

International Doctor (DR.Lee)

Drama Script 10-Episode Series

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Characters:

Main Character:

LEE SEOK-YI (JOHNNY LEE/DR. LEE)

- Occupation: Unlicensed natural healer and Oriental medicine practitioner.
- Age: Ranges from 11 to 60-80 throughout the series.
- Born an orphan in Jirisan mountain, he was raised by his grandfather, a traditional Oriental medicine practitioner, learning extensively from him. Witnessing his grandfather's death by North Korean soldiers while treating a U.S. pilot, he was later adopted by white American parents with the help of the rescued American pilot. Initially treated well, Lee began experiencing abuse after his adoptive father became disabled from a severe accident. Fleeing this abuse, he hid deep in the mountains of Alabama, where he was saved from a bear attack by an Indian chief named Shinbone. He then studied Native American medicine under Shinbone and used both Oriental and Native American traditional medicine to heal many people. However, due to practicing without a medical license, he was wrongfully imprisoned after a patient died during treatment. In prison, he meets Attorney Richard, who helps him advocate for the recognition of natural healing practices based on Eastern and Native American methods, eventually appealing the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

GRANDFATHER LEE (YI)

- Occupation: Oriental medicine practitioner
- Age: 70s
- Lives in Jirisan mountain, grandfather to Seok-Yi (Johnny Lee).

Dedicated to passing down his extensive medical knowledge to his grandson to continue the family tradition. Haunted by guilt for causing a tragic mistake leading to the death of Seok-Yi- yi's

parents. He dies during the Korean War at the hands of North Korean soldiers for treating an American pilot.

DO-HA (SON OF GRANDFATHER LEE, SEOK-YI'S FATHER)

- Age: 25
- Seok-Yi's Korean father who was captured by Japanese soldiers on the day of Seok-Yi's birth and forcibly conscripted into the Japanese military. Seok-Yi never met his father.

SEOL-AH (SEOK-YI'S MOTHER)

- Age: Early 20s
- Seok-Yi's mother embraced Christianity against strong opposition from Grandfather Lee. During pregnancy, complications

arose with ectopic pregnancy and breech positioning. Despite her life-threatening condition, she opposed abortion. Unable to receive a life-saving C- section from American missionaries due to her father-in-law's opposition, she eventually died after miraculously giving birth to Seok-Yi. An angel appeared to her in a dream during pregnancy, proclaiming that her child would save many lives.

CHIEF SHINBONE

- Occupation: Native American Chief, natural healer
- Age: 70s
- The last remaining Native American natural healer in Alabama, Chief Shinbone saves Seok-Yi's life and teaches him Native American medicine. Later, he is killed after his land is forcefully seized by Roger, a local influential figure.

ATTORNEY RICHARD

- Occupation: Lawyer
- Age: Mid-40s
- A lawyer known for winning cases by any means, even falsifying

evidence. Eventually imprisoned after being caught for evidence fabrication. While incarcerated, he meets Seok-Yi (Dr. Lee), who successfully treats his chronic diarrhea using traditional Asian medicine. Deeply impressed, Richard becomes an advocate for Asian and natural healing methods, believing Dr. Lee has exceptional healing abilities. He aids Dr. Lee's legal battle, appealing his case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

JOHN

- Occupation: Retired Air Force pilot; later a successful billionaire

- Age: 30s, later 80s
- After his plane was shot down by North Korean forces, he

suffered severe injuries and was treated by Seok-Yi's (Johnny's) grandfather. However, Johnny's grandfather was later killed by North Korean soldiers because of this incident. Feeling deep guilt, John helped arrange Johnny's adoption to America. After recovering in the hospital, John tried to find Johnny again, but Johnny had already disappeared. Later, he became a hugely successful businessman and billionaire. One day, he happens to learn about Johnny's legal case, which leads him to reunite with Johnny. John supports Johnny by funding his legal appeal with his wealth.

TOM

- A pilot in his 30s during the Korean War, who rescues John and helps facilitate Johnny's adoption.

ROGER

- Occupation: Corrupt businessman and prominent local figure
- Age: From 30s to 70s
- An unscrupulous real estate developer in Alabama who forcibly

murders Chief Shinbone and takes over his land. He accumulates immense wealth by running a timber business, causing deforestation, and becomes an influential local figure. One day, his only son suffers a heart attack while heading to a club with friends, but he survives thanks to Dr. Lee's emergency treatment. However, ignoring Dr. Lee's medical advice, his son returns to the club and eventually dies. Blaming Dr. Lee, Roger makes it his life's mission to imprison Dr. Lee forever, preventing him from ever practicing medicine again.

BUBBA

- Age: 18
- Roger's son, who suffers a heart attack and is treated by Dr.

Lee. Ignoring medical advice, he returns to the club, leading to his death.

JIMMY

- Age: 18
- Billy's friend who accompanies Bubba to the street bar (club).

Leaves Bubba to die and later commits perjury in court.

BILLY

- Age: 17
- Jimmy's friend who also accompanies Bubba to the street bar.

Leaves Bubba to die and also commits perjury in court.

STEVEN:

- Age: 30s, later 80s
- Johnny's American adoptive father. After adopting Johnny, he

becomes disabled due to an accident at an auto repair shop. He blames Johnny for his disability and abuses him. In the end, Johnny cures him, enabling Steven to walk again. Despite the risk of revealing his abusive past, Steven testifies in Johnny's favor at the Supreme Court trial, proving Dr. Lee's medical expertise and innocence.

TIMOTHY:

Age: 40s

Occupation: Sheriff

Initially arrests Dr. Lee (Johnny) on first-degree murder charges, leading to a death sentence. However, upon further investigation, Timothy discovers Roger bribed witnesses and testifies at Dr. Lee's retrial, supporting his innocence. Timothy also investigates Roger, uncovering his involvement in Chief Shinbone's murder, eventually arresting him.

HUNTER

- Johnny's classmate who bullies Johnny during childhood.

MOLLY

- Occupation: Housewife
- Age: Patient from age 12, 30s as an adult, 60s as a witness
- Molly was Johnny's (Seok-Yi's) elementary school classmate who

supported him when he was bullied. She nearly died choking on a tomato but was saved by Johnny. She taught Johnny English, developing a deep friendship and love. However, they were separated when Johnny fled to the mountains due to abuse by his adoptive father. Years later, she marries Brett but endures an unhappy marriage due to his infidelity. She later develops breast cancer and is successfully treated by Dr. Lee (Johnny). Attempting to rekindle her relationship with Johnny, she instead

follows Dr. Lee's advice and restores her marriage with Brett. She later appears as a witness in court.

EMILY: Johnny's adoptive mother who tries to help Johnny but fails to stop her husband from abusing him.

KATIE: Johnny (Seok-Yi)'s school teacher.

JENNA: Strip club dancer; witness to Bubba's death. **WILLIAM:** Pastor of an American church; Molly's father. **Historical Characters**

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT: Visits Cheaha Mountain in Alabama to attend a CCC event. Trapped on the mountain by a severe storm, he becomes seriously ill and seeks refuge in Chief Shinbone's cabin. Roosevelt recovers thanks to Chief Shinbone's care.

FRANK: Governor of Alabama in the 1940s, accompanies Roosevelt on his Cheaha Mountain visit. He hears Roosevelt's promise to establish an Indian reservation but later, influenced by Roger, cancels the reservation, enabling Roger to seize the land.

OTHER CHARACTERS DEANDRE: Prison inmate **MARQUIS:** Prison inmate **TERRELL:** Prison Inmate

MALIK: A sincere prisoner who has served a long sentence; imprisoned for many years due to the accusation of assaulting a white woman. Known as a diligent inmate.

BRETT: Johnny's schoolmate who marries Molly and cheats on her. Continues to hold resentment toward Johnny and falsely testifies against him.

GOVERNOR FRANK: 1940s Alabama governor who accompanies President Roosevelt to Cheaha Mountain. Influenced by Roger, he later cancels Roosevelt's promise of establishing an Indian reservation, allowing Roger to exploit the land.

PRISON GUARD TONY: Initially indifferent, Tony later seeks to help Dr. Lee after Dr. Lee saves his younger brother, who attempted suicide in prison due to drug addiction.

