

SAWGRASS WARS

"Blood in the Neck"
Episode 3 - 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. SHELTON HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DUSK

DALE BRODY stands in the yard with a hunting knife in one hand and an orange in the other.

Six armed BRODYS surround the property.

DALE
So why don't you tell me where
Johnny Malone's boy went?

INT. SHELTON outhouse - CONTINUOUS

BONES holds Johnny's Colt .45 against his thigh and watches through a split in the warped wall.

The outhouse is barely large enough for him. Heat and human waste press around him. Mosquitoes whine.

Something with too many legs crawls across his neck.

Bones does not move.

EXT. SHELTON HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

JASPER faces the armed men.

JASPER
I ain't seen Bones.

Dale removes another strip of orange peel.

DALE
That disappoints me.

JASPER
Can't help that.

DALE
I thought we had an understanding.

JASPER
About money. Not Bones.

Dale places an orange slice on his tongue.

GARTH BRODY approaches the gator pit with a Desert Eagle.

CLAYTON BRODY carries an AK-47 toward the rear of the house.

JESSUP BRODY searches the ancient Chevrolet, throwing tools into the mud.

Dale looks at the moonshine jar beside the truck.

DALE
Whose moonshine?

JASPER
Mine.

DALE
There were two cups.

JASPER
I get thirsty.

Dale smiles.

DALE
You know what your trouble is,
Jaspar?

JASPER
I'm sure you're gonna tell me.

DALE
You're too stupid to lie.

Jasper's hand drifts toward the knife in his overalls.

Dale sees it.

DALE (CONT'D)
Go ahead.

Jasper stops.

DALE (CONT'D)
You think being Atticus Shelton's
boy makes you dangerous?

JASPER
It didn't hurt.

DALE
No. Mack Donnelly did that.

Jasper's expression changes. The name alters the air.

DALE (CONT'D)
That still bothers you?

JASPER
You weren't there.

DALE
Neither were you.

JASPER
My brother knows what happened.

DALE
Merle knows whatever story makes
him feel better.

Jasper steps closer.

Dale lowers the orange.

DALE (CONT'D)
Careful.

JASPER
My daddy was the most feared man in
Dawber County.

DALE
Your daddy is dead.

The words hit harder than a fist.

DALE (CONT'D)
Bo Dawber went to prison. Johnny
Malone ran away. Atticus got
himself killed.

Dale drops the remaining orange into the mud.

DALE (CONT'D)
That old world is finished, and the
Shelton name don't buy what it used
to.

Jasper draws his knife.

INT. SHELTON outhouse - CONTINUOUS

Bones tightens his grip on the Colt.

EXT. SHELTON HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

The Brodys raise their weapons.

Dale lifts one hand.

DALE

Let the boy show us what he
inherited.

Jasper lunges.

The knife sweeps toward Dale's stomach.

Dale pivots, catches Jasper's wrist, and HEAD-BUTTS him in
the nose.

Dale slashes downward with his own blade.

Jasper stumbles.

For one moment, nothing happens.

Then blood pours down his right leg.

Jasper stares at it, confused.

DALE (CONT'D)

You ever hear of the femoral
artery.

Jasper's knee buckles. He falls into the mud.

Dale wipes his knife on Jasper's overalls.

DALE (CONT'D)

That's a no.

Blood spreads beneath the boy.

INT. SHELTON OUTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Bones reaches for the door-then stops himself.

Six rifles wait outside.

EXT. SHELTON HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Dale crouches beside Jasper.

DALE

That artery carries a whole lot of
blood. Cut it in the right place
and a man can empty out quicker
than a punctured gas can.

Jasper presses both hands against the wound. Color drains
from his face.

Dale eats another orange slice.

DALE (CONT'D)

Good news is we can get you to the
hospital.

Jasper looks up.

DALE (CONT'D)

Bad news is I'm the only one
willing to drive.

JASPER

Go to hell.

DALE

You first.

Dale stands and calls across the property.

DALE (CONT'D)

Merle! Your baby brother is
bleeding to death!

No answer.

Garth returns from the gator pit.

GARTH

Found signs someone's been back
there.

DALE

Signs?

GARTH

Gate's open.

DALE

Did you look inside?

Garth stares toward the black water.

GARTH

No.

DALE
Why not?

GARTH
Gators.

Dale blinks at him.

DALE
You are holding a fifty-caliber
pistol.

GARTH
They're big gators.

DALE
That's what the pistol is for.

GARTH
You want me to go in?

DALE
I want you to stop wasting whatever
portion of my life the Lord has
forced me to share with you.

Dale points toward Clayton.

DALE (CONT'D)
Take him. Find Merle and Waylon.

Garth and Clayton move toward the pit.

Dale turns to Jessup.

DALE (CONT'D)
Get the truck lights on Jasper.

Jessup stands over the wounded boy, fascinated.

Dale claps in front of his face.

Jessup jumps.

DALE (CONT'D)
Lights.

Jessup heads toward the F-350 beside the outhouse.

INT. SHELTON OUTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Bones watches him approach.

