

DEAD HORSE LAKE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. TURTLE FLAMBEAU FLOWAGE - TWILIGHT

A STEADY RHYTHM of waves slap the hull of an expensive Runabout as it cuts across a serpentine Wisconsin north woods lake.

TIFFANY ROGERS, late 20's, is perched atop the seat like a would-be Hollywood starlet riding a Thanksgiving Day float.

TIFFANY
Emil's gonna kill me.

BILLY WADE, early 30's, his hair SLAPPING his threadbare baseball cap, absently chews gum in sync with the rhythm of the waves.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Did you hear me? Emil's going to
kill me.

BILLY
Tell him the bridge on County K is
still out.

TIFFANY
I told him that last time.
(pause)
We should have driven.

BILLY
Yeah, well, the bridge *is* still
out. And this *is* still faster than
driving all the way 'round.

TIFFANY
(sighing)
It's so beautiful here. So
peaceful. They could have come up
with a better name.

BILLY
Donner's Bay?

TIFFANY
Dead Horse.

BILLY
Dead Horse Lake? That's the next
one over.

TIFFANY

Oh. Are you sure it's okay to use
the boat? Looks expensive.

BILLY

That's because it is expensive.

TIFFANY

We're not going to get in any
trouble are we? I can't believe
Emil just gave this to you.

BILLY

He didn't just give it to me. It's
for a job.

TIFFANY

What kind of job?

Billy chews his gum.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

He must trust you.

She watches the rhythm of his jaws for any acknowledgement.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

You're very handsome. Like a ship's
Captain. Driving with the wind in
your hair and the sunset kissing
your face.

BILLY

I'm not driving. You drive a car-

TIFFANY

Driving. Captaining-

BILLY

Piloting.

TIFFANY

Piloting, whatever. I wish we
weren't late.

BILLY

We?

TIFFANY

I.

(beat)

I don't want to go to work. A night
like this. The sunset. The stars.
This boat.

(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Everything is so perfect. So
beautiful. God, I really want to
blow you right now.

She reaches over and grabs his crotch.

BILLY
(grins)
That's why you're late to start
with.

She fake pouts. Listening to the water SLAP THE HULL, she
runs her hand along the stitching on the side of her seat.

TIFFANY
Is this real leather?

Billy nods.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Emil's going to be so mad. Is the
bridge really out, or are you just
saying that?

BILLY
The bridge is really out.

TIFFANY
God, it smells so good out here. So
fresh, so clean-
(beat)
You better hurry up. Emil's going
to kill me.

EXT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Billy docks at the end of a crowded pier and throws a line to
a beefy BOUNCER.

Tiffany grabs her back pack, kisses Billy's cheek and reaches
to the Bouncer to help her onto the pier.

TIFFANY
Bye, love.

BOUNCER
Hey Tif, Emil's been looking for
you. He's on the warpath.

TIFFANY
The bridge is still out.

BOUNCER

That's what I told him. Sweet ride,
Billy.

Billy nods as he pulls the rope astern and throttles the boat back into the lake.

EXT. LAKE FRONT MANSION - SUNRISE

Mist chokes the rising sun. The Runabout is tethered to a private dock.

Billy loads fishing gear into the boat and then helps a 20-something HIPSTER on board, tossing him a life vest.

BILLY

Here. Wear this.

HIPSTER

Seriously?

He eyes the orange vest like a kid eyes broccoli.

BILLY

Safety first. No one gives a rat's ass what you look like.

Billy doesn't wait and pulls the boat out from the dock. The Hipster falls backward into the hull and begrudgingly puts the life vest on as the boat disappears into the mist.

EXT. TURTLE FLAMBEAU FLOWAGE - EARLY MORNING

Billy carefully navigates the boat through the flowage.

HIPSTER

God damn, this is early.

BILLY

Fishin's best now.

Rotting tree stumps jut out of the shallow waters, the boat occasionally SCRAPES along swamped timber.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Keep an eye out for submerged tree trunks. Running one would definitely be very not good.

As the hipster watches rotting tree trunks on his side, Billy notices a HAND GUN holstered beneath the hipster's jacket.

HIPSTER
Why they call it "Dead Horse" Lake?

BILLY
My guess is because horses died in it.

HIPSTER
Geez. You think?

Billy steers the Roundabout into a secluded cove, cuts the engine and lets the boat drift alongside a submerged tree.

HIPSTER (CONT'D)
This a good spot for muskie?

Billy throws the anchor over and busies himself in the back of the boat, pulling out FISHING RODS AND A TACKLE BOX.

BILLY
Too shallow for muskie. But it's lousy with small mouth.

HIPSTER
Cool. Is this your 'secret fishing hole'?

BILLY
Nope.

HIPSTER
No? I thought all you guys have a favorite fishing spot, right?

BILLY
Yup.

HIPSTER
So why don't we go there?

BILLY
You're not paying me enough to take you there.

He hands the hipster a fishing rod and sorts through the tackle.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Start over there. Near the stumps closest to the bow.

The hipster obediently throws the line toward the bow.

Billy pulls out a LARGE HOOKED LURE and ties it to his line, but accidentally snags his thumb on one of the barbed hooks.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Fuck me.

The hipster turns, see the BLOOD on Billy's hand.

HIPSTER
Dude, you okay?

Billy ignores him, sucks the blood off his thumb and finishes tying the lure. The hipster shrugs and turns back toward the bow.

HIPSTER (CONT'D)
Dude. This God's country shit beats the hell out of sitting in traffic all day. But you gotta do something about the time. This shit's too early, bro--

Billy stands and carefully aims his rod toward the bow- and the hipster.

HIPSTER (CONT'D)
Train the fish to work later in the day, around the noon hour. That way, they're fresher for dinner. That's what I say. It's too goddamn early for this shit--

With an assured flip of his wrist, Billy whips the lure forward - HOOKING the hipster's cheek. BLOOD gushes down his face.

HIPSTER (CONT'D)
(screams)
AWW, FUCK!

BILLY
Oh my God, I'm sorry! Hold still--

Billy reaches forward, as if to help, but instead grabs the gun. He steps back and points it at the man's bleeding head.

HIPSTER
What the--

BILLY
Your keys.

HIPSTER
Are you fuckin' kidding me?

BILLY

The keys. I need the keys.

HIPSTER

You're Emil's boy?

The hipster begrudgingly digs a set of keys out of his pocket and holds them out toward Billy.

HIPSTER (CONT'D)

You don't have to do this.

BILLY

Drop them. Now. Or I blow sunlight through your skull.

HIPSTER

Seriously, dude. You do not have to do this-

BILLY

I'm not going to ask again.

HIPSTER

You do know you're stealing from Mitch. No one steals from Mitch.

BILLY

Toss 'em here.

The hipster defiantly drops the keys instead.

HIPSTER

You kill me, you're a fucking dead--

In one sure move, Billy throws his weight to the side of the boat-

- and fires the gun -

BAM!

He purposely shoots past the hipster's head, toward shore.

Instinctively jerking away from the gunshot, the hipster over-corrects his weight in the rocking boat and falls overboard --

-- IMPALING himself on a jagged half-submerged tree stump.

Billy pockets the keys.

He tosses the fishing rod - with the lure still snagged in the hipster's cheek - overboard - and pulls anchor.

Billy grabs a gaffing hook and uses it to pull the boat to a clump of pine branches near shore. An OLD DENTED ALUMINUM UTILITY BOAT is hidden beneath.

He snags it and pulls it toward the Hipster.

He pushes down on the stern, swamping the tiny boat until it sinks into the lake muck with just its bow sticking out.

The Hipster mouths 'help,' but nothing comes out but a dribble of blood.

Billy throttles the boat back into the flowage, the wake washing over the dying man-

-and tosses the gun over the side.

EXT. LAKE SIDE MANSION - DAY

Billy docks the Runabout and saunters to the driveway and a new BMW.

Using the hipster's keys, he unlocks the BMW's trunk, and pulls out a stuffed duffle bag. He unzips it- it's gorged with fat rolls of cash.

Satisfied, he locks it back up and tosses the duffle in the boat and speeds off across the lake.

EXT. BOTTOM'S UP PARKING LOT - DAY

Billy parks an old beater pick-up truck and saunters in, duffle bag in hand, nodding to the bouncer at the entrance.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - DAY

Billy breezes through the club, ignoring the patrons at the bar and the exotic dancers on stage.

COCKTAIL WAITRESS

Hi, Billy.

He smiles charmingly at the waitress as he heads toward a cramped back office.

Tiffany, dressed in a skimpy cocktail waitress outfit, smiles at him as he passes by.

He nods to the White Trash Heavy guarding the door and saunters in.

INT. EMIL'S OFFICE - DAY

EMIL BOTTOMS, a pudgy man with sweaty hands and eczema, has the bad habit of running his tongue over his bottom lip when he's nervous, or horny.

He sits behind a desk in an oversized office chair like a tin pot dictator after the palace coup.

BIG JIMMY, Emil's Ojibwe office manager, sits dutifully on an old sofa. He's got a SOLID GOLD TOOTH and wears a pair of CHEAP SUNGLASSES, the kind college kids buy at CVS on the first day of spring break.

EMIL

Right on time.

Billy drops the duffle bag on Emil's desk and takes a seat on the couch.

EMIL (CONT'D)

Did he give you any trouble?

BILLY

No, sir.

EMIL

Will he be any trouble tomorrow?

BILLY

No, sir. Looks like he had an accident fishing. That's what I hear.

EMIL

That's too bad.

(breaks into a grin)

Just goes to show you how dangerous the great outdoors can be - specially when you've spent your whole life playing goddamn video games. Stupid FIB.

Emil casually looks inside the duffle and tosses it to the Ojibwe. Big Jimmy pulls out fist sized rolls of cash.

BILLY

I counted it. It's all there.

EMIL

Of course. I'd expect nothing less. You want a drink? You're a To-kill-a-ya man, right?

BILLY

No thanks. Not when I'm on the
clock.

EMIL

Jimmy, get us all a round of shots.
Straight up. No produce.

Big Jimmy saunters to the door, says something to the White Trash Heavy, then saunters back to the sofa and sits.

EMIL (CONT'D)

That's what I like about you,
Billy. You're a professional.
Through and through. You don't mix
work and pleasure. I like that
about you. You know how many guys
don't get that? You'd be surprised.
Stupid kids today. God damn punk-
ass entitled little bastards. Am I
right?

BIG JIMMY

You're right.

EMIL

You're damn right I'm right. Think
the rules don't apply to them. But
not you, Billy, not you-

The White Trash Heavy opens the door and Tiffany enters,
carrying a tray of tequila shots.

Emil eyes her as she sets the drinks on the table. He
absently rolls his tongue over his lower lip-

EMIL (CONT'D)

You're a true professional. Totally
old school. I respect that.

TIFFANY

Anything else, Mr. Bottoms?

EMIL

Not yet, darling, not yet. You can
leave the bottle.

TIFFANY

Yes, sir.

He can't take his eyes off her as she leaves.

EMIL

God damn. Where were we? Oh, yes,
to a job well done. Cheers.

He lifts his shot glass and Big Jimmy and Billy follow, but
Billy sets his down without drinking.

EMIL (CONT'D)

(to Big Jimmy)

See what I mean? A total
professional. He does what he says.
Didn't take a sip. Not one God damn
sip.

BILLY

Yeah, well, if that's all, I'll be-

Billy smiles and gets up, puts on his sunglasses and heads
for the door.

EMIL

I bought you a shot of To-kill-ya
to celebrate our good fortune and
you insult me by not drinking it?
Who the fuck do you think you are?

Billy stops mid-stride. Turns. Smiles.

BILLY

(congenial)

I'm the guy you can count on to
always get the job done. Always.

EMIL

Then drink your God damn tequila.

Still smiling, Billy looks charmingly to Big Jimmy, and back
to Emil.

BILLY

Yes, sir. My apologies to you both.

Billy throws back the shot, carefully sets it upside down on
the corner of Emil's desk and heads for the door.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Thank you kindly.

(he winks at Emil)

Just don't tell my boss I drank on
the job. I told him I wouldn't.

Emil bursts out laughing.

EMIL

See that Big Jimmy? A total
professional. He does what I say.
Always. Hey, Billy--

Billy pauses in the open doorway.

BILLY

(still smiling)
Yeah, boss?

Emil tosses him a roll of cash.

EMIL

I told you- stick with me and
you'll go places. Swing by Friday
night after hours. We need to
celebrate.

Billy nods as he exits.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - DAY

Billy leaves his smile at Emil's door.

As he leaves, he locks eyes with Tiffany as she serves a table.

She smiles warmly at him as he passes.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - NIGHT

Billy enters, grabs a beer out of the fridge, pulls the roll of cash from his pocket and counts it.

He pulls a chair away from the wall, pulls the vent plate off the heating duct, and pulls out a shoe box.

The word, "Someday" and a drawing of a muskie is scribbled in Sharpie on the side. It's full of cash - \$100 bills.

CAR HEADLIGHTS shine on the wall as he hears a car approach.

He quickly stashes the cash and hides the box back in the wall.

EXT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - NIGHT

An older model car pulls up in front of Billy's driveway.

Tiffany, exhausted, pulls herself out of the back seat, slams the door, then remembers she forgot her backpack, before dragging herself down the driveway.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - NIGHT

Tiffany sleepily enters Billy's bedroom and dumps her backpack on the floor.

TIFFANY
(yawning)
Hi darling, I'm home.

She pulls her clothes off and lays face down on top of a sleeping Billy, laying her head on his chest.

He awakens, cracking an eye open.

BILLY
(drowsily)
Hi, darlin'--

He hears her SNORING LIGHTLY, and falls back asleep.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - MORNING

Billy wakes up to see Tiffany, smiling at him.

BILLY
Morning.

She kisses him.

TIFFANY
Good mornin'. You're cute when you sleep. You know that? You remind me of a little kid.

She rolls over and finger-kisses A PHOTO of a younger Billy on the nightstand. He's in combat gear, smiling, with two other young men. It's the only framed photo in the trailer.

BILLY
Nope. I was never a kid. I was born like this.

TIFFANY
Bullshit. I bet you were adorable when you was a kid.

BILLY

Darling, my momma always told me there are two kinds of babies born into this world. Little ones that are born ugly - that grow up to be beautiful and little ones that are born beautiful - and grow up to be the worst butt-ugly folk you ever laid eyes on.

TIFFANY

Oh, yeah?

BILLY

Yup. She loved telling anyone that'd listen that I was the most beautiful baby ever born.

Tiffany snorts a laugh and tosses a pillow at him.

TIFFANY

She did not say that.

BILLY

It's true. Every word.

TIFFANY

Well, you prove her wrong. I bet you were a beautiful baby *and* you're beautiful now.

BILLY

Let's not get carried away.

TIFFANY

Okay, maybe not beautiful. But handsome and sexy.

(she kisses him lustfully)
The kind of handsome and sexy that will make beautiful babies.

BILLY

Whoa. Stop right there. I mean it. You and me. This is what it is. Nothing more. You hear me.

TIFFANY

I hear you. I'm just talking. I didn't mean no nothing by it. I can play if I want to.

BILLY

Yeah, and playin' turns to serious real fast.

TIFFANY

I know, but don't you ever want to settle down, plant some roots and start a family?

BILLY

I'm serious. Knock it off. Jesus Christ, we can barely take care of ourselves.

TIFFANY

Well I been thinking about that-
Just hear me out-

BILLY

You've been thinking about what?

TIFFANY

I'm twenty-six years old.

(beat)

Okay, twenty-nine, if you count all of 'em. And yes, I'm allowed to think about it. All girls do.

BILLY

Okay. So think this through. I get you knocked up and then what? What kind of tips you expecting then? You think guys want to be served drinks at a strip club by some big old pregnant chick?

TIFFANY

No. But, that ain't what I was getting at-

BILLY

Hell, let's say you spit out a kid. You think Emil's gonna start a day care?

TIFFANY

That's not fair. If you'd let me finish, I'd tell ya what I was going to tell you.

BILLY

What?

(beat)

What??

TIFFANY

You done man-splainin' my life to me?

Billy doesn't say a word.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Emil has a safe in the back office.
Big Jimmy had it open last night
and was tossing piles of cash in
it. He wasn't even counting it.
Just tossing it in. By the fistful.

BILLY

Stop.

TIFFANY

Baby, we could take some of it and
go off and start a new life.

BILLY

Are you insane?

TIFFANY

No I am not.

BILLY

You need to stop. Right now. Get
these crazy thoughts out of your
head.

TIFFANY

They're not crazy. Emil's so stoned
half the time, he won't miss it.

BILLY

Emil will kill you.

TIFFANY

But-

BILLY

No buts. Just stop!

TIFFANY

Yeah, but-

BILLY

I SAID STOP!

TIFFANY

Why you so worked up?

BILLY

You're not hearing me. Emil will
kill you. And I ain't plannin' on
knocking you up.

He storms out of the trailer.

TIFFANY

I'm just supposin' out loud. I
don't mean nothing by it. I'm not
stupid, you know.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB DRESSING ROOM - LATE
AFTERNOON

Tiffany arrives to work, nods to HAVANA, a stripper doing her
make-up at the mirror, and dumps her backpack in the corner.

She starts changing into her cocktail outfit, but is
surprised when Emil strides into the room.

EMIL

I need you to pull a double shift.
Jodi's a no show again.

HAVANA

I can't. I gotta pick up my kid.

He turns and sees Tiffany.

EMIL

Hey, angel.

He can't take his eyes off of the half dressed Tiffany.

EMIL (CONT'D)

(to Havana)

I'm not asking you. I'm telling
you. Have the kid's daddy pick 'em
up.

HAVANA

Kinda' hard when he ain't due for
parole for another two years.

EMIL

Sucks to be you. You're on in five.

He turns and leaves.

HAVANA

Asshole.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMAN'S CLUB - LATE AFTERNOON

Tiffany works behind the bar.

EMIL
Tonic with lime.

Emil takes a seat at the bar and watches her work.

TIFFANY
Sure you don't want anything
stronger?

EMIL
Nice up-sell. Sure. Vodka. Tito's.

He ogles her body as she turns to grab the bottle from the top shelf.

EMIL (CONT'D)
You ever think about dancing?

TIFFANY
Me? God, no.

EMIL
Why not?

TIFFANY
Trust me. No one wants to see me
dance naked on stage.

EMIL
You underestimate yourself.

TIFFANY
Do I?

EMIL
Sure.

TIFFANY
I don't know. Have you seen me
dance? I look like I'm having a
seizure.

As she sets the drink in front of him, Emil puts his hand on top of hers.

EMIL
Bring it to my office, angel.

He doesn't wait for a response and heads to his office.

TIFFANY
Um. Okay, sure.

She grabs a cocktail tray and extra napkins and takes the drink to the back office.

INT. EMIL'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Emil's at his desk when Tiffany enters.

EMIL
Just set it over here.

He stands and comes around the desk as she sets the drink down. She turns to leave, but Emil grabs her ass.

EMIL (CONT'D)
Nice. Firm. Very nice.

TIFFANY
(stunned)
Is that all, Mr. Bottoms?

He nods as he runs his fingers through his thinning hair and watches her hurry for the door.

EMIL
You're a smart kid. You can go far here- sky's the limit. It's your call.

TIFFANY
Excuse me, Mr. Bottoms?

EMIL
Emil. Call me Emil.

TIFFANY
Emil.

EMIL
I meant what I said out there. You should consider dancing. You can make money with that pretty little ass of yours. Good money.

TIFFANY
I'm real happy tending bar and waiting tables, Mr. Bottom- Emil. Seriously.

EMIL
I'm serious, too. If you're shy or got the jitters to work through, you can practice in here. In private. With me.

TIFFANY

That's mighty kind, sir.

EMIL

Emil.

TIFFANY

Emil.

EMIL

Like I said, you seem like a smart girl. The sky's the limit. It's your call.

She stops at the door, hesitates, then turns back and gives him a quick kiss on the cheek and leaves.

TIFFANY

Thank you, sir. I'm flattered.

EMIL

Give it some thought. I don't offer private lessons to just anyone.

In the hallway outside the office, she passes the White Trash Heavy and smiles-

Then collapses against the wall.

INT. RAY'S BAIT AND BOAT SHOP - LATE AFTERNOON

Billy works on an outboard motor engine when the BELL on the front door rings.

A TOURIST enters and stands looking around. He's dressed right out of an LL Bean catalogue.

BILLY

I'll be right up in a second. Just finishing up.

The Tourist nods and starts wandering the storefront. Billy grabs a greasy rag and heads up front.

BILLY (CONT'D)

What can I do you for?

Tourist dumps a container of live bait on the counter and pulls out an AMEX Black Card.

TOURIST

What's the nearest place to get vegan cheese curds?

BILLY

Vegan cheese curds? Down in Madison. If you're hungry, try Norwood Pines Supper Club. Best fish fry this side of Green Bay. We don't take AMEX. Got anything else?

Annoyed, the Tourist pulls out a wad of cash.

TOURIST

Do they serve anything not fried?

BILLY

Thanks. Not sure. But I know they serve Bears fans.

Billy smiles, laying on the charm, as he makes change.

TOURIST

Thanks.

BILLY

You're welcome. Good fishing.
Enjoy, now.

As he leaves, RAY WHITE enters, holds the door for him. Ray is the shop's owner, 60's, and was born wearing flannel.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Hey, Ray.

He heads behind the register and checks a three ring binder.

RAY

Busy day?

BILLY

Typical. That outboard's almost done. Just need to clean it up a bit. Hey, Ray?

RAY

Jah.

BILLY

Sorry I was late yesterday. No excuses.

RAY

No worries. You mix it up with the Misses?

Ray looks up as he scribbles notes in the binder.

BILLY

Something like that.

RAY

You still 'hookin' up' with that cocktail waitress?

BILLY

Yup. That's what I get for not locking my door at night.

RAY

Just remember, if you want to keep 'em, you got to treat 'em right. Let 'em know you care. Sweet talk 'em a bit. They like shit like that. Pick 'em up and hold 'em when they're down. Listen to 'em. You got to let 'em know they're special, ya' know?

Billy nods.

RAY (CONT'D)

Them? They just got to show up naked with a six pack.

Ray winks and starts for the back garage.

BILLY

Oh. Hey, Ray. That utility boat rental was a no show this morning.

RAY

They're probably sleeping off a hangover. If it's not back by end of day tomorrow, call it in as stolen.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Emil watches Tiffany tend bar. He can't take his eyes off her.

EXT. BOTTOM'S UP PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Big Jimmy kills the neon sign as he ushers the last dancers out the front door. Tiffany bums a ride home with Havana.

TIFFANY

Thanks. I appreciate it.

HAVANA

It's no problem, love. You're right on the way. And, I'm so damn tired, you help me keep awake.

They pull out of the parking lot and pass Big Jimmy walking on the roadside.

TIFFANY

We should give him a ride.

HAVANA

Seriously? He gives me the creeps.

TIFFANY

Would you want to walk home, alone, this late?

Havana sighs, pulls over.

HAVANA

Any creepy ass shit from him and he's out-

Tiffany rolls the window down as Big Jimmy approaches.

TIFFANY

Hi Big Jimmy, need a ride?

Big Jimmy doesn't say a word, but gets in the tiny car.

HAVANA

You're welcome.

TIFFANY

I was just saying how bad it is to have to walk home this late, specially in the middle of nowhere.

HAVANA

You know, wolves and rapists and shit.

TIFFANY

Yeah, these woods give me the creeps at night.

HAVANA

They're creepy as fuck.

There's an uncomfortable pause in the conversation as Big Jimmy watches shadows blur by his window.

BIG JIMMY
Wolves are spirit animals.

Havana mouths "spirit animal?" to Tiffany. There's an awkward silence.

TIFFANY
So, where do you live?

Big Jimmy doesn't say anything.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
I mean, where do you want us to
drop you off?

BIG JIMMY
Up the road.

HAVANA
Where up the road?

BIG JIMMY
I'll tell you when we're there.

More awkward silence as they drive.

TIFFANY
So, Jimmy, I have to tell you, I
think you have the hardest job at
the club. I mean, you pretty much
run the place for Emil. I don't
think he appreciates all you do.
You deal with all the bar vendors,
schedule the girls, count and put
away all that cash Emil's always
leaving around the office- you
clean up all his, er - messes. He
should treat you nicer. Maybe give
you a raise.

HAVANA
Fucker should give us all raises-

Tiffany shoots her a look: be nice.

HAVANA (CONT'D)
What? He should. Share some love.
That's all I'm saying, girl.

TIFFANY
Anyway, I'm just saying. I think
you have the hardest job at the
club.

Big Jimmy doesn't say a word.

HAVANA

Speaking of hard. Did you see that flatlander kid during my set tonight? Trying to act all cool, strolling up to the stage pitching a tent through his shorts the whole time?

TIFFANY

No. I missed it-

HAVANA

(laughing)

You and most everybody. You had to get up and look real close - the darlin' had the cutest little pup tent!

TIFFANY

That's funny, girlfriend. Poor kid. Probably his first time in a --

BIG JIMMY

Stop here.

HAVANA

Here? There's no here, here. We're still in the middle of nowhere.

BIG JIMMY

Here.

She pulls the car over to the side of the desolate road.

BIG JIMMY (CONT'D)

Thanks, girlfriend.

HAVANA

I ain't your girlfriend.

(beat)

Not yet anyway. You gotta give me one rock-hard reason or a cottage with a guest room to call me girlfriend.

Tiffany and Havana laugh.

TIFFANY

You sure this is right? There's nothing here.

BIG JIMMY
It's right.

He gets out and the women watch him walk into the woods.

In the distance a wolf HOWLS as Havana pulls back onto the road.

HAVANA
You know what I told you about that
creepy-ass shit?

TIFFANY
I hope he's gonna be okay.

HAVANA
Really?

TIFFANY
Yeah. This place ain't nice at
night.

HAVANA
Ain't nice? Girl, were you raised
on a rainbow? Shit.

They drive for a bit, each lost in their thoughts.

HAVANA (CONT'D)
So, what do ya' mean Emil leaves
piles of cash around his office?
How much cash?

TIFFANY
A lot. More money than I ever seen.
I mean, I bet there's enough to pay
the entire staff- for a couple
years.

HAVANA
God damn. And that son of a bitch
won't give me a break to pick my
kid up from day care? He's a bigger
asshole than he already is.

INT. DINER - DAY

Tiffany and Billy eat breakfast at a greasy spoon across the street from Ray's Bait and Boat Shop.

TIFFANY

Did you know that not one cell in your body is the same as when you were born? It's true. I ain't making it up. We're one hundred percent completely different people from how we started out.

BILLY

Guess that explains how I can fit in these adult sized clothes now.

TIFFANY

You're making fun of me. I think it's pretty cool. Think about it. If our bodies can completely remake themselves, how come we can't do that with our lives?

BILLY

I don't know. Why?

TIFFANY

That was a rhetorical question, Billy Wade. We can change. We just got to will it to happen first.

Billy GRUNTS as he shovels eggs in his mouth.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

That's my plan, anyway.

(beat)

Hey, you know that picture next to your bed? Where was that taken?

BILLY

Fallujah.

TIFFANY

Did you like being a soldier?

BILLY

Like? No one likes being a soldier.

(beat)

You could say I was good at following orders.

TIFFANY

Who are the guys in the photo with you?

BILLY

Friends.

TIFFANY

How come you never talk about them?

BILLY

Cause they're dead.

She watches him eat. Is going to say something, decides against it.

A Porsche SUV pulls up to Ray's and two tourists go inside.

TIFFANY

Wow. That's a fancy-pants car.

BILLY

A Porsche Cayenne E-Hybrid Sports Utility Vehicle, platinum edition. Has 670 horse power and can tow over seven thousand pounds.

TIFFANY

That's one nice car. How much do you think a car like that costs?

BILLY

That's ninety-five thousand dollars off the lot.

TIFFANY

For a car?

BILLY

For a plug in hybrid sports utility vehicle.

TIFFANY

Looks like a car.

(beat)

Who has that kind of money for a fancy car like that?

BILLY

That's stupid money.

TIFFANY

Stupid money. I want to make stupid money.

BILLY

Darling, it takes brains or a silver spoon to make stupid money like that.

TIFFANY

I got brains. You got brains. And we're both hard workers- specially you.

BILLY

That SUV's never been off road once. Never has, never will. I got no respect for those posers bringing a vehicle like that up here. Shit, they ain't towing no seven thousand pound boat with that. They could, but wouldn't know a tow bar from a crow bar. They'll rent a boat from Ray and I'll end up taking their sorry fat asses out fishing. Shit. I bet they can't even bait their own fishing line.

TIFFANY

But that's good work for you. You get to do what you love-

BILLY

You think I love having to listen to them brag about how much money they drop? Shit. They're just showing off how rich they are, blowing money on a trophy vehicle that looks good, but never gets used properly.

TIFFANY

Kind of like a trophy wife-

BILLY

Exactly like a trophy wife. That six hundred horse power engine and twenty-one year old ass each get played with for a year or so while they're new then get put away in their own fancy room in an obnoxious cookie-cutter McMansion-- just roll 'em out when you need to impress some fat bastard that don't give a rat's ass about you.

TIFFANY

Billy Wade. I like when you get all fired up.

BILLY

Big fake tits or big fake utility vehicles. That's all I'm saying.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)
It's all the same. It ain't real.
It's all illusion. They no better
than us.

TIFFANY
But still, that's one fancy car.
I'd like to be seen in a car like
that someday.

BILLY
Ain't you hear a word I said?

TIFFANY
Yeah, I heard you. You're telling
me you don't like putting worms on
another man's hook and that you're
damn lucky to have these
spectacularly beautiful - and real -
breasts in your bed every night.

A police car pulls up to the diner and two cops enter,
heading to the counter. One sees Billy and stops.

OFFICER
Billy.

BILLY
Jesse. Afternoon.

OFFICER
Hey, do you know if Ray's missing
any rentals?

BILLY
As a matter of fact, he is. A
little aluminum beater was due back
two days ago. If it's not returned
by end of day, he asked me to
report it to you guys.

OFFICER
No need. We found it. Far end of
the flowage, this side of Dead
Horse Lake.

BILLY
Oh good. I'll swing by this
afternoon to pick it up-

OFFICER
We can't let you have it just yet.

BILLY
Why's that?

OFFICER

'Cause we found it half sunk with a
dead guy in it.

TIFFANY

Oh my God-

BILLY

Shit.

TIFFANY

What happened?

OFFICER

Not sure. Looks like your renter
probably had one too many edibles.
Fell overboard and tangled with the
wrong end of a submerged tree
stump. Mind if we stop by after
lunch and look at your rental
order?

BILLY

Sure, no problem. I'll have it
pulled for you before you even tap
a piece of Amy's rhubarb pie.

OFFICER

Thanks, Billy. Ma'am.

The officer joins his partner at the lunch counter.

TIFFANY

Oh my God, that's terrible. I
wonder if it's someone we know.

BILLY

Just another rich dumb ass FIB that
couldn't bait his own hook. You
done?

TIFFANY

No.

BILLY

I better go grab that paperwork and
let Ray know he's out a week's
rental.

Billy heads out. Tiffany watches him cross the street. He
holds the bait shop's door open for the two exiting tourists.

Tiffany watches intently as the Porsche drives away.

TIFFANY

Maybe it is stupid money, but
stupid's so good lookin'-

EXT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER'S BOAT DOCK - DAY

Billy and Tiffany sun themselves on the end of the pier.

Tiffany takes off her sunglasses and eyes Billy. She gently blows on his face to see if he's awake. There's no reaction.

She blows a bit harder until he crinkles his nose and cracks open an eye.

BILLY

I killed the last person to do
that.

She smiles and kisses him.

TIFFANY

Ain't you the tough guy.

BILLY

Go ahead. Poke the bear.

She climbs on top of him, leans in close, and blows on his face again.

TIFFANY

I never been poked by no bear
before-

She nibbles his ear-

BILLY

Oh yes you have-

TIFFANY

Oh yeah?

He rolls on top of her. He kisses her.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Some tough guy. You ain't so tough.
Just a big ol' teddy bear-

He looks into her eyes. Smiles.

And PUSHES her off the dock, into the lake.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Oh my God!!

Billy grins and lays back down as she splashes about.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
You're such dick! I can't believe
you did that-

She slips under the water.

She pops up flailing, gulping more water than air.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Did you hear me- what a dick move!

BILLY
(to himself, pleased)
Yeah, yeah.

She slips back under-

The splashing stops.

Air bubbles gurgle up-

Billy stretches out, yawns-

The air bubbles stop-

It's quiet-

-Just water lapping against the dock.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(eyes still closed)
I told ya' not to mess with me.

More quiet.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Tif?

Nothing.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Stop messing around, darlin'-

He sits up-

BILLY (CONT'D)
Tif?

No response.

He hops to a crouching position-

BILLY (CONT'D)
Darlin'? C'mon.
(beat)
This ain't funny now-

He doesn't see Tiffany sneak back up the dock behind him.

She shoves him as hard as she can into the water-

TIFFANY
Oh, who's the tough guy now, eh?

But as he falls, he grabs her arm and pulls her in with him-

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Aghhhh-

She bellyflops back into the lake.

BILLY
I warned you not to poke the bear-

She playfully spits water at him.

TIFFANY
Yeah, yeah, all this big talk about
poking. I'm still waiting-

She wraps her arms around him. They kiss.

Still kissing, she pulls him down, under the water-

I/E. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - LATE AFTERNOON

Billy and Tiffany sleep in each other's arms, spent after
making love all afternoon.

A CAR HORN cuts the silence-

Tiffany bolts upright. The CAR HORN blares again-

HAVANA (O.S.)
Hey, Tiffany! Hurry up, we're late,
girl!!

TIFFANY
Oh shit, oh shit, oh shittidy-shit-

She jumps up, trips over the mattress as she scrambles out of
bed. Billy wakes up, slaps her butt as she climbs over him,
grabbing for her clothes.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
(to Billy)
Go stall her, babe. Please.

Tiffany rushes into the bathroom as Billy yawns and saunters naked to the front screen door.

BILLY
Hey, Havana. Tiff will be right out-

Havana sees Billy naked in the doorway, lays off the car horn-

HAVANA
(grinning)
What'cha guys doing?

BILLY
Afternoon swim lessons.

HAVANA
Swimming lessons? That's what we're
going with?

BILLY
Yup.

HAVANA
Where do I sign up? You think you
can teach this girl to swim?

BILLY
A girl like you can't swim?

HAVANA
Never had a proper lesson-

Tiffany appears in the doorway, backpack in hand.

