

WOMEN OF THE MOVEMENT

Pilot: Hour 1

"Mother and Son"

Written by

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Based on the book

"Emmett Till: The Murder That Shocked the World and Propelled the
Civil Rights Movement"

by

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REVISED NETWORK DRAFT
June 16th, 2020

PART ONE: TEASER

OVER BLACK: we hear quick, irregular breaths. A deep exhale. Whimpering. This is pain, a woman fighting her pain. *Concealing* it.

FADE IN:

1

INT. COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL - MAMIE'S ROOM - DAY

1

A sterile room with two beds. One is empty. The other is occupied by nine-months pregnant MAMIE TILL (18). With the plump face of a child, Mamie clenches her teeth, fighting a contraction.

NURSE (O.C.)

Won't be long. You'll have company.

TITLE CARD, "JULY 25TH, 1941"

A distracted White NURSE enters, preparing the spare bed. Mamie deflates -- not the "company" she was hoping for.

Another contraction hits. Through cramping, she mutters:

MAMIE

It hurts. I mean -- I think it's time.

NURSE

Hon, when it's time there won't be any doubt.

The Nurse is nearly out the door when Mamie summons the courage to call out:

MAMIE

I'm real sweaty, Ma'am. I soaked my sheets.

NURSE

(as if doing her a favor)
I'll see if I can find someone.

She's gone. Mamie reclines, fear pooling in her eyes.

ALMA (O.C.)

My God, hasn't anybody been in here?

ALMA GAINES' (39) booming voice is a welcome intrusion. This fierce mama bear takes in the scene, growing furious when she discovers an empty cup at Mamie's bedside.

ALMA (CONT'D)

I told that woman to bring you a pitcher.
 (feeling her forehead)
 You're burning up!

Alma sits, but only for a second. She yanks back the sheet and finds a SOAKING WET mattress.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Mamie, your water broke!

MAMIE

I asked for a change.

ALMA

Good Lord, child, that means it's time!

As Alma charges off, Mamie wrestles with her shame...

MAMIE

No one told me.

2

INT. NURSE'S STATION - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

2

Alma finds Mamie's Nurse typing an intake chart.

ALMA

My daughter. Mamie Till--

NURSE

--one moment--

ALMA

--my child's water broke.
 How much longer would you suggest she wait?

It's a wonder Alma's gaze doesn't burn through her.

3

INT. COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM - LATER - DAY

3

Alma hangs back while the DOCTOR (White, Male) finishes examining Mamie. He wraps up, interrogating her with his gaze, and then:

DOCTOR

What have you been doing?
 (off Mamie's confusion)
 This baby is breech. We have to operate immediately.

Mamie looks to Alma for clarity, but there's no time to explain. The staff springs to action, first ushering Alma out of the room, then placing a CONE over Mamie's mouth.

NURSE

Count backward. Start at one-hundred.

MAMIE

One-hundred. Ninety-nine...

As the twilight-sleep inducing drugs take affect, Mamie's eyes flutter, and then everything is BLACK.

FADE TO:

4

INT. COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL - RECOVERY - EVENING

4

Mamie wakes in a new room, slowly piecing things together: her stomach is round, but no longer full -- and then it hits her: stitches, silence... no crib. No baby.

MAMIE

Mama!

Alma hurries in, carrying flowers. Wearing pity.

ALMA

Sit, hon. You'll tear through your sutures.

MAMIE

Where's my baby?

ALMA

He's in the nursery. Recovering. Sit.

Alive. Mamie exhales.

MAMIE

He.

ALMA

They're on their way with him, but before they get in here, Mamie...

Before Alma can finish, Mamie's eyes drift to the door, and she brightens: the Nurse and Doctor have her BOY. She opens her arms to embrace the tiny bundle -- only to GASP when she discovers that his face is bruised and scarred.

NURSE

It was the forceps. But they'll fade -- the scars.

MAMIE

All this, it's because he was breech?

DOCTOR

Yes. His neck, right knee, and wrist were constricted by the umbilical cord, which cut off circulation.

(MORE)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

As a result, I'm afraid he'll have struggles -- he may never walk on his own. When discharged, we recommend that you move your son to an institution.

Mamie is silent, as if she can't hear him, or won't.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Mrs. Till?

MAMIE

I'd like some time with him. If I may.

DOCTOR

We'll take him in a few minutes.

They leave. Admiring her boy, Mamie fights tears.

MAMIE

You just got here, and they're telling me I gotta give you up?

As she touches his tiny fingers and toes, we FIND Alma watching, a witness to a transformation: her daughter is now a mother. A sad moment passes as they find each other's eyes.

MAMIE (CONT'D)

I think I'll call him Emmett.

ALMA

I'm so sorry.

Mamie tugs EMMETT's blanket, shielding him from the pity.

MAMIE

There's nothing to be sorry about.

ALMA

Sweetie, you heard the Doctor.

MAMIE

What kind of life is he gonna lead in an institution, where he'll be nothing more than a burden? No. I'll bring him down here every day if have to. Every hour.

(and then)

I want more for him, Mama. I want him to be free.

We go OFF Mamie, determined to keep this promise to Emmett and to *herself*.

FADE TO:

MAIN TITLES

MONTAGE: QUICK POPS of HISTORICAL FOOTAGE capturing the BROWN VS. BOARD OF EDUCATION RULING and the unrest that followed.

TITLE CARD, "13 YEARS LATER"

- The front page of the *Topeka State Journal* from Monday, May 17th, 1954, "SCHOOL SEGREGATION BANNED!"

- BLACK FOLKS reading the NEWSPAPERS, wearing pride.

- NETTIE HUNT on the steps of the Supreme Court, holding that very newspaper while gazing at her daughter NICKIE next to her. We HOLD on this image of a mother believing in a better world for her child as OMINOUS MUSIC BUILDS over newsreel footage of:

- WHITE PROTESTORS carrying signs "KEEP OUR SCHOOLS WHITE"

- ANTI NAACP DEMONSTRATIONS

- BURNING CROSSES

- KKK PARADES

- WHITE COPS steam-rolling BLACK ORGANIZERS with signs touting voter registration

- The imagery builds until GUN SHOTS take us to a *Jet Magazine* headline from AUGUST 13TH, 1955: 2ND NEGRO SLAIN IN MISSISSIPPI VOTE DRIVE!

As the impact of this historic ruling is made clear, we understand what Mamie and Emmett are up against, and we...

END TITLE SEQUENCE

ACT ONE

5 EXT. CHICAGO, ILLINOIS - EVENING 5

We sweep the city's skyline, traveling past the bustling shopping center near 63rd & Halsted on the south side, where sidewalks are packed with people -- mostly BLACK with a sprinkling of WHITE FOLKS.

TITLE CARD, "AUGUST 14TH, 1955"

We follow a streetcar to a predominantly Black neighborhood of single-family homes and apartment buildings.

Here parents sit on stoops, chatting with neighbors while their children run free, house-to-house, seemingly unaffected by the unrest of the south.

LAUGHTER draws us inside the open window of a second floor apartment.

6 INT. MAMIE'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - EVENING 6

Mamie (now 33) and Alma (now 54) set heaping platters of greens and fried fish on the table, right in front of UNCLE MOSE WRIGHT (64) and Mamie's boyfriend, GENE MOBLEY (32), a well-dressed barber with kind eyes, who can't help but drool over the food.

MAMIE

Wipe your chin, Gene. And try not to eat it all in one bite--

EMMETT TILL (now 14) explodes into the room behind her, carrying a skillet of corn drenched in black pepper.