The outhouse door is not fully closed.

Bones eases backward.

His heel strikes a metal bucket.

CLANG.

Jessup stops.

Bones raises the Colt.

A SCREAM erupts from the gator pit.

Garth fires three rounds into the water.

Something enormous thrashes inside the enclosure.

DALE (O.S.)
Goddamn it! Are you shooting the
gator or my people?

GARTH (O.S.)
Could be both!

Jessup turns toward the pit.

Bones lowers the pistol.

Through the crack, he sees the F-350 twenty feet away. Its fuel door hangs open. A rag protrudes from the truck's toolbox.

An idea forms.

Not a good one.

Bones slips through the door.

EXT. SHELTON HOUSE - BESIDE F-350 - CONTINUOUS

Jessup opens the driver's door.

Bones remains low behind the truck.

He pulls the rag from the toolbox and feeds one end into the fuel opening.

Gasoline saturates the cloth.

Bones looks toward Waylon's Challenger.

A stainless-steel ZIPPO lies in the mud beside an empty Budweiser can.

Bones crawls beneath the windows and retrieves it.

Jessup climbs into the cab.

Bones flicks the Zippo.

Nothing.

He tries again.

A flame appears.

Bones touches it to the gasoline-soaked rag.

Fire races toward the fuel tank.

Bones runs for the trees.

Jessup starts the truck.

The F-350 EXPLODES.

Fire engulfs the cab. The windshield bursts outward. A door spins into the Shelton house.

The blast throws Dale against the Chevrolet and tears the orange from his hand.

Jessup vanishes inside the flames.

Bones hits the mud and covers his head as pieces of metal rip through the trees.

The LIVE GRENADE tears free from Dale's belt and lands in the yard.

Everyone sees it.

No one moves.

Dale crawls toward it.

Bones charges from the smoke and KICKS the grenade into the gator pit.

The grenade DETONATES.

Black water, mud, and pieces of fencing erupt into the air.

Alligators roar and thrash behind the damaged enclosure.

MERLE emerges through the smoke with WAYLON behind him.

Merle sees Jasper in the blood-soaked mud.

MERLE

Jasper!

He runs toward his brother.

Dale tackles him.

They crash into the mud. Dale rolls on top and drives his forearm across Merle's throat.

DALE

You burned my brother!

MERLE

Wasn't me!

Dale reaches for his knife.

Merle catches his wrist.

The blade descends toward Merle's neck.

Bones raises the Colt.

Dale and Merle twist together. No clear shot.

BONES

Get off him!

Dale looks toward Bones. His eye widens.

DALE

There you are.

Dale pulls Merle in front of him.

DALE (CONT'D)

You killed Jessup.

BONES

Let Merle go.

DALE

I came here to talk to you.

BONES

You brought six men and assault rifles.

DALE
That's how Brodys talk.

Dale presses the knife against Merle's throat.

BONES
Put it down.

DALE
You first.

BONES
No.

DALE
I'll open him.

BONES
Then I'll shoot you.

DALE
You might hit Merle.

BONES
I might.

Merle stares at Bones.

MERLE
Not helping.

Dale laughs.

Bones steps closer.

Dale drags the knife across Merle's skin.

Blood gathers beneath the blade.

Merle gasps.

Bones FIRES.

The bullet strikes Dale high in the shoulder.

Dale collapses beside Merle.

Merle rolls away, clutching his neck.

Dale writhes in the mud.

Bones approaches with the Colt extended.

Dale's eye patch has twisted aside, exposing a scarred, empty socket.

DALE
You little bastard.

BONES
Stay down.

DALE
You think one bullet ends this?

BONES
No.

Bones aims at Dale's head.

BONES (CONT'D)
This one will.

Dale stops moving.

Behind them, the damaged gator fence GROANS.

Waylon runs toward his Challenger.

Merle grabs Bones's arm.

MERLE
Jasper.

Jasper lies where he fell, skin gray, blood saturating the dirt.

Merle drops beside him and presses both hands against the wound.

MERLE (CONT'D)
Stay with me.

Jasper's eyes flutter.

JASPER
Bones?

BONES
I'm here.

JASPER
Did you get Dale?

Bones looks toward the wounded man.

BONES

Yeah.

Jasper smiles weakly.

JASPER

Knew you would.

Merle removes his belt and tightens it around Jasper's thigh.

MERLE

We need a truck.

Waylon starts the Challenger.

MERLE (CONT'D)

Get over here!

Clayton raises the AK-47.

Bullets strike the Challenger.

Waylon ducks and speeds away.

Merle stares after him.

MERLE (CONT'D)

That coward!

More gunfire tears through the yard.

Bones and Merle drag Jasper behind the Chevrolet.

BONES

We can use this.

MERLE

It don't run.

BONES

You said it was almost finished.

MERLE

Jasper said that. Jasper lies about trucks.

Bones opens the driver's door and searches beneath the seat.

BONES

Where are the keys?

MERLE

Sun visor.

Bones pulls it down.

The keys fall into his lap.

