—a single shot.

Trent's head erupts in a crimson bloom. He tumbles forward into the swamp.

INT./EXT. ALEX'S CAR

Malone bursts from the backseat, wild-eyed.

MALONE

What have you done?!

Bones marches forward, expression unreadable. Tiana looks up, stunned, as a massive teenager with a .45 stares down at her. He's joined by Malone, limping, bleeding, gripping a .38.

MALONE (CONT'D)

Tiana?

BONES

You know this chick?

MALONE

Put the fucking gun down, Bones!
What the fuck just happened?

TIANA (O.S.)

My boss is an attorney! We were
meeting a client at the prison!

MALONE

It's me. Malone. Deon's favorite
client.

TIANA

Can you get me outta here?!

MALONE

Yeah. Boys, get over here and help
this lady out of the swamp!

ALEX

Why should we?

MALONE

Jesus, you boys are cold!

BONES

Well Pa!

MALONE

How about five million fucking
dollars, son?

ALEX

Deal.

BONES

I'll get her.

TIANA

Uh, guys... I see alligators!

Malone raises his revolver and fires warning shots into the swamp.

MALONE

I'll handle the gators!

Bones jumps into the water, lifts Tiana effortlessly.

ALEX

You got this?

BONES

She weighs nothin'! I could lift three of her!

Amid Tiana's screams, Bones carries her like a rag doll. Alex reaches down and hauls her onto the pavement.

Tiana collapses, sobbing.

Trent's phone starts ringing. Alex picks it up: "GREAVES - BROWARD COUNTY."

ALEX

We've gotta get outta here!

BONES

Why?

ALEX

Call it intuition.

BONES

Your car's toast!

INT. ALEX'S CAR

Alex jumps into the driver's seat, turns the key. Nothing.

ALEX

Come on, come on...

He tries again. The engine stutters.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Dear God...

Third try—success. Engine ROARS to life.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Get in! I'm leaving!

Bones jumps in. Malone helps Tiana to her feet.

TIANA

Why the hell would I come with you?

MALONE

If you stay, the next people here
will finish what that guard
started.

Tiana stares at Trent's corpse. She swallows her fear.

ALEX

Now! Let's get back to Dawber
County!

Tiana helps Malone into the car.

The car speeds off, leaving the carnage and swamp behind.

Act 3

EXT. JOHNNY MALONE'S HOUSE - DAY

A BLACK FIREBIRD SCREECHES to a halt outside the cordoned-off
remains of Johnny Malone's Spanish Colonial-style home.
Yellow tape flaps in the breeze.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Mack Donnelly made his bones going
deep with gangs and cartels. His
takedown of Dawber's drug ring
should've been legendary. Instead,
his career tanked.

Mack Donnelly (50s), rugged, burned out but dangerous, kills
the ignition. He lights a cigarette, steps out. His DEA badge
hangs from a thick belt; a pistol rests opposite it.
Snakeskin boots crunch on debris.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Oscar Fuentes, now mid-tier at the
DEA, threw Mack a lifeline—gave him
a desk in Miami.

(MORE)

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

But Mack never stopped hunting
Malone. He couldn't.

Mack ducks the crime scene tape, heading toward the still-smoldering ruin. He draws glances—he doesn't look like a fed. More like trouble.

A UNIFORMED OFFICER jogs up.

OFFICER

Sir, you can't—

He freezes, sees the badge. Steps aside.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

Sorry, sir.

Mack nods and keeps walking, scanning the wreckage. His brooding moment is interrupted.

BARBARA (O.S.)

I'm surprised you came.

BARBARA ROLAND (early 40s), poised, lethal in a DHS pantsuit, stands behind him. Pistol on her hip, laptop open on the hood of a black Suburban. Her presence commands the scene.

MACK

I'm surprised DHS is wasting time
down here.

BARBARA

A house explodes in broad daylight
a year after 9/11? DHS gets called.

MACK

And what, Homeland Security stops
bombs now?

BARBARA

If we'd been around before 9/11—

MACK

The towers still would've come
down, Barb.

BARBARA

Says the career DEA agent.

MACK

Exactly.

Barb leads Mack to her Suburban. On the laptop screen: crime scene photos—burned corpses.

BARBARA
Recognize any of them?

MACK
Only if they were jack-o'-lanterns
on my mom's porch.

BARBARA
For fuck's sake, Mack. Just be an
agent for once.

MACK
Barb—

BARBARA
It's Director Roland.

MACK
How's Tucker?

BARBARA
Better than ever. Third home in the
Hamptons.

MACK
Bet he still cries over court-
appointed clients.

BARBARA
Say what you want, he never slept
with a stripper tied to his case.

MACK
That you know of.

BARBARA
What's that supposed to mean?

MACK
C'mon. High-profile litigator,
flanked by young interns,
globetrotting with the elite... you
sure he's not worse than me?

BARBARA
He's not a degenerate.

MACK
You used to like that about me.

BARBARA
Not the part where you banged a
Reno stripper.

MACK

Why can't we just get along?

BARBARA

I wasn't gonna do this...

She chuckles, then reaches behind the laptop and holds up a plastic evidence bag. Inside: a scorched lighter with a skull and crossbones.

MACK

Malone's.

BARBARA

Thought you'd want closure.

MACK

Where was it found?

BARBARA

In the rubble. Near a charred body.

MACK

That ain't him. Check the dentals.

BARBARA

Who else would it be?

MACK

One of the Haitians, Barb!

Barb sighs.

MACK (CONT'D)

Sorry. I'll call you Director Roland.

BARBARA

Dentals are being run. In the meantime, pull your files on Malone. All of them.

MACK

He's alive. I know it.

BARBARA

You smell like Jim Beam.

MACK

Jack Daniels.