EMMETT

--yeah. We don't wanna be digging fish bones out of your throat again.

Emmett has grown into a healthy boy at five foot three inches and 150 pounds, with a baby face and piercing hazel eyes that look right through you.

NOTE: Emmett stutters. The actor and director will choose when we hear it. Less is more.

Uncle Mose scoops the corn onto his plate. He's diminutive, but strong and sun-leathered from four decades of sharecropping.

UNCLE MOSE

You leave any pepper in that grinder,
boy?

EMMETT

It's how I like it.

MAMIE

How we like it.

Mother and son share a sweet look of solidarity as the family eats.

UNCLE MOSE

Sure gotta kick to it. You taught this
boy any skills he can actually use?

ALMA

Now, Mose Wright, ain't nothing wrong
with a boy who can cook.

UNCLE MOSE

City life done took the Delta out of you,
Alma.

Alma brushes him off, as if swatting a fly.

UNCLE MOSE (CONT'D)

Who you got teaching him the essentials?
Hunting, farming, fishing?

EMMETT

Mama's been taking me fishing since I
could walk. Cousin Wheeler came last
time. Sure got good fishing up at Des
Plaines River.

ALMA

There ya have it, Mose, you can sleep at
night knowing that your great nephew and
grandson are a little "country".

Alma cuts Uncle Mose a self-satisfied smile.

UNCLE MOSE

Fishing can't be that good seeing as
Wheeler's coming down to Mississippi with
me next week to test our waters.

EMMETT

What now?

UNCLE MOSE

He's gonna spend a couple weeks with the boys. Your cousin Curtis is coming down by car a week later. You're welcome to join us.

Emmett nearly hyperventilates at the thought.

UNCLE MOSE (CONT'D)

Only thing I ask is that you carry your weight out in the fields with my boys.

EMMETT

Mama, can I?

MAMIE

We have plans.

EMMETT

Aww, come on. I can go to Oklahoma with you and Gene any old time. Please?

Mamie's shaky. Uncle Mose interprets her anxiety.

UNCLE MOSE

If it's all that political mess, Mamie, you know we ain't got nothing to do with that out in East Money.

GENE

Is that right? They're killing us down there for registering to vote, and you don't think that has anything to do with you?

ALMA

Politics at the dinner table, Gene?

Gene respectfully holds his hands up in surrender, but Uncle Mose is eager to explain.

UNCLE MOSE

It's terrible, all of it, but that kind of trouble don't find us out in the country. And me and mine, well, we don't go looking for it. That's all I meant.

(and then, to Mamie)

Now, you send Bobo down with us, only thing he'll be worrying about is how many fish he's gonna catch and how long it'll take for his Aunt Lizzie to fry 'em up.

MAMIE

I know he'd be in good hands...

EMMETT

Then why can't I go?

She searches her soul for a reasonable answer...

MAMIE

I'm just not ready.

EMMETT

But, Mama...

Mamie's eyes plead with Alma. *Rescue me.*

ALMA

Enough. You heard her. Let's move on.

They retreat to their food. Gene reads the tension in the room and takes a swing at lifting their spirits:

GENE

Ooo-wee, you keep cooking like this,
Mamie, and I might just marry you.

MAMIE

You mean you might just *ask*?

Uncle Mose cracks a smile, welcoming the levity. Alma leans in, charmed by the proposition. Emmett, well...

EMMETT

I don't think so.
(using Mamie's words against
her)
We're just not *ready*.

Mamie blinks away her disdain, slightly amused.

NEIGHBOR BOY (O.C.)

Hey, Bobo! You coming down or what?

Just like that, Emmett morphs back into his sweet self.

EMMETT

May I be excused?

MAMIE

Go on. You can help clean up after.

We notice a SLIGHT LIMP in Emmett's gait as he takes off. Once he's gone, Mamie feels Gene's judgmental gaze.

MAMIE (CONT'D)

I've kissed some frogs. He's protective.

Gene retreats to his food, accepting that explanation.
For now.

EMMETT (PRE-LAP)

On three. One, two...

7

EXT. MAMIE'S APARTMENT - LATER - EVENING

7

From the stoop, Mamie watches Emmett and a few
NEIGHBORHOOD BOYS (all teens) sing under the streetlight.

EMMETT
Three. *Only*--

NEIGHBORHOOD BOY
Only youuuuuuu...

EMMETT

Hold on a second. You sang lead last
time.

NEIGHBORHOOD BOY

Does it matter?

EMMETT

Tonight it does.

The whole block's watching, but Emmett only has eyes for
sweet PHYLLIS (14, Black, adorable).

NEIGHBORHOOD BOY

(with a shrug)

Go ahead.

BACK TO MAMIE, a surprise witness to Emmett edging toward
manhood.

EMMETT

Let's go again.

Emmett takes the lead, counts to three, and belts The
Platters 1955 hit "Only You."

EMMETT (CONT'D)

*Only you can make all this world seem
right.*

Mamie studies Phyllis, who catches Emmett looking at her
and grins in return. An opening. But Emmett is suddenly
bashful. He looks away, carrying on like he didn't notice
her at all -- as his friends join in, singing off-key,
not a melody in earshot.

EMMETT & FRIENDS

Only you can make the darkness bright.

Gene finds Mamie on the stoop.

GENE

Boys don't have a lick of rhythm, do they?

MAMIE

Ssh. It's perfect.

Gene studies Mamie as *she* studies Emmett. His expression, equal parts tender and tentative.

GENE

You ruined that boy. How he'll ever find a gal who looks at him like you do is beyond me.

Gene's words bring a flick of concern to Mamie's face.

GENE (CONT'D)

There's a lot of love in this house. Makes me wonder if there's room for more.

Eager to connect, Mamie faces him. Locking eyes.

MAMIE

There's always room.

He moves in for the kiss. It's gentle, and yet when they part it seems something has shifted in their world. They share an eager, loving look as the music takes us out.

EMMETT & FRIENDS

Only you and you alone can thrill me like you do, and fill my heart with love for only you...

8

INT. MAMIE'S APARTMENT - EMMETT'S ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

8

Emmett is hanging clothes when he spots Mamie passing by.

EMMETT

Don't it look like I had these professionally cleaned?

He holds up a pressed shirt.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Trick is, I press them with my hands while they're still wet, on the line, and when they dry -- ta-da! I'll show you how next time we do the wash.

Mamie sits on the edge of his bed trying to find the right words to make sense of the day.

MAMIE

I really like you.

Emmett's thrown. That was *abrupt*.

EMMETT

Uh -- don't you mean, you *love* me?

MAMIE

No. Well -- yes. I do. I can't help but love you, but to *like* you, now that is something special.

EMMETT

(with an awkward laugh)

I like you too, Mama.

MAMIE

And Gene?

Ah. Now he understands where this is going.

EMMETT

You know I'm not shy. If I didn't, I'd say so.

But Mamie can see that he's holding back.

MAMIE

You're protective. With good reason. I'm sorry you've felt like you had to be, but if it's any consolation, one day you're gonna make some lucky girl very happy.

Embarrassed, Emmett lowers his gaze. Mamie immediately lifts his chin, imparting pride in her boy.

MAMIE (CONT'D)

I might be the only one who's said it, but I'm sure not the only one who sees it -- the wonderful young man you're becoming. I just want you to *believe* it.

Emmett takes that in, and then he *uses* it.

EMMETT

Okay. Well... you know I'd eat, sleep, and bathe outside if I could, if you like me so much, why won't you let me go to Mississippi so I can run the land, and I dunno -- see the stars?