Merle climbs into the truck bed with Jasper and keeps pressure on the wound.

Bones turns the key.

CLICK.

Again.

Nothing.

Clayton fires from behind the pit.

The windshield shatters over Bones.

BONES

Start, you piece of shit.

Bones pumps the accelerator and turns the key.

The engine coughs—then ROARS.

Merle laughs despite himself.

MERLE

Jasper, you lying son of a bitch.
You fixed it.

Bones shifts into drive.

The truck lurches, stalls, and rolls several feet.

BONES

Come on!

He restarts it.

The engine catches.

Bones floors the accelerator.

The Chevrolet spins through the mud toward the road.

Garth steps into their path with the Desert Eagle.

Bones drives straight at him.

Garth fires twice and dives aside.

One bullet tears through the hood. Another passes inches behind Bones's head.

Merle pulls a sawed-off shotgun from a rack behind the cab.

He FIRES from the truck bed.

The blast knocks Clayton backward.

EXT. THE NECK - DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

The Chevrolet tears into the swamp darkness.

Its engine rattles as though every part is arguing about which will fail first.

MERLE
Hospital's east!

BONES
I know.

MERLE
You're going west!

Bones yanks the wheel.

The truck swerves toward the canal, misses it by inches, and turns around.

Merle looks down at Jasper.

MERLE (CONT'D)
Keep your eyes open.

Jasper does not answer.

Merle slaps his face.

MERLE (CONT'D)
Talk to me.

Jasper's head rolls sideways.

Bones watches in the rearview mirror.

BONES
Is he breathing?

Merle lowers his ear to Jasper's mouth.

MERLE
I don't know.

BONES

Check.

MERLE

I am checking!

BONES

Keep pressure on his leg.

MERLE

There ain't much blood left to keep
in him!

Bones presses harder on the accelerator.

The road twists between walls of sawgrass. Headlights bounce
across black water and tree trunks.

Bones looks at the Colt on the seat beside him.

His hand is perfectly steady.

The steadiness unsettles him.

MERLE (CONT'D)

Jasper. Come on, little brother.

BONES

Put pressure on his leg.

Merle does not answer.

BONES (CONT'D)

Merle.

MERLE

He's gone.

Bones looks back at the road.

BONES

No.

MERLE

I can't feel him breathing.

BONES

We're almost there.

MERLE

He's dead.

BONES

You don't know that.

MERLE

I know my brother.

Bones grips the wheel.

Jasper lied to Dale for him.

Jasper could have surrendered Bones and lived.

Instead, he stayed silent.

Merle bends over his brother's body.

For miles, only the dying engine and tires against pavement can be heard.

Finally, Merle raises his head.

MERLE (CONT'D)

That took nerve.

BONES

What?

MERLE

Coming out like you did.

BONES

I wasn't going to watch Dale kill both of you.

MERLE

Most people would.

BONES

I ain't most people.

MERLE

No. You're Johnny Malone's boy.

Anger returns to Bones.

BONES

I'm Bones.

MERLE

Your daddy never feared mine.

BONES

Maybe he should have.

MERLE

Sanchez was the only man who didn't fear Atticus. Johnny never let him see it.

BONES

You knew my father?

MERLE

I was eighteen when he disappeared.

BONES

But you remember him.

MERLE

Everyone remembers Johnny Malone.

Bones looks at Jasper's body in the mirror.

BONES

My father left.

MERLE

He lived.

BONES

Same thing, where I come from.

Merle rests a hand on Jasper's chest.

MERLE

The Brodys came because somebody told them you know how to find him.

BONES

I don't.

MERLE

Dale believes you do. Warden Kinder believes Kenny knows where the money is. My cousin Waylon believes whatever the warden pays him to believe.

BONES

What do you believe?

Merle looks into the cab.

MERLE

I believe the old war is starting again.

EXT. THE NECK - COUNTY ROAD - NIGHT

The truck reaches the main road.

Distant lights shine beyond the trees.

INT. CHEVROLET PICKUP - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Bones remembers the birthday card hidden in his room.

INSERT - THE CARD

DANTES MARINE SERVICES, LLC.

A Miami address.

COME SEE ME BEFORE YOUR EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY.

Signed:

ED DANTES.

BACK TO SCENE

Bones turns toward the hospital.

EXT. DAWBER COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The ancient Chevrolet SCREECHES beneath the emergency canopy.

Bones jumps out and pounds on the glass doors.

BONES
We need help!

ORDERLIES rush outside with a gurney.

Merle remains in the truck bed, holding Jasper against his chest.

ORDERLY
Sir, you have to let him go.

MERLE
He's my brother.

ORDERLY
Let us help him.

The orderlies gently pull Jasper from Merle's arms and lower him onto the gurney.

A NURSE checks for a pulse.

Her expression tells Merle the truth before she speaks.

NURSE
Get him inside.

They rush Jasper through the emergency doors.

Merle climbs down from the truck.

His hands, shirt, and face are covered with his brother's blood.

Bones stands beside him in the same condition.

MERLE
You saved my life, Bones Malone.