Episode 1: Execution

INT. LOCATION: CABIN ON CHEAHA MOUNTAIN, ALABAMA -

EVENING

SCENE 1: OMINOUS ATMOSPHERE - INT. CABIN / EXT. CHEAHA MOUNTAIN - PREDAWN

In the deep predawn darkness, a heavy silence blankets Cheaha Mountain, cloaked in cold mist. Suddenly, a wolf's agonized howl pierces the stillness. The animal growls low, sensing nearby danger. Inside a dimly lit cabin, a single candle flickers weakly, casting long, eerie shadows along the wooden walls.

SCENE 2: INDIAN SWEETGRASS RITUAL - INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

At the center of the cabin, an Asian man methodically burns ceremonial sweetgrass—used in Native American healing rituals—to calm a wounded wolf. His hands move with practiced precision. The wolf initially thrashes in pain but gradually stills as the man murmurs soft Native American incantations. The wolf slowly closes its eyes, soothed.

SCENE 3: BEGINNING OF TREATMENT - INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Only once the wolf is calm does the man retrieve a needle from his bag and begin stitching its deep wounds. The room is cluttered with ritual tools, animal bones, and blood-stained cloths, creating a grim, sacred atmosphere. Blood drips from the wolf onto the wooden floor, deepening the room's somber mood.

SCENE 4: MOMENT OF RECOVERY - INT. CABIN - DAWN

After some time, the man gently inserts acupuncture needles into the wolf's head, completing the treatment. The wolf, nearly motionless, emits a faint groan, then slowly regains consciousness. It struggles to its feet. The man walks to the door and opens it—morning sunlight streams in, warm and golden.

SCENE 5: REUNION OF THE WOLF - EXT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Outside, the wolf's pack waits silently at the forest's edge. The healed wolf steps forward and reunites with its family. Together, they vanish into the woods. The man calmly gathers his tools, slings the medical bag over his shoulder, and begins descending the mountain path.

SCENE 6: MAJESTY OF NATURE - EXT. CHEAHA MOUNTAIN - MORNING

The camera rises, revealing the majestic landscape of Cheaha Mountain in the soft light of morning. Vast forests stretch toward the horizon. The man becomes a small figure amidst the grandeur, gradually fading into the wilderness as nature reclaims the scene.

EXT. ALABAMA COUNTRY ROAD - EVENING - 1980

A rusty Cadillac Coupe de Ville glides down a dusty two-lane road as dusk settles over the horizon. Crickets chirp, and the humid air clings to everything. Inside the car, laughter and

smoke mingle with the sound of Lynyrd Skynyrd playing on the radio. Three scruffy white boys, JIMMY, BILLY, and BUBBA, pass a joint between them, windows down, hair tousled by the wind.

INT. CADILLAC - WEDNESDAY EVENING

JIMMY (yawning)

Dang, church near bout put me in a coma today. I was noddin' off somethin' fierce.

BILLY (laughing)

Shoot, I gotta show up or Daddy'll tan my hide. Skip church and I might as well pack my bags. Bubba! Your old man don't know you're hooked on that wacky weed and chasin' tail! If he finds out what we been doin', we're all gonna be six feet under.

BUBBA (grinnin', puffin')

Only reason I go to church is to gawk at them pretty gals in them Sunday dresses.

JIMMY (sighing)

Man, country life's as dull as a butter knife. Church, school, chores. Church, school, chores. I need this weed just to survive.

JIMMY (firmer, eyes ahead)

I swear on Granny's biscuits, soon as I turn 20, I'm high-tailin' it to the big city.

BUBBA (mocking)

Ha! City folk'll just call ya a backwoods bumpkin. Me? I already got into Bama. Roll damn Tide!

BILLY (high-fivin')

Roll Tide, baby! Must benice havin' rich folks. Mine can't even fix the porch swing, let alone pay for college. I'm stuck workin' at Daddy's woodshop 'til I die or win the lotto.

JIMMY (teasing)

Man, you ain't ever leavin' this podunk town!

BILLY (laughin')

Least we got some good huntin' out here.

BUBBA (perkin' up)

When's huntin' season start, anyhow?

JIMMY (noddin')

Soon as it turns cold. Winter creepin' in fast.

BILLY (excited)

Hope we get to hunt on your daddy's land again. Cheaha Mountain's crawlin' with critters. I even saw a black bear once!

JIMMY (serious)

Yeah, Bubba's daddy got that land from the government, but it used to belong to them Injuns.

BUBBA (smirkin')

Daddy ran them pagans off like a coon from the henhouse. If there's any left, we'd probably be tradin' bullets.

BILLY (somber)

Heard Chief Shinbone was the last one 'round here.

BUBBA (laughin')

Ol' Shinbone damn near gutted my daddy! That's where he got that mean scar across his face.

BILLY

No kiddin'? That man already looks like he wrestles gators for breakfast.

JIMMY

I clam up when he's around. Gives me the heebie-jeebies.

BUBBA

Shoot, even I'm scared of him—and he's my daddy.

JIMMY (suddenly cheerful)

Least we get to raise hell when he ain't lookin'. Y'all hear about that new club openin' up over in Anniston?

BILLY (leanin' in)

Heck yeah, let's go tonight.

JIMMY (worried)

We're underage, dumbass. They catch us, it's our asses.

BUBBA (grinnin')

Relax. I whipped up some fake IDs. We're golden.

JIMMY (laughin')

You son of a gun, I love you. Even if we get pinched, your daddy'll grease the sheriff and we'll be out by sun-up.

BILLY (teasin')

Must be nice havin' a daddy that owns half the county.

JIMMY

Don't fret, Billy. We got Bubba. He's like our own hillbilly Batman.

Sweet Home Alabama kicks on the radio. All three boys light up.

JIMMY

Crank it up! This song makes my soul dance!

BUBBA

Hell yeah! We hittin' that club tonight, boys!

BILLY (pointin')

Take Highway 78. That'll get us there quicker.

JIMMY (glancin' at dash)

Yo, Bubba... your gas gauge's sittin' on E.

BUBBA (pointin' ahead)

Ain't no thang. There's a station up yonder. We'll gas up and roll on.

The Caddy rumbles toward a lonely gas station glowing like a bug light on the dark backroad.

EXT. GAS STATION - ANNISTON, ALABAMA - NIGHT

A Cadillac Coupe de Ville idles beside an old pump. "Sweet Home Alabama" blares through the speakers. JIMMY and BILLY sit inside, windows rolled down. BUBBA is out pumping gas, dragging on a Marlboro.

JIMMY (leanin' out the window)

Man, I cain't wait to hit that new club tonight. Gonna be lit as a bonfire!

BILLY (grinnin')

Shoot yeah! Gonna be one fer the books.

BUBBA (smirkin')

Damn right, boys. Time we raise some real hell!

BILLY (laughin')

Heard the gals up there look like Dolly Parton's younger cousins. Bubba, hurry it the hell up!

BUBBA

Hold yer horses, I'm near done...

Suddenly, BUBBA's face twists up. He clutches his chest and hits the ground hard.

JIMMY (jumpin' out)

Bubba?! What the hell, man?! You alright?!

BUBBA (gaspin')

My chest... Lord have mercy... Feels like a mule kicked me... I cain't breathe...

He begins to shake violently.

JIMMY

Billy! Get out here! Somethin' ain't right!

BILLY (runnin' out)

He messin' 'round or what?

JIMMY

Hell no, he's shakin' like a dog passin' peach pits! I think he's havin' a dang heart attack!

BILLY (half-laughin')

Guess ol' boy got too pumped 'bout them women! (Stops, realizing what JIMMY said) Wait, seriously?

JIMMY

Ain't the time for jokes, dumbass! Go call 911—inside, quick!

Billy rushes into the station.

INT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Inside, a gum-chewing CLERK in her 40s watches *Wheel of Fortune*, barely glancing up as BILLY bursts in.

BILLY (panicked)

Ma'am I need to use your phone! My friend is dying out there!

CLERK (not lookin' up)

Ain't for customers. Use the payphone.

She notices the commotion outside and sighs, as if it's something she's witnessed countless times before.

CLERK

Ugh, fine. I'll call it in.

She picks up the phone and dials.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)

911, what's your emergency?

CLERK

We out here at the gas station off Highway 78. Some fella just dropped like a sack'a potatoes. Send somebody fast.

