

SAWGRASS WARS

"The Mogul"

Episode 16 - Season One

Written by

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Based on the Sawgrass Wars novella series
by Kurt Weichert

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FADE IN:

INT. SAFE HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

TEDDY HENDERSON circles BONES MALONE, tugging at a jacket that is too tight across Bones's shoulders.

Bones pulls at the collar. Miserable.

Teddy shoves the tail of Bones's shirt back inside a pair of expensive trousers.

BONES

I look like somebody died.

TEDDY

You look like you might be allowed through the front door.

BONES

My clothes were fine.

TEDDY

You wore jeans with blood on them.

BONES

Wasn't my blood.

TEDDY

That does not improve them.

SUDS emerges from the bathroom in a purple suit Teddy found in the back of a closet.

The sleeves end several inches above his wrists. A white bandage covers the burn on his shoulder.

Suds spreads his arms.

SUDS

How I look?

Teddy stares at him.

TEDDY

Like a nightclub bouncer at Easter.

Suds smiles.

SUDS

Thank you.

TEDDY

That was not a compliment.

SUDS

It sounded nice.

Bones removes his jacket.

Teddy catches it before it hits the bed.

TEDDY

Put that back on.

BONES

No.

TEDDY

My father will judge you the second
you enter.

BONES

He can judge my shirt.

TEDDY

My father decides whether we get
access to half the wealthy
customers in Miami.

Bones takes the jacket from him.

BONES

That's why you're going.

Teddy looks down.

TEDDY

What does that mean?

BONES

You're his son.

TEDDY

That does not carry the influence
you think.

Suds adjusts one of his short purple sleeves.

SUDS

Your daddy don't like you?

TEDDY

My father likes me when I'm useful.

Bones puts the jacket back on.

BONES

Then today should feel familiar.

CUT TO:

EXT. GORDY SOUND - DAY

A polished music empire occupying an entire city block near Biscayne Bay.

Recording studios, executive offices, rehearsal spaces and a private nightclub concealed behind mirrored glass.

A black Mercedes pulls to the entrance.

INT. GORDY SOUND - LOBBY - DAY

Bones, Teddy and Suds enter a monument to money and fame.

Gold and platinum records cover the walls. Framed photographs show PHIL HENDERSON beside singers, athletes, politicians -- and men whose arrests once dominated the Miami newspapers.

A fountain shaped like a musical note rises beneath an enormous chandelier.

Suds looks up.

SUDS

This place got its own weather.

Teddy approaches the SECURITY DESK.

The SECURITY GUARD notices the healing cut across Teddy's throat.

SECURITY GUARD

What happened to you?

TEDDY

Nothing.

The guard looks past him at Bones and Suds.

SECURITY GUARD

They with you?

TEDDY

Yes.

SECURITY GUARD

Your father know?

TEDDY

He arranged the meeting.

The guard picks up the telephone.

Teddy reaches for it, but the guard moves it away.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

He knows.

SECURITY GUARD

Then he won't mind me checking.

The lobby doors open.

A TEENAGE SINGER Bones recognizes from television enters with an entourage of young women.

She wears sunglasses indoors.

An older man trails behind them carrying shopping bags and a small dog.

Suds smiles at the singer.

SUDS

I know her.

TEDDY

You know her music.

SUDS

Same thing.

The singer notices Suds's purple suit.

She smiles back.

Teddy grabs Suds by the arm and pulls him toward the elevators.

TEDDY

Do not talk to the artists.

SUDS

Why?

TEDDY

They belong to my father.

Suds's smile disappears.

SUDS

People don't belong to people.

TEDDY
At Gordy Sound they do.

INT. GORDY SOUND - STUDIO CORRIDOR - DAY

The elevator doors open.

Teddy, Bones and Suds step into the corridor.

They hear Phil Henderson before they see him.

PHIL (O.S.)
Stop!

The music from STUDIO A abruptly dies.

INT. GORDY SOUND - STUDIO A - CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

An ASSISTANT ushers Teddy, Bones and Suds into the back of the crowded control room.

Nobody acknowledges them.

Everyone is watching PHIL HENDERSON.

Late fifties. Broad-shouldered. Immaculate cream suit. Precisely trimmed hair and beard. Diamond rings flash beneath the studio lights.

Phil stands behind the mixing console, surrounded by engineers, musicians, assistants and one increasingly terrified PRODUCER.

Inside the vocal booth, a YOUNG SINGER stands alone behind the microphone.

Phil presses the talkback button.

PHIL
What word are you singing?

YOUNG SINGER
Stay.

PHIL
No. You are pronouncing stay. I asked you to sing it.

The singer glances toward the producer.

Phil catches her.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Don't look at him. He approved the last twelve takes. At this point, he's an accomplice.