BONES
I got your brother killed.

MERLE
Dale killed Jasper. Don't take credit for something a Brody did.

Bones looks through the emergency-room windows.

Doctors surround Jasper's body.

MERLE (CONT'D)
Sheltons don't forget who stands with us.

BONES
I don't want anything from you.

MERLE
A Shelton debt don't care what you want.

Bones climbs into the battered Chevrolet.

The engine turns over twice before catching.

He drives into the night.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. WIDOW'S WALK MARINA - NIGHT

SUPER: AFTER MIDNIGHT

Jasper's ancient Chevrolet rattles down the shell road with one headlight aimed into the trees and the other bouncing across the marina.

It passes the dark bait shop, coughs twice, and stops crooked beside Alex's boathouse.

INT. WIDOW'S WALK BOATHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

ALEX sleeps in a recliner wearing nothing but white briefs.

A loud CREAK outside jolts him awake.

Alex grabs a LOUISVILLE SLUGGER from behind the television and moves toward the door.

SHUFFLING outside.

Alex raises the bat.

The door slowly opens.

BONES

Alex.

ALEX

Jesus H. Christ!

Alex lowers the bat.

Bones stares at him.

Then he starts laughing.

BONES

You're wearing tighty-whities.

Alex looks down.

ALEX

They're underwear.

BONES

They're little-boy underwear.

ALEX

I was asleep.

Bones steps inside.

His shirt is black with sweat and streaked with blood from his chest to his knees. Mud covers his legs. Dried blood crusts one cheek.

He looks as though the swamp chewed him up and changed its mind.

Alex's embarrassment disappears.

ALEX (CONT'D)

What the hell happened to you?

BONES

Long night.

ALEX

Are you shot?

BONES

No.

Alex reluctantly touches Bones's arm.

His fingers come away bloody.

ALEX

You're bleeding.

BONES

It ain't mine.

ALEX

Whose is it?

Bones looks at his bloodstained shirt.

BONES

Jasper's.

Alex lowers the bat.

ALEX

Where is he?

BONES

Hospital.

ALEX

Is he alive?

Bones does not answer.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Bones?

BONES

No.

The answer hangs between them.

Bones walks to the sofa and collapses onto it.

The wooden frame complains beneath him.

Alex pulls on a pair of jeans.

ALEX

What happened?

BONES

The Brodys came looking for me.

ALEX

Why?

BONES

Same reason everybody is looking for us.

ALEX

The money.

Bones nods.

BONES

Dale thought I could take him to Johnny.

ALEX

Can you?

BONES

I told him I didn't know anything.

ALEX

That isn't what I asked.

Bones looks at him.

BONES

Jasper told Dale I wasn't there.

ALEX

He protected you.

BONES

Dale cut him open for it.

Alex sits across from him.

ALEX
What did you do?

BONES
What I had to.

ALEX
Which was?

BONES
I shot Dale.

Alex freezes.

ALEX
You killed Dale Brody?

BONES
Shot him in the shoulder.

ALEX
Is he alive?

BONES
He was when I left.

ALEX
You shot Dale Brody and left him
alive.

BONES
I was busy.

ALEX
Doing what?

BONES
Trying to keep Jasper from dying.

Alex sees the exhaustion beneath the blood—and something
unusual in Bones.

Fear.

ALEX
I'm sorry.

BONES
Jasper was an asshole.

ALEX
He was.

BONES

He was helping Merle work me for information.

ALEX

Probably.

BONES

But he kept Dale off me.

ALEX

You kept him from dying alone.

BONES

Didn't do much good.

ALEX

It mattered.

Alex finds a towel and tosses it to him.

Bones wipes his face, then recoils.

BONES

This smells like a used jockstrap.

ALEX

How do you know what that smells like.

Bones tosses it aside.

BONES

I don't know why I came here.

ALEX

Because you had nowhere else to go.

BONES

I could've gone home.

ALEX

That trailer isn't home.

Bones looks at him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You said that yourself.

Alex retrieves the coded map from beneath a sofa cushion and spreads it across the table.

BONES

That the map you showed Kenny?

ALEX

Yeah.

BONES

You really went to see him?

ALEX

Somebody had to tell me the truth.

BONES

Did he?

ALEX

He sent me to Bubs.

BONES

Who told you to stay away from the money.

ALEX

He never said there wasn't any.

BONES

Only you could hear a preacher warn you about death and think it was confirmation.

Alex studies Bones.

ALEX

Bubs recognized the map.

BONES

That doesn't tell us where the money is.

ALEX

No. But Johnny can.

Bones goes still.

Alex sees it.

ALEX (CONT'D)

What?

BONES

Nothing.

ALEX

You do that every time somebody mentions your daddy.

BONES

Do what?

ALEX

Look like you're about to run.

BONES

I ain't running.

ALEX

Then why did you come here?

Bones reaches into his shorts and removes a creased envelope protected inside a plastic grocery bag.

A Miami postmark.

ED DANTES above a post-office box.

He gives it to Alex.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Who's Ed Dantes?

BONES

Open it.