EXT. GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

A shadowy figure approaches LEE—mid-50s, Asian, wearing a worn military coat and carrying a tattered World War II duffel bag. He kneels beside Bubba, calm and composed.

JIMMY (steppin' forward, suspicious)

Whoa now, old timer—what the hell you doin'?

LEE (calmly)

Quiet. He needs help.

The **Clerk** steps out.

CLERK

Ambulance is comin'. Be about ten minutes.

LEE opens his duffel bag. Inside are unusual needles of various sizes. The crowd gasps.

JIMMY (grabbin' Lee's arm)

Hey, now! You ain't stickin' my buddy with nothin'! What in the Sam Hill you plannin'?!

LEE (serious, steady)

If I don't, he's dead. You want that?

JIMMY

How the hell you know that? You some kinda doctor?

LEE (hesitates, then nods) Yes.

JIMMY (uncertain, releases him)

Alright... but if you kill him, I swear I'll drag your ass to hell myself.

LEE quickly pricks Bubba's finger, then retrieves a long needle. With swift precision, he plunges it into BUBBA's chest.

SPECIAL EFFECT: The needle strikes the exact point required. BUBBA jolts. His eyes snap open as he gasps for air like a man brought back to life.

LEE (to Bubba)

Ambulance will take you to hospital. You *must* go.

BILLY (stunned)

Holy hell... That was wild. Bubba, you okay?

LEE is already packing up and walking off.

EXT. GAS STATION - MINUTES LATER BUBBA sits up, grinnin'.

BUBBA

Shoot... I'm feelin' peachy!

BILLY

Ambulance's on the way, man. You sure you don't need to go?

BUBBA

Naw, I've had a bum ticker since I was a kid. Happens every now'n then. I bounce back quick.

JIMMY

You sure about that?

BUBBA

I ain't missin' out on them honky-tonk honeys. Let's roll.

BILLY

If Bubba says he's good, then let's go. Them ladies ain't gonna wait forever.

They hop in the Caddy and drive off, hollering and laughing.

EXT. GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

The ambulance pulls in. PARAMEDICS step out and begin scanning the area.

PARAMEDIC

Where's the guy?

CLERK (chewin' gum)

He already left with his friends. Some Asian man gave him an injection—right in the chest—and suddenly he jolted upright, like a spring-loaded toy.

PARAMEDIC (stunned) ...He what now?

CLERK

Told ya. Big ol' needle. Said he was a doctor or somethin'.

PARAMEDIC

You don't just stab someone in the dang chest and fix 'em!

CLERK

Well, he did. I seen it.

PARAMEDIC (shakin' head)

Lord have mercy. What a waste'a gas.

They get back in the rig and drive off, still muttering.

INT. HONKY-TONK CLUB - NIGHT

The club pulses with neon lights, country rock blasting through the speakers, and the steady rhythm of boots hitting the floor. BUBBA, JIMMY, and BILLY sit at the bar, already a few drinks in.

Bubba commands the space, speaking with the confidence of someone who thinks he owns the place.

BUBBA (nudgin' Jimmy)

Y'all check out that lil' darlin' over yonder? Lord have mercy, she's finer than frog hair split four ways!

JIMMY (grinnin')

Shoot, comin' here tonight was the smartest damn thing we done all week.

BILLY

Imagine if we'd hauled Bubba's ass to the ER — we'da missed all this. That Chinese fella knew what he was doin', I'll give 'im that.

BUBBA

I'm feelin' fit as a fiddle, boys. Now quit jawin' and order us somethin' stiff!

JIMMY

Whiskey good?

BILLY (to bartender)

Three whiskeys, make 'em mean.

BARTENDER (eyebrow raised) Y'all even 21?

BUBBA (flashin' a shady grin, holdin' up a clearly fake ID) Sure are. Here's my license, officer. Ain't she purdy?

BARTENDER (lookin' it over) This real?

BUBBA

Real enough to drive my truck and buy ammo. What more ya need?

JIMMY (laughs, low)

Whew! Thought we was cooked for a sec.

BUBBA

Relax. My daddy damn near owns this whole town. Sheriff plays poker at our house every Thursday.

BILLY

Yeah, remember when we boosted them pickups that one time? We was outta jail by sunrise. Bubba's daddy is the real MVP.

JENNA, mid-20s, in tight jeans and a denim jacket, strolls up smiling.

JENNA

Well, looky here... three handsome country boys out on the loose.

JIMMY

What's your name, pretty thing?

JENNA

Name's Jenna. I'm 25. What about you, muscle man?

BUBBA (puffin' up)

I'm 25 too! Swear on my coon dog.

JENNA (laughin')

You look more like nineteen with a fake mustache. I used to fib my age too just to get into spots like this. Now c'mon and dance with me, Romeo.

JIMMY (elbowin' Billy) Who's up first?

BILLY (teasin')

Bubba needs it most. Go on, Casanova.

BUBBA

I was born ready, boys.

JENNA

Alright then—let's see what kinda two-step you got. Bet y'all ain't nothin' but a bunch of corn-fed bumpkins.

BUBBA (gettin' on the dance floor)

Bumpkin? Girl, this here's *hillbilly hot sauce*!

JIMMY (crackin' up)

Lawd... Bubba looks like a drunk possum tryin' to walk a tightrope.

BILLY

Least he's tryin'. Ain't like you're winnin' no dance contests.
JENNA waves the bartender over.

BARTENDER

Three more whiskeys, comin' right up. **JIMMY** (toastin')

To us!

BILLY

To tonight!

BUBBA

And to Jenna, the only gal brave enough to dance with me!
They clink glasses and toss back shots.

JENNA

Y'all are somethin' else. Ain't had this much fun in a coon's age.

BUBBA (slurrin')

Let's drink till we can't see straight!

JIMMY

Hell yeah! We tearin' it up tonight!

BILLY

Ain't every night we get outta Podunkville. Let's make it count!
They all dance—wild, sweaty, free. JENNA twirls and laughs.

BUBBA (dancin', woozy)

Man... I'm real glad I didn't croak earlier. Y'all my boys.

JIMMY (cheerin')

We love ya too, Bubba! Don't die on us tonight!

BILLY

Keep on movin', man! You good!
Suddenly, BUBBA stops, sways hard.

BUBBA

Ugh... I don't feel so good...

JIMMY (catchin' him)

Whoa—whoa! Bubba?! You alright?

JENNA (walkin' up, concerned) Hey, he looks rough. Is he okay?

BILLY

He gonna hurl?

BUBBA (weak)

No... hospital... take me...

BUBBA collapses.

JIMMY

Crap! He's out cold!

BILLY

You think it's his heart again?

JIMMY

He ain't breathin'! We gotta get him to the ER now!

BILLY

Let's call 911!

JIMMY

No! BUBBA's dad finds out we dragged him into a hospital, we're screwed six ways from Sunday. You know how he is.

BILLY

So what the hell we do?!

JIMMY

We drive him ourselves. Keep this on the hush. That Asian doc musta botched somethin'.

BILLY (shakin' Bubba)

C'mon man! Bubba! Wake the hell up!

Bubba loses consciousness completely.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

The emergency room is alive with activity. Nurses move quickly, machines beep, voices call out across the floor. An ambulance screeches to a halt outside. The doors swing open, and paramedics rush in with BUBBA on a gurney. A scruffy, middle-aged DOCTOR in a stained white coat approaches with purpose, his

expression worn and sharp, as if he has seen one too many farm accidents.

DOCTOR

What in the hell happened to him?

JIMMY (breathin' hard, eyes wild)

He just dropped, Doc! Stopped breathin' on us!

DOCTOR (already walkin' beside the gurney) What happened before that?

JIMMY

Some weird-lookin' Asian fella jabbed Bubba in the dang chest with a needle on the side'a the road! Said he was a doc or somethin'!

DOCTOR (confused)

Come again? He *stabbed* him?

He shines a light into BUBBA's eyes. There is no response. The pupils are fixed and unreactive.

DOCTOR (softly)

Damn... boys, your friend might already be gone.

INT. INSIDE EMERGENCY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The nurses wheel BUBBA into the crash bay. Machines beep. Doors slam. The medical team moves quickly and with purpose. The heart monitor displays a flatline—no pulse.

DOCTOR (snappin')

Git me the paddles! Charge that sucker to 200 joules—now!