INT. REFORM PRISON - DAY

Deon enters, instantly sensing something off. The GUARDS are twitchier than usual. One of them, a portly, bearded guard named DALY (30s), cradles a shotgun and motions silently for Deon to follow.

They walk past signs and inmates. As they approach a metal door, Deon glances at a wall sign: "MORGUE →"

DEON
Where are you taking me?

GUARD DALY
(tilting his head toward
the sign)
The morgue.

DEON
Why?

GUARD DALY
(beat)
Because your guy Kenny Gregory
hanged himself.

Deon stops. Eyes the door to the morgue.

DEON
You go first.

GUARD DALY
Suit yourself.

He trudges down. Deon follows, more wary now. He reaches the black-painted door marked MORTUARY. Daly waves him in.

INT. REFORM PRISON - MORTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Inside, Kenny Gregory's LIFELESS BODY lies cold on a table.

Then -- a SHADOW shifts in the corner.

FESTER (30s), wiry and wild-eyed, steps into view, holding a SHIV.

Before Deon can react -- SLASH. The blade carves deep into Deon's neck. Blood jets. He gasps, clutching the wound. He collapses, twitching.

Daly CATCHES his fall, gently guiding him onto a PLASTIC SHEET. Like they knew this was coming.

Fester grins -- pleased with his kill.

Then -- BOOM.

Daly BLASTS Fester in the chest with his shotgun. Fester's body FLIES back, shredded by buckshot.

GUARD DALY
Inmate Fester -- Warden Kinder
thanks you for your service.

Daly kicks Fester's corpse so it slumps atop Deon's.

Two more GUARDS enter to help remove the bodies.

CUT TO:

INT. WARDEN KINDER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Warden Kinder watches a small monitor, sipping Scotch. Calm.
On screen: the clean-up of Deon and Fester.

Bocephus Dawber, massive and dignified in an orange D.O.C. jumpsuit, lounges nearby.

BOCEPHUS
You're enjoying this.

WARDEN KINDER
(smiling)
I think I am.

BOCEPHUS
Didn't know you had it in you.

WARDEN KINDER
You should've seen my unit in 'Nam.

BOCEPHUS
Someday you'll have to tell me...
(beat)
Malone never shut up about his time there.

WARDEN KINDER
You really hate Johnny Malone,
don't you?

BOCEPHUS
Does it show?

WARDEN KINDER

(laughing)

That's why I like you, Bo. Ice water in your veins.

Kinder reclines in his chair.

WARDEN KINDER (CONT'D)

You sure Malone stashed the money at the church?

BOCEPHUS

It's the only place that makes sense.

WARDEN KINDER

Five million bucks in a Baptist church... now that's a hell of an offering.

BOCEPHUS

If I know Pastor Bubs, he hasn't touched it.

WARDEN KINDER

Why not?

BOCEPHUS

He probably sees it as blood money.

WARDEN KINDER

What man sits on five million for over a decade?

BOCEPHUS

(leans in, coldly)

A better man than either of us.

WARDEN KINDER

And if he doesn't hand it over when my boys show up?

BOCEPHUS

Then you're makin' a mistake. Don't touch Bubs.

WARDEN KINDER

Is that a threat?

Bo's glare hardens.

Kinder lets out a hollow laugh, trying to recover.

WARDEN KINDER (CONT'D)

Just let the guards know when
you're ready to return to your
cell.

Bo sets his glass down and exits.

Kinder watches him go, his authority feeling... less certain.

INT. ALEX'S BOATHOUSE - DAY

ALEX

We're getting that money now.

MALONE

No fuckin' way, kid. Not until I
get a better lay of the land around
here.

TIANA

What does this have to do with me?

MALONE

Tiana, sweetie, Warden Kinder and
his boys are bad men looking to
steal the score of a lifetime.

TIANA

I need to call Deon!

MALONE

Honey, Deon's gone by now. If you
haven't heard from him, he's dead.
(beat)
You want to be a lawyer again?

TIANA

What?

MALONE

Do you want to be a lawyer or not?

TIANA

Yes. But I don't want to be your
lawyer.

MALONE

Honey, I'm all you've got.

TIANA

Honey? I am an Ivy League-educated
attorney with a whole helluva lot
of qualifications.

MALONE

You're hired!

(to Alex and Bones)

What are you going to do with that money?

ALEX

We can buy some land.

MALONE

Real estate. I'm glad you listened to me earlier. It's a good time to get into that racket.

(beat)

So, you want land?

ALEX

Yes, near the old Battenberg sugar plantation.

MALONE

I'd think waterfront would be a better investment.

ALEX

It is near the water.

MALONE

It's near the swamp.

ALEX

I just need a large patch of secluded land that can be accessed through the swamp.

BONES

Dude, that's like all of Dawber.

ALEX

It needs to be close enough so that the trucks can get to it.

MALONE

Trucks?

ALEX

To move the product on land. You know, YAYO.

BONES

(excitedly)

Yes! Scarface motherfucker! Chi Chi get the YAYO!

MALONE

Oh, for fuck's sake!

BONES

Dude, that's genius!

MALONE

You're not doing that!

ALEX

Why not?! That's what you did!

MALONE

No, I was a financier.

ALEX

Fuck off, Malone, you ran drugs for Escobar!

MALONE

The Dawbers, Sheltons, and Del Vecchios ran the drugs. I just moved money around. I'm a fuckin' accountant!

ALEX

Who moved drugs around for the Colombians! My God, since when did you become such a bullshitter?!

MALONE

Hey, I'm a professional bullshitter, which is how I got so rich!

BONES

Well, your bullshit had consequences, Dad. For me. For Mom. For everyone back here in Dawber.

MALONE

At this point, I'd rather just give you a million dollars contingent on you boys getting out of Dawber.

BONES

I can live with that, Dad.

