

"MEET US ON THE MOON"

by  
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"If he was from Venus, would he meet us on the moon?  
If he died in Memphis, then that'd be cool, babe.  
Children by the million sing for Alex Chilton when he  
comes 'round. They sing "I'm in love. What's that song?  
I'm in love with that song." - The Replacements  
("Alex Chilton")

BLACK

We see a small silver and black Magnavox cassette/CD player. It's on it's side, strapped to a white speed boat seat cushion/flotation device with velcro strips. Battery powered. The wheels move in the cassette deck. The woofers throb; turned up loud, but we cannot hear what's playing. The seat cushion drifts through murky, brown water; past bottles, sneakers, and finally, a live alligator's long, yellow and brown head. It hisses. This we hear.

TITLE: NEW YORK CITY - AUGUST 28 2005

"American Music" by the Violent Femmes plays over first credits.

INT. LOWER EAST SIDE STUDIO APARTMENT - MORNING

SONNY CASTLE, 39, skinny, African American, wakes with a start. His sheets are strewn across the bed, sweaty. There are beer bottles littering his bedroom. LP record sleeves scattered all over the floor. Someone has spraye "L.E.S. Stay Gold, OK!" on the wall in red Krylon.

Sonny rises. Stares at it. Doesn't recall tagging any slogans on his wall. He's in bad shape. His head throbs. We follow as he pads to the bathroom in his boxer shorts. Posters hang on the wall. A framed lobby card for Dance Craze, a new wave/ska concert film hangs on the wall, next to a leering kit kat clock. We hear it's mechanized ticking.

Sonny lifts the toilet seat. Vomits. Flushes. Stares in the mirror. Looks at his temples. They're graying. Thinning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Opens the medicine cabinet. Gobbles some aspirin.  
Slashes his face with cold water. Spits.

SONNY

It's showtime, folks.

EXT. LUDLOW STREET/LOWER MANHATTAN - DAY

We hear the sound of hard rain against the sidewalk. Then splashing as a skinny, long haired man scurries across the street and hurriedly unlocks a storefront grid. He slides up the metal and enters Land Speed Records, a narrow and slightly dilapidated independent record store. This is WALKER WHITE, 38, one of the proprietors.

INT. LAND SPEED RECORDS

Walker flicks the lights, removes his blue, Maxwell's tee shirt and shakes the rain out of his dark hair. In the warm, orange glow of the store, we see a long, scuffed coffee bar with a ten cup coffee maker and a turntable mounted on the back shelf. In the foreground, there are rows and rows of plywood record bins, painted cherry red and filled with highly collectible vinyl LPS.

There are framed posters on the wall: a vintage shot of the Mael brothers of the band Sparks, and promotional posters for old indie rock bands like Helium, The Divine Comedy, Spacemen 3, Slint, Neutral Milk Hotel and a one sheet poster for the Run DMC movie Tougher Than Leather. An American flag hangs against the back wall, upside down.

Walker turns on the coffee maker and attempts to warm up. He walks to the racks and selects a few records, cradling them so we can't make out his choices. Behind the bar, he carefully places one of the LPs on the turntable. We hear a few crackles, then, the unmistakable opening riff to the Scorpions' "Rock You Like A Hurricane."

Walker stares at the street through the large, glass storefront window. A crack is taped with tan packing tape. Who knows how long ago it was damaged?

Sonny enters, dressed in a lightweight, hooded, olive drab parka. His head is now fully shaved.

SONNY

Take that bullshit off.

Sonny pours himself some coffee.

WALKER

Nice... head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY

You know it's not funny. This Scorpions shit. People are suffering out there. Did you see the news this morning? Six people dead in Florida.

Sonny yanks the record from the turntable.

WALKER

Whoa. Careful. Okay. Someone's gonna wanna buy that.

Sonny walks towards the bins. Replaces Walker's selections and pulls some of his own.

SONNY

It's also not funny - not funny. "Rock You Like A Hurricane?" Some lowest common denominator weak ass mental doo doo you're pumping out with that selection. How much thought did you put into it before you played it? A lot?

Walker shrugs.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Do you feel clever?

WALKER

Not anymore.

SONNY

Let me retrace this here.

WALKER

Aw. Come on.

SONNY

No. No. This is fascinating. So, you open the store. Dry off? Yeah?

Walker nods.

SONNY (CONT'D)

You look around and you're thinking "Hurricane songs?"

WALKER

So?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SONNY

"Like A Hurricane" by Neil Young.  
"Hurricane" by Dylan.

WALKER

Oh. Yeah. Good one.

SONNY

Either of those would be preferable. Both are brilliant. Beautiful songs. Important songs. But they still qualify as obvious ass fucking choices.

WALKER

Alright. Can we please drop it?

SONNY

Any casual musicologist... fuck that... music *fan*... no, I'll go one better... any sentient, sensitive think-er, forget about the co-owner of a recorded material *boutique*, would observe, "Nature is stirring... people are in some peril... and I feel for them. I'm safe and warm in here but I know deep down that's some grace of God shit. Life is sweet. And messed up. So let me acknowledge that. Let me... *respect* that. Let me select something comforting, and familiar but also aware... committed... to the great one-ness of this experience."

WALKER

Okay.

SONNY

Or you could go another route entirely.

WALKER

Okay!

SONNY

Check this out. You could privately deduce, "New York City... It's good when it rains.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SONNY (CONT'D)

Cleans up the piss." You might then play something hard but constructive. Positive and optimistic but a little wary and wise. "Ain't Gonna Rain No More," by Schooly D. Or... even the original motion picture soundtrack from... Taxi Driver? Drop some Bernard Hermann. "Some day a real rain's gonna come and wash all the scum off the street." That's some psycho-optimism.

WALKER

It was early, Sonny!

SONNY

It's *still* early. And how long did that take me? Thirty seconds? A full minute. Already I'm plumbing some righteous sonic depths. And my head doesn't hurt. I don't have the bends.

Sonny puts the needle on a record. More crackles. Then "Just Walking In the Rain" by Johnny Ray plays.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Not only that... but I've got some power now. I feel better. Unlike Missy, I *can* stand the rain. The Scorpions? That's why you're still wet. That and you're too fucking stupid to cover your head.

WALKER

Dude, do you have a thorn in your paw?

SONNY

Where's your shirt?

WALKER

I hung it up. What the fuck is wrong with you today? Did I do something?

Sonny ignores him.

WALKER (CONT'D)

You shaved your head... Man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SONNY

You need a shirt. That yellow Bad Brains tee downstairs. Put that on for now.

WALKER

It's not a t-shirt. It's a rag. It smells like notes.

SONNY

You're wearing it. This ain't the boardwalk.

WALKER

We're not gonna get any customers anyway. It's Sunday morning. And it's a fucking meteorological I don't know what out there. Event!

SONNY

You don't get it.

WALKER

Oh, I get it.

SONNY

You don't. You used to. At school. Post grad, maybe. But you don't anymore. You got it. Then you lost it.

WALKER

I get everything. Still.

SONNY

You really think we're gonna be dead today?

WALKER

Yes.

SONNY

Answer me this. Whenever you listen to... *Forever Changes*... or *Low*... or... *Girlfriend* or *Bizarre Ride to the Pharcyde*, or...

He picks up one of the records he's just pulled.

SONNY (CONT'D)

*In The Aeroplane Over the Sea*, is it like you're hearing them for the very first time? Like an infant?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

For a split second Walker gazes dolefully out at the bins of records. He scratches his torso.

WALKER

No.

SONNY

Then I feel sorry for your ignorant ass. Because, apparently when it comes to everything else... you can't remember a fucking thing. How about September 12? You recollect what kind of business we did?

Walker pours some coffee for himself.

WALKER

You listed them chronologically.

SONNY

It's important.

WALKER

Oh, I *know* it's important.

SONNY

Sometimes I gotta wonder.

They watch the rain through the broken shop window.

WALKER

People are fucked out there, huh? Like... down South.

Sonny nods.

SONNY

Could be a category 5.

WALKER

That's bad?

SONNY

Category 3'd pick us up right now and take us to Munchkinland.

Sips.

SONNY (CONT'D)

This is good coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

WALKER

Sumatra. It's got snapping turtle  
shit in it.

SONNY

Aromatic.

A third man enters the store. A customer this time.  
He's Japanese, dressed in a vintage black suit and  
expensive looking trench. He removes his ski hat and  
reveals high piled, black hair. This is BOBBY HAYAKAWA,  
27, an up and coming rock musician.

BOBBY

Are you open?

Sonny turns to Walker, as if to re-illustrate his point:  
when tragedy strikes and rock boys needs comfort, they  
come to us.

INT. STOCK ROOM

Walker pulls the yellow Bad Brains t-shirt over his  
torso. It's stained and stiff. He smells it. Winces.

TITLE: Two Days Ago

INT. WALKER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Walker stands in his underwear, holding a long, white  
candle. He uses it to light a series of smaller candles.

CORNELIA BRIDGES, his girlfriend, early 30s, dark hair,  
waits in bed, covered with a pale, blue sheet. The room  
is small and bare with just a boom box and a large stack  
of CDs on the floor.

CORNELIA

What are you doing, Walker?

WALKER

What? It's romantic.

CORNELIA

Come back to bed.

Walker blows out the candle. Begins searching through  
the pile of CDs.

CORNELIA (CONT'D)

Walker!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALKER

Hang on.

CORNELIA

No. Now. Please?

He continues to seek an elusive disk.

CORNELIA (CONT'D)

Put anything in. Does it really matter what we listen to right now?

WALKER

Yes.

CORNELIA

You have to find the perfect record... for *this*?

WALKER

That's right.

CORNELIA

It's going to be over in a few minutes. Just pick one good song and let's do it. "Crazy" by Seal. I love that song. Then we're done.

WALKER

I will not fuck you to Seal.

Frustrated, she rises and pads out of the room, holding the sheet against her front.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

INT. LIVING ROOM

It's just as tiny as the apartment, more so as it's covered with books, records, DVDs and a giant, old school TV set. Cornelia is sprawled on a blue, velvet couch, bathed in blue TV light. A pack of cigarettes, an ashtray, a remote control and a wind up plastic California roll sit on a blocky wooden coffee table. Walker emerges from the bedroom, holding a CD.

WALKER

I found it.

CORNELIA

I'm not in the mood anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He sits down next to her.

WALKER

Don't you want to know what it was?

She shakes her head.

WALKER (CONT'D)

You're not at all interested in what we could be doing it to. Right now?

She ignores him.

WALKER (CONT'D)

What are you watching?

She shuts off the TV. They sit in the dark. It's uncomfortable. Walker strikes a match. Lights a cigarette.

WALKER (CONT'D)

It was Galaxie 500. The Peel Sessions. Not the Ryko anthology. I thought it'd be good if we had sex to Galaxie 500.

CORNELIA

It'd be good for us to just have sex.

She rises, walks to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

She pulls on some clothes. Begins brushing her hair. Picks up some mouthwash. Gargles. Spits. She's shouting now. He enters.

WALKER

It's almost three o'clock. Where are you going?

CORNELIA

Bar.

WALKER

It's late. It's almost last call.

She kisses him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORNELIA

Walker, I love you. But I need to get out of here right now. Right now. I need to sit in a bar, drink a vodka tonic and think. And you need to let me.

She puts on some lipstick. This worries him. She exits. He stares at himself in the mirror.

INT. BEDROOM

Walker puts a CD into the boom box. Crawls into bed alone.

"Don't Let Our Youth Go To Waste" by Galaxie 500 plays on the box and the soundtrack. Soon, he's smiling, drifting off with the languid chords.

INT. BATHROOM/LAND SPEED RECORDS - PRESENT

Walker is staring in the mirror. He fixes his hair. Spies a can of English Garden scented air freshener on the counter top. Picks it up. Sprays the pits of the Bad Brains t-shirt with it.

INT. LAND SPEED RECORDS - FLOOR

Walker enters from downstairs. Sonny is there with Bobby and a second customer, JEFF PARKER, early 20s, dressed all in white. There's flour in his hair. He's a scruffy, hipster mess, but sweetly so.

WALKER

Hey.

JEFF

Hey, Walker.

Sonny gestures to Jeff and Bobby.

SONNY

Alright. Hit him.

JEFF

Well, okay. Maybe I'd play "Stormy Weather." By The Pixies. Not Lena Horne. Oh, maybe Lena Horne!

WALKER

Aw, man. Sonny! Come on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

Guitar Wolf has a song called  
"Hurricane Rock." Have you heard  
it?

The all shake, even Walker.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

It's pretty good. But if I was  
opening the store up, I'd have  
played "I Wish It Would Rain," by  
the Temptations. The irony is  
nice... because it's pure. I'd  
play it for the irony. Or maybe  
"The Rain, The Park and Other  
Things" by The Cowsills? For...  
other things.

JEFF

Hey, uh. I brought you guys some  
bread. It's dry. I put it in a  
bag.

WALKER

Thanks.

SONNY

Do you bake that bread or just  
deliver it.

JEFF

Deliver it. Sometimes I watch  
them bake it. Hey this doesn't  
have a price on it.

Jeff holds up a record. An "action packed" spoken word  
LP from the early 70s: Adventures With Skippy The Bush  
Kangaroo.

WALKER

You really want that shit?

SONNY

Hey! That's Skippy The Bush  
Kangaroo, motherfucker We've had  
that forever. I mean, *forever*.  
Like since we opened. Do not  
disrespect Skippy The Bush  
Kangaroo.

JEFF

It looks exciting.

SONNY

Ten.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jeff nods. Digs into his pocket. A cat pads across the floor.

WALKER

Hey, you found Jobriath.

SONNY

I didn't find him. I put a bowl of Fancy Feast out and he found me. You open the store, you feed the cat. What's with forgetting every rule? Seriously.

WALKER

I think Cornelia's cheating on me.

SONNY

No shit?

WALKER

I'm pretty sure. I'm like 80 percent sure.

BOBBY

Whoa.

SONNY

Did you catch her with another dude?

WALKER

I don't think there's another guy yet. I think she's looking.

JEFF

Why do you think she's got leaving on her mind?

They all stare at him.

JEFF (CONT'D)

What?

WALKER

She's been complaining a lot. Saying she wants more stuff. Plus... she *looks* like she's looking.

SONNY

Wearing perfume?

WALKER

And lipstick.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SONNY

Sometimes girls do that to attract other girls. Not for sex. For compliments. Self-esteem.

JEFF

Really? How do you know that?

SONNY

Oh, I used to know a lot about women. In my 20s. Early 30s. I knew everything about female behavior. Trying to forget it all now.

JEFF

Cool.

Jeff begins reading the liner notes to his new record.

SONNY

I think you're being paranoid. Corny loves you, man. She's always loved you. If she wanted to shop, she'd have gone to market already. Besides, you guys have excellent stuff. She wants more *stuff*?

WALKER

Besides records.

SONNY

Oh.

BOBBY

What about...

WALKER

And books.

BOBBY

Oh.

Long silence.

SONNY

This shit is not letting up. If it's this bad *here*...

BOBBY

You know, I was supposed to fly to New Orleans on Wednesday but that's off. They're thinking it's gonna hit hard. She. Katrina.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BOBBY (CONT'D)

So... you know... I'm shopping.

SONNY

I *do* know.

Bobby continues to browse. We see his heavy posture lighten before us as he removes *The Call of The West* by Wall of Voodoo. Adds it to an ever-increasing stack of treasures that he's going to leave with.

SONNY (CONT'D)

If it rains hard enough, the levees won't hold. That city is six feet below sea level. The levees break, the lake will flood everything. Lake Pontchartrain

JEFF

How do you know so much about... that stuff?

SONNY

How do I know about New Orleans?

JEFF

Yeah.

SONNY

Shit's the birthplace of jazz. Blues. Rock n' roll. Second greatest city in the world.

JEFF

You ever been there?

SONNY

No.

They all stare at Sonny as he begins dusting the bins. He's a little embarrassed.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I know it happened before though. In 1965. Hurricane Bessy. This is no joke. Those levees break...