The nurses place the defibrillator pads on Bubba's chest.

DOCTOR

Clear! One, two, three—zap!

THUMP! Bubba's chest jerks. The monitor doesn't budge.

DOCTOR

Charge it to 300! Again! Y'all clear!

ALL

Clear!

DOCTOR

One, two, three—*bam!* Still nothin'.

DOCTOR (grittin' teeth, louder)

One last try—crank it to 360! We ain't losin' this boy without a fight!

NURSE

Charged and ready!

DOCTOR

Everybody off! One, two, three—*ZAP!*

The monitor flickers... then stays dead still.

DOCTOR (quiet, heavy breathing) ...Nothin'. I'm callin' it.

Checks his busted watch.

DOCTOR

Time of death... 10:45 PM.

*The room goes silent. **JIMMY** and **BILLY** just stand there—frozen, pale like ghosts.*

JIMMY (barely above a whisper)

No... he was laughin' just a little while ago. Dancin'. He was fine...

BILLY (chokin' back tears) Bubba...

The doctor and nurses slowly step back, giving the men a quiet moment to themselves.

JIMMY (clenchin' fists)

That Asian feller... what the hell'd he do to Bubba?!

BILLY (low and dead serious)

Don't matter none now... but we cain't let Roger-Bubba's daddy—find out *nothin'* 'bout this, you hear me? If he finds out we skipped church, went drinkin' at that titty bar... we're deader'n roadkill on a hot blacktop. We gotta pin it on somethin' else—say that Asian feller jabbed Bubba with a needle or somethin'. Ain't no way we makin' it out alive if Roger hears the real story.

JIMMY (noddin' slow, still rattled)

Yeah... Yeah, alright. We don't say nothin'. Not a damn word.

(Pauses, looking down at Bubba) But... you reckon they'll think it's that Asian feller's fault? I mean... he done stuck a needle in Bubba's chest in the damn parkin' lot. What if they start askin' questions?

BILLY (lookin' Jimmy dead in the eye)

Hell yeah, we blame it on him. Ain't nobody gonna question a couple church boys sayin' some foreign feller done somethin'

shady. We just say he come outta nowhere, stuck Bubba with that needle, and next thing we know, he's belly-up. That's our story, and we stickin' to it—no matter what.

BILLY (lookin' down at Bubba's still body)

We take this to the grave, Jimmy. Just like Bubba did.

INT. ROGER'S OFFICE - DAY - NEXT DAY

The air is heavy and still. ROGER's office is dimly lit, wood-paneled, with mounted deer heads and dusty whiskey bottles lining the shelf. A Confederate flag hangs behind his large oak desk. ROGER, in his mid-80s and built like a bull, paces slowly, his eyes filled with a mix of grief and anger. JIMMY and BILLY sit rigidly in two worn chairs, visibly tense and sweating.

ROGER (stern, voice low and dangerous)

Now y'all better speak real plain... What the hell happened last night? (pause, voice tightening) You lie to me, I'll know. Y'all know damn well who I am.

BILLY (swallowin', voice shaky) We—we're real sorry, sir.

JIMMY (nervously)

Yessir. We—we don't know much... honest.

ROGER (tryin' to hold it in)

Then explain to me how my boy ends up stone-cold dead before midnight.

JIMMY (quick, ramblin')

We was at the gas station—just pumpin' gas—and Bubba started grabbin' his chest sayin' it hurt real bad. Outta nowhere this weird-lookin' Asian feller shows up, says he's a doctor, pulls out this crazy-lookin' needle and *stabs* Bubba right in the chest. We didn't know what else to do. Bubba woke up sayin' he was fine, swear to God.

BILLY

Then 'bout a half-hour later, he started strugglin' to breathe again... so we high-tailed it to the hospital.

ROGER (eyein' 'em hard)

Why the hell didn't y'all call 911 right then?

BILLY (defensive, leanin' forward)

We *did*! Ask that lady at the gas station. She called!

ROGER (snappin')

Then why didn't y'all take him straight to the hospital instead of wastin' time?!

JIMMY (lookin' guilty)

We thought that fella was a real doctor... Said he knew what he was doin'. We figured Bubba was good... That's on us, sir.

ROGER (suspicious) Were y'all drinkin'?

JIMMY (hesitatin', voice crackin')

N-No... well... maybe a little. We stopped off at that new club over in Anniston. Just had a couple drinks.

BILLY (jumpin' in)

Barely nothin', sir! But this wasn't no booze thing—it was *that Asian feller*! He done somethin' to Bubba!

ROGER (leanin' in, voice like thunder)

You tell the cops y'all was at a strip club?

JIMMY (snappin' to attention)

No, sir! We ain't said nothin' to nobody!

BILLY (firmly)

Me neither! Swear on my granddaddy's grave.

ROGER (cold, deadly calm)

Tell me 'bout this man. Every detail.

JIMMY (thinkin', tryin' to remember)

He was wearin' this old-timey military jacket. Looked like one of them mountain folks. Real quiet.

BILLY

Yeah, had this weird bag too—like them Indian medicine bags. Real strange-lookin'.

ROGER (voice flat, icy)

So y'all sayin' this Asian man killed my son. If that turns out to be a lie... I'll hold *both* y'all responsible.

JIMMY (shakin')

I swear to God, sir—we're tellin' it straight!

BILLY

On my momma's life, we ain't lyin'. That man's the reason Bubba's gone!

ROGER (standin' tall, all business now)

Alright then. So y'all had nothin' to do with Bubba dyin'. That means y'all do exactly what I say from here on out. Ain't nobody need to know y'all went to that club. If we're pinning this on that foreign bastard, we keep Bubba's drinkin' *quiet*.

JIMMY (softly) Yes, sir...

BILLY (noddin', dead serious) Understood, sir. We won't say nothin'.

JIMMY (after a pause, nervous)

But... there was a bartender... and a dancer... they saw us.

ROGER (calmly, real cold) You let me worry 'bout them.

ROGER locks eyes with them, his expression unreadable. The others nod slowly, the weight of Bubba's death pressing heavily on the room. A long, dense silence settles, like storm clouds gathering over a wide field.

INT. HOSPITAL MORGUE - NIGHT - 1980

The lighting is dim and cold, flickering weakly overhead. The air is still-thick with the scent of metal, bleach, and death. At the center of the room, BUBBA lies beneath a white sheet on a steel examination table. The low hum of an aging refrigerator buzzes in the background like an idle insect.

ROGER, in mud-stained boots and a worn work coat, stands rigid beside his son. His face is etched with grief, jaw clenched like a rusted wrench. His hands tremble, knuckles pale. SHERIFF TIMOTHY, late 40s, broad and heavysset from too many meals at the local diner, his face lined by years of hard truths and half-lies, carefully folds the sheet back.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (softly, respectful)

Roger... there ain't no bruisin', no cuts. No scrapes, no nothin'. Boy looks like he just laid down and never got up.

ROGER (voice crackin', full of hurt)

He's dead, Tim. Just gone...(pauses) And them boys said some strange-lookin' Asian feller come outta the shadows... stuck Bubba with somethin' sharp-said he was a damn doctor.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (firm, steady)

If he weren't no real doc... and he done somethin' to your boy, we'll find him. I swear on my badge and on my mama's grave.

ROGER lowers his head. A single tear slips down his cheek, but he wipes it away quickly and firmly, as if embarrassed by it. He is not someone who cries easily.

ROGER (quiet, voice breakin' just a bit)

He killed our only boy, Tim... You gotta find him. You gotta.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY puts a heavy hand on Roger's shoulder steady and solid like an old oak tree.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY

I ain't sleepin' 'til I do. That's a promise, Roger.

They both look down at BUBBA's still body. The silence is heavy, like the air before a storm. SHERIFF TIMOTHY's eyes narrow as he surveys the room, then lowers his gaze back to BUBBA.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (mutterin' like a prayer, or a curse)

Whoever did this... they're gonna pay. (pause) Eye for an eye... tooth for a tooth... life for a life. Just like it says in the Good Book.

The camera slowly pulls back. The two men, one weary, the other resolute, stand side by side, a quiet tension between them. The cold morgue fades into shadow.