The producer shifts uncomfortably.

Phil presses the button again.

PHIL (CONT'D)

The man you love is walking out the door. If he leaves, you will never see him again. I need to hear your heart break.

YOUNG SINGER

I'm trying.

PHIL

You sound relieved.

Silence.

Phil turns toward the ENGINEER.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Bring her voice forward.

ENGINEER

It's already up three decibels.

PHIL

Then why does she sound like she's singing from the trunk of a car?

The engineer reaches for the console.

Phil slaps his hand away.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Not that one. Unless you want the drums to sound like garbage cans falling down a staircase.

Phil adjusts two controls himself.

The singer's voice rises cleanly above the track.

Phil points at the GUITARIST.

PHIL (CONT'D)

The note before the bridge is flat.

GUITARIST

It's not.

Phil stares at him.

The guitarist checks his instrument.

His face changes.

Phil turns toward the producer.

PHIL

You have a flat guitar, a buried
singer and a bridge that lies down
and waits for traffic. What exactly
have you been producing?

Nobody answers.

Phil opens the control-room door.

INT. STUDIO A - VOCAL BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Phil enters and gently removes the singer's headphones.

PHIL

Look at me.

She does.

PHIL (CONT'D)

You have one of the finest voices I
have heard in twenty years. That
voice bought your mother a house.
It put your brother through school.
It employs every frightened person
staring through that glass.

Her eyes fill with tears.

Phil lowers his voice.

PHIL (CONT'D)

But none of that matters if you
stop feeling the words.

He steps back.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Who are you singing to?

She hesitates.

YOUNG SINGER
My father.

PHIL
Where is he?

YOUNG SINGER
Atlanta.

PHIL
No. Where is he when you sing that
word?

Her composure cracks.

YOUNG SINGER
Leaving.

PHIL
Good.

Phil places the headphones back over her ears.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Now stop performing and ask him not
to go.

INT. STUDIO A - CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Phil returns to the console.

PHIL
From the second verse.

The engineer starts the track.

The singer begins.

Everyone listens.

She reaches the final line -- and her voice breaks across the
word:

YOUNG SINGER
(singing)
Stay...

The note disappears.

Nobody moves.

Phil presses the talkback button.

PHIL

There.

He looks at the producer.

PHIL (CONT'D)

That is why I spend money.

The singer wipes her eyes.

Phil finally turns and sees Teddy standing at the back of the room.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Turn the music off. My greatest disappointment has arrived.

The room becomes silent again.

Phil studies his son's face.

His eyes settle on the thin scar across Teddy's throat.

PHIL (CONT'D)

What happened?

TEDDY

Business.

PHIL

No. Business produces money. You produced swelling.

Teddy glances at the studio employees.

TEDDY

Can we do this somewhere else?

Phil addresses the room.

PHIL

Everybody out except the singer.

Musicians, engineers and assistants hurriedly gather their belongings.

Phil points at the producer.

PHIL (CONT'D)

You stay.

The producer freezes.

PRODUCER

I thought you said everybody out.

PHIL

I want you to sit here and
contemplate how a seventeen-year-
old girl understood the song better
after thirty seconds of direction
than you did after six weeks of
biling me.

The producer slowly sits.

Phil leads Teddy, Bones and Suds into the corridor.

INT. GORDY SOUND - STUDIO CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Phil stops in front of Suds.

He examines the strained purple suit from shoes to collar.

PHIL

You look like a nightclub lawsuit
wrapped in purple.

Suds smiles.

SUDS

That sounds expensive.

The corner of Phil's mouth twitches.

He turns to Bones.

PHIL

You're Johnny Malone's son.

BONES

Bones.

PHIL

I know your name.

BONES

You know my father?

PHIL

Your father could smell money
through concrete.

Phil moves closer.

PHIL (CONT'D)
You smell like gasoline near an
open flame.

BONES
Still gets people's attention.

For the first time, Phil smiles.

PHIL
Come upstairs.

INT. GORDY SOUND - PHIL'S OFFICE - DAY

Floor-to-ceiling windows overlook Biscayne Bay. Record
awards, magazine covers and photographs of Phil with two
decades of Miami power players cover the remaining walls.

A NERVOUS MAN waits beside the desk holding an envelope.

Phil enters without acknowledging him. Teddy, Bones and Suds
follow.

PHIL
Thursday afternoon. The single
enters rotation before the weekend.

The nervous man nods.

NERVOUS MAN
I'll speak to the program director.

PHIL
No. The program director has
principles. Speak to the man paying
his gambling debts.

Phil points toward the door.

The nervous man leaves with the envelope.

Teddy drops into a chair.

Phil looks at him.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Stand up.

TEDDY
Why?