They nod in silent and grave agreement. There's a long, awkward pause. Walker clears his throat. Sonny slams his coffee mug on the bar top. Points at him.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Don't sing it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

WALKER

I wasn't gonna sing anything.

SONNY

You were gonna sing "When The  
Levee Breaks" by Led Zeppelin. I  
know you better than you know you.

Walker turns away.

WALKER

I was gonna beat box the drum  
solo.

SONNY

Don't do it. It's not funny.

They all stare out at the rain. Nodding their heads to a  
communal beat.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Alright. Fuck it.

He walks over to the L bin and pulls out Led Zeppelin  
Four. Holds it up.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Just once to get it out of our  
heads and then never again.

They all nod, relieved, as he cues it up.

INT. LAND SPEED RECORDS - LATER

It's still raining. Sonny and Walker are closing the  
store up. They're both holding loaves of Jeff's bread,  
which they occasionally chomp. Walker counts out the  
register. Sonny sweeps the floor. Jobriath the cat  
watches lazily.

WALKER

Maybe we should take him with us?  
In case the streets are flooded  
out and we can't get here  
tomorrow.

SONNY

We gotta open tomorrow.

WALKER

What if it's knee deep?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY

We're opening for business anyway.

WALKER

I still think we should take the cat.

SONNY

Take the cat, man. It's your cat. I just feed him.

WALKER

It's Cornelia's cat, if you'll remember. Technically, anyway. She decided she didn't want him anymore.

SONNY

She named the cat Jobriath?

WALKER

She named him Courage. I named him Jobriath when I brought him downtown. Re-named him. He seems to like it.

(to cat )

Come here Jobriath.

The cat doesn't move. Walker scoops him up. Strokes his head.

WALKER (CONT'D)

I guess when she finally decides she doesn't want me anymore, I can come live here too.

SONNY

Look, man. I'm sorry I've been Sergeant Hartman on your shit all day. I don't wanna say anything, especially after you told me about your girl. I just want you to know it's not your fault. We're cool.

WALKER

What is it?

Sonny continues to close up.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Well, you have to tell me now! Come on. Whatever it is, I should know. We're partners!

INT. MAX FISH BAR - LATER

Walker and Sonny, both soaking wet again, sit at the bar in this old Lower East Side landmark. Hipsters play pinball and chat around them. Perverse paintings and collages hang on the walls. It's simultaneously warm and harshly art-damaged in here.

WALKER

I would have gone with you to meet the landlord. You should have let me know.

SONNY

I didn't go meet him. He just... showed up at my door last night with all these "suits." Pod people.

WALKER

They bum rushed you.

SONNY

I couldn't sleep after they left. I watched bad movies all night.

WALKER

What'd you watch?

Sonny ignores the question.

SONNY

Guy tells me they're offering ten times what we're paying him. And they're all looking at me.

WALKER

What'd you tell him?

SONNY

I told him to kiss my black ass. I'm not gonna contribute to the oppression of the neighborhood; prize out the black and Puerto Rican families that built the shit.

WALKER

What'd he say?

SONNY

He told me I was barely black.

WALKER

Is that why you shaved your head?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY

Fuck yes. I'm also *really* going gray. Anyhow, we gotta be shit tight now. Which is why I was on you. The dude is looking for any excuse to get us out of there. He finds a boot scuff on the floor? A cockroach gives him the stink eye and we're out. I'm sending this month's rent by messenger. Check comes in two days late, Land Speed's a Le Pain Quotidian in 48 hours.

WALKER

Maybe we should relocate. To Brooklyn. Queens? I used to step over junkies when I left this bar. Now I'm tripping over strollers. It's all yuppies who only care about creature comforts, and teenage kids who don't care about anything at all, as far as I can see. At least when we were teenagers we cared about the rock. These kids here, to them it's just rock. Trying to sell them a piece of vinyl, it's like you're asking them to re-enacting the Civil War.

SONNY

They don't even DJ with it anymore. They use two motherfucking i-Pods. i-Pods! To DJ!

They stare up at a lit up promotional poster for Julio Iglesias' 1100 Bel Air Place album. Julio's face is melting like a burn victim's.

WALKER

So...

SONNY

So...

WALKER

What'd you watch last night?

Walker stares at him.

SONNY

*Modern Girls.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WALKER

That's not a bad movie. That's a really good movie. Excellent soundtrack. Depeche!

Sonny rises. A sporto-looking 21 year old FRAT BOY staggers out of the bathroom and whoops. Sonny looks back at Walker. Walker shakes his head.

"Do The Dog" by The Specials plays loudly on the soundtrack.

We see in Close Up, a pair of thick, suede roach killer shoes. The owner of these hot numbers is skanking madly in her two-tone black and white tights.

INT. BEDROOM/CENTRAL PARK WEST

"Do The Dog" blares, now on the turn table of TABITHA CHURCHILL, 17. She has black bangs, a baby-face and a tough, permanently suspicious smirk on her lips. She is upending cosmetics and papers as she thrashes around her pink and expensively appointed bedroom. In the distance, through the window, we see the expanse of the Park's lush Great Lawn.

There's a loud banging on the door. Tabitha turns the record down. Opens the door. PHILLIP CHURCHILL, her father, late 40s, enters. He wears a velour bathrobe and speaks in a well-schooled British accent. He picks up the album.

PHILLIP

Do you even know who Margaret Thatcher was? Because I wouldn't mind the noise complaints and the property destruction as much if I thought maybe there was a bit of historical context involved.

He notices the record is badly scratched. Blows off the dust.

PHILLIP

And if it wasn't *my* record that you're ruining. I'd carefully hidden this.

He picks up another record. *Nevermind The Bollocks* by the Sex Pistols. There's also the Clash's self titled debut and *Tell Us The Truth* by Sham 69.

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CONTINUED:

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

And these.

TABITHA

Daddy, tell me about punk.

PHILLIP

I will not.

TABITHA

Please!

PHILLIP

No.

TABITHA

Why?

PHILLIP

Because the notion of karma catching up to me is completely terrifying. My mouth is very dry and I can't form... words.

TABITHA

Did you have a "punk name"?

PHILLIP

Well, Tabby... in fact, it was Kid Custard.

She laughs.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

You don't like Justin Timberlake anymore? I noticed you've...

They stare at a poster of Justin Timberlake. Tabitha has blacked out his eyes and teeth, put a safety pin through his nose and drawn the Anarchy symbol on his forehead.

TABITHA

I was bored. I get bored all the time, lately. Bored, bored, bored! Boring! Bo-ring! Bored!

PHILLIP

Right. You could always show up at... the Consulate? Where you work? Where I'm under near-constant review? I was going to mention that I know you haven't been there in some time.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

I was also planning to point out that this is somewhat embarrassing to me. I've been waiting, in fact, for the appropriate occasion to severely reprimand you.

TABITHA

Daft cows over there.

PHILLIP

Tabitha. The British government, *our* government, has generously provided us with this beautiful apartment and that very polite driver downstairs, not to mention the platinum American Express credit card in your wallet. All they ask in return is that we not bring shame on the Crown in front of the Americans.

TABITHA

Who asks that? Tony Blair?

Phillip looks heavenward.

PHILLIP

Oh Christ, forgive me. I was *young!*

TABITHA

Daddy, can I please have some cash?

PHILLIP

It's not for drugs is it?

TABITHA

Records.

Phillip digs hurriedly into his pockets.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

Thank you. I found a very cool store downtown. Unfortunately, it's cash only.

PHILLIP

Will you go to work tomorrow? Just... show up. Say hello. You can explore the city on your lunch hour, but I want you back at your desk for a full day. Whatever they ask you to do, make Xerox copies, boil water... just do it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Don't... *question* it. Just...  
oblige. Please?

She smiles. Nods. He rises.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

And... and... I don't want you  
doing anything with your hair.  
That's a preemptive command. But  
a firm one.

TABITHA

Okay.

PHILLIP

I know I haven't been the  
disciplinarian, Tabitha, but I can  
be just as strict as your mum.  
And I assure you that if you don't  
obey both of these very reasonable  
orders, you're going to be sent  
home. No... no... you're going to  
be sent to a very strict boarding  
schools in Switzerland. Or a  
nunnery. Depending on how much  
your she agrees to contribute to  
this disciplinary action.

TABITHA

Okay!

She burps.

PHILLIP

If you just listen and give them a  
chance, you'll learn a lot at the  
Consulate. We're doing important  
work.

TABITHA

Oh, crap.

PHILLIP

No. No "crap."

TABITHA

Americans aren't interested in any  
real cultural exchange with us.  
They're interested in our  
obedience. Just watch the evening  
news.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

PHILLIP

I don't want you watching the news.

(beat)

Alright. You can watch the news but not to justify any rebellion.

He sits down on the bed again. Holds the records.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

I want to encourage you to think freely. I'm speaking of mindless rebellion. When you're 17 it's gratifying but when you're older and you learn a few things you'll look back on those moments with shame. Terrible, terrible... shame. And by the way, you're absolutely incorrect. America has exchanged a great deal with Britain. Rock n' roll came from the American South. Did you know that? You did not know that, did you?

She shakes her head, interested. He's encouraged.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

It's derived from Delta blues music. Country music too. All this pre-dates The Beatles. And the Stones. And... The Arctic Monkey.

TABITHA

*Monkeys.*

PHILLIP

Since this music is so important to you, you might be interested in listening to some of these early recordings. Find out where it comes from. Maybe you'll respect the long tradition of Anglo-American cultural exchange a bit more. And mind yourself around the bloody office!

TABITHA

Fine.

PHILLIP

Let the body pogo but use the mind too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

He pats her and kisses the top of her head.

TABITHA

"Pogo"?

PHILLIP

Hopping up and down. Sid Vicious  
invented it.

TABITHA

Did you know him?

Phillip rises. Straightens his tie.

PHILLIP

Absolutely not.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sonny lays on his living room couch, again struggling with insomnia. Like Walker's apartment, this room is also cluttered with books and records. Sonny watches the news on the couch. There's footage from New Orleans on the Weather Channel. Pounding rain, and swirling wind turns his screen a forboding gray. He flips around the channels. Sees FEMA Chief Michael Brown on CNN. Brown looks like a car salesman. When he speaks, it seems instantly dubious.

MICHAEL BROWN

We are ready. We are going to  
respond!

Sonny flips back to the coverage of the storm.

After a few seconds, he rises. Walks over to his computer. Pulls up his Google bookmark. His last search is still typed in: "Breakdance" and "Irene Cara"

He does a new search for: "New Orleans" and "news."  
Pulls up local news coverage from the city. An interview with New Orleans' Mayor Ray Nagin. It loads and unfolds slowly. Nagin is shaken and speaks very slowly.

NAGIN

Last night I got a call from the  
head guy at the Hurricane Center  
Max Mayfield, and he told me this  
story that basically scared the  
you know what out of me. I talked  
to the governor and she said,  
"Look, I recommend you go  
mandatory.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NAGIN (CONT'D)

And our legal person the city attorney figured out a way to do it that would hold up. I think it's the right thing to do. It elevated things. It got more people moving. It got the Superdome working. And if we save 20,000 lives, or 30,000 lives, it think it's well worth it.

SONNY

Mandatory evacuation.

He rises. Goes to the window. Looks down on Avenue A. The rain is still falling. Lighter now. The streets are crowded with bar hoppers. Good humor. Revelry.

INT. WALKER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Walker and Cornelia are having sex. Things seem better between them. We soon see why. An i-Pod is now jacked into the boom box on the floor by the bed. We see the illuminated, blue screen.

A playlist reads: "Sex With Cornelia."

TITLE: AUGUST 29

INT. ELIZABETH STREET BAKERY - EARLY MORNING

A powerful hearth. A plate full of rolled dough is shoved in on a wooden plate.

We see Jeff watching with great interest as his cousin, ROGER, mid 30s, bakes the morning's bread. It's still dark outside. Jeff wipes the sleep out of his eyes.

ROGER

You wind your Mickey Mouse watch too tight? You know we're not ready for you.

JEFF

I was thinking maybe I could help with the baking today.

ROGER

You're not baking shit. You're not a baker.

JEFF

I can bake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROGER

You don't have the temperament.  
You're not an artisan. Your  
father wasn't either.  
You're good at delivering the  
bread. Like him. Deliver the  
bread.

JEFF

I wanna make something, Roger.

ROGER

Make a pot of coffee.

Jeff exits. Roger continues to shove dough into the  
over, laughing.

INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - AFTERNOON

A large, nicely appointed but industrial space in Midtown  
Manhattan. Concrete walls covered with eggshell  
soundproofing and tapestries. Loads of tangled cords and  
stacks of amplifiers. We see that Bobby is watching  
footage from the Gulf Coast on his lap top. St.  
Bernard's Parrish in the 9th Ward of New Orleans is now  
covered with murky brown water, that shimmers in the  
August swelter, flowing and rising. He cannot fathom  
what's there on his screen. He's transfixed. The rest  
of his group, Headband, are packing up their gear  
disinterestedly.

BOBBY

The levees broke. They broke!  
Just like Sonny said they would!

A black dog paddles across the screen, strangely calm as  
it goes.

FLESH CHECKERS, late 20's, a scrawny guitarist, dressed  
in a ripped, red leather jacket stops what he's doing and  
approaches Bobby.

FLESH

I have some room in my road case,  
man. Stick it in there.

BOBBY

Stick *what*?

FLESH

Did you say you had no room for  
the pedal rack?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

No.

FLESH

You're all packed?

BOBBY

What?!

FLESH

Cool.

BOBBY

Flesh, do you see this? Those are cars. Underwater. That's a person. Right there. That's New Orleans! This is real time.

They stare at an African American mad, pushing his torso through the flood, looking for a way to safety. Any dry land or shelter.

FLESH

Aw, I can't look at that. Too depressing. I keep thinking of the session. What might have been.

BOBBY

*That's* what you care about?

FLESH

Well, yeah. Now we have to record in LA. I hate LA.

Flesh shrugs. They watch the laptop screen. From a news helicopter P.O.V. they are shown locals, mostly African American, stand on rooftops holding up "Help Us" signs as the water rises. Flesh has had enough. Walks away.

FLESH (CONT'D)

Sorry. Too fucked up for me, dude.

Bobby watches him go, disgusted.

INT. BRITISH CONSULATE/MIDTOWN - AFTERNOON

Tabitha, dressed primly in a tweed jacket and cotton skirt, watches the same footage here in this immaculate office row. She's surrounded by various BRITISH MEN and WOMEN, all of them look concerned and helpless as they watch a small, communal TV, mounted on the wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRITISH WOMAN

Look at that one. Oh, my.

TABITHA

That "one."

Tabitha rises. Grabs her bag and sunglasses and sneaks out as they remain gathered around the office's television set.

INT. LAND SPEED RECORDS

"Gettin' Funkier All The Time" by The Meters plays on the store sound system as Customers shop. Tabitha, dressed down in her consulate wear searches the bins. She thumbs through a pile of vintage punk, then seems distracted. She spots Jeff, also browsing. Approaches him.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

Excuse me. Do you have the blues?

JEFF

Oh, uh. I don't work here.

TABITHA

I'm so sorry.

She blushes. He stares at her. She looks good to him.

JEFF

But I know the store really well. Blues is over here. I'll show you.

TABITHA

Could you possibly recommend something?

JEFF

I guess. Yeah. What are you looking for specifically

TABITHA

Well... I really want to know where rock and roll comes from.

JEFF

Ah.

Sonny is watching all this from behind the counter. He walks up to Tabitha and gives her a hug.

SONNY

I'm sorry. I don't know you but... thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He walks away. She smiles. It breaks the ice.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Pull that Jelly Roll Morton  
record. And the Louis Jordan.

Jeff pulls the records. Hands them to Tabitha. She happily places them in her pile. Walker approaches them.

WALKER

How old are you?

TABITHA

Seventeen.

Walker hugs her. Smiles gratefully. Walks away. Tabitha and Jeff stare at each other. He awkwardly hugs her too, following suit.

INT. LAND SPEED RECORDS - LATER

Jeff and Tabitha are wrapped up in each other, conversing over coffee at the bar by the front door. Sonny emerges from the basement holding a small television set. Walker is helping some customers. Bobby enters, looking ashen.