TIFFANY
Behave, you-

She kisses Billy, slaps his ass as she hurries by, and piles into Havana's car.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
And you- you do too know how to
swim.

HAVANA
Uh, uh, girl. Can't swim a lick-

TIFFANY
Well, get your own swim instructor.
Mine's taken-

Billy watches them drive off. Scratching his butt, he heads to the kitchen.

I/E. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Billy's beater truck pulls into the busy parking lot.

Billy cleans up well. He's dressed to the nines: Custom made alligator cowboy boots, Italian jeans, and western shirt with hand stitched skull and roses embroidery. He looks like a million bucks.

He swaggers across the parking lot, past a line of patrons waiting to get in.

BOUNCER

Hey, Billy.

Billy nods as the Bouncer lets him in, striding through the bar like he owns it.

COCKTAIL WAITRESS

Hi, Billy.

He winks. Without losing a beat, he struts up to the end of the bar past a "Reserved" sign and takes a seat.

Tiffany works the bar. She smiles and brings him a bottle of Patrón and a glass, brushing his hand with hers.

TIFFANY

Patrón on the house. If it's not to your liking, you can have anything behind the bar. Anything.

The guy sitting next to Billy raises an envious eyebrow.

BILLY

Patrón's fine, darlin'.

INT. EMIL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Emil shoves piles of cash into the corner safe as Tiffany enters with a cocktail tray full of drinks.

EMIL

Shut the door behind you.

TIFFANY

Yes, sir. You asked for a vodka tonic-

He closes the safe, turns to Tiffany like a puma eyeing prey.

EMIL

Set it on my desk. So, angel, have you given more thought to my generous offer to coach your soon-to-be incredibly successful dance career?

He circles her like a shark.

TIFFANY

Well, sir. Yes, I have-

EMIL

Oh good. First lesson: presentation-

He reaches up and unbuttons the top button of her blouse. Tiffany fumbles her cocktail tray as she uses it as a shield between them.

TIFFANY

Sir. Mister Bottoms, no-

EMIL

Emil.

He hands her the drink she just placed on the desk, so both hands are full.

TIFFANY

Emil. I have given it lots of thought and like I- sir?

Emil reaches up and unbuttons another button.

EMIL

Let's see what you got, angel.

TIFFANY

Mister Bottoms- No- Emil-

Without permission, he gropes her, pulls her close and kisses her-

There's a KNOCK and Big Jimmy enters holding his phone up in the air.

BIG JIMMY

Boss, it's- Whoa, sorry.

EMIL

What is it? Can't you see I'm busy-

BIG JIMMY
Sorry, it's Mitch-

EMIL
Take a message.

BIG JIMMY
I tried. Says it's urgent. Wants
his money-

EMIL
Take a God damn message! I'm busy
here-

BIG JIMMY
But it's Mitch.

Tiffany regains her composure, sets Emil's drink down and hightails it out of the office.

EMIL
Fuck.

He looks at Big Jimmy still holding the phone.

EMIL (CONT'D)
Fuck!!

Enraged, he grabs the phone and hurls at the far wall.

EMIL (CONT'D)
FUCK!!!

Get the fuck out. Now.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Billy watches Tiffany from across the crowded bar.

She heads back to the bar, avoiding eye contact with him.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - NIGHT

Tiffany quietly enters the bedroom, slips off her clothes and lays down next to Billy, as not to wake him.

She can't sleep. Her hand shakes and she squeezes it tight. It doesn't help.

She stares at the moonlight dancing on the ceiling.

Billy, on his side, opens his eyes, too. He listens to her breathing-

BILLY
Everything alright, darlin'?

TIFFANY
Yeah.

She caresses his arm.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Love you, babe.

INT. DINER - DAY

Billy and Tiffany eat breakfast in silence.

TIFFANY
I need to talk to you about
something.

BILLY
What?

TIFFANY
I, um, I-

BILLY
Yeah?

TIFFANY
(beat)
Nothin'.

She plays with her food a bit.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Why do you work for Emil?

BILLY
The money's good.

TIFFANY
Yeah, but you already work full
time at Ray's-

BILLY
I make more working part time for
Emil.

TIFFANY

Then why work for Ray at all? Why not just work for Emil?

BILLY

I been working for Ray since I was fourteen.

TIFFANY

That's fine and all, but if Emil's paying you more-

BILLY

Don't know. Listen, they both appreciate the work I do for them - and they leave me alone. Let's just leave it at that.

TIFFANY

Jeez. I didn't know it was a such touchy subject.

BILLY

It's not, alright? Just drop it.

She pushes her food around her plate for a bit.

TIFFANY

I'm just saying, I bet there's plenty of other places that'd appreciate hard work, too.

BILLY

Plenty of other places-

TIFFANY

Yeah, you could work at a ton of other places.

Billy shovels a fork full of egg in his mouth and points out the window.

BILLY

Tell me what you see over there.
Down the road-

TIFFANY

Some big old trees.

BILLY

And look over that direction. What do you see?

TIFFANY

The grocery and some more big old trees. Oh, and the gas station.

BILLY

I ain't ever planning on ringing up groceries or gasoline for a living.

TIFFANY

But ringing up worms at Ray's is okay.

BILLY

It's fishing. It's different. Why you so obsessed with Ray's worms? Every day, it's worms this or worms that.

TIFFANY

I ain't obsessed with no worms. It's just you are, is all-

BILLY

You'll be worm food if you keep asking all these stupid questions-

TIFFANY

We're all gonna be worm food sooner or later, Billy Wade. My, you're irritable today.

BILLY

I ain't irritable. Tired, is all. I didn't sleep well last night.

TIFFANY

Me neither. But I ain't being short with you, neither.

Billy gets lost in a smudge on the window.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

All I'm saying, is, if you're making such good money taking Emil's friends and associates out fishing on his fancy boat, why not get your own fancy pants boat and work for yourself? Start your own fishing expedition company.

Billy's turn to push food around on his plate.

BILLY

Someday. That'd be real nice.
Someday.

TIFFANY

I doubt he's paying half of what
you're worth.

BILLY

Ray pays me what he can. He's fair.

TIFFANY

I'm talking 'bout Emil.

BILLY

He pays me well enough. What's it
to you?

TIFFANY

Nothin. I'm just talking here.
Seems to me if you ever did want to
settle down, working for yourself
is--

BILLY

I told you I ain't planning on
settling down. Get that nonsense
out of your head. I ain't the
settling down type.

TIFFANY

I call bullshit.

BILLY

You do, do you?

TIFFANY

Yeah, I do. Bullshit. You do want
to settle down, you just ain't
figured it out yet.

BILLY

How'd you figure that?

TIFFANY

'Cause since you started seeing me,
you ain't fooled around on me once.
Not even laid eyes on another girl.
That's how come I know.

BILLY

That don't mean nothing.

TIFFANY

Oh yeah? You can have any girl at Bottom's Up you want. I see how they look at you. Hell, Havana does the Betty Crocker slide every time she sees you.

BILLY

The Betty Crocker slide-

TIFFANY

Duh, think about it.

(beat)

You do fill out a pair of Levi's better than most guys and you're easy on the eyes-

BILLY

I guess you're lucky you got such pretty eyes-

TIFFANY

And you're lucky I got pretty everything else. All I'm saying is you got other options.

(beat)

You don't have to work for Emil is all-

Billy points his fork at her.

BILLY

What kind of 'options' you talkin' about?

TIFFANY

I'm talking about your very own boat. For your own fishing tours. I'm going to buy it for you-

BILLY

You? That's rich. You don't got a pot to piss in, girl.

TIFFANY

I'm taking Emil's money.

BILLY

Oh no you ain't.

TIFFANY

Yes, I am. And I'm gonna buy your very own fancy boat and a fancy, stupid money car for me.

BILLY

Whoa. No one's taking Emil's money.

TIFFANY

I am.

BILLY

No you ain't. One more lick about this boat business and I'll kick your pretty fuckin' ass to the curb faster than a hungry dog on a bone.

TIFFANY

I am. After what he done to me last night. Yes I am.

BILLY

Back up. What'd he do to you last night?

TIFFANY

That's between me and him-

BILLY

What did he do to you?

TIFFANY

Settle yourself down. Let's just say Emil don't respect his employees much, is all.

Billy stares her down. She locks eyes with him. Then he takes a bite of hash browns.

BILLY

I never had a problem with him.

TIFFANY

Yet.

INT. RAY'S BAIT AND BOAT SHOP - DAY

Ray backs his pick-up and trailer into the back garage. He's towing the aluminum beater boat, still covered in lake muck.

BILLY

Little bit more, a little more- whoa. You're good.

While Ray untethers the boat from the trailer, Billy yanks the outboard motor off the stern, attaching it to a workbench.

RAY

Took the Sheriff long enough to
okay the release-

BILLY

Yeah, but the engine's gonna be
shit after sitting in the flowage
all this time.

RAY

Looks better than the flatlander
they fished out of it. Can you fix
it?

BILLY

We'll see-

He lifts a hand full of muck away as he pulls off the hood.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Gotta pickle it with diesel. Just
hope rust hasn't set in the carb
yet. Give me a week and ask again.

RAY

Geez, that's another week's rental
down the shitter. God damn
flatlander.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - DAY

Havana is changing in the dressing room when Big Jimmy knocks and pokes his head through the door.

BIG JIMMY

Hey, girlfriend.

HAVANA

What I tell you about that?

BIG JIMMY

Emil changed the schedule. You're
on deck tonight 'til closing.

HAVANA

Son of a bitch! I told him I can't
do tonight! I gotta pick my kid up.
Hey, wait-

He turns and leaves. She follows him to Emil's office.

HAVANA (CONT'D)

I got no one to watch my kid. You gotta change the schedule. I know it's a pain, but I need to-

BIG JIMMY

Can't. Amber's a no-show.

HAVANA

C'mon, Big Jimmy, don't make me beg-

He turns to her, stopping in the office doorway. Inside, she sees the open safe and STACKS OF CASH on Emil's desk.

BIG JIMMY

It is what it is. Sorry.

He shuts and locks the door on her.

EXT. DEAD HORSE LAKE - DAY

Billy sits in a small boat in a secluded cove fishing. He's the only one on the remote lake.

He sits back, taking in the pristine timbered shoreline, and relaxes.

His secret fishing hole.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Havana finishes her set and heads backstage. She stops by Emil's office. Nobody's there.

She's surprised to find the door unlocked. She opens it a crack. Just far enough to see the corner safe. It's locked, but there's a STACK OF CASH on Emil's desk.

She hears a door slam somewhere and quickly pulls Emil's door shut. She turns to see Big Jimmy blocking her way.

BIG JIMMY

What'cha doing, girlfriend?

HAVANA

I lost my fucking earring and thought it might be here- but I didn't want to go in Emil's office when no one's around.

Big Jimmy doesn't take his eyes off her.

HAVANA (CONT'D)
I didn't think it'd look good.

BIG JIMMY
No. Good call. What's it look like?

HAVANA
It's no biggie. Just a cheap-ass
stud.

Big Jimmy pulls out a wad of cash and hands her a hundred.

BIG JIMMY
You found your cheap-ass stud right
here. Go buy yourself a new pair.

Havana tucks the money away.

HAVANA
Cheap-ass? No. We'll have to see
about the stud part.

She smiles seductively-

HAVANA (CONT'D)
Thank you.

And winks at the Ojibwe as she scampers past him.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - LATE AFTERNOON

Tiffany enters the Dressing Room, sees Havana sitting half
dressed in front of the mirror.

TIFFANY
Hey, girlfriend.

Havana stares off, lost in her thoughts.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Havana? You okay?

Havana sees her, fakes a smile and starts her make-up.

HAVANA
Yeah. Same shit. Different day.
Just stinks more.

