

SAWGRASS WARS

"The Map"
Episode 2 - Season One

Written by

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Based on the Sawgrass Wars novella series
by Kurt Weichert

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FADE IN:

EXT. REFORM CORRECTIONAL CORPORATION - DAY

An isolated private prison rises beneath the Florida sun. Concrete walls. Guard towers. Razor wire carving the sky into pieces.

INT. REFORM CORRECTIONAL - CELL BLOCK - DAY

KENNY GREGORY walks down the corridor in prison khakis.

Five-foot-six. Gray hair slicked behind his ears. Gray handlebar mustache. Deep lines around eyes that still carry mischief.

He looks like a short, aging redneck.

The prisoners who know him move out of his way.

MICHAEL GREAVES escorts him. Thick-bodied. Military crew cut. Overgrown mustache. A correctional uniform has granted him the authority he always wanted.

Hands shoot through the bars of a nearby cell.

HOT TAMALE, a bald young Latin King, grins at Kenny.

HOT TAMALE
Chaparrito!

Kenny stops.

KENNY
You still talking? I thought I broke your jaw.

HOT TAMALE
I'm gonna kill you before you get out.

Kenny steps closer, just beyond his reach.

KENNY
You've got three weeks.

HOT TAMALE
Plenty of time.

KENNY

You've been promising for six months. I'm starting to think you're not serious about our relationship.

Hot Tamale reaches farther through the bars.

HOT TAMALE

Come closer.

KENNY

I would, but people might talk.

Greaves strikes the bars with his baton.

GREAVES

Keep moving.

HOT TAMALE

My people are gonna get you, Gregory!

Kenny resumes walking.

KENNY

Your people couldn't get laid in a monkey whorehouse with a fistful of bananas.

Hot Tamale shouts after him in Spanish.

Kenny answers in fluent Spanish without turning.

The shouting stops.

GREAVES

What'd you say?

KENNY

I complimented his mother.

GREAVES

You think you're funny?

KENNY

I know I am.

Greaves drives the baton into Kenny's stomach.

Kenny folds forward. Hot Tamale cheers.

Greaves leans close.

GREAVES

You think because you're getting out that you own this place?

Kenny struggles for breath.

KENNY

Three weeks.

GREAVES

What?

KENNY

I'm getting out in three weeks. Not someday. Thought accuracy might be important to a professional like you.

Greaves raises the baton.

Kenny lifts his hands.

KENNY (CONT'D)

I surrender to your superior intellect.

GREAVES

You're still mine until you walk through that gate.

KENNY

I was hoping we could stay friends afterward.

Greaves shoves him along.

Kenny smiles, but his eyes drift toward a narrow window and the open sky beyond the wire.

Three weeks.

INT. REFORM CORRECTIONAL - VISITORS' ROOM - DAY

Greaves opens the door.

A wall of reinforced glass divides the room. Metal stools are bolted to the floor. Gray telephones hang beneath the windows.

Kenny enters expecting his attorney, Deon Childress.

Instead, ALEX GREGORY waits behind the glass.

Seventeen now. Worn clothes. Messy brown hair. A dark bruise has swollen his left eye nearly shut.

Kenny stops.

For an instant, he sees an ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD ALEX sitting in the same chair.

Then the almost-grown man returns.

Greaves nudges Kenny with the baton.

GREAVES

Move.

Kenny sits and lifts the receiver.

Alex does the same.

Kenny stares at the bruise. All the words he rehearsed disappear.

KENNY

I hope the other guy looks worse.

Alex hardens.

ALEX

I haven't come to see you in six years, and that's the first thing you say to me?

KENNY

Well, I --

ALEX

You always did have a way with words, Kenny.

The use of his name lands.

KENNY

What happened to your eye?

ALEX

Nothing.

KENNY

That doesn't look like nothing.

ALEX

It's handled.

KENNY

Who hit you?

ALEX

You planning to do something about
it from there?

Kenny looks at the glass between them.

KENNY

No. I guess I'm not.

Alex was ready for an argument. The admission unsettles him.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Where's Bobby?

ALEX

Dead.

Kenny stares.

KENNY

What?

ALEX

Bobby Boone is dead.

KENNY

When?

ALEX

A few weeks ago.

KENNY

How?

ALEX

They found his boat drifting in the
swamp. Then they found his hat.

Alex pauses.

ALEX (CONT'D)

And his right arm.

Kenny tightens his grip on the phone.

KENNY

What happened to the rest of him?

ALEX

Wildlife officers cut open Smiley.

KENNY

Was the Gator missing an eye.

ALEX

What? Missing an eye? No?

KENNY

It wasn't Smiley.

ALEX

Why do you think Smiley is missing an eye?

KENNY

Because years ago he attacked me and I took out his eye.

ALEX

I never heard that story before. Anyway who cares. It was a big Gator that ate Bobby.

Kenny closes his eyes.

KENNY

Why wasn't I told?

ALEX

Who was supposed to tell you?

KENNY

Bobby was supposed to be looking after you.

ALEX

He wasn't very good at it.

KENNY

What about your grandparents?

ALEX

Which ones?

KENNY

The Battenbergs.

Alex laughs without humor.

ALEX

Forbee hasn't spoken to me in months.

KENNY

He's your grandfather.

ALEX

He remembers that when it's useful.

KENNY

Where are you living?

ALEX

The boathouse.

KENNY

With who?

ALEX

By myself.

KENNY

You're seventeen.

ALEX

Almost eighteen.

KENNY

That's not an answer.

ALEX

It's the answer I've got.

KENNY

What about school?

ALEX

What about it?

KENNY

Are you going?