ALEX

No! I don't want your fuckin' handout.

BONES

Why not? With that money, we could be running this place! And not just Dawber County either! The whole fuckin' state!

Malone is contemplating.

BONES (CONT'D)

Dad, don't you want to be back on top?

ALEX

Malone, with your business skills and our vision, we could easily reclaim the old empire.

Malone nods. Alex and Bones high-five.

MALONE

But, Alex, there are going to be strict rules. This is a dangerous game and you've got to play it straight. You both do.

ALEX

You're the expert.

MALONE

I am.

TIANA

What about Deon? His brother Willis lives here. I know Willis from his office visits. Deon was always taking care of his legal problems. Shouldn't he know what's going on?

MALONE

Willis Childress... that is a good idea. We can use his help.

(beat)

I'm sure Willis doesn't like me either and that is why I want you to go talk to him. Tell him what's happening and ask him to come back with you.

INT. DEA MIAMI FIELD OFFICE - OSCAR FUENTES' OFFICE - DAY

A large manila folder SLAMS down onto the desk with a thud.

DEA SPECIAL AGENT Oscar Fuentes (50s, wiry, Cuban-American) glares at the file like it insulted his mother. Across from him, Mack Donnelly (50s, grizzled, still in cowboy boots) sits, arms folded. Barbara Roland (early 40s, fierce, DHS power player) stands off to the side.

OSCAR

This is some real bullshit!

BARBARA

Isn't this what you wanted?

OSCAR

What?

BARBARA

For a year, you've been screaming for more resources. Well, congratulations.

OSCAR

How is Homeland Security gonna get me more resources when your new shiny agency is taking every nickel in D.C.?!

BARBARA

Simple. Work with us.

Oscar throws his hands in the air, pacing.

OSCAR

What the fuck?!

(to Mack)

Did she always talk in riddles when you two were married?

BARBARA

Excuse me?

MACK

As you know, Barb's always prided herself on being a professional ball-buster.

OSCAR

She talks like a government fortune cookie.

BARBARA

DEA and DHS have concurrent jurisdiction—

OSCAR

That's bureaucratic horse shit and
you know it!

Oscar sits down in his chair.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

You and I both know the War on
Terror's gonna suck up everything.
My guys'll be left chasing crumbs.

BARBARA

A house exploded in broad daylight
in Miami, post-9/11. That qualifies
as domestic terror.

OSCAR

And you just so happen to dump this
case on my lap right when I've got
six cartel killings on Calle Ocho
and a witness in Hialeah too scared
to testify.

BARBARA

Help us close this and I'll be your
best advocate in D.C.

OSCAR

Bullshit. You just don't want this
mess blowing back on DHS.

MACK

We didn't solve it the first time,
Oz. Malone's still out there.

OSCAR

Oy dios mio! Not this ghost story
again!

BARBARA

We found Malone's lighter. He was
there.

OSCAR

A fucking lighter? You want me to
drop real threats because of a
goddamn Zippo?

MACK

It's custom. From 'Nam. Had it
since his platoon days. Skull and
crossbones etched on the back.

OSCAR

You're not helping your case, Mack.
You're making it sound like you've
been investigating him this whole
time.

MACK

I have. On my own time.

OSCAR

(laughing)

So you disobeyed a direct order,
used agency resources... Jesus
Christ.

BARBARA

Are you taking the case or not?
I've got a flight to D.C. in two
hours.

OSCAR

Fine. I'll babysit your bag of
shit. But just remember—drugs are
killing more Americans than al-
Qaeda ever did.

Barb grabs her bag and heads for the door.

MACK

Say hi to Tucker for me.

BARBARA

(grunts)

Still jealous?

Oscar chuckles as Barb exits.

Mack stares out the door. A young woman walks past, radiant
and sharp in her blazer. Mack leans in.

OSCAR

She's something, huh?

MACK

Who's that?

OSCAR

REYES!

AGENT REYES (20s, Latina, lethal with a smile) turns.

AGENT REYES

Yeah, boss?

OSCAR
Get in here. Welcome to the circus.

INT. OSCAR FUENTES' OFFICE - DAY

Mack grins ear-to-ear as the beautiful young woman walks in.

AGENT REYES
What's up, Chief?

Mack's eyes widen when he realizes this young woman is a full-blown Special Agent. He notices a badge and gun on her hip. Reyes grimaces as she catches him staring.

MACK
Hey, I'm Mack.

AGENT REYES
Yeah, I know who you are.

MACK
Have we met?

AGENT REYES
You tried to sleep with me after your talk at the academy.

MACK
I think I would remember that?

AGENT REYES
Later that night. You were drinking... heavily.

Oscar cuts him off.

OSCAR
Mack, this is your new partner.

MACK
Now wait-

Oscar raises a hand.

OSCAR
I don't want to fucking hear it. After all the shit you've pulled, and everything I've done for you. You repaid me by running a secret investigation into Johnny Malone? Not only is Reyes your new partner, she's the ranking agent on this investigation.

AGENT REYES
(grinning)
Thanks, boss!

OSCAR
Get out of here, Reyes. Close the
door behind you.

Reyes nods, shoots a sarcastic look at Mack, and exits.

Mack scowls.

MACK
I don't do partners.

OSCAR
You know what they call me around
here?

MACK
Oz?

OSCAR
No. You and Barb call me that, and
I fucking hate it.

Oscar points at his desk nameplate.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
They call me the Special Agent in
Charge. That means I say what
happens in this office. You lied to
me about Malone. You went to Barb
to get her to pressure me. Now
you're getting what you wanted, so
meet me halfway.

MACK
Fine. But I didn't go behind your
back.

OSCAR
The end result is the same.

Mack heads to the door and calls out.

MACK
Reyes. Get a car.