TIFFANY
Tell me about it. You look like
you've seen a ghost. You sure
you're okay?

HAVANA

Yeah. I'm good-
(beat)

Just never thought I'd come to
Jesus in some shit-ass titty-bar
dressing room-

TIFFANY

What?

HAVANA

Nothing. Just talking to myself.
Thinking about my kid. You okay?

TIFFANY

Yeah, I mean, no. I mean, it's
Emil.

HAVANA

Of course it is. Fuckin' asshole.
What'd he do now?

Big Jimmy sticks his head in.

BIG JIMMY

You're up girlfriend.

HAVANA

Thanks.
(to Tiffany)
So what's going on?

TIFFANY

I think I screwed up.

HAVANA

Did you fuck him?

TIFFANY

God, no. No. Ew.

HAVANA

Good. Because this conversation's
over if you did. Shit, did you know
that perv once fucked a warm bowl
of oatmeal?

TIFFANY

No, he did not-

HAVANA

With brown sugar and cream. Waste
of a good breakfast-

TIFFANY
That's disgusting.

HAVANA
Damn right, it is.

Big Jimmy sticks his head back in.

BIG JIMMY
Havana.

HAVANA
Coming.
(back to Tiffany)
We'll talk later.

Havana stands. Takes last looks in the mirror-

TIFFANY
Thanks. Hey, girlfriend- not even
Jesus could resist those titties-

Havana grins, adding a last dash of glitter to her chest-

HAVANA
You got that right! They're an
evening of heaven and a lifetime of
hell-

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Havana is onstage dancing while Emil parties with a group of slick CHICAGO BIG SPENDERS.

He snaps his fingers toward Tiffany until he has her attention-

EMIL
Hey, hey, babe. Another round for
my new friends. Fuck. Bring the
whole bottle.

Tiffany brings a bottle of whiskey to the group, and sets it on the table.

As she turns to leave. Emil grabs her thigh. High up near her skirt.

EMIL (CONT'D)
Pour it.

She tries to step away, but he squeezes harder.

EMIL (CONT'D)

Pour my friends a round. A good
Wisconsin pour- not those cheap ass
pours you get on Rush Street- Am I
right?

He reaches under her skirt, grabbing a butt cheek, laughing
with the Big Spenders as she drains the bottle, filling each
tumbler to the brim.

EMIL (CONT'D)

Fuckin' amateurs down there, that's
what I say. You want to do it
right, you came to the right place.
Up north to Bottom's Up.

He chugs the entire tumbler and slams the empty glass upside
down on the table.

EMIL (CONT'D)

Drink up boys.
(to Tiffany)
Another round. Keep it flowing,
angel. And here. Keep the tip.

He hands her two \$100 bills and slaps her ass as she leaves.

EMIL (CONT'D)

Ah hell, I'm feeling good tonight,
boys. Here, spread some love.

He throws a handful of \$100 bills down on the table and chugs
another full tumbler of tequila.

Havana finishes her set. She drops to her knees to pick up a
meager handful of crumpled \$1 bills -

She never takes her eyes off of Emil.

INT. EMIL'S OFFICE - DAY

Emil, still hung over and wearing sunglasses, pours himself
into his chair. Big Jimmy enters.

BIG JIMMY

Morning.

EMIL

Fuck off.

Big Jimmy nods and leaves.

Emil reaches into his shirt pocket for his bag of coke, but it's empty. He tries his jacket pocket. Empty.

EMIL (CONT'D)
Fuck me.

He rummages his desk drawers. Nothing.

EMIL (CONT'D)
Yo, Big Fuckin' Jimmy!

Big Jimmy pops his head in.

EMIL (CONT'D)
You seen my bag of wake-up blow?

BIG JIMMY
I threw it in the safe before I closed up.

EMIL
What the god damn did you do that for?

BIG JIMMY
You left it on the desk last night.
I was doing you a favor-

EMIL
Some favor, dumb fuckin' Indian.
Making me jump through extra god-damn hoops just to do my morning line of giddy-up and go.

Emil needs to steady himself as he bends down to unlock the safe.

BIG JIMMY
Did you ever stop and consider you may have a drug problem?

EMIL
You think? Fuck you.

He gets the safe open and pulls out the bag of coke, but freezes, mid-motion.

The safe is empty. No cash.

EMIL (CONT'D)
What the god damn-

He pulls out the duffle bag. It's empty, too.

BIG JIMMY
Where's all the money?

EMIL
You're asking me?

Emil stands and confronts the Ojibwe. He is now sober.

EMIL (CONT'D)
You're asking me?
(beat)
You're asking me where the money
is?! Where's my god damn money!!

BIG JIMMY
The safe was open when I closed up
last night. I didn't even look
inside- just tossed the coke in and
locked the door- I swear I don't
know where it is.

EMIL
Well, you better start the fuck
looking for it, now, shouldn't you.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - DAY

Big Jimmy rifles through the stripper's dressing room,
emptying all the lockers.

He gets to Havana's locker. It's empty.

BIG JIMMY
Girlfriend, no-

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - DAY

Billy's PHONE RINGS.

BILLY
Yup.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - DAY

Emil, phone in hand, stares into Havana's empty locker as he
talks to Billy.

Big Jimmy paces behind him.

EMIL

We got ourselves a situation. Get your ass out to whatever shit hole Havana lives in and find her sorry ass... That ungrateful whore stole my money. Tear the place apart, cut her fuckin' fingers off, send her kid to a fuckin' orphanage. She's gotta pay for this... What? Didn't I just tell you? The whore stole my money. She's gonna' pay-

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - DAY

Billy hangs up, grabs his car keys-

TIFFANY

Who's that, babe?

He ignores her. She starts to follow-

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Babe?

The door slams in her face as he leaves.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

What's goin' on?

Billy stops. Whips around and grabs her by the arms.

BILLY

Tell me you didn't have anything to do with this?

TIFFANY

With what? Ow, you're hurting me - What are you talkin' about?

BILLY

Swear to me you two didn't plan this together?

TIFFANY

Plan what?!? With who? What the hell is wrong with you?

BILLY

Swear.

TIFFANY

I swear.

She breaks free his grasp.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
But I don't know what the hell
you're talking about.

BILLY
I told you to stay out of Emil's
business.

TIFFANY
I ain't in no-body's business! I
swear.
(beat)
I swear. What's going on?!

BILLY
Emil's on the warpath-

He climbs in his truck.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Do me a favor and steer clear of
him today. He's downright ugly.

TIFFANY
Were you going?

BILLY
To try and talk some sense into him
before he does something stupid.

He tears off out the driveway kicking up a cloud of dust.

I/E. HAVANA'S TRAILER PARK - DAY

Billy stands inside an empty trailer. He stares at a sink full of dirty dishes. Kid's drawings are taped to the fridge.

The bedroom is empty. A suitcase sits on the bed.

He opens it. It's packed full of clothes, but no money. He closes it back up.

He walks out, pushes a kid's big wheel out of the way, and leans against his truck.

Havana drives up, parks next to him.

HAVANA
Hey, there, sexy.

BILLY

Hey. Where you been?

HAVANA

Just dropped the kid off at
daycare? Why?

BILLY

No reason. Actually, for some
reason, I thought you were going on
a trip.

HAVANA

Me? No.

(beat)

What are doing you here?

BILLY

In the neighborhood-

HAVANA

(playfully)

You here to give me swimming
lessons?

BILLY

Sure. Yeah. But, not here. Lunch,
at the pier?

HAVANA

Shit, yeah, it's a date.

Billy gets in his truck-

BILLY

Don't tell Tif.

And drives off.

EXT. PUBLIC PIER - DAY

Havana shows up at the dock ready to party, wearing a
provocative bikini bottom, tight tee shirt and a smile.

HAVANA

Wow, what a sexy boat.

BILLY

She's got great lines, don't she.

HAVANA

You both do. I hope these lines are
just as acceptable to the captain-
Permission to come aboard?

Billy helps Havana into the Roundabout. She's surprisingly
cautious getting in.

BILLY

You alright?

HAVANA

Yeah, I'm good. Just a bit nervous.
You know, me and water.

BILLY

Well, it's a good thing the boat
comes with indoor seating-

He tosses her a life vest.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Here. Safety first.

He smiles reassuringly. It helps.

HAVANA

Thanks.

He pushes away from the dock and throttles the boat out into
the lake.

EXT. DEAD HORSE LAKE - DAY

Billy and Havana sunbathe on the deck of the Roundabout.

Billy casually leans against the pilot's seat, his baseball
cap and SUNGLASSES shade his eyes.

Havana lies on the deck, flirtatiously brushing her foot up
against Billy's leg.

Billy ignores her advances - but doesn't move his leg either.

HAVANA

Hey, where can a girl get a drink
around here?

BILLY

Leinies on ice in the cooler. Aft
compartment.

She gets up, brushes her breasts against his shoulder as she leans in close.

HAVANA
What the fuck is the aft, darling?

BILLY
Back there-

Emotionless, he nods to the back of the boat-

HAVANA
You want a beer?

BILLY
I'm good.

She runs her finger down his arm as she saunters past him.

She grabs a beer from the ice compartment, places the cold bottle against her forehead, then between her breasts, smiles seductively toward Billy-

HAVANA
God, that feels good-

BILLY
I bet. Say, what do you know about Emil's money?

HAVANA
You mean the piles of cash he keeps in his office?

BILLY
Yeah.

HAVANA
Nothing. Why?

She takes a long draw on the bottle and leans enticingly over the aft board- her back to Billy.

She looks over her shoulder, smiling seductively at Billy.

She runs her finger along her bikini bottom and looks out over the glistening water-

HAVANA (CONT'D)
So this is how the other half lives? This is nice. Real nice. I could definitely get used to this-

There's an ENGINE ROAR-

-the boat PITCHES forward-

-THROWING Havana overboard-

She comes up for air, thrashing-

HAVANA (CONT'D)
Hey!! Billy-

She gulps water, panic replacing shock-

HAVANA (CONT'D)
Help me-

Billy cuts the engine. Sits back and watches her struggle-

HAVANA (CONT'D)
Billy- that's not funny. I can't
swim-

We see her struggling in the reflection of his sunglasses-

HAVANA (CONT'D)
I'm serious, I can't swim-

BILLY
Where's Emil's money?

HAVANA
His money? What are you talking-

She gulps for air and thrashes in the waves. Billy watches her struggle from his seat-

The boat slowly drifting away from her-

HAVANA (CONT'D)
Billy!! Help me, Billy!! I-

Her head slips under water as she flails helplessly-

HAVANA (CONT'D)
Help me-

She spits a mouthful of water-

HAVANA (CONT'D)
Billy, please-

Without taking his eyes off her, he leans down, grabs a life jacket-

HAVANA (CONT'D)
Oh, Billy-

And drops it overboard the far side, away from her.

HAVANA (CONT'D)
What? No! NO!

The boat drifts farther away as her head sinks under the waves-

HAVANA (CONT'D)
Help-

Billy watches from behind his sunglasses-

The thrashing stops-

-Havana doesn't come up.

A few air bubbles pop to the surface when-

A FISHING BOAT rounds a rocky outcropping, heading their way-

Billy stands. Looks back to the water-

Havana's lifeless body floats to the surface, bobbing in the waves-

Billy throws anchor and frantically waves at the fishermen-

BILLY
HEY, OVER HERE! HELP! HELP!!

He's got their attention.

He expertly dives into the water toward the body, and pulls her back to the boat-

EXT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER'S SMALL DOCK - DAY

Tiffany sunbathes on the pier. Distant POLICE SIRENS echo off the lake.

She casually looks out across the water, doesn't see anything, and goes back to sleep.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Tiffany tends bar. She sees Billy beeline to Big Jimmy.