*
*

Mamie sighs. *This again?*

EMMETT (CONT'D)

It'd be nice to spend some time with the guys for a change.

Mamie reads between the lines. He's asking for freedom.

MAMIE

Emmett...

Emmett swallows his disappointment and hangs his clothes, straightening every cuff and collar...

EMMETT

I know, I know. Maybe next year. Maybe then you'll *like* me enough to let me go.

...his precision brings a wistful smile as she remembers.

MAMIE

The day you were born I promised myself that I'd prepare you for the world, so that when I had to let you go -- you'd be ready. I sure as heck wasn't when I had you -- I didn't know a thing about life. I relied on Mama for everything. Sometimes I still find myself looking to her to clean up my messes...

(and then)

...but I want more for you. I always have, so -- you can go.

EMMETT

Really? You mean it!

MAMIE

But, listen, Mississippi isn't Chicago.

EMMETT

I know, I know--

MAMIE

--you don't. You were a little boy the last time you were down there. White folks are gonna treat you different now.

EMMETT

Mama. I know how to act because you taught me how to act.

MAMIE

That's just it. You need to forget a lot of things I taught you.

These words hurt, but she must say them.

MAMIE (CONT'D)

You have to humble yourself down there.

Both process the indignity.

EMMETT

Don't worry, I'm gonna be fine. No, I'm gonna be more than fine -- I'm gonna have the time of my life, and if I can find my cufflinks, I'm gonna look sharp doing it!

MAMIE

Cufflinks? I guess you can take the boy out of the city...

Emmett yanks his dresser drawers open. While searching for cufflinks he finds a ring with the initials "LT" engraved on it. An uneasy moment passes as he studies it.

EMMETT

I wish I could've known him a little, before he went off to war. May he rest...

MAMIE

Your father missed out. It was, and will always be, his loss.

(and then)

Good night, Bo.

*

Mamie heads off.

EMMETT

Mama?

Mamie hangs in the doorway, expecting more questions about his dad that she may not be ready to answer.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Don't you and Gene run off and get married before I get back, you hear?

Mamie exhales with a rickety smile.

9

INT. MAMIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT 9

Mamie finds Alma and Uncle Mose heading out.

UNCLE MOSE

I appreciate the meal, hon. Sorry about getting him all riled up.

MAMIE

He can go.

Alma and Uncle Mose swap surprised glances.

MAMIE (CONT'D)

But you have to watch over him.

UNCLE MOSE

He'll have all he needs in my back yard.
It'll be the closest thing to summer camp
he ever got.

MAMIE

Promise me.

UNCLE MOSE

I promise.

Alma steps in, offering comfort and a little innuendo.

ALMA

It's time, Mamie. For you and Bobo to --
blossom. On your own.

A tad embarrassed, Mamie takes a deep breath.

MAMIE

Alright, then. I guess it's settled.

FADE TO:

10

EXT. ENGLEWOOD TRAIN STATION, CHICAGO - MORNING

10

Mamie and Emmett rush through hives of activity:
INTEGRATED PASSENGERS coming and going, bumping into each
other without incident, while trying to catch the train.

TITLE CARD, "AUGUST 20TH, 1955"

MAMIE

We packed those new dungarees, didn't we?

EMMETT

Yep.

MAMIE

And your lunch?

Emmett holds up his sack lunch.

MAMIE (CONT'D)

What about cash? Do you have enough?

They reach a long line for the ticket counter.

EMMETT

I have everything I need, but if we don't hurry it won't matter. Look at this line!

MAMIE

It's okay. It's good actually. It's good to slow down. We gotta make sure we're not forgetting anything.

(deep breaths, and then)

When you're down there and you see a White person approaching, what do you do?

Emmett sighs. *Again with these questions?*

MAMIE (CONT'D)

I'm serious. I don't want you getting too comfortable.

EMMETT

I step off the sidewalk.

MAMIE

And? *

EMMETT

I keep my eyes down-- *

MAMIE

--you keep your whole head down. You kneel in the street if you have to. *

TICKET TAKER (O.C.)

Next.

EMMETT

We're up!

(to the Cashier) *

One round-trip ticket to Winona, Mississippi.

Mamie pulls out her cash with shaky hands. The train's HORN sounds. Emmett grabs the ticket and bolts up the stairs.

MAMIE

Emmett! Get back down here.

EMMETT

Awh, Mama! What is it?

MAMIE

You didn't kiss me.

Embarrassed, Emmett tromps back down and complies, but a quick kiss is not enough. Mamie pulls him in for a hug.

EMMETT

You gotta let me go.

She does. He slips off his watch and hands it to her.

MAMIE

What's this for?

EMMETT

Don't need to know what time it is when I'm on vacation, do I? Bye!

As Emmett jogs up the stairs, Mamie calls out.

MAMIE

I love you, Bo. You be good now, and don't forget to write.

11 INT. TRAIN - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

11

Emmett hurries down the aisle of this integrated car, searching until his eyes land on Uncle Mose and...

EMMETT

Wheeler!

...his cousin WHEELER PARKER JR (16), gentle, protective, and says everything with a smile.

WHEELER

Bobo! Five minutes later, you would've been spending the next two weeks in Oklahoma.

EMMETT

Well, I'm here -- and I don't want to miss a thing.

Emmett drops his bags in an empty seat across the aisle.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

View's better over here.
(trying another seat)
Or maybe here.

UNCLE MOSE

Cool your heels and sit. Next to me.

Wheeler switches seats. Emmett plops next to Uncle Mose.

UNCLE MOSE (CONT'D)

Boy's got ants burrowed in his pants.

WHEELER

Oh, you ain't seen the worst of it. You ready for the longest ride of your life?

12

EXT. ENGLEWOOD TRAIN STATION, CHICAGO - SAME - MORNING 12

The train now leaving the station, the crowd thins. The finality weakening Mamie, she starts to lose balance when WILLIE MAE (30's, sturdy, kind), emerges from the pack of travelers watching their loved ones leave.

WILLIE MAE

Mamie, here.

She moves in to steady Mamie, offering a hand. Her son CURTIS (16, wide-eyed, toothy grin) trails her.

MAMIE

Willie Mae, Curtis -- what are y'all doing here?

CURTIS

Came to see Wheeler and Papa Mose off. I's worried Bobo might have to wait 'til next week to come down with me.

Mamie balks, embarrassed.

WILLIE MAE

We're glad you made it.

MAMIE

Just barely.

WILLIE MAE

If I didn't know you better, I might think that was an accident.

MAMIE

Can you blame me?

Mamie lowers her eyes. Willie Mae lifts her chin.

WILLIE MAE

Our boys will have each other. They're gonna be just fine.

She turns to Curtis, who offers an encouraging nod. Mamie withholds a reaction, choosing instead to keep her eyes on the train as it travels further into the horizon, and we go OFF Mamie, straining to get one last glimpse of her boy...

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

13 EXT. TRAIN - ILLINOIS - LATER - DAY 13

The train barrels down the Illinois Central Railroad, leaving the Chicago skyline in its wake.

14 INT. TRAIN - ILLINOIS - SAME - DAY 14

Wheeler and Uncle Mose are asleep. Emmett's seat is empty. We glide down the aisle until we find him with his face pressed to a window, gazing at the flatlands of rural Illinois with hopeful, wondrous eyes.

SOUTHERN HUSBAND (O.C.)

Governor's race is heating up. Coleman and Johnson sure are paying a lot of lip-service about blocking integration--

SOUTHERN WIFE (O.C.)

--but how much power does Mississippi have against the Supreme Court?