Alex removes a birthday card decorated with palm trees, neon lights, and Biscayne Bay.

A white business card falls onto the table.

INSERT - BUSINESS CARD

DANTES MARINE SERVICES, LLC

A Miami address.

On the back, written in red ink:

COME SEE ME IN MIAMI AS SOON AS YOU CAN FOR AN EARLY
EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY GIFT.

BACK TO SCENE

ALEX

When did you get this?

BONES

Few weeks ago.

ALEX

And you didn't tell me?

BONES
I wasn't gonna go.

ALEX
Who sent it?

Bones stares at the card.

BONES
Johnny.

Alex examines the envelope.

ALEX
Ed Dantes. Edmond Dantès.

BONES
Who?

ALEX
The Count of Monte Cristo.

BONES
The what?

ALEX
It's a book. A man gets betrayed
and thrown in prison. He escapes,
finds a fortune, and comes back for
revenge.

Bones frowns.

BONES
Sounds cheerful.

ALEX
Johnny chose that name for a
reason.

BONES
Maybe he liked the movie.

ALEX
Maybe he's telling you something.

BONES
He's telling me to go to Miami.

ALEX
Then we're going to Miami.

Bones takes back the card.

BONES

I ain't seen him since I was
little. Barely remember what he
looks like.

ALEX

You have pictures.

BONES

Pictures ain't the same as a
father.

Bones fights to contain seventeen years of anger.

BONES (CONT'D)

He had seventeen years to come see
me. Seventeen years to walk through
the door and say my name.

He looks at the birthday card.

BONES (CONT'D)

Now he sends this like he's some
uncle I see at Christmas.

ALEX

Maybe he couldn't come back.

BONES

He sent postcards from Jamaica,
Panama, and the goddamn
Philippines, but he couldn't make
one trip across Alligator Alley?

ALEX

He might have been protecting you.

BONES

Everybody says that when a man
leaves. Makes the leaving sound
noble.

Alex understands more than he wants to.

ALEX

Then don't go for him.

Bones looks up.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Go for yourself. Ask him why.

BONES

And while I'm asking, you plan on
finding out where he put the money.

ALEX

Yes.

BONES

At least you're honest.

Alex picks up the telephone.

BONES (CONT'D)

Who are you calling?

ALEX

Billy.

BONES

Why?

ALEX

Because the Caprice won't make it
to Miami without him.

BONES

It won't make it with him.

ALEX

Then we'll all be stranded
together.

Alex dials.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BUCK DAWBER'S HOUSE - BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The telephone RINGS.

BILLY answers, half asleep.

BILLY

Somebody better be dead.

Alex looks at Bones.

ALEX

Jasper Shelton.

Billy sits up.

BILLY
What happened?

ALEX
Bones shot Dale Brody.

A long beat.

BILLY
I'll be there in twenty minutes.

Billy hangs up.

BACK TO
BOATHOUSE

Alex replaces the receiver.

BONES
You could've led with the Miami
part.

ALEX
Then he might've gone back to
sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. WIDOW'S WALK BOATHOUSE - LATER

A KNOCK strikes the door.

Alex checks through the window and unlocks it.

Billy enters wearing jeans, work boots, and the gray shirt
from the church roof. His hair is flattened from sleep.

He sees Bones.

BILLY
What the hell happened to you?

BONES
I shot Dale Brody.

Billy closes the door.

BILLY
Of course you did.

BONES
What's that supposed to mean?

BILLY

It means nobody else I know says
things like that before breakfast.

BONES

It ain't breakfast.

BILLY

It's two in the morning.

Alex gives Billy the Miami card.

Billy reads it.

BILLY (CONT'D)

This Johnny?

Bones nods.

BILLY (CONT'D)

You sure?

BONES

As sure as I can be.

Billy studies the address.

BILLY

Who's Dantes?

ALEX

Edmond Dantès. The Count of Monte
Cristo.

Billy looks at Bones.

BILLY

Your daddy's pretending to be a
French count?

BONES

Apparently.

ALEX

He was imprisoned for something he
didn't do, escaped, found a
fortune, and came back for revenge.

BILLY

Sounds like Johnny.

BONES

You've never met him.

BILLY
Neither have you.

That lands.

Alex slips the folded map into his jacket.

ALEX
We leave before sunrise.

BILLY
We?

ALEX
Bones isn't going alone.

BONES
I ain't said I'm going.

ALEX
Yes, you have.

BONES
When?

ALEX
When you brought that card here
instead of burning it.

Bones looks at the envelope.

Billy checks the dark marina through the window.

BILLY
If Dale's alive, every Brody in the
county will be hunting him.

ALEX
Waylon and Kinder want him too.

BILLY
And the sheriff?

ALEX
Buck will arrest Bones first and
ask what happened after the Brodys
write the story for him.

BILLY
Then we can't take Bones's truck.

Everybody knows it.

ALEX
We take my Caprice.

BILLY
That thing make it across the
Alley?

ALEX
It'll make it.

BILLY
It overheats driving across town.

ALEX
Only when it's hot.