EXT. CHEAHA MOUNTAIN - NIGHT - 1980

A foggy moon hangs over the dark woods. SHERIFF TIMOTHY and a ragtag group of DEPUTIES and hounds move slowly through the underbrush, flashlights bobbing between the pines. Boots crunch fallen leaves. The dogs sniff the trail, their hackles raised. They approach an old, lopsided cabin, standing alone as if it doesn't belong. Smoke curls from the chimney.

INT. DR. LEE'S CABIN - NIGHT

The door creaks open. Sheriff Timothy and the deputies step inside, rifles drawn. The room is dim and cluttered. A flickering lantern casts shifting shadows on the walls.

Scattered throughout are strange medical instruments, Native American artifacts, bones, jars, and dried herbs.

DEPUTY 2 (squintin')

Well I'll be damned... What *is* all this mess?

DEPUTY 3 (lookin' around, uneasy)

Place looks like somethin' outta a dang horror flick. You smell that? That ain't just woodsmoke...

They come across animal carcasses—one of them a deer in the middle of dissection, dried blood staining the floor.

DEPUTY 2 (grim)

Y'all see this? That deer's been cut open. This some kinda sick ritual?

DEPUTY 3 (backin' up a bit)

Hell, man... this feels cursed. Like some witch doctor lives here.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (grittin' his teeth)

Ain't right, that's for damn sure. I'm bettin' this fella had somethin' to do with Bubba.

DEPUTY 2

I heard them mountain shamans can call on evil spirits. Make critters go mad. Might explain what's been goin' on up here.

DEPUTY 3 (whispers, spooked)

We need to find this fella and get the hell out. I don't like this place one bit.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (commandin')

Alright—y'all split up and cover the back. If he runs, drop him. You got my word.

DEPUTY 2 (Roger's hunter) (noddin', serious)

Got it. I've tracked worse. Hell, I done hunted Indians before (pauses, realizes what he said)

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (turnin', sharp) Hunted *what*, now?

DEPUTY 3 (quick, nervous laugh)

He's just talkin' nonsense, Sheriff. Old campfire stories, that's all.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (stern)

You boys stay sharp. Somethin' ain't sittin' right with me.

DEPUTIES

Yessir.

Suddenly, outside a figure moves in the dark.

DEPUTY 3

There! That's him!

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (shoutin')

Hold it right there! Don't move, or you're gettin' dropped!

DR. JOHNNY LEE freezes, caught in the flashlight beams. Hands up.

JOHNNY LEE

What in the world is going on here?!

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (rifle aimed)

Shut your mouth and hit the ground! Now!

JOHNNY LEE

This is my cabin!

Deputies rush in, force him to his knees, rifles pointed. One ties his hands with a worn leather strap.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY

You're under arrest for the murder of Bubba Rogers.

JOHNNY LEE (shocked)

Murder?! I have never killed anyone!

DEPUTY 2 (sneerin')

All that voodoo-lookin' stuff in there, what the hell is it? You some kinda mountain shaman?

JOHNNY LEE

No, sir! I'm a doctor. I treat animals. That deer died while I was trying to save it!

DEPUTY 2

You call them bloody tools and dead critters "medicine"?

JOHNNY LEE

Yes, I work with herbs and acupuncture in Eastern medicine. I have never harmed anyone.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (shakin' his head)

Save it for the judge. You're comin' with us.

DEPUTY 3 (leanin' in, whisperin')

You do all this weird crap by yourself?

JOHNNY LEE (desperate)

Please... y'all have it wrong. I help things live. I don't kill. You have to believe me.

DEPUTY 2 (grumbly)

I say we don't risk it. This fella's up to no good. We're dealin' with dark stuff, Sheriff.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY

We'll sort the truth back at the station. Right now, he's comin' with us.

JOHNNY LEE (quiet, defeated)

Please... Just give me a chance to explain...

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (cold)

You'll get your chance... in court. Now hush up and start walkin'.

The group begins moving down the trail. JOHNNY walks behind them, head bowed, the weight of suspicion and cold steel pressing against his wrists. The dogs howl into the dark night as the group disappears into the forest.

EXT. CHEAHA MOUNTAIN - DAY - 1980

The sun barely filters through the pine trees, casting long shadows across the ridge. A dirt trail winds down the mountainside. JOHNNY LEE, hands bound, walks slowly behind SHERIFF TIMOTHY and two DEPUTIES. Their boots crunch fallen leaves, rifles slung tightly across their backs.

Suddenly, a low growl cuts through the silence. From the treeline, three wolves emerge—eyes locked on the group, muscles taut. They move in slowly, silently, with precision.

The police dog begins barking frantically—then yelps and retreats, tail tucked, paws scrambling on the loose rock near several deep holes in the ground. The deputies freeze.

DEPUTY 2 (staring)

The hell... Them look like wolves he done raised or somethin'.

DEPUTY 1 (narrowing his eyes)

Told y'all. Feller's one'a them mountain shamans. Wolves, spirits, all that dark crap follow 'em. (hand inching toward his holster) We oughta just shoot 'em now.

DEPUTY 1 starts to draw. JOHNNY LEE throws himself between the wolves and the deputies.

JOHNNY LEE (urgent, breathing hard)

Don't! Don't shoot! They're not attacking—they're trying to protect me. I raised them after I treated their injuries—they're no longer wild!

The wolves hold their ground, growling low. DEPUTY 2 hesitates, his gun half-raised, looking to the sheriff for direction.

DEPUTY 2 (anxiously) Sheriff... what you wanna do?

SHERIFF TIMOTHY steps forward, jaw clenched, eyes cold as stone.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (flat, no emotion)

Ain't got time for this fairy tale mess. (beat) Drop 'em. All of 'em. Now.

The deputies raise their rifles. JOHNNY Lee throws himself in front, eyes wide.

JOHNNY LEE (desperate)

No! Please! They're just animals! They're all I have!

Gunfire erupts. Echoes roll across the mountain like thunder. The wolves yelp, collapsing one by one. Blood stains the dirt. One drags itself toward JOHNNY, eyes locked on his as it takes its final breath.

JOHNNY LEE (staggering back, devastated) No... NOOO!

He drops to his knees, staring at the lifeless bodies. He does not cry. He is too stunned. Too broken.

The deputies lower their rifles, breathing heavily. SHERIFF TIMOTHY does not flinch—he simply turns back to the trail.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (cold, to the others) Let's move.

JOHNNY LEE remains kneeling, staring at the bodies of the wolves as if he has just lost members of his own family. The weight of what has just occurred settles over the mountain like a storm cloud.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY - 1980

The room is hot and stuffy. A single fan clicks in the corner, barely stirring the thick air. Peeling wallpaper, stained wood panels, and the lingering smell of stale coffee fill the space. DR. JOHNNY LEE sits across from SHERIFF TIMOTHY, who leans back in his metal chair, the case file open before him, his jaw methodically working a wad of tobacco.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (gruff, dead serious)
You know why you're sittin' here, don'tcha?

JOHNNY LEE (soft, calm) No, sir. I don't.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (leaning in, voice low)
You're bein' held for *murder*, boy. You remember the fella you stuck with that needle back at the gas station?

JOHNNY flinches slightly, realizing who he is referring to.

JOHNNY LEE (nodding slowly)
I remember him. He was having a heart attack. I administered emergency treatment. I tried to save his life.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (snapping)
Save his life?! Hell, you killed him! Don't try and sweet talk me. Witnesses say you pulled out some long, god-awful needle and jabbed it right into his chest. Then, later that night he keels over dead. Sounds more like voodoo than medicine.

JOHNNY LEE (firm, holding steady)
That is not true. After the treatment, he was breathing again. I told his friends to take him to the emergency room. I did my part.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (narrowing his eyes) You ain't no licensed doctor, are ya?

JOHNNY LEE (quietly)
No, sir. I do not have official credentials. But I can treat people. I know what I'm doing.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY

So what are ya, huh? Some kind of backwoods *Indian shaman*? Devil healer? We don't take kindly to that dark arts mess 'round here.

JOHNNY LEE

I am not a shaman. I do not worship any devils. I use natural medicine, remedies that have been passed down through generations.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (leaning closer, voice colder)

You think I'm stupid? We found your little mountain shack-blood everywhere, dead animals hangin' like trophies, weird-lookin' tools. You expect me to believe that's just for helpin' animals?

JOHNNY LEE

That is exactly what it was. I treat injured animals. That deer you saw? He was dying. I was trying to save him.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (mocking)

Right... Just like them Inca savages rippin' hearts outta folks for their sun god. Maybe that's what you did to Bubba, offered his heart up to whatever weird spirit you talk to up there.

JOHNNY LEE (steady, emotional)

That is not true. I have never harmed anyone. I only wanted to help that boy. I gave them clear instructions, and they chose not to listen. That is not my responsibility.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (pounding the table)

You ain't a doctor, you ain't licensed, and you sure as hell ain't trustworthy. You playin' with folks' lives like you got some God-given right to cut 'em open.

JOHNNY LEE (calm but firmly)

I may not have a formal license. But I know how to heal. Call it whatever you like, Sheriff... but I was only trying to help that boy.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (standing, eyes hard as nails)

Well, you'll get to explain all that *fancy healin'* in front of a jury. 'Cause far as I'm concerned—you're goin' down for *murder*, plain and simple.

JOHNNY sits in silence. SHERIFF TIMOTHY snaps the file shut. The heat presses down, thick and unmoving. Outside, a dog barks. The

tension remains, unbroken.

INT. TIMOTHY'S OFFICE - NIGHT - 1980

The room is dim, lit only by a single dusty desk lamp casting long shadows across faded hunting trophies and yellowed wanted posters. A half-empty bottle of bourbon rests beside a loaded revolver. SHERIFF TIMOTHY, weary and tight-jawed, enters as if bearing the weight of the entire mountain. He lowers himself into the chair with a heavy sigh and reaches for the rotary phone.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (firm, low)

Roger... it's done. We got that Asian feller. (Pauses) He admitted to jabbin' Bubba in the chest with some long needle. Cabin was full'a bloodied tools, weird lookin' bones, and Injun ritual crap. We're hittin' him with second-degree murder.

ROGER's breath crackles through the receiver—heavy, labored, full of fire and pain.

ROGER (rage boiling)

That man... he took my only boy from me, Tim. That ain't just some prison offense. (spits) He's our *enemy*, Sheriff. An eye for an eye. Bubba's gone—I want *him* gone too. That bastard *has* to die.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY leans back, rubbing his temples, his jaw tense. He studies BUBBA's file as if it's staring back at him.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (measured)

To go for the chair, we'd have to up it to first-degree. (pauses) I'll dig up more. See if we can twist the charges. Build a case so strong the devil himself can't wiggle out.

Roger's breath steadies just a little — but the hate doesn't leave his voice.

ROGER (cold, sharp)

Make it happen. I want to see him fry. Nothin' else brings justice for my boy.

Sheriff Timothy's face hardens, his eyes glinting like steel beneath the yellow lamp.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (resolute)

You'll get your justice, Roger. That heathen plays with spirits and witch doctorin' — he don't belong here. Court'll hand down

the sentence, and the Good Lord'll finish it. (pauses) I swear it to ya.

He sets the receiver down—firmly, but with control. Reaches for Bubba's file and opens it. The rustle of paper breaks the silence. His rough, worn hands turn through the evidence photos with the solemnity of scripture. He does not react. He is not searching for truth. He is constructing a case designed to condemn.

The camera moves in on Sheriff Timothy's face—rigid, expressionless, radiating a grim sense of righteousness and unyielding rural justice.

INT. TALLADEGA COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY - 1980

The old wood-paneled courtroom is filled with low chatter and tension. Sweat glistens on brows. People fan themselves with folded church bulletins. Murmurs drift through the crowd like a breeze across a cotton field.

JUDGE HARLON BARKLEY, late 60s, stern-faced, his gavel worn smooth from decades of use, strikes it three times against the bench.

JUDGE BARKLEY (Southern drawl, loud)

Y'all hush up now! This here's a court of law, not the front porch at Buck's Diner. (beat) Prosecutor, you got somethin' else?

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON (calm, sharp)

Yes, Your Honor. I'd like to call Miss Patty Lou, the gas station clerk.

PATTY LOU, mid-40s, gum chewer, big hair and bigger attitude, walks nervously to the stand. She places her hand on the Bible.

BAILIFF

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothin' but the truth, so help you God?

PATTY LOU

Yes, sir. I surely do.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON (gesturing to the defendant's table)

Miss Patty Lou, do you recognize that fella sittin' over yonder?

She squints through her glasses at JOHNNY LEE.

PATTY LOU

Yeah, that's him. He's the one. He was there that night.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON

And what happened when them boys came into your station?

PATTY LOU

One of 'em—looked like he'd seen a ghost—come bustin' in hollerin' for an ambulance. Said his buddy was droppin' dead out front. So I called 911 lickety-split.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON

Then what?

PATTY LOU (hesitating, nervous)

Well... when I stepped outside to see what all the ruckus was, I saw that man...(points to JOHNNY)...stickin' some long dang needle right into the boy's chest. Like somethin' outta a horror movie.

The jury collectively gasps. The fans fall still. The crowd leans forward, held in silent anticipation.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON

You sure about that?

PATTY LOU (nodding firm now)

Clear as day. That needle was near a foot long, looked like somethin' an Injun witch doctor would use. Scared the tar outta me.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON

And did he look like a real doctor to you?

PATTY LOU (snorts)

No sir. He looked like some mountain hermit. Dirty coat, carried a sack full'a bones or somethin'. Not what I call medical.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON

No further questions, Your Honor.

JUDGE BARKLEY (nodding) Defense? You may proceed.

DEFENSE LAWYER COLE, clean-cut, young but steady, rises and walks slow to the stand.

DEFENSE LAWYER COLE

Miss Patty Lou... did you hear this man say he was a doctor?

PATTY LOU (shaking her head)

No... I didn't hear nothin' like that.

DEFENSE LAWYER COLE

And what happened after he treated the boy?

PATTY LOU

They all got in that old Cadillac and drove off. Bubba—the boy—was up and walkin'.

DEFENSE LAWYER COLE

And when the ambulance arrived?

PATTY LOU

I told 'em he was gone already... and I said some Asian feller done poked him with a giant needle and brought him back. They looked at me like I was smokin' somethin'.

The gallery chuckles lightly. The judge bangs his gavel once.

DEFENSE LAWYER COLE (slight grin) So, you told 'em he got healed?

PATTY LOU (uneasy now)

I mean... it looked that way at the time. But thinkin' on it now... it was all mighty strange.

DEFENSE LAWYER COLE

Strange, sure. But did you see him hurt the boy?

PATTY LOU

No, sir. Not really. He just stabbed him once and the boy got better, at least for a little while.

DEFENSE LAWYER COLE

So you admit you might've misunderstood what you saw?

PATTY LOU (nervously wringing her hands)

Maybe... I don't rightly know. Just don't sit right in my head now, that's all.

DEFENSE LAWYER COLE

Understood. No further questions.

JUDGE BARKLEY

Alrighty. Miss Patty Lou, you can step down. We'll call the next witness after a short recess. This court's adjourned for fifteen minutes.

He strikes the gavel. The crowd begins murmuring again as the bailiff ushers people out. SHERIFF TIMOTHY leans forward from

the back row, watching JOHNNY LEE intently. The tension in the room doesn't fade—it simply sinks in deeper.

INT. TALLADEGA COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY - 1980

The wood-paneled courtroom is filled to capacity. Ceiling fans turn slowly, doing little to move the thick, stagnant air. JIMMY sits on the witness stand, shifting uncomfortably in his seat. The DEFENSE ATTORNEY flips through his notes, while the PROSECUTOR—clean-shaven and intense—paces deliberately across the floor.

PROSECUTOR (steady, firm)

Now, Jimmy... what were y'all doin' with Bubba that evenin'?

JIMMY (nervous, trying to stay calm)

We was headin' home from Wednesday night youth service at church.

PROSECUTOR

And then?

JIMMY

We stopped to get gas—we was runnin' low. That's when Bubba started feelin' bad... real bad. He just dropped. Right there by the pump. We hollered at the lady inside to call 911.

PROSECUTOR

And then what happened?

JIMMY

This Asian feller come outta nowhere—said he could help. Said he was a doctor. Pulled out this long ol' needle—looked like somethin' outta a war movie. We tried to stop him, but he wouldn't listen.

PROSECUTOR

He told you he was a doctor?