ALEX

Sometimes.

KENNY

Sometimes?

ALEX

I didn't come here to discuss my attendance.

Kenny's anger rises -- then dies beneath shame.

He softens.

KENNY

Are you eating?

ALEX

I'm not a dog you left tied behind the house.

KENNY

I didn't mean it that way.

ALEX

You don't know anything about me.

KENNY

I know that.

Again, Alex stops.

Kenny puts his free hand on the metal counter.

KENNY (CONT'D)

I know I wasn't there.

ALEX

You went to prison.

KENNY

I remember.

ALEX

Ma got sick while you were in here.

Kenny looks down.

ALEX (CONT'D)

They would've found the cancer sooner if we'd had decent insurance. But we didn't. We didn't have money for much of anything after the government took it.

KENNY

Alex --

ALEX

By the time the doctors found it, there wasn't anything they could do.

KENNY

I know.

ALEX

No, you don't.

Kenny looks up.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I was there when she died. You weren't.

The room falls away from Kenny.

EXT. COUNTY FAIR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

MARY CHRIS BATTENBERG, young and radiant, walks barefoot through carnival lights, expensive shoes dangling from one hand. She laughs with Kenny.

BACK TO SCENE

KENNY

I loved your mother.

ALEX

Then you should've stayed out of prison.

Kenny has no defense.

Alex reaches beneath his shirt and removes a folded sheet of paper.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I came because of this.

He unfolds it against the glass.

A HAND-DRAWN MAP. Waterways. Fishing holes. Old landing sites. Coded numbers.

Kenny recognizes it instantly.

He SLAPS his hand against the window.

KENNY

Put that down.

Across the room, Greaves looks toward them.

Alex does not move.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Where did you get it?

ALEX

Bobby's things.

KENNY

Put it away.

ALEX
You recognize it.

KENNY
Alex.

ALEX
Who made it?

Kenny glances toward Greaves. The guard starts closer.

KENNY
Where did Bobby keep that?

ALEX
At the boathouse.

KENNY
Who else has seen it?

ALEX
No one.

KENNY
Are you sure?

ALEX
Bones and Billy know it exists.
They haven't seen it.

Kenny tries to cover the paper through the glass.

Greaves strikes the counter with his baton.

GREAVES
Hands off the window.

Kenny pulls back.

ALEX
I can't read the code.

KENNY
Good.

ALEX
You and Johnny Malone made it.

Kenny spots a CAMERA in the corner of the ceiling.

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

ALEX

You almost broke the glass trying to hide it.

KENNY

You need to forget you found that.

ALEX

Five million dollars is difficult to forget.

Greaves stops behind Kenny.

KENNY

You don't understand what you have.

ALEX

That's why I'm here.

KENNY

Some things are dangerous even when you don't understand them.

ALEX

Everything in Dawber County is dangerous. At least this might be worth something.

Kenny studies his son -- seeing his own old certainty that intelligence can protect him from consequences.

KENNY

Listen to me. You take that map back to the boathouse and hide it.

ALEX

Where's the money?

KENNY

I can't tell you that.

ALEX

Can't or won't?

KENNY

Both.

ALEX

Then tell me how to find Johnny.

Kenny looks toward the camera again.

KENNY

Johnny's dead.

ALEX

No, he isn't.

KENNY

You don't know that.

ALEX

Bones does.

KENNY

What did Bones say?

ALEX

That he believes Johnny is alive.

Kenny studies Alex. The slight lift of the boy's chin says he is holding something back.

Kenny refuses the bait.

KENNY

Have you spoken with the pastor?

ALEX

Bubs?

KENNY

Yes.

ALEX

About what?

KENNY

Your situation.

Alex glances at the map.

ALEX

My financial situation?

Kenny holds his gaze.

KENNY

Pastor Bubs understands how difficult financial times can be.

ALEX

You want me to ask a bankrupt church for money?

KENNY

I want you to speak to him.

ALEX

Why?

KENNY

Because I'm your father and I'm
telling you to.

Alex smiles coldly.

ALEX

That argument might've worked six
years ago.

Kenny absorbs it.

KENNY

Talk to Bubs. Show him nothing.
Tell him only that I sent you.

Alex folds the map and slips it beneath his shirt.

ALEX

All right.

KENNY

And stay away from Johnny Malone.

ALEX

You just said he was dead.

KENNY

Then staying away should be easy.

Greaves reaches over Kenny's shoulder and presses the phone
hook.

The line goes dead.

GREAVES

Time.

KENNY

We just started.

GREAVES

Visit's over.

KENNY

That's my son.

GREAVES

I don't care if he's the governor.

Kenny lifts the receiver again. Dead.

Alex remains behind the glass.

Kenny places his palm against it.

Greaves raises the baton.

GREAVES (CONT'D)

I said hands off.

Kenny lowers his hand and raises his voice through the glass.

KENNY

I'm getting out in three weeks.

Alex stands.

KENNY (CONT'D)

We can start over.

Alex stares at him.

ALEX

I'm not interested in starting over.

Alex turns toward the exit.

KENNY

I love you.

Alex stops but does not look back.

Then he walks out.

Greaves grabs Kenny's shoulder. Kenny twists free.

KENNY (CONT'D)

All right, Dick.

Greaves smiles.

GREAVES

What did you call me?

Kenny realizes the trap.

KENNY

I said all right.

GREAVES

You threatened me.

KENNY

I did no such thing.

Greaves shoves him against the counter.

TWO GUARDS enter.

Kenny raises his hands.

KENNY (CONT'D)

What is this?

GREAVES

Inmate Gregory became aggressive during his visit. Threatened a correctional officer.

KENNY

That's a lie.

GREAVES

Take him to isolation.

Panic flashes across Kenny's face.

KENNY

No.

Greaves's smile widens.

KENNY (CONT'D)

My release is in three weeks.

GREAVES

Should've thought about that before threatening staff.

KENNY

I want my attorney.

GREAVES

You can want anything you like.

KENNY

Get Deon Childress.

The guards seize his arms. Kenny resists.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Deon is my lawyer! You call him now!

Greaves drives the baton into Kenny's ribs.

The guards drag him away.

Beyond the glass, Alex's empty stool faces him.

INT. REFORM CORRECTIONAL - CONTROL ROOM - LATER

WARDEN VERN KINDER watches the visit recording.

Large square glasses and a loosened tie give him the harmless appearance of an insurance salesman.

WAYLON WIGGINS sits at the adjacent console. A Budweiser can is hidden between his boots.

On the monitor, Alex presses the map against the glass.

Kinder pauses the image.

KINDER
Magnify that.

WAYLON
The camera resolution ain't good enough.

KINDER
Try.

Waylon enlarges the image. The map breaks into gray squares.

Kinder leans closer. Waterways. Handwritten marks. Coded numbers.

KINDER (CONT'D)
That boy has it.

WAYLON
Has what?

KINDER
What do you think?

WAYLON
Could be a fishing map.

KINDER
Bobby Boone died looking for something in those waters.

WAYLON
Smiley ate him.

KINDER
Smiley didn't draw that.

Kinder resumes the recording. Kenny tells Alex to speak with Pastor Bubs.

Kinder stops it again.

KINDER (CONT'D)
The pastor.

WAYLON
Bubs has been around forever.

KINDER
He was close to Malone.

WAYLON
Everybody was close to Malone until
the arrests.

Kinder cleans his glasses with his tie.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
What do you want me to do?

KINDER
Keep Gregory in isolation.

WAYLON
How long?

KINDER
Until he tells us what the map
means.

WAYLON
His release date is close.

Kinder replaces his glasses.

KINDER
Then we don't have much time.

WAYLON
Department of Corrections might ask
why we put him in the box.

KINDER
The company will explain that an
unstable inmate threatened staff.

WAYLON
What about the kid?

Kinder watches Alex leave the visitors' room.

KINDER
Call Trent.

WAYLON
He's following the lawyer.

KINDER
He can follow two people.

Waylon reaches for the phone.

KINDER (CONT'D)
And Waylon?

WAYLON
Yeah?

KINDER
Find out everything you can about
Pastor Bubs.

INT. REFORM CORRECTIONAL - ISOLATION CELL - NIGHT

White concrete walls surround a steel cot and a combination
sink and toilet.

No window. The fluorescent light remains on.

The guards throw Kenny inside.

Greaves stands in the doorway.

GREAVES
One way or another, you're going to
tell us where Malone put that
money.

Kenny rubs his ribs.

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

GREAVES
You're a terrible liar.

KENNY
And you're a terrible person. Yet
here we are, both doing our best.

Greaves's smile disappears.

GREAVES
We can keep you in here past your
release date.

KENNY

No, you can't.

GREAVES

I can write a report saying you
attacked me. Warden can recommend
charges. Company lawyers can keep
you tied up for months.

Kenny looks at the walls.

They already seem closer.

Greaves notices.

GREAVES (CONT'D)

You don't like small places, do
you?

Kenny forces a smile.

KENNY

I've lived in your head for years.
Nothing's smaller than that.

Greaves slams the door.

The lock engages.

Kenny stands beneath the fluorescent light.

His breathing accelerates.

The white walls become WET EARTH.

The fluorescent hum becomes HELICOPTERS and MACHINE-GUN FIRE.

EXT. HILL 861 - DAY - FLASHBACK

Mud. Blood. Bamboo.

The young enemy soldier stands above Kenny, urinating into
the depression.

BACK TO
ISOLATION

Kenny presses both hands to his head.

KENNY

This isn't Vietnam.

He sits on the cot and draws his knees toward his chest.

KENNY (CONT'D)

This isn't the hill.

The room keeps shrinking.

Kenny closes his eyes and forces himself to breathe. In through the nose. Hold. Out through the mouth.

FLASH CUTS

Alex's bruised eye.

Mary Chris laughing at the county fair.

The map pressed against prison glass.

Bobby Boone's empty boat drifting through the swamp.

BACK TO
ISOLATION

Kenny rocks on the cot.

Three weeks until his release.

Alex may not have three weeks outside.

Kenny opens his eyes and stares at the door.

KENNY

Get me Deon Childress! I want my
lawyer!

No answer.

Kenny pounds the steel with both fists.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Do you hear me? Get me my damned
lawyer!

His voice echoes through the isolation wing.

Then even the echo dies.

Kenny stands alone with the walls.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. GETHSEMANE BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

The church looks as tired as the people who worship here.

Its white paint has faded to gray. Crooked shutters frame windows clouded by heat and rain. A blue tarp covers part of the roof.

The wooden cross above the steeple leans slightly east, as though even Christ has grown weary of standing upright in Dawber County.

PASTOR BUBS, late 60s, stands at the bottom of the church steps while DEON CHILDRESS places a folder inside a polished Mercedes.

Deon wears a tailored tan suit, expensive watch, and the confidence of a man who escaped Dawber County without forgetting where he came from.

DEON

I'll take care of the filing. You and Mama Millie won't have to appear unless the bankruptcy trustee requests it.

BUBS

I appreciate that.

DEON

You shouldn't have waited this long.

BUBS

I was hoping the Lord would provide another solution.