PHIL
Because I'm not finished being
angry.

Teddy remains seated.

Phil crosses behind his desk.

PHIL (CONT'D)
I spent thirty years turning
talented idiots into millionaires.
Somehow, I raised a millionaire who
turned himself into an idiot.

TEDDY
I've heard this speech.

PHIL
No, you've heard shorter versions.
I keep hoping repetition will
accomplish what parenting did not.

Teddy stands.

TEDDY
You wanted me to build something.

PHIL
I wanted you to learn the business.

TEDDY
I built my own.

PHIL
You sold marijuana to fraternity
boys.

TEDDY
Rich fraternity boys.

PHIL
You are not my successor. You are
an expense report with hair.

Bones looks away to conceal a smile.

Teddy catches him.

TEDDY
You think this is funny?

BONES
A little.

Phil points at Bones.

PHIL

Don't encourage him. Teddy has
mistaken surviving his mistakes for
talent since childhood.

Teddy touches the scar on his neck.

TEDDY

Willis did this.

Phil's expression changes. The anger does not disappear. It
becomes colder.

PHIL

He cut you?

TEDDY

He wanted to scare me.

PHIL

Did it work?

TEDDY

Yes.

PHIL

Good. Fear may succeed where
education failed.

TEDDY

You don't care that he nearly
killed me?

Phil walks around the desk.

He places two fingers beneath Teddy's chin and examines the
scar.

PHIL

I care so much that three people
had to persuade me not to have
Willis Childress killed before
breakfast.

Teddy searches his father's face.

TEDDY

Why didn't you?

PHIL

Because your mother asked me not to begin a gang war while she was planning your funeral.

TEDDY

I wasn't going to die.

PHIL

You arranged a secret meeting with Lucien Baptiste after stealing from both organizations. Death was the first competent appointment on your calendar.

Teddy pulls away.

Phil turns to Bones.

PHIL (CONT'D)

You went into the warehouse.

BONES

Yes.

PHIL

After Willis ordered you to remain outside.

BONES

Yes.

PHIL

You killed Lucien's men.

BONES

Some.

PHIL

And saved my son.

BONES

I saved everybody.

PHIL

That answer may be the first reason I believe you.

Suds lowers himself carefully into a chair.

Phil notices the bandage on his shoulder.

PHIL (CONT'D)

You were burned.

SUDS

Little bit.

PHIL

Doesn't it hurt?

SUDS

Yes.

PHIL

Then why are you smiling?

SUDS

Frowning don't help.

Phil stares at him.

Suds stares back pleasantly.

Phil returns behind his desk.

PHIL

What does Willis want?

BONES

Access.

PHIL

To what?

BONES

Your son's customers.

PHIL

He already has them.

BONES

Teddy has college students and
bored country-club wives. We want
the people in your photographs.

Phil laughs.

PHIL

You want me to distribute marijuana
to recording artists and
politicians?

BONES

No. We want you to stop paying
strangers to bring it to them.

Suds unbuttons the purple jacket and removes a SEALED
PACKAGE.

Teddy stares.

TEDDY

You carried that through my
father's security?

SUDS

They searched the wrong arm.

Suds places the package on Phil's desk.

Phil glances toward the office door, then presses a button
beneath the desk.

The HEAD OF SECURITY enters.

Phil points to the package.

PHIL

This came through your lobby.

The security chief looks at Suds.

HEAD OF SECURITY

I searched him.

PHIL

No. You touched his jacket and
admired yourself.

Phil points toward the door.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Fire the man operating the front
desk.

HEAD OF SECURITY

He's my brother-in-law.

PHIL

Then Thanksgiving will be
uncomfortable.

The security chief leaves.

Suds looks at Phil.

SUDS

You fired a man because I tricked
him?

PHIL

I fired a man because you could
have been carrying a bomb.

SUDS

Fair.

Phil cuts open the package and examines the marijuana.

PHIL

Quality?

Suds smiles.

SUDS

You holding it.

PHIL

Source?

SUDS

Dawber County.

PHIL

Volume?

SUDS

Enough to start.

PHIL

That means not enough.

SUDS

It means Willis don't tell numbers
to strangers.

Phil looks at Bones.

PHIL

And you?

BONES

I don't tell my father's business.

PHIL

Yet you want mine.

BONES

I want access to the customers your
people already supply.

Phil closes the package.

PHIL

I don't touch product. I don't
transport it. Nothing stays
overnight in any building with my
name.

BONES

Fine.

PHIL

My artists never carry it across
state lines.

BONES

Fine.

PHIL

My employees are not arrested.

BONES

We'll do our best.

Phil's eyes narrow.

PHIL

The correct answer is fine.

Bones smiles.

BONES

You should meet Johnny.