SONNY

Where's that cable?

He finds it and begins attaching it to the back of the tube.

TABITHA

I'm in big trouble. I should get back to the Consulate. I promised my father I'd behave.

JEFF

Okay. I mean if you have to.

TABITHA

I could phone and tell them I'm ill. I ate something suspicious for lunch.

JEFF

You should figure out what it was first. In case they ask.

TABITHA

Calimari?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFF

Sometimes clams are bad. My brother almost died once. On Coney Island.

Sonny turns up the TV. Turns down the music. People slowly gather around. Paula Zahn reports from CNN.

PAULA ZAHN

And the pictures say it far more powerfully than words could ever convey. Good evening. Hurricane Katrina, one of the most powerful and dangerous hurricanes ever on record slammed into the Gulf Coast this morning with winds as high as 140 miles per hour. The damage is immense and it may take years to undo. Here's what we know. Power is out all across the region. Parts of New Orleans and mobile have been flooded with many other communities also under water. Some homes under water up to their rooftops. Earlier today President Bush declare a state of emergency for the entire Gulf Coast. Right now Katrina has been downgraded from a category four hurricane to a category one storm, but there still could be an awful lot of damage caused by that powerful of a storm. The images are absolutely incredible. This driver in New Orleans nearly drowned when his car was swept away by the rising water.

The Customers slowly convene around the TV. All are speechless.

INT. LAND SPEED RECORDS - LATER

Sonny and Walker close up the shop for another night. Jeff and Tabitha are still there, lingering.

JEFF

Do you wanna get some food?

TABITHA

I should get home and let the deportation process start.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFF

Your Dad's not really going to send you back to England, is he?

TABITHA

Right now the only thing I have going for me is my relatively normal haircut.

JEFF

Don't take this the wrong way. I'm not a pushy person. I don't like "pushy." But... if you're already in trouble, let's get a burrito.

TABITHA

Alright.

WALKER

You wanna get a drink, Son?

SONNY

I'm depressed.

WALKER

I know. Me too. That's why I'm suggested liquor. Whiskey.

SONNY

Don't you have to deal with Corny?

WALKER

Lots of whiskey. Beer too.

SONNY

I'm getting tired of going on pissing benders whenever shit gets bad. It's not dignified anymore.

WALKER

Yeah. So. You coming?

SONNY

Let's hit it.

Sonny puts his arm on Jeff.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Star-crossed lovers? I'm throwing you out.

INT. MAX FISH - LATER

We see Sonny and Walker joylessly down shots at the bar, very obviously numbing themselves.

Over by "Gris Gris Gumbo Ya Ya" by Dr. John, we see the following montage:

EXT. BENNY'S BURRITOS

We see Jeff and Tabitha laugh and talk over a small table. They have large, cool margaritas, and dunk chips in salsa. Jeff gestures with a chip.

INT. AVENUE A

Sonny staggers up the street, drunk.

INT. BAKERY - NIGHT

Jeff and Tabitha enter the bakery. Jeff jams open a refrigerator and pulls out a bucket of dough.

TABITHA

Oh, God. It smells so good!

Together they knead it. Jeff is going to bake something.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Walker pulls out the *Gris Gris LP* by Dr. John. Places it on the turn table. Stares at the creepy cover. Looks up at the clock. It's 3 am. Looks over at the bed. It's empty. Cornelia is still out.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bobby wears headphones on his head. He has his guitar in his lap. He's playing an elegaic and mean blues riff that only he can hear. His eyes are closed. His teeth are gritted. He's making G.E. Smith style-guitar face.

INT. BAKERY

Tabitha and Jeff shove a truly cock-eyed sculpture of dough into the hearth with no small fanfare. They embrace and kiss each other triumphantly.

INT. CENTRAL PARK WEST APARTMENT

Tabitha sneaks in, clutching her bag of records. The music fades. Her father is waiting there in his pajamas.

TABITHA  
Kid Custard. Ulp.

PHILLIP  
You know I was at the first Patti Smith show at the Roundhouse in '76. You're making me feel very uncool here.

TABITHA  
I'm sorry, Daddy. Were you very worried? I promise I'll call first from now on if I'm going to be late.

PHILLIP  
Have you been drinking?

TABITHA  
Margaritas. But look.

She points to her hair. Stumbles over. Kisses him. Walks off to her bedroom.

INT. TABITHA'S BEDROOM

She pulls out her records. Stares at them. Selects the Fats Domino record. Places it on her turn table. Carries the sleeve to her dresser. Props it up. Gets into bed. Stares at it. "Blue Monday," plays.

TITLE: August 30

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT

Sonny is in the bathroom. He wears a t-shirt and boxers. His face is lathered up. He holds a razor. The TV is on in the other room, loudly. Sonny listens as he shaves. CNN. It's an inescapable presence in his life as the storm and it's aftermath unfolds.

KYRA PHILLIPS/CNN (O.S.)  
It's gators like this that you're concerned about in these rising waters right?

Sonny stares into the sink as the water spirals down his drain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATOR EXPERT (O.S.)

Oh, my gracious. Those poor folks out there have got so many problems. And part of that's going to be these wild animals that are washed out of their homes. They don't have any place to go. They're going to see animals turning up in backyards and porches and underneath houses that they never thought they'd see out there.

KYRA PHILLIPS (O.S.)

What about snakes, Tim?

Sonny closes the door hard. Sits down on the edge of the tub. The water is still running. His face is only half shaven. He puts his head in his hands. There's a knock on the door. Sonny rises. Walks out. Peers through the keyhole. Opens it.

WALKER

I used my spare key. I didn't want to come in here, I figured maybe you'd picked up a girl after I left.

SONNY

Too drunk. Plus... girls don't like me.

WALKER

We should open the store.

SONNY

It's only ten o'clock, man.

WALKER

Sonny, Fats Domino is missing.

INT. LAND SPEED RECORDS

Sonny and Walker drink coffee. "The Fat Man" plays on the store sound system. The TV is on. Captions. No sound. They look grave, to a man.

Bobby enters, out of breath.

BOBBY

Thank God, you're open. Did you know that Fats Domino is...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY

Yeah. Sit. Listen. Here.

Sonny pours Bobby a cup of coffee. They all listen to the music. It's great. Rollicking boogie woogie.

INT. LAND SPEED RECORDS - LATER

The store is packed with customers. Tabitha is there too. With Jeff. She wears shades. He wears a ball cap over his brow. Both look worse for wear. Fats Domino continues to play. "Blue Monday" again.

TABITHA

Not originally a New Order song!  
Who knew?

JEFF

I took a beating over that challah  
we made.

TABITHA

Your cousin hit you?

JEFF

Pushed. Hard. I'm probably going  
to have to get a new job now. I  
saw Shoegasm is hiring.

TABITHA

You're not working at anything  
called Shoegasm. You're not  
answering the phone and saying,  
"Shoegasm..."

JEFF

I'm kind of screwed.

TABITHA

I didn't mean to get you fired. I  
just believe you should bake if  
you want to bake. People are so  
cocked up. Give them a little  
authority and they get fucking  
arrogant.

JEFF

Anyway, I brought it in. It's  
pretty good. Toasted.

TABITHA

Hmm. Is there any jam?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jeff goes to retrieve the bread from behind the counter. Sonny approaches the TV. Turns down the music. Turns up the volume.

We see scenes of total human degradation. People, mostly African American, packed into the Superdome, sweating, scared, parched and rapidly angering. They stare at the camera like it's a foreign object. There doesn't seem to be a lot of organized relief going on.

SONNY

That's America. That ain't Africa or India now. That's happening in our Time Zone. On the motherfucking government watch too.

Bobby emerges from the bins with Big Star's debut, *No. 1 Record*. Hands it to Sonny.

BOBBY

Can you play this?

SONNY

Yeah. In a minute.

BOBBY

Please play it.

Walker approaches. Takes the record from Bobby.

WALKER

What's up?

BOBBY

I was just at Rosario's getting a slice and I ran into Sammy Wire.

SONNY

From The Spurts?

WALKER

How's he doing? He doesn't come in anymore.

BOBBY

He was in rehab. He pulled out five of his own teeth one night after an Ambien and Malibu binge.

SONNY

Rough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOBBY

Two of the drummer's teeth too.  
Please play track one? "Feel."  
Now?

WALKER

I know what track one is. What's  
up?

SONNY

Okay. Uh... Sammy Wire told me  
Alex Chilton is missing too.  
Nobody's seen him since the levees  
broke.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ.

Walker, shaken, reverently plays the Big Star record. As  
the ascending chords to "Feel," the glammy album-opener  
chime out, Tabitha takes great notice.

TABITHA

I should know about him too?

The all nod. Tabitha nods her head to the music. It  
gets her. She takes Jeff's hand. Leads him out the  
door.

SONNY

Walkman? You better pull *Radio  
City*, and *Third* too.

BOBBY

Do you have *Like Flies On  
Sherbert*?

SONNY

Yes, we have *Like Flies On  
Sherbert*! Where do you think you  
are?

BOBBY

I didn't see it over there.

SONNY

Pull *Like Flies On Sherbert*. Fuck  
it, pull the Box Tops. We're  
gonna be here a while.

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK

Jeff sits on a bench with Tabitha. They drink ice coffees. Jeff tells her all about Alex Chilton. He pulls out his i-Pod at certain intervals. Cues up songs for her. It's a modern age courtship. Cult heroes 101.

TITLE: September 1

INT. MAX FISH - AFTERNOON

Sonny and Walker sit at the bar.

SONNY

I hate to say it but it would be easier to process if they were dead. There would be closure. But they're missing. You know? Missing. People are looking for them. Nobody's seen them. They're... missing. What if they're never found. What if Alex Chilton is never found? They found Jeff Buckley and we could stop playing *Grace* on repeat. Remember that?

WALKER

I do.

SONNY

*Eventually*, I got over Lennon getting shot. Around '91, '92.

WALKER

Corny says this is just further proof that I'm a paranoid and depressive personality. That I have no faith in things turning out okay. She thinks someone's going to find them. She says that I secretly enjoy this because it validates my pessimism.

SONNY

Who's gonna find them? Aquaman? Submariner? The motherfucking Man From Atlantis?

WALKER

Coast Guard. Corny says. She says that's what these people are trained for. She says we should trust the government.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY

What are you still doing with this woman?

WALKER

I love her. Sonny.

Sonny downs his drink.

WALKER (CONT'D)

I do! Things are better. Really. Everything's fine.

We next see CNN footage of Anderson Cooper interviewing Louisiana Senator Mary Landrieu.

ANDERSON COOPER

Joining me from Baton Rouge is Louisiana Senator Mary Landreau. Senator, we appreciate you joining us tonight. Does the Federal Government bare responsibility for what is happening now? Should they apologize for what is happening now?

SENATOR MARY LANDRIEU

Anderson there will be plenty time to discuss those issues of why and how and what and if but Anderson as you understand and all of the directors of CNN and the news networks, this situation is very serious and it's going to demand all of our full attention through the hours, through the night and through the days. Let me just say a few things. Thank President Clinton and former President Bush for their strong statements of support and comfort today. I thank all the leaders that are coming to Louisiana and Alabama and Mississippi to our help and rescue. We are grateful for the military aspects that have been brought to bear. I want to thank Senator Frist and Senator Reed for their extraordinary efforts tonight, Anderson. I don't know if you've heard.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SENATOR MARY LANDRIEU (CONT'D)

Maybe you all have announced it but Congress is going to an unprecedented session to pass a ten billion dollar supplemental bill tonight to keep FEMA and the Red Cross up and operating...

ANDERSON COOPER

Excuse me, Senator. I haven't heard that because uh... for the last four days, I've been seeing dead bodies in the streets in Mississippi and to listen to politicians thanking each other and complimenting each other, I gotta tell you there are a lot of people here who are very upset and very angry and very frustrated. And when they hear politicians thanking each other it kind of cuts them the wrong way right now. Literally there was a body in the streets of this town yesterday being eaten by rats because this woman had been laying in the street for 48 hours and there's not a lot of facilities to take her up. Do you get the anger that is out here?...

INT. LAND SPEED RECORDS

Walker, Sonny, Bobby, Tabitha and Jeff, who we now see have been gathered around a small TV on the bar top of the record store, begin cheering as they observe this.

SENATOR MARY LANDRIEU

Anderson, I have the anger inside of me...

Sonny mutes the TV with the remote.

SONNY

I have the anger inside of me too, baby. I can't listen to any more of that bullshit.

He puts a record on the turn table. "I Wish I Was In New Orleans" by Tom Waits plays.

SONNY (CONT'D)

This is some fucked up Third World-style neglect goin' on.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY (CONT'D)

Where is the President? Where are the Feds?

WALKER

Somebody should do something.

SONNY

We *do* do something. We pay taxes.

BOBBY

I donated two hundred dollars to the Red Cross. I feel better. I felt better yesterday.

SONNY

It's not enough.

BOBBY

You're right. I should have made it five hundred.

SONNY

No, I mean it's not enough. Donating. We should... help those people. You know what? Fuck this! I'm going.

JEFF

Can we stay?

SONNY

No, you don't understand what I'm saying here. I'm *going*.

WALKER

To New Orleans?

SONNY

I'm gonna do something! I'm gonna find them.

JEFF

Alex Chilton?

WALKER

And Fats Domino?

SONNY

Yes. And yes!

JEFF

Wow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOBBY

The Coast Guard is searching for them.

SONNY

That's great. I'm gonna search too.

WALKER

Seriously?

SONNY

I'm not going to sit here and wait for more bad news and just crush in like I do. Watch TV. Drink. Dick around. Drink some more. I'm gonna do something about this, man. I don't care if I die trying. Alex Chilton would try to save us if he could. Listen to this record.

He picks up the *No. 1 Record* LP.

SONNY (CONT'D)

He has saved us. Already. Fats too. Not only have they made our lives better with they're music, we, Walker and me, we make a living selling that music. We owe them! The Coast Guard doesn't owe them. We owe them!

WALKER

We can't go down there right now.

BOBBY

It's bad. Really bad. Gangs. Snakes. Nutria.

TABITHA

What the fuck are Nutria?

BOBBY

Giant rats.

SONNY

That's exactly why these guys need all the help they can get.

Sonny turns to Walker.

SONNY (CONT'D)

You with me? Or you gonna let a giant rat eat Alex Chilton?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WALKER

Why are you asking me this?

Walker paces.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Why are you asking me this?!

SONNY

Well, because you're my friend.  
And because I'm going to use the  
September rent to finance this.

WALKER

Really? God. I don't... Are you  
sure you don't wanna just go to  
the bar? Maybe break some bottles  
out back? Hit a pillow?

SONNY

If we drive all night, we can be  
there by tomorrow and start  
searching. I think. I don't  
know. Just...

BOBBY

You're really serious.

JEFF

I'm in, Sonny!

WALKER

We need to think this through. We  
have responsibilities here. What  
about the bread?

JEFF

Anyone can deliver bread.

BOBBY

I'm supposed to leave on the red  
eye to LA. Tonight. I'd be  
seriously fucking these guys. We  
have a record deal. A real one.  
Do you know how rare that is these  
days?

WALKER

We have a record *store*. I have a  
girlfriend.

Sonny pulls on his coat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SONNY

I'm going down to Chinatown to see  
if I can rent a Humvee or  
something.

TABITHA

Terrible for the environment.

BOBBY

Right. There's an argument that  
global warming exacerbated this  
storm in the first place.  
Exacerbated.

SONNY

Fine. A van. A hybrid. Wheels.  
Then I'm gonna load up on water  
and shit. Walker and I will meet  
back here at midnight and then  
we're gone. Whoever shows up  
right here at twelve is in.  
Whoever doesn't, nobody's gonna  
cut on you.

Bobby nods. Tabitha and Jeff look at each other. Walker  
rocks back and forth, ratcheting up his energy... a small  
grin creeps across his lips. And gets bigger. And  
bigger. We see he's staring at the American flag on the  
wall. Walker walks over to it. Takes it down. Turns it  
over, right side up and re-fastens it to the wall.

SONNY (CONT'D)

That's right! That's right!