Deon closes the car door.

DEON

Sometimes the Lord provides bankruptcy attorneys.

Bubs smiles.

BUBS

He does work in mysterious ways.

DEON

I'm serious. The church is months behind on the mortgage. The roof needs replacing, the insurance is about to lapse, and you're paying the electric bill with credit cards.

BUBS

Millie has always preferred
candlelight.

DEON

Pastor.

BUBS

I hear you.

Deon removes his sunglasses.

DEON

You can't save Gethsemane by
pretending the numbers will change.

Bubs looks across the property.

The church, fellowship hall, and modest parsonage stand
between an empty gravel road and the dark water of the swamp.

A HAMMER strikes the damaged roof.

BILLY DAWBER leans over the edge with a tool belt around his
waist.

BILLY

Everything all right down there?

BUBS

Just fine, Brother William. How are
you?

BILLY

I'm fine. Your roof ain't.

BUBS

That's why you're up there.

Billy shakes his head and returns to work.

EILEEN SCULLY steps out of the church carrying a pitcher of
iced tea. Her red hair is tied back, freckles bright beneath
the Florida sun.

EILEEN

Mama Millie is heating the ribs.

Billy immediately looks over the edge again.

BILLY

What kind?

EILEEN

The same kind she made Sunday.

BILLY

I might stay for lunch.

Bubs glances at Deon.

BUBS

Young love.

DEON

Does Billy know?

BUBS

I don't believe either one of them knows.

DEON

Eileen knows.

BUBS

Women usually do.

Eileen raises the pitcher toward Deon.

EILEEN

You sure you won't stay?

DEON

My wife has me on a diet.

EILEEN

Mama Millie doesn't recognize diets.

DEON

That's why I have to leave before she sees me.

Deon turns back to Bubs.

DEON (CONT'D)

Call me if Kinder gives you any trouble about Kenny.

BUBS

Why would the warden give me trouble?

DEON

Kenny listed you as an emergency contact. His release is coming up.

Bubs remains calm.

BUBS
That shouldn't concern Warden
Kinder.

DEON
No. It shouldn't.

The two men understand that does not mean it won't.

Deon embraces Bubs.

DEON (CONT'D)
Take care of yourself.

BUBS
Go with God, son.

Deon enters the Mercedes and drives beneath the wooden sign:
WELCOME TO GETHSEMANE.

EXT. COUNTY ROAD NEAR GETHSEMANE - CONTINUOUS

A dark sedan waits beneath the live oaks.

TRENT DIETRICH watches Deon's Mercedes pass.

He writes the license number inside a small notebook.

A photograph of Deon Childress is clipped to the opposite
page.

Trent starts the engine.

Then another vehicle ROARS toward the church.

Trent looks into his mirror.

A battered black CHEVROLET CAPRICE tears past him, throwing
dust across the road.

At the wheel is Alex Gregory.

Trent lets Deon go.

He turns the page in his notebook.

A photograph of Alex sits beneath one handwritten
instruction:

FIND THE MAP.

EXT. GETHSEMANE BAPTIST CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The Caprice comes around the bend far too quickly.

Bubs steps into the road and raises both hands.

The car skids sideways.

Its front bumper stops several feet from him.

Alex leans through the open window.

ALEX

You trying to get killed?

BUBS

You're the one driving like the devil is collecting rent.

ALEX

I saw you.

BUBS

Then why did you nearly run me over?

ALEX

I thought you'd move.

BUBS

At my age, moving is a deliberate process.

Alex glances toward the church.

ALEX

I need to talk to you.

Bubs approaches the window.

Alex's left eye has swollen purple and black. He looks as though he has not slept.

BUBS

What happened to your face?

ALEX

Fell.

BUBS

On what?

ALEX

A fist-shaped rock.

BUBS
Whose fist?

ALEX
It doesn't matter.

Bubs notices a plastic bag of marijuana on the passenger seat.

He opens the door, picks up the bag, and drops it onto the floorboard before climbing inside.

Alex stares at him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

BUBS
Getting into your car.

ALEX
I can see that.

BUBS
Park beside the church.

ALEX
I'm not staying.

BUBS
Mama Millie made ribs.

ALEX
I didn't come to eat.

BUBS
You look like you haven't eaten since Easter.

ALEX
I came to talk.

BUBS
We can talk inside.

Alex shifts into drive.

ALEX
I'm not going into church.

Bubs closes the door.

BUBS

That is between you and God.
Parking is between you and me.

Alex drives toward the gravel lot.

BUBS (CONT'D)

When did you last sleep?

ALEX

I'll sleep when I'm dead.

BUBS

At this rate, that should be
Thursday.

Alex parks beneath a live oak but leaves the engine running.

ALEX

I'm not here for a sermon.

BUBS

That's fortunate. I usually require
people to sit still for those.

ALEX

I don't believe in organized
religion.

BUBS

You don't believe in organized
anything.

ALEX

I'm a Deist.

Bubs looks at him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I read about it.

BUBS

In what?

ALEX

That John Adams book.

BUBS

John Adams was not a Deist.

ALEX

Maybe it was Thomas Jefferson.

BUBS

Thomas Paine would be a better example.

ALEX

That's who I meant.

BUBS

You should read the Bible.

ALEX

If I'm a Deist, why would I read the Bible?

BUBS

Because you clearly need help selecting a religion.

Alex turns off the engine.

Bubs reaches for the door.

ALEX

Hold on.

Something in the boy's voice stops him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I saw Kenny.

Bubs slowly closes the door.

BUBS

How was he?

ALEX

In prison.

BUBS

That wasn't my question.

