

Flat River
by
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EXT. OPEN RANGE - SUNDOWN

A FORD MODEL-A PARCEL POST TRUCK drives up a desolate road, stopping at the porch of a snow-covered TIMBER CABIN. The FRONT DOOR of the cabin CLANKS open and shut.

A man steps out of the truck. The PATCH on his right biceps reads "NATIONAL RURAL LETTER CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION." He takes his shotgun from the car, keeping his face hidden.

INT. RURAL ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

Shards of wood and glass cover the HAND WOVEN RUG in the entry way. There are CLAW MARKS on the PANTRY DOORS.

The man picks up what remains of a sepia toned WEDDING PHOTOGRAPH.

INSERT - TATTERED WEDDING PHOTOGRAPH

The NATIVE AMERICAN BRIDE's high cheek bones and flowing, hip-length black hair contrast her rigid, white wedding gown.

BACK TO:

GROWL! The sound comes from the master bedroom. The man cocks his weapon as he approaches the door.

POV - POSTMAN

INHALE, EXHALE, INHALE, EXHALE. We prepare to enter.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

We push the door open. A pair of emaciated, BLACK-HAIRED ALEXANDER WOLVES prowl over the remains of the NATIVE AMERICAN BRIDE from the photograph.

One of the wolves bares its teeth and leaps at us. We raise our gun...

EXT. SNOWCAP - DAY - TEN YEARS LATER

GASP! JIM CORBETT awakens from his nightmare. He lies on his stomach, buried in snow, holding a .68 caliber HAWKEN RIFLE. He touches the scar on his throat.

EXT. ROCKY OUTCROP - CONTINUOUS

A MASSIVE GRIZZLY BEAR prowls along the ridge across the way.

EXT. SNOWCAP - CONTINUOUS

Jim's GUN MUZZLE enters the frame. BANG!

EXT. ROCKY OUTCROP - CONTINUOUS

The bullet misses. The bear makes a beeline for the forest below.

EXT. SNOWCAP - CONTINUOUS

Jim slides feet first down the mountainside while reloading his rifle. BANG! He misses again.

The bear veers away from Jim, who notices he's rapidly approaching THE CLIFF'S EDGE.

Jim reaches into his HAVERSACK PACK for his JUMPLINE GUN. WHOOSH! The harpoon flies, affixing itself to a tree.

Jim SWINGS out over the cliff's edge momentarily and touches down safely on the adjacent cliff side.

The bear charges by. Jim releases the jumpline, catapulting himself down the slope towards the bear.

He pulls out his COLT 45 PEACEMAKER and fires all six shots into the bear's haunches. The bear SNARLS in pain. Jim slides past the creature and comes to a stop.

Jim reloads his rifle as the bear charges. BANG! The bullet strikes the bear in the head and it collapses at Jim's feet, DEAD.

EXT. MONTANA - CHEYENNE TERRITORY - SUNDOWN

Jim drags the bear's head beneath the stacked LOG HOUSES built into the sides of sheer-walled rock ridges.

CHEYENNE INDIANS GRUMBLE as Jim passes by.

Jim stops in front of a TIN ROOFED HUT, placing the bear's head on a stake.

A pasty-skinned, greasy-haired FAT MAN dressed in a MINK COAT waddles out, chewing on the end of a cigar.

He touches the bear's canines. He lets out a FIENDISH LAUGH before looking at his gold plated POCKET WATCH.

FAT MAN
(over his shoulder)
Charles! Get the Prairie-Niggers
back down to that track.

CHARLES, a tall, snake-like white man with a handlebar mustache, walks up beside the Fat Man.

CHARLES
'bout god damn time.

Charles hands Jim a BOTTLE OF MOONSHINE.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Thank'ye. Don't think I could
stomach sitting 'round them pipe
smokin' blanket-asses much longer.

Charles starts banging on Cheyenne doors, BARKING ORDERS.

The Fat Man grabs the bottle from Jim and takes a swig. He offers it back to Jim.

FAT MAN
How bout a drink?

JIM
Give me what you owe me and I'll be
on my way.

The Fat Man takes another swig, keeping his eyes fixed on Jim.

FAT MAN
Just like they say you are, huh?
(pause)
Well that's fine by me.

The Fat Man tosses Jim an ENVELOPE. Jim pockets it and walks away.

FAT MAN (CONT'D)
(yelling)
You ain't gonna count it?

JIM
(over his shoulder)
I know where to find you.

Jim continues on his way.

CHARLES
(under his breath)
Good working with you too, stingy
swamp kike.

EXT. SNOWY ROAD

Jim pulls up to a TELEGRAPH POLE. He scales it.

He detaches the wire, slides down the pole and re-attaches it to a TELEGRAPH RECEIVER in the trunk of his car.

He taps on the end of the telegraph trigger. Moments later, a message comes in.

Jim pulls out a MAP. With a pencil, he traces the coordinates on the map. They intercept in the middle of MISSOURI. It's his next job.

EXT. SNOWY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Jim drives away into the vast, snowy expanse.

EXT. FLAT RIVER, MO - OZARK MOUNTAINS - DUSK

Jim pulls into town in his CITROEN AVANT.

FLAT RIVER is a small town at the foot of a SLOPING MOUNTAIN in the OZARKS. The town BUZZES eerily with the sound of electricity.

A brackish colored SMOG hovers over landscape. ROCKY CAVES spot the mountainside, a sign of MINING ACTIVITY. A monolithic ELECTRIC GENERATOR glows atop the mountain, smoke pouring out of it's smokestack.

The TOWN at the base of the mountain is comprised of SQUARE, LOG HOUSES of varying size with NOTCHED CORNERS and THATCHED ROOFS.

A RIVER separates the town from a temporary ENCAMPMENT with MAKESHIFT TENTS and a large, fortress-like CABIN.

A MEGAPHONE POLE stands 30 feet above the encampment. A RED LIGHT atop of the pole flashes.

LOUDSPEAKER

Payload transport report at 0800.

Payload transport report at 0800.

Jim arrives at the encampment. It's the temporary home of contractor/entrepreneur TURNER PEEBLY.

EXT. PEEBLY'S ENCAMPMENT - DUSK

PEEBLY steps out of his cabin, moving towards Jim with ease despite a pronounced limp.

Peebly extends his hand.

PEEBLY

Jim Corbett, I presume.

He grips Jim's hand like a vice.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

Turner Peebly.

Jim surveys Peebly's side of the River: a series of FARM HOUSES and BARNs are spotted around his encampment.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

Welcome to the countryside.

Jim looks across the river at the hustle and bustle of the town.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

Come, let's have a drink.

He turns to walk into the cabin. Jim follows.

INT. PEEBLY'S COMPOUND

Peebly's cabin is lantern-lit and sparsely decorated. A FIRE rages in the hearth. A DRAFTING DESK sits against the far wall.

Beside the desk is a large BOOKSHELF, stacked full of LITERATURE, ANTIQUATED MEDICAL JOURNALS and SCIENCE ALMANACS.

Peebly takes a seat and pours WHISKEY into a couple of TUMBLERS. The book, "DE HUMANI CORPORIS FABRICA" lies open on his desk.

PEEBLY

I collect medical journals. I find it necessary to know how things function.

Peebly shuts the book.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

You come highly recommended by some of my close associates.

JIM

I'll let my work speak for itself.

PEEBLY

Good. Let me be frank then. My work here is time sensitive.

Peebly rolls a shiny BULLET across the desk. Jim catches it before it hits the ground.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

A bullet is 98% lead, 2 % silver. Those two things are in high demand right now and they're waiting for me up in those hills.

Peebly takes a drink.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

Problem is, there's some sort of animal up there feeding on the miners.

JIM

The problem's that generator. Animals don't react well to changes in their environment.

PEEBLY

You're familiar with the Dynamo?

JIM

I've heard stories. That's the first one I've seen myself.

PEEBLY

This war won't last, Mr. Corbett. Wilson's already scaling back troops. I can ill afford to halt production any longer.

JIM
I take half now and collect the
rest when it's done.

PEEBLY
Good. Pleasantries only waste time.

Jim stands up.

JIM
I'll need a man who knows the
territory.

PEEBLY
Consider it done.

They shake on it.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)
One last thing Mr. Corbett. I
presumed you have noticed my
encampment is not lit by
electricity?

Jim waits for Peebly to explain himself.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)
I only spend money when it's
absolutely necessary. You see, I
expect results.

JIM
You'll get them.

PEEBLY
Good. It'll be a fine sight to see
those men back in the mine. Get
some rest.

Jim exits.

EXT. JIM'S CAMPSITE - NIGHT

The lights from town illuminate a rusty, iron-hued smog in
the night sky.

Jim sits atop a small ridge overlooking Peebly's encampment.
He tends to the fire.

Jim hears a sound and draws his COLT .45. BECKETT STAMP, a
wire-thin man dressed in a SECOND HAND SUIT waves his hands
in the air.

BECKETT

Easy.

Jim lowers the gun. Beckett approaches, cautiously.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Didn't mean to sneak up on you.
Peebly sent me.

Jim stands and shakes his hand.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Beckett Stamp.

Jim returns to tending the fire.

JIM

You're early. Didn't expect you
'til sun-up.

BECKETT

Sorry.

Beckett changes the subject.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Where'd you get a car like that?
You from the city?

JIM

No.

Becket inspects the car.

BECKETT

It's a Citroen Traction Avant. Wow.
The 7A isn't it?

Jim nods.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Forward traction.

JIM

What?

BECKETT

In French. It means forward
traction.

Jim walks over to the tent with a bundle of things.

JIM
That's what they say.

BECKETT
Not everyone here's as simple as
you think.

JIM
I imagine they're not.

BECKETT
Where're you comin' from?

JIM
Big Sky.

BECKETT
Oh.

Jim clarifies.

JIM
Montana. Cheyenne territory.

Beckett picks up Jim's STAG KNIFE.

JIM (CONT'D)
It's been a long day. If you don't
mind, I'd like to get some sleep.

Jim takes back the knife.

JIM (CONT'D)
I don't need you 'til morning.

BECKETT
Right. Night then.

Beckett leaves.

EXT. JIM'S CAMPSITE - MORNING

PITCH BLACK:

The SOUND of HEAVY BREATHING. Jim fights through a nightmare,
mumbling in his sleep.

The flaps of the tent are tied back, welcoming a strong
breeze. Something moves outside the tent.

Jim bolts up, drawing his gun. He stares at his target.

It's a SMALL BOY with a buzzed head, dressed in his SUNDAY'S BEST. He stares back at Jim, unflinchingly calm.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Edward!

MADDISON, the boy's mother, appears outside the tent. She pulls her son away from Jim.

Jim comes out of the tent, sliding his suspenders over his shoulders.

MADDISON

Put it down!

Jim sees that he's still brandishing the revolver. He holsters it quickly.

JIM

Sorry. He startled me.

MADDISON

You had to draw a gun on him?

JIM

I thought I made camp far enough outside of town that I wouldn't be a bother to anyone.

MADDISON

There's a plot of land up there where the boy and I pay respect to his father.

Jim nods. Edward pulls on his mother's arm. She turns to him and he begins to communicate with her in sign language.

EDWARD

It's okay mom.

MADDISON

He could have hurt you.

She looks back up at Jim.

JIM

He's alright.

Maddison shoots Jim a look.

JIM (CONT'D)

(signing)

Are you alright?

Edward's eyes light up. He nods his head slowly.

JIM (CONT'D)
(signing)
Sorry.