BILLY
We live in Florida.

Bones stands.

Exhaustion makes him sway.

BONES
You two can keep discussing the
reliability of Alex's piece-of-shit
car after I wash Jasper off of me.

Billy catches his arm.

BILLY
You all right?

Bones looks at him.

BONES
No.

The simplest truth he has spoken all night.

Billy releases him.

BILLY
There are clean clothes in my
truck.

BONES
Why?

BILLY
Because I work for a living.

Bones disappears into the tiny bathroom.

Water GROANS through the pipes.

Billy lowers his voice.

BILLY (CONT'D)
You really think Johnny will tell
you where the money is?

ALEX
He'll talk to Bones.

BILLY
That isn't what I asked.

Alex looks at the closed bathroom door.

ALEX
No. But once we find Johnny, we'll
have something nobody else has.

BILLY
What?

ALEX
Leverage.

Billy shakes his head.

BILLY
You've been reading too many of
Kenny's books.

Alex places the card beside the map.

BILLY (CONT'D)
What if the money isn't there
anymore?

ALEX
Then we find out who took it.

BILLY
And if Bubs was right?

ALEX
About what?

BILLY
That it gets us killed.

Alex looks at the bloody footprints across the floor.

ALEX
The killing already started.

Billy follows his gaze.

Then he takes out his truck keys.

BILLY
I'll get the clothes.

Alex smiles faintly.

ALEX
Knew you were coming.

BILLY
I didn't say that.

ALEX
You came here in the middle of the night.

BILLY
Because you said it was an emergency.

ALEX
It is.

Billy opens the door, then stops.

BILLY
If I go, it ain't for Johnny Malone's money.

ALEX
What's it for?

Billy looks toward the black water.

He looks back at Alex.

BILLY
I want the truth.

Billy exits.

MONTAGE - PREPARING FOR MIAMI

— Red water spirals into the drain as Bones scrubs Jasper's blood from his skin.

— Billy loads clean clothes, tools, water, and coolant into the Caprice.

- The Caprice's hood stands open beneath a marina light. Billy checks the oil and every cracked belt.
- Alex studies the coded map beside the Dantes Marine Services card.
- Bones dresses and stares at the birthday card in his hands.

EXT. WIDOW'S WALK MARINA - PRE-DAWN

The first light of morning appears over the water.

Alex locks the boathouse.

Billy closes the Caprice's hood.

Bones stands beside Jasper's Chevrolet.

He touches the battered fender once.

Then he joins the others.

The three boys climb into the Caprice.

Its engine turns over.

Once.

Twice.

On the third attempt, it starts.

The Caprice pulls away from Widow's Walk.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. DAWBER COUNTY ROAD - PRE-DAWN

The battered black Chevrolet Caprice leaves Dawber County twenty minutes before sunrise.

INT. CAPRICE - MOVING - PRE-DAWN

BILLY drives. The right headlight flickers whenever it feels like working.

ALEX rides beside him with the coded map inside his jacket.

BONES sprawls across the torn back seat, asleep before the county line.

Billy's borrowed jeans end several inches above his ankles. A Gethsemane Baptist T-shirt strains across his body.

Every few miles, the Caprice drifts toward the shoulder.

Billy corrects it without comment.

ALEX

You tired?

BILLY

No.

ALEX

You keep doing that.

BILLY

Doing what?

ALEX

Trying to kill us.

BILLY

Car's pulling right.

ALEX

It didn't pull right yesterday.

BILLY

Yesterday you weren't carrying
three people, two guns, and
whatever Bones ate before we left.

A wet SNORE comes from the back seat.

Alex looks over his shoulder.

ALEX

He looks dead.

BILLY

He nearly was.

ALEX

You believe everything he told us?

BILLY

I believe somebody's blood covered
him.

ALEX

He could've exaggerated the rest.

BILLY

Bones exaggerates when he's proud.
Last night, he wasn't proud.

Dawn forms as a gray line beyond the cypress trees.

Mist floats above the drainage canals.

Bait shops, shuttered gas stations, and houses raised on
concrete blocks pass outside.

Dawber County disappears behind them.

The Caprice strikes a pothole.

Bones wakes violently and reaches beneath his shirt for
Johnny's missing Colt.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Easy. Gun's under the seat.

BONES

Where are we?

BILLY

Across the county line.

BONES

Anybody behind us?

Alex checks the mirror.

ALEX

Not yet.

Bones rubs his face and leans between the seats.

BONES

How much farther?

BILLY

Two hours if the car holds.

ALEX

It'll hold.

The temperature needle creeps above halfway.

Billy taps the gauge.

Alex slaps his hand away.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Don't encourage it.

A green highway sign emerges through the mist:

MIAMI - 114 MILES.

EXT. ALLIGATOR ALLEY - SUNRISE

The Caprice merges onto the straight gray highway as sunlight breaks over the Everglades.

Water and sawgrass stretch toward both horizons.

White birds rise from the marsh.

An alligator rests beside the canal with its mouth open to the warming sky.

There is nowhere to hide.