ALEX

He looks old.

BUBS

Twelve years will do that.

ALEX

He's getting out in three weeks.

BUBS

So I've heard.

ALEX

He told me to come here.

Bubs tightens his fingers around the brim of his straw hat.

BUBS

What did he say?

ALEX

That you understand difficult
financial times.

Bubs looks at the leaking church, the tarp, and Deon's
bankruptcy papers disappearing down the road.

BUBS

Your father always possessed a
peculiar sense of humor.

ALEX

He wasn't joking.

BUBS

No?

ALEX

I showed him something.

BUBS

What?

Alex studies him.

ALEX

A map.

Bubs does not move.

BUBS

What kind of map?

ALEX

The swamps around Dawber County.

BUBS

There are many maps of the swamps.

ALEX

Not like this one.

Alex reaches beneath his shirt.

Bubs catches his wrist.

BUBS

Don't.

Alex smiles.

The reaction told him everything he wanted to know.

ALEX

You don't even know what I'm
reaching for.

BUBS

I know you shouldn't be pulling
things out of your clothes in front
of a church.

ALEX

It's paper, Pastor.

BUBS

Then leave it where it is.

Alex withdraws his hand.

ALEX

Kenny recognized it.

BUBS

Kenny recognizes many things he
should forget.

ALEX

It has his writing on it. Someone
else's, too.

Bubs looks through the windshield.

Billy has climbed down from the roof and joined Eileen near
the fellowship hall. MILLIE stands in the doorway holding a
tray covered with aluminum foil.

BUBS

Who have you shown?

ALEX

No one.

BUBS

Keep it that way.

ALEX

You recognize it, too.

BUBS

I recognize trouble when it parks
beneath my tree.

ALEX

Where is the money?

Bubs turns toward him.

BUBS

What money?

ALEX

Johnny Malone's five million
dollars.

Alex watches Bubs closely.

BUBS

That money is a legend.

ALEX

So is the devil.

BUBS

The devil has better documentation.

ALEX

Kenny sent me to you.

BUBS

Your father sent you to speak with
me. That doesn't mean I have
millions of dollars.

ALEX

Do you?

BUBS

If I had millions, do you think
Deon would be filing bankruptcy
papers for this church?

ALEX

That might be exactly why you're
filing.

Bubs frowns.

BUBS

Explain.

ALEX

Kenny and Bo get out soon. They'll come looking for what belongs to them. Bankruptcy makes you look broke. Then you and Millie leave Dawber County before anyone asks questions.

Bubs stares at him.

BUBS

You believe I'm stealing drug money and hiding behind bankruptcy?

ALEX

I believe everyone in this county lies.

BUBS

Including you?

ALEX

Especially me.

BUBS

At least you're self-aware.

Alex leans closer.

ALEX

Johnny gave you something.

Bubs looks away.

BUBS

No.

ALEX

That wasn't convincing.

BUBS

I have belongings stored for men who went to prison.

ALEX

What kind of belongings?

BUBS

Photographs. Military papers. Clothes. Things their families did not want federal agents taking.

ALEX

Johnny's things?

BUBS
I don't remember.

ALEX
You remember everything.

BUBS
Age changes a man.

ALEX
So does five million dollars.

Bubs opens the door.

Alex grabs his forearm.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Pastor.

Bubs looks down at Alex's hand.

BUBS
Take your hand off me.

Alex releases him.

Bubs remains seated. His voice softens.

BUBS (CONT'D)
Listen carefully. Whatever you
believe your father and Johnny
Malone buried, it brought nothing
good to this county.

ALEX
It brought money.

BUBS
It brought cocaine.

ALEX
It brought jobs.

BUBS
It brought death.

ALEX
People were already dying.

BUBS
Then we gave them more efficient
ways to do it.

Alex looks toward the church.

ALEX

The county was better when they had the money.

BUBS

For some.

ALEX

For everyone.

BUBS

No. It only appeared that way because the suffering had not yet presented its bill.

ALEX

You sound like Kenny.

BUBS

That should trouble both of us.

Alex's expression hardens.

ALEX

My mother died broke.

Bubs says nothing.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Forbee Battenberg could've helped her. He didn't. Kenny could've helped if he hadn't gone to prison. He didn't. Every man who promised to take care of us disappeared, got arrested, or decided we weren't worth the trouble.

BUBS

I know.

ALEX

You don't.

BUBS

I buried your mother.

Alex looks away.

BUBS (CONT'D)

I watched you stand beside her grave and refuse to cry because you believed grief was another thing people could use against you.

ALEX

I didn't cry because I was done.

BUBS

You were a child.

ALEX

I'm not anymore.

BUBS

No. You are a seventeen-year-old boy attempting to inherit the worst decisions of grown men.

ALEX

I'm trying to get out.

BUBS

With blood money.

ALEX

With money.

BUBS

There is no difference.

ALEX

There is when you're hungry.

Bubs studies the bruise around Alex's eye.

BUBS

Did Bones do that?

Alex does not answer.

BUBS (CONT'D)

You asked him about Johnny.

ALEX

He knows how to find him.

BUBS

That doesn't mean Johnny wants to be found.

ALEX

I don't care what Johnny wants.

BUBS

You should.

For the first time, Alex's confidence falters.

Bubs opens the door and steps out.

Alex follows him.

ALEX
So he's alive.

BUBS
I didn't say that.

ALEX
You said he doesn't want to be found.

BUBS
I said you should care what happens when you go searching for dangerous men.

ALEX
You're terrible at lying for a pastor.

Bubs turns toward him.

BUBS
And you are far too pleased with yourself for a boy standing at the edge of a grave.