JEFF

Hey, can anyone else drive?

They all look around, a little worried. Jeff stares at  
Sonny.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Can you drive?

TABITHA

I can drive.

They stare at her.

SONNY

You wanna come with me right now?

She stares at Sonny and Jeff.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

JEFF

You're already in trouble.

Tabitha pulls out her cell phone. Dials a number.

TABITHA

(into phone)

Hi, Daddy. Before you say anything, I want to let you know that my hair is unchanged, I'm not on drugs and I'm learning a frightful amount about the roots of rock and roll.

INT. COCKTAIL PARTY

Mr. Churchill holds the phone and begins to sweat as he stares out at the crowd of American and English UPPER CRUSTERS mingling.

INT. LIVING ROOM/WALKER'S APARTMENT

Walker sits with Jobriath in his lap. Cornelia paces.

WALKER

All you have to do is make sure there's food in his bowl.

CORNELIA

"Jobriath"?

WALKER

You can call him Courage.

He moves to hand her the cat. It hisses.

CORNELIA

Great.

WALKER

I have to do this.

CORNELIA

Who's paying for this?

WALKER

We're using... petty cash.

CORNELIA

This has Sonny's fingerprints all over it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALKER

I'm not letting him go down there alone. We're partners.

CORNELIA

No, Walker. We're partners.

Walker rises. Walks into the bedroom.

CORNELIA (CONT'D)

I might not be here when you get back.

WALKER

Feed the cat.

CORNELIA

You think it's going to be the same after this? How am I ever going to feel secure knowing that you can just abandon me on a whim.

WALKER

Ask the cat.

CORNELIA

What?

WALKER

I said, please feed the cat.

CORNELIA

You're a motherfucker. Do you know that? Are you aware of just how much of a motherfucker you are?

WALKER

I am aware that I'm unavoidably motherfucker. No matter what I do, I'm going to stay a motherfucker.

He emerges with a bag. Lets it drop.

WALKER (CONT'D)

But goddamit I'm going to be a bad motherfucker from now on.

She's impressed by this.

CORNELIA

It's very dangerous down there.

They stare at each other. The old chemistry is briefly back. He kisses her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CORNELIA (CONT'D)

Alex Chilton?

WALKER

And Fats Domino.

CORNELIA

Well... at least you've got your soundtrack picked out.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A white Ford Econoline van rolls up to a meter in front of a supermarket on Avenue A. Sonny, Jeff and Tabitha roll out.

SONNY

Okay, goddamn that was expensive.

JEFF

Short notice. You save money when you plan your trip well in advance. It says here.

He hands him the Rent-A-Car brochures. Sonny shoves them in his pocket. He hands them some cash.

SONNY

I've gotta run upstairs and grab something. Make sure you get plenty of water.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT

Sonny enters. It's dark. He knows where he's headed and doesn't deliberate. He grabs his Yankee hat off the back of the couch. Walks into the bedroom. Pulls a t-shirt from a drawer. Goes to the bathroom. Stares at his toothbrush hanging by the sink. He snatches it. Opens the medicine cabinet. Stares at his toiletries, drugs, and other products. It's too complicated. He closes the cabinet. Walks back to the bedroom. Opens a drawer next to the bed. Pulls out a small case. Opens it. Removes a black .38 Smith and Wesson revolver. Stuffs it in the back of his pants. The wooden grip sticks out that back. It's cold. He shivers.

SONNY

Haven't had to walk around with you in my ass in a long time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sonny takes a long look at his books, his records, his comfortable, library-like pad for one last time. Then exits.

EXT. LAND SPEED RECORDS - NIGHT

The van is parked outside the store. Sonny emerges with a giant stack of CDs and a purple, canvas bag full of tapes. He pulls the grid down. Locks it. Then pad locks it with a separate and apparently super strong lock.

SONNY

Let's see you gentrify this shit.

He joins Jeff and Tabitha as they wait on the street. Soon Walker rounds the corner, holding his suitcase.

SONNY (CONT'D)

My brother.

Walker smiles. They all wait for Bobby. Will he show up?

JEFF

What time is it?

SONNY

Twelve eleven.

JEFF

You think Bobby's on his way to L.A.?

WALKER

Let's give him four more minutes. Five more minutes. I don't know.

SONNY

My man is not coming. He's got his million dollar record deal.

TABITHA

Head Band is a crap name for a band.

Bobby finally walks up. He's carrying a guitar case and a back pack. He wears a cowboy hat. It tamps down his fluffy hair. He spies them. Runs over, relieved.

BOBBY

You're here. Whew. I'm sorry I'm late. I stopped by my pot dealer.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY (CONT'D)

I got some of this too, just in case. We should probably take it now. Or... you know.. Keep it nearby.

JEFF

Acid?

He hands them each foil packets full of meds. Sonny reads the packaging.

SONNY

Tamiflu.

BOBBY

He sells a lot of it. You'd be surprised.

JEFF

Did you... did you get any pot?

BOBBY

Yes.

WALKER

Did you leave the band?

BOBBY

Oh, yes. But... we weren't gonna be very good anyway, were we?

TABITHA

Not with that name.

WALKER

Okay. Should we hit it?

SONNY

Let's hit it.

They pile into the van. Start the engine. "Monday" by Wilco plays on the soundtrack as they pull out of the spot and head towards the bridge on their way down South.

EXT. GARDEN STATE PARKWAY/NEW JERSEY - NIGHT

The moon is full. The van speeds across the blacktop. Inside Sonny sits in the passenger seat. Bobby sits next to Walker and Jeff. It's a little cramped. All look a bit ashen. The enormity of what they're doing is starting to sink in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALKER

There's no way I could have left  
the coffee maker on. Right?  
Right. Right?

SONNY

Uh. Listen, everyone. I just  
want to say... thank you. Thank  
you for supporting Land Speed all  
these years. You've keep us  
alive. Right, Walk?

WALKER

Yeah. Definitely.

SONNY

And thanks for getting involved...  
well... here.

They all nods. Stare ahead. Silent.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Should I put in another CD?

Nobody says anything. They drive on in silence.

EXT. GAS STATION - SOMEWHERE AROUND PENNSYLVANIA

The van pulls up to a pump. They all pile out.

TABBY

Do you know how to pump a tank?

She stares at Sonny. He shrugs. She's amazed.

TABBY (CONT'D)

Right. Figure it out. I have to  
pee.

Sonny picks up the nozzle. Inserts his debit card in the  
slot. Walker helps him. Together they pump the tank.

Bobby shakes out the kinks. So does Jeff. There's a  
weird giddiness as they look up at the sky.

INT. BATHROOM

Tabby enters a filthy road stop bathroom. She's aghast  
at the conditions. She steps very lightly across the  
grody tile. Enters the stall. Begins carefully papering  
the toilet seat.

EXT. GAS STATION

JEFF

Look at the stars. I don't think I've ever seen stars in my life.

BOBBY

You can't see them in the city but you can see them you know... other places.

JEFF

Yeah?

BOBBY

You've never left the City?

Jeff shakes his head. Breaks into a goofy grin.

JEFF

It feels good! Ha!

Bobby spreads some maps out on the window of the van.

BOBBY

Sonny. Walker. Sammy Wire wrote some directions to Alex Chilton's neighborhood. The Spurts were recording down at Easely and the engineers there knew Chilton. Sammy's a Big Star fan... obviously. I bet he'd be here, if it wasn't for the colostomy bag. Anyway, they road tripped it over there for dinner one night. Chicken. I think. He knows the area really well. It's one of the few things he's retained. Anyway, I've got them here. I also have you know, some classic Rand McNally stuff. From the 60s.

Walker and Sonny watch as the digits flip and the price goes up and up on the gas tank. Twenty dollars. Twenty five dollars. Topping out at thirty six dollars and change.

WALKER

Shit, man. Gas is expensive! Who knew?

SONNY

Well... everyone else in the world. You don't hear that shit every night on the news?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALKER

Yeah, but I don't give a shit. I take the subway. Cabs?

SONNY

You ever factor in how much the price of petrol adds to the price of a cab ride?

WALKER

No.

SONNY

Or how it influences foreign policy? Or the environment?

WALKER

Come on, man. It's late!

Sonny returns the handle. Grabs his receipt.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Are we really using the rent money for this?

SONNY

We just did. We're officially committed now.

WALKER

Well, yeah but... can turn back. I mean... you know... we can... not make it worse. We're only like a hundred miles out of Manhattan or something. Fifty miles? We can turn around.

SONNY

I don't wanna turn around, Walker. We sit in that store. We listen to records. Sell a couple. Don't sell most of them. There's a lot of time. You have a lot of time, you get a lot of ideas. You get older, soon, you're getting big ideas. Major shit you're gonna do. But the thing of it is: I haven't followed through any one of those ideas. Little. Big. Nothing. Ever. My whole life, I haven't finished one thing until the end. Graduate school. Beth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WALKER

Beth dumped you. You never even liked Beth.

SONNY

I liked Beth.

WALKER

Oh.

SONNY

I never quit cigarettes... for real. I talked about it. I talk a lot. And I walk. A few steps. And then I cave. But this shit... I'm on this road until the end. This shit I'm sticking with.

Sonny pulls a cigarette from his pack.

WALKER

Don't... don't light that here.

SONNY

Oh. Yeah. Good lookin' out.

Tabby bounds out of the convenience store. She carries teaming bags of junk food. Sucks on a gigantic soda.

TABBY

Excluding the Devil's loo, that is the most amazing shop I've ever been in. I went a little crazy. I hope you like orange food.

Tabby climbs into the car. Starts it up.

TABBY (CONT'D)

Let's go. In. In. I've got my artificially stimulated second wind. Someone's going to have to talk to me constantly to help me stay awake.

JEFF

Can I have shotgun? For a while?

Jeff smiles at Tabby. She smiles back.

SONNY

Yeah. Sure.

They all climb into the van. Sonny extends his hand to Walker as they settle into their seats. Walker takes it. They shake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SONNY (CONT'D)

Rock n' roll.

WALKER

American rock n' roll.

BOBBY

"I've never traveled far without a little Big Star..."

JEFF

I've never traveled far.

INT. HIGHWAY 81 SOUTH/SOMEWHERE AROUND MARYLAND

"The Swish" by The Hold Steady plays. New York City gets farther and farther away as the van heads towards New Orleans.

SONNY

So I know Walker going on twenty years, now.

WALKER

Since our misspent spell of liberal arts education.

SONNY

Don't really know the rest of you too well. Bobby some. Jeff, I know you as "the bread guy." Why don't we go around the room... around the van... and say something orientating bullshit about ourselves? Help Tabitha stay awake and strengthen our bonds as an ass kicking posse of do rights? I'll start. Let's see. My middle name is Thomas. The most embarrassing record in my collection is probably *Come Find Yourself* by the Fun Lovin' Criminals. I'm sorry. I love it. I like Red Vines, not Twizzlers. I still think the best book of existential philosophy ever written is *There's A Monster At The End of This Book* by Grover. And I'm a full on hedgehog.

TABITHA

What's that? A hedgehog.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

Like Ron Jeremy?

SONNY

Well there are two kinds of people, this goes back to the Greeks, actually but it was used most famously in an essay by this cat Isiah Berlin.

WALKER

It's also a song by Luna.

SONNY

When it comes to types of people, there are foxes and there are hedgehogs. The fox knows a little about many things. The hedgehog knows a lot about only one big ass thing. Land Speed is a hedgehog magnet, but I don't wanna assume anything about all y'all, since that's not going to help us understand each other better. So... you know... I'm throwing it out there.

WALKER

Walker White. What. Okay. I'm a Libra with a freaky rising. I'm from Queens. Rockaway. When I was young, I used to break into hospital gift shops and steal Jesuses. My favorite song of all time is "The Train (C'Mon Ride It)" by Quad City DJs. Best movie ever made: *Grosse Pointe Blank*. And uh... hedgehog.

BOBBY

Bobby. I wish I could wear sneakers because my feet hurt a lot but I can't get around how uncool they look. Even the really expensive ones. I don't get Serge Gainsbourg at all even though I know I'm supposed to. Same with sushi. Oh... uh... hedgehog.

JEFF

Jeff. Parker. I'm probably a fox. But I wanna be a hedgehog. I have hedgehog envy, maybe? I used to deliver bread.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JEFF (CONT'D)

But you guys know that. I sometimes delivered cake. Did you know that?

SONNY

You never brought us cake.

JEFF

It's harder to sneak cake. My favorite White Stripes song is "I Fought Piranhas." My other favorite is "Boll Weevil." I spent one year at The New School. I might go back. I might not. I can open a can of Campbells chicken noodle soup with a Bic lighter. Any can really. In case we lose the can opener.

SONNY

Tabitha? What are you, baby?

TABITHA

I'm seventeen.

They're all quiet.

JEFF

What does anybody wanna hear?

BOBBY

Maybe we should try to find the news?

Jeff searches for a news station. They hear a variety of pop songs, then static. Switch to am and finally pick up a frequency.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

...roving gangs have been looting local businesses in plain view of the police, who seem, for now at least, completely powerless to stop them.

Tabitha shuts the radio off. Slows down, then pulls off the road and shuts the engine. They all stare at each other as the van sits on the shoulder of the road. She flips on the hazards.

TABITHA

I can't listen to that. I need to rest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SONNY

Oh, come on, people. We're in this ... now. This is what it's about. Roving gangs. Fuck 'em. We're from New York City. There are roving gangs everywhere.

WALKER

Not anymore.

SONNY

Well, I recall pretty clearly when there were, and I'm still here. Walker's still here. We're the motherfucking Warriors! Look, I know you're scared. I'm scared. If there was no fear to face, this wouldn't mean shit. It'd be a road trip. We might as well be going to Sun Studios. Fucking... Graceland. Let's get our heads around this... We're heading into a dangerous place. But... there are people who need us. And two them seriously rock.

TABITHA

I need sleep. We are so far from New Orleans. It's a 20 hour drive. 20 hours.

SONNY

We can do this. We'll get there. We just need to push it. Time is an issue here. Our heroes are in peril.

TABITHA

You know what, Sonny? I've just learned something about myself that I'd like to share if that's okay?

SONNY

Yeah, alright.

TABITHA

I've learned that I'm a fox after all. Not a hedgehog. Because I know more than just one thing. I know about music. And I agree that it's the most important thing in my life as well.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

TABITHA (CONT'D)

It's pretty much the only thing that makes me feel good when I think about waiting to see if I get into a series of prestigious universities I truly don't even want to attend. Or my parent's divorce and how they're so fucking civil to each other, when they really just want to either screw or stick each other with pins. But I know other things too. For instance... I know how to fucking drive a car. You cock. I'm sorry. The chemicals and the sugar and the caffeine are effecting my emotions. Violently.

SONNY

Alright. We'll find a motel. Get some sleep. A few hours. And in the morning...

BOBBY

I'm really tired. I didn't want to say anything. I know how important morale can be. I... you know... I tour. I've toured.

WALKER

So, like when you get to a club does the marquee say: Live Tonight: Headband.

BOBBY

When you answer the phone do you say Land/Speed?

WALKER

You know I do.

BOBBY

It's a dumb name too.

SONNY

It's a great name.

WALKER

It's a Husker Du album.

TABITHA

Is it good? I mean, should I own it? Husker Du.

WALKER

*Hoosker. Hoosker du.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

JEFF

I saw a sign back there. Gas,  
Food Lodging. The exits' coming  
up. It's a Best Western.

BOBBY

Oh, Best Westerns are clean. A  
little more expensive...

TABITHA

Clean would be nice.

INT. BEST WESTERN - LATER

Walker is washing his face with a tiny bar of soap.  
Sonny sits on one of the two beds in this small roadside  
motel room. There's a knock at the door. Sonny rises to  
answer it. Bobby and Jeff enter.

BOBBY

What are you doing?

SONNY

Just like... thinking. Spacing  
out.

BOBBY

We can't sleep.

SONNY

Have you tried? It's only been a  
few minutes?

JEFF

I know I won't be able to sleep.

BOBBY

Me neither.

SONNY

You should get some sleep, man.  
This is gonna be heavy.

JEFF

That's why I can't sleep. Is that  
a paradox?

SONNY

No.

JEFF

Shit. I thought it was a paradox.  
Is it irony?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY

Sorry.

JEFF

What is it?

WALKER

Well... it's fucking stupid. I'm gonna sleep.

BOBBY

Is this room bigger than ours.

JEFF

No, but it smells better. We got a smoking room.

BOBBY

For the weed.

SONNY

You don't wanna be smoking that stuff down there. There's gonna be lots of heat.

BOBBY

*When?* They're looting Wal Marts? They care if I smoke a bowl or several? Anyway, I'm going through the last of it now. You want some?

SONNY

No thanks, man. I'm good.

WALKER

I'll have some.

JEFF

Come back to the "smoking" room.

Sonny turns on the TV. Flips around the channels. There's a knock at the door. Jeff opens it. Tabitha is there, wearing a weird roadside T-shirt. It says: Amish Country and shows a horse and buggy.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Hey.

TABITHA

I'm creeped out. There's something under my bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JEFF

The beds are solid.

TABITHA

You caught me. What are you doing?

JEFF

We're just uh... talking.

TABITHA

Can I join? I have fudge.

She comes in. Places a box of fudge on the table. Sits on the bed. Sonny puts on CNN. They see coverage of the flood. It's much, much worse than they thought. The entire 9th ward is under water. Street lights jut out from the buried pavement. Cars are submerged. People are travelling via boat over the streets. Blocks and blocks of houses slowly log up with water. Everyone who wanders into camera-view seems dazed.

SONNY

That's where we're going. First thing.

Jeff, Bobby and Walker abandon their weed-smoking mission. Sit on the bed and gape. Tabitha opens her box of fudge. Passes it around. Bites into a cube. Wipes her mouth.

TABITHA

We're going to need a big boat.

TITLE: September 2

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Bobby is sitting on the edge of the bed, watching TV. SEAN PENN now patrols the flooded ward. He is captured by the cameras as he pulls 9th Ward RESIDENTS into a boat. He holds a shotgun.

BOBBY

Wake up.

Sonny comes to.

SONNY

Where the fuck am I?

BOBBY

Best Western. Somewhere. Not New York.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY

What time is it?

BOBBY

Look who's down there now. You'll never guess.

Walker stirs awake. Jeff and Tabitha enter from the bathroom.

TABITHA

President?

JEFF

Navy Seals?

WALKER

National Guard?

BOBBY

Sean Penn.

WALKER

Sean Penn?

BOBBY

Sean Penn.

Tabitha sits on the bed. Stares at the TV.

TABITHA

I love Sean Penn. *I Am Sam!*

Sonny rises. Opens the window. The light streams in, blinding them.

WALKER

Come on, man. Bright.

SONNY

We should be there.

WALKER

Too bright.

SONNY

Doesn't it make you feel better that Sean Penn is down there?

WALKER

Yes. Actually. Weird.

BOBBY

But we're not Sean Penn. We're not even *Michael Penn*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SONNY

Why not? I mean... why aren't we Sean Penn? I'm fucking sick of not being Sean Penn. I'm almost 40 years old. My whole life I've never been Sean Penn. I'm gonna be Sean fucking Penn before it's too late to be Sean Penn.

JEFF

I'd like to be Sean Penn.

SONNY

That's right, you'd like to be Sean Penn.

TABITHA

How does one become Sean Penn?

They all stare at the screen. We see more footage of Sean Penn as he regulates.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

Right. In the car...

INT. BEST WESTERN - MORNING

They all traipse out of Sonny and Walker's bedroom, with dark shades on, drinking cruddy motel room instant coffee. Tabitha rubs her neck.

TABITHA

I'm so glad I paid for a whole room and ended up sleeping in a tub.

JEFF

Me too. I mean... I didn't sleep in the tub. I slept sort of under the tub. On the floor. But I paid for the room. I didn't use.

BOBBY

We're going to have to be more practical from now on.

TABITHA

On that very note, I have a suggestion.

EXT. TARGET/SUPER-STORE - DAY

The van pulls into the parking lot.

## INT. TARGET/AISLES

Bobby, Jeff, Tabitha, Sonny and Walker load up a pair of shopping carts full of outdoors/camping/boating and rescue equipment. Life jackets. Bulky, canvas survival kits. Bobby holds a small, portable Magnavox radio. Tabitha wears a wide-brimmed, straw hat.

JEFF

Would you loot this place if you absolutely had to?

SONNY

I might loot it now. How are we going to pay for all of this stuff?

Tabitha pulls out her Amex platinum credit card.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Platinum.

TABITHA

My father hasn't cancelled it yet. He might not at all. He probably thinks it's impolite.

WALKER

Did you see how well stocked the Music section is? Do you suppose it would kill us to think about adding a CD rack to Land Speed? Music DVDS.

SONNY

We sell vinyl.

TABITHA

Right. I think we're off.

JEFF

Where are we going to store all of this stuff?

They all stare at Tabitha. A new leader.

## INT. BOAT SHOP/MARYLAND

A TV set is mounted in the office of this high end boat lot. It plays footage of the President, who finally seems to have the disaster on his radar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRESIDENT BUSH

Again, I want to thank you all for... and Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job. The FEMA Director is working 24.... They're working 24 hours a day.

We see Tabitha, Sonny, Jeff, Walker and Bobby cramped into the office, while BOAT SALESMAN, in a crisp white short sleeve shirt, deeply tanned, fills out the paperwork.

TABITHA

What a dumb ass.

BOAT SALESMAN

I'll throw in the trailer, since you're not financing.

TABITHA

Oh. Thank you very much.

BOAT SALESMAN

You're very welcome. So... That will be seventeen thousand nine hundred and ninety nine dollars.

SONNY

Are you sure you wanna do this, baby?

They stare up at the TV again.

PRESIDENT BUSH

Again, my attitude is, if it's not going exactly right, we're going to make it go exactly right. If there's problems, we're going to address the problems. And that's what I've come down to assure people of. And again, I want to thank everybody. I'm not looking forward to this trip. I got a feel for it when I flew over before.

SONNY

"Flew over."

PRESIDENT BUSH

It... for those who have not... trying to conceive what we're talking about...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PRESIDENT BUSH (CONT'D)

it's as if the entire Gulf Coast  
were obliterated by a... the worst  
kind of weapon you can imagine.  
And now we're going to try to  
comfort people in that part of the  
world.

Tabitha, pissed, holds out her plastic.

TABITHA

Ring it.

The Salesman rings up the boat sale.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

At least it's not drugs.

EXT. HIGHWAY 81 - LATER

From an arial view, we see the whit van speed south, with  
a fifteen foot speedboat mounted on a trailer behind.  
There's a small cabin, a powerful outboard motor and a  
brown, vinyl tap covering their multiple Target  
purchases.

INT. VAN

Bobby is strumming "More Fun In The New World" by X on  
his guitar. He, Walker and Sonny are singing the chorus:  
"It was better before, before we voted for What's His  
Name? This was supposed to be the new world," very  
loudly. The windows are all open and the breeze is  
blowing their hair around.

EXT. HIGHWAY 81

"More Fun In The New World" (X's version) plays on the  
soundtrack as the van turns off Interstate 81 onto  
Interstate 10, passing a road sign that reads:  
Tuscaloosa.

INT. VAN

They're still singing, until it becomes clear to them  
all, slowly, and person by person that they are starting  
to see some real Hurricane Katrina-wrought damage around  
them. Broken trees. Abandoned cars. Garbage in the  
middle of the road. Helicopter rotor noise in the  
distance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY

Bob, you pitch that weed?

BOBBY

Doin' it.

TABITHA

We're an hour out. Maybe less.  
I'm going to make a last gas stop.  
If you want anything before we...  
you know... before.

Bobby lights the end of a joint. Sucks. Passes to Jeff. He declines. Bobby chucks the rest of his stash out the window.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS CITY LIMITS

Tabitha is driving slowly, as if she's prolonging some inevitable nightmare as best as she can. Nobody is protesting.

INT. VAN - LATER

Displaced CITIZENS are literally walking out of the City in rags, in the direction of the oncoming traffic. Tabitha pulls the van up towards an African American WALKING MAN in a red t-shirt and torn, blue shorts.

TABITHA

Excuse me. Do you need help? Do  
you need some water? Sir?

The Man looks at her, and for a second or two, it seems like she's speaking a different language.

SONNY

Gimme some of that water.

Walker scrambles to find a large bottle of water.

WALKER

Give him that sandwich.

SONNY

Yeah. Where is it?

WALKER

Here.

SONNY

And the chips.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sonny leans out the window with their lunch.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Brother! Here. Take this.  
Alright?

The Man looks at Sonny queerly. He finally speaks in a deep Southern drawl. He looks at the Van, the boat, Sonny's clean clothes. He laughs.

MAN

"Brother?"

He takes the water. Opens it. Drinks, while staring daggers at Sonny. He leaves the sandwich and chips. Walks on.

BOBBY

That was so fucked up. This is so fucked up, man. I'm freaking out a little bit.

SONNY

Hey. Funny Reefer Man. You need to realize what's going on here. And you need to get your head down. Fast. Okay? Alright?

BOBBY

Yeah. Okay.

SONNY

Everybody needs to cool out. Just cool out.

WALKER

Okay, you sound like Jagger at Altamont. Not a good tactic.

SONNY

Alright. Alright. Here's what we're gonna do. We're gonna go around the van, again? Okay? And everyone's gonna share a New Orleans fantasy. Right? And Tabby, you just... just... drive.

They all nod.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I'll start. I come down. I walk into a bar in the French Quarter. I light up a cigarette. I smoke in a bar. Nobody hassles me. I order a drink.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SONNY (CONT'D)

I take it into the street and drink it in the open air. Nobody hassles me.

WALKER

It's Mardi Gras. I'm on a float. I'm wearing a mask. But everybody is waving at me, like they know it's me. They're excited to see me. They throw beads at me. Or... or I throw beads at them. The women... they all show me their... they make me feel at home.

SONNY

Bob? You ready to pick it up?

He massages Bobby's shoulders.

SONNY (CONT'D)

In the pocket, Bob.

BOBBY

Okay. Well... I'm living in an old hotel. There's a ceiling fan. A bottle of bourbon. Nothing else but me and my guitar. And I'm writing a Graham Parsons song. But it's my song. I also want an alligator's head. For my desk.

SONNY

Jeff?

JEFF

I don't know, man. I'm piss-scared.

SONNY

Let's go, Bread.

JEFF

Alright.

(long pause)

Uh... I save Alex Chilton from drowning in the flood?

They all look at him.

TABITHA

Up there!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Tabitha has turned into the Elysian Fields exit and run dead into a makeshift roadblock, that seems to have been set up by some kind of self-appointed militia. Five ragged-looking locals in muddy undershirts and camouflage pants, trucker hats and motorcycle boots. Four hold shotguns. One holds a shovel. Except for Militia Man One, the leader, the others are no older than Bobby and Jeff.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

What do I do?

They flag her down. She stops. Militia Man One approaches the car. His skin is sun burned. Unshaven. He speaks in a drawl.

JEFF

What's up? Dude.

MILITIA MAN ONE

How you people doing today?

WALKER

Great. Thanks. Feeling good. Feeling... strong. How... are you? Sir?

MILITIA MAN ONE

New York plates. You from New York?

SONNY

You are quick.

The Militia Man gives Sonny a death glare.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Look, Hoss. We're here to help. You wanna let us pass?

MILITIA MAN

How do I know you didn't steal this van? Steal that boat?

SONNY

We got papers.

MILITIA MAN

Let's have a look at those papers.

SONNY

I don't have to show you any papers. You're not the police. Are you the police?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MILITIA MAN TWO

We're the police now. Ain't we,  
Daddy?

MILIITA MAN ONE

Shut up.  
(to Tabitha)  
You got papers in the glove  
compartment, Sugar?

SONNY

Listen. Why are we wasting time  
on this bullshit? People need our  
help. We're Americans. Just like  
you. We came down here to help  
out.

MILITIA MAN

I'm talkin' to the little girl.  
I'm not talking to you, Boy.

SONNY

Oh, that's how it's gonna be?  
"Boy"?

TABITHA

We have papers. We have a fucking  
boat! Just let us through so we  
can help, you fucking redneck  
Wanker.

JEFF

Nice.

The Militia Man's fake smile disappear. They all clutch  
their guns tight. Sonny reaches behind himself in the  
passenger seat. We see him grab the handle of his gun  
from the backside of his pants.

MILIITIA

I'm gonna need you to step out of  
the car and wait with us.  
Nobody's getting in or outta here  
today. Lots of looting and  
shooting going on back there.  
Someone's gotta do something about  
that.

Militia Man Two approaches the van more closely. Peers  
his head right in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MILITIA MAN TWO

Can't let every nigger escape  
justice just cause we're all a  
little wet.

He removes his cap to say hello. Stares dead at Sonny.

MILITIA MAN TWO (CONT'D)

Ain't that right? Boy?

Sonny is about to pull his gun when he notices the van is now surrounded. All five Militia Men are upon their vehicle, eyeing its contents, in both the cab and the boat.

TABITHA

What do I do?

SONNY

(whispers)  
Drive.

TABITHA

Serious?

SONNY

Drive!

Tabitha hits the gas hard and the van and boat smashes through the wooden roadblock. The Militia Men pile into their Chevy pick up truck and follow them.

The van zig zags across the highway with the pick up in pursuit, keeping straight and steady. Both are doing upwards of 90 MPH. The pick up is a much faster ride because of all the Van's cargo but Tabitha's instinctive swerving across the road is keeping it from passing. Whenever Tabitha encounters something in the road: a felled tree branch or roadkill, the swerves become wilder.

Frustrated, the Militia Men begin to fire their shotguns in the air. Then, at the back of the van. A blast blows the right turn signal to smithereens and peels back the metal and melts the rubber on the fender. It feels like an ante has been upped. Like their chicken game is becoming a high stakes thing, here.

TABITHA

Okay. We're so not insured for  
this.

Sonny removes his pistol. His fellow passengers are shocked.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

BOBBY

You have a gun? What are you  
doing with a gun?

(to Walker)

Did you know he had a gun?

WALKER

Yeah, he pointed it at me once.

SONNY

I did not. Come on.

WALKER

You were drunk.

SONNY

The safety was on.

Sonny leans out the right passenger-side window and squeezes off two shots directly at the pick up. One misses. The other shatters their windshield.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Ha! How ya like me now,  
motherfucker!

WALKER

(to Bobby)

It was a long, long time ago. We  
were a lot more self destructive  
and fucked up.

SONNY

Next one's taking your goddman  
bucktooth head off! You hear me,  
bitches?!

(to Bobby)

A lot more fucked up.

Sonny fires another shot, which blows off the side view mirror of the pick up. Bobby and Jeff cover their ears.

BOBBY

Why aren't you aiming for the  
tires?

SONNY

Shit. I'm a little amped.

WALKER

We're not any less impractical,  
unfortunately.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

WALKER (CONT'D)

Which is, if you really wanna know  
the truth of it, the main reason  
our business is suffering.  
Gentrification is only a symptom.  
Not the cause.

Sonny re-loads his gun from a box of bullet pulled from  
his jacket. Leans out and fires again. It misses. His  
next shot lodges in the driver's side door of the pick  
up. Sparks fly off the paint.

SONNY

You saying the proprietors of  
every Mom and Pop business being  
gobbled up by superstores are  
stubborn, irresponsible, elitists  
at heart?

(to Militia)

You like that? You like that  
don't you, sucker. You want some  
more of that.

BOBBY

This is like, disturbingly  
cathartic for him.

WALKER

He hasn't had any action in a long  
time.

The pick up finally slows and swerves itself but quickly,  
the Militia Men regain themselves and begin firing  
through the blasted out windshield.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Shit.

SONNY

Faster, Tabby!

TABITHA

You know this isn't fucking easy!  
I'm on the opposite side of the  
fucking car, for one. I learned  
to drive in a Vauxhall Viva in  
Knightsbridge! Where's he's  
sitting. Hello?

She banks a hard right down a side road. The pick-up  
follows. Tabitha then does a surprise U-turn and gets  
right back on the main road. Floors it across the  
asphalt. Jeff grips the dash. The others all roll around  
in the cab like beans in a maraca. Jeff begins thumbing  
through the CDs as the van speeds on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

TABITHA (CONT'D)

You're going to play a record?!

JEFF

No?

He looks back. Sonny and Bobby shake their head. Walker shrugs.

TABITHA

I need to focus. Alright? I'm sorry. I don't mean to yell.

JEFF

It's okay.

TABITHA

I really, really like you.

JEFF

I like you too.

As she talks with Jeff, she does not see that the stretch of highway they're on literally ends in about fifty yards. The road literally turns own into lake water, half of it above sea level, half of it below. Tabitha speeds right into it. The van immediately begins filling up with rank, brown water.

TABITHA

Shit! Sorry! Fuck!

SONNY

Nice. Nice focusing.

WALKER

You're doing a heck of a job.

TABITHA

Oh, piss off.

WALKER

What do we do. Sonny? What do we do?

SONNY

We're sinking?

WALKER

Yes, we're sinking! What do we do?

SONNY

I'm thinking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

BOBBY

They're back!

As the van fills with water, they all turn to see the pick up truck waiting at the top of the road. The Militia Men have piled out, guns in hands.

SONNY

Alright, on three, get all the shit you can carry... everything you think you might need that you don't wanna see at the bottom of this floodwater, take it out, and put it... in the boat. I'll cover you.

WALKER

Get in the boat? That's your plan?

SONNY

Get in the damn boat! We're going down. We have a boat. What the fuck do you want from me?

From the Militia Men's point of view, we see that the rental van is indeed sinking into the murk, hood first, with it's passengers bickering loudly amongst themselves. As the water streams in, they all grab what they can. Spare life jackets, water, food, clothes.

Bobby decides, painfully, to leave the guitar. It floats through the window and down into the lake on its side. They then scramble out of the van one by one while Sonny pops off his remaining rounds, then re-loads.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Jeff, I don't suppose you've grabbed that bag with my mix tapes in it?

Jeff shakes his head. Sonny fires another round. The Militia Men duck and then fire back.

SONNY (CONT'D)

You wanna grab that? If you can. It's purple. Says New York Knicks on it.

Jeff fishes around the back for it, as the van literally sinks. Finally he gives up and they both paddles towards the hitch, where Walker is trying to free the boat from the trailer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

JEFF  
I couldn't find it.

SONNY  
That's alright.

Sonny fires off another round and then begins to help pushing the boat into the water.

SONNY (CONT'D)  
I mean it's not like that shit is irreplaceable. It's not like the sentimental value is making me ache. In the guts.

They pile into the boat as the rented van, and Sonny's mix tapes sink to the bottom.

JEFF  
I saved this.

SONNY  
What's that?

JEFF  
Oh, uh... it's just a mix tape I made Tabby.

TABITHA  
You made me a mix tape?

Jeff nods, shyly. She takes his hand. Walker fumbles with the engine. Ducks as a shot nearly rips the top of his skull off before bubbling into the water. All four armed Militia Men are firing now. The shots getting seriously close to their targets. One hits the boat, causing fiberglass dust to blow up in the air. A few feet lower and the vessel would be useless.

SONNY  
Start the engine! Start the engine!

Walker fumbles with the outboard as the rest duck. Sonny hops in. He's out of bullets.

SONNY (CONT'D)  
Start the engine! Pull it. The chord. Pull it!

A pair of Militia Men begin to wade into the water in order to get a better shot at them. Two blasts ring out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

Walker pulls the chord. The engine sputters. They head off into the water, cramped and crowded, the motor boat's speed capacity greatly reduced, their van at the bottom of the drink.

Welcome to New Orleans.

TITLE: LOWER 9TH WARD

INT. 9TH WARD - LATER

"Jesus Christ" by Big Star plays as the motor boat cruises over the brown surface, surreal and pocked with tree tops. A gator's spiny back can be seen in the distances as it side-winds through the drink as well. A TALL MAN crosses it, numbly. No fear. He's drinking from a silver thermos. The man stares at Sonny, Walker, Jeff, Bobby and Tabitha as they can't help but watch him. His expression is oddly serene.

TALL MAN

What're you looking at?

SONNY

Alligator. You better come up here, man.

TALL MAN

I'll skin that gator.

He takes a drink.

SONNY

You sure?

TALL MAN

I'll skin you too.

He walks off, through the murk.

WALKER

I don't know what he's got in that thermos but I need some.

SONNY

Maybe these people are tougher than we are.

WALKER

What would you do if this was New York? Where would you go? The bar? Can't go to the bar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY

I'd definitely try the bar.

WALKER

Hey. Look.

They see a larger boat, about twenty feet away. A PRIEST is standing over three water-logged bodies, draped across the fiberglass stern. He's saying a loud, ecumenical prayer over them. Sonny guides the boat up towards them. They wait until the priest finishes. An OLD MAN emerges from the cabin. He wears a dirty polo shirt and shorts. Barefoot.

OLD MAN

You have any?

SONNY

Any what?

OLD MAN

Bodies. I'm taking these in.

SONNY

No. No bodies.

OLD MAN

What're you doing there?

SONNY

Well, we're down from New York City. We're looking for Mr. Antoine Domino. Sir. Otherwise known as The Fat Man.

OLD MAN

Not much room in there for a fat man.

SONNY

You know of a search party we can join? Coast Guard.

OLD MAN

There's a couple of 'em out now. Searching houses. Boat'll be back here in a few to drop off some more lost souls. You can follow them back in, I suppose.

SONNY

Will that be alright?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OLD MAN

You see a lot of bureaucrats out here?

SONNY

You the undertaker?

OLD MAN

I run the pizza place. This is my fishing boat.

The sounds of a larger boat approaching is heard. It's the U.S. Coast Guard.

Sonny, Walker, Jeff, Tabitha and Bobby brace themselves.

LT. ANNA MUNI, 35, pretty, brunette, with dark eyebrows and tan, well-toned body, throws a rope to the old man's boat. She wears a dirty U.S. Coast Guard uniform.

ENSIGN BERK, late 20s, a junior officer stands ready by her side. His head is shaved and his nose is covered with zinc oxide, giving him the air of a happy go lucky surfer. It stands in contradiction with his wired and morose posture and expression. The Old Man grabs their rope. Pulls his boat over. Berk pulls the body of a middle aged, white male off the deck of the boat, carefully. Drowned, pale and bloated. Anna grabs his feet. They transfer him to the Old Man's boat.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Any more for the Coroner?

ANNA

That's it. We're going across St. Claude. See if there's anyone for rescue. Not enough boats, but...

Anna takes a look at Sonny and Walker's boat as if to say, "Who the hell are these people?" Old Man picks up her curiosity.

OLD MAN

New York City.

ANNA

No shit?

SONNY

We'll follow you.

ANNA

Do you really know how to drive that boat, New York City?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SONNY

Doing okay so far.

ANNA

You mean you haven't capsized yet.

SONNY

Not yet, Ma'am.

ANNA

That's just luck. You're overweighted by about 200 pounds. You're not coming out behind me. I don't have the time or the room to rescue any New Yorkers today.

WALKER

I can come up on your boat? I mean... uh... I weigh about 180. I work out... some.

Anna and Walker meet eyes.

ANNA

Oh yeah? How much can you bench?

WALKER

About sixty pounds.

She smiles.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Oh... bench. I don't know. I curl. Mostly. Curl.

ANNA

You have a weapon, Curly? I don't expect you can defend yourself without one.

WALKER

No weapon, Ma'am.

SONNY

I've got a weapon. We can take care of ourselves if any trouble comes down. We've been shot at today already. Coming into town.

ANNA

"Border Patrol?"

SONNY

It sure wasn't the Welcoming Committee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANNA

I bet they were aiming high.  
Probably firing blanks.

SONNY

No, Ma'am. They put a hole in our  
boat. Coupla holes in our car.

ANNA

Well, if they wanted to take you  
out, you'd be out. Those boys  
shoot tin cans all day long. They  
can hit a target blind drunk.  
They're too smart to be killing  
anyone right now.

SONNY

They didn't look to smart.

ANNA

Smart folks don't want a murder  
rap. They know all this... it's  
going to be back to normal some  
day. And then they're gonna get  
found out.

She looks around sadly.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Alright. Come on up, New York.

WALKER

Walker. White.

He clumsily gets into the coast guard boat. Offers his  
hand to her. She doesn't shake it. Turns to Berk. His  
looks says, "Don't even try me." Anna calls to Sonny.

ANNA

Follow close. And whenever  
possible, stay in the boat. You  
don't want any of this in your  
lungs.

BOBBY

We've been under already. Are we  
like... in trouble?

ANNA

Well, when the levees broke, all  
the manhole covers flew about  
twenty feet in the air. Most of  
this? Sewerage. That's a nice  
get up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

BOBBY

Thanks.

ANNA

Don't throw it in your laundry bag  
when you're done here. Burn it.

The Old Man's boat heads off. The Coast Guard boat turns  
around and heads back into the rows of houses. Sonny,  
Bobby, Jeff and Tabitha follow in the motorboat.

EXT. LOWER 9TH WARD - LATER

Berk is staring hard at Walker. He seems uncomfortable.

WALKER

So. You guys seen Sean Penn?

Berk is silent.

ANNA

So what happened? You were  
watching this on TV and decided  
it'd be fun to come down and check  
it out for yourself?

WALKER

Not "fun" no.

ANNA

What do you do up there?

WALKER

I own a record store. Co-own.  
With Sonny.

ANNA

You wanna hear some music?

WALKER

Oh. Yeah, alright?

ANNA

Then go back to New York. There's  
no "charm" down here right now.  
Okay? No red beans and rice.

WALKER

I know.

ANNA

There's plenty of dead people.  
Sick people. Snakes. Gators.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERK

Red ants.

WALKER

Ants?

BERK

They can eat an entire family in  
half an hour.

Sonny shouts from alongside the Coast Guard boat.

SONNY

How'm I doing?

ANNA

Don't get cocky. Just stay close.

She gives the boat some gas. Sonny tries to keep up but soon he can only make out the wake. He gives the motorboat as much gas as possible.

INT. COAST GUARD BOAT - LATER

They pull up to a series of small, clapboard houses, some with porches underwater, some with cars buried up to the roof. The leaders and gutters are all bent and broken. Antennae blown off. Wires on the rood. Windows smashed out. Debris floating in the water or scattered across the dirt or concrete mounds the mark the rare houses that have some land in front of them.

ANNA

This the one, Berk?

BERK

That's the one they said might be  
full, yeah. Number Fourty Three.

ANNA

Alright.

WALKER

Shouldn't we wait for them?

ANNA

I don't know? If you're trapped  
in the attic in there with your  
eyes burning with sweat, what  
would you say?

BERK

They were warned to keep up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

You coming in or not, New York?

Anna pulls a service revolver from her holster and checks it. Berk removes his side arm as well.

WALKER

Can I... do you have an extra one of those?

ANNA

Sorry.

Berk picks up a long, wooden stick, the kind used to pull clumps of weeds or garbage from a boat's propeller. Hands it to Walker.

WALKER

Thanks.

(whispers)

Dick.

They hop out of the boat and slosh up to the front door of the house.

ANNA

Coast Guard! Hello? Anyone here?

BERK

Coast Guard! Comin' in!

Anna opens the door and steps into the darkness. Berk follows. Walker, brandishing his stick, turns to see if he can't find a trace of Sonny and the rest in the distance. Nothing. He looks up at the sky. It's impossibly pretty. Calico. He shakes his head. Follows them inside.

INT. MOTORBOAT

Sonny slowly guides the boat down a waterlogged row of houses. Above them, there are streetlights. All dark. Surreal. Bobby is trying to get service on his cell phone. It's waterlogged. He finally gives up. Throws it over the side.

SONNY

What would be good... what would be *better* is if I knew where the I was. That would be better than this, huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

There's some land up there. You see it? Maybe we should get out. Start a fire or something? I'm concerned about gas. It'd be good to not run out of gas. Also.

SONNY

Did you catch that attitude she copped with me? "New York." What's that about?

TABITHA

Walker sure got in that boat quick.

SONNY

Yeah, well he's having some lady issues at home. That's alright. At least if anything happens to us, Land Speed will be able to carry on.

TABITHA

But nothing's gonna happen to us, right?

SONNY

We're gonna be okay, baby. Trust me.

Sonny is docking the boat towards a piece of exposed road and earth a few yards away from a block of houses. Suddenly, he turns the boat violently. Jeff nearly falls into the water.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Sorry. I'm sorry. Is everyone okay?

Sonny shuts off the engine. Slumps in his seat.

BOBBY

Are we going ashore? What's going on?

They all stare at the banks of the shore. A long, thick, black power line has come down and dangles just above the water.

The wire is exposed.

A weird hum is heard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The water, tossed by boat's jerky motion, laps close to the downed wires. Centimeters away. If the waves touch it, the entire expanse of water might become electrified, as though someone threw a transistor radio, or a Marshall stack into a massive bathtub..

They try to steady the boat but it's no use. There's a popping sound. Sparks and then nothing.

SONNY

Nobody move.

TABITHA

What's happening?

They stare at the water, wondering if it's live.

The wires are now fully wet. They are wading distance to the land but nobody wants to be the one to get out of the boat to test this. They're trapped.

Worse, the sun has started to sink. The sound of copter rotors has faded. It's painfully quiet.

BOBBY

How long are we going to stay frozen here, Sonny?

SONNY

Don't know. Thinkin' bout that. Right now.

BOBBY

Do you really think it's...

SONNY

I don't know! Do you know?

BOBBY

I don't know. We could flip a coin. I don't have a coin. Plus... I'm worried about touching anything... metal.

Bobby slowly rises. Stands in the boat. Stares at the water. Then Jeff does the same. Slowly. Painfully. Tabitha next. Then Sonny. All four in the boat, staring down at the mysterious, brown water, and then up at the darkening sky.

They look ahead at the row of houses. Someone has written: "Help!" On the front wall of a blue house, about twenty yards off. There's a white cross painted below it. Sonny cups his hands and calls out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Someone has also scrawled a message across the front of a pale, red house in their sightline: " No looters. Will shoot!"

SONNY

Hello? Anyone in there? Hello?

BOBBY

I'd like to say right now that I'm not a looter. I'm a rhythm guitarist!

INT. FLOODED HOUSE - DAY

Anna, Berk and Walker, lit by two flashlight beams, pad through the ravaged living room of this small house. Warm and personal touches still remain, creating an eerie air. Dishes, groceries, knick knacks.

WALKER

Jesus. There's still photos on the wall.

ANNA

Where did you think they'd be?

WALKER

I'm sorry.

ANNA

People live here. I live here. I haven't been home since Friday.

WALKER

Do you have family there?

ANNA

I have pets.

WALKER

Dog? Cat.

ANNA

Fish.

Walker chuckles.

WALKER

Sorry. I'm sorry. I'm really nervous.

Berk pushes Walker towards a door.

BERK

Open that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Walker obliges. Nothing inside.

ANNA

Hello? Anyone here? It's the Coast Guard. And an insensitive prick!

WALKER

I didn't mean to laugh. I think fish might have a better shot. You know? Compared with say, a fat cat. Or a dog? An old dog? A lazy dog?

Berk grabs Walker by the neck.

BERK

Stop makin' words come out of your mouth.

Anna pulls Berk off.

ANNA

You're not helping yourself by trying to make this better. It's alright. You just don't get it.

WALKER

I get it.

Walker straightens himself out. They walk further into the kitchen area.

BERK

We should check the attic.

WALKER

Wait. I feel something.

ANNA

Empathy? Regret?

WALKER

No... Under my boots... Do you feel...

Suddenly the floor gives way.

All three fall through a giant rip into an underground well space.

Anna and Berk are immediately trapped under the broken porch beams and boards, blocked from surfacing into the air pocket by a tangle of wood and nails and metal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Walker has fallen even further into a vacuum: beyond the porch and into a formerly watertight basement area, which was, amazingly, more or less intact, but now starting to flood rapidly.