INT. CAPRICE - MOVING - SUNRISE

A SILVER SEDAN closes the distance behind them.

Alex sees it.

ALEX
You see that?

BILLY
Yeah.

Bones turns around again.

The silver sedan enters the left lane.

Alex reaches beneath his seat and grips an old .38 REVOLVER.

Billy sees him.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Don't pull that out.

ALEX
I'm not.

Bones reaches beneath the rear seat and retrieves Johnny's Colt.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Don't fire inside my car.

BONES

You'd rather they shoot us?

ALEX

I'd rather you not blow my head off
from behind.

The sedan pulls alongside.

A WOMAN in sunglasses drives with one hand.

Two small children sleep beneath beach towels in the back
seat.

She sees the three young men staring at her and speeds away.

Bones lowers the Colt.

Billy exhales.

BILLY

Terrifying.

BONES

She could've been working for
Waylon.

BILLY

Her youngest looked especially
dangerous.

Alex hides the revolver again.

Their laughter does not last.

Fear remains inside the car with them.

BILLY (CONT'D)

What happens when we get there?

ALEX

We find Johnny.

BILLY

And then?

ALEX

Bones introduces us.

BILLY

What if he won't?

Alex looks into the back seat.

BONES
I'll introduce you.

BILLY
That ain't what I meant. What if
Johnny won't see us?

BONES
He invited me.

BILLY
He invited you. Not us.

Bones removes the birthday card from his pocket.

Its folds have softened from being opened too often.

BONES
He'll see us.

BILLY
You sound sure.

BONES
I ain't.

The boys fall silent as sunlight turns every pool in the
Everglades silver.

EXT. ALLIGATOR ALLEY SERVICE PLAZA - MORNING

The Caprice sits with its hood raised.

Billy pours water into the radiator while Alex watches the
traffic.

Bones returns from the store carrying three Cuban sandwiches,
two bags of pork rinds, powdered doughnuts, and no change.

BILLY
What did you do? Rob them?

BONES
Woman felt sorry for me.

BILLY
Why?

BONES
Told her my daddy abandoned me.

Alex stares at him.

Bones hands him a sandwich.

BONES (CONT'D)

What? It's true.

They eat beside the car.

Bones demolishes his sandwich, opens the doughnuts, and studies the birthday card again.

BILLY

You know what you're going to say to him?

Bones licks sugar from his thumb.

BONES

Yep.

BILLY

What?

BONES

Hello.

BILLY

And after that?

BONES

See how hello goes.

Billy empties the water jug into the radiator.

Alex spreads the coded map across the hood.

BONES (CONT'D)

Don't show him that right away.

ALEX

Why not?

BONES

Because I'm asking the questions first.

ALEX

You've had seventeen years to ask questions.

BONES

And you've had one day to become an expert on my family.

Alex slowly folds the map.

BONES (CONT'D)

Waylon told Merle that Kinder put
Kenny in isolation after your
visit.

Alex stops.

ALEX

What?

BONES

Said the warden knows you brought
in a map.

ALEX

How much did they see?

BONES

Enough to put your daddy in the
box.

Billy SLAMS the hood.

BILLY

Anything else we should know before
we arrive?

Alex considers.

ALEX

Bubs recognized the map.

BILLY

Did he tell you where the money is?

ALEX

No. But he knows more than he's
saying.

BONES

Why would Johnny trust Bubs?

ALEX

Because Bubs was the one man in
Dawber County who wouldn't steal
from him.

Bones looks at the birthday card.

BONES

Maybe we ain't going to Miami to
find the money.

BILLY

What are we going for?

Bones studies the handwriting on the card.

BONES

To find out why Johnny called me
now.

MONTAGE - APPROACHING MIAMI

- Traffic multiplies around the Caprice.
- Concrete walls painted with murals replace the sawgrass.
- Overpasses cross above other overpasses.
- Palm trees, warehouses, billboards, and glass towers fill the horizon.
- Bones sits upright, taking in a world larger than anything in his father's postcards.

INT. CAPRICE - MIAMI TRAFFIC - DAY

Spanish music pounds from a neighboring car.

Motorcycles cut between lanes.

A woman shouts into a cellular telephone while steering with her knees.

Billy holds the Dantes Marine Services card against the wheel.

BILLY

You sure this is the street?

BONES

That's what it says.

BILLY

It better be. Temperature gauge is
almost red.

ALEX

Turn on the heater.

BILLY

It's ninety-three degrees.

ALEX

Pulls heat from the engine.

Billy turns it on.

Scalding air BLASTS through the car.

BONES

You trying to kill us?

BILLY

Open a window.

BONES

The window don't work.

BILLY

Then sweat.

EXT. MIAMI INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

The Caprice squeezes through a yellow light.

EXT. LITTLE HAVANA - DAY

The Caprice leaves the main road.

Brightly painted homes stand beside crumbling Spanish houses
protected by chain-link fences.

Men drink coffee beneath striped awnings.

Old women sweep sidewalks.

Roosters wander as though they own the city.

INT. CAPRICE - MOVING - DAY

Billy checks the card.