PHIL

I intend to.

Teddy looks at his father.

TEDDY

You haven't agreed to anything.

Phil ignores him.

PHIL

What percentage is Willis offering?

BONES

Fifteen.

PHIL

Teddy told me twenty.

Bones looks at Teddy.

Teddy raises his hands.

TEDDY

He asked.

Phil smiles.

PHIL

You boys have been here ten minutes, and my son has already betrayed your negotiating position.

Teddy sits down.

TEDDY

Now you understand my childhood.

PHIL

Twenty-five.

BONES

Fifteen.

PHIL

You just admitted twenty.

BONES

I admitted Teddy talks too much.

Phil leans back.

PHIL

You want access to recording artists, professional athletes, club owners, hotel suites, yachts, private parties, and people wealthy enough to consider laws an inconvenience.

BONES

Twenty.

PHIL

Twenty-five.

BONES

Twenty, and Teddy controls the operation.

Teddy looks up.

So does Phil.

PHIL

You trust him?

BONES

No.

PHIL

Then why put him in charge?

BONES

Because he built the market.

Phil looks at his son differently.

Teddy straightens.

BONES (CONT'D)

Suds handles supply. I watch Teddy.
Your people open the doors.

Phil looks at the package.

PHIL

What does Johnny Malone contribute?

BONES

He's in Switzerland.

PHIL

That wasn't my question.

BONES

He'll bring money.

PHIL

How much?

BONES

I don't know.

PHIL

You expect me to believe that?

BONES

I didn't ask you to.

Phil stands.

The room tightens around him.

PHIL

I can end this meeting, close every
club to you, and make Willis's
marijuana rot in Dawber County.

Bones rises too.

BONES

And then your people keep buying
worse product from Lucien at a
higher price.

PHIL

You think you can stand in my
office and tell me how Miami works?

BONES

No.

Bones steps closer.

BONES (CONT'D)

I think you already know I'm right.

Phil stares at him.

Teddy holds his breath.

Suds smiles.

Then Phil extends his hand.

PHIL

Twenty.

Bones shakes it.

Phil turns to Teddy.

PHIL (CONT'D)

You control the operation.

Teddy looks surprised.

TEDDY

Really?

PHIL

One mistake and I replace you with
the giant.

Suds sits straighter.

SUDS

I accept.

PHIL

You weren't offered anything.

SUDS

Still sounded nice.

INT. GORDY SOUND - STUDIO CORRIDOR - LATER

Phil walks Teddy, Bones and Suds through his empire.

Recording studios operate behind layers of glass. Producers mix songs beneath colored lights. Assistants hurry through the corridors carrying contracts, clothes, food and cash.

INT. GORDY SOUND - PRIVATE NIGHTCLUB - CONTINUOUS

Workers prepare for an album-release party.

Phil points toward the VIP entrance.

PHIL

Product enters there after security changes shifts.

Teddy nods.

TEDDY

I know.

PHIL

Nothing remains overnight.

TEDDY

I know.

PHIL

Nothing travels on a company tour bus.

TEDDY

I know.

PHIL

Then why did security find six pounds beneath a seat last month?

TEDDY

That wasn't mine.

PHIL

You were always involved. I simply hadn't determined whether you were useful.

Teddy stops.

TEDDY

I built eight clubs, three country clubs, two university campuses and private customers from here to Palm Beach.

Phil looks at him.

PHIL
You did that?

TEDDY
Yes.

PHIL
Without using my name?

TEDDY
Your name opened the first door.

PHIL
And after that?

TEDDY
My product kept them open.

Phil nods once.

For Teddy, it is more approval than he has received in years.

INT. GORDY SOUND - STUDIO CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

They pass the studio where the young singer listens to the completed track.

Suds waves through the glass.

She waves back.

Phil notices.

PHIL
She likes you.

SUDS
I like her.

PHIL
She has four albums remaining on her contract.

SUDS
I ain't trying to record nothing.

PHIL
I meant she is busy.

Suds looks at Bones.

SUDS
People really do belong to him.

Phil stops.

PHIL
Everyone in this building belongs
to a contract.

SUDS
That don't make it right.

PHIL
It makes it enforceable.

Suds smiles.

SUDS
You funny.

PHIL
I wasn't joking.

SUDS
I know.

Phil stares at him, unable to decide whether he has been
insulted.

Bones laughs.

INT. GORDY SOUND - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Teddy, Bones and Suds emerge from the elevator.

A BLACK SEDAN waits near the exit.

Bones notices it first.

BONES
Same kind of car from the
warehouse.

Suds's smile disappears.

Teddy stops.

TEDDY
You think it's Lucien?

Bones hands him the Mercedes keys.

BONES
Get inside.

Suds reaches beneath his purple jacket. His pistol is still there.

TWO FIGURES stand near Teddy's Mercedes.

One slips something beneath the windshield wiper.

BONES (CONT'D)

Stay here.

Bones moves between the parked cars.

Suds follows.

BONES (CONT'D)

I said stay.

SUDS

I don't follow orders from teenagers.

BONES

You follow Willis.

SUDS

Sometimes.

The figures hurry back to the black sedan.

Bones runs.

The sedan accelerates before he reaches it.

Suds raises his pistol.

BONES

Too many cars.

The sedan disappears down the ramp.

They approach Teddy's Mercedes.

A PHOTOGRAPH rests beneath the windshield wiper. Teddy stands outside Gordy Sound with Phil. A red circle has been drawn around Teddy's head.

Bones turns it over.

Written on the back:

ONE MILLION.

NEXT TIME WE TAKE THE SON.

Teddy reads the message. His face loses its color.

PHIL (O.S.)
No, they won't.

They turn.

Phil stands beside his security chief and FOUR ARMED GUARDS.

Bones hands him the photograph.

Phil studies it. His face reveals nothing.

HEAD OF SECURITY
Sir?

Phil returns the photograph to Bones.

PHIL
Close every club where Lucien's
people conduct business.

HEAD OF SECURITY
All of them?

PHIL
All.

HEAD OF SECURITY
That will cost us.

PHIL
It will cost them more.

Phil looks at Teddy.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Your mother gets two additional
guards.

TEDDY
She'll ask why.

PHIL
Tell her I bought her jewelry.

TEDDY
She'll know you're lying.

PHIL
Then buy the jewelry.

Phil turns to the security chief.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Find every promoter, artist, dealer
and club manager accepting Lucien's
money. By morning, they choose
between his business and mine.

Bones studies him.

BONES

You can do that?

Phil looks offended.

PHIL

I made a teenage girl's heartbreak
enter radio rotation on Thursday.
This is simpler.

Teddy holds up the photograph.

TEDDY

They threatened me.

Phil faces his son.

For an instant, the imperial mask disappears.

PHIL

You are not dying before I decide
whether you deserve the company.

Teddy smiles faintly.

TEDDY

That the closest you can come to
saying you love me?

PHIL

Yes.

TEDDY

Thought so.

Phil looks toward Bones.

PHIL

You said Johnny is returning?

BONES

Soon.

PHIL

When he calls the meeting, I'll
attend.

BONES

You don't know what the meeting is about.

PHIL

It is about money, territory and men pretending they can become legitimate.

Bones studies him.

BONES

How do you know?

PHIL

Because every criminal eventually wants a conference room.

Phil turns toward Gordy Sound, then stops.

PHIL (CONT'D)

One more thing.

Bones waits.

PHIL (CONT'D)

If Johnny Malone sends his son into another war while he sits behind a desk, I will tell him exactly what I think of him.

BONES

He didn't send me.

PHIL

No?

BONES

I came on my own.

Phil smiles.

PHIL

That may be the first interesting thing about you.

Phil returns inside with his guards.

Suds looks at Bones.

SUDS

I thought he liked you.

BONES

He does.

SUDS

How can you tell?

BONES

He insulted Teddy more.

Teddy opens the passenger door.

TEDDY

What do we do now?

BONES

We tell Willis.

TEDDY

And Johnny?

BONES

When he comes home.

Suds squeezes into the back seat.

Bones starts the Mercedes.

Teddy fastens his seat belt.

TEDDY

You know how to drive this?

BONES

No.

TEDDY

This is a hundred-thousand-dollar car.

BONES

I can read the letters.

TEDDY

What letters?

Bones shifts into reverse.

BONES

R means race.

The Mercedes SHOOTs backward.

Teddy grabs the dashboard.

Suds laughs.

Bones turns toward the exit.

Behind them, through the garage doors, Phil works two telephones while his security chief dispatches armed guards in opposite directions.

MONTAGE - PHIL CLOSES DOORS

-- A South Beach CLUB MANAGER answers his telephone, then points two of Lucien's dealers toward the exit.

-- A RADIO PROGRAMMER removes a Haitian-backed artist from the night's playlist.

-- A PROMOTER tears Lucien's name from a VIP list.

-- Gordy Sound's security chief circles addresses across a map of Miami.

END MONTAGE

EXT. ROSE'S HOUSE - PORCH - NIGHT

SUPER: 2:17 A.M.

BILLY DAWBER stands barefoot on the porch. His hair is mussed from sleep.

BO DAWBER presses an empty ledger into his hands.

BO
Get into the truck.

BILLY
What is this?

BO
Work.

BILLY
You said we were going fishing.

BO
We are.

BILLY
Nobody takes a ledger fishing.

Bo walks toward the waiting Lincoln.

Billy looks through the screen door. ROSE stands inside in her nightgown, tightening the belt of her robe. The house is silent. Rufus remains asleep upstairs.

BILLY (CONT'D)

You know where he's taking me?

ROSE

Your uncle doesn't tell me anything until he needs me to agree with it.

BILLY

That doesn't concern you?

ROSE

It has concerned me since before you were born.

Bo sounds the horn.

Rose looks toward the Lincoln.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Go.

BILLY

You want me working for him.

ROSE

I want you beside him.

BILLY

What's the difference?

ROSE

If you're beside him, he can't forget whose son you are.

Billy opens the ledger. Written inside the cover: WILLIAM DAWBER. Beneath it: PRIVATE ACCOUNTS.

He closes the book.

Rose catches his arm before he leaves.

ROSE (CONT'D)

You pay attention tonight.

BILLY

To what?

ROSE

Everything he doesn't explain.

EXT. MARINA - NIGHT

The marina operates without lights.

DALE BRODY waits beside an aging commercial fishing boat, one hand resting on his cane. A brace surrounds his injured leg.

The boat's faded name stretches across the stern: MISS CAROLINE.

MERLE SHELTON stands near the fuel dock with a shotgun tucked beneath his arm.

DALE

I told him not to bring that.

Merle pats the weapon.

MERLE

This ain't for you.

DALE

Then quit pointing it at my boat.

MERLE

If I was pointing it, you'd know.

Bo walks between them.

BO

Two days.

DALE

What?

BO

You worked together for two days before disappointing me.

MERLE

I didn't do anything.

BO

You brought a shotgun after I said no weapons.

MERLE

You said no weapons at the meeting.

Bo takes the shotgun from him.

BO

You enjoy testing language?

MERLE

I enjoy being alive.

BO

Then stop making me explain things.

Bo hands the weapon to Billy.

Billy looks at it.

BILLY

What am I supposed to do with this?

BO

Put it in the truck.

MERLE

Why does he get to touch it?

BO

Because he follows instructions.

Billy looks at Bo.

Nobody laughs.

Billy carries the shotgun to the Lincoln. When he returns, Dale is aboard the Miss Caroline. Merle remains on the dock.

DALE

You coming?

MERLE

On that?

DALE

She's seaworthy.

MERLE

She's leaking.

DALE

All boats leak.

MERLE

Not from the roof.

Bo steps aboard. Merle reluctantly follows.

Billy peers into the darkness beyond the boat.

BILLY

Where's the crew?

DALE
You're looking at it.

BILLY
That feels insufficient.

Bo offers Billy a hand. Billy ignores it and jumps aboard.
Dale starts the engines.

EXT. MISS CAROLINE - MARINA - CONTINUOUS

The Miss Caroline pulls away from the dark marina.

EXT. MISS CAROLINE - OPEN WATER - NIGHT

The boat travels south through the canal and turns toward open water.

Dale handles the wheel. Bo studies an old nautical chart beneath the cabin's red light.

Merle watches the darkness from the stern.

Billy sits beside a stack of empty fish crates, the ledger across his knees.

No fishing poles. No bait. No nets.

BILLY
You planning to tell me what we're catching?

Bo marks a position on the chart.

BO
Soon.

BILLY
You promised Dawber County you weren't starting another smuggling operation.

BO
I promised there would be no more drug smuggling.

Billy stares at him.

BILLY
That sounds like the same thing.

BO

Then wait until you understand.

The boat clears the shelter of the islands. Wind strikes from the east. Waves hammer the hull and throw spray across the deck.

Dale adjusts course.

DALE

Storm moved faster than expected.

BO

We have time.

DALE

You been out twelve years. Weather still don't take orders from you.

BO

Neither do you. Both problems can be corrected.

Dale looks toward the dark horizon.

A distant light moves across the water.

Merle steps into the cabin.

MERLE

Boat behind us.

Dale checks the mirror.

DALE

How far?

MERLE

Two miles. Maybe three.

DALE

Running lights?

MERLE

White over red.

DALE

Fishing boat.

MERLE

Could be Coast Guard.

DALE

Coast Guard runs different lights.

MERLE

You sure?

DALE

My family has been on this water
for four generations.

MERLE

And still can't afford a boat
without holes.

Dale starts to rise. Pain shoots through his injured leg. He grips the wheel.

Merle sees it. The insult disappears from his face.

MERLE (CONT'D)

I'll check the stern.

Merle heads back outside.

BILLY

Peace is going well.

Bo folds the chart.

BO

They're still alive.

BILLY

That your standard?

BO

For the first week.

EXT. MISS CAROLINE - GULF WATERS - PRE-DAWN

SUPER: 3:56 A.M.

Dale slows the engines. Waves and darkness surround them.

BILLY

This your fishing spot?

BO

Wait.

BILLY

For what?

The low growl of an aircraft approaches from the south.

Billy searches the sky.

A PLANE passes without lights, several hundred feet above the water. It turns west.

A dark shape falls from its rear and strikes the water. Then another. And another.

Billy stands.

BILLY (CONT'D)

What was that?

Dale increases speed. Merle moves to the bow with a handheld spotlight.

Its beam finds a rectangular bale floating beneath layers of black plastic.

Then a second.

A line of packages rises and falls across the waves.

Dale smiles.

DALE

Square grouper.

BILLY

What?

DALE

Florida's only fish with corners.

Bo points toward the first bale.

BO

Bring it aboard.

Dale maneuvers alongside. Merle hooks the plastic with a boat pole. Billy helps him haul the bale onto the deck.

The package slams against the boards. A corner tears open.

Compressed marijuana shows beneath the plastic.

Billy stares at it.

BILLY

You lied.

Bo watches the remaining bales.

BO

I said no cocaine.

BILLY

You said no drug smuggling.

BO

I said there would be no more drug smuggling like before.

BILLY

No, you didn't.

BO

Then I should have been more precise.

Billy steps between Bo and the next bale.

BILLY

We're going back.

BO

We return after we collect the shipment.

BILLY

I'm not helping.

Bo lowers his voice.

BO

Move.

BILLY

No.

The Miss Caroline rises on a wave. Billy grabs the side rail. Bo remains perfectly balanced.

BO

You think marijuana destroyed this county?

BILLY

I think smuggling did.

BO

Cocaine destroyed us. Colombians, guns, airplanes, millions moving too quickly for men who had never possessed anything.

BILLY

And this is different?

BO

No cartel owns sixty percent. No Mack Donnelly living inside the family. No Johnny Malone lying about the books.

BILLY

Just you.

BO

Just us.

Billy looks toward Dale and Merle.

Dale pretends to watch the instruments. Merle holds the boat pole without moving.

BO (CONT'D)

Weed was moving through these waters before Johnny ever came home from Vietnam. Fishermen found bales floating offshore and earned more in one night than the shrimp boats paid all year.

BILLY

So that makes it right?

BO

It makes it ours.

A light sweeps across the distant water.

Dale turns toward it.

DALE

Boat changed direction.

Merle raises his binoculars.

MERLE

Coming this way.

Bo locks eyes with Billy.

BO

You want to debate morality or get off this water?

Billy picks up the boat hook.

Together, they pull the remaining bales aboard.

EXT. MISS CAROLINE - THE NECK - DAWN

The approaching boat passes more than a mile to the east. Its lights disappear toward the Gulf.

Nobody speaks until the Miss Caroline enters a protected canal.

Merle lowers the binoculars.

MERLE
Fishing boat.

Dale smiles.

DALE
Told you.

MERLE
You weren't sure.

DALE
I was sure enough.

MERLE
You nearly pissed yourself.

DALE
That was seawater.

Bo steps between them.

BO
Do either of you remember the
table?

They stop.

The canal narrows. Sawgrass presses toward the boat from both sides. Mangroves conceal the entrance to open water.

Billy looks from the channel to a red line marked on Bo's chart.

The Neck controls the water.

The Miss Caroline stops beside a wooden platform hidden beneath cypress trees.

SHELTON MEN wait with two smaller boats. Without a word, they begin transferring the bales.

Merle supervises until the final package leaves the deck.

BILLY
Where does it go now?

BO
Orange groves.

BILLY
Dale's trucks?

BO
Yes.

BILLY
Then the packing house?

BO
Sometimes.

BILLY
And Battenberg Plantation?

BO
When needed.

Billy studies the chart. The entire corridor takes shape before him: water to the Neck, the Neck to the groves, the groves to the county road.

Agricultural trucks pass through Battenberg and the packing house unnoticed.

BILLY
You planned this in prison.

Bo steps onto the platform.

BO
I had time.

INT. BRODY ORANGE GROVES - EQUIPMENT BARN - DAWN

A refrigerated truck waits inside the barn. WORKERS hide the bales beneath crates of fruit.

Dale leans on his cane while Merle counts.

MERLE
Twelve.

BILLY
Thirteen.

Merle looks toward the truck.

MERLE

I counted twelve.

BILLY

One is beneath the rear pallet.

Merle checks. The thirteenth bale rests in shadow.

Bo smiles.

BO

He pays attention.

Billy opens the ledger.

BILLY

What am I supposed to write?

BO

Weight after processing.
Transportation expenses. Shares
owed to the fishermen, Sheltons,
Brody's, and supplier.

BILLY

I don't know any of those numbers.

BO

You will.

BILLY

You want me to be Johnny Malone.

The barn falls silent.

Bo looks toward the workers.

BO

Outside.

Everyone leaves. Even Merle and Dale obey.

Bo closes the barn door.

BO (CONT'D)

I want you to be better than
Johnny.

BILLY

You think he was the problem?

BO

He lied to everybody.

BILLY

Because you demanded sixty percent.

BO

I provided the county.

BILLY

You provided fear.

BO

Same thing when government does it.

Billy closes the ledger.

BILLY

I'm not laundering money for you.

BO

You're keeping honest records.

BILLY

Of drug smuggling.

BO

Marijuana.

BILLY

That's a drug.

BO

It is a plant.

BILLY

So is cocaine before people process it.

Bo smiles faintly.

BO

Bubs teach you that?

BILLY

Common sense did.

Bo walks toward the refrigerated truck.

BO

One shipment pays twenty fishermen who haven't had steady work in years. Another repairs the packing house. Three more reopen the marine yard.

BILLY

And when is it enough?

BO

When the legitimate businesses
support themselves.

BILLY

You believe that?

BO

Yes.

Billy searches his face.

Bo means it. That frightens Billy more than a lie.

BILLY

What is the prison part?

Bo stops.

BO

What?

BILLY

You learned something in prison.
You said you were building more
than fishing and trucking.

Bo looks through a crack in the barn wall toward the grove.

BO

The state spends more money keeping
a man in prison than most people in
Dawber County earn working.

BILLY

So?

BO

Dawber County will build a reentry
center.

BILLY

For prisoners?

BO

For men nearing release. They live
there, work here, learn trades, and
leave with money and employment.

BILLY

In your businesses.

BO

Yes.

BILLY

How much does the state pay you?

Bo smiles.

BO

Enough.

BILLY

And you get cheap labor.

BO

They get work.

BILLY

You get both.

BO

That is why it's a good business.

Billy looks toward the marijuana concealed beneath the fruit.

BILLY

You're financing a prison business
with drugs.

BO

I'm financing a second-chance
program with marijuana.

BILLY

You hear how that sounds?

BO

I hear how it works.

BILLY

What happens when someone gets
arrested carrying your marijuana?

BO

They won't.

BILLY

And if they do?

BO

They made a decision.

BILLY

You made it for them.

Bo steps closer.

BO

I spent twelve years surrounded by men nobody planned to help. Men came out with forty dollars, no job, and nowhere to live. Then everybody acted surprised when they went back.

Billy hears the conviction in his voice.

BO (CONT'D)

I can make money and keep men from returning to prison. I can rebuild this county and give families work. If moving marijuana across water pays for the beginning, I can live with that.

BILLY

Can they?

BO

Who?

BILLY

The people you use.

Bo's expression hardens.

BO

You have your father's habit of confusing questions with courage.

BILLY

And you have yours of calling greed service.

For a long moment, Bo stares at him.

Billy braces for the blow.

Instead, Bo hands him a pencil.

BO

Write thirteen.

Billy looks at the pencil.

BO (CONT'D)

If you want to know what I'm doing, learn the numbers. If you want to stop me, learn them better.

Billy opens the ledger. He writes the date, then the number of bales.

Bo watches.

Billy pauses.

BILLY

What happens when temporary starts
making too much money to stop?

Bo looks toward the rising sun beyond the groves.

He does not answer.

EXT. ROSE'S HOUSE - MORNING

The Lincoln rolls up after seven.

RUFUS waits beside the pond with his fishing rod. He sees the car and waves.

RUFUS

You went fishing without me!

Bo gets out.

BO

We were working.

RUFUS

Did you catch anything?

Billy steps from the driver's side carrying the ledger.

Rufus stares at it.

RUFUS (CONT'D)

You caught a book?

Billy glances at Bo.

BILLY

Something like that.

Rufus runs toward the house to tell Rose.

Bo stops Billy beside the porch.

BO

Keep the ledger with you.

BILLY

Why?

BO

Because Merle can count, Dale can steal, and Buck still believes a badge makes him honest.

BILLY

You don't trust your own brother?

BO

I don't trust anyone who thinks he's better than me.

Billy looks toward the screen door. Rose waits inside.

BILLY

You trust me?

Bo places a hand on his shoulder.

BO

No.

BILLY

Then why give me the books?

BO

Because you're the only one I want to.

Bo enters the house.

Billy remains on the porch. He opens the ledger and studies the first entry.

Thirteen bales.

One route.

Four families.

A business Bo calls temporary.

Billy closes the ledger.

At the pond, a fish strikes the surface and disappears beneath the dark water.

CUT TO BLACK.