We stay TIGHT on Emmett. It's unclear if he's listening to the SOUTHERN WHITE COUPLE seated behind him or simply lost in the scenery.

SOUTHERN HUSBAND (O.C.)

I'd put my money on Coleman. We gotta have faith that he'll keep his word, or else the whole world's gonna look like this damned train car.

Emmett blinks. He turns to steal a glance and finds the Husband casually reading the *Jackson State Times* while his Wife knits.

SOUTHERN WIFE

My God, just think of our daughters.

Neither seems to care that they're in the presence of Black Passengers, even when they look up and see the innocent, inquisitive stare of young Emmett, questioning them with this eyes, as if to say: *You're afraid of me?*

CONDUCTOR (O.C.)

Next stop, Cairo.

The announcement wakes Wheeler, who nudges Uncle Mose, who discovers the empty seat next to him. He scans the aisle until he spots Emmett in a daze.

UNCLE MOSE

Bobo, get back here.

Startled, Emmett snaps out of his fog. He hops up, looks down and discovers his BARE feet on the floor.

EMMETT

My shoes.

(searching under his seat)

They're gone! Oh, no. We just bought 'em.
Mama's gonna kill me.

WHEELER

Get back here, I think I packed an extra pair.

Emmett returns to his seat.

UNCLE MOSE

How'd you manage to lose 'em?

While Wheeler retrieves shoes from his bag, Emmett glances at the Southern Couple.

EMMETT

(echoing Mamie's warning)

Guess I got too comfortable.

Emmett slips on his loaner shoes as the BLACK PASSENGERS begin gathering their things.

UNCLE MOSE

Alright. This is us. Get up.

EMMETT

We're not there yet, are we?

UNCLE MOSE

Stop asking questions and get your stuff.

WHEELER

What's left of it.

Wheeler playfully nudges Emmett, who catches the Southern Couple smugly watching Black Passengers prepare for departure, as if to say: *This is the way it should be.*

15

INT. MAMIE'S APARTMENT - MAMIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

15

Mamie lay in bed, staring at Emmett's watch on her wrist. There's a RAP on the door that she ignores. Alma enters with tea and crackers.

ALMA

We gotta get you healthy for your trip.

Mamie remains stoic, ignoring the food. Her eyes fall back to Emmett's watch. It's 2:30 PM.

MAMIE

He should be in Cairo by now. Changing cars.

It stings them both, what *changing cars* represents.

MAMIE (CONT'D)

Remember the fumes in that front car?

Alma nods. She remembers. She wishes she did not.

MAMIE (CONT'D)

Do you think it's true that they have ceiling fans in the other cars?

ALMA

You sure it's your stomach that's upset?
(off her silence)
He wouldn't want you worrying yourself sick over him.

MAMIE

I just need a day.

ALMA

Eat something when you can.

Alma leaves Mamie considering her words. She takes a single bite and then shoves it away. She tried...

16

EXT. TRAIN STATION - CAIRO, IL - SAME - DAY

16

Emmett follows Wheeler and Uncle Mose through a swarm of BLACK PASSENGERS baking in the heat and humidity while making way for WHITE PASSENGERS to board.

EMMETT

Why we gotta change cars now?

UNCLE MOSE

So we can pass into Kentucky.

A beat as this lands on Emmett, another reminder of the freedoms he left in Chicago. The indignity certainly isn't lost on him, but he swallows it.

Still, Wheeler spies his disappointment and throws a comforting arm around him.

WHEELER

Down at Uncle Mose's, it's just us. The boys. The farm. The lake. We won't have nothing to worry about but bug bites. You'll see.

With slightly lifted spirits they enter the COLORED CAR, the car closest to the train's engine, closest to the FUMES.

FADE TO:

17 INT. FORD/EXT. RURAL ROAD - WINONA, MISSISSIPPI - NIGHT 17

Outside fireflies light up the sky. Inside Emmett, Wheeler, Uncle Mose, and their luggage are stuffed like sardines. Uncle Mose's son MAURICE (16) drives.

EMMETT

I can't wait to go fishing. I'm thinking about rising before the sun.

Maurice laughs, carrying resentment. From his accent to his clothes, he's all country. Everything Emmett is not.

UNCLE MOSE

You might beat the sun, but you're heading to the fields with us first thing, remember?

EMMETT

I just thought we might get a day to unwind?

Maurice shoots a grin at his father. They laugh.

MAURICE

Unwind? You sure he's up for this, daddy? I don't want him slowing the rest of us down.

Emmett puffs up, eager to prove himself.

EMMETT

I can keep up. Back in my old neighborhood, I ran deliveries for the milkman and newspaper fella in the dead of summer. I'm not afraid of a hard day's work at all.

Maurice hurls Wheeler an amused smirk. *They shall see.*

Ignoring Maurice's chiding, Emmett moves to the window, taking in the fertile soils of the Mississippi Delta as we...

FADE TO:

18

EXT. COTTON FIELDS - EAST MONEY, MISSISSIPPI - DAY

18

FROM ABOVE: we fly across the expansive cotton field in full bloom. Like a scene from 1800, Black Men, Women, and Children pick bolls of cotton in the blistering August sun. There's a rhythm to their work: fill the sack. Dump it in the basket. Pick another bail.

All the livelong day.

TITLE CARD, "AUGUST 24TH, 1955"

We find Uncle Mose's sons, ROBERT (14, quiet, stoic), and SIMEON (12, innocent baby of the family), next to Wheeler, who's struggling while the Wright boys lug 9 foot sacks of cotton in the 95 degree heat with ease.

ISOLATED from his cousins, we find Emmett in his wide-brimmed hat taking in a bit of shade under a seven-foot stalk while reading a "Frankenstein" comic book.

RUSTLING in the fields pulls him out of the fantasy. He investigates and discovers a stray HEN.

EMMETT

Hey, now. Come on. Remember me?

Emmett pulls sunflower seeds from his khakis, lures the hen to his side and pets her while she pecks at them.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

You're smart to go on your own.

UNCLE MOSE (O.C.)

What the hell are you doing?

Uncle Mose emerges through the towering stalks, startling the hen -- and Emmett. She escapes, but Emmett is caught with his comic book by his side.

UNCLE MOSE (CONT'D)

You ain't been out here half a day.

EMMETT

I picked twenty-five pounds this morning.

UNCLE MOSE

You bragging or apologizing?

EMMETT

It's the heat. I haven't -- adjusted yet.

UNCLE MOSE

You been here four days already, boy.

EMMETT

I know. Maybe when I'm more...
(searching for the right
word)
...situated, I'll catch up. Then I'll be
picking like the devil. Come on. I'm
supposed to be on vacation, aren't I?

Emmett grins. That smile. That stutter. Uncle Mose isn't
immune to it.

UNCLE MOSE

(calling out)

Boys.

Maurice, Robert, Simeon, and Wheeler rush over.

UNCLE MOSE (CONT'D)

Smooth talker over here caught me in a
good mood. Y'all are done for the day if
you want.

The boys stare at him blankly, expecting a punch-line.

SIMEON

You mean it, Daddy?

Uncle Mose nods. The boys perk up. Well, most of them.
Robert is entirely unmoved.

ROBERT

I need the money.

UNCLE MOSE

Alright then. Rest of you, keep close.
You hear me, Maurice? No going into town.

Robert and Uncle Mose leave the other boys to empty their
sacks into the collection baskets. While waiting for
their turn, Maurice leans into Emmett.

MAURICE

You sure can talk.

EMMETT

You're welcome.