BILLY

Address should be ahead.

Alex spots it.

ALEX

There.

EXT. DANTES MARINE SERVICES HOUSE - DAY

A decaying Spanish colonnade hides behind an overgrown yard.
Vines climb the walls. Palm fronds press against the windows.
A chain-link gate bears a sign:

BEWARE OF DOG.

Someone has painted HORN before DOG and added a crude naked woman beneath it.

Bones stares at the property.

BONES
This is it?

ALEX
This is it.

BONES
My daddy lives here?

ALEX
Maybe Dantes does.

BILLY
Looks condemned.

A black Mercedes waits at the opposite end of the block,
wildly out of place.

Billy drives past without stopping.

BONES
What are you doing?

BILLY
Checking the street.

BONES
You think that Mercedes followed
us?

BILLY
No. It got here first.

EXT. LITTLE HAVANA SIDE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The Caprice sits beneath a broad mango tree.

The boys watch the house through the dirty windshield.

Nobody speaks.

The Mercedes door opens.

DEON CHILDRESS steps out wearing a dark suit and expensive sunglasses.

Alex leans forward.

ALEX
That's Deon Childress.

BILLY
How do you know?

ALEX
Saw his picture at Bubs's house.

BONES
The football player?

ALEX
Lawyer now.

Deon approaches the property, checks both directions, and peers through a tear in the fence tarp.

A MAN'S VOICE calls from behind the house.

Deon answers.

The gate opens and he disappears inside.

BILLY
What's he doing here?

ALEX
Finding Johnny.

Bones reaches for the door.

Alex stops him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Wait.

BONES
That's my daddy in there.

ALEX
Maybe.

BONES
You heard him.

ALEX

I heard a man.

Bones pulls free.

BONES

I didn't come this far to sit in
your car.

ALEX

He could have guards.

BONES

He's an accountant.

ALEX

He was Pablo Escobar's accountant.

BONES

That story's bullshit.

ALEX

So is the one about Atticus's gator
pit?

Bones hesitates.

Billy turns off the engine.

The heater dies.

BILLY

We wait for Deon to leave. If
Johnny trusts him, he'll come out
calm. If he comes out running, we
keep driving.

ALEX

For once, Billy has a good idea.

BILLY

I'm starting to regret coming.

They wait inside the heating car.

Bones bends the birthday card against his knee, straightens
it, then bends it again.

BONES

What if he don't recognize me?

Silence.

BILLY
He sent the card.

BONES
What if somebody else sent it?

BILLY
Then we find out who.

Bones watches the house.

BONES
My mama used to tell me he stayed
gone because men wanted to kill
him. Said if hje came home, they'd
ue me to get to him.

ALEX
Sounds possible.

BONES
She stopped saying it when I got
older.

BILLY
Maybe she got tired of defending
him.

Bones nods.

The side gate opens.

Deon emerges with a leather briefcase and anger in every
step.

He turns back toward the property.

DEON
You've got until five tomorrow!

After that, I file the papers!

A SHIRTLESS MAN appears behind him.

Sun-darkened skin. Green running shorts. Brown sandals. A
cigarette. A revolver tucked into his waistband.

An old gold watch.

A faded military tattoo marks his left wrist.

Bones stops breathing.

JOHNNY MALONE is older than the photographs. Thinning hair. Gray temples. A softened body. Deep lines around his eyes.

But the crooked smile is unmistakable.

Bones has the same one.

JOHNNY
Stay safe, brother.

Deon pushes through the gate.

Billy removes both guns from beneath the seats and locks them inside the glove compartment.

BILLY
We go unarmed.

ALEX
Why?

BILLY
Because if that's Johnny Malone, he
already know we're here.

Billy climbs out.

Alex follows.

Bones remains frozen inside the car.

ALEX
You coming?

Bones looks at his father.

He grips the birthday card and steps out.

EXT. DANTES MARINE SERVICES HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The three boys approach.

Deon notices them first.

Recognition strikes when he sees Bones.

DEON
Bones?

Bones stops.

His hand starts beneath his shirt before he remembers his pistol is locked inside the car.

BONES

I didn't do anything.

Deon looks from Alex to Billy.

DEON

That usually means you did.

ALEX

We're looking for somebody.

Behind Deon, Johnny steps closer to the gate.

JOHNNY

Who is it?

Deon looks back.

Then he moves aside.

For seventeen years, Johnny existed to Bones as postcards, rumors, photographs, and arguments through trailer walls.

Criminal. Fugitive. Hero. Coward. Ghost.

Now he stands less than twenty feet away.

The birthday card trembles in Bones's hand.

Johnny's cigarette drops from his lips.

The color leaves his face.

For one fleeting instant, he looks frightened.

Then the crooked Malone smile returns.

Johnny opens both arms as though Bones has been gone for an afternoon.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Hey, boys.

Nobody moves.

Johnny's gaze settles on Bones.

The smile falters.

Bones spent the entire journey deciding what he would say.

Hello had seemed like enough.

Now it is not nearly enough.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE THREE