JIMMY (nodding)

Yes, sir. I asked him straight up. He said Bubba was gonna die if he didn't act fast.

PROSECUTOR

Then what?

JIMMY

He shoved that needle right in Bubba's chest. Deep. All the way, near as I could tell.

PROSECUTOR

And Bubba? What happened?

JIMMY (somber, eyes low)

He came to. Got up like nothin' happened. But about a half hour later... he just fell out again. Dead. (beat) If that man hadn't touched him, we'd've gone straight to the ER. Bubba'd still be with us.

PROSECUTOR

No further questions, Your Honor.

JUDGE BARKLEY (stern, looking to the defense) Counselor? You got questions?

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE rises slowly, eyes locked on Jimmy.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE (calm, deliberate)

Jimmy, didn't the man tell y'all Bubba needed to get to the ER right away after he treated him?

JIMMY (fidgeting, unsure)

I... I don't remember hearin' that. He said Bubba'd be alright. That's all I heard.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE (checking notes)

Let's talk timeline. Y'all stopped at the gas station round 8 PM. Bubba didn't get to the hospital 'til near 10:30. That's two and a half hours. What were y'all doin' in between?

JIMMY (shuffling in his seat)

We got lost. None of us was real good at drivin'. Bubba usually did the drivin'. We was out on them backroads with no lights and no phones.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE (leaning in)

It takes 30 minutes tops from that station to the hospital. Y'all wanderin' two hours in circles?

JIMMY (snapping, defensive)

We didn't stop nowhere! And we sure as hell didn't drink nothin'! We're *Christian youth*, alright?!

PROSECUTOR (jumping up)

Objection, Your Honor! Counsel's badgerin' the witness and

dredgin' up testimony already cleared. The pastor done told y'all they was at church.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE (pointing at the file)

Your Honor, these gaps matter. That boy might've been alive if he'd got proper help *in time*. I'm askin' for a short recess to verify their whereabouts.

PROSECUTOR (calm, stern)

That ain't what this trial's about. The issue here is whether JOHNNY Lee played doctor without papers and ended up killin' a boy.

JUDGE BARKLEY (banging the gavel once)

I've heard enough. This trial ain't gonna turn into some wild goose chase. Counsel—stick to what matters. (turns to Prosecutor) You got another witness?

PROSECUTOR (noddin' with purpose)

Yes, Your Honor. We call Billy Davis to the stand.

BILLY, late teens, clean shirt tucked into worn jeans, steps up. There's a hard look in his eyes—guilt, fear, and something else. He sits down, takes a breath as the crowd leans in.

PROSECUTOR

Billy, tell us exactly what went down that night—every bit of it.

The courtroom goes still as a pine forest before a storm. BILLY glances at JOHNNY Lee then back at the jury.

INT. TALLADEGA COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY - 1980

The room is heavy with tension. Sweat glistens on foreheads. The ceiling fans turn ineffectively, barely moving the warm air. People lean forward on creaking wooden benches, watching in silent anticipation.

BILLY sits upright in the witness box, wringing his hands. His voice is steady, but weighed down with guilt.

BILLY (softly, trying to stay composed)

We pulled into the gas station to fill up Bubba's Cadillac. He was feelin' rough, so he sat down for a spell. That's when this Asian feller comes walkin' over—says he's a doctor, says he can help. He pulls out this long needle—real long, like a dang ice pick, and jabs it right in Bubba's chest.

Murmurs ripple through the courtroom. The judge bangs his gavel once.

BILLY (continuing)

We tried to stop him—but he kept sayin' Bubba'd die if he didn't act quick. (beat) Later on, while we was drivin' home, Bubba just... fell over again. I tried to drive him to the hospital, but I ain't never driven before. Got us turned around out on them old country roads. Took forever to find our way.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON (step forward, stern)

Son, you swear what you just told this court is the whole truth?

BILLY (nodding, hand over heart)

I swear before God, every word of it's true.

ROGER, BUBBA's daddy, sits stiff in the gallery, his jaw tight, eyes burnin' holes into DR. LEE.

JUDGE BARKLEY (gravelly voice)

Defense? You got anythin' for the witness?

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE (standing up, calm but cutting)

Billy... you said y'all stopped around 8 o'clock. Bubba didn't make it to the ER 'til near 10:30. That's a long time. What really happened in them two and a half hours?

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON (snapping)

Objection, Your Honor! Asked and answered!

JUDGE BARKLEY (firm) Let the boy answer.

BILLY (voice cracking, overcome)

I told y'all—I couldn't drive right! I panicked. Got us all twisted up on them dirt roads. (tears up) Bubba's gone 'cause I messed up... I didn't know how to help him...

Billy breaks into tears. A hush falls over the courtroom. Roger stares straight ahead, unmoved.

JUDGE BARKLEY (heavy voice)

Alright, son... that'll do. (turning to Defense) Counsel—let's keep this train on the tracks. This ain't about drivin'. It's about whether or not that man over there acted like a doctor without bein' one.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE (urgently)

Your Honor, we're askin' for a brief adjournment to bring in more witnesses—people who can speak to Dr. Lee's true intentions. He wasn't tryin' to harm nobody. He was tryin' to help.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON (slamming his hand on the table)

No! This man could tamper with evidence or skip town. We already got enough to prove what he is.

JUDGE BARKLEY (bangin' the gavel)

That's enough! We ain't puttin' this off no longer. The gas station clerk's testimony stands solid, and we're movin' forward. (Turning to the prosecutor) Mr. Clayton, got another witness?

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON (with conviction)

Yes, Your Honor. The State calls SHERIFF TIMOTHY MOORE to the stand.

INT. TALLADEGA COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY - 1980

The wooden pews creak as people lean forward, fans fluttering, sweat trickling down faces. The tension is palpable. The judge narrows his eyes from the bench, his gavel resting heavily in his hand. SHERIFF TIMOTHY, still in uniform, boots dusty from mountain trails, steps up to the witness stand.

JUDGE BARKLEY (gravelly Southern drawl)

Sheriff Moore, place your hand on the Good Book. You swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothin' but the truth, so help you God?

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (steady as stone) Yes, sir. I do.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON (stepping up, voice full of fire)

Sheriff, did you search the defendant's residence up on Cheaha Mountain?

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (nods) We sure as hell did.

PROSECUTOR

And what'd y'all find?

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (voice raisin' with disgust)

We found strange lookin' trinkets, bones tied up with leather cord, blood-soaked cloth... looked like Injun witchcraft, plain as

day. (pauses) And animal carcasses—ripped open, gutted. That place smelled like death and sin. I tell ya, that man's no healer. He's a doctor of the devil.

Gasps fill the room. One lady clutches her pearls. The judge bangs the gavel once.

PROSECUTOR (leaning in)

Do you have that evidence with you today?

SHERIFF TIMOTHY

Yes, sir. Brought every last piece.

Two DEPUTIES enter, hauling in boxes—animal hides, jars of dried herbs, and bundles of bone tools. The jury leans away in horror.

DR. LEE (snapping up, voice cracking)

No! No! Those ain't mine! They belonged to my master—they're healin' tools!

PROSECUTOR (cutting, sharp)

Explain the animal corpses, then. Why were they gutted and strung up like trophies?

DR. LEE (stammering, lost)

Those... those... I—I tried to save 'em... I swear...

PROSECUTOR (slams a hand on the table)

Your Honor, we have even *more*. Sheriff—tell the court what else y'all found.

Deputies roll in a gurney, covered by a tarp. The whole room goes dead silent. Sheriff Timothy steps down, walks over, and rips the tarp back.

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (loud and grim)

We found human remains, Your Honor. A whole mess of bones. And this here... (points to the corpse) That's the mummified body of Chief Shinbone—missing for years. Found in a cave behind the defendant's cabin.

The courtroom explodes. People shout, some stand, others gasp and cross themselves. Reporters scribble like mad. The judge bangs the gavel furiously.

DR. LEE (standing, voice trembling)

No! That... that was my master! He taught me everything I know! You don't understand!

PROSECUTOR (pointing, accusing)

The jury understands just fine! This man ain't no doctor—he's a *serial killer*! And we're askin' the court to elevate charges to **first-degree murder**!

JUDGE BARKLEY (stern, tight-jawed) Where exactly was the body found?

SHERIFF TIMOTHY (looking the judge dead in the eye)

In a rock cave. Tucked behind a pine ridge right out back of the defendant's shack.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE (rattled, turning to Dr. Lee)

Dr. Lee... *what is this?*

DR. LEE (shaking, barely able to speak)

I-it's... I can't say. I swore an oath... to my master... I-I'm sorry...

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE

If you don't explain it, they'll put you in the chair.

DR. LEE (quiet, broken) I-I'm sorry...

JUDGE BARKLEY (voice like thunder)

Can the defense offer *any* explanation for these remains?

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE (defeated)

Not at this time, Your Honor. We need more time.

JUDGE BARKLEY (firm, final)

Y'all had your time. This court finds cause to pursue first-degree murder—and if convicted, the defendant will face the death penalty.

Gasps. Reporters rush from the courtroom. Roger stares at Dr. Lee with cold satisfaction.

FRONT PAGE - THE ALABAMA PRESS

"ASIAN 'DOCTOR' OR DEVIL IN DISGUISE? Mummified Chief Found in Murder Trial Horror"

ALABAMA TODAY NEWSPAPER HEADLINE: "SERIAL KILLER CAUGHT, STANDS TRIAL - JAPANESE INDIAN CULT MASS MURDERS"

INT. TALLADEGA COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY - 1980

The old courthouse is filled to capacity, shoulder-to-shoulder. People from across the county have gathered, dressed in their Sunday best. The air is dense with sweat, perfume, and tension. A ceiling fan turns slowly overhead, offering little relief. JUDGE BARKLEY, broad-shouldered and weathered by years on the

bench, strikes his gavel with force, the sound echoing like thunder through the chamber.

JUDGE BARKLEY (booming)

Order in this court! (turns to the defense) Counselor, you may give your closin' words.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE, his jacket removed and sleeves rolled up, rises slowly and solemnly. He walks toward the jury with the measured steps of a man bearing the weight of a fractured world.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE (steady, heartfelt)

Your Honor... ladies and gentlemen of the jury... y'all been sittin' here listenin' to every piece of this strange and heartbreakin' case. And now, I stand before you to ask one simple thing—look not with fear... but with *understandin'*.

He pauses, his voice a slow Southern drawl, seasoned with empathy.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE (cont'd)

Now I ain't gonna stand here and say JOHNNY Lee's a perfect man. He done claimed he was a doctor when he wasn't—and that was wrong. He knows that. But what he was... was someone tryin' to do right by a boy who was dyin' right there in front of him.

He gestures to the courtroom floor, evoking the moment.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE

Out at that gas station, Bubba was strugglin' to breathe. Most folks would've stood back, watched him die. But not JOHNNY Lee. He jumped in—used the only knowledge he had. Old world knowledge. Eastern medicine, passed down from his teacher. Native practices. What some folks might call strange—but what he called *healin'*.

A few jurors shift uncomfortably, but listen.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE (earnest)

He didn't sneak around in the dark. He didn't hide. He acted outta urgency and compassion. He didn't kill Bubba. He tried to save him. And now y'all are fixin' to call him a killer?

He leans on the rail, locking eyes with the jury.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE

Y'all ever made a mistake tryin' to do right? I reckon we all have. He ain't a monster. He's just a man. A man who stepped into the fire when nobody else would. Please. Look at his heart.

Don't throw him to the wolves for somethin' he did tryin' to help.

He gives a small nod, then turns and walks slow back to his seat.

JUDGE BARKLEY (gruff) Prosecution. Your closin'.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON rises like a man ready to bring down the heavens. He adjusts his tie, then paces slow and deliberate.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON (cool, with Southern steel)
Ladies and gentlemen... don't let soft talk and folklore blind y'all to the truth. (pause) JOHNNY LEE didn't save nobody. He ain't no hero. He's a fraud. A dangerous man who pretended to be a doctor, and in doin' so... sent a young boy to his grave.

He points toward DR. LEE, who sits motionless.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON (fire rising in his voice)
You ever seen a man stick a foot-long needle in somebody's chest in a gas station parkin' lot? No license. No hospital. Just bones, blood, and strange chants. (pause) He calls 'em healin' tools. But the dead animals? The bones? The *mummified corpse*? That ain't healin'. That's *madness*. That's *evil*.

He steps closer to the jury, voice thundering.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON

We found human remains on his land. Bones. Chief Shinbone's mummified body. And what'd Johnny Lee say? (stern pause) "I can't talk about my master."

The jury shifts, some whisper. Tension rises like a storm.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON

He couldn't explain it. 'Cause there *ain't* no explanation... unless you believe this man's a serial killer hidin' behind voodoo smoke and feathers.

He slams his hand on the rail.

PROSECUTOR CLAYTON

Now if y'all let this man walk free, he'll be right back out there—stickin' needles in folks and buryin' bodies where nobody'll find 'em. Alabama don't need that kind of justice. Not now, not ever. He chose to lie. He chose to kill. Now it's your turn to choose. Choose right. Choose guilty. First-degree murder.

He exhales hard through his nose and heads back to his seat. You could hear a pin drop.

JUDGE BARKLEY

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, y'all've heard the closin' arguments. Now it's in your hands. It's your duty to step back, weigh the facts, and come to a verdict based on the law and the truth as it was laid out in this courtroom. Nothin' more, nothin' less.

LATER - INT. COURTROOM - VERDICT READING

The jury files back in. The room is still. Eyes fixed forward.

JUDGE BARKLEY (after a long pause) Jury... have y'all reached a verdict?

The JURY FOREPERSON, an older woman with a tight bun and a heavy heart, stands up slowly.

JURY FOREPERSON

Yes, Your Honor. We find Mr. Johnny Lee... guilty of first-degree murder.

Gasps echo. A church lady faints. Roger bows his head, whispering "Thank you, Lord."

JUDGE BARKLEY (slow, final)

Then by the laws of this state, JOHNNY Lee... you are hereby

sentenced to death by electrocution. May God have mercy on your soul.

ROGER and his family shake hands, faces somber but satisfied.

DR. LEE (standing, voice shaking)

I never meant harm... I just wanted to help...

DEFENSE ATTORNEY COLE (quietly, beside him)

I'm sorry, JOHNNY. I truly am. I did all I could.

DR. LEE (softly)

I know. Thank you.

As the officers cuff Dr. Lee, ROGER steps up, leaning in really close, voice like a snake in the grass.

ROGER (whispering coldly)

You'll burn for what you did to my boy.

DR. LEE (eyes tearing up)

I didn't kill him... I tried to save him...

The officers lead Dr. Lee away. The courtroom remains silent as he's taken down the hall and out of sight.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

The camera spins quickly, landing on **ROGER** and **SHERIFF JIMBO** standing stoically amid the crowd.

Roger chews on a toothpick, a faint smirk on his lips.

Jimbo squints, arms crossed, surveying the area like a predator in waiting.

A **PROSECUTOR**, drenched in sweat and wearing a wrinkled suit, approaches with a subtle smile.

ROGER

When's the execution?

PROSECUTOR

These days? Executions don't come easy.

The left's screaming about abolishing the death penalty, and it's election season.

Governor's walking on eggshells right now—like a grumpy old dog tiptoeing across a glass floor.

ROGER

You've done well. I'll be in touch.

They shake hands.

As the prosecutor walks off, **Jimbo** steps forward and spits onto the curb.

He leans in, voice low and hushed.

SHERIFF JIMBO

You saw Shinbone's body, didn't ya?

Jesus... damn near pissed myself.

Thought that Injun was still breathin'.

Creeped me the hell out.

ROGER

No one can know about that.

You tell anyone?

SHERIFF JIMBO

Hell no. Swear on my life—I ain't told a soul.

ROGER

If Dr. Lee's tied to Shinbone, then now's the time to snuff out the light.

SHERIFF JIMBO

Want me to handle it?

I know a guy inside. Little cash, some pills, maybe a girl...

We can make it look like a prison brawl gone wrong.

ROGER

Do it. Make it clean.

Whatever it costs—I'll cover it.

SHERIFF JIMBO

Got it, boss.

INT. ALABAMA STATE PRISON - NIGHT - 1980

The halls echo with footsteps and cold silence. The flickering fluorescents overhead cast long shadows on rusted bars and cracked concrete.

Two guards, EARL and BUCK, both thick-