She watches the two disappear into Emil's office, the door slamming shut behind them.

BAR PATRON
An Old Fashioned and a bump.

TIFFANY
(absently)
Point okay for the bump?

BAR PATRON
Spotted cow, if it's on tap.

TIFFANY
Sure.

As she makes the drink, she watches Billy emerge from the office and head her way.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Here you go-

Billy motions her away from the bar patron, toward the end of the bar.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
What's up?

BILLY
It's Havana. She's dead.

TIFFANY
What?! How-

BILLY
She drowned. This afternoon. In the lake.

TIFFANY
No, no, no-

BILLY
I'm sorry, darlin' -

She starts crying.

TIFFANY
That can't be! We just- she said - she said she'd give me a ride home tonight- I just talked to her, like yesterday- It's got to be a mistake.

(beat)
Did Emil- ?

BILLY
No-

TIFFANY

Are you sure? After this afternoon-

BILLY

No. It was an accident- I found her-
me and another fisherman. I'm
sorry.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - NIGHT

Billy and Tiffany are in bed. Tiffany is curled in the fetal position, her back to Billy. Billy can't sleep, watching shadows trip across the ceiling.

Tiffany can't sleep either. She pulls herself tighter into a ball.

EXT. DEAD HORSE LAKE - DAY

It's RAINING. It's hard to see where the heavy gray curtains of cloud end and the brooding lake begins.

Billy and Tiffany silently endure the rain as Billy pilots the Roundabout, its hull RHYTHMICALLY cutting through the slate gray chop of waves.

EXT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - DAY

It's RAINING. Billy steers the boat up to the empty pier.

Tiffany grabs her backpack, climbs onto the dock and turns to say goodbye, but Billy's already pulled the boat away.

She stands in the rain watching the Roundabout disappear into the dank gray.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - DAY

It's still RAINING. Tiffany preps the bar, chopping ice in the sink with an ICE PICK when Emil sits across from her.

EMIL

Give me a vodka tonic. Hold the tonic.

She continues chopping ice-

EMIL (CONT'D)

Angel. Like now.

TIFFANY
Sorry, Emil.

As she sets a glass full of ice in front of him, he grabs her wrist.

EMIL
We have a problem today?

She tightens her grip on the ice pick-

TIFFANY
No, sir. It's just. It's Havana. I
can't believe she's gone.

He loosens his grip, leaving his hand on the bar, touching hers.

EMIL
It's a tragedy. She was a good
dancer. Such a terrible waste. She
a friend?

Tiffany nods, letting go the ice pick.

She grabs a rail vodka and pours Emil his drink.

EMIL (CONT'D)
Word of advice, darling. Be careful
who your friends are.

He chugs the drink and heads to his office.

EXT. RAY'S BAIT AND BOAT SHOP GARAGE - DAY

It's RAINING. Billy docks at the pier behind the garage.

A Cadillac SUV with big chrome rims is parked in front of the garage. Its engine running.

Billy runs for the garage's man door and the dry interior.

INT. RAY'S BAIT AND BOAT SHOP - DAY

MITCH BARANIAK, dressed in a burgundy velour track suit and half bottle of cologne, follows Billy in out of the RAIN.

The rain partially dilutes the product in Mitch's hair, forming tiny greasy droplets the consistency of bacon fat on the tips of his thinning hair.

BILLY
Afternoon. Can I help you?

MITCH
Yeah, my cell service is for shit
up here. I need some directions.

Mitch waves his cell phone around for effect.

BILLY
Sure. Where to?

MITCH
Bottom's Up Gentlemen's Club.

BILLY
Bottom's Up?

MITCH
Yeah, you hear of it?

BILLY
Oh, yeah. Not much to do up here
when the fish ain't biting.

MITCH
That's what I hear.
(beat)
Directions?

BILLY
Yeah, sure. It's just north of
here. Not too far, but the bridge
on the county road is out, so you
have to go around the long way-
Here, let me show you-

He takes a map of the Flowage off the wall and sets it on the counter between them. He traces the route with his finger.

BILLY (CONT'D)
You got to circle back down here
around the flowage and then up and
around these lakes. It's an extra
thirty minute drive than normal,
but it's easy on the eyes.

Mitch examines the map.

BILLY (CONT'D)
There's no other roads, so you
can't get lost as long as you make
this turn here.

MITCH

Got it.

Mitch notices an open three ring binder laying next to the map. He catches a name listed on the page.

MITCH (CONT'D)

What's this?

BILLY

Our boat rental log. You want to rent a boat?

MITCH

No. This-

He points to the name on the page, tapping on it with his finger.

MITCH (CONT'D)

This was my nephew.

Billy looks at the name.

BILLY

The kid from Chicago-

MITCH

You knew him?

Billy closes up the binder and sets it aside. He puts the map back up on the wall.

BILLY

No. I mean, I handled his boat rental and got him set up, but he pretty much kept to himself-

MITCH

Was there anyone with him?

BILLY

No. Not that I recall.

MITCH

He didn't say anything? Mention where he was going? Who he was meeting?

BILLY

Sorry, mister. He didn't say a word. Just wanted to rent a fishing boat. That's all.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)
He was pretty quiet and like I
said, he kept to himself.

MITCH
Imagine that. My nephew, the
fisherman.

BILLY
I'm sorry for your loss.

MITCH
Thanks. And thanks for the
directions. Glad I stopped in.

Mitch turns and strides out the door.

BILLY
Sure. Any time.

EXT. RAY'S BAIT AND BOAT SHOP - DAY

It's RAINING. Mitch piles into the Cadillac.

He stares at the bait shop door, absently rubbing the wet
velour of his track suit, watching Billy through the window-

INT. RAY'S BAIT AND BOAT SHOP - DAY

It's RAINING. Billy grabs his phone.

BILLY
Hey, Big Jimmy, yeah, is Emil
around?... You better find him.
He's about to have company... I
just gave Mitch Baraniak directions
to the club-

He hangs up and heads back to the garage and the outboard
engine he's been pickling.

He yanks the starter rope on the engine. Nothing.

EXT. RAY'S BAIT AND BOAT SHOP - DAY

It's RAINING. Mitch watches rain dribble down his windshield.
He sighs. Grabs a GUN from the glove compartment, checks to
make sure it's loaded, and heads back inside.

INT. RAY'S BAIT AND BOAT SHOP - DAY

It's RAINING. Mitch enters, the little bell RINGS as he tries to keeps the door from slamming.

He flips the sign on the door from 'open' to 'closed'.

BILLY (O.S.)

Hey, I'll be right up, but just so
you know, we're closed-

Mitch pulls the gun from his waistband, as Billy re-enters.

MITCH

Here's the thing. My nephew was a
moron. Had an opinion about
everything and never kept his yap
shut. He was loud and annoyed
everybody he ever met.

BILLY

Whoa, mister. How 'bout we put that
gun away.

MITCH

How 'bout you tell me what really
happened to my nephew?

BILLY

You got it wrong, mister. It is
what it is.

Drops of bacon-fat water drip off his bangs while he eyes
Billy.

MITCH

It is what it is? No. No. I don't
think it is what is. Not at all.
Grab your coat, I ain't taking you
out of my sight until we get this
squared.

EXT. BOTTOM'S UP PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

It's stopped raining and GRAY DAMP hangs from the trees.
Billy and Mitch drive up to the front entrance.

I/E. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - LATE AFTERNOON

Emil and Big Jimmy are waiting for Mitch, but are surprised
to see Billy with him.

EMIL

You two know each other?

MITCH

No. Not one fucking bit-

He notices Big Jimmy wearing a hunting knife on his belt.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Nice knife. You always bring a knife to a titty bar?

BIG JIMMY

You can never be too safe-

EMIL

Bears. We're lousy with bears up here - and I don't mean the ones from Chicago. Big Jimmy found one in the back of a dancer's pick up truck the other night-

BIG JIMMY

A black bear. Not a Chicago Bear.

MITCH

Bears? I don't see no bears around here.

BILLY

Maybe you ain't looking close enough, friend.

EMIL

How'd you two say you know each other?

MITCH

He didn't. He gave me directions here. How 'bout you give me your big knife, Injun Joe?

Big Jimmy hesitates-

BILLY

A cold beer and some glittered ass seemed like a good idea.

MITCH

See that Emil? I'm an inspiration.

(to Big Jimmy)

The god damn knife-

Big Jimmy rests his hand on the knife hilt, sizing up Mitch.

MITCH (CONT'D)
I ain't gonna ask twice.

He shows the gun in his waistband. Emil nods to Big Jimmy, he hands him his knife.

EMIL
So listen, we can stand here and hold our dicks till the skeeters come out or we can go inside and show you some north woods hospitality.

He flips Billy a wooden token.

EMIL (CONT'D)
First drink's on the house, kid. My angel at the bar will set you up. Give Mitch and me some space to talk-

MITCH
He doesn't leave my sight. Got it?

Billy looks to Emil- gets an affirmative nod.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Billy sits by himself watching the stage show.

Waiting a nearby table, Tiffany watches Billy watch the show.

Across the bar, Mitch watches Billy watch the show.

He also watches Tiffany watching Billy.

MITCH
So, who's the girl?

EMIL
The bartender? My angel, Tiffany.
Why?

MITCH
She's easy on the eyes. Why ain't she dancing?

EMIL
I'm working on it. Helping her overcome her performance anxiety.

Tiffany flirtatiously preens, trying to get Billy's attention.

MITCH
Performance anxiety- what's that?
Stage freight?

EMIL
Yeah, something like that.

MITCH
I find it hard to believe that
sweet thing suffers any kind of,
what'd you call it?

EMIL
Performance anxiety.

MITCH
Yeah, performance anxiety. She
seems to have no problem performing
for our boat renting friend.

EMIL
No. No she doesn't.

Agitated, Emil runs his tongue along his teeth.

EMIL (CONT'D)
I gotta take a piss.

As he leaves the table, Mitch watches him hurry through the crowd toward the restrooms.

Emil passes the restroom and heads to his office.

INT. EMIL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

His hands shaking, Emil pulls a bag of coke from his desk drawer and snorts a line.

He closes his eyes as the drug surges into his system. When he opens them, Mitch is in his face, gun in hand.

EMIL
What the-

MITCH
You said you had to take a piss.

EMIL
Yeah, so?

MITCH
So, it don't look like you're
taking a piss.

EMIL

No. I'm doing some blow. To calm my nerves.

MITCH

Doing blow-

Mitch motions Emil up away from the desk.

EMIL

To calm my nerves. Yeah. Do you mind not waving that gun around?

MITCH

You told me you had to take a piss-

EMIL

What do you care if I do a line of coke or take a piss?

Mitch sets his empty cocktail glass on Emil's desk.

MITCH

Why do I care? Because words fucking matter. Piss or coke? Big difference. Words matter.

Mitch drops his exercise pants and starts PISSING into the empty glass.

EMIL

What the fuck? This is my office, Mitch. The john's down the hall.

MITCH

Words fucking matter. Office or john? Piss or coke. This is a piss. I'm pissing here, guess that makes this a fucking toilet. It was an office, now it's a john.

Mitch finishes peeing, dribbles piss on the floor before he pulls his pants up with a snap.

MITCH (CONT'D)

It's how the world gets along- or doesn't. Like when you tell someone you'll pay them money owed to them- and then don't.

EMIL

I don't have your money. I gave it to your nephew.

MITCH
How convenient for you he's dead.
Enough dickin' around. I want my
money.

He points the gun in Emil's face.

BILLY (O.C.)
He doesn't have the money.

Mitch turns, sees Billy standing in the doorway.

BILLY (CONT'D)
I do.