Edward smiles.

MADDISON
How do you--

JIM
My wife was mute.

MADDISON
Edward's never known anyone but me
and his father who could use it.

Beckett appears out of the brush, chewing on a couple blades
of LEMON GRASS.

BECKETT
Sorry. Am I interrupting something?

Maddison and Edward look surprised.

MADDISON
No. We should be going.

Maddison blushes a little and takes Edward by the hand. She
leads him towards the brush.

Jim begins to pack up his things.

JIM
(to Beckett)
Let's get started.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - MORNING

Beckett and Jim hike up the mountain, passing through the OAK
and PINE forest.

Above, IGNEOUS and VOLCANIC ROCK SPIRES jut out of the
mountain.

An irritating BUZZ sounds from the crudely constructed
ELECTRICAL POLES zigzagging down the mountainside.

BECKETT
Stay under the sticks. Get better
footing.

JIM
How far up is the breach?

BECKETT
Five...six hundred feet. You'll
feel it when we're getting close.

JIM
How do you mean?

BECKETT
I can't really explain it...Come
on.

They continue their ascent.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
I've been thinkin' about your car.

JIM
(sarcastically)
Oh yeah?

BECKETT
I'm gonna get myself one when I get
out of here.

Jim abruptly comes to a halt and measures a set of paw prints
with an oversized DRAFTING COMPASS.

JIM
60 inches...

BECKETT
What is it?

JIM
Cougar.

BECKETT
And these?

Beckett stands over a pair of smaller paw prints.

JIM
Cubs.

Jim looks up. The opening of the abyss is close.

JIM (CONT'D)
That's why she's killing.

BECKETT
To feed them?

JIM
To protect them. Let's go.

EXT. MINESHAFT - LATE MORNING

The air is hazy with smoke. Jim and Beckett arrive at the opening. Jim covers his nose. The smell is acrid.

JIM
(painfully)
What's that smell?

They walk around the opening and Beckett points to the GENERATOR'S SMOKESTACK.

BECKETT
Tailings!

Jim follows cougar tracks towards the mine.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
It's in the mine isn't it?

Jim ignores him and unlatches his pack, displaying his arsenal.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Good god.

Jim slings his HAWKEN RIFLE with a 3 foot-long welded barrel over his shoulder and grabs his two standard model BF HUNTING HANDGUNS.

JIM
Any other ways in or out of that mine!?

BECKETT
No!

JIM
Good!

Jim pulls Beckett behind a boulder.

BECKETT
Now what!?

JIM
We wait!

BECKETT
Why!?

Jim points a finger towards the pitch-black opening.

JIM
Hunt a cat in the dark, you give it
the advantage.

Jim points to a rocky spire hanging above the opening. He checks the chamber of Beckett's battered hunting rifle.

JIM (CONT'D)
Don't shoot unless I do,
understand?

Beckett nods. Jim points to Beckett's ears.

JIM (CONT'D)
Got any more of that?

Beckett shakes his head. Jim runs off towards the opening. He scales the rock wall and perches himself atop the spire.

EXT. MINESHAFT - AFTERNOON

The sun sits directly overhead. Jim squints his eyes and grinds his teeth.

The BUZZING SOUND has become UNBEARABLE. Jim removes a couple FLARES from his satchel and jumps down from his perch.

BECKETT
What're you doing!?

Jim cocks his handguns and heads into the abyss.

INT. MINESHAFT - CONTINUOUS

The NOISE of the generator grows quiet as he moves deeper into the mine, but the vibrations grow stronger. The SILVER DEPOSITS sparkle in the flare light.

He comes to a crossroads: FOUR TUNNELS break off in different directions. He sees HUMAN FOOTPRINTS.

JIM
What the hell...

He follows the trail.

INT. TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

He's forced to crawl as the tunnel grows narrower. The human tracks disappear, giving way to cougar tracks.

He discovers flies circling around the bodies of two dead COUGAR CUBS. They've been stripped of their hides.

Jim spies shards of clothes and human remains at the end of the tunnel. BANG! A shot sounds from outside the mineshaft. Jim runs back towards the opening.

EXT. MINESHAFT - MOMENTS LATER

Jim exits to find Beckett pointing his gun at the cougar as it runs into a valley of PINE TREES.

BECKETT

I see her!

Jim takes chase and Beckett follows. They reach the valley of PINE TREES.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

What now?

Jim puts a finger to his lips.

EXT. PINE FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

A MISTY-FOG blankets the FOREST FLOOR.

Jim makes his way through the trees cautiously. He sees the barrel of Beckett's stub-nosed SHOTGUN.

JIM

(whispering)

Easy.

Jim calmly lowers Beckett's shotgun.

BECKETT

(nervously)

It's watching us...

Jim motions for Beckett to be quiet. A rolling growl is heard nearby. Beckett flinches, aiming his gun wildly.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
That son of a bitch is
everywhere...

JIM
Calm down.

BECKETT
I can't see a god damn thing.

They stare intently into the mist.

ROAR! The cougar scales a tree in the distance. BANG! Beckett
fires a shot off beside Jim's ear.

Jim falls to a knee, blood dripping from his ruptured ear
drum. EEEEEEE! The HIGH PITCHED SOUND fills Jim's head.

Jim draws his rifle over his shoulder. He looks through the
cross-hairs, steadying his aim up to the tree canopy.

He pulls back the COCKING TRIGGER while inching his finger
towards the RELEASE TRIGGER.

Jim spots his target. ALL GOES QUIET...BANG!

The cougar tumbles through the branches. THUMP! It hits the
forest floor.

INT. PEEBLY'S COMPOUND - MEDIC TENT - DUSK

YOHAN, a DOCTOR in his mid 40's with ALBINISM and oval
SPECTACLES, looks into Jim's ear with an OTOSCOPE. He
periodically taps a TUNING FORK, watching the vibrations in
Jim's inner ear.

Peebly limps over to the physician's table and speaks to Jim.

PEEBLY
Yohan Vandebosh. My personal
physician, a Dane. He's a gifted
man.

Jim frowns as Yohan taps the tuning fork again.

YOHAN
You've completely ruptured your ear
drum. You've considerable damage to
the auditory nerve as well.

JIM

Am I going to be able to hear out
of it or not?

YOHAN

I don't know. It's important that
the perforation doesn't grow any
larger.

Jim tries to sit up, but loses his balance. Yohan helps him
upright.

YOHAN (CONT'D)

Try to refrain from sudden
movements. Your equilibrium is out
of sorts. Imagine the magnets that
balance a compass become slightly
shifted. It doesn't take much for
north to become south, east to
become west.

Yohan packs up his THINGS.

JIM

How long til it's fixed?

YOHAN

It all depends on the person.

PEEBLY

That'll be all Yohan. Thank you.

YOHAN

(to Jim)

Get some rest.

Yohan exits. Peebly hands Jim an ENVELOPE of money.

PEEBLY

Beckett says you must have been
over a hundred yards from the mark.

JIM

I can't remember.

PEEBLY

Impressive, being able to stay
focused despite the damage to your
ear.

JIM

It's only by luck you get a cat
into a clearing like that.

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

It was the best chance we were going to get.

PEEBLY

Anyone can get lucky, but not everyone knows what to do with it. Just look at Beckett.

Jim buttons his shirt and refastens his SUSPENDERS.

JIM

He was spooked.

PEEBLY

But you weren't.

Jim stops dressing and stares back at Peebly.

JIM

What are you getting at?

PEEBLY

I've added some cushion to your purse.

Jim opens the envelope and counts the extra cash.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

I've also organized a celebration in your honor tonight.

JIM

That's unnecessary you don't need-

PEEBLY

It's not for your benefit, it's for mine.

Jim places the envelope in his BREAST POCKET.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

I have been given an opportunity to reestablish myself as a force for good. A stroke of luck drove that man eater into the clearing and you took advantage of it. Similarly, these simpletons have been driven into a kind of clearing as well. Now it's up to me to take advantage of my position.

Jim clutches his ear, squeezing his eyes shut. Peebly taps Jim's breast pocket with his pipe.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

I've been more than
generous...Besides you're in no
condition to be on the move.

EXT. TOWN CENTER - HOEDOWN - NIGHT

FIDDLE MUSIC plays. LIGHT BULBS dangle from the sky, casting a warm glow over dancing townspeople. CHICKENS are being roasted over an open flame and CASKS OF WHISKEY sit atop rows of CHECKER-CLOTHED TABLES.

TWO DANCERS bounce up and down atop a pair of PLANKS, partaking in a traditional Midwestern dance-off.

Jim sits beside Peebly at the MASTER TABLE. He hasn't touched his food.

A GROUP OF WOMEN wearing traditional LACED BONNETS and PAISLEY-PATTERNED SUNDAY DRESSES approach the table. One of the women places an ADVENT WREATH in front of Jim.

WOMAN

A token of our thanks Mr. Corbett.

Jim stares at the purple and white candles atop the circle of evergreen leaves and red berries. The woman nudges her LITTLE GIRL forward.

LITTLE GIRL

This...this circle represents God's eternity and unity. The leaves mean everlasting life. That candle is the prophet's candle wishing Jesus comes again. That candle is for Bethlehem where Jesus was born. That candle is the...the sheep's candle.

The MOTHER CLEARS her THROAT.

LITTLE GIRL (CONT'D)

I mean the shepherd's candle. And the big one in the middle is the angels candle to celebrate our lord Jesus Christ's birth.

Jim wobbles atop his chair. BLOOD trickles out of his ear.

WOMAN

Are you alright sir?

Peebly pats Jim on the back.

PEEBLY

He's fine, just a little tired from the day's events. Thank you all so much, it's a lovely gesture really.

The women walk away. Peebly turns to Jim.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

Look at them, Jim.

Peebly digs into his food.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

They were stuck in the ways of the old world.

Jim cringes and touches his ear.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

The power company gave these people things they'd only dreamt of. Made life easier.

JIM

Everything comes at a price.

PEEBLY

Opportunity, Jim. Expanding and diversifying. The majority of this country's population lives in small towns like these. But until now, electricity was limited to the cities.

Jim sees Beckett, standing alone and unnoticed. He scowls at the dancers.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

Imagine a hundred Flat Rivers, all powered by portable generators, all dependent on one power company. They've cornered a very large market.

Jim fights back nausea.

JIM

So what does that make you?

PEEBLY

Their well-paid liaison. I'd been working that mine for nearly half a year before they approached me. I knew these people.

Jim begins to stand.

JIM

Excuse me.

Peebly watches him stand up.

JIM (CONT'D)

I need to lie down.

Jim walks away. Sounds and lights start to blur. Yohan stumbles past Jim, drunk.

YOHAN

How'sa ear?

Yohan LAUGHS and gropes at DANCING WOMEN.

The RINGING in Jim's ear gets louder and he passes out.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. MADDISON'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Jim wakes up in a FOUR POST BED. He slips on his WHITE-LINEN SHIRT. Kerosine LAMPS flicker throughout the room. CHARCOAL SKETCHES line the WALLS.

INSERT - SKETCHING

A MAN is silhouetted in front of the ABYSSAL OPENING of the mine shaft.

BACK TO:

Edward stands in the doorway, watching Jim.

JIM

(signing)

What are these?

Edward points to the CURSIVE "E" marked at the corner of the drawing.

JIM (CONT'D)
You drew them?

Edward nods. Jim glances back at the haunting image.

JIM (CONT'D)
Who is this?

EDWARD
(signing)
My uncle.