OSCAR
I don't want this becoming a Mack
Donnelly shit-show.
Don't give me that look. No one
wanted you after Reno.
(MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I saved your ass and you've been busting my balls ever since.

MACK

We are friends.

OSCAR

Then try not to get us sued. We may be friends, but I'll fire you myself.

INT. REFORM PRISON - DAY

Warden Kinder greets DEA Agents Mack Donnelly and Aisha Reyes with a broad, toothy grin. Despite his calm exterior, tension brews underneath. He extends a hand, composed but sweaty.

WARDEN KINDER

Mack Donnelly. As I live and breathe.

MACK

How've you been, Vern?

Kinder turns to Reyes and shakes her hand.

WARDEN KINDER

And who might you be?

MACK

This is Special Agent Aisha Reyes.

WARDEN KINDER

(smiling)

Oh, my. What an exotic name.

Reyes yanks her hand back.

AGENT REYES

It's a name.

She glares at Mack.

AGENT REYES (CONT'D)

What is it with you old timers?

MACK

Who're you calling 'old'?

AGENT REYES (TO KINDER)

We're here to see two prisoners.

MACK

Agent Reyes is one of the DEA's up-and-comers. Don't let her lack of charm fool you-she hates everyone.

Kinder dabs sweat from his brow.

WARDEN KINDER

Well, how can I help you?

AGENT REYES

Bocephus Dawber and Kenny Gregory. We need to talk to them.

WARDEN KINDER

I can help you with one.

MACK

What does that mean?

WARDEN KINDER

Kenny Gregory hanged himself a couple days ago.

AGENT REYES

Why would someone set for release in two weeks hang himself?

WARDEN KINDER

For that, you'd need a séance.

AGENT REYES

Why wasn't a coroner's report sent to our office?

WARDEN KINDER

This facility filed a report-with the Department of Corrections, Honey.

AGENT REYES

Honey?!

MACK

And Bo? I need to talk to him.

WARDEN KINDER

I have to ask-why?

MACK

National security matter.

WARDEN KINDER

Is Al Qaeda down here?

MACK

That'd be for us to know.

WARDEN KINDER

I can't let you see him without his attorney.

AGENT REYES

Actually, yes you can. It's national security.

MACK

Vern, It's a Patriot Act-type thing.

WARDEN KINDER

I admit, I don't understand the particulars of the Patriot Act.

AGENT REYES

It means we can do whatever the fuck we want. Anytime. Anywhere.

WARDEN KINDER

How ominous.

MACK

So are you bringing out Bo now?

WARDEN KINDER

Looks like I don't have much of a choice.

Kinder pulls out a walkie-talkie.

WARDEN KINDER (INTO RADIO) (CONT'D)

Bring Bocephus Dawber to the holding room. Our DEA colleagues want a little pow wow.

EXT. WILLIS' GANG HOUSE - DAY

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Maroon Gang wasn't like the others. Willis always said they were different—part Depression-era Black culture, part Southern gang code. More family than crew. More sermon than hustle.

INT. WILLIS' GANG HOUSE - GYM ROOM - DAY

WILLIS CHILDERS (30s), sweating and seething, punches a bag with raw fists. The bag swings wildly.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

His brother Deon was the golden child. While Willis was in juvie, Deon was at church with Pastor Bubs. While Willis went to war, Deon went to college. They never understood each other. But damn, Willis was proud of him.

SUDS (30s), a mountain of a man, holds the bag steady. Always smiling, always loyal.

SUDS

What's wrong, bro?

WILLIS

Hold him steady.

The bag lets out a muffled scream. There's someone inside.

Willis unloads—a barrage of punches until the man inside falls silent. He pulls a knife and slices the bottom of the bag. TED HENDERSON (20s), bloodied and barely conscious, drops to the floor.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

I think white boy done learned his lesson.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Ted Henderson, pot-dealer-turned-snitch. Tried to double-cross Willis for the Haitian gang. Bad call.

WILLIS

I thought we was partners!

He kicks Ted in the ribs. Ted coughs, sputters.

TED

My... father... will... pay...

WILLIS

Oh, he gonna pay.

He holds a knife to Ted's throat, then raises it.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
Suds, cut this bitch up.

SUDS
Right.

TED
Please! I don't want to die!

WILLIS
You ain't gonna die. Not today.
(to gang)
Drive his ass back to Miami. Tell
his daddy next time he tries to
sell us out to the Haitians, we'll
send him home in a box.

Gang members haul Ted away.

EXT. WILLIS' GANG HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

A battered truck pulls up. BIGZ (30s) waits beside it with
Tiana (30s), calm and defiant. Willis approaches.

WILLIS
Whatchu want, woman?

TIANA
Did you get a call from the prison?

WILLIS
What? Why'd you come all the way
out here?

TIANA
I need you to come with me.

WILLIS
I'm busy.

TIANA
What was that yelling from inside?

WILLIS
That'd be my business. What's Deon
want?

TIANA
I think Deon's dead.

Willis freezes, laughs nervously.

WILLIS

What, he get in a fight with some rich client?

TIANA

He went to the prison. To see Kenny Gregory.

WILLIS

Why the fuck he talkin' to Kenny Motherfuckin' Gregory?

TIANA

We were representing him. They are our clients.

WILLIS

Why? Why represent the white boys that wrecked this county?

TIANA

It's our job. We're lawyers.
(beat)
Look, Willis, the fact is I think your brother and Kenny Gregory were murdered by their prison guards—

WILLIS

Why in the hell would federal prison guards murder those two?

TIANA

Because Kenny and Deon were the only two links to Malone's missing money.

WILLIS

Malone?! Bitch, that money ain't nowhere to be found. It's what you might call a legend. Malone was a con man. My bro, Deon, though, he knows how to take care of himself. That dude is like a cat: he got nine lives; always got a way out of any bad situation. I know. I watched him do it up-close-and-personal. Got right on the hell outta here when there was nothin' that could save him. And now he runnin' that big ass firm in Miami.

TIANA

Willis, I know that Deon is dead.

WILLIS

No, no, no. Deon don't die. Guys like me die. Guys like Deon go on to be fuckin' senators... maybe even president.

TIANA

I think they were murdered. By prison guards. For Malone's money.

(beat)

They tried to kill me, too. On the old alligator alley. They put a hit on Kenny and Deon because they were the two people other than Malone who knew where he had hidden the money from Johnny Malone's drug deals.

WILLIS

That money's a ghost story.

TIANA

No, it's real. And Malone's alive. I've been with him all day.

Willis steps closer, knife-sharp gaze.

WILLIS

If you're lyin'...

TIANA

Come with me. Malone's got a plan. They're coming for the money. They'll kill anyone who gets in the way.

(beat)

Deon is dead, Willis. Please.

Willis fights emotion. Nods.

WILLIS

Suds! Bring my car. Boys, follow us in the truck.

(to Tiana)

If I don't like what I hear, you won't wake up tomorrow.

(beat)

But if Deon's really gone... I'm gonna kill every motherfuckin' guard that had a hand in it.

Tiana watches as Willis walks to his car, rage burning behind his eyes.

FADE OUT.

INT. REFORM PRISON - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Mack Donnelly enters, eyes locking with Bo Dawber (50s), seated with his hands cuffed to a metal table. Bo sits upright, controlled, his glare burning through the air.

Behind Mack, Ward Kinder holds the door open. Agent Aisha Reyes lingers nearby, arms crossed, unreadable.

BOCEPHUS

Well, well... If it ain't Captain Ahab and his babysitter.

WARDEN KINDER

Now you play nice, Bo.

Kinder flashes an oily smile and slinks out, closing the door behind him.

Bo glances at Reyes, amused.

BOCEPHUS

Who's the pretty young thing? She looks a lot better than Oscar.

MACK

Yeah, and she could kick your ass in ways he could only dream of.

BOCEPHUS

Ten years, Mack. Ten. And now you show up tryin' to bust my balls when I'm two weeks from paradise.

MACK

Word is, if you hadn't killed Sanchez, you and Johnny would still be raking it in.

BOCEPHUS

I don't have to talk without my lawyer.

AGENT REYES

Actually, you do.

BOCEPHUS

Does this little girl not know
about constitutional rights yet?

MACK

Do you? Because we're investigating
a potential act of terror.

AGENT REYES

Narco-terror.

BOCEPHUS

Terrorism? What are you talking
about?

AGENT REYES

A Miami house blew up. Broad
daylight. Left a crater the size of
a minivan. Bodies everywhere.
Haitians.

Bo leans back, unconcerned. Mack produces a plastic evidence
bag. Inside: Johnny Malone's engraved lighter, "SORRY,
CHARLIE."

MACK

Johnny's alive.

Bo goes quiet. Just stares at the lighter.

MACK (CONT'D)

He was there. At that house.

BOCEPHUS

Then maybe the Haitians finally got
him.

MACK

You and I both know Johnny's got
nine lives. He's not even halfway
through 'em.

Bo pushes the lighter back across the table.

BOCEPHUS

Congrats. You found your white
whale.

MACK

You know where he hid the money.
And now he's on the run again.
Which means he's coming to get it.

AGENT REYES

Help us, or we make sure you never leave this prison. Under the Patriot Act, we can detain and interrogate narco-terror suspects indefinitely.

MACK

It's a beautiful thing, really.

AGENT REYES

But if you give us what we need, we'll see to it you walk in two weeks. Just like scheduled.

Bo shifts, the weight of the moment sinking in. He snorts softly, then nods.

BOCEPHUS

Bubs has it.

MACK (TO REYES)

The local pastor.

AGENT REYES

You sure?

BOCEPHUS

It's a hunch.

MACK

Bo's hunches are better than most men's facts.

AGENT REYES

Looks like you're getting your freedom after all.

MACK

Thanks, Bo.

Bo just stares at them, expression unreadable, as the lighter rests between them on the cold metal table.

FADE OUT.

INTERIOR. ALEX'S BOATHOUSE - DAY

Malone jumps up when he sees Willis Childress charging toward him, fists clenched.

WILLIS

You've got a lot of fuckin' nerve,
boy!

TIANA

Willis, stop!

WILLIS

Bitch, you best stay outta this!

Malone braces for a beating. But before Willis can strike, BONES steps in, hulking and calm.

BONES

I wouldn't come any closer to my
dad if I were you.

Willis sees Bones and relents slightly, backing off with a snort. He plops into the recliner.

WILLIS

Boy, what you protectin' him for?
He hurt you and your mama as much
as he hurt the rest of us.

Bones says nothing. His stare is cold, flat. He yells at Tiana.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Bitch, get me a drink.

TIANA

Get off your lazy ass and get it
yourself.

BONES

Show some respect, Willis.

WILLIS

Only reason I ain't beatin' your
cracker ass is 'cause I just got
done with another white shithead!

Malone puts a hand on Bones' shoulder.

MALONE

Why don't you get Willis here
something to drink, son?

Bones looks at him like he's lost his mind.

BONES

What?

Malone moves past Bones and sits on the couch across from Willis.

MALONE
Let's all calm down.

Bones, fuming, turns and PUNCHES a massive hole in the wall. Silence. Then a smug smile from Bones.

BONES
That could've been your fuckin' face, Willis.

TIANA
On second thought, I'll get that drink.

MALONE
He takes after his mother.

WILLIS
So what the fuck you want?

Malone fixes a level gaze on Willis.

MALONE
Been having trouble making ends meet?