Millie waves from the church.

MILLIE
Alex! You coming to eat?

BUBS
Give us a moment.

Millie puts one hand on her hip.

MILLIE
You've had several.

Billy and Eileen watch from behind her.

Alex lowers his voice.

ALEX
If you know where the money is, tell me.

BUBS
I don't.

ALEX
If you know where Johnny is --

BUBS
I don't.

ALEX
What did Kenny mean?

BUBS
That you need guidance.

ALEX
I need cash.

BUBS
You need your father.

ALEX
I tried that.

Bubs looks at him sadly.

BUBS
Try again.

Bubs walks toward the church.

Millie approaches carrying the tray of ribs. She notices Alex's eye.

MILLIE
Oh, baby. What happened?

ALEX
Nothing.

MILLIE
Nothing seems to be beating up
every boy in Dawber County lately.

She touches his cheek gently.

Alex tolerates the affection for only a moment before stepping away.

MILLIE (CONT'D)
Come inside. You're too skinny.

Bubs stops at the church steps.

BUBS
Millie.

MILLIE

What?

BUBS

Leave him be.

MILLIE

He hasn't eaten.

BUBS

He has convinced himself he needs something else.

Millie looks from Bubs to Alex.

She hears the fear beneath her husband's irritation.

MILLIE

What did you two discuss?

ALEX

Money.

Bubs opens the church door.

BUBS

Be careful with that boy, Millie.
His mind is in a dark place.

MILLIE

All minds pass through dark places.
That's why the Lord gave us lamps.

Alex looks at her.

For one reckless second, he considers showing her the map.

Then Billy approaches.

BILLY

Come eat.

ALEX

What are you doing here?

BILLY

Fixing the roof.

ALEX

For free?

BILLY

That's generally how volunteering works.

ALEX
You don't volunteer.

BILLY
I do now.

Alex looks toward Eileen.

She smiles at him.

EILEEN
Hey, Alex.

His anger unexpectedly abandons him.

ALEX
Hey.

Eileen notices his eye.

EILEEN
Are you all right?

ALEX
Never better.

EILEEN
What happened?

ALEX
Fishing accident.

Billy coughs to conceal a laugh.

Alex ignores him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Your hair looks nice.

Eileen touches her ponytail.

EILEEN
It looks the same as always.

ALEX
Then it always looks nice.

An uncomfortable silence.

Billy stares at him.

EILEEN
Thank you.

MILLIE

Eileen, bring that tea inside.

EILEEN

Don't take too long.

She looks at Billy before returning to the fellowship hall.

Alex watches her go.

BILLY

What was that?

ALEX

What?

BILLY

You sounded brain damaged.

ALEX

I was being polite.

BILLY

You're never polite.

Alex looks toward the church door.

ALEX

Are you here because of Bubs?

BILLY

Yes.

ALEX

What has he told you?

BILLY

That the roof leaks.

ALEX

About Johnny.

Billy's expression changes.

BILLY

Not this again.

ALEX

Kenny sent me here.

BILLY

You went to the prison?

Alex points to his bruised eye.

ALEX

This inspired me.

BILLY

What did your daddy say?

ALEX

He told me Bubs knows something.

Billy looks toward the church.

BILLY

What kind of something?

ALEX

The money.

Billy shakes his head.

BILLY

Bubs is filing bankruptcy.

ALEX

Convenient, isn't it?

BILLY

No. It's terrible.

ALEX

Kenny and Bo are getting out. Bubs suddenly claims he's broke.

BILLY

He's been broke for years.

ALEX

Maybe he wants everyone to think that.

Billy lowers his voice.

BILLY

You're accusing the pastor of stealing drug money.

ALEX

I'm accusing him of knowing where it is.

BILLY

You need help.

ALEX

That's what everyone says when they
don't want to answer.

Billy glances toward the Caprice.

BILLY

Is the map in your car?

Alex smiles.

ALEX

So now you believe in it.

BILLY

I believe you're going to get
yourself killed.

ALEX

I'm getting Johnny Malone.

BILLY

Bones said no.

ALEX

Bones shot a shark six inches from
my hand.

Billy studies the bruise.

BILLY

You asked for that punch.

ALEX

No one asks to get punched.

BILLY

You practically submitted a written
request.

Alex opens the driver's door.

ALEX

You coming?

BILLY

Where?

ALEX

To find Bones.

BILLY

No. I'm eating ribs.

ALEX
With Eileen.

BILLY
Yes.

ALEX
You like her.

Billy smiles.

BILLY
I like ribs.

ALEX
You've never repaired anything
without being paid.

BILLY
Maybe I'm becoming a better person.

Alex starts the engine.

ALEX
Or maybe you're becoming a liar.

BILLY
Slow down on the gravel.

Alex reverses out of the parking space.

He looks once more at Gethsemane.

Bubs stands in the doorway, watching him leave.

Alex drives away.

INT. GETHSEMANE BAPTIST CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Bubs closes the church door.

Millie waits beside him.

MILLIE
What did Kenny send that boy here
to find?

Bubs approaches an old Bible resting on a shelf behind the
pulpit.

He opens the cover.

Inside is a sealed envelope, yellowed with age.

Bubs closes the Bible.

BUBS

Something I prayed would stay
buried.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. THE NECK - DAWBER COUNTY - DAY

A narrow strip of marshland extends into the upper
Everglades, surrounded on three sides by dark water and
sawgrass.

Homes built from salvaged wood and corrugated metal rise on
patches of stubborn ground.

Men skin game beneath oak trees. Children fish from a broken
dock. A stripped engine hangs from a chain. Alligators churn
inside a fenced pit.

The Neck follows laws never written by the State of Florida.

Even Dawber County considers it strange.

EXT. SHELTON HOUSE - DAY

A rusted Chevrolet pickup sits on blocks before a weather-
beaten house.

BONES MALONE lies beneath it, examining a transmission held
together by wire, mismatched bolts, and faith.

JASPER SHELTON, seventeen and nearly three hundred pounds,
leans over the open hood. Loose overalls. Rubber fishing
boots. Tough enough that the other students stopped making
jokes about his size years ago.

JASPER

How's she look?

BONES

Like shit.

JASPER

That good?

BONES

I've seen dead animals in better condition.

JASPER

You think I need a new transmission?

BONES

I think you need a new truck.

Jasper laughs.

Bones slides out from underneath.

Jasper offers him a mason jar filled with clear liquid.

Bones removes the lid and sniffs. The fumes burn his nose.

BONES (CONT'D)

What's in this?

JASPER

Moonshine.

BONES

What else?

JASPER

Family secret.

Bones takes a cautious drink.

Fire tears down his throat. He fights the urge to cough.

Jasper grins.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Smooth, ain't it?

BONES

Like gasoline.

JASPER

That's the corn.

BONES

That isn't corn.

JASPER

You want more?

Bones drinks again rather than admit the first swallow nearly blinded him.

Jasper slaps the truck.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Once I get her running, I'm
painting her candy-apple red.

BONES
You selling it?

JASPER
Maybe.

BONES
How much?

JASPER
More than you've got.

BONES
You don't know what I've got.

Jasper holds his thumb and forefinger an inch apart.

JASPER
I know what you ain't got.

Bones tightens his hand around the jar.

Jasper sees it. His grin disappears.

For several seconds, neither moves.

Then Jasper pulls a prescription bottle from his overalls.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Relax. I'm playing.

He shakes two pills into his palm.

BONES
What are those?

JASPER
Something that'll make you forget
why you're mad.

BONES
I'm not mad.

JASPER
Then you don't need 'em.

Jasper swallows both pills with moonshine.

Bones returns the jar.

An animal SCREAMS somewhere beyond the house.

Bones turns toward the swamp.

MERLE SHELTON emerges through the sawgrass carrying a dead raccoon by its hind legs. A rifle rests across his shoulder.

Lean. Patchy beard. Missing teeth. Sunglasses too expensive to have been purchased legally.

MERLE

Dinner!

Bones stares at the raccoon.

Merle notices.

MERLE (CONT'D)

You got a problem?

BONES

No.

MERLE

Your face says you do.

BONES

My face always looks like this.

Jasper laughs.

JASPER

He don't want none of your coon stew.

Merle points the rifle at Bones.

MERLE

Boy comes onto Shelton land and looks down on Shelton food.

BONES

I didn't say anything.

MERLE

You didn't have to.

Bones remains still.

BONES

If you're gonna shoot me over a raccoon, you'd best do it before you cook that thing. Otherwise, you're wasting dinner.

Merle studies him.

Then he lowers the rifle and laughs.

MERLE

I see why Jasper likes you.

JASPER

I don't.

Merle carries the raccoon toward the rear of the house.

MERLE

Y'all want some, come around back in an hour.

BONES

I'm good.

Merle stops.

BONES (CONT'D)

But I appreciate the invitation.

MERLE

That's better.

Merle disappears behind the house.

Jasper leans closer.

JASPER

He would've shot you.

BONES

I know.

JASPER

Maybe not killed you.

BONES

That's thoughtful.

JASPER

He's been tense.

BONES

About what?

JASPER

Money.

Bones looks toward the trees behind the house.

Beyond them stands the GATOR PIT—high fencing, black water, reptilian eyes.

A faded photograph hangs on a nearby shed.

ATTICUS SHELTON stands beside the pit, staring into the camera with the same expression men saw before disappearing into the swamp.

BONES

You ever been inside the pit?

Jasper shakes the pill bottle.

JASPER

Plenty.

BONES

With the gators?

JASPER

They know me.

BONES

They're alligators.

JASPER

They knew Daddy.

BONES

That didn't make them pets.

Jasper smiles.

JASPER

You scared?

BONES

No.

JASPER

You should be.

An engine approaches through the Neck.

MOLLY HATCHET'S "FLIRTIN' WITH DISASTER" blasts loud enough to shake birds from the trees.

A red-and-black DODGE CHALLENGER tears onto the property and stops beside the truck.

WAYLON WIGGINS climbs out wearing his Reform Correctional uniform.

A narrow strip of hair runs down the center of his head—too deliberate to be accidental and too ugly to be fashionable.

He finishes a Budweiser, crushes the can against his forehead, and throws it into the yard.

Then he lights a cigarette.

WAYLON
Where's Merle?

JASPER
Cooking.

Waylon looks at Bones.

Bones recognizes the Reform uniform—and the man inside it.

WAYLON
What're you doing here?

BONES
Helping Jasper.

WAYLON
With what?

Bones points toward the truck.

Waylon looks underneath.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
That thing ain't worth fixing.

BONES
That's what I told him.

JASPER
Both of you can go to hell.

Waylon removes a twelve-pack from the Challenger and heads behind the house.

WAYLON
Merle!

Jasper watches him go.

BONES
What's he doing here?

JASPER
Family.

BONES
He didn't come for coon stew.

JASPER
How do you know?

BONES
No one comes anywhere for coon
stew.

Jasper laughs, but his eyes shift toward the rear of the property.

Bones notices.

The visit was planned.

Bones reaches back and touches the grip of Johnny's Colt .45.