Walker stands up. Calls up to Anna and Berk.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Hey! Hello? Hello? Are you guys okay?

Walker looks around. There's a weight bench. One hundred pounds of weight on it. For a split second Walker wants to pump it, just to see if he can. He looks around quickly. A water cooler. A poster on the wall of a wild mustang galloping next to a Ford Mustang. This was someone's rec room. Soon the pouring in flood waters rise up to his neck.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Hello? Hello? Are you guys okay?

Walker inhales the last pocket of air before submerges. Rises. Coughs. Spits. Tries it again. Nerves got the best of him. We follow him as he literally swims up the broken staircase and past the porch on what once was the ground floor.

The nails cut into his arms as he kicks and pulls his way under the porch area. He grabs Anna by the arm and pulls her up to the surface in the kitchen area. Only there's no floor anymore. He lays her across the top of the refrigerator. Sucks in some air. Returns to the porch area. Drags out Berk. Pulls him to the surface.

Soon Berk regains consciousness, sputtering. He shakes Walker off. Walker climbs on top of Anna. Tries to give her mouth to mouth. Has no idea how. Fumbles. Berk regains his composure, yanks Walker off Anna violently. Climbs on top of her and begins expertly reviving her. Walker treads water, watching. His eyes, wide. Anna comes to.

ANNA

Attic. Check the attic.

Walker swims to the staircase. It's still intact, hanging there in the air to the side of the giant water-filled hole that once was the kitchen floor. He climbs up to the second floor, almost racing the rising flood.

INT. ATTIC

Walker pounds on the door. He finally bursts through the weakened wood. The attic is dry but hot and foul-smelling. Walker winces as he enters. He looks around. Sees an OLD WOMAN with her face stuck in the vent, breathing heavily. She wears a pink blouse and shorts. Barefoot.

WALKER

I've got someone. Hello? Ma'am.  
We're here to help you.

He approaches her. Grabs her. She won't come away from the vent.

WALKER (CONT'D)

It's okay. We have a boat. We're going to take you away.

OLD WOMAN

This is my house.

WALKER

Uh... okay. But... you can't stay here. Right now.

OLD WOMAN

I'm not leaving my house. This is my house.

Anna and Berk walk into the attic. The water is rising even higher now. They can actually hear it rumble as it gobbles up all of the air, inch by inch. Berk picks the woman up single-handedly. She struggles for a bit then allows him to carry her to the entrance. Walker helps Berk bring her down the stairs and across the water, out through the front door. Anna follows. They see the boat, bobbing there in the water. It's only been a few minutes since they were all on it, but everything seems different now. They carefully help the woman onto the boat.

WOMAN

My book! My book! The book!

WALKER

What do you want?

He stares at her.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Tell me. What's in there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

You're not going back in there.

WALKER

Where is it? The attic?

The Old Woman nods.

BERK

We're not going to wait for you.

Walker jumps out of the boat and walks back into the house. Swims towards the stairs, which are now almost fully submerged. He pulls himself to the third floor. Enters the attic for the second time. Picks up the woman's leather-bound Bible. Returns to the water, which has now begun pouring into the attic itself. Holding it high with one hand, he furiously paddles with the other. He swims into the open air in time to see the entire house fall in on itself.

OLD WOMAN

My house! My house. Oh, God,  
have Mercy.

Berk and Anna are still there, staring at him. He climbs into the boat. Hands the woman her Bible. She is palpably relieved. It's a small comfort but it's the only one she has. Walker points his finger at Anna.

WALKER

You know what? I get it!

INT. MOTORBOAT

Sonny stares at the water. Sweat beads on his brow. It's clear he's been motionless a while. An hour. Maybe two. Jeff, Tabitha and Bobby are in the same position.

BOBBY

I want to go home.

TABITHA

I could be in an air conditioned  
Consulate, reading British Vogue  
and eating curried chicken salad.  
Drinking a Tab.

SONNY

I'm sorry.

JEFF

I'm going in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They all stare. Nobody moves. It's clear he's said this before. Bobby kneels down. Picks a CD from the floor of the boat. Throws it in the water, quickly. It sinks. Nothing happens. They all stare. Nobody moves. Finally...

TABITHA

Does that mean...

BOBBY

I don't know. I think so.

TABITHA

Do you want to check? I mean, do you feel... better about the chances that... it's... safe?

BOBBY

I kinda do.

They all stare. Nobody moves. Finally...

SONNY

What CD was that?

BOBBY

That was a Weezer CD. Sonny.

They all stare. Nobody moves. Finally...

SONNY

*Pinkerton?*

BOBBY

No, Weezer.

They all stare. Nobody moves. Finally.

SONNY

Green or Blue?

Before he can answer, Jeff lets out a primal cry and steps out of the boat, down into the water, loses his balance, trips and regains himself, spitting out water. He begins to cackle. He's safe!

Nobody is going to be electrocuted today.

Sonny, Bobby and Tabitha laugh excitedly. Hug each other. Then quickly follow him to shore. Sit there for a minute, staring back at the boat. Sonny wades back into the water. It doesn't seem so forboding anymore. He pulls some of the canvas survival kits out and throws them to Jeff and Bobby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SONNY (CONT'D)

Alright, we tie up the boat.  
Start a fire and send up some  
smoke signals.

Tabitha takes a kit from Jeff. Squeezes his hand.

TABITHA

That was very brave.

JEFF

Thanks.

TABITHA

What were you thinking?

JEFF

I don't know. I guess I was  
thinking about you?

TABITHA

No. Really?

JEFF

If I jumped and was okay, you'd be  
safe. Safer. If I jumped and  
started you know... frying, you  
wouldn't ever... forget me.

TABITHA

I was already never going to  
forget you.

JEFF

Oh. I didn't know.

SONNY

Tabby, baby. Let me ask you  
something? Do you think you have  
it in you to start a big ass fire?

TABITHA

I think I can.

SONNY

Jeff, you stay with her in case  
any of our friends from the  
redneck persuasion show up. Take  
this. Wave it around like you're  
Martin Lawrence. Bob, let's grab  
some shit from the boat and  
politely break into some of these  
houses.

INT. COAST GUARD BOAT

Walker sits on the deck, next to the Old Woman. He's been talking with her. Anna stares down at him.

ANNA

How do you feel, Walker?

WALKER

I want some scrambled eggs.  
Coffee. Warm toast with the  
butter already on it. I'd like a  
shower, a clean pair of socks.  
Black. And the new issue of Mojo.

ANNA

How about a stick of gum?

She hands him a pack of gum.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Sugar free.

He takes the pack. Offers gum to the Old Woman. She smiles. Declines. We see she has no teeth in her mouth.

Walker hands the gum back to Anna.

WALKER

Do you even like music?

ANNA

I love music.

BERK

I don't like music.

WALKER

Well you know, we love music. We  
are completely saved and ruined by  
music. Simultaneously. It  
inspires us to do some really  
stupid shit. For instance.

He rises, stares out at the square mileage of water covered residences.

WALKER (CONT'D)

We came down here because we  
thought we could rescue musicians.  
Fats Domino. Do you know who he  
is?

BERK

Don't get smart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALKER

Alex Chilton too.

Berk looks defensive like he doesn't know who *that* is.

ANNA

*That's* why you're here? *That's* the only reason you're here.

WALKER

*That's* the only reason we *came*. It's not the only reason we're here. Not anymore.

ANNA

So are you up for some more? Is that what you're saying?

WALKER

What about Sonny? What about my friends?

ANNA

I think we need to focus on the people who don't have a 20,000 boat. Okay?

WALKER

Eighteen thousand.

ANNA

What?

WALKER

Nothing.

Berk joins Anna in the cabin. He begins steering the boat towards another row of houses.

ANNA

We'll finish searching this quad and then, if you want, I'll take you to him?

WALKER

Who?

ANNA

The Fat Man.

BERK

We picked him up yesterday. With his wife.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WALKER

He's found? He's safe?

She smiles. He tries to rise. He's beat.

She extends her hand. He grabs it. She pulls him up. Their eyes lock.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Thank you. On behalf of rock geeks everywhere, for saving Fats Domino. And his wife.

ANNA

Thanks for pulling me out of that water. Walker.

BERK

I gave you CPR.

She turns to him.

ANNA

Before or after he pulled you out too?

Berk continues to navigate the boat, pretending he didn't hear this.

EXT. HOUSE ROW

Sonny is smashing at the front door of the blue house with a survival hatchet. Bobby is ducking for cover as wood chips fly. Behind them, Tabitha is fanning the flames of a fire started in the center of a circle of rocks and stones.

SONNY

You know I'm thinking, when we get back?

BOBBY

Uh... yeah?

SONNY

I'm thinking I'm gonna book some in stores. Local acts. Touring acts. I got some friends at Headphones magazine. They've got good contacts. We can rig a DJ booth. Host after parties and shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

That's a good idea. I'll play.  
When I get a new band.

SONNY

I don't see why Land Speed  
shouldn't have an eBay store too.  
Maybe an electronic newsletter.  
Like Other Music's got? You know  
"what's good this week."

BOBBY

I'd wanna know that. What's good  
this week. Next week.

SONNY

We wanted to stay strong you know?  
Kick against the pricks. But we  
weren't really kicking. We were  
just kinda bitchin' about  
everything.

He finally makes his way through the door.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Alright, let's do this like we're  
good Jack Torrance.

He sticks his head through the door. Then his hand.  
Unlocks it. Opens it. He and Bobby enter.

SONNY (CONT'D)

"Kick in the door... wavin' the  
.44..."

The sound of a large bottle flying past them. It crashes  
against the front room wall.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Fuck. Look! Listen. Man?  
Hello? We're here to help. I'm  
not armed. I'm rapping because  
I'm nervous.

A figure emerges from the shadows inside the water-logged  
house. It's an older, black man. Grey, matted hair.  
White t-shirt. Wet, heavy dungarees. He wades out.  
This is ELVIN BOUDREAU, 60.

ELVIN

Paul?

SONNY

No, man. It ain't Paul.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ELVIN  
You come to get me?

SONNY  
That's right.

ELVIN  
You alright, Son?

SONNY  
I'm alright.

ELVIN  
I heard you crying.

SONNY  
No, man. I wasn't crying. I'm  
alright. You alright?

Elvin hugs Sonny. Sonny feels odd at first. The old man is sweaty. Shaking. Delirious.

ELVIN  
My boy. My son. I was so  
worried.

SONNY  
Yeah. Okay. Listen. Mister.  
It's alright now. Tell me  
something. Okay? Who else is  
here? Is there anybody else up in  
here that needs to get outta here  
right now?

ELVIN  
It's just you and me, Paul.

Bobby continues to search the room. Finally he sees a body, face down in the kitchen. It's immediately clear to him that this is "Paul." He turns the body over. There's no reviving him. He's gone.

BOBBY  
Sonny.

He gestures to the body. Sonny sees it. Computes what's happening here. His expression sinks. Dread. Awkwardness.

ELVIN  
My son. My boy.

SONNY  
That's right. I'm here, Pops.  
I'm here. I'm your boy. Okay?  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SONNY (CONT'D)

It's okay. I'm your boy, let's go  
outside now, alright? Come on.

He takes Elvin by the hand. Leads him out. Elvin looks  
back at the flooded home. Sonny gentle discourages him.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Come on. Don't look back now.  
Follow me. ...

EXT. HOUSE ROW

Sonny, Elvin and Bobby exit the house. Bobby carries a  
piece of sheet rock. Hangs it on the front of the house.  
Pulls a sharpie from his pants and scrawls: "Body inside.  
9/2/05" on it. Tabitha and Jeff look up. They see what  
was just written.

INT. COAST GUARD BOAT -LATER

We see Anna, Walker and Berk working as a team now as  
they help various stranded 9th WARD RESIDENTS onto the  
Coast Guard boat. As the rescues unfold, we notice that  
Walker is getting the hang of it. Even Berk pats him on  
the back as they finish their last run.

EXT. HOUSE ROW

Sonny sits with his arms around a shivering Elvin. It's  
sweltering, but the old man is in shock. They cover him  
with an emergency blanket and watch his condition with  
great concern. Tabitha pulls a can of pork and beans off  
the fire. Hands the warm can to Sonny. Then another.  
Sonny and Elvin eat together.

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

We see Bobby and Jeff enter a new house together. Large,  
antebellum, pale yellow and dark inside.

INT. HOUSE

They walk through the kitchen, side by side. It's less  
ravaged than the house that Sonny and Bobby entered  
earlier. A battery powered fan whirrs on the kitchen  
counter. The sound of a radio is heard somewhere within  
the edifice.

BOBBY

Hello? Is anyone here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They pad down a hall and into a large, round room full of guitars and amps. Moonlight pours through the window. The walls are papered. The flowered print peels off gradually. There are gig posters everywhere, but the heat and the damp has made them run and peel as well.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Holy shit. How much room do we have in the boat you think?

JEFF

Not much. Why?

BOBBY

Well, I'm gonna take some of these. I have to.

JEFF

We can't take this stuff.

BOBBY

Do you see this?

Bobby holds up a guitar.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

This is a 1966 Jetglo Rickenbacker. The kind Roger McGuinn played on "Eight Miles High." There are like... I don't know, thirty of these in the world probably.

JEFF

It belongs to someone.

BOBBY

There's nobody here.

JEFF

It's not ours. Someone cares a lot about that guitar.

BOBBY

I'm sorry. I get you. In theory. You know. But you're going to have to.. .I don't know.. beat me up. Because I'm taking this guitar.

A shadow casts over the door. A mysterious, bearded man is watching them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEARDED MAN

Did you not see the sign on the porch?

BOBBY

Huh?

JEFF

We weren't looking.

They see that the man, handsome, slim, bearded, mid 50s, is holding a shotgun. He wears a pink t-shirt and khaki shorts. Keds sneakers.

BEARDED MAN

Well... it said, "Looters will get shot."

BOBBY

Oh. No. I didn't see that.

BEARDED MAN

I'm sorry that you missed it, but that doesn't alter the policy.

BOBBY

This guitar...

BEARDED MAN

You a player?

BOBBY

Every day. Well... not today. I had an old acoustic but it... it drowned.

BEARDED MAN

Yeah? That's a shame. These aren't going to drown today. Or tomorrow. These guitars are gonna be just fine.

Jeff stares hard at the bearded man.

JEFF

Wait a minute. You're him, aren't you? I know you. I know it. From the album covers. Bobby. I know him. That's him!

BOBBY

Who?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JEFF  
(whispers)  
That's Alex Chilton.

BOBBY  
You're Alex Chilton? Are you Alex  
Chilton?

They both stare at the man. He smiles cryptically.

BEARDED MAN  
Naw. I'm not Alex Chilton. That's  
wild.

BOBBY  
Aren't you?

He shrugs.

BEARDED MAN  
I don't know. I don't think so.

BOBBY  
Well I think you are. And I know  
that you're not going to shoot  
anyone.

BEARDED MAN  
That so?

BOBBY  
You're Alex Chilton. Alex Chilton  
can't shoot anyone. You wrote  
"Thirteen." You can't shoot  
anyone.

BEARDED MAN  
What if I was... Elvis. Elvis  
sang, "Love Me Tender." You think  
he'd shoot you?

JEFF  
Elvis might have shot us.

BOBBY  
Look. This is silly. We're here  
for you. We came down here to  
save you. If you're Alex Chilton.  
Which you clearly are.

JEFF  
Just tell us. And we'll save you.

BOBBY  
We'll save you either way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BEARDED MAN

Yeah?

They nod.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)

Thanks for that. But I'm not leaving.

JEFF

Why?

BEARDED MAN

This is gonna blow over.

BOBBY

Have you looked outside? It's not blowing over.

BEARDED MAN

You're young. Everything blows over.

BOBBY

Alright. Well... whomever you are? I will... right now... I will volunteer to help you move these guitars to the attic. And cover them in whatever waterproofing you can find. Then, you can do whatever you want to do... but if I were you... I would take my papers and really come with us, cause even if this blows over, it's not going to blow over for a long time. Okay? And it's dangerous here.

The man looks at Bobby. Looks at the guitars. Nods. Puts the gun away.

BEARDED MAN

You boys want a beer?

EXT. HOUSE ROW

The fire is still going. The moon is up. It hangs bright and clear in the sky, so big, it looks ten, maybe fifteen feet away. Like Sonny, Tabitha, or Elvin could reach up and grab off a hunk of moon rock without rising from their huddle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY

The fire should keep the  
alligators away.

TABITHA

"Should"?

ELVIN

Paul.

TABITHA

Why is he calling you Paul?

SONNY

Because I'm Paul. Alright?  
Yeah. What do you need?

ELVIN

I'd like to go back inside. Start  
fixing up.

SONNY

We will, Pops. We will. You and  
me. Alright?

Jeff, Bobby and Bearded Man approach. Sonny rises with  
the gun.

BOBBY

It's okay. It's us.

SONNY

You find anyone?

They get closer now. Sonny sees Mysterious Man.

BOBBY

This is probably Alex Chilton.  
We're not sure. He's a recluse.

Bearded Man sits in front of the fire. Sonny extends his  
hand.

SONNY

Sir. It may be an honor.

Bearded man laughs to himself.

EXT. HOUSE ROW

They're still waiting for any sign of a rescue boat. The  
fire is dying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY

Nobody is coming tonight. The Coast Guard is spread thin. The Man isn't sending in the Army cause everyone is over in Iraq. We're being passed by. I know this feeling. I recognize this feeling. I live with this feeling in New York City. At least now, I know I'm not alone.

TABITHA

You're *not* alone, Sonny. I walked into your store the other day and I saw you. You were surrounded by people. And they were all there because of you. I watched you as you walked through the store. I thought you were super cool. I envied you. *I* felt alone.

BOBBY

It's true, Sonny. Sometimes it feels like Land Speed is all I've got. Nobody else understands me. Nobody knows how special I am. Or they forgot. In a weird way, I'm proud of that. We should all be proud of that.

BEARDED MAN

I may be disenfranchised but who wants to be *franchised* anyway?

TABITHA

Sonny, that rescue boat is gonna come around soon. And guide us out of here.

JEFF

Are you sure we shouldn't pile in and see if we can find our way... somewhere?

BOBBY

In the pitch black? I'd rather be on land than out of gas and drifting. Just keep the fire going.

JEFF

Nobody's going see the smoke now.

They sit and watch the fire. Worried. A little awkward. Bobby can't stop staring at the Bearded Man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOBBY

Alright, finish this sentence...  
 "Gimme a ticket for an  
 airplane..." The Box Tops? You?  
 Your number one record. You named  
 the first Big Star album No. 1  
 record because of it?

The man shakes his head.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

If we're gonna die here, at least  
 admit that you're him.

TABITHA

We should pull down the moon and  
 get on. Doesn't it look like we  
 could? Just climb up there?

SONNY

Yeah.

TABITHA

I think I'd like to do that.  
 Would you guys come with me?

JEFF

I'm on the moon with you in a  
 minute.

Bobby turns to Bearded Man one more time.

BOBBY

Okay. Okay. How about this. "A  
 little thing that's gonna please  
 ya... just a little town down in  
 Indonesia..." Finish the  
 sentence. Finish it.

Sonny stands up.

SONNY

Flares.

BOBBY

"Bangkok!" Bangkok! You wrote  
 it. I love that song. Tell me  
 you wrote it. I broke up my band  
 for this.

BEARDED MAN

What were you called?

BOBBY

Well, we were called... nevermind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SONNY

Flares!

TABITHA

Are you feeling better about things/

SONNY

Yes. I am, actually. Thank you. Flares.

TABITHA

Why does Sonny keep saying "Flares."

BEARDED MAN

I used to wear flares. Then I got hip.

SONNY

Jeff? Tabitha? In that survival kit, with the hatchet and the turn your piss into tap water pills, were there any flares? Did anyone check?

JEFF

I think so. I didn't really check. I was very psyched about the hatchet.

SONNY

Well. A flare could be... useful. Don't you think?

Bobby continues to stare at Bearded Man.

BOBBY

Do you... do you wanna maybe... start a band with me?

SONNY

What are the odds that there's a working flare in there! If you were a betting man?

JEFF

Fifty fifty? Should I check?

Jeff waits. Then realizes, that yes, he really, really should. Walks out to the boat. Climbs in as they all watch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JEFF (CONT'D)

Oh. Wow.

SONNY

No flares?

JEFF

No, I found a flare.

SONNY

Great! Bring it back.

There's a long pause. He doesn't move.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Bring it, Bread.

JEFF

Hey, uh, Bobby? What were those  
big rats called again?  
Neutragenas?

SONNY

Nutria.

TABITHA

Why?

JEFF

Oh... no reason.

INT. MOTORBOAT

We see Jeff staring face to face with a wet, slick, fierce eyed, giant rat. 25 pounds. A foot and a half long, with large, yellow teeth that gleam in the moonlight.

JEFF

I'm going to throw the flare,  
okay?

SONNY

No don't throw it!

Jeff throws it. Sonny jumps up, desperately as the flare soars over the water and towards the land. He catches it in his hand like Lynn Swann. Rolls on the ground, protecting it from the damp.

SONNY (CONT'D)

What'd I just say?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jeff jumps overboard. Paddles to shore, sputtering. The sound of scratching nails and high pitched rodentine squeals are heard.

TABITHA

Is there a gigantic fucking rat in the boat?

JEFF

No.

He nods. Shakes off the water but can't shake the heebie geebies.

TABITHA

There's a giant rat. In the boat.

EXT. COAST GUARD BOAT

Walker and Anna have convened with the Old Man's boat. They are transferring people from one boat to another. Both are exhausted and soaked with sweat and lake water. Berk confers with the Old Man. Anna and Walker are alone in the cabin.

WALKER

What kind of fish? I mean fresh or salt water.

ANNA

Fresh water.

WALKER

I have a cat. In New York.

ANNA

Yeah. What else do you have in New York?

WALKER

Records. Books. Bills. And... a woman. Sort of.

ANNA

Sort of.

WALKER

Things haven't been... glorious.

ANNA

You did good today. You have a knack for this, Walker.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALKER

I'm a fox.

ANNA

You're conceited.

WALKER

I mean... no... I mean I'm a fox and not a hedgehog. I know more than one big thing. I'm... deep. Deeper than I'd figured on.

ANNA

I'm going to be here a long time, Walker. I'm going to see my city recover from this. If my home is gone, I'm going to rebuild it. If my fish are dead... I'm going to get new fish. I don't have a lot to offer anyone until this is done.

Walker nods. She kisses his cheek. The sound of a flare is heard. Berk points at the sky.

WALKER

Those are my friends.

ANNA

You think they've saved anyone with that fancy boat?

WALKER

Probably not. We should probably go pick them up anyway. I mean... I like them. You know?

She smiles.

ANNA

Berk! I'll see you at the station. I'm gonna go lead these New Yorkers out.

BERK

If you really have to. I'd leave them right where they are.

WALKER

Except me, right?

Berk nods. Flashes the peace sign to Walker.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Really? Okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Walker flashes the peace sign back.

EXT. HOUSE ROW

Sonny chucks his empty can of beans into the boat. The sound of a can being whipped around a fiberglass bucket violently is heard.

SONNY

I got a mouse in my apartment.

BEARDED MAN

You can eat 'em. Nutria. They're a delicacy. Taste like goose.

SONNY

Like goose, huh? Like a Christmas goose?

Sonny kneels down and checks on Elvin, who is sleeping. Sonny pulls the survival blanket over him. Bobby and Jeff are still staring at Bearded Man intensely.

BOBBY

Do you know what's a good album? By you? *Feudalist Tarts*.

JEFF

*No Sex.*

TABITHA

I haven't heard that.

Bearded Man nods. Bobby approaches Sonny. Jeff points at Bearded Man.

JEFF

Did you ever hear it? Probably, right? Cause... you made it.

SONNY

Y'all need to cool it.

BOBBY

You don't even care whether we saved Alex Chilton or not?

Sonny puts his arm around Elvin. Stares up at the moon.

SONNY

Nah. You know something? I don't. Not anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The sound of the Coast Guard motor boat is heard. They all jump up.

BOBBY  
Walker! It's Walker.

SONNY  
My man.

Anna steps out of the boat, onto the land. Peers into their boat. Pulls out her gun, wordlessly and shoots the Nutria dead between the eyes. Stares at Elvin and Mr. Mysterious.

ANNA  
Wow. You pull these folks out?

SONNY  
That's right.

ANNA  
Searched the whole row?

BOBBY  
Uh huh.

ANNA  
Color me impressed.

JEFF  
That's a Replacements song.  
"Color Me Impressed."

Anna stares at him.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
Well it is.

Sonny and Walker hug.

SONNY  
What's up?

WALKER  
I know CPR.

SONNY  
Yeah? We don't need none of that.  
We need some gas. Some  
directions.

Jeff jumps in the boat. Holds up the dead Nutria.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SONNY (CONT'D)

We need to not be showing me that shit right now. I'm gonna upchuck my beans.

ANNA

I'm going to put on the spot. You think you can follow me this time?

Sonny nods. They pack up their stuff. Jump in the boat. Bobby removes a seat cushion flotation device. Straps the boom box to it.

JEFF

What are you doing?

Bobby hits "play." "Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans" by Louis Armstrong plays on the tape. Bobby pushes the flotation device out into the water, as the boats start up and head out.

BOBBY

Auto-reverse. It's gonna keep playing for a long time.

JEFF

That's good.

BOBBY

Yeah.

SONNY

Yeah.

The boat speeds off.

INT. COAST GUARD RESCUE STATION

Rows of beds. Sleeping and resting evacuees. Doctors. A news crew is doing a report.

Walker, Sonny, Jeff, Tabitha and Bobby, now dry and more or less cleaned up, walk along the row, following Anna who moves purposefully.

TABITHA

What's going to happen to all these people.

SONNY

Elvin and everyone here. Where are they gonna go?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

We'll copter them out to the Convention Center. Superdome. When the city opens up, some'll leave. Go to Baton Rouge. Some are gonna go to Texas. Some are going to stay here. Rebuild.

She gestures to a bed. There, a portly, black man, elderly but bright eyed lays there, half asleep.

ANNA (CONT'D)

That's him.

They all stare. Sonny and Walker approach him.

SONNY

Mr. Domino?

The man looks up. He seems serene, like the Buddha.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I'm Sonny Castle. This is Walker White. We own a record store in New York City. Sir, we just want to say "Thank You." For everything. And to let you know that we'll never forget what you've done. And as long as we're around and working, we're gonna help make sure that nobody else does either.

WALKER

We're called Land Speed Records. We don't have a card but when you're up and touring again, and you're ever in New York, Sir, we'd be honored if you'd come by.

SONNY

Maybe play a few tunes. We're doing in stores.

WALKER

We are?

Anna walks away. Bobby follows her.

BOBBY

Hey, uh... hey, so when you check that bearded man in, what name did he give you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNA  
Barry.

BOBBY  
Barry?

ANNA  
Mm hmm.

BOBBY  
Really?

ANNA  
Really.

BOBBY  
"Barry"? Is that like a  
pseudonym?

ANNA  
I didn't interrogate him. Did  
you?

BOBBY  
Yes! Yes! I did. But... I'm not  
threatening.

Sonny, Walker, Tabitha and Jeff collect him.

TABITHA  
The sun is coming up.

JEFF  
Bread.

WALKER  
How much money do we have left?

SONNY  
You mean do we have enough to go  
home and open the store?

WALKER  
Yeah.

SONNY  
I think we're good, man. I think  
we're good.

They walk out into the moonlight. Tabitha holding Jeff.

BOBBY  
So... I'm choosing to believe that  
we saved Alex Chilton.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BOBBY (CONT'D)

If I get drunk and brag about it,  
some day... you'll back me up?

TITLE: December, 2005

INT. LAND SPEED RECORDS - NEW YORK CITY

Sonny picks up some milk crates and brings them into the store. They have index cards affixed to them: 50 cents each. The store seems like it's prospering. It's full of customers, holiday shoppers, including Tabitha and her father. A new rack of CDs and DVDs add to the variety merchandise. It's a store re-thought, and trimmed with tinsel. A small, Christmas tree sits on the bar. Bobby enters. He wears a red sharkskin suit and has dyed his hair blonde.

BOBBY

Hey.

SONNY

What's up?

BOBBY

Walker's outside. We're double  
parked.

SONNY

Jeff, can you close?

JEFF

Yeah. No problem.

SONNY

And make sure you leave some water  
for the cat.

JEFF

Right.

SONNY

And feed the fish.

JEFF

Cool.

SONNY

And make sure to turn off the  
coffee maker.

JEFF

I'll write it on my hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY

Leave the tree on. It's festive.

Tabitha and her father bring up a stack of records. She hands them to Jeff to ring up.

JEFF

*A Christmas Gift For You.* The best Christmas album ever. Did you know that Phil Spector was Jewish.

TABITHA

I did not.

JEFF

Did you, Mr. Churchill?

PHILLIP

I did not either.

JEFF

David Bowie and Bing Crosby. Nice. Chipmunks. Of course.

PHILLIP

Of course.

JEFF

"Christmas Wrapping," "Christmas in Hollis," you're getting all the good ones. I sure would love to be there when you play all these. Loud. Around the fire.

PHILLIP

Would you care to join us for Christmas dinner. Jeff? Tabby is making a tempeh goose. But perhaps, you'd like to come... anyway?

JEFF

Have you ever wondered there hasn't been a holiday standard in the last 20 years?

PHILLIP

I have.

JEFF

Sonny thinks it's because nobody can convincingly sing about good will anymore. Anyway, this comes to one forty five fifty nine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PHILLIP

Or... thirteen dollars in digital  
downloads .

TABITHA

Daddy!

PHILLIP

Alright.

Phillip hands Jeff the money.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

I'm "down."

EXT. LUDLOW STREET

Sonny and Bobby hop into a shiny, black Mustang. Walker, in shades and a ski hat, sits in the driver's seat, hands on the red leather steering wheel.

WALKER

You turn off the coffee maker?

SONNY

Where'd this come from?

WALKER

The apartment sale finally came through. And she bought me out. I'm staying over at Bobby's.

BOBBY

We're roughing it. Relatively speaking.

TITLE: 9th Ward

We scan rows and rows of FEMA trailers, housing those rendered homeless by the flooding.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Walker and Sonny are pounding nails into plywood boards. Trucks with "Habitat For Humanity" banners line the roads, which have been pumped out but are still loaded with debris.

Elvin emerges from one of the houses. He wears a sweater and looks healthy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELVIN

Sonny Castle, goddamnit what are you doing with that hammer?

SONNY

I'm "hammering"?

ELVIN

You have a deal with that nail?

SONNY

You don't like my hammering?

Elvin approaches Sonny and demonstrates how you do one or two forceful hits, not a series of small, weak ones. It's very paternal.

Walker steps out onto the new, plywood porch and stares out at a car that's just pulled up and parked. Anna gets out. She's wearing jeans, a t-shirt and a corduroy coat. She walks up to Walker. Kisses him.

WALKER

What was that for?

ANNA

I really loved your last mix tape.

WALKER

Yeah?

ANNA

Yeah. It was good. You really, really know how to convince me things can be beautiful. With the rock n'roll.

WALKER

It's a thing.

ANNA

Are you still a fox?

Walker nods. They embrace.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Have you been lifting weights?

WALKER

Yes. I can bench 90.

ANNA

Wow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WALKER

I'll fuck shit up.

She kisses him. They stare out at the houses that still need rebuilding. The rows of trailers in the distance.

ANNA

Shit is fucked up enough.

Sonny and Elvin pound nails. Walker takes Anna's hand and leads her across the porch.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Bearded Man sits in his living room. His house is restored. The wall paper replaced. His guitars and amps dragged down from the attic. His beard is shaven. He wears a red tee shirt. He places his Rickenbacker guitar in his lap. Plugs it in. Begins to play.

Bobby enters, clutching his guitar. Sits down next to him. Joins in.

Black.

"Alex Chilton" by the Replacements plays on the soundtrack.

(CONT'D)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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