WILLIS
Be doin' a lot better if I had that cash you hid from Bo Dawber.

MALONE
How much would help you?

WILLIS
Like you gonna help me out?

Malone nods.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
Hell no. I've seen what you do to partners.

MALONE
You saw what I do to people who threaten my family.

WILLIS
You wearin' a wire?

Malone lifts his shirt. Hairy. Disgusting.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Jesus, you a hairy-ass
motherfucker!

MALONE

I'm part Italian. What do you
expect?

WILLIS

You look like Cornelius from Planet
of the Apes! Call Jane fuckin'
Goodall!

MALONE

Are you done?

Willis rolls his eyes.

MALONE (CONT'D)

The boys and I are getting the old
business up and running again.

WILLIS

Dawber County's changed, Malone.
You wrecked a lot of folks here.

MALONE

Let me make it right.

Willis leans in.

WILLIS

Alright. I'm listenin'.

MALONE

Two million. No questions asked.

Willis laughs, eyeing Malone's disheveled look.

WILLIS

Where the fuck you got that kind of
cash?

MALONE

Here and there.

WILLIS

You'll need to do better than that.

MALONE

But I need your help to get to it.
It's here in Dawber.

WILLIS

Why do I feel like you tryin' to fuck me?

MALONE

I'm not. Two million. You in or out?

WILLIS

I heard there's five mil.

MALONE

I need the rest to handle the assholes comin' for it.

WILLIS

Who?

MALONE

Same ones who murdered Deon.

Willis stiffens. Fists clench.

WILLIS

Who the fuck would kill Deon?

MALONE

Tiana told you. Same corrupt prison staff that killed Kenny Gregory. They want the cash. And they're coming.

WILLIS

Well, Suds and the boys are ready to tear 'em apart... including you, and that giant son of yours.

MALONE

You do that and you'll lose two million, not to mention a shot at real power.

WILLIS

That's a weak-ass sales pitch.

MALONE

Effective, though.

WILLIS

You gonna invest in my weed business?

MALONE

That's the idea.

WILLIS

What about the other three mil?

MALONE

It's leverage. If I don't stop them, no one gets a dime.

WILLIS

Kill the Warden. Be done with it.

MALONE

Not the smartest move when we're trying to build a narcotics empire, Willis.

(beat)

Are you in or out?

WILLIS

Two mil gets me in... for now.

MALONE

Good. It's a show of force. That's what we need.

WILLIS

Still think your boy's an idiot. Give me his share, I'll invest it for him.

MALONE

Two mil's enough.

Malone eyes the massive hole in the wall.

MALONE (CONT'D)

Bones. You and I are going on a fishing trip.

EXT. ALEX'S SKIFF - DAWBER COUNTY SWAMP - MANGROVE TUNNELS - DAY

A small skiff drifts through the tangled maze of mangrove tunnels. Malone stands at the helm, steering slowly. Bones sits motionless at the stern, stone-faced.

MALONE

Son?

BONES

I really gotta thank you, Malone.

MALONE

You mean "Dad."

BONES

Sure.

MALONE

Because I am your father. The only one who gives a damn about you in this cruel-ass world.

BONES

Dude, I barely know you.

That comment hits Malone hard. He shifts.

MALONE

So what are you thanking me for, then?

BONES

For giving me a purpose.

MALONE

And what exactly is that?

BONES

I'm an outlaw. Like you, I guess.

MALONE

I'm just an accountant, son.

BONES

You get us that money, I'll call you whatever you want. Hell, I might even make you a mug that says "Father of the Year."

MALONE

What are you planning to do with it?

BONES

Down payment on our future.

MALONE

Crime ain't a future.

BONES

Not this speech again. School's out, old man. That outlaw life? It's in.

Bones pulls out Malone's old service pistol and kisses it.

BONES (CONT'D)

This is who I am now.

MALONE

I didn't do all this to raise a--

BONES

Do all of what? You bailed on us.
On mom. On everything. What did you
expect? That we'd just grow up to
be frat boys at FSU?

MALONE

Honestly? Yeah.

BONES

And I am the dumb one?

Malone softens.

MALONE

You're not dumb. You just don't
think things through. That's
something you can work on son.

BONES

Where we going?

MALONE

Into the heart.

Malone points to a narrow tunnel in the mangroves.

MALONE (CONT'D)

Cut the engine.

Bones hesitates.

BONES

You afraid of something, Malone?

MALONE

We're here.

Malone points to an area near them.

MALONE (CONT'D)

We tied the bags to weights. Kenny
and I dropped them here.

Bones grabs a hook and lowers it into the black water.

MALONE (CONT'D)

Be careful.

BONES

You've gone soft in your old age.

Bones snags something.

BONES (CONT'D)

Got one!

He hauls up a black box. Laughter bursts out as he rips it open and yanks out stacks of plastic-wrapped cash.

BONES (CONT'D)

Woo-boy! Jackpot!

Bones kisses the stacks of cash.

BONES (CONT'D)

I'm the king of the fuckin' world!

MALONE

That's only a million. We need the rest.

Bones slaps the cash back into the box.

MALONE (CONT'D)

Keep it sealed. Don't let it get wet.

Malone hauls up a second bag with effort.

MALONE (CONT'D)

That makes two.

Bones lowers the hook again... and then--

--SMILEY, the monstrous Dawber County crocodile, erupts from the swamp, jaws clamping down on a bag.

BONES

Shit!

Bones swings the hook at Smiley, slashing wildly. The beast shoves forward, nearly knocking him in. Malone grabs Bones' shirt and yanks him back.

BONES (CONT'D)

Fuckin' thing!

Bones lunges for the money floating in the water.

MALONE

Get back here!

Too late. Bones jumps overboard, firing bullets into Smiley. Blood fills the water.

He surfaces, dragging another box with him. Malone hauls him into the boat. Bones slaps his hand away.

Malone opens the box--the money inside is ruined.

MALONE (CONT'D)
It's waterlogged.

BONES
What?

MALONE
It's gone. That's \$2 million lost.

Bones SCREAMS. He kicks the box, furious.

BONES
This is not enough!

MALONE
We've got \$3 million. That's what we've got.

Bones revs the engine, jerks the boat into gear, hurling Malone backward.

MALONE (CONT'D)
Where the hell are we going?

BONES
To get the rest.

Bone's pulls out Malone's gun and points it at his father.

BONES (CONT'D)
I ain't playin'. One way or another, I'm getting mine.

MALONE
Okay. Fine.

BONES
That's what I thought.

MALONE
But I do the talking.

Bones raises the pistol again.

BONES
I got a better idea. Let this guy do the talking.

MALONE

Pastor Bubs is a good man. That's why I trusted him with the money.

BONES

And he let mom rot.

MALONE

He's incorruptible.

BONES

I will break him.

MALONE

He was a Prisoner of War at the Hanoi Hilton. The North Vietnamese tried for six years to break him, I think he can handle you son.

Bones stares at his father and points to his gun.

BONES

I can be meaner.

INT. CHURCH HALL - DAY

PASTOR BUBS stands at the front of the hall, paper trembling in hand. He fumbles with a rickety microphone. MILLIE gently ushers a dozen elderly townsfolk into folding chairs.

Bubs sighs, crumples the page, tucks it into his pocket. Clears his throat.

TESSA

What the hell is he doin'?

MILLIE

Oh, Tessa...

BUBS

Do you all remember the day Johnny Malone almost drowned pullin' Jessie here outta the Gulf?

TESSA

Speak up, Bubs!

Pastor Bubs pulls the mic from the stand, steps closer.

BUBS

Johnny Malone. Tessa, do you remember when he saved Jessie?

TESSA

Don't mention that man! No, siree!

BUBS

He touched all our lives. We thought he was sent by God to save us.

(beat)

Margaret, he was a false prophet. He led us all astray. Me included. Took me losing my boy to drugs to see it.

TESSA

God rest your sweet boy's soul.

BUBS

Thank you, Tess. When the feds shut down our fishing industry, I looked the other way 'cause Johnny was handing out money.

(beat)

I took that money. Built this church with it.

JESSIE

We were all guilty. Thought he was saving Dawber.

BUBS

Y'all remember when he left town? He wasn't killed. Bo Dawber didn't get him.

(beat)

He came here. Said I was the only one he could trust. Left me with access to a Swiss bank account...

Gasps ripple through the room.

BUBS (CONT'D)

It's worth hundreds of millions. More than I ever dreamed of.

MARGARET

Then it's for all of us! Not just you!

TESSA

If you had it, why you still preachin' in this dump?

BUBS

I never touched it. Not once.

JESSIE

Why not?

BUBS

Because it's blood money.

JESSIE

Why did you take it to begin with?

BUBS

Because I'm human.

MARGARET

Then use it. Help poor Bones. Help us all.

BUBS

I filed for bankruptcy. And tonight, I'm calling the FBI.

TESSA

Righteous! You're a good man, Pastor!

JESSIE

So you'll just hand it over to the feds?

MALONE (O.S.)

It's not yours to give, Bubs.

Gasps. JOHNNY MALONE enters with BONES behind him.

BUBS

Speak of the devil... A wolf in sheep's clothing.

MALONE

That's almost biblical.

BONES

Almost.

Stunned silence. TESSA squints, jaw dropping.

TESSA

Johnny?

MALONE

Hey, Tessa.

Jessie grabs his Bible, fuming.

JESSIE

You two deserve each other.

Jessie storms off. Tessa tries to wheel away, but BONES grabs the handles.

TESSA

Boy, you'd best not-

Tessa spits in Bones face. Bones turns demonic. BUBS, furious, lunges-grabs Bones' shirt. Bones elbows him-hard. Bubs crashes backward.

Bubs, nose broken, rolls to the floor.

BONES

Clear outta here, ya old bitty!

Johnny intercepts, but BONES draws a pistol, aims at Johnny.

MALONE

Don't do this, son.

Bubs rises, bloodied, and hurls his Bible at Bones. It hits.

BUBS

Here, boy! This is all you're entitled to!

Bones points the gun at Bubs-finger on the trigger.

BONES

This bastard's gonna give us what we need!

BUBS

No, boy. I'll not do that.

Bones growls. Grabs Bubs by the shirt-hoists him up.

BONES

I'll squeeze it outta you. One penny at a time!

WHACK! A baseball bat hits the wall-everyone freezes.

BILLY DAWBER steps in, Louisville Slugger in hand.

BILLY

BONES! Enough!

Bones deflates. The rage fades. He turns to Billy-embraces him.

BONES

I'm sorry, brother...

BILLY

It's okay, buddy.

Bones nods. Pushes past everyone, leaves.

TESSA

Get me outta here, Bubs!

MALONE

Where you goin'?

BUBS

Outside. Then I'm callin' the feds.

Bubs rolls Tessa. Johnny moves to block them—but Billy steps in.

BILLY

Leave 'em be, Johnny.

MALONE

You got no say here, Dawber!

BILLY

Wrong. I got everything to do with this. You lost your say the day you ratted on my family.

Johnny slaps the bat down—glares.

MALONE

Stay the hell away from my boy.

BILLY

I've had Bones' back since you ditched us all. You don't get to tell me, or him, or Alex, a damn thing.

INT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

Malone's rage melts away as he turns to open the double doors. Standing before him is none other than DEA AGENT MACK DONNELLY, grinning like a lunatic.

In his hand, a plastic EVIDENCE bag with the scorched, cracked VIETNAM WAR LIGHTER — Malone's — inside.

MACK

Sorry, Charlie.

Mack YANKS Malone by the collar and SLAMS him against the wall.

MACK (CONT'D)

Where's the fuckin' money, Johnny?

Malone winces as Mack CRANKS his wrists back and SNAPS on handcuffs – hard.

BILLY walks past, unfazed.

BILLY

I'll leave y'all to it, then.

MACK

Sure thing, kid.

MALONE

What the fuck, Mack?!

MACK

Quiet!

Mack SHOVES Malone through the side door.

EXT. CHURCH – CONTINUOUS

Mack marches Malone behind the church.

MALONE

This is a shakedown?

MACK

Take me to the money.

MALONE

I want to turn state's evidence!

Mack SMACKS Malone in the back of the head.

MACK

Shut the fuck up.

He KICKS Malone's ass – hard. Malone howls.

MALONE

You can just arrest me, Mack!

MACK

Let's go.

Malone starts limping off, toward the back dock.

MACK (CONT'D)

Damn, Johnny. You've gotten slow as molasses in your old age!

INT. CHURCH - CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER

Bones paces. Bubs is alone now with his wife MILLIE.

Bones BURSTS IN and SLAMS the chapel doors.

BUBS

Hello again, child.

BONES

You know why I'm here?

BUBS

To seek a reconciliation with your past?

BONES

What?

Bubs ignores him. Walks calmly beneath the cross, whispering a prayer.

Bones GRABS Millie from the pew.

MILLIE

Please!

BONES

This is all up to your husband, Millie! I'm here for what's mine!

BUBS

I cannot propitiate sin into this community.

BONES

I don't know what that means, but I don't like it!

BUBS

Son—

BONES

You ain't my Pastor Bubs! I ain't got a daddy!

BUBS

You have the Lord our Father!

BONES

You are not going to call the feds.

BUBS

That blood money your father left was his guilt offering. I won't be part of it.

MILLIE

Bubs—

BUBS

Bones, you are many things, but a murderer is not one of them. Put the gun down. Pray for forgiveness.

BONES

Pray?! In this shitstorm?

BUBS

Desperation is exactly when we need Him most.

MILLIE

This is insane!

BUBS

Right here is our mission field, Millie. We have to try.

(to Bones)

Let me show you the light, boy.

MILLIE

It won't be just Bones regretting this!

BONES

I ain't playin' no more!

Millie JABS Bones in the ribs with her elbow and runs. Bones THROWS her to the floor.

BUBS

How could you do such a thing?!

Bubs DIVES forward.

BUBS (CONT'D)

In the name of God!

Bones and Bubs CLASH. They fall, roll, strike. The chapel turns into a cage match.

Bones SLAMS Bubs' head to the floor – once, twice. Bubs' nose gushes.

Then – a turnaround – the preacher digs deep, lands a SOLID PUNCH.

Bones stumbles. Disoriented.

Bubs grabs his collar and HAMMERS him again and again–until he STOPS.

Breathing heavily, Bubs STANDS. Compassion replaces rage.

He reaches a hand down.

BUBS (CONT'D)

Come, son.

Bones, stunned and teary, takes his hand.

They rise together.

EXT. CANAL – MOMENTS LATER

Malone limps toward the docked skiff, bags of cash still onboard. He pauses– a shadow moves behind him.

MACK

Keep walking.

MALONE

Where're we going?

MACK

The skiff. You pulled the money from the swamp–I know you did.

Malone limps forward, exhausted.

MACK (CONT'D)

We head to the airstrip. I've got a guy. He flies us to Vegas. I pay off my Russian debt with the cash...

(beat)

Then I hand you over.

MALONE

The Russians don't even know me.

MACK

They don't need to. I told 'em you've got a Swiss account.

MALONE

You don't even know if I have a
Swiss account.

MACK

Doesn't matter. They believe it.
They want the access code. You're
my ticket.

MALONE

No plan. Just desperation.

MACK

You're right, I'm in over my head.
Get in the boat, Johnny.

Just then—WHACK! Mack crumples to the ground.

Willis stands behind him, holding a pistol like a hammer.

WILLIS

Johnny?

MALONE

Jesus, Willis...

Malone raises his hands.

WILLIS

Put your hands down. We're good.

Willis spots a cash bag.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

That the stash?

Malone nods.

WILLIS (CHUCKLING) (CONT'D)

You sly devil.

MALONE

You gonna shoot me?

WILLIS

Why would I? You helped me get
those bastards who killed my
brother.

MALONE

You got the Warden?

WILLIS

Waited like you said. Ambushed 'em.
They never had a chance.

(beat)

We took our time with the Warden. I
made him pay for what he did to
Deon.

Willis pulls keys from Mack's belt. Unlocks Malone's cuffs.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Wanna shoot him?

Malone looks down at unconscious Mack.

MALONE

Tempting...

Malone cuffs Mack to the dock.

MALONE (CONT'D)

...but I don't need more heat.
Besides—Russians are after him.
He'll lay low.

Malone points to the bags.

MALONE (CONT'D)

Take two million. Hell, take it
all.

WILLIS

You going back into business?

MALONE

After Europe.

WILLIS

Switzerland, huh? I heard what he
said.

Malone grins.

MALONE

Yeah. A little fresh air... some
banking.

WILLIS

Well, bon voyage, you bastard. We
will be waiting for you when you
come back.

MALONE

Swamp remembers everything, Willis.

Malone gets into the skiff and drives away. Willis walks away in the opposite direction leaving Mack handcuffed, knocked out, handcuffed to the dock.

FADE OUT.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

DAWBER COUNTY NEVER FORGETS.

NEITHER DOES MALONE.

THE END... FOR NOW.