But Maurice wears resentment, not gratitude. Emmett just can't see it.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Whaddya say we hit the lake? A nickel says I can beat y'all in a diving contest.

19 EXT. LAKE NEVER FAIL - LATER - EVENING 19

A soundtrack of crickets, bullfrogs, and laughter as Emmett, Maurice, Wheeler, and Simeon DIVE into the lake.

20 EXT. LAKE NEVER FAIL - UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS - EVENING 20

We follow Emmett UNDERWATER, gliding towards the bottom of the dark lake, using only his instincts to guide him.

Down here there is no stutter. Or limp. Or rules. For this moment, he is free...

...until he pushes too hard and starts to fatigue.

His face reads panic. He abruptly halts his descent, glancing back up to the surface. He could give up now, but something comes over him. He steadies his breath and keeps swimming, pushing his lungs to their limit until he DISAPPEARS into the dark water.

21 EXT. LAKE NEVER FAIL - MOMENTS LATER - EVENING 21

One-by-one Maurice, Wheeler, and Simeon surface only to find a pile of mud at the water's edge.

WHEELER

Oh, hell. Where's Emmett?

MAURICE

He knows how to swim, don't he?

SIMEON

Bobo!

The boys pull themselves to the shore, searching for him in a panic -- until a LOG flies out of nowhere, SPLASHING in the water.

The boys turn and find Emmett laughing hysterically.

MAURICE

Boy, you never stop playing, do you? We thought you'd drowned!

EMMETT

Awh, you're just sore cause you lost.
I sure am hungry.

Maurice shoves him out of his way and starts dressing.

MAURICE

Quit yer yappin', money bags. Let's get
something in town.

SIMEON

Daddy said to stay close.

MAURICE

You gonna tell him?

22

EXT. MONEY, MISSISSIPPI/INT. FORD - NIGHT

22

The Wright Family's Ford pulls into the town's business district, creeping past a post office, filling station, and cotton gin, stopping in front of a CLOSED café.

EMMETT

This is the main drag, and y'all only
have one restaurant?

MAURICE

Bryant's got snacks.

Maurice parks at a filling station near Bryant's Grocery and Meat Market, a two-story brick building bearing Coca Cola signs.

The boys step out of the Ford and scan the locals on the porch. Emmett's disappointed to find mostly MEN (field workers) and BOYS (teens - early 20's) playing checkers, drinking soda pop, and casually shooting the shit.

EMMETT

Nothing but guys.

MAURICE

You wouldn't know what to do with a girl
if you had one.

EMMETT

I've *had* girls.

MAURICE

Had them how?

EMMETT

You know -- had dates with 'em. I took a
girl to the show once.

Wheeler laughs.

WHEELER

When you were eleven.

EMMETT

How would you know?

WHEELER

You were living in Argo, and your Mama couldn't help but tell the story every Sunday supper about how you made the poor girl pay her own way in.

EMMETT

I bought her popcorn. Figured it was fair.

MAURICE

You a real ladies' man.

They laugh. Emmett joins in, covering his embarrassment.

WHEELER

I'm starving. You guys coming?

MAURICE

Right behind ya.

Wheeler enters the market, leaving Maurice to chat up the Locals, who offer nods and hellos to the Wright boys.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Hey, ya'll, my cousin here is visiting from Chicago and he wants to know where all the girls are at.

EMMETT

Yeah. Don't you have any pretty ladies down here?

Emmett steps into their space. The Locals size this city boy up, clocking his new dungarees and his confident air.

LOCAL BOY

Heard some talk about a planation party this weekend.

EMMETT

Oh, yeah?

Another local playing checkers, ALBERT (20), sparks to the conversation.

ALBERT

If you're antsy, there's a real pretty lady working the cash register.

EMMETT

How pretty we talking?

ALBERT

Go on in and see for yourself, Chicago. Tell us if they make 'em that pretty up north.

Joke's over for Maurice. He takes Emmett aside.

MAURICE

He's fooling you, Bobo. He's talking about a White lady.

All eyes on Emmett. His bravado emerging as he moves towards the door.

EMMETT

I've gone to school with White girls, I'm not afraid to look at one.

ALBERT

Then go on and ask her for a date while you're at it. I dare you.

Maurice steps in, suddenly serious.

MAURICE

Just watch your tongue, Bo.

It's said with an unusual softness, evidence of his concern, but Emmett confidently strides inside...

23 INT. BRYANT'S GROCERY & MEAT MARKET - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT 23

...crossing Wheeler on his way out. Emmett grins in passing before finding himself alone with CAROLYN BRYANT (21, White), the steely, petite brunette cashier.

We see a twinge of judgment as she takes in his demeanor.

Obvious northerner.

She returns to her magazine, showing little emotion until she glances up again and finds Emmett looking right at her.

Her eyes question what we can clearly see: he's smiling at her. To us, it's the harmless smile of a boy on a dare, but to Carolyn it's an affront to a way of life.

As she stiffens, Emmett glances toward the screen door and catches Simeon watching this unfold, worried this dare has gone too far.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

24

EXT. BRYANT'S GROCERY & MEAT MARKET - NIGHT

24

Simeon PULLS Emmett through the swinging door, ushering him back onto the porch. He downplays his concern, laughing nervously as he releases Emmett.

SIMEON

Alright, alright. You got your laugh.
Let's head on home--

ALBERT

--so what's the story, Chicago? You
taking her out or what?

The locals laugh, provoking him further. Emmett turns, facing the screen door. Through it, we find Carolyn behind the counter.

Wearing a toothy-grin, Emmett waves...

EMMETT

Goodbye!

...and whips back around for a reaction. He expects laughter but receives silence. Everyone recognizes the offense. Everyone but Emmett.

MAURICE

Boy, are you crazy?

We STAY with Emmett, confused by Maurice's concern.

EMMETT

What?

The group falls silent, because everyone else can see what Emmett can't: Carolyn approaching from behind.

While the others lower their eyes, Emmett's head turns, following Carolyn as she zips past him.

And as she marches towards a parked car, Emmett inexplicably WHISTLES at her.

Carolyn freezes, her jaw clenching in disgust.

As if time has stopped, Emmett reads fear on his cousins' faces. As the Locals step away -- keeping their distance from him -- it finally dawns on Emmett that he screwed up, but before he can right his "wrong," Carolyn reaches into the car:

LOCAL BOY

She's got a gun!

As the horrified Locals take cover, Emmett, Wheeler, Maurice, and Simeon hightail it across the parking lot.

25 INT. FORD - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

25

Maurice hops behind the wheel with a lit cigarette in his mouth.

MAURICE

Hurry the hell up!

Emmett's limp slows him down, but he makes it...

EMMETT

Let's go! Let's go!

...just as Maurice DROPS HIS CIGARETTE.

MAURICE

(scrambling to find it)

Damn it, I dropped my cig!

EMMETT

Who the hell cares? Let's get out of here!

Maurice keeps searching. With every passing moment, the boys' panic kicks up a notch.

WHEELER

What were you thinking, Bo?

Emmett remains silent. Truth is, he doesn't know.

MAURICE

Got it!

Cigarette recovered, Maurice jerks the car into gear and peels out of the parking lot. As they speed away, Emmett turns and discovers Carolyn through the rear window.

She's aiming a PISTOL right at him.

26 EXT./INT. FORD - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

26

Maurice speeds along the dark country road.

MAURICE

Damn it, Bo, I told you to watch yourself.

EMMETT

I didn't do anything!

MAURICE

You don't go waving at White ladies like that -- forgetting to call them "ma'am."

SIMEON

There's gonna be hell to pay when mama and daddy find out.

Emmett turns cold at the prospect.

EMMETT

Please don't tell 'em.

HEADLIGHTS approach, gaining speed by the moment.

WHEELER

Guys. Guys... hey -- someone's coming!

Maurice VEERS off the road, tossing the boys around the car as he SLAMS on the breaks and kicks the door open.

WHEELER (CONT'D)

What the hell? We're sitting ducks out here!

MAURICE

Not if you running!

Maurice takes off...

27

EXT. COTTON FIELDS - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

27

...disappearing into the field with Wheeler and Emmett trailing him. They dip into the field and hide. As the car approaches, Emmett turns to Wheeler.

EMMETT

Where's Simeon?

28

INT. FORD - SAME - NIGHT

28

Simeon is curled up in the fetal position in the backseat waiting for the car to pass. He grows impatient, pulling himself up to check the rear window -- where he's instantly BLINDED by HEADLIGHTS.

FADE TO:

BLACK.

A long beat of silence, broken by a faint, "Tick. Tick. Tick..."

FADE IN:

29

INT. MAMIE'S APARTMENT - MAMIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

29

TIGHT on EMMETT'S WATCH as time ticks by.

REVEAL Mamie, listless -- sitting on the edge of her bed with the watch in her palm, listening to the sound of time passing, seconds that feel like hours.

ALMA (O.C.)

Mamie?

Mamie runs her fingers on the watch band, the closest thing to Emmett right now.

TITLE CARD, "AUGUST 25TH, 1955"

Alma storms in. Before she can ask:

MAMIE

I'm not going.

ALMA

Listen here, you said you needed a day. You've had *five*. All the while that man's been waiting, patiently might I add, for you to get yourself together. You make him wait much longer, you're gonna find yourself alone.

MAMIE

If I knew for sure that Bo made it down there okay -- if I could just hear his voice...

She trails off, believing it to be impossible.

ALMA

You'd go?

CUT TO:

30

INT. MAMIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER - DAY

30

Mamie alone, telephone in hand, anxiously waiting.

EMMETT (V.O.)

Mama?

Mamie exhales at the sound of his voice.

MAMIE

Bo. How are you?

EMMETT (V.O.)

Everything okay? You scared the bejeezus out of Aunt Lizzie, calling on her neighbors to track me down like this.

A hint of embarrassment visits Mamie, but she covers.

MAMIE

Oh. You know your grandma, when she sets her mind to something... but enough about all that, now that I have you I wanna hear everything. Are you eating enough? Helping out? Having fun? Tell me.

EMMETT (V.O.)

Yeah. Sure. Everything's just fine.

MAMIE

You're behaving yourself?

EMMETT (V.O.)

Mama, aren't you supposed to be on vacation?

MAMIE

Well, yes. I was.

EMMETT (V.O.)

Then why aren't you?

She's quiet. Does she cover or reveal?

MAMIE

I miss you! I -- just wanted to see if you needed anything.

EMMETT (V.O.)

Oh, well... if you're asking, I guess I could use a little more money.

Always the opportunist. Mamie can't help but laugh.

MAMIE

Don't tell me you've gone and spent what we gave you already?

INTERCUT: Emmett in a neighbor's kitchen. Alone and yet doing what he can to project his usual exuberance.

EMMETT

The guys and I went to the market last night...

Emmett pauses, still shaken from the incident. Still pushing down his fear.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

...and I couldn't just buy for myself.

MAMIE (V.O.)

Well, that's real nice of you...

A compliment? Emmett fights tears.

MAMIE (V.O.)

...but I'm sorry to say that the Bank of Mama is closed. I won't bother you again. I'll see you in a week or so. Bye, Bo.

Emmett lingers, unable to hang up.

MAMIE (V.O.)

Bo? You still there?

EMMETT

Yeah...

He nearly breaks, but shakes it off. His voice betrays nothing.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

...just check your mail, okay? Bye!

MAMIE (V.O.)

Goodbye.

Click. She hangs up. Emmett's mask fades. His truth emerges in the form of a homesick gaze at the phone, the closest thing to Mamie. He takes a beat to compose himself and forces a smile, his armor -- and he hangs up.

31

INT. MAMIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME - DAY

31

A little embarrassed, Mamie sits with Alma on the couch.

MAMIE

I don't think he misses me a bit.

ALMA

You don't say?

MAMIE

I'm gonna call the girls. It's my turn to host.

Alma returns a hopeful look.

MAMIE (CONT'D)

I guess it'll have to double as a send off. Gene and I'll leave Sunday morning.

ALMA

Hallelujah!

Alma grabs her purse and bops to the door.

MAMIE

You're leaving?

ALMA

My work here is done. Tell Gene he can thank me later.

Alma leaves. Mamie smiles, finally looking *forward*.

32

INT. BRYANT'S GROCERY & MEAT MARKET - BACK ROOM - NIGHT 32

Carolyn is sleeping, arms wrapped around her sons, THOMAS (2) and ROY JR. (3). Enter ROY BRYANT (24, White, wears his insecurities on his sleeve).

ROY

Carolyn. Carolyn.

She wakes, disoriented as he stumbles bedside.

CAROLYN

Roy, what is it?

ROY

You okay? Something happen Wednesday night?

Carolyn is now awake, fully understanding the question, though unsure how to answer.

ROY (CONT'D)

I come home to a bunch of talk. What's this about you and some big-talking nigger at the market?

Off Carolyn, wavering.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

33

EXT. GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI - NIGHT

33

Emmett, Maurice, Wheeler, and Curtis (having just arrived from Chicago) cross a lively street, passing a statue honoring the sons and daughters of the Confederacy.

Excited to show Curtis around, Emmett moves in front of the pack, throwing an arm around his cousin as they enter a sea of BLACK FOLKS socializing in the streets where vendors sell ice cream, fried fish, and hot dogs -- a chubby kid's culinary mecca.

EMMETT

Welcome to Mississippi, Curtis. I hope you're hungry.

CURTIS

A little. But after spending all damned day in the car, I'm ready to unwind, if ya catch me?

Maurice gets it. And smiles.

MAURICE

I think we can find something a little stronger than ice cream. Come on.

TITLE CARD, "AUGUST 27TH, 1955"

Entering the crowd, Emmett bumps into a countrified BLACK MAN (late 20's). Thinking nothing of it, he keeps walking until:

JOHNNY (O.C.)

Watch yourself, Chicago.

Chicago? Emmett turns and finds a man we'll call JOHNNY eyeing him.

EMMETT

Sorry, Sir. Didn't see you coming.

That should be it, but Johnny lingers, studying Emmett and Maurice with a shady intrigue.

JOHNNY

You're Preacher's boy.

MAURICE

Who's asking?

It wasn't a question. Johnny keeps his eyes on Emmett.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

There a problem?

JOHNNY

Best start paying attention.

He takes off, leaving Emmett confused.

EMMETT

What is it? The pants? My shoes? He didn't say nothing to Curtis or Wheeler about being from Chicago.

MAURICE

It ain't about your looks, dummy. It's about the market. People are talking.

EMMETT

All the way out here?

Emmett finds Johnny in the crowd, watching him from afar.

MAURICE

He works for Roy Bryant.
(off Emmett's confusion)
That was his wife at the market.

As that lands on Emmett, his paranoia grows.

EMMETT

What are people saying?

MAURICE

Depends who you ask.

EMMETT

But I didn't do anything!

WHEELER

We know that, Bo. We know.

But these words bring little comfort to Emmett as he scans the crowd again, only now it feels like EVERYONE'S watching him.

We go OFF Emmett, no longer a carefree teen pushing boundaries, he's a boy who needs his mother.

EMMETT (V.O.)

Dear, Mama. How is everybody? I hope you had a nice trip. I'm having a fine time...

34

INT. MAMIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

34

Mamie sits at her table, reading the letter from Emmett, her voice syncing with his.

EMMETT (V.O.)

...but I am out of money.

MAMIE

...but I am out of money.

REVEAL Mamie's GIRLFRIENDS, (all 30's, Black, stylish, surrogate sisters) who make up her women's group "Les Petite Femmes," patiently waiting for the game to begin.

MAMIE

Can you believe that? I gave that boy plenty of money, and he already spent it on sweets, of all things.

She passes the letter to OLLIE (30's), who barely glances at it before setting it down. Ollie turns to the rest of the women, whose expressions tell us that this "Emmett talk" has been going on for too long.

OLLIE

This is supposed to be your big send-off, and here you are going on the whole night about Bo when you promised your Mama you wouldn't.

(and then)

You can't even bring yourself to shuffle the cards, woman!

Mamie laughs it off, still focused on her boy.

MAMIE

It's just typical of us, Me and Bo. I worked myself into a frenzy finding a way to phone him, and what did I find in my mailbox this morning but two letters. One from him--

(grabbing a second letter)

--and another from my Aunt Lizzie, who just went on and on bragging about my "nice, obedient son".

As she prepares to read the letter, her friends groan.

OLLIE

You planning on doing this with Gene?

MAMIE

What? I thought y'all wanted to hear.

A collective "Really, girl?" look from her friends makes her reconsider...

MAMIE (CONT'D)

Alright, alright. I'll shut up.

We hear a few "Amens" as the ladies clink glasses.

Mamie swats away their teasing and rises to hang the letters on her refrigerator. She takes one last look at Emmett's before returning to the table.

MAMIE (CONT'D)

Whose deal?

Her girlfriends trade exasperated looks.

GIRLFRIENDS

Yours!

35

EXT. GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI - LATER - NIGHT

35

Emmett, Maurice, Wheeler, and Curtis are perched outside a dicey nightclub, drinking beers and people-watching.

Emmett is distant, barely offering a smile while Curtis gyrates like the couples dirty dancing inside.

Wheeler clocks Emmett's mood and offers comfort.

WHEELER

Don't pay it no mind. It's nothing but a bunch of rumors.

Maurice takes a swig of his drink and interrupts.

MAURICE

'the hell you know, Wheeler?

WHEELER

I know Bo.

MAURICE

But you don't live here. You ain't gonna have to deal with this in a few weeks. The rumors. The hurt "feelings"...

Emmett cowers, unable to find the words to fix this.

EMMETT

I was just fooling around.

WHEELER

We know that. Listen, let's head back to Papa Mose's. You know he's gonna have us working first thing.

CURTIS

Not on a Sunday. Come on. It's my first night in town, I'd like to do *something*. Didn't y'all say there was a planation party?

MAURICE

Yeah. Up at Four Fifths.

Wheeler looks at Emmett, checking in.

WHEELER

You up for it?

Emmett grins, grateful for the escape.

EMMETT

Yeah. Let's get out of here.

Emmett follows his cousins through the crowd, excited for what's to come, but when he turns to watch his back, he meets the steely gaze of Johnny from afar, and he can't shake the feeling that he's being hunted.

36

INT. MILAM'S SHOP - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

36

J.W. "BIG" MILAM (36, White), Roy's towering half-brother, a balding good ole boy who carries weight in his gut, studies Roy, who's chewing his inner cheek.

After a moment of contemplation, Milam offers his pot.

MILAM

All in.

Roy studies his brother and folds. Showing a Ten and a Jack, Milam gathers the pot.

ROY

Awh, hell.

MILAM

You know that you chew your inner cheek when you got a piss-poor hand?

Already folded, MELVIN CAMPBELL (29, White), HUBERT CLARK (35, White), and an UNNAMED MILAM BROTHER (30's White, stoic, ***intentionally nameless based on Carolyn's statement**) retreat to a shared bottle of whiskey. Roy takes in the scene, wanting none of it.

ROY

Can you get me home?

MILAM

When you gonna get yourself a car?

ROY

When you get yourself on a diet.

MILAM BROTHER

Stick around. We just got started.

ROY

Mood ain't right for socializing.

Melvin offers the bottle to Roy.

MELVIN

The hell you think this is for?

ROY

Gotta take a leak.

Roy rejects the booze, grabs a cigarette, and heads out.

When he's gone, the men trade looks.

HUBERT

It's eating him up real good, ain't it?

MELVIN

It'd be eating you up, too, if one of 'em made ugly remarks to your wife.

Milam turns to his cohorts, chewing on his anger.

MILAM

He lets this go another day, *talk* will be the least of his concerns.

37

EXT. MILAM'S SHOP - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

37

In the darkness, Roy smokes. Milam joins him.

MILAM

How long you gonna let this go?

Roy bristles, in no mood for brotherly provocation.

MILAM (CONT'D)

You know how niggers operate. Word gets out we let this go, it ain't stopping with talk.

They live in the silence a bit, a fully-loaded silence, with Milam eager to feed Roy's anxiety.

MILAM (CONT'D)

She's left alone in that store 'til nine, sometimes eleven on weekends. Next one might put his hands on her -- or my Juanita -- or some gal who don't know no better. Whoever it is, boy's gotta answer for himself.

ROY

You don't think I know that? I been asking around.

Milam coughs out a laugh, unimpressed with Roy's "efforts" to right the wrong.

ROY (CONT'D)

The hell you expect me to do?

MILAM

Find him.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

38

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD/INT. FORD - LATER - NIGHT

38

Maurice is driving. Curtis is up front, woozy. Emmett and Wheeler sit in back, both are sober.

CURTIS

How in the hell am I supposed go to service in the morning?

MAURICE

That's white lighting for you. 190 proof homemade whiskey.

CURTIS

Whatever you call it, I'm seeing triple.

WHEELER

(nudging Emmett)

Good thing we stuck to beer.

EMMETT

That party was a bust. All that land and I didn't see but one girl.

CURTIS

Should've kept drinking, Bobo, you would'a seen three girls. Like me.

Their laughter is cut short by a sudden, loud THUMP.

EMMETT

What the hell was that?

WHEELER

Sounded like a damned body.

Maurice drops his speed and listens out the window.

MAURICE

Quiet.

A beat. They hear a dog YELP O.C.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Just a dang ole dog.

CURTIS

Wake me up when we're home.

Maurice accelerates.

EMMETT

You're not just gonna leave it there to die, are you?

MAURICE

We can't be out here after dark. We already pressed our luck the other night. I ain't tempting fate again.

EMMETT

Can't we just check on him?

MAURICE

For what?

EMMETT

I don't know for what, it's -- the right thing to do.

Maurice laughs.

MAURICE

Jesus. One of these nights you're gonna have to catch that same chicken you been lovin' on all week, and then my mama's gonna wring its neck and chop its head clear off. You know that, don't you?

Emmett turns to the window, stung by the thought.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

And you know how much easier it'd be to eat it if you would've just let the chicken be a damned chicken?

As Emmett stares into the darkness, it all hits him. The Incident. The Whistle. His deep longing for home...

MAURICE (CONT'D)

I don't know what it's like up in Chicago, but there's an order to things down here and I ain't looking to upset it. The sooner you figure that out, the better off you'll be.

...and Emmett does something we've never seen him do before, he dissolves into silent tears, and the boys continue their drive home in silence.