Maddison arrives, holding a steaming BOWL of TOWELS.

MADDISON
Edward?
(signing)
What are you doing awake?

EDWARD
(signing)
I had a bad dream.

MADDISON
Neither one of you should be out of
bed...the pot is on. Come have some
tea.

INT. KITCHEN

Jim and Edward sit at the KITCHEN TABLE. MADDISON pours TEA for them.

MADDISON
(signing to Edward)
Let it cool.

JIM
I can remember seeing that
doctor...

MADDISON
Yohan. Yes. He was... indisposed.
Beckett brought you here.

Jim sniffs the mug, causing his eyes to tear.

JIM
What is this? It smells like acid.

MADDISON
You've never had Hawberry tea
before?

JIM
I'd remember something that smelled
like this.

Edward SLURPS.

MADDISON
Ignore the smell, just try it.

Jim takes a sip while Edward finishes his cup.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
Yohan came by to check on you
today. He said it's best for your
ear if you kept inside out of the
moisture.

Jim takes another sip.

JIM
Good.

MADDISON
Told you. Mothers drink it when
breast feeding. Helps the baby
sleep through the night.

Edward rests his head on the table.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
Better than warm milk.

Maddison kisses Edward on the forehead.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
(signing)
Back to bed with you.

Edward hugs Maddison and goes to his room. Maddison takes a
seat at the table.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
I'm sorry if we woke you.

Jim shakes his head.

JIM
I was up anyway. Bad nerves.

Jim stops talking and rubs his temples.

MADDISON
Beckett did that to you?

She points to his ear. Jim nods.

JIM
You know him?

MADDISON
He may live in Peebly's compound
but he was born and raised in Flat
River.

Maddison shrugs.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
Beckett's always been an outsider
of sorts.

Jim closes his eyes in pain.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I yelled at you
yesterday.

JIM
Forget it.

MADDISON
He shouldn't have been wandering
into strangers' tents.

She smiles. There is a LONG SILENCE.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
Where did you get that scar?

She timidly points at Jim's scar.

JIM
Hunting accident.

Jim looks out the window at the generator atop the
mountainside and changes the subject.

JIM (CONT'D)
You don't use the power?

Maddison shrugs.

MADDISON
I'm fine with how things were
before.

She turns up the KEROSENE LAMP to make her point, ignoring
the UNLIT LIGHT BULB dangling over the table.

JIM
How long has it been this way?

MADDISON
The generator came less than a
month ago. It's been hard since
then.

JIM
Why's that?

MADDISON
My brother ran the power lines
through town. He was the first to
disappear.

She looks out the window.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
He was the closest thing Edward had
to a father.

Jim diverts his eyes.

JIM
I saw Edward's drawings.

MADDISON
He started when his father passed,
few years back. He's taken to it
again since his uncle disappeared.

Jim doesn't respond.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
You don't wear a ring.

JIM
Lost it years ago.

They share a moment of understanding.

MADDISON
Why do you do this?

JIM

What?

MADDISON

Risk your life for complete strangers?

JIM

It's how I make a living.

Maddison smiles.

MADDISON

You can tell me some other time.

Jim gingerly touches his damaged ear, wincing in pain.

MADDISON (CONT'D)

(hesitantly)

You know you can stay here as long as you need...

JIM

I'm alright. I should probably get going.

SCREAM! A WOMAN cries out. Maddison's hurries to the window. Jim follows.

EXT. TOWN STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Outside, a NAKED WOMAN runs through the center of town.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

MADDISON

Mrs. Clancy?

EXT. TOWN STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Jim runs out to Mrs. Clancy. She lies on the road in the fetal position.

JIM

Hello?

She ignores him.

JIM (CONT'D)

It's okay.

MR. CLANCY, an obese man, staggers down the street towards them.

MR. CLANCY
Make... Make it go away!

Maddison helps Mrs. Clancy inside.

JIM
Mr. Clancy?

Mr. Clancy's irises are grayish-pink. He HISSES at Jim, displaying his bloody teeth.

Maddison runs out with a blanket and covers Mrs. Clancy.

Mr. Clancy's face contorts, returning back to its portly, softer form.

MR. CLANCY
Please. Make it go away.

Mr. Clancy starts to dig, stuffing his ear canals with soil. Blood flows freely from his cuticles.

MR. CLANCY (CONT'D)
Please. Please. Stop.

Lights turn on in neighboring homes and a crowd builds. Mr. Clancy HISSES again and lunges at Jim.

Jim draws his STAG KNIFE. Mr. Clancy's face loses its tension once again.

MR. CLANCY (CONT'D)
It's inside. It... it won't go
away.

Jim's knees weaken- a bout of vertigo. Mr. Clancy grabs him, and plunges Jim's blade through his own jugular.

Onlookers GASP at the act of self-mutilation. Mr. Clancy falls on Jim, bleeding out atop Jim's chest.

INT. PEEBLY'S COMPOUND

Beckett nurses a WHISKY. A FIRE rages in the HEARTH. Jim bursts through the door, covered in blood.

BECKETT
Jesus. You okay?

JIM

Are you referring to the ear or the fact that a man slit his own throat on top of me?

Jim looks around.

JIM (CONT'D)

Where the hell is he?

Beckett doesn't answer. Peebly emerges from the back room. His face is beet red and his limp is more pronounced than ever. He takes a seat and stares into the fire.

PEEBLY

(to Jim)

You didn't do what I asked.

JIM

The hell I didn't...

PEEBLY

More of my miners have gone missing.

JIM

I don't see what that has to do with me.

PEEBLY

That James girl, the one who gave you that god damn wreath. They found her with her head smashed in.

JIM

What?

PEEBLY

Same goes for Mrs. James and their youngest.

Beckett interjects.

BECKETT

I was there. Jim killed the man eater.

PEEBLY

He killed a man eater. Something else is still out there.

Beckett has no response.

JIM

Their bodies. Were they still intact?

PEEBLY

From the head down, they were unscathed.

JIM

No man eater kills without eating its prey. Did anyone see anything at the Jameses'?

PEEBLY

Unfortunately the Clancys' lived closest to the Jameses'. They were a little preoccupied with that messy domestic fracas you took part in.

JIM

That man stabbed himself in the throat. A husband doesn't do that over an unmade bed.

Becket shifts NOISILY in the corner of the room.

PEEBLY

Give us a moment will you?

Beckett lingers for a moment.

BECKETT

But--

PEEBLY

Out.

Beckett leaves.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

I make a point of knowing everything I can about the people I'm in business with.

JIM

What do you know?

PEEBLY

I know enough.

(beat)

(MORE)

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

A man has gone missing, his family is dead. You know that pain better than anyone.

Jim stares into the fire.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

More people will die in vain.

JIM

What do you care about people dying in vain as long as you get your money?

PEEBLY

Do you know the parable of the sower who went forth to sow?

JIM

I don't give a shit.

PEEBLY

Humor me. If you remember, some of the seeds fell upon stony places where there wasn't much earth. When the sun came up, most were scorched or choked by the thorns that sprung up around them.

JIM

What's your point?

PEEBLY

I was one of those seeds. Unlike the others, I managed to survive because I understood a simple principle: might is right, weakness is wrong.

Jim turns to go.

JIM

I'm leaving.

PEEBLY

Name your price then.

Jim stops with his back turned to Peebly.

JIM

Double it.

PEEBLY

Done. I want those men back at work
in two days time.

Jim exits.

EXT. TOWN STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

Jim walks swiftly towards Maddison's. Beckett catches up with him.

BECKETT

Slow down. Where are you going?

JIM

To find out what that Clancy woman
knows.

INT/EXT. MADDISON'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

KNOCK! KNOCK! The door opens. Edward looks up at Jim.

JIM

(signing)
Where's your mom?

CLICK! The GUEST ROOM door opens and Maddison appears in the doorway behind Edward.

EDWARD

(signing)
In the back.

JIM

You watching out for her?

EDWARD

I don't have a gun.

Edward points to Jim's GUN HOLSTER. Jim bends down by Edward's side and hands him a COIN.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

What is it?

JIM

It's better than a gun. It's a good
luck coin. It keeps the bad stuff
away.

(playfully)
Don't lose it. I want it back.

Edward looks back to his mom, showing off the shiny coin.
Maddison smiles.

Jim stands.

MADDISON
She's still in shock.

JIM
I'll be easy.

INT. GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jim sits down on the edge of Mrs. Clancy's BED. Beckett and Maddison stand by the door.

JIM
How are you--

MRS. CLANCY
He should have gotten those eyes
checked out when I told'em.

Mrs. Clancy looks up and stares at Jim.

MRS. CLANCY (CONT'D)
It was like watching cottage pinks
bloom in the summer.
(beat)
His eyes were like that. It wasn't
right.

JIM
Can you tell me what he was doing
when it started?

MRS. CLANCY
He had come down from that tailings
pit like usual, but was real worked
up about Mr. James and the Chapman
boys goin' missing.

BECKETT
What do you mean the Chapman boys
goin' missing?

MRS. CLANCY
He hadn't seen them in a couple
days. He'd been working the pit all
alone.

Mrs. Clancy starts to cry.

MRS. CLANCY (CONT'D)
 And then he stopped making any sense. He started talking about that sound, that sound, he wouldn't shut up about it...and then--

She breaks down and Maddison goes to comfort her. Jim gets up and looks at Beckett.

JIM
 The Chapman's.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SHACK - MIDNIGHT

Jim KNOCKS, there is no answer. He pushes open the door.

INT. MOUNTAIN SHACK - CONTINUOUS

The shack has been ransacked.

BECKETT
 Hello?

Beckett flicks on a LIGHT SWITCH.

CRASH! A GIRL jumps out from a closet, SCREAMING.

HYSTERIC GIRL
 Stop it!!! Off! Off! Off!

Beckett turns off the switch. The girl breaks down and runs into Jim's arms. Jim peels her off of him and sits her down on the bed.

JIM
 You're okay.

Beckett pulls Jim aside.

BECKETT
 Shoulda told you before. This girl's four quarters short of a dollar.

Jim nods. They return to the girl.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
 Where're the boys Amy?

Amy won't answer. Jim kneels down by her side.

JIM
Where are the boys?

She hesitates.

AMY
I knew it was gonna happen. Working
up there with a demon's machine.

Jim gives Beckett a sideways glance.

BECKETT
Like I said. Sharp as a marble.

AMY
They were all working up there on
that mountain. Giving that demon
what we didn't want.

She stands up and traces the wire running from the door to a
LIGHT BULB.

AMY (CONT'D)
They brought it back down with 'em.

She sits down on the bed.

AMY (CONT'D)
It got inside them. They made this
noise. This... EEEEEEEHHHH.

She begins to cry.

AMY (CONT'D)
It was wrong.

Beckett turns to Jim.

BECKETT
They worked up there with Clancy
and James.

He pokes the girl.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Where are they?

AMY
They ran off back to it, I know it!

Jim stands up.

JIM
Come on with us. We'll take you
into town and get you cleaned up.

Amy refuses.

AMY
I'm stayin' here. They need me.

JIM
They're not comin' back.

AMY
I have to fix supper.

Beckett gives Jim a look.

BECKETT
Let's go.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - CONTINUOUS

Jim and Beckett make their way back into town. A stiff breeze carries the scent of ROTTING FLESH.

Beckett pinches his nose.

BECKETT
Good god.

Every now and then, they walk past an animal carcass.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
What the hell is this?

Jim looks at the animal carcasses. Troubled, he keeps walking.

JIM
I need to get some rest.