JASPER
You expecting trouble?

BONES
Always.

JASPER
Your daddy's gun?

Bones removes his hand.

BONES
You ask a lot of questions.

JASPER
Just making conversation.

BONES
Make it about something else.

Jasper lifts the hood wider.

JASPER
You hear from him?

Bones stares at him.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Your daddy. People say he's still alive.

BONES

People say your father fed a tax assessor to a twelve-foot gator.

JASPER

He did.

BONES

No, he didn't.

Jasper considers it.

JASPER

Might've been an insurance man.

Bones starts toward the road.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Where you going?

BONES

Home.

JASPER

You ain't got a ride.

BONES

I'll walk.

JASPER

Through the Neck?

BONES

I walked here.

JASPER

That was before dark.

The sun sinks behind the sawgrass. Shadows gather beneath the trees.

Bones looks down the long dirt road.

BONES

I'll stay until the truck runs.

Jasper smiles.

JASPER

That's the spirit.

Behind the house, Merle laughs.

Waylon answers in a lower voice.

Bones moves toward the corner.

Jasper blocks him.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Give 'em privacy.

BONES
Why?

JASPER
They're discussing business.

BONES
What kind?

JASPER
The private kind.

Bones looks down at him.

Jasper's eyes are glassy from pills and moonshine. A knife handle protrudes from his overalls.

BONES
You brought me here so Merle could
talk to Waylon.

JASPER
I brought you here to fix my truck.

BONES
You haven't done anything to it
since I arrived.

JASPER
I handed you tools.

BONES
Most of them don't fit.

Jasper's smile weakens.

Bones steps around him.

Jasper grabs his arm.

Bones looks down at the hand.

BONES (CONT'D)

Let go.

JASPER

We're friends.

BONES

Then let go.

Jasper releases him.

EXT. SHELTON HOUSE - REAR YARD - CONTINUOUS

Bones rounds the house.

Merle stands at a wooden table, cutting the raccoon into pieces and dropping the meat into a black pot over a fire.

Waylon drinks and smokes beside him.

Neither sees Bones in the shadows.

WAYLON

Warden put Kenny in the box.

MERLE

How long?

WAYLON

Until he talks.

MERLE

He'll talk?

WAYLON

Man hates tight spaces. Been screaming half the night.

Bones stops.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

Warden says the kid brought a map into the visit.

MERLE

What kid?

WAYLON

Kenny's boy. Alex.

Merle drops another bloody piece into the pot.

MERLE

Bones know about it?

WAYLON

That's what you're supposed to find out.

MERLE

I told Jasper to work on him.

WAYLON

Jasper couldn't work on a screen door.

Merle points the bloody knife toward the front yard.

MERLE

He and Bones are close.

WAYLON

How close?

MERLE

Wrestling close. Drinking close.

WAYLON

Close enough Bones tells him how to reach Johnny?

Merle looks toward the corner.

Bones silently steps back.

A branch SNAPS beneath his heel.

The conversation stops.

MERLE

Jasper?

Bones slips around the house before either man appears.

EXT. SHELTON HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Jasper waits beside the truck.

JASPER

What were you doing?

BONES

Taking a leak.

JASPER

Outhouse is over there.

Bones looks toward a leaning wooden structure beside the sawgrass.

BONES

I forgot.

Jasper studies him.

Another engine approaches.

Then another.

Deeper engines. Multiple vehicles.

Jasper's expression changes.

JASPER

Who's that?

BONES

You tell me.

Headlights appear between the trees.

A black FORD F-350 rolls onto the property, followed by an orange pickup bearing a Confederate battle flag across its grille.

Jasper grips the knife in his pocket.

JASPER

Get in the outhouse.

BONES

Why?

JASPER

Go.

The trucks stop.

Doors open.

DALE BRODY exits the F-350 wearing a surplus Army jacket despite the heat.

A black patch covers his left eye, with a crude white eyelid painted across it. A German cross hangs from his neck. A LIVE HAND GRENADE dangles from his belt.

Six armed BRODYS spread through the yard with rifles.

Jasper pushes Bones toward the side of the house.

JASPER (CONT'D)
If Dale sees you here, we're all
dead.

BONES
Why?

JASPER
He ain't here about the truck.

Bones glances toward the rear yard.

Merle and Waylon have disappeared.

Jasper shoves him again.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Move!

INT. SHELTON outhouse - CONTINUOUS

Bones enters.

The smell nearly drives him back out.

Through a crack in the warped boards, he watches Dale
approach Jasper.

Dale peels an orange with a hunting knife.

DALE
Evening.

Jasper keeps his hands visible.

JASPER
Dale.

DALE
Where's your brother?

JASPER
Out back.

DALE
Waylon?

JASPER
Don't know.

Dale eats an orange slice and chews slowly.

His men search the property. One heads toward the gator pit. Another approaches the house.

Dale notices the moonshine jar beside the Chevrolet.

DALE
Who else is here?

JASPER
No one.

Dale sniffs the air.

Once.

Then again.

Jasper shifts his weight.

Dale smiles.

DALE
You smell that?

JASPER
No.

DALE
Old cheese.

JASPER
What?

DALE
A lie. Lies always smell like old cheese.

Dale turns toward the outhouse.

Inside, Bones draws Johnny's Colt .45 and holds it beside his leg.

Dale walks closer.

Halfway across the yard, he stops and looks back at Jasper.

DALE (CONT'D)
I know Johnny Malone's boy was here.

Jasper says nothing.

Dale removes the hunting knife from his belt.

DALE (CONT'D)

So why don't you tell me where he
went?

Bones watches through the crack, pistol ready.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE TWO