FADE TO:

39 INT. MOSE WRIGHT'S HOME - MOSE'S BEDROOM - LATER - NIGHT 39

The house is dark. The windows are open to allow a breeze. Uncle Mose and his wife ELIZABETH "LIZZIE" WRIGHT (55) are asleep when a car pulls up outside.

TITLE CARD, "AUGUST 28TH, 1955"

Doors open. We hear footsteps, heavy boots, a loud knock on the door, and then:

ROY (O.C.)
Preacher, Preacher!

Uncle Mose is startled awake.

40 INT. MOSE WRIGHT'S HOME - FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER 40

Uncle Mose stumbles in, pulling on a shirt. It's too dark to see, so he tries a lamp, but it remains pitch black.

UNCLE MOSE
Damn bulb.

He feels his way to the screened porch.

UNCLE MOSE (CONT'D)
Who's there?

ROY (O.C.)
Mr. Bryant.

Uncle Mose steels himself, opens the door, and finds Milam on the other side holding a pistol and a flashlight that he shines right in Uncle Mose's face.

Roy stands behind his towering brother.

ROY (CONT'D)
I'm Roy Bryant. I'm looking for the Negro from Chicago.

Uncle Mose spots an UNIDENTIFIABLE BLACK MAN near the truck, just before he shields his face and disappears into the shadows.

MILAM
The one that did the talking at the market.

The distraction lowers Uncle Mose's guard, allowing the intruders to push their way inside.

Elizabeth charges in.

ELIZABETH

Please.

Milam shines his light on the distraught matriarch.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

He's just a boy.

Roy blocks her from continuing down the hall.

MILAM

That was my sister-in-law, and I won't stand for it.

ROY

Back to bed. We ain't gonna ask again.

Trembling with fear, Elizabeth turns to Uncle Mose, willing him to take control. Emasculated, he motions for her to comply, and she disappears into her bedroom.

A beat. Uncle Mose collects himself, only to find the flashlight back in his face.

MILAM

Where is he?

41

INT. MOSE WRIGHT'S HOME - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

41

Milam's flashlight cuts across the room, landing first on Curtis, passed out, and then on Wheeler, wide-awake in the shared bed. His terrified eyes settle on the gun.

UNCLE MOSE

These are my grandsons. They ain't who you're looking for.

Milam gets a closer look, inching his gun closer to Wheeler's head. He's trembling.

UNCLE MOSE (CONT'D)

I got a full house tonight.

Milam concedes, believing him for now.

MILAM

Come on.

Uncle Mose leads the intruders out of the room, leaving Wheeler petrified. When the coast is clear, he slips on his shoes and jumps back in bed -- ready to run, in case he's next.

42 INT. MOSE WRIGHT'S HOME - SPARE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 42

Milam's flashlight finds two EMPTY beds. Roy tears through the room -- finds no one.

The light SMACKS Uncle Mose, waiting in the doorway.

MILAM

You stalling, Preacher?

UNCLE MOSE

No, Sir. Boys came home late. I'm not sure where they all ended up.

43 INT. MOSE WRIGHT'S HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 43

As the Intruders trail Uncle Mose into this room, he's overcome with dread.

44 INT. MOSE WRIGHT'S HOME - SIMEON'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 44

The flashlight lands first on Robert and Maurice, still sleeping. Milam WHIPS it across the room to the other bed where Simeon and Emmett sleep.

UNCLE MOSE

The little one's mine.

Milam focuses the light on Emmett.

MILAM

This the one? From Chicago?

Uncle Mose steadies his voice, knowing that he must comply or die.

UNCLE MOSE

Yes.

Milam nudges Emmett, who wakes in a daze, only seeing Uncle Mose at first -- and then he's blinded by the flashlight and the faces of two angry White men.

MILAM

You the one who did the smart talk up at the market?

Rubbing his eyes, Emmett sleepily replies.

EMMETT

Yeah.

Milam cocks his pistol.

MILAM

You say "Yeah" again, I'll blow your head off. Get dressed.

Emmett peers at Uncle Mose, who gestures for him to do as told. Surrendering to the men, and to the south, Emmett lowers his head. It is demoralizing.

EMMETT

Yes, Sir.

Still half asleep, Emmett moves to the side of the bed to dress. As the men watch, he keeps his head down, vulnerable and compliant while slipping on a shirt and pants, and then he reaches for his socks--

MILAM

--just the shoes.

It's a strange order, but Emmett follows it.

MILAM (CONT'D)

Come on.

They're gone. Simeon's eyes SNAP open, having heard everything. He remains stiff, afraid to breathe, eyes on the doorway, bracing himself... in case he's next.

45

INT. MOSE WRIGHT'S HOME - ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

45

Flanked by the Intruders, Emmett is ushered through the house. He does not dare say a word. He trembles.

Fighting panic, Uncle Mose trails them, remaining silent until they inch towards the door.

UNCLE MOSE

Mr. Milam, he don't have good sense. He was real sick as a boy.

Unmoved, they keep walking.

UNCLE MOSE (CONT'D)

Where you plan on taking him?

MILAM

Nowhere. If he ain't the right one.

UNCLE MOSE

Can't you just take him out back and whip him? No need to drive off with him, is there?

The Intruders stop. Hopeful tears pool in Emmett's eyes.

ROY

How old are you?

UNCLE MOSE

Sixty four. Sir.

MILAM

Well, if you know any of us here tonight,
you won't make it to sixty-five.

Hope leaves Emmett's body. He lowers his head, his lips forming the word *mama* -- just as Elizabeth charges back in the room.

ELIZABETH

I'll pay you for the damages. Please,
Lord. Please, don't take him!

The intruders YANK Emmett through the door.

ROY

Get back in bed, and I wanna hear the
springs!

They're gone. With the door still open, Uncle Mose hears:

ROY (O.C.) (CONT'D)

This the right one?

SOFT VOICE (O.C.)

Yes. It's him.

Elizabeth heard it too. She pushes past him.

46

EXT. MOSE WRIGHT'S HOME - PORCH - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

46

As the Intruders SHOVE Emmett into the truck, Elizabeth falls to her knees, making one last blood-curdling plea to the Heavens. But it's of no use. The truck holding her great nephew disappears into the night.

Uncle Mose finds Elizabeth in shambles. It's humiliating. Even in his own home: White supremacy wins.

ELIZABETH

He was ours to watch over.

Paralyzed with shame, he joins his wife. On his knees.

UNCLE MOSE

He'll be back. They'll whip him and
they'll bring him back, Lizzie.

If only he believed that.

FADE TO:

47 INT. MAMIE'S APARTMENT - MAMIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING 47

Suitcase packed. Church clothes pressed. We find Mamie in a deep, peaceful sleep, until a RINGING phone wakes her.

TITLE CARD, "SEVEN HOURS LATER"

48 INT. MAMIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER 48

Mamie picks up the phone.

MAMIE
(into phone)
Hello?

She hears silence, followed by SOBBING.

MAMIE (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Who's there?

WILLIE MAE (V.O.)
It's Willie Mae. I don't know how to tell you.
(choking back tears)
Bo.

MAMIE
(into phone)
Bo? What about him?

WILLIE MAE (V.O.)
Some men came and got him last night.

Willie Mae's words are swallowed by her tears. Unable to keep it together, she hangs up.

MAMIE
(into phone)
Willie Mae? Willie Mae?

Silence. Mamie remains frozen with the phone in her hand.

Wearing a far away expression, Willie Mae's words begin to form meaning in Mamie's mind. *She let him go.*

And they took him.

END HOUR #1