BECKETT
And this?

JIM
Tomorrow.

BECKETT
How will I know when--

JIM
I'll come find you.

Beckett watches Jim walk away.

EXT. JIM'S CAMPSITE - LATER

Jim goes to place his Haversack pack in his car. He opens the PASSENGER SIDE DOOR to find Edward sleeping in the backseat. Edward opens his eyes.

JIM
Hello.

EDWARD
(signing)
I was scared.

JIM
Your mom's going to be worried.

Edward yawns and shuts his eyes.

JIM (CONT'D)
Come on.

Jim picks Edward up, resting the boy's head on his shoulder.

INT/EXT. MADDISON'S HOME - LATER

Maddison opens the door and JUMPS at the sight of Edward asleep in Jim's arms. She takes Edward from Jim.

JIM
I found him sleeping in my car.

MADDISON
I didn't even know he'd gone. Thank you, I'm sorry for--

JIM
It's okay. He was just scared.

Jim turns and starts to walk away.

MADDISON
When his daddy used to leave he'd sneak out into the fields looking for him.

Jim stops and turns back to Maddison.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
He feels safe with you Jim.

Jim cracks a smile.

JIM
He's a good kid. Get some rest.

MADDISON
Good night Jim.

JIM
Night.

Jim turns and walks away.

EXT. JIM'S CAMPSITE - LATER

Jim arrives to find a man silhouetted by the moonlight. Jim reaches for his revolver.

PEEBLY
There's no need for that, I'm unarmed.

Jim lowers the gun as he realizes it's Peebly.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)
Perhaps my summation was off earlier.

Jim makes his way into his tent.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)
It may not be another man eater.

Jim comes out of the tent and begins to light a fire.

JIM
What makes you think that now?

PEEBLY
Nobody's used to seeing feral animals drop dead at their doorstep.

JIM
I told you before things didn't add up.

PEEBLY
Not devouring the flesh of a young child was one thing, but leaving elk meat to rot? Predators don't do that.

Jim starts the fire.

JIM

If you're looking for an answer, I don't have one.

PEEBLY

I think we could be dealing with a disease of sorts. Clancy's irises were pink. I referenced my medical journals, Jim. It's a sign of rabies.

JIM

I've never seen rabies like that.

Peebly face grows stern.

PEEBLY

Whatever it is, I'm tired of watching my miners drink the day away in the saloon, Mr. Corbett. Take care of it.

Peebly lingers and then exits. Jim tends to the fire.

EXT. TOWN CENTER - THE NEXT MORNING

Beckett and Jim make their way to the Jameses' house. A RADIO PROGRAM SOUNDS from the MEGAPHONE TOWER.

RADIO (O.S.)

Six Texas Rangers (Hi-ho, hi-ho) rode in the sun (Hi-ho, hi-ho); Six men of justice rode into an ambush, and dead were all but one. One lone survivor (Hi-yo, hi-yo) lay on the trail (Hi-yo, hi-yo); Found there by Tonto, the brave Injun Tonto, he lived to tell the tale. Hi-yo Silver, Hi-yo Silver away!

Beckett and Jim arrive at the house. Shards of wood and glass line the street.

RADIO (O.S.) (CONT'D)

His wounds quickly mended (Hi-yo, hi-yo) and then in the night (Hi-yo, hi-yo), Six graves were put there to hide from the outlaws that one had lived to fight.

Stepping over the debris, they enter the home.

RADIO PA

He chose silver bullets (Hi-yo, hi-yo) the sign of his name (Hi-yo, hi-yo); A mask to disguise him, a great silver stallion, and thus began his fame. Hi-yo Silver, Hi-yo Silver away! The Lone Ranger is his name!

INT. JAMES'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Jim and Beckett enter. Dried POOLS of BLOOD stain the floor. Jim grimaces and shuts his eyes.

BECKETT

You okay?

Jim puts his hand over his mouth, nodding. Jim notices the empty light sockets. He goes to investigate, finding the stems of SHATTERED BULBS.

JIM

You ever seen one of these bulbs explode before?

BECKETT

No.

Jim's complexion turns PUKE GREEN and he stops at the stairs.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

You goin' up there?

Jim shakes his head.

JIM

Lemme get some air.

Jim stumbles out of the house.

EXT. TOWN CENTER- CONTINUOUS

Jim falls to a knee and DRY HEAVES.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Find what you were looking for?

Jim looks up to find a GROUP of MINERS towering above him.

A thin, BALD MAN standing at 6'7" steps towards Jim. His appearance resembles something reptilian.

BALD MAN
There's still somethin' out there.

JIM
We're working on it.

A shorter, BEARDED MAN with tobacco stained teeth and a floppy miners cap spits a wad of tobacco beside the Bald Man.

BEARDED MAN
Drag a fool like Beckett 'round
with you, you're not gonna set much
straight.

JIM
Don't you boys have somewhere you
should be?

They don't respond.

BALD MAN
There's rumors going 'round.

JIM
That's not my concern.

BALD MAN
People saw something running back
up into that mine.

A third miner holds a HANDHELD RADIO and fiddles with the KNOB.

The SOUND of STATIC causes Jim's knees to grow weak.

BEARDED MAN
(quietly)
These people are scared.

He leans in closer to Jim.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)
We're scared.

More townspeople have amassed outside the home.

BALD MAN
We need your help. Please.

JIM
I'll take care of it. I just need
more time.

Jim looks up at him with tired eyes.

INT. PUP TENT - NIGHT

Jim looks at his haggard appearance in a CRACKED MIRROR,
removing the bloody COTTON SWABS from his ear.

MADDISON (O.S.)
Are you alright?

Jim looks back to find Maddison in the entryway, wearing a
WINTER COAT over a THIN SLIP and holding a LANTERN.

JIM
I'm fine.

Jim lies on his mattress. Maddison kneels beside the
headrest.

MADDISON
You're going into that mine
tomorrow?

JIM
Looks like it.

Maddison looks concerned. Her eyes gravitate towards a
PICTURE of Jim's wife.

MADDISON
How long ago did you lose her?

Jim can't answer.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
It's been two years since my
husband died. Edward barely
remembers him.

JIM
How'd it happen?

MADDISON
He got pneumonia on a cattle run.
By the time he got back to town, it
had set in bad. There was nothing
anyone could do.

JIM

I'm sorry.
(beat)
It's been ten years.

MADDISON

What?

JIM

Since she passed. My job would take me away, sometimes months at a time. She'd tend to the house, keep things in order. I came back one day and...

Maddison holds his hand.

JIM (CONT'D)

I don't like talking about how I found her.

MADDISON

You feel like it's your fault.

Jim looks away.

MADDISON (CONT'D)

I felt like nothing could ever replace him. But since you got here things changed...

Jim keeps his eyes shut tightly.

MADDISON (CONT'D)

What are you thinking?

JIM

I don't want to forget her.

Maddison kisses him and pulls away. She lets her coat slip off her shoulder and places Jim's hand on her breast. They kiss passionately. Jim gently pushes her away.

JIM (CONT'D)

Stop.

He clutches his hands above his head, shutting his eyes tightly.

MADDISON

You deserve to be with someone.

She kisses him on the cheek, picks up the lantern and exits.

EXT. JIM'S CAMPSITE - SUNUP

The dynamo glistens in the early morning light as Jim splashes his face with water. Beckett arrives with a TEENAGE BOY.

JIM
Who're you?

TERRANCE
Terrance.

BECKETT
The oldest James boy.

Jim grimaces. The pain in his ear has gotten worse.

JIM
Give me your gun.

BECKETT
What?

JIM
You're not coming if you have that
12-gauge.

Beckett hands him the shotgun. Jim tosses Beckett a BROWNING M1911 single action pistol.

JIM (CONT'D)
Don't pull that trigger unless you
can smell its breath.

BECKETT
What's "it?"

Beckett seems nervous.

JIM
We'll find out soon.

Jim puts on his pack.

JIM (CONT'D)
Come on.

They exit into the brush.

EXT. MINESHAFT - MORNING

Jim cringes at the BUZZING SOUND. Beckett hands a ball of wax to Jim. Jim fills his good ear.

They light LANTERNS and enter the mine.

INT. MINESHAFT - CONTINUOUS

Jim leads the way. The walls look prehistoric in the flickering lantern light.

INT. MINESHAFT - TEN MINUTES LATER

They reach the spot of decent.

BECKETT

Wish we had a canary or something.

They continue on. They move deeper and the lanterns begin to flicker.

TERRANCE

My light...

Terrance's lantern goes out.

BECKETT

Not enough air down here.

Beckett reaches into his pocket for the TINDER BOX. Jim stops. A SOUNDS of SCURRYING in the distance....

Beckett fumbles with the MATCHES. The SOUND grows LOUDER.

TERRANCE

I hear something.

BECKETT

Jim?

Jim doesn't answer. The SOUND of SHUFFLING FEET.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Jim?

SCREECH! Jim drops the lantern.

EVERYTHING GOES BLACK

The THING emits a LOW, GUTTURAL, MONOTONE HUM, imitating the SOUND of the generator. Terrance WHIMPERS.

TERRANCE
B-B-Beckett? J-Jim?

BECKETT
Shhh! Keep quiet.

TERRANCE
I can hear it! Beckett!?

Terrance SCREAMS. Jim can hear him being EATEN ALIVE.

Jim goes for his TINDER BOX and lights his lantern. A shadowy-figure crouches over Terrance's body, its back arched, BREATH LABORED.

It's a MAN. His facial-bone structure has begun to collapse. His ears, covered in polyps, seem to pulsate and a dark scar runs underneath one of his sunken eye-sockets.

The man charges at Jim, striking him against the wall. Jim drops the lantern and it bursts into flames.

BOOM! Beckett misses his target, scaring the crazed man off into the darkness.

BECKETT
What in god's--

JIM
Is he dead?

Terrance's throat is torn open. He's bled out.

They hurriedly light Beckett's lantern.

JIM (CONT'D)
Let's get the hell out of here.

They make their way swiftly out of the mine.

EXT. MINESHAFT OPENING - EARLY EVENING

Jim and Beckett emerge from the mine.

BECKETT
What the hell was that?

Jim looks down at his arm. He's been bitten. He starts down the mountain.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
What're you going to do? Jim!

Jim leaves Beckett behind.

EXT. JIM'S CAMPSITE - NIGHT

The FIRE CRACKLES. Jim loads his pack, attaching his SPRINGFIELD BAYONET along the side. Beckett and Peebly arrive.

PEEBLY
Back to running I suppose?

JIM
Not running. I fulfilled my contract.

PEEBLY
You hunt man eaters don't you?

Jim secures a TARP to the roof of his car.

JIM
Get someone else.

BECKETT
We've already tried. No one's willing to go up there.

JIM
Keep looking.

Jim gets down off the roof.

PEEBLY
That man is the last remaining vestige of this problem.

JIM
I don't hunt people. You say it's rabies, he'll die on his own.

Peebly places a ROLL OF CASH on the hood of the car.

PEEBLY
You think human life is any more valuable than fish or fowl?

Jim tosses the cash back to Peebly.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

That man up there is worth nothing to the world. His life is only as valuable as he thinks it is.

JIM

Save it. I'm not going up there.

PEEBLY

Is it the fear, Jim? That they'll always end up like she did?

Jim stops in his tracks.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

Our pasts catch up with us all.

JIM

Stop.

PEEBLY

She died and you weren't there to save her.

(beat)

You have a chance to help these people.

Jim breaks free from Peebly's stare.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

You're deceiving yourself Mr. Corbett.

Peebly disappears into the THICKET. Beckett picks up Jim's pack.

JIM

Thanks for what you did back there.

BECKETT

You don't need to thank me.

Jim takes the pack and they shake hands.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

You should get that ear checked out.

JIM

We'll see. Good luck.

EXT/INT. MADDISON'S HOUSE - LATER

Jim KNOCKS. Maddison opens the door and Jim steps inside. Edward draws at the table.

MADDISON
You're leaving.

JIM
Tomorrow.

Edward assesses the situation and runs upstairs.

JIM (CONT'D)
I--

MADDISON
It's okay Jim. You don't have to explain.

Maddison turns away from him and cleans off the table.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
It would be good of you to go talk to him.

INT. EDWARD'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jim enters. Edward works a piece of PRESSED METAL into a cup of POWDERED CHARCOAL. He looks up at Jim.

JIM
(signing)
Can I have a look?

Edward hesitates before handing him the notebook.

EDWARD
(signing)
Why can't you stay?

Jim turns the pages, finding rough sketches of his things: the CATERPILLAR TREAD around the tires of his car, the REAR IRON SIGHT on his Avtomat rifle, and the black JAPANNED TIN BUTTONS that line the waist of his trousers.

JIM
Just time.

Outside, THUMPING noises sound.

EDWARD
(signing)
My Uncle had a scar like yours.

JIM
On his neck?

Edward shakes his head.

INSERT - SKETCH

Raised and thatched scar tissue runs underneath the man's right eye. Despite the man's handsome features, Jim recognizes him as the crazed man from the mine.

INT. EDWARD'S ROOM

Jim flips the pages. More drawings of this man. Only he's not crazed.

JIM
That's him...

Jim stares at the book in a state of shock.

INT. MADDISON'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jim runs down the stairs. Edward follows. Maddison stares out the window. A FAINT SCREAM is heard.

MADDISON
Jim, I think there's something
going on out there.

Jim ignores her.

JIM
What happened to your brother?

MADDISON
I told you already.

JIM
How did he die?

MADDISON
He disappeared one night while he
was working. They said it was the
man eater...

She trails off, staring out the window.

JIM
Did they ever find his body?

MADDISON
They--

SCREAM! The sound of BREAKING GLASS. CRIES of agony.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
Something's wrong...

SMASH! A BLOODY HAND breaks through the kitchen window. Jim pulls Maddison to safety.

JIM
Get upstairs!

Maddison scrambles upstairs with Edward in tow.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

CRAZED MEN begin to burst out of their homes.

The men bound into dark homes only to flee as lights turn on. Houses all across town begin to light up.

INT. MADDISON'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jim locks the front door with an IRON DEAD BOLT. He turns for the stairs but his path is blocked.

A CRAZED MINER towers in front of him. The man has torn his ears off.

Jim recognizes the man's low, guttural, monotone HUM as the sound from the mineshaft.

CRAZED MAN
Make it stop.

The crazed man approaches Jim.

CRAZED MAN (CONT'D)
Make it stop.

Electricity powers the light bulbs overhead. Jim winces and the crazed man SHRIEKS.

In the light, the man's eyes appear PINK and his teeth ground down. He bursts out of the window.

Edward is at the stairwell, hand resting on the wooden, glass-fronted FUSE BOX. The ceramic fuses have been switched on.

EDWARD
(signing)
They like the dark places.

He points out the window to other well lit homes. Jim lets his gun fall to his side.

INT. EDWARD'S ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Edward sleeps in his bed. Jim and Maddison sit against the far wall.

MADDISON
Are you alright?

JIM
Just tired.

Maddison looks at Edward.

MADDISON
Remember what it felt like to be
able to sleep like that?

JIM
It's been a long time.

MADDISON
I miss it.

Maddison squeezes Jim's hand.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
Are you still afraid?

JIM
They're not going to bother us
anymore.

MADDISON
I'm not talking about what's out
there.

Jim meets Maddison's gaze and they kiss passionately.

INT. MADDISON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jim and Maddison enter the room, still kissing. They fall onto the bed.

MADDISON

Wait.

Maddison turns off the lights. The SILVER GLOW of MOONLIGHT fills the room.

JIM

But...

Maddison kisses him.

MADDISON

Trust me.

They make love.

EXT. TOWN STREETS

Maddison's house is lit brightly but the master bedroom remains dark.

INT. MADDISON'S ROOM - EARLY AFTERNOON

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

Jim awakens. Someone's at the door.

JIM

I'll go check it.

Jim goes downstairs. Maddison follows.

INT. MADDISON'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jim goes to the front door.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

Jim slides open the peep-hole, it's Peebly.

Jim looks over Peebly's shoulder, a GROUP of SCRAWNY TEENAGERS sit in the bed of a Dodge Brother's Company PICK-UP TRUCK, armed with homestead WINCHESTER RIFLES.

Maddison goes to the window and stares at the boys.

PEEBLY

I need a word.

Jim nods and slides the peep-hole shut. Maddison looks at Jim and pleads.

MADDISON

Don't...

Maddison points out the window at the innocent mob.

MADDISON (CONT'D)

You see the little one in the
yellow smock?

Jim sees a pigeon toed boy messing with the trigger guard of his rifle. He's the youngest of the bunch.

MADDISON (CONT'D)

He hasn't been back here since his
sleep over with Edward. He's still
embarrassed about wetting the bed.

Jim opens the door.

EXT. TOWN STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Peebly stands hunched over next to Beckett.

PEEBLY

It's only the miners.

JIM

The man I saw up there yesterday
was Maddison's brother.

Peebly nods gravely.

PEEBLY

He was in charge of Clancy and the
Chapman boys, the first group of
infected.

JIM

There's no infection. Rabies
doesn't spread like this.

PEEBLY

Right now, the only thing that matters is clearing out that mine.

Jim squints as he looks at the sorry looking militia.

JIM

What are you doing with them?

Beckett steps in front of Peebly.

BECKETT

I gathered them last night, Jim. They're ready to fight.

(beat)

We need you up there.

Jim glares at Peebly.

JIM

They're kids.

BECKETT

They know the dangers.

JIM

They're used to chasing each other around with cap guns.

PEEBLY

What do you suppose we do then, Jim?

JIM

I've got enough TNT to cave in that mine. They'll never see the light of day again.

Peebly shakes his head.

PEEBLY

I can't have that happen. There's still work to be done in that mine.

BECKETT

There's more of us than them. We wait 'til they come out and we open fire.

JIM

Don't do this.

Peebly turns to Beckett.

PEEBLY
Start the truck.

Beckett hops into the driver's seat.

BECKETT
We'll position them around the
opening. You know where to find 'em
if you change your mind.

JIM
Wait.

PEEBLY
There isn't time, Jim. When death
looms near, your instinct to live
grows stronger. It's in every one
of these boys' natures to survive.
(to Beckett)
Let's go.

Peebly taps on the hood of the car. They drive off.

INT. MADDISON'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jim walks in the door.

MADDISON
What's going on?

Jim grabs his things.

MADDISON (CONT'D)
You're not going are you?

JIM
Those kids don't stand a chance up
there alone.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jim bursts out the front door and is immediately overtaken by
a bout of vertigo. He collapses and Maddison comes to his
aid.

The sun is at its zenith.

INT. MADDISON'S KITCHEN - SUNDOWN

The sun sets as Jim lies on the kitchen table. Yohan examines his ear.

The doctor retracts a plunger from Jim's ear and assess the tissue damage.

YOHAN

The tear's too large. I'm afraid
the damage is irreparable.

Jim slowly sits up.

JIM

What about the pain?

YOHAN

It'll subside, but it may take some
time.

Yohan begins to place his medical equipment into a *Maw & Son's* MEDICAL KIT.

MADDISON

Those men. Have you ever seen
anything like this?

YOHAN

No.

MADDISON

You must know something...

YOHAN

It seems to me that something is
triggering a violent response in
these people.

CLICK! Yohan fastens the latches on his kit.

JIM

We know that.

YOHAN

The response could be internal or
external.

JIM

You mean, deep down, all these men
could be lunatics.

YOHAN

Perhaps.

MADDISON

Any reason it's just the miners?

YOHAN

It's highly unlikely that all these men are suffering from the *same* internal physiologic illness. More likely, it's some external pathogen.

JIM

How do you cure something like this?

YOHAN

Well... What are we curing?

Jim gets up off the table and looks out the kitchen window.

JIM

What the hell...

EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - CONTINUOUS

GUNFIRE ERUPTS near the mineshaft. SCREAMS are heard.

A DRONING, LOW PITCHED, HUM rolls down the mountainside. The infected miners descend upon the town.

INT. MADDISON'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jim backs away from the window and looks at Maddison.

JIM

Grab Edward!

Jim bolts out the front door.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

He runs out into the street towards the church. Desperate townspeople fight back against the Infected.

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Jim throws open the vaulted doors of the brick-walled GOTHIC CATHEDRAL.

JIM
Everyone inside!

Townspeople funnel into the church.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Maddison, Edward and Yohan run for the church.

An Infected miner cracks Yohan's skull with a HEADBUTT, while another Infected pursues Maddison and Edward.

Jim grabs a bolt action WINCHESTER RIFLE from a shopkeeper. He catches the Infected miner in his cross-hairs and fires.

BANG! The miner's skull explodes, splattering Maddison with blood. Maddison and Edward make it to the church.

INT/EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Jim shuttles them inside quickly.

JIM
Close the windows!

A GROUP of BOYS close the shutters. Jim steps inside the church and shuts the doors.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK! Townspeople crowd around the BARRED WINDOW. Jim sees the Bald Miner and the Bearded Miner from the Jameses' outside the door.

BALD MINER (O.S.)
Please, let us in!

A pair of TEENS go to unlock the door but a MAN blocks their path.

MAN
Wait! Look at their eyes.

People fight to get a glimpse out the window. The miners' eyes have turned pink.

MAN (CONT'D)
They're going to be just like the
others in short order.

Townspeople start to back away from the window. The Bald Miner runs away from the church.

BEARDED MINER
I'm not one of them. Please!

Jim pushes the man aside and begins to unlatch the door.
THUMP!

BLOOD spatters the window. The miner goes QUIET.

The townspeople can hear the CRIES of AGONY outside the vaulted doors. THUD! THUD! The door shakes.

JIM
Everyone under the pews!

THUD! They obey his orders. Jim closes the last set of shutters.

SMASH! An Infected's hand breaks through the window. Edward runs to the front doors.

JIM (CONT'D)
Edward!

Jim sees what Edward sees:

THE FUSE BOX.

Edward depresses the ceramic switches.

The church lights up. The Infected SHRIEK in pain.

JIM (CONT'D)
Open the shutters!

The teens re-open the shutters.

A couple boys sit perched atop a ledge, looking out a window towards the mine shaft.

BOY
They're running away.

The Infected flee from the church. An older man stares out the window.

MAN

The light...

JIM

They're afraid of it.

An old woman speaks out fearfully.

OLD WOMAN

We should leave this place. They'll know where we are.

The mass begins to murmur.

YOUNG MAN

We should stay here for the night. We're safe if we're together.

The mass sighs in agreement.

TOWNSPERSON

This is the Lord's house. Evil can't touch us here.

More grumbling.

TOWNSPERSON (CONT'D)

You saw them run from the place. Why on earth should we leave?

JIM

Just stay together. They should be gone by morning.

YOUNG MOTHER

How do we bring an end to this?

ELDERLY RELIGIOUS MAN

Pray for salvation.

Jim reloads his pistol, preparing to leave.

MADDISON

Where are you going?

JIM

To see Peebly.

Maddison grabs his arm.

MADDISON

He doesn't give a damn about us. Stay.

Jim pulls Maddison in and whispers in her ear.

JIM
We need to get help.

EXT. TOWN STREETS - NIGHT

Jim sneaks through town with his pistol drawn.

INT. PEEBLY'S COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Jim enters, startling Peebly.

JIM
How many of those kids died up there?

Peebly looks away.

PEEBLY
They wanted to fight and I let them. I have their blood on my hands.

JIM
What did you expect?

PEEBLY
Perhaps not to feel this way.

Jim moves to the window, peering out over town.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)
Not one came back...not one.

JIM
This thing has gotten too big, Peebly.

PEEBLY
Beckett's putting out the call by radio as we speak.

JIM
Good. But we still need to cave in that mine.

PEEBLY
When the sun comes up, yes.

Jim falls into a CHAIR. Peebly takes a seat behind his desk.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)
I read something before you
arrived.

Peebly reaches under his desk and produces a LEATHER BOUND BOOK.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)
When I saw Mr. Thompson smash in
the skull of his little girl, I
asked myself how a father could do
such a thing.

He opens the front flap of the book and reads.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)
"I thus drew steadily nearer to the
truth: that man is not truly one,
but truly two."

SLAM! He drops the book on the desk: DR. *JEKYLL & MR. HYDE* by Robert Louis Stevenson.

JIM
Not all the answers are in your
books.

PEEBLY
No, not always. But let me explain.
Dr. Jekyll is an upstanding
citizen. Mr. Hyde, a murderer and a
rapist. The thing is, they're the
same person.

Peebly pauses, looking at the book.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)
We're all capable of extreme acts
of violence.

JIM
It's only the miners, Peebly.

PEEBLY
Well, Mr. Jekyll didn't just
miraculously turn into a murderer.
He ingested a chemical potion and
the change came about.

Jim pauses.

JIM
It's an external pathogen. Yohan mentioned that.

PEEBLY
And those miners must have been exposed to it.

JIM
(beat)
Where do you get your water?

PEEBLY
The spring.

EXT. BECKETT'S CABIN - NIGHT

Jim throws open the door without knocking.

BECKETT
Jesus, Jim.

JIM
Get dressed.

BECKETT
What?

JIM
Get dressed. We're going up the mountain.

Beckett goes pale.

BECKETT
Now?

JIM
You didn't have a problem sending those boys up earlier.

Beckett looks down, ashamed.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SIDE - NIGHT

Jim and Beckett make their way up towards the spring. Jim leads, holding a lantern.

BECKETT
You hear that?

The SOUND of FAINT MOANING. Jim draws his gun and follows the sound up the mountain.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

The moaning WOMAN takes her last breath as they approach.

BECKETT
It's Amy Chapman.

Amy's right leg is broken.

JIM
Her eyes...

Her eyes are pink and faded.

BECKETT
Well, it ain't just the miners anymore.

Jim follows her trail of blood.

JIM
She was coming from up there.

Jim sees where the trail leads.

JIM (CONT'D)
The generator.

INT. DYNAMO - MOMENTS LATER

The sound of the generator is deafening. Two large boiler drums emit steam, spinning the buckets at the top of the generator.

Jim and Beckett follow the trail of blood. It stops at the base of a steel ladder.

Jim picks up a bent BRASS PIPE and notices a large dent in one of the spinning buckets.

JIM
Looks like she fell. Getting back at the "demon" for taking her brothers.

Beckett nods.

JIM (CONT'D)
 (yelling)
 You know how this thing works?

BECKETT
 I know all there's to know.

Beckett points to the BOILER DRUMS.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
 Burn coal and tailings in the
 furnace and pressurized steam
 builds in those drums there...

Beckett points to the COPPER PIPING leading out of the drums.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
 Steam's forced up those pipes next.

Beckett points to the rotating buckets.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
 When it reaches those buckets, they
 start rotating and you got yourself
 enough thermal energy to power the
 whole town.

Jim runs his finger over a MERCURY THERMOMETER.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
 Gotta watch the temperature. Gets
 too hot and the whole place goes
 up. That happens, mineshaft
 collapses.

Jim slides open a STEEL DOOR.

INT. TAILINGS PIT - CONTINUOUS

Jim peers down into a PIT of METALLIC RUBBLE and PASTE.

BECKETT
 Tailings pit. Mine trash. The stuff
 Mr. Peebly can't sell. Gotta get
 rid of it somehow.

Jim spies a massive FURNACE beneath the two boiler drums.

JIM
 James and the Chapman boys... This
 what they were doing? Feeding this
 trash into that furnace?

BECKETT

When the mine was running that pit
was always full.

Jim taps the brass pipe against his palm.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

We done here?

JIM

Show me the spring.

CLANK! Jim drops the pipe.

EXT. NATURAL SPRING - LATER

The SOUND of TRICKLING WATER.

They stand at the edge of the spring. Jim dips an empty HONEY
JAR into the water. Dozens of half-inch FISH glimmer in the
light.

BECKETT

Look at 'em all

JIM

Graylings. Just spawned.

BECKETT

Means there'll be a good run of
trout this year.

JIM

There's nothing wrong with the
water.

Jim dumps out the water.

JIM (CONT'D)

Graylings are picky about laying
eggs. If it wasn't good here they'd
have done it elsewhere.

He watches the FINGERLINGS swim away.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Jim and Beckett reach the brightly lit church.

BECKETT

I gotta get some sleep.

He walks away towards the river.

JIM
Beckett.

Beckett stops.

JIM (CONT'D)
Who'd you put out that call to?

Beckett hesitates.

JIM (CONT'D)
The distress call.

BECKETT
Oh.
(beat)
Ionia. It's the next town over.

Beckett turns back towards the river. Jim KNOCKS on the church door.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
I don't owe you any more favors,
Jim.

Beckett stares at Jim. The church door OPENS.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Maddison lets Jim into the church.

MADDISON
What's going on?

JIM
I don't know.

Jim takes a seat.

EDWARD
(signing)
Are they going to come for us?

JIM
We're safe for tonight.

Edward huddles close to him. Maddison squeezes Jim's hand.

The SOUND of electricity DRONES IN and OUT. Jim nods off.

INT. TOWN CHURCH - DAWN

Jim's eyes snap open. The monotone HUM and the electric BUZZ reverberate throughout the church.

Edward looks at Jim, TERRIFIED.

EDWARD
(signing)
They're doing it now.

Jim rubs his eyes.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
(signing)
They're doing it now.

Jim looks around: the HUM is coming from the men, woman and children inside the church.

A YOUNG WOMAN tears pages out of a BIBLE, stuffing them into her ears.

YOUNG WOMAN
Stop it, stop it, stop it.

Jim wakes up Maddison.

JIM
Maddison...We need to leave. Now.

They QUIETLY get up, trying not to disturb those who are battling infection.

A LITTLE GIRL grabs Maddison's forearm tightly. The girl has chewed her lips off.

LITTLE GIRL
Mommy? Make it stop.

She lunges at Maddison and bites her forearm. Maddison SCREAMS.

THUMP! Edward strikes the girl over the head with a BRASS CROSS.

They exit the church.

EXT. TOWN CHURCH/MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

They SLAM the doors shut. SCREAMS SOUND from inside.

JIM

Run!

They flee to an ABANDONED HOME.

INT. ABANDONED HOME - CONTINUOUS

The house is in shambles. Jim leads Edward and Maddison upstairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jim closes the door and presses the light switch.

Maddison looks down at the BLOODY BITE MARK on her arm.

JIM

It's alright.

Jim exposes his forearm, revealing a bite mark of his own.

JIM (CONT'D)

If it were contagious I'd know by now.

CRACK! Jim looks out the window. The Infected have broken out of the church.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

A HOARD of Infected townspeople pass by.

INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jim hands his Webley Break-Top REVOLVER to Maddison.

JIM

Take it.

MADDISON

Where are you going?

Maddison can't stop shuddering.

JIM

We need to get out of here. I'm getting the car.

MADDISON
Where will we go?

JIM
Away from here.

MADDISON
We can't.

Tears stream down her face.

JIM
We stay here, we'll end up like
everyone else. No one knows what's
causing this.

MADDISON
There are others like us. They need
you.

Jim stands up.

JIM
I'm giving you and Edward a chance
to get out of here alive.

MADDISON
Please Jim.

JIM
Keep the lights on. I'll come back
for you soon.

Jim exits. Maddison picks up the revolver with a shaky hand.

INT. ABANDONED HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Jim fashions a torch out of a piece of splintered wood.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Jim jogs through town, holding the torch above his head.

He freezes when he notices A PAIR of INFECTED TEENS. He waves
his torch at them. They ignore him and wander past.

Confused, Jim takes off towards his campsite.

EXT. JIM'S CAMPSITE - MOMENTS LATER

Jim grabs his AVTOMAT ASSAULT RIFLE. He places a MAGAZINE in the chamber and pulls the bolt back.

EXT. HILLSIDE - SUNUP

Jim's CAR veers around boulders and over rocky terrain.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jim sees the speedometer hit 50 mph. The windshield is foggy. CRACK! Wood from a shattered branch sprays across the hood.

Jim tries to correct the wheel. The window clears, revealing a group of roaming Infected near the RIVER.

The car strikes the mass of Infected. Jim loses control of the car. An Infected smashes through the windshield.

CRACK! Jim's head hits the steering wheel as the car crashes into the river.

The car slowly fills with water as Jim loses consciousness.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. BARN STABLE - LATER

Jim opens his eyes to find an ELDERLY WOMAN at his bedside reading *Psalms*.

WOMAN

Praise the Lord, my soul, and never forget all the good he has done: He is the one who forgives all your sins, the one who heals all your diseases.

JIM

Where am I?

A YOUNG GIRL hands Jim a mug of Hawberry tea.

JIM (CONT'D)

Thank you.

The door of the stable opens and a stout FARMER enters holding a PUNT GUN, something like a shotgun but nearly twice its size.

FARMER
You feelin' better?

JIM
Where's my car?

FARMER
Ruined, sitting in the river.

Jim tries to stand but falls back against the bed.

FARMER (CONT'D)
Easy there. You hit your head pretty good. You should rest.

JIM
No time. I have to get back.

FARMER
Whatever you're getting back to's probably not worth getting back to now.

Jim sees ACME LANTERNS dangling from the wooden cross beams.

JIM
You don't have electricity here.

FARMER
Not on this side of the river. We work the land over here, not the mine.

Jim spies CATTLE and SWINE PENS.

JIM
Surprised you didn't take the money.

FARMER
I'll trade money for my health any day. Life up there is limited, breathing in those poisons. There's quite a bit more than just the silver and ore Peebly went on about.

JIM
You mean the tailings.

FARMER

I mean Arsenic, Mercury, Sulfur,
Cyanide. No surprise to me what's
happened to those miners.

JIM

Doesn't really explain what
happened to their families.

He stands, spying his clothes dangling over the fire.

FARMER

I suppose it doesn't.

Jim dresses quickly.

FARMER (CONT'D)

It's a foolish thing, going out
there.

JIM

They'll find you here.

FARMER

They'll find us all. This is where
I raised my children. I'm not
leaving.

Jim nods.

JIM

Good luck to you then.

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE & MAIN STREET - AFTERNOON

Jim crosses the river and looks back at the FARMHOUSES.
SCARED FAMILIES watch him from second story windows.

Jim runs towards the ABANDONED HOME. THUNDERCLOUDS hang over
Flat River.

INT. ABANDONED HOME - MID AFTERNOON

Jim enters the house out of breath.

JIM

Maddison!?

Jim heads upstairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The BEDROOM DOOR is slightly cracked.

JIM
Maddison!?

He pushes the door open and enters the room.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The revolver sits on the bed. The room is EMPTY.

JIM
Maddison!?

Jim leaves the room.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He notices a chair positioned at the end of the hallway beneath a trap door, which leads to the attic.

INT. ATTIC - MOMENTS LATER

CREAK! Jim pokes his head up through the opening and spies Edward cowering in the corner.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jim throws scraps of wood into the hearth, heating a TEA KETTLE on the QUEEN Atlantic STOVE. The lights are on.

Edward rests his head on the table. Jim finds some CHEESE CLOTH and a bottle of BAYER RUBBING ALCOHOL.

He kneels down in front of Edward to dress the boy's wounded knee.

JIM
This is going to sting a little.

Jim cleans the gash. Edward CRINGES.

JIM (CONT'D)
You have to tell me what happened.

Edward shakes his head, teary-eyed. The tea kettle WHISTLES.
Jim massages his temples.

JIM (CONT'D)

Please.

EDWARD

She told me to run. I didn't want
to leave.

The kettle WHISTLES LOUDER and the electrical NOISE grows
DEAFENING.

JIM

What happened?

EDWARD

She was becoming one of them...I
hid in the attic.

SMASH! Jim jumps from his chair and shatters the bulbs
overhead.

The electric light is gone, but the BUZZ persists.

Jim looks at the tea kettle, watching as STEAM shoots out
it's spout.

JIM

(under his breath)
It's in the air.

Jim puts his hands over his ears and looks down at Edward who
remains unfazed by the sound.

JIM (CONT'D)

(signing)
You can't hear it, can you?

EDWARD

Hear what?

INT. PEEBLY'S COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Jim storms in with Edward in tow.

JIM

I found your pathogen.

Peebly chews on the end of his pipe.

PEEBLY

What?

JIM

The power company led you to believe you could burn up those tailings, save yourself some money and time, but it's what's making these people sick.

Peebly looks down at his desk.

PEEBLY

How can you be certain?

JIM

Proximity to those boilers. It explains why Clancy and them were first and the miners next. Everyone else, it was just a matter of time, breathing in those toxins.

PEEBLY

They said it had been tested.

JIM

There's more to it.

Peebly diverts his eyes.

JIM (CONT'D)

Burning the tailings creates the pathogen, but the sound is the trigger.

Peebly knocks the ashes out of his bowl piece onto the desk.

JIM (CONT'D)

It explains why they stuff their ears before they lose it.

PEEBLY

But not everyone's infected.

JIM

The ones who haven't turned haven't been using your power. Or in Edward's case, can't hear it.

Peebly tries to pack his pipe with shaky hands.

PEEBLY

You were in that church. Why aren't you trying to tear my eyes out?

JIM

I can't hear out of this ear. Without the sound, there's no way to become Mr. Hyde.

PEEBLY

The generator is so close to that mine. Why retreat to it?

JIM

The light. They can't stand it.

PEEBLY

Why leave it then?

JIM

That pathogen creates a rage. Their need to satisfy it is more powerful than their will to survive.

Peebly sighs.

PEEBLY

They said there were risks but I wasn't told as to what they were. I wouldn't have signed the charter if I had.

JIM

You have to shut it down.

PEEBLY

I'd be in breach of contract if I did that.

JIM

You'll be killed if you don't.

PEEBLY

If a man's word means nothing then he might as well be dead.

Peebly slides an ENVELOPE across his desk.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

You have the power to do what I can't.

Jim opens the envelope. Inside is a METAL BULB attached to the end of a LEVER.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)
You'll need that to shut it off.

Jim pockets the envelope and picks up Edward.

JIM
Beckett didn't make that call, did he? They'd be here by now.

Peebly shakes his head.

PEEBLY
He's disappeared.

JIM
We need to radio for help.

Peebly tries to reload his pipe.

PEEBLY
Hurry, Jim.

Jim and Edward exit.

EXT. PEEBLY'S COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Beckett stands outside the window, unbeknownst to all.

EXT/INT. BARN STABLE - SUNDOWN

KNOCK! KNOCK! The Farmer comes to the door, brandishing a Remington rifle.

FARMER
Come in.

INT. BARN STABLE - MOMENTS LATER

Edward refuses to let go of Jim's hand. Jim kneels beside him.

JIM
You still have my coin, don't you?

Edward removes the coin from his pocket, clutching it tightly.

JIM (CONT'D)
Hold onto it. You're safe here.

Edward frowns.

JIM (CONT'D)
I'll be back for you.

Jim stands and turns to the farmer.

JIM (CONT'D)
Reinforce that door if you can.
Don't come out for anything or
anyone unless it's me, understand?

The Farmer nods.

INT. BROADCAST TOWER - CONTROL ROOM

Jim climbs up the ladder through the floor hatch. He flicks on the TRANSCEIVERS.

SCREECH! Feedback. CLICK! Jim feels the barrel of a pistol pressed against the back of his head.

BECKETT
Don't move.

Beckett grabs Jim's revolver from his holster.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Turn around.

JIM
Listen to me Beckett--

BECKETT
Shut up, Jim. Give me the key.

Jim refuses. BANG! Beckett fires his gun.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
I said give me the key.

Beckett rips it out of Jim's pocket. He places it on the RADIO.

JIM
Stop this Beckett, you--

POP! Beckett fires several shots in quick succession at the key, destroying the radio in the process.

BECKETT

Get down on your knees.

Jim shakes his head. Beckett moves towards the ladder.

JIM

I can't do that Beckett.

BANG! Beckett fires the gun again.

BECKETT

I said get down on your knees.

Jim turns to face Beckett.

JIM

You're out of bullets.

Beckett throws his pistol aside and draws Jim's revolver.

BECKETT

But you're not.

Jim moves towards Beckett. Beckett tries to pull the trigger but it's LOCKED.

Jim shoves Beckett. He falls through the floor hatch.

THUD! He hits the ground below.

Jim checks the radio. It's toast. So is the key.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jim slides down the ladder. Beckett is trying to crawl away.

JIM

You should have killed me when you had the chance.

BECKETT

I never did anything to you. I was just doing my job.

Jim grabs his revolver and places his pinky and ring finger into two discreet slots, disarming the safety. He fires a round off beside Beckett's head.

JIM

It works after all.

He pulls back the hammer.

JIM (CONT'D)
Why didn't you put out that call?
You could have saved these people.

BECKETT
I wouldn't have got my money.

Beckett sighs painfully.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
This was more than a business
arrangement.

He can't make eye contact with Jim.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
The people at U.S. Power & Electric
wanted someone on the inside to
report back to them. I...I was
their man. They said I wouldn't get
my money if things got out.

JIM
This is on you.

BECKETT
I didn't think it would be like
this.

Beckett meets Jim's stare.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
I can't be in this town with these
people for all my life. Understand?
They're going to give me enough to
start over somewhere else.

JIM
You're never going to see that
money. How much have you told them?

BECKETT
Everything.

Jim grabs Beckett by the collar.

JIM
You're coming with me. If you try
anything, I'll kill you.

Jim drags Beckett to his feet.

JIM (CONT'D)

You're going to show me where those charges are.

BECKETT

For what?

JIM

We're going to take care of that generator.

BECKETT

But the generator sits right atop the mine. If one goes, so does the other.

JIM

I'm not going to let them turn anyone else into one of those things.

EXT. RIVER - MOMENTS LATER

Jim leads Beckett across the river towards Peebly's compound.

JIM

How long has this been going on?

BECKETT

They don't tell me that stuff. I told you, I was just a messenger.

JIM

If Peebly's right, Flat River is one town of many with that same generator.

Becket points to the compound.

BECKETT

He's gone.

JIM

What?

BECKETT

Peebly's car is gone. The coward's ran off.

Jim notices Beckett's eyes. They've begun to turn PINK.

JIM
Doesn't make any difference. Come
on.

INT. PEEBLY'S COMPOUND - LATER

Jim kicks in the door. They step into the compound.

BECKETT
The charges are in the cellar.

Beckett walks over to a HATCH DOOR. He spins the lock dial.
CLICK! It swings open.

INT. CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

They descend a ladder and discover a CEDAR CABINET fastened
with a PADLOCK.

JIM
Where's the key?

BECKETT
I don't know.

Beckett's pink eyes shimmer in the lantern-light. Jim pushes
him aside and draws his revolver.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Oh no, I'm leaving.

Jim points the revolver at Beckett.

JIM
You take one more step towards that
ladder and I'll put a bullet
between your eyes.

Beckett stops. Jim aims the gun at the lock.

BANG! The lock flies off and the doors open, revealing rows
of DYNAMITE, FUSE BOXES and BLASTING CAPS.

Beckett lets out a SIGH OF RELIEF.

JIM (CONT'D)
Get as much as you can carry.

INT. PEEBLY'S COMPOUND - MOMENTS LATER

Jim equips himself with a lever-action SHOTGUN, a SWEDISH MAUSER RIFLE and EXTRA REVOLVER ROUNDS as Beckett emerges from the cellar with the SACHEL of TNT.

EXT. MAIN STREET - SUNSET

Beckett is struggling under the weight of the charges. The Infected have begun to emerge from the mine.

BECKETT
No...It's not dark yet.

JIM
It's dark enough.

He continues on towards the church.

INT. TOWN CHURCH

They enter and bolt the door. DEAD BODIES litter the pews. Outside, Infected SHRIEK.

BECKETT
What're we doing?

JIM
You're going to rig the place. Save what we need for the generator and use the rest.

Beckett's hands shake as he bundles charges together.

JIM (CONT'D)
I'll need as much wire as you can give me.

Beckett nods. Jim walks over to the rope that sounds the CHURCH BELL.

BECKETT
What're you doing?

JIM
How much time do you need?

Beckett starts setting charges around the bases of the pilasters.

BECKETT
A few minutes.

JIM
You have one.

Jim pulls the chord and RINGS the bell.

EXT. TOWN STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The Infected follow the sound towards the church.

INT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

Jim continues to ring the bell. Beckett attaches the
DETONATOR CHORD to the FUSE SWITCH.

BECKETT
Here.

He hands Jim the blasting cap.

JIM
Take the rest of those charges and
head for the forest.

Beckett's eyes dart back and forth, rapidly.

BECKETT
No.. No, I-I can't.

JIM
You don't have a choice.

Beckett shakes his head, smacking his ears.

BECKETT
Stop it.

JIM
Beckett...

Jim reaches for his gun.

BECKETT
You don't understand. It's too
late. They're already on their way.

Jim leaves the gun at his side.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Men like you. The power company
wants to make sure no one ever
knows this place existed.

JIM
That doesn't change anything.

Beckett's voice is shaky.

BECKETT
It's opening something up inside of
me, Jim. It's making it come out.

TEARS flow from Beckett's pink eyes.

JIM
You're still going to get that
dynamite to the generator.

Jim climbs the bell rope, weaving the detonation wire around
it.

JIM (CONT'D)
You'll need cover if you're going
to make it.

Infected start to bang on the outer doors of the church.

JIM (CONT'D)
Go.

INT. CHURCH STEEPLE - CONTINUOUS

Jim closes the hatch behind him. He catches sight of Beckett
running towards the forest.

He gives the CHURCH BELL another RING.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - CONTINUOUS

Beckett runs. The church bell RINGS.

INT. CHURCH STEEPLE - CONTINUOUS

Jim spies a few Infected running after Beckett. He aims his
rifle.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Panting, Beckett quickens his pace.

INT. CHURCH STEEPLE - CONTINUOUS

Jim fixes his gun on one of Beckett's pursuers. BANG! An Infected's head explodes. BANG! Another is ripped in half.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Beckett flinches at the gunshots.

INT. CHURCH STEEPLE - CONTINUOUS

Jim steadies his rifle. BANG! He takes out another Infected.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Beckett suddenly drops the dynamite satchel and heads for a SERVICE VEHICLE. A pair of Infected are on his tail.

INT. CHURCH STEEPLE - CONTINUOUS

JIM

Bastard.

CRASH! The Infected have broken into the church. They charge up the stairs towards Jim's hatch. Jim pulls out his revolver.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Beckett pushes in the STARTER and the engine SPUTTERS.

BECKETT

Come on! Come on!

One of the Infected breaks through the windshield, grabbing Beckett.

INT. CHURCH STEEPLE - CONTINUOUS

Jim looks through the SCOPE: Beckett is being mauled to death.

SCREECH! The hatch bursts open and Jim fires at the onslaught of Infected until the chamber empties.

Jim slams the hatch shut and jams it with his rifle. He unravels the wire that connects the charges to the blasting cap.

The hatch door shakes violently. Jim jumps out of the steeple window.

EXT. CHURCH ROOF - CONTINUOUS

He slides down the roof with detonation wire in hand.

Jim can't stop his slide. He falls onto a NEIGHBORING ROOF.

EXT. HOUSE ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Jim slams against a CHIMNEY. He drops the blasting cap. It rolls towards the edge of the roof. Infected circle on the ground below, waiting for him to fall.

Jim snatches the blasting cap just before it goes over. He pushes the DETONATOR and jumps off the roof.

BOOM! The Church EXPLODES. The FOUNDATION of the house Jim is positioned on gives way, crushing the Infected below.

Jim runs towards the DYNAMITE SATCHEL.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jim passes by Beckett's bloodied corpse and picks up the satchel. He heads for the forest.

EXT. FOREST - LATER

Jim is pouring sweat. SHARP, SHRILL SOUNDS pass through the trees. Jim points his gun at the PHANTOM SOUNDS.

His mind is playing tricks on him. He keeps moving.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - LATER

The climb has steepened. The forest is alive with BUZZING FREQUENCIES.

He hears a twig SNAP. More SNAPPING TWIGS. Jim turns to find Edward coming up behind him, KNIFE in hand.

JIM
Edward...

Jim bends down beside Edward, looking him over for injuries.

JIM (CONT'D)
(signing to Edward)
I told you I'd be back for you.

EDWARD
I wanted to help you.

Jim takes the knife from him.

JIM
(signing)
You alright?

Edward looks at him, SCARED.

JIM (CONT'D)
What is it?

EDWARD
(signing)
Your eyes.

Jim's eyes have started to turn pink. Edward looks back in fear. Infected CRY OUT in the distance.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
They followed me.

Jim pumps his lever action shotgun and checks for SHELLS. Only FOUR remain.

JIM
It's okay. Can you keep a look out?

Edward nods.

JIM (CONT'D)
Good. Let's go.

Jim carries Edward piggy-back up the mountain.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Jim has weakened under the weight of the dynamite and the boy. He sparks a FLARE and hands it to Edward.

A few Infected spot the LIGHT and descend upon them. Edward tenses in fear.

JIM
(signing)
It's okay.

A pair of infected approach quickly. Jim waits. Hands quaking, he can barely steady the shotgun.

Edward SCREAMS and drops his flare.

BOOM! Jim kills both of the Infected with one shot. He reloads. BOOM! Another pair of Infected are blown apart.

Jim opens fire on the surrounding infected with his handgun. The Infected retreat but continue to prowl from a distance.

Edward's flare rolls down the hill into some DRY BRUSH, which instantly CATCHES FIRE.

JIM (CONT'D)
(signing to Edward)
Are you okay?

Edward nods. A GRATING SOUND fills the air. Jim realizes he's grinding his teeth.

JIM (CONT'D)
We have to keep moving.

EXT. ROCKY OUTCROP - LATER

FLAMES and SMOKE fill the sky. Jim and Edward are right beneath the glowing generator. Jim puts Edward down.

JIM
I can't carry you anymore.

Jim falls to one knee. He starts to emit the MONOTONE HUM of the generator.

ROAR! The SKY opens up and rain begins to fall. Jim extends his revolver to Edward. Edward backs away.

JIM (CONT'D)
 (signing)
 Take it.

Edward shakes his head. FLASH! The forest lights up. BOOM!
 THUNDER sounds.

Jim tries to stand but fails.

JIM (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 Stop it.

Edward looks terrified.

JIM (CONT'D)
 (signing)
 I'm alright.

Jim backs away from Edward, but Edward follows.

JIM (CONT'D)
 Stop. Stay there.

Edward collapses against a tree.

JIM (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 Stop it. Please.

Jim tries to plug his ears with soil but fails.

He takes out his stag knife. He flicks open the thin BONE
 SAW.

ROAR! Thunder erupts. Jim sparks another flare, heating the
 blade molten orange over the flame.

Jim bites down on a stick, steadying his hand as he brings
 the blade up to his good ear. ROAR! The sky bellows as Jim
 works the blade into his ear canal.

SSSSSSS! The SOUND of BURNING FLESH. The stick splinters as
 Jim bites through it. He SCREAMS.

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The rain relinquishes the forest fire. ASH covers the
 mountainside.

EXT. ROCKY OUTCROP - AN HOUR LATER

Jim awakens with Edward by his side.

JIM
(signing)
I'm okay now.

EXT. MINE SHAFT - MOMENTS LATER

Jim carries Edward piggy-back. He stops in front of the dark mine opening. Edward shakes his head.

JIM
(signing)
I need to see what's inside.

Jim strikes a FLARE.

JIM (CONT'D)
Keep your eyes closed, I wont let
anything happen to you.

INT. MINE SHAFT - CONTINUOUS

They work their way into the mine. Edward's eyes are shut. A GROUP of 30 or so Infected huddled near the back of the tunnel.

He sees the BALD MINER and YOHAN. He walks closer and finds MRS. CLANCY, the SHOP OWNER, and others. They're docile yet clearly infected.

Jim spots MADDISON.

JIM
Maddison?

She looks back at him with an empty gaze. Jim backs out of the mine.

EXT. VALLEY - DAWN

BOOM! The generator EXPLODES into a massive cloud of rock, smoke and fire.

Jim and Edward watch the fireworks from the valley below.

The ground RUMBLES violently as the mineshaft caves in.

EDWARD
 (signing)
 Was she in there?

Jim hesitates.

JIM
 I didn't see her.

He picks Edward up and walks towards town, holding him tightly.

EXT. EDGE OF RIVER & PEEBLY'S COMPOUND- SUNUP

Jim and Edward emerge from the forest. The Farmer and his family watch as they make their way towards the farmhouses.

There are no survivors on the others side of the river. It's a GHOST TOWN.

The ground RUMBLES. Edward looks back: FOUR PADDY WAGONS roll in V-Formation up the road. The cars split off, encircling the survivors.

The doors swing open and men in TRENCH COATS step out, holding TOMMY GUNS.

The RED LIGHT atop the megaphone pole begins to FLASH as a BROADCAST comes through.

RADIO VOICE
 Broadcasting from Ionia, MO.
 Saturday, January 13th, 1918. This
 radio broadcast serves as an
 indictment of U.S. Power & Electric
 for the destruction of Flat River,
 Missouri. Under false pretenses,
 this company supplied the town of
 Flat River with experimental
 electricity. It has become evident
 that the aforementioned
 experimental electricity is
 responsible for the death of
 hundreds. The violence and
 destruction has been hushed and it
 is the goal of U.S. Power &
 Electric that the events of Flat
 River disappear with its
 inhabitants. There are still
 survivors who remain unaffected.
 The neglect of these people would
 be nothing short of murder.

The BROADCAST LOOPS. The MERCENARIES hesitate. A man wearing a LARGE BRIMMED PANAMA HAT steps out of the LEAD CAR.

He takes off his COAT, revealing a pair of COLT HANDGUNS resting in SHOULDER HOLSTERS.

BOSS
Round them up.

The mercenaries line everybody up. Some try and fight back, but to no avail.

The BOSS walks up to Jim and the boy.

BOSS (CONT'D)
Sorry. It's just business.

Jim meets the man's stare. In a flash, the Boss draws a pistol and brings it to Jim's head.

HENCHMAN
(o.s.)
Car coming up!

The Boss spins his gun back into his holster. PEEBLY drives up in his CADILLAC SIXTY SPECIAL.

PEEBLY steps out of the car, holding a DUFFLE BAG. The Boss stares him down.

BOSS
Who the hell are you?

PEEBLY
I'm the man giving that address.

Peebly motions to the MEGAPHONES.

BOSS
Unfortunately that doesn't change anything.

PEEBLY
Not for you, but for your employers that's another story.

BOSS
What's in the bag?

PEEBLY
That all depends. How much are they paying you?

The Boss eyes Peebly's car.

BOSS
Two and a half large.

Peebly LAUGHS.

PEEBLY
All on the back end I presume?

The Boss nods.

Peebly walks up to him and unlatches the bag, displaying rows of TWENTY DOLLAR BILLS.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)
That's fifty-five hundred up front.

BOSS
For what?

PEEBLY
For leaving them be.

BOSS
The rest?

PEEBLY
For taking care of the men who sent
you here on child's wages.

Peebly extends the bag.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)
I'll pay equal sum upon
termination.

The Boss takes the bag and shakes Peebly's hand.

BOSS
Deal.

PEEBLY
Good. Now tell your men to stand
down.

The Boss motions to his henchmen.

BOSS
(yelling)
Start the cars!

The Boss puts on his coat and opens a passenger side door.

PEEBLY

You make sure to see it through on your end.

BOSS

I shook on it didn't I?

PEEBLY

So did the men you're going to pay a visit to.

The Boss ducks into the car. They drive off.

Peebly walks back to his car. Jim and Edward follow.

JIM

Thank you.

PEEBLY

That corporation deceived me, Jim. A man doesn't take these things quietly.

Peebly leans against the car, tired.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)

There might be other places like Flat River. I could use a good man like you.

Jim looks to Edward.

EDWARD

(signing)

He wants you to go with him.

Jim turns to Peebly and shakes his head.

JIM

I'm staying here.

Peebly nods.

JIM (CONT'D)

There were some without a Mr. Hyde. They're the ones we never got to see. They died in that mine.

Peebly chuckles.

PEEBLY

So much for original sin.

He shakes Jim's hand and gets into his car.

PEEBLY (CONT'D)
To better things, Jim.

Peebly starts the car and drives off.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

DEAD SILENCE:

Peebly's car drives off into the distance.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAYS LATER

Jim and Edward stand by MADISON'S GRAVE. It's beside Edward's father's. Edward lays a VIOLET on top of each.

Jim takes Edward's hand and they walk down the HILL back towards town.

The CAMERA jibs up to reveal TOWNSPEOPLE rebuilding the town, one house at a time.

THE END.