Emil raises an eyebrow, surprised.

Mitch motions Billy into the room.

MITCH
Uh, uh. The safe.

EMIL
But he said he has it.

MITCH
Open it.

EMIL
The safe is empty.

MITCH
Open it!

EMIL
Jesus, you're one persistent prick.

Emil goes to the safe and works the combination.

EMIL (CONT'D)
You're wasting your time-

The safe lock CLICKS and Emil pulls the door open. Empty.

EMIL (CONT'D)
Do I look like I'd lie to you?

Mitch hands the glass of piss to Emil.

MITCH
Yeah. You look like you've lied to
every person you've ever met.

BILLY

I said I got your money. It's back at the bait shop. How 'bout you and me go get it and leave him out of it.

MITCH

How 'bout you shut the hell up. I'd feel better if this gun was pointing at all of you, let's go-

Big Jimmy enters as they all leave.

MITCH (CONT'D)

You, too, Injun Joe.

Emil hands him the glass.

EMIL

Lose the piss and come with us.

Big Jimmy dutifully takes the glass, handing it to Tiffany on his way out.

EXT. TURTLE FLAMBEAU FLOWAGE - NIGHT

Big Jimmy pilots Emil's Runabout while Mitch keeps his gun pointed at Billy. Emil pours Mitch and himself glasses of whiskey.

EMIL

Here. It cuts the chill. Bottom's up.

(they drink)

That's tough news about your nephew. My condolences to you and your family.

MITCH

Thanks. My kid sister is devastated.

EMIL

It's just tragic. It's been all the talk here. It's too bad. The flowage can be deadly if you're not familiar with it. His first time on the water?

MITCH

First and last time. It's for the best.

(MORE)

MITCH (CONT'D)
If he gets his dumb ass killed
fishing, what good is he to me?
Saves me an unpleasant conversation
with his mother - and a shit ton of
sympathy money.

EMIL
Uh, yeah, I suppose-

MITCH
Speaking of money. Emil, my friend.
Help me out with something. This
here- it just doesn't square.

EMIL
What's that?

MITCH
You tell me you don't have my
money. But your bait shop friend
here says he's got it. Why would
this boy scout have my money?

EMIL
I don't know. Did you ask him?

MITCH
I'm asking you.

EMIL
How the fuck would I know? If he's
got your money, I'd be curious as
hell to ask him how he came into
possession of it.
(to Billy)
So why do you have Mitch's money?

Billy shrugs his shoulders.

BILLY
I didn't know it was his.

EMIL
See? Just a stupid
misunderstanding. We'll get to the
bottom of this in no time, won't we
kid.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Tiffany can't concentrate as she works the crowded bar,
filling a rocks glass to the very brim with whiskey.

BAR PATRON

Whoa- I'm flattered sweet cheeks,
but this ain't my first rodeo-

TIFFANY

(distracted)

Hmm, what's that?

BAR PATRON

Gotta love these north-woods pours.

TIFFANY

Yeah-

She leaves the full glass where it is and leaves, nodding to a cocktail waitress-

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Cover for me, will ya'-

EXT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Tiffany rushes out the back door toward the pier, gulping fresh air.

She paces back and forth as she lights a cigarette. The lit cigarette fails to calm her shaking hands.

BOUNCER

Tif? You alright?

TIFFANY

Yeah. I'm good.

BOUNCER

They need you at the bar-

He holds the door open for her-

TIFFANY

(extinguishing cigarette)

Yup. Be there in a sec-

She feebly smiles at him as she retreats back into the club.

I/E. RAY'S BAIT AND BOAT SHOP GARAGE - NIGHT

Big Jimmy docks the Runabout and ties off the line. Emil and Big Jimmy get off first. Mitch shoves Billy out of the boat with his gun.

At the garage door, Billy stops, pulls out a SET OF KEYS-

BILLY
I'm not used to having a gun
pointing at me-

-And "accidentally" drops them on the dock, by Mitch's feet.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Sorry. Do you mind?

Mitch doesn't play along. He steps back, motions Billy with the gun to pick them up.

Billy bends down, "fumbles" the keys as he picks them up, dropping them into the water below.

MITCH
You are not doing yourself any favors-

He PUNCHES Billy hard in the gut, grabs him by the scruff of his neck and drags him to the door.

MITCH (CONT'D)
Alarm?

Billy doesn't respond.

MITCH (CONT'D)
I asked you a question. It's best you answer like your life depends on it.

Billy shakes his head.

Mitch smashes the door window with his gun, reaches inside and unlocks the door. No alarm.

He shoves Billy in first and the group follows behind.

MITCH (CONT'D)
Where is it?

Billy motions to a metal toolbox near the outboard engine repair station. Mitch shoves the gun in his ribs, pushing him forward.

Billy looks around for anything to defend himself.

Nothing.

At the tool box, Mitch stops Billy-

BILLY
It's not locked. Top drawer-

MITCH

Open it.

Billy pops the top cover open and steps back, holding his gut where he was hit-

MITCH (CONT'D)

It's empty.

BILLY

The tray pulls out. It's underneath.

Mitch reaches in to pull out the heavy tray-

Billy LUNGES, SLAMMING the metal cover on Mitch's hand-

-And grabs for the gun-

-Knocking it out of his hand.

But it CLATTERS against the floor, landing under a workbench-

Billy sees the outboard engine and grabs the power-chord, pulling hard-

-The engine ROARS to life-

-as Billy wraps the power-chord around Mitch's throat.

Trying to break free, Mitch pushes backward, smashing Billy into a wall of engine parts.

But Billy doesn't let go, squeezing the line hard-

Billy pushes forward, pushing them both toward the ROARING engine, its propeller spinning at HIGH SPEED-

Mitch SLAMS Billy into a workbench-

-And grabs a hammer.

He swings it at Billy's head-

But Billy TWISTS out of the way-

-And slams his weight down, pinning Mitch's forearm on the workbench-

-the hammer flying out of his hand.

Billy uses the workbench as leverage and THRUSTS Mitch forward, toward the SPINNING propeller-

Mitch tries swinging Billy around him toward the engine-
Billy holds his ground.
He pushes forward with all his weight-
Pushing Mitch's face toward the DEADLY PROPELLER-
Mitch turns sideways, trying to break Billy's grasp-
But with a surge of energy, Billy pushes the side of Mitch's head INTO THE WHIZZING PROPELLER-
BLOOD SPRAYS out from the prop as it CHOPS OFF his ear-
The engine hits skull bone and STALLS.
It's QUIET. Except for Billy's heavy breathing.
Mitch collapses, crumpling to the ground-
Billy drops the engine cord, picks up a stool and sits.
He watches BLOOD pool out from Mitch's head.

BIG JIMMY (O.C.)
Whoa. That was intense.

Billy looks up at Emil and Big Jimmy in the doorway. They stare back at him in shocked disbelief.

BILLY
Hang tight, guys. I got this.

Emil looks at Big Jimmy, then at Billy.

EMIL
So? Is the money here?

Billy shakes his head as he gets to his feet.

BILLY
No.

EMIL
And why the fuck not?

He glares menacingly at Billy. Then breaks out laughing.

EMIL (CONT'D)
I'm messing with you. So this was
your plan? To lose Mitch?

Billy nods.

BILLY

Not much of a plan. Just wanted to get him away from you and the club. Sorry it didn't quite work out-

EMIL

Sorry, my butt. That guy's a pain in my ass. I finally got to see the master at work. You're a goddamn artist, my friend.

Mitch MOANS.

Emil looks down-

EMIL (CONT'D)

Do I have a great team or what?

-and kicks Mitch in the head.

EXT. TURTLE FLAMBEAU FLOWAGE - NIGHT

Big Jimmy pilots the boat while Billy nurses his injuries.

Mitch glares wide-eyed at the group. HIS FACE SWOLLEN AND BLOODY AND MISSING AN EAR. He's gagged and tied with the anchor line. The anchor sits on his lap.

Emil, Mitch's gun in hand, stands over him gloating; his one leg propped on the hull like a pirate captain.

Emil sets the gun down and pours himself a glass of whiskey.

EMIL

Have you been out on Dead Horse Lake? It's world renowned for the fishing. Year Round. In fact, did you know that the Green Bay Packers' great Coach Lombardi once invited Coach Halas and your Chicago Bears to ice fish on this very lake with his Packers after football season ended?

Mitch glares at Emil-

EMIL (CONT'D)

Yes, sure as shit. As God is my witness.

He takes a gulp of whiskey.

EMIL (CONT'D)

As the story goes, both coaches, being the competitive type, bet on which team could catch more fish. That first night of ice fishing, the Packers caught enough fish to feed the entire team. They ate like kings. Halas's Bears didn't catch a thing. Not one goddamn fish. The second night, the Packers brought in their haul, same as the night before - they had enough to feed the entire team and then some. The Bears- still nothing. Notta. Finally, on the last day, Coach Halas's boys still haven't caught a single goddamn fish so Halas calls one of his players over and tells him, 'I want you to sneak over to the other side of the lake and find out what Lombardi's secret is to catching all these fish.' The player nods and sneaks off through snow banks and ice and comes back an hour later. 'Coach, coach. Lombardi and his boys are cheating.' 'I knew it,' says Halas. 'What's their trick? How they pulling it off?' The player grabs Halas by the shoulders and says, 'they're cutting holes in the ice!'

Emil cracks himself up, snorting as he laughs. He nonchalantly picks up the gun, waving it around as he laughs and downs the rest of the whiskey.

EMIL (CONT'D)

Yeah, it's pretty funny, get it?

BANG!

He shoots Mitch in the head.

EMIL (CONT'D)

I didn't lie to you. I don't have your money, 'cause it was always my money to start with.

Emil shrugs and pours himself another drink, filling the glass to the brim.

EMIL (CONT'D)

God damn. I guess words do matter.

Billy grabs Mitch, anchor and all, and throws him overboard. The line goes tight, pulling the body up and overboard.

Big Jimmy puts on his cheap sunglasses as he throttles the boat forward.

BIG JIMMY
Dude. The sun never sets on a
badass.

EXT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Big Jimmy expertly docks the Runabout as Billy hops out to tie off the boat.

Emil downs the last of the whiskey. He tosses the bottle overboard before stumbling off the boat.

EMIL
God damn, I feel alive!

He wraps his arms around both men-

EMIL (CONT'D)
What a team we make, eh? With me as
quarterback, we can't go wrong-

He squeezes them tight and leads Billy and Big Jimmy toward the club.

EMIL (CONT'D)
Bah, Mitch. Fucker. Feels good to finally get that God damn thorn out of my backside.

And for that, we are going to party like kings. I'm talking top shelf, boss-echelon shit. But tomorrow-

Tomorrow, you find my fucking money. Got it?

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

The club is crowded. Tiffany is behind the bar and sees Billy, Emil and Big Jimmy enter. Billy walks with a painful limp, his eye is swollen from bruising.

She watches Emil and Big Jimmy disappear into Emil's office. Billy goes to the restroom, oblivious of the crowd.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP MEN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Billy washes dried blood from his hands.

He looks in the mirror and notices the blood splattered shirt for the first time.

Tiffany enters, smothering him with concern and a tight hug.

TIFFANY

Oh my God, oh my God, what happened to you? Are you alright?

Billy tries feebly to pull away.

BILLY

I'm good. Most of me anyway-

She hugs him tight again, but he winces in pain.

TIFFANY

No you're not. What happened? We should get you to a hospital-

BILLY

No. I'm okay. No hospitals. Really. I'll be okay.

She stops dead, noticing the blood-splattered shirt for the first time.

BILLY (CONT'D)

It's not mine. Please don't ask.

TIFFANY

Not yours? But all the more reason to get you-

BILLY

I said, no hospital.

TIFFANY

-Get you out of it and into a new shirt.

She helps him lift the shirt off, over his bruised ribs.

BILLY

Ouch-

TIFFANY

Sorry, babe-

She tosses the shirt in the waste can, burying it under dirty paper towels.

She eyes Billy and his battered bare chest.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Oh my God, does it hurt bad?

She dabs a wet paper towel on some dried blood on his cheek-

BILLY
Yeah, but only when I breathe-

Overcome with emotion, she wraps her arms around him and kisses him passionately. He winces in pain, but doesn't let her go.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Tiff, darlin'-

Darlin'-

She steps back. Tears in her eyes.

TIFFANY
I'm scared, Billy. Seeing you like this- I'm scared to lose you- scared someone tried to take you away. I won't ask. You asked me not to, but I don't want to let go. Whoever did this, I hope they got what was coming to them-

BILLY
Darlin'. There's nothing to be scared about. Listen. I need you to do me a favor-

TIFFANY
What?

BILLY
You need to find me another shirt.
You think you can do that-

TIFFANY
There's a lost and found box up front. Let me check-

BILLY
Thanks. And Tiff-

TIFFANY
What?

BILLY

Keep your shit together, okay? Keep this on the down low. No need for management to find out about us, remember?

She wipes away her tears as she nods. She takes a deep breath before leaving.

INT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Tiffany rifles through a lost & found box, pulling out a jean jacket. She holds it up. Looks about the right size.

Emil stands in the back of the club, drink in hand. He watches her hurry through the crowd and into the Men's Room with the jean jacket.

INT. EMIL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Billy, wearing the jean jacket, drinks a Leinenkugels and chills as Emil, drunk and stoned, does a line of coke with A STRIPPER.

Big Jimmy walks in with a cashbox and takes a seat next to Billy.

EMIL

That was some serious shit, my friends. Some serious shit, indeed.

Hiding behind his sun glasses, Big Jimmy nods.

BIG JIMMY

Indeed. And a good night for the club, too.

He picks up a handful of cash from the box for emphasis.

EMIL

Indeed. Indeed. What the fuck does that word even mean?

The stripper shrugs and licks cocaine off Emil's nose.

EMIL (CONT'D)

Who the fuck knows? But I'll tell you this - there was this kid in my high school. Smartest kid in the class. Timmy fuckin' Hawkins.

(MORE)

EMIL (CONT'D)
Told me that if I wanted to get
better grades I should always start
my answer with the word 'indeed'.

BILLY
Did it work?

EMIL
Indeed, it did! Son of a bitch
helped me pull a D out of a failing
grade. Just by adding one goddamn
word.

(whispers, like sharing a
secret)
He said it'd make me sound smarter.

BILLY
No shit.

EMIL
No shit, indeed! See what I did
there? It does make me sound
smarter.

(Throws back a shot)
Skinny fuck thought I was stupid.
He never made that mistake again.

BILLY
Indeed.

BIG JIMMY
Indeed.

Emil and the stripper burst out laughing. Big Jimmy smiles,
flashing his gold tooth.

Tiffany enters with another round of drinks.

TIFFANY
Last rounds. The sun's starting to
come up and this girl's gotta get
her beauty rest.

EMIL
Last round? Shit. Well, in that
case, you'll have to come join us.
Come rest that pretty little ass
right here.

He slaps his lap and motions for her to come to him.

She hesitates. Emil catches her look to Billy for help.

TIFFANY

It really is late, Mr. Bottoms. I
should--

EMIL

--Emil, God damn it. Emil. Come
park it here.

Emil licks his bottom lip and slaps his lap again, watching
her like a hawk watches a bunny.

EMIL (CONT'D)

I ain't going to ask again. Angel,
you want the sky, the rocket's
right here.

Emil watches her steal another glance to Billy, as she walks
across the room and sits on his lap.

Emil kisses the back of her neck, but keeps his eyes on
Billy.

Her back stiffens.

Billy coolly looks away, taking a long pull from his bottle
of beer.

Emil kisses her neck again. She stiffens more, pulls away
slightly-

Emil frowns.

EMIL (CONT'D)

Scram, kid. You're right. You need
your beauty rest.

Tiffany doesn't move.

EMIL (CONT'D)

Get lost, I said.

He shoves her off his lap and motions to the stripper.

EMIL (CONT'D)

Come here. You got some of my blow
on your tits.

Tiffany grabs her cocktail tray and quickly leaves.

Emil does another line of coke with the stripper while
watching Billy take another swig of his beer.

EMIL (CONT'D)
(to Big Jimmy)
Ain't he the best professional you
ever seen?

Big Jimmy nods.

EMIL (CONT'D)
Here's to you Billy. You are one
god damn cool mother fucker. Yes,
indeed, you are.

Billy tips his beer toward Emil and takes a swig.

EMIL (CONT'D)
Sitting there all smug like. Mr.
Billy Wade. No shit storm you can't
handle. Not you. Sitting there
drinking your beer like a champ-
like some chump FIB on a Saturday
night.

BILLY
Boss?

Emil does another line of coke and grabs a wad of cash from
the cash box and throws it at Billy.

EMIL
For our Mitch problem. Now get that
skank waitress out of here. I don't
ever want to see her here again.
Got it?

Billy looks to Big Jimmy, buying a moment to process the
command.

BILLY
Sir?

Emil fixes his eyes on Billy, drains his glass of whiskey.

EMIL
You heard me. Take the Runabout.

Billy doesn't move.

EMIL (CONT'D)
Is there a problem here?

BILLY
No, sir. It's good. And thanks for
the drinks.

Billy heads for the door. Hesitates. Emil ignores him, focusing his attention on the stripper. Billy leaves.

EXT. BOTTOM'S UP GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - SUNRISE

Sunlight pokes through the pines on the far shore. Tiffany throws her backpack in the boat and climbs aboard.

TIFFANY

The fancy boat again. You really know how to spoil a girl.

BILLY

Nothing but the best.

As he pulls the ropes in, he tosses Tiffany a life jacket.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Put this on. You know, safety first.

He stows the ropes, opens the glove compartment - a loaded GUN is stowed there - and coolly closes it before pulling away from the dock.

INT. EMIL'S OFFICE - SUNRISE

Emil tries to do another line of coke but slumps forward onto his desk - littered with cash from the cashbox. The Stripper is passed out on the couch.

Big Jimmy finally stands up.

BIG JIMMY

Boss?

Emil's reply is incoherent.

Big Jimmy lifts Emil by the scruff of the neck, picks up the cash, sets Emil's head back down, and heads over to the corner safe.

EMIL

(mumbling)

What you doin' with my money--

Big Jimmy enters the safe's combination. But just as he opens the door-

EMIL (CONT'D)

I said, what the fuck you doin' with my money?

BIG JIMMY
Cleaning up. Party's over boss.

Emil pulls MITCH'S GUN from his pocket. Big Jimmy stands up. The money still in his hands. The safe still open.

EMIL
You stealing from me-

BIG JIMMY
You're fucked up, boss. Give me the gun.

Bleary eyed, Emil waves the gun at Big Jimmy.

EMIL
Fucked up? I don't think so-

BIG JIMMY
C'mon, boss. Set the gun down.

EMIL
I'm not fucked up, you are-

BANG!

He shoots Big Jimmy in the mouth. The Ojibwe staggers back, blood gushing everywhere.

Shocked, Big Jimmy just stands there. Bleeding.

EMIL (CONT'D)
Whoa.

Big Jimmy wipes blood from his mouth and spits the bullet and his now smashed gold tooth into his hand.

EMIL (CONT'D)
Dude. What the fuck-

Big Jimmy lunges at Emil, grabs the gun with one hand and his boss by the jaw with the other.

He jams the gun deep in Emil's mouth and pulls the trigger-

BANG!

BIG JIMMY
(Ojibwe)
Kaawiin Kiin Animush. Kah.
(You fucking idiot!)

Big Jimmy wipes more blood from his face, unsure of what to do next.

He pockets the cash he was holding, steps over Emil's body, forgetting the open safe, and leaves.

Emil's cold, dead eyes stare blankly at the open safe.

Its content's empty.

EXT. TURTLE FLAMBEAU FLOWAGE - SUNRISE

Billy expertly guides the boat through the river flowage.

The bow silently slips through the smooth-as-glass water as the sun pokes over the top of the pines.

A LOON cuts the silence and Tiffany breathes deep and smiles.

TIFFANY

This never gets old. Everywhere you look is so beautiful, every breath so fresh.

Billy keeps his eyes focused straight ahead.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

I like the quiet. The stillness.
It's so peaceful.

She listens to the LOON'S SONG.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

This is God's country.
(pauses as she listens to
the loon)
When I'm out here with you, I feel
so alive. Riding the river like
this, you forget your troubles,
your past. Everything- just is.
Just what it ought to be. It's
better than back there, back at
work. I always feel so small.
(she listens to the loon)
But, being out here, now, with you,
I still feel small in the world,
you know, but I'm not scared. And
that's okay.

She breathes deep and turns her gaze on Billy. She watches him intently.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Are we close to Dead Horse Lake?

BILLY
Yup. It's just past the next bend.

TIFFANY
Can we stop there?

BILLY
Sure, darlin'.

EXT. DEAD HORSE LAKE - SUNRISE

The boat glides past an outcropping of pine and Billy steers the Runabout through a shallow inlet that opens onto the pristine secluded lake - and to his secret fishing hole.

TIFFANY
Yes, this is it. It's just as I remember it. You took me fishing here, my first day up north. It was right over there you told me a friend of yours was looking to hire a new waitress at the club he owned.

Billy nods, begrudgingly.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
See that clearing? It'd be perfect for a little cabin, you said.

She takes in the shoreline, as if memorizing each tree.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
I fell for you when you said that. Our own private world here, where no one could find us. A place to build a home. A real home. A place to raise a family. You and me- I never had a real home before.

BILLY
(hoarsely)
We should get going.

TIFFANY
No Billy. Let's go to shore here. I'm not as dumb as everyone thinks. I don't need no rocket to get to heaven. This boat'll do.
(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Take me ashore to the clearing.
Where you wanted to build a cabin.

Billy hesitates.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Please. For me.

He nods, and throttles the boat toward the tiny clearing.

He eases the bow onto shore. Tiffany hops out and strides to the clearing. Billy dutifully follows, his hands tight in his vest pockets.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
This is perfect. Right?

She takes a deep breath and smiles.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Yes, it's perfect. The kind of
place to put down roots and grow
old in.

She hugs him tight, not letting go.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
I'm not stupid, you know.
(beat)
I love you, Billy Wade.

He hugs her with one hand, keeping the other in his pocket.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
I know what you do for Emil. It
don't matter to me.

She kisses him.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
(whispers in his ear)
Don't say anything. It'll ruin the--

Billy pulls the trigger of the gun in his pocket--

BANG.

BANG. BANG.

The noise scares a flock of nearby mallards into flight.

Tiffany slumps lifeless in his arms. HER BLOOD staining his hands and chest.

She slips from his arms.

Billy stares down at her lifeless eyes.

He tries to not cry.

He falls to his knees and gently cradles her.

Across the lake, a PAIR OF LOONS bob in the water. One dives under the glassy surface-

Billy's anguished WAIL echoes across the lake-

There's a **FLASH** of gunfire-

- a beat and a **BANG** echoes across the lake.

It's QUIET.

WATER LAPS against the empty Runabout.

On the floor of the bow, Tiffany's backpack sits open-

Wads of cash stuffed inside, the top bills blowing away-

-revealing a shoebox-

-With a muskie and "Someday" drawn in sharpie on it.

Near the far shore the loon resurfaces, a small fish in its mouth.

FADE TO BLACK.