

MOONSHINE

Feature Film Adaptation Written by

Jerry Gray

Based on Image Comics Unique Crime-Thriller Moonshine Vol. 1
Written by Brian Azzarello

SIGNATURE PROJECT

Date: 4/29/2024 (SP)

Email: Jerrywilliamgray@gmail.com

Phone: (262)-707-8060

© **Copyright** Jerry Gray

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. WILDERNESS - SPINE RIDGE WEST VIRGINIA - DEAD OF NIGHT

The night is alive. A cacophony of crickets and frogs serenade the untamable wilderness.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)
Spine Ridge, West Virginia. The
year of our Lord: 1929.

An ominous forest cast in shadows is lit by a full moon and the beacon of light from a hand-held lantern.

Monstrous tree branches hover over three ruggedly handsome, middle-aged federal agents, DENTON, NASH, and MILLER.

The disgruntled trio of G-Men are unwelcome foreigners in pinstripe suits and fedoras.

They are heavily armed with shotguns and axes as they trek through the treacherous terrain.

AGENT DENTON
...Swear I caught a whisp of smoke
this afternoon, Nash.

AGENT NASH
You saw crows fly, Denton. You sent
us on a wild goose chase.

The warm glow of the lantern illuminates Miller's grim face.

AGENT MILLER
Agent Nash, please refrain from
your usual negative bullshit.

AGENT NASH
Miller, we are in God's sweaty ass
crack, huntin' hillbilly
bootleggers!
(beat)
So I ain't happy about it -- Fuck
your refrain. The chorus is: We are
all in the damn doghouse with
Hoover, 'cause we wouldn't fuck
him, so he's fuckin' us --

EXT. WILDERNESS - HOLT'S BOOTLEGGER SHACK - NIGHT

The G-men strike gold! (*Or, so they think.*) They've stumbled upon a weathered, wood bootlegger's shack covered in moss. It looks like it is a part of the earth.

AGENT DENTON
Holy shit.

AGENT MILLER
Holy shit.

They enter the establishment.

INT. HOLT'S BOOTLEGGER SHACK - NIGHT

The lantern's glow reveals a make-shift kitchen for brewing alcohol. As The G-Men hover in the doorframe, their shadows tower in the b.g.

AGENT MILLER
Holt's setup.

AGENT NASH
Goddamn right.

AGENT DENTON
Why, I'll be dipped.

In the surrounding darkness, they hear something inhuman... Miller cocks his shotgun.

AGENT MILLER
Boys...

They are not alone. The G-Men exchange nervous glances.

A bloodthirsty BEAST'S terrifying growl pierces the silence O.S. Nash swings his axe into the darkness.

Petrified, Miller peers over his shoulder.

A horrific mangy beast attacks Miller. Miller shrieks and drops his shotgun. Blood splatters the shotgun.

Agent Denton draws his pistol. The beast pounces. Blood splatters against the wood walls. Denton drops his gun.

A shot fires and a FLASH erupts from the handgun illuminating glimpses of the monster - a hunched back with rippling muscles and fur standing on end.

All goes dark. Gnashing fangs, snarls, and horrible screams fill the shack.

Agent Nash is cornered. He backs into a kettle. A shadow with massive claws towers before him.

AGENT NASH POV - WEREWOLF EYES

shimmer like gold coins.

EXT. WILDERNESS - SPINE RIDGE WEST VIRGINIA - FULL MOON

Agent Nash shrieks O.S. Silhouetted crows soar from the tree branches into the night's sky.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE: MOONSHINE

The Eagles '*New Kid in Town*' plays under title credits.

OPEN UP FROM
BLACK:

INT. RUNDOWN APPALACHIAN HOTEL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Stained peeling wallpaper lines the dimly lit, dingy corridor.

A sweet and sassy messenger girl, CISSY (6) rests the receiver of the wall mounted phone on the floor. She carries a doll.

Cissy skips to a hotel room down the hall and knocks.

CISSY
Mista Pirlo, Sir? Mista Pirlo?

Lou answers through his closed door.

LOU PIRLO (O.S.)
Yeah.

CISSY
Y'got a telephone call, long distance.

LOU PIRLO (O.S.)
What time is it?

CISSY
Jus' after lunch time.

LOU PIRLO (O.S.)
Like quarter past lunch, or half past?

CISSY

No, like all past. But just.

(beat)

Shall I tell yer party ta' hold?

LOU PIRLO (40) cracks open the door. Cast in deep shadows, Lou is ruggedly handsome with a five-o'clock shadow and an ever-present hangover.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

My party? Like hell. This party was being thrown by The Boss...

END SONG CUE.

FLASHBACK - LOU'S POV

A powerful man's massive hand pushes a glass of whiskey across a mahogany desk.

INT. NYC SKYRISE - JOE'S OFFICE - MORNING

The man's name is JOE MASSERIA (50s). Beer-bellied and balding, he wears a gold ring, a pinstripe shirt, suspenders, and a red tie.

JOE MASSERIA

Try this.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

Joe "*The Boss*" Masseria. My Boss.

Joe leans back in his chair and taps the rim of his whiskey glass with his cigar.

Lou picks up the glass and swirls the drink in his hand.

LOU PIRLO

I dunno, Joe... It's kinda early for me.

JOE MASSERIA

You shittin'?

Backlit by the New York cityscape, Lou and Joe conduct business in the shadows.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

Four days ago, Joe asked to see me. Said he had a job I was qualified for.

(MORE)

LOU PIRLO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Up 'til then I'd been getting by on my good looks and a "Joe sent me" card.

Lou downs the whiskey.

LOU PIRLO

Really smooth. Who the hell is makin' this for us? Fella knows his craft.

JOE MASSERIA

The fella's name is Hiram Holt, an' he ain't makin' it for us -- yet.

(beat)

He's down in Virginia, up in the fuckin' hills. Out in the Goddamn woods.

Determined, Joe leans forward in Lou's face.

JOE MASSERIA (CONT'D)

I want this hooch.

(beat)

I want you to talk to Holt about that, Lou. Tell him I'll make 'em rich.

LOU PIRLO

Sure, Joe. But, what if that don't work? Some of these hillbillies... They can get cagey.

JOE MASSERIA

That's why I'm lettin' you outta yers, Lou...

Joe hands Lou a mason jar of sealed whiskey.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. RUNDOWN APPALACHIAN HOTEL - LOU'S HOTEL ROOM - AFTERNOON

The empty mason jar lays on the floor under the bed. The last drop of alcohol drips from the rim.

INT. RUNDOWN APPALACHIAN HOTEL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Lou leans against the wall talking on the mounted phone.

JOE MASSERIA (O.S.)
 (over the phone)
 Lou, do we have a bad connection?

LOU PIRLO
 No Joe, I can hear you just fine.
 This place is fucked up, Joe!

JOE MASSERIA (O.S.)
 (over the phone)
 You fucked up?

LOU PIRLO
 No!

JOE MASSERIA (O.S.)
 (over the phone)
 Do we have a deal?

Lou hangs his head.

LOU PIRLO
 Not yet.

LOU'S IMAGINATION - SNAKES HEAD

juts out from the end of the receiver. It's tongue hisses and flicks in Lou's ear.

Lou tilts his head away from the receiver (*and the imaginary deadly snake*).

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)
 Joe let me know I fucked up.
 (beat)
 I'd been in Spine Ridge a day, and
 I didn't have a deal. Yes, I tried
 to see Holt, but he was up in the
 fuckin' mountains doin' whatever
 the fuck knows...

**END LOU'S
 IMAGINATION.**

BACK TO HALLWAY

Lou draws the receiver back closer to his ear. The snake is gone.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)
 When I told Joe I fucked up again.
 He let me know.
 (beat)
 (MORE)

LOU PIRLO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 It's hard to work for a crazy
 person.

INT. RUNDOWN APPALACHIAN HOTEL - STAIRWAY - AFTERNOON

Cissy plays with her doll on the steps.

At the top of the stairs, Lou's shadow looms on the wall. He continues his phone conversation.

LOU PIRLO
 Relax, Joe! I'm gonna see him
 today.

JOE MASSERIA (O.S.)
 (over the phone)
 You have a goddamn appointment?

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)
 An appointment in Appalachia? Jesus
 Christ...

EXT. APPALACHIAN TOWN MAIN STREET - AFTERNOON

A dirt road, storefronts, and telephone poles stretch as far as the eye can see. Colorful autumn trees surround the little pop up town.

A SCRAPPY KID (12) in overalls and boots balances on the bumper of a truck. His head is tucked under the hood and his hand wields a wrench.

Lou wears a classy khaki suit that matches his fedora and wingtips. He takes in the scenery.

LOU PIRLO
 Hey Kid! Where can I get a bite in
 this burg?

The Kid continues wrenching away.

SCRAPPY KID
 Bite? A bite of what, Mista?

LOU PIRLO
 Pasta and gravy.

The Kid looks up from his work.

SCRAPPY KID
 Pasta? That like a biscuit?

INT. APPALACHIAN TOWN DINER - AFTERNOON

A red Cola sign, ceiling fans, and a few small tables fill the space. Behind a long counter lined with bar stools, a WAITER holds a tin pot of coffee.

A steaming plate of mush resembling biscuits and gravy rests on Lou's table. He is not satisfied.

LOU PIRLO
Not the color I was expecting.

WAITER
What color were you lookin' fer?

LOU PIRLO
Anything but this.

Lou takes a whiff of his plate.

WAITER
More coffee?

LOU PIRLO
Good idea.

The Waiter refills Lou's coffee.

Lou takes bites of his mush. He's pleasantly surprised.

LOU PIRLO (CONT'D)
MMM, MMM, MMM.

Lou wipes his lips with a diner napkin.

A beautiful blonde woman seated on a stool at the end of the counter glances at Lou. They make eye contact just long enough to communicate a clear sign of interest. Her name is TEMPEST (36). Tempest is as tough as she is tender.

LOU PIRLO (CONT'D)
Y'know why I ordered this?

WAITER
'Cause you was hungry?

LOU PIRLO
No, Sir, because when I see a girl with such *refined beauty* I naturally think she has good taste.

TEMPEST
HA! It's the gravy that tastes good.

LOU PIRLO

MMM-HMMM.
 (beat)
 Good as yours?

Tempest grips her fork.

TEMPEST

Eat shit.

LOU PIRLO

Not a very friendly town you have here.

TEMPEST

Fresh fellers tend to bring out the best in *Holt Girls*.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

Holt Girls...?

I/E. APPALACHIAN DIRT ROAD/LOU'S FORD MODEL T - AFTERNOON

A Model T sputters along the winding trail among a maze of trees. Warm colors of the fall leaves and the setting golden sun reflect in a nearby still creek.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

Time to keep my appointment.
 (beat)
 Holt's place was up in the hills, way off the path, beaten or otherwise. It took the better part of the afternoon to get there. I made a mental note to get an extra tire when I was back in town. You never know with these damn dirt roads...

Shotguns in hand, TUCKER (40s) and FRYE (mid-30s) stand as roadblocks in the distance. They look like dirty henchmen.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

Better safe than sorry.

EXT. HOLT'S PLACE - AFTERNOON

Lou's Model T pulls up to a wooden cabin deep in the wilderness.

HIRAM HOLT leans against a cabin's beam on the elevated porch. Holt is rough around the edges and mysterious. A seemingly gentle giant you don't want to cross.

Holt wears blue overalls and a matching blue collared shirt. He bears an unusual deep scar across his blind eye.

Holt chews on a twig and holds a mason jar filled with whiskey. Holt holds his ground as Lou steps out of his Model T.

HIRAM HOLT
Hap you with somethin' sir?

LOU PIRLO
I'm here to see Hiram Holt.

HIRAM HOLT
I reckon we all know dat, ut'wise
you woud'n be har.
(beat)
Question's' why?

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)
I fuckin hate this part. The
disrespect. Until they know.

LOU PIRLO
Joe sent me. Joe Masseria. From New
York. With a business proposition.

Eyeballing the NY gangster, Tucker and Frye exchange plotting glances. The brothers see dollar signs.

HIRAM HOLT
Whas'da bizniz?

Lou addresses Holt's sons, Tucker and Frye.

LOU PIRLO
This is between me and Mister Holt
if you two don't mind...

Tucker and Frye shove shotgun barrels directly into Lou's face. Lou's eyes anxiously dart between both barrels.

Lou steps back an inch.

Holt gestures to his sons to back off.

Tucker and Frye retreat and wait at Lou's car. Lou proceeds up the porch steps and joins Holt.

HIRAM HOLT

You wan' Missa Hol' to hear, tell me da' whole story.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

So I did. I laid out Joe's entire plan, numbers and all, watchin' it go in some dimwit's ear an' out the other.

(beat)

It wasn't going according to plan, not like I had one, but...

EXT. HOLT'S PLACE - PORCH - AFTERNOON

Holt hands Lou a mason jar of whiskey.

HIRAM HOLT

Wai' here.

Holt enters his rustic cabin.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

Like always, I improvised.

Lou looks back at Tucker and Frye. They stroll back to their post further down the dirt road.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

Joe was right about Holt's Liquor. If we could bring this to New York, it wouldn't be long before Kings, Queens, and the Mayor himself look to us for a nip or two.

Lou takes in the scenery - an old barn and bare trees with winding branches. It is still and bleak.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

Joe's offer was low though. Still, money's money, and I didn't see much of it around. I didn't expect him to, but if Holt wanted to Haggle, I'd put in a word.

(beat)

The liquor was worth it. It is that primo.

Lou takes a swig from the jar of whiskey. His peaceful moment is interrupted by shouting O.S.

TEMPEST

Enos, No! Come back...

A completely naked, athletic man named ENOS (late-30s) emerges from the surrounding forest.

Enos' mouth and hands are caked with blood. He falls to his knees and cries in physical anguish.

Tempest rushes to her brother's aid. Enos' embraces Tempest as she helps him onto his feet. Tempest holds him tightly.

TEMPEST (CONT'D)

Enos...

ENOS

It hurts, Tempest, it hurts...

Eyes widened, Lou stands in the door frame of Holt's cabin in utter terror. Tempest eyes Lou once more.

TEMPEST

Shush, Brother, shush.

In response to Enos cries for help, two FARMHANDS exit the weathered, wood barn.

ENOS

Don' tell daddy, dont' tell daddy...

TEMPEST

A course I won'.

The Farmhands carry Enos' to safety.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

Being from the city, one thing that hits you about the woods... It gets fucking dark.

HIRAM HOLT (O.S.)

Missa...?

With clenched fists, Holt approaches Lou in the doorframe.

I/E. HOLT'S PLACE/PORCH - AFTERNOON

Holt extends his hand to shake Lou's. They officially meet.

LOU PIRLO (O.S.)

Pirlo. Lou Pirlo. You're...?

HIRAM HOLT

Hiram Holt.

Firm handshake.

HIRAM HOLT (CONT'D)

Lil' Tip: Next time you'd do well
to introduce yourself before you
introduce the man that employs you.

(beat)

Can I invite you in?

Lou enters Holt's cabin.

INT. HOLT'S PLACE - KITCHEN - DUSK

There is no source of light other than a golden sunset that
floods through the cabin windows. Dark, moody, shadows
dominate the cramped space.

Lou sits down at the kitchen table and removes his fedora.

Holt stands in front of cluttered wooden shelves with his
back towards Lou. Cast in deep shadows, Holt reaches for two
shot glasses.

HIRAM HOLT

You're probably wonderin' what my
little charade was about...

Lou leans forward.

LOU PIRLO

How about I say "I get it," Mister
Holt?

(beat)

It's not my way, but it is a way to
feel people out.

Holt faces Lou holding two empty shot glasses.

HIRAM HOLT

Fair enough.

Lou surveys the dismal cabin.

LOU PIRLO

Nice place you have here.

HIRAM HOLT

It's fair enough as well.

EMPTY SHOT GLASSES

Holt pours two shots of whiskey.

HIRAM HOLT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
On to business. Drink, Mr. Pirlo?

LOU PIRLO (O.S.)
S'why I'm here.

BACK TO HOLT'S KITCHEN

Holt grimaces. He chews on his twig and thinks.

HIRAM HOLT
Yeah. Can't see no other reason.
'Bout on what you said New York is
offerin'...
(beat)
Ran them numbers over in my head a
couple times, an' they don' add up.
What yer Boss is willin' to go? I'm
gettin', an then some now.

LOU PIRLO (O.S.)
But not the volume.

HIRAM HOLT
The what?

Like a determined, sleazy salesman, Lou leans over his shot glass and clasps his hands.

LOU PIRLO
Number of jars. We can double them.
Joe is convinced that once he gets
your product to Manhattan, the
Island will be buzzin' for it.
(beat)
He owns the toniest of rooms.

Lou knocks back his shot.

HIRAM HOLT
He does? Then what he need me for?

Holt rolls the twig between his index finger and thumb. Lou holds his empty shot glass up to Holt, as if giving a toast.

LOU PIRLO
Whatever happens, Mister Holt, deal
or no deal. I want to say what
you're making - your liquor. Best I
ever had.

Holt droops his head. He glowers in his glass.

HIRAM HOLT
That's a kind thing to say.

LOU PIRLO
Ain't no kindness in this business.

HIRAM HOLT
Well, I'd like to think there is...
That it's more 'bout relations than
money.

LOU PIRLO
Don't you gotta pick one or the
other to survive?

HIRAM HOLT
Not down here. You take 'em both
an' make 'em the same.

Tucker rushes through the doorframe. He is breathless.

TUCKER
Hey, Pa! Pa! Got a mess on White
Hill... A Goddamn mess.

A sobering look crosses Holt's face. He knows "what kind of
mess." It isn't good. Holt's deep scar over his eye is
prominent in the low light.

EXT. WILDERNESS - WHITE HILL - DUSK

Holt, Tucker, Frye, and Lou trek through a minefield of trees
on a trail down the mountain overlooking Holt's Bootlegger
Shack.

LOU PIRLO
Thank you for letting me tag along
and see your operations. Especially
under these circumstances.

HIRAM HOLT
Well, if it's that bad... you and
yer Boss oughta know what yer
gettin' into.

Lou places his hand on Holt's shoulder.

LOU PIRLO
That's good to hear, Mister Holt.
I'm sure Joe will --

Holt looks over his shoulder at Lou.

HIRAM HOLT

Call me Hiram. You an' Joe on first names, we should be too, Mister Pirlo.

(beat)

I'm not gonna tell you I'm flattered 'bout what you said. I know my liquor is good.

LOU PIRLO

Good? Hell, it's great!

HIRAM HOLT

Yeah, well...

The troop of men reach the bottom of the hill. Lou and Holt stand in the doorway of his whiskey brewing shack. Lou is horrified by the sight.

HIRAM HOLT (CONT'D)

Ain't one to brag.

INT. HOLT'S BOOTLEGGER SHACK - DUSK

The liquor kitchen is completely ransacked, but nothing is stolen. It's a bloody mess. A slaughterhouse.

Three viciously attacked G-Men lie dead. Like shredded rag dolls, their bodies look like zombies with missing limbs. Head bashed in.

LOU PIRLO (O.S.)

Jesus Mary an' Joseph.

Holt enters. He bends down beside a body and scoops up a blood-stained FBI badge. Shocked, Lou stands motionless in the doorway.

LOU PIRLO (CONT'D)

What the fuck happened in here?

HIRAM HOLT

You are in the mountains, Lou.

Holt glances over his shoulder at Lou.

HIRAM HOLT (CONT'D)

My mountains.

(beat)

Commit this to memory, an' if yer gonna be sick by what you see?

Holt hands Lou the bloody FBI badge.

HIRAM HOLT (CONT'D)

Please do it on Masseria's lap then
wipe yer mouth on his pecker an'
tell him this is what happens to
the dumb shits wanna fuck with my
business.

Lou turns to exit, but is barricaded by Holt's boys.

LOU'S POV - HOLT'S BOYS

FRYE

Yer lucky you got a message to
deliver, City.

TUCKER

Otherwise, we'd bury you with
what's left a these G-Men.

EXT. HOLT'S BOOTLEGGER SHACK - DUSK

Holt and Lou exit. Holt gives his sons marching orders.

HIRAM HOLT

Take Lou here back to his
automobile.

(beat)

I reckon he wants to get back to
the city an' his master...
dontcha...

Tucker escorts Lou through the forest.

I/E. LOU'S FORD MODEL T - NIGHT

Surrounded on all sides by dense wilderness, Lou's car
headlights beam down the dirt road. The trees appear to be
closing in on him.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

Well, didn't that just go according
to plan. Joe was gonna crucify me.
Not literally, but that might be
preferable to a long life
suffocating on farts.

(beat)

In case I didn't make it clear -
This job is my ticket.

Lou cranks the steering wheel and rounds a curve on the
winding dirt road.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

As a crazy fucker, Joe wouldn't be able to see Hiram the same. No, he'd see Hiram as a disrespectful fucker.

BOOM! A tire blows. Lou crimps the steering wheel and clenches his teeth.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

That's what makes "crazy," crazy -- It don't see crazy. Anyway. That left it up to me to make things good.

(beat)

Or not...

SSSSSSSSSS... Air seeps out of the rear tire. Lou puts the Model T in park and steps out to take a closer look at it.

LOU PIRLO

Fuck.

Lou hears a distant low dark chant and a banjo playing somewhere in the dark woods.

As if it was summoning Lou, the jaunty tune fills the air. He chases after the sound into the dense forest.

EXT. WILDERNESS - NIGHT

Lou sprints through the forest. The music grows louder. His tie flaps in the breeze.

DELIA (O.S.)

(sings)

*"You don't see why that she would
dog me 'round. She say you don't
see why, whoooo!"*

Shadows of trees tower over Lou as he reaches a clearing. The light of a full moon shines like a spotlight.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

I don't want to say I'm a religious man, because as soon as I do some priest is holdin' out a collection plate. But hearing that music...?

(beat)

It pulled me.

EXT. WILDERNESS CLEARING - NIGHT

The glow of a roaring fire consumes the edge of the surrounding forest. Lou hides in the darkness.

DELIA (O.S.)

(sings)

"That she would dog me 'round. It must be that old evil spirit, so deep down in the ground."

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

How was I supposed to know that pull was down?

Lou peers from behind a tree. The flame reflects in Lou's locked eyes.

LOU'S POV - JAMBOREE

At a distance, free-spirited black locals sing, clap and jubilantly dance around the blazing, crackling campfire. A drum and tambourine keep the beat for the banjo.

They laugh and drink moonshine.

A spunky, black woman with frizzy hair catches Lou's attention. Her name is DELIA. She holds hands and dances with her son RORY (10).

DELIA

(sings)

"You may bury my body down by the highway side. You may bury my body woooo-oooooooo!"

BACK TO CLEARING

Faces glow ominously. Delia's enchanting singing voice stands out in the otherworldly celebration.

DELIA

"Yeah my poor dead body down by the highway side!"

The BANJO AND FLUTE PLAYERS notice the onlooker.

BANJO PLAYER

(sings)

"So my old evil spirit can hitch itself --"

The patter of the drum beat slows to a stop. Silence. All eyes on the party crasher, Lou as he approaches.

Dogs sniff Lou's paint legs. Lou lights up a cigarette.

BANJO PLAYER (CONT'D)

(to Lou)

You want somethin', Mista?

LOU PIRLO

A drink.

CUT TO BLACK.

OPEN UP FROM
BLACK:

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

Rory and two other FRIENDS play. They try to catch a large snapping turtle with sticks.

The turtle springs up breaking the water and bites down on a Boy's stick - SNAP! Rory cheers!

RORY

We got 'im!

The turtle releases the stick and crawls away into the grass bed. Rory swings his stick like a bat at the runaway reptile.

FRIEND #1 (O.S.)

Hit 'im! Hit 'im!

RORY

Ima gonna git that ol' turta! Ima gonna make soup! An' ima...

Rory chases after the turtle splashing through the swamp.

FRIEND #2

Careful, Rory -- Don' git bit!

Rory's eyes widen at a horrific sight lying between cattails.

FRIEND #2 (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Rory?

RORY'S POV

A gruesome rotting corpse of a black man. His face, chest cavity, and leg have been eaten by some kind of beast.

BACK TO SWAMP

The young friends stand motionless. Rory turns and takes off running, leaving his friends behind.

I/E. APPALACHIAN TOWN STREET/LOU'S FORD MODEL T - DAY

Lou snores as he sleeps on the bench seat of his parked car. An empty mason jar lies on the floor.

The streets bustle with activity. A horse and buggy, crossing pedestrians, and a barking hound fill the air.

Cissy pokes her head inside Lou's open car window.

CISSY

Why you sleepin' in yer automobile,
Mista Pirlo?

Lou's eyelids peak open. He squints in the harsh sunlight at Cissy.

LOU'S IMAGINATION - LOU'S POV

In a drunken mirage and almost ghostly apparition, Cissy suddenly looks like a different girl: ANNABELLE. A smiling spunky child with a bow in her short hair.

**END LOU'S
IMAGINATION.**

BACK TO MODEL T

Lou jolts up and drops his head into his hands. Hungover.

LOU PIRLO

Well. I guess I was done drivin'
it, Annabelle...

CISSY

It's Cissy.

LOU PIRLO

Oh. Right. Sorry.

INT. RUNDOWN APPALACHIAN HOTEL - LOU'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Lou's shadow looms in the open bathroom door frame. He holds a straight razor blade to his face. His clothes are neatly pressed and folded lying on the sunken cot.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

My head was killing me. I must have overindulged a bit last night. I hope I had a good time. It would be a damn shame to be feeling so crappy on account of a bad night.

INT. LOU'S HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Water from the faucet sink drips. A can of shaving cream sits on the edge.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That negro hooch made me blind. Was not fit for consumption -- Not like Holt's liquid gold.

BATHROOM MIRROR

Lou's hand carefully swooshes the cutthroat razor across his handsome foamed face. He smokes a cigarette.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

Which reminded me, Joe was gonna want a report.

BACK TO BATHROOM

KNOCK...KNOCK... Wrapped in a towel around his waist, Lou exits.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So, I was gonna have to make one up.

I/E. HOTEL HALLWAY/DOOR - DAY

Lou cracks open and peers out.

SHERIFF KELLY

Lou Pirlo?

LOU PIRLO

Yeah?

The lawman's name is SHERIFF KELLY. He wears a gold star pinned to his uniform suit jacket. It reads: "Deputy Sheriff."

SHERIFF KELLY

Mind if I have a word with you?

Lou nods. Kelly lets himself in.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - DAY

Cissy is curled up in a ball on the wooden floor. She listens carefully to Lou and the Sheriff's banter behind the closed door.

SHERIFF KELLY (O.S.)
I got a dead darkie in the woods.

LOU PIRLO (O.S.)
What's that have to do with me,
Sheriff...?

INT. LOU'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Lou buttons up the top button of his collared shirt. Eyes locked on Kelly.

SHERIFF KELLY
...Kelly. Accordin' to his people,
he went off in the woods with you
last night.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)
I have no idea who Kelly is talking
about. A lot of last night, was
left there.

LOU PIRLO
Are you accusing me of murdering a
negro?

Kelly smokes a cigarette. The smoke slithers up like a snake.

SHERIFF KELLY
You got a sweet tooth, Mister
Pirlo?

Kelly reaches down and picks up Lou's muddy wingtips.

SHERIFF KELLY (CONT'D)
Taste fer chocolate? If not, I
ain't accusin' you a shit. That
darkie was half eaten. Savaged by
some animal.
(beat)
You don't have the stomach for
that, I reckon bein' from the big
city an' all. Might wanna put a
shine on these.

Kelly hands Lou his muddy shoes. Lou puts on and ties his shoes.

SHERIFF KELLY (CONT'D)
 Jus' routine questions, s'all.
 Y'know... As the last man to see
 'im alive? You got maybe somethin'?

LOU PIRLO
 ...Wilson.

SHERIFF KELLY
 S'cuse me?

LOU PIRLO
 That was his name. He changed a
 flat tire for me.

SHERIFF KELLY
 Right.

Kelly eyes Lou's dingy suit jacket hung on the old coat rack.

SHERIFF KELLY (CONT'D)
 You got blood there on yer jacket,
 Mister Pirlo.

KNOCK...KNOCK...

I/E. LOU'S HOTEL ROOM/HALLWAY - DAY

Cissy stands outside Lou's door.

CISSY
 Mista Pirlo? There's a telephone
 call --

LOU PIRLO
 Tell him I'm not here.

CISSY
 Cain't. Already tol' 'im you were.

Lou and Kelly exit Lou's hotel room. Kelly escorts Cissy by the hand down the corridor.

Lou drags himself to the wall mounted telephone. He picks up the receiver and holds it to his ear.

LOU PIRLO
 Hello, Joe. How's New York?

JOE MASSERIA (O.S.)
 (over the phone)
 Thirsty, Lou...

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)
 The fucker.

JOE MASSERIA (O.S.)
 (over the phone)
 When can I expect my first
 delivery?

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)
 I love Joe and I owe him more than
 I have. But at times his arrogance
 gets to me.

LOU PIRLO
 Holt's not interested.

JOE MASSERIA (O.S.)
 So what? I am.

INT. NYC SKYRISE - JOE'S OFFICE DESK - DAY

A knockout DAME (late-30s) sits perched on Joe's lap in a low cut, form fitting dress. She lights up a cigar and smokes it. Joe continues his long distance call with Lou.

JOE MASSERIA
 Very. It's in Holt's best interest
 that he understands that.

LOU PIRLO (O.S.)
 (over the phone)
 Joe, this guy, he's unreasonable...

JOE MASSERIA
 Then don't reason with him, Lou.

LOU PIRLO (O.S.)
 (over the phone)
 I'm just sayin' that getting'
 Holt's liquor might be more trouble
 than it's worth is all.

JOE MASSERIA
 I tasted it, and I don't believe
 that shit.

LOU PIRLO (O.S.)
 (over the phone)
 Joe, he did something I really
 can't talk about... But, he's a
 maniac. A cold-blooded killer, Joe!

The Dame pops the cigar in Joe's mouth.

JOE MASSERIA
 You spooked, Lou? Goin' are ya?

Lou pauses.

LOU PIRLO (O.S.)
 (over the phone)
 No...

JOE MASSERIA
 You need help?

Lou defensively.

LOU PIRLO (O.S.)
 (over the phone)
 No! Just give me a couple days,
 Joe.

JOE MASSERIA
 You got it. But no more!

Joe sets the desktop telephone on the handset. CLICK.

INT. LOU'S HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Lou sits on a closed toilet seat and hand-washes the blood stain off his suit jacket with a shower brush.

He sighs. Lou pulls the blood-stained FBI badge out of his coat pocket. It is sobering.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)
 A couple days. I should've just
 told Joe, I saw three feds ripped
 to shreds and Holt going boastful
 on it, and is that kinda guy we
 wanted to business with?

He repockets the badge and gets back to scrubbing.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)
 Chances are, Joe mighta realized
 the heat that would bring, and he'd
 put the kibosh on this proposition
 himself.

(beat)
 I didn't feel much like dealing
 with the problem, I told him Holt
 said "No."

KNOCK...KNOCK...

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)
 They just make problems bigger.

Lou's head turns towards the door.

LOU PIRLO
 Jesus Christ, what is my room Grand
 Central!

Lou storms out of his bathroom in his muddy wingtips.

INT. LOU'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Before Lou can answer the incessant knock, the door swings
 wide open.

Tucker and Frye Holt stand in the doorway, armed with
 handguns.

TUCKER
 Grab yer hat, City. We're gonna' go
 fer' a ride.

I/E. WILDERNESS/TUCKER AND FRYE'S HIDEOUT - AFTERNOON

The brother's adolescent clubhouse is decorated with sinister
 skulls of mountain goats and bucks with antlers intact. They
 hang like picture frames on trees as decor.

Lou, Tucker and Frye sit around a lit lantern on a wood
 table.

TUCKER
 So, Mister Pirlo, you out to get
 yer hands on my Pa's whiskey.

LOU PIRLO
 Why I'm here. But, your "Pap" made
 it clear that he wasn't interested
 in selling.

FRYE
What if I was?

TUCKER
Me too. Hell with Pa!

FRYE (CONT'D)
Tucker!

TUCKER
I'm just sayin', Frye, we wanna git
in bed with Mista Pirlo!

Intriguing. Lou draws a cigarette as he listens to the Holt boy's banter. Frye strikes a match off the table and lights Lou's cig.

TUCKER (CONT'D)
Mista Pirlo, we think Pa's ol'
fashioned.

FRYE
If we was selling to New York City,
would we be rich?

Lou pauses and takes a drag.

LOU PIRLO
Boys... There's money falling off
skyscrapers in New York.
(beat)
It could be falling on you.

Tempest stands in the entryway of the hideout. She confidently butts in on the conversation.

TEMPEST
I like the sound of that.

FRYE
Tempest! I tol' you to --

Tempest approaches Frye. She holds her step-brother's chin in her hand.

TEMPEST
Frye - you don' even know how to
spell. We need to make a deal.

LOU'S LIPS

Smoking.

LOU PIRLO
Yes, we do. So then let's get in
bed. And we'll talk.

TEMPEST

Side-eyes Lou.

BACK TO HIDEOUT

The tree mounted cracked skull stares at Lou dead in the eye.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

So, they gave me their rundown, and it wasn't good. By that I mean nothing that would put a grin on Joe's face. Essentially all they were talking was--

FRYE

Skimming. Little here, little there. Nothin' Pa would notice.

TUCKER

How's that?

LOU PIRLO

Cute.

(beat)

But, it's not gonna do me any good. I'm talking volume here. I need truckloads!

TEMPEST

Cin you start with one...

TEMPEST'S EYES

Full of love.

TEMPEST (CONT'D)

Tonight?

CUT TO BLACK.

OPEN UP FROM
BLACK:

I/E. WILDERNESS/TUCKER'S TRUCK - NIGHT

The headlight beam into the dark trail. Trees flank the dirt road. The back of the beat-up cargo vehicle is covered with a tarp.

LOU PIRLO

Do you know how *quick* New York will
burn through this booze?

Lou Pirlo clasps the mason jar in his hands as he sucks the liquid gold back like he was drinking from a babies' bottle.

TUCKER

Ain't it called lightning, 'cause
it's slow, Mista Perlo.

Tucker makes a fast turn. They careen down the mountain. The tires screech and kick up dirt.

LOU PIRLO

Speaking of which, can you lay off
the gas Tucker? I'd like to make it
there in one piece.

Tucker grins a toothy grin with a stick as a toothpick in between his clenched teeth.

TUCKER

No, Sir. And I'll git you an' the
hooch where y'all need to be in
record time.

A rear tire hits a BUMP. Whiskey flies out of the jar. It splashes and stains Lou's tie.

Disgruntled by Tucker's reckless driving, Lou throws Tucker a stern look. He brushes off his tie.

LOU PIRLO

Christ, Tucker! Careful...

TUCKER

I ain't the one needs to be that,
Mista Pirlo.

With full attention.

LOU PIRLO

Really?

TUCKER

Hiram ain't my Daddy. I married in.

LOU PIRLO

Frye too?

TUCKER

Nah. Frye's fuckin' his Daddy.

(beat)

(MORE)

TUCKER (CONT'D)

Tempest an' her brother, Enos. They adopted. Gotta tell you tho, havin' Tempest keen on New York, makes me think.

LOU PIRLO

About --

Suddenly, a buck darts across the dirt road directly in front of the truck's headlights. Lou shouts a warning.

LOU PIRLO (CONT'D)

Shit! Look--

The buck makes it to the other side by a hair. Shook, Lou catches his breath.

LOU PIRLO (CONT'D)

Fuckin' shit, Tucker! Slow down!

Tucker laughs.

TUCKER

Fuck yer scared-ass shit, Pirlo! If I ain't drivin' fast, I ain't --

Out of nowhere, a large wild beast with arched feet and large claws pounces the roof of the truck. THUMP!

The truck veers off-road full tilt. It heads straight into a large tree. Tucker and Lou brace themselves for impact - CRASH! CRACK! SPUTTER! Engine smoke seeps out.

Crows soar from the branches of the crashed tree. A full moon lights the disaster.

INT. TUCKER'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Lou is slumped in the passenger seat completely unconscious. Forehead and nose bleed.

LOU PIRLO (V.O.)

When I was seven years old, I made a boat out of scraps of wood my old man gave me from his job on the dock. I would take it down to the East River, get in, then paddle out with my arms and just bob up and down watching the real boats go by.

(beat)

(MORE)

LOU PIRLO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

My little sister Annabelle would chase me up and down the shore as I drifted, all the while yelling that she wanted a ride too. So one day, I gave her one. I put her in my boat, and I gave it a push, and out it went.

(beat)

I watched her drift away. Then, she stood up. The one thing I told her not to do. I remember the feeling, drowning, as I swam deeper and deeper out to her. The water was black and cold, and I was surrounded.

(beat)

I felt that way again.

A distant voice breaks the silence of the sputtering truck.

TUCKER (O.S.)

Please, I'm begging you... I'm so sorry, I made a mistake...

Lou's eyes peak open as he comes to.

LOU'S POV - BLURRED VISION - TUCKER

collapsed in the grass on his knees bleeding and sobbing at the feet of a towering Werewolf. The beast salivates over Tucker.

TUCKER (CONT'D)

Please, please, I just wanted to do good by Lizzie!

I/E. WILDERNESS/TUCKER'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Lou notices Tucker's gun on the floor of the truck. He grabs it.

TUCKER (CONT'D)

I wanted to be a man. Please, I wanted her to be proud of me!

Pleading, Tucker hugs the beast and buries his face into the Werewolf's furry chest.

TUCKER (CONT'D)

I'll never do it again. I'll go! Please, God, don't do this to me! Don't do this to me, God... I'm sorry, I swear!

CRUNCH! Tucker's kneeling legs squirm. Blood pours down Tucker's back and jacket. Tucker's body falls backwards. His head is gone.

Drool and blood drips from The Werewolf's snout and mouth.

Lou slowly opens the passenger side door to sneak out. CREEEAK. Lou glances back over his shoulder at the monster.

LOU'S POV - WEREWOLF

looks up from his meal. Beady-eyed and blood-stained, the monster arches his back and growls.

BACK TO TUCKER'S TRUCK

LOU PIRLO

Shit.

Terrified beyond description, Lou bolts out of the passenger seat and sprints. He points the gun and fires rounds into the darkness. BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Lou suddenly free-falls off a cliff.

I/E. RUSHING RIVER/UNDER WATER - NIGHT

SPLASH! Lou's body plummets into the swirling water. He sinks before his body shoots up like a bobbing buoy.

Traumatized, Lou face gasps for air. The constant current pummels and pounds Lou.

LOU'S HAND

reaches and grabs a protruding tree root. He is completely submerged underwater.

BACK TO RIVER

Lou breaches the surface and cradles the branch for dear life. He chokes and coughs hard.

EXT. RIVERBANK - MORNING

The warm, radiant glow of the sun beats down on a large tree at the edge of the river. Lou's exhausted body is slumped under the tree. His eyelids flutter open.

LOU'S POV - DELIA AND RORY

Hover and stare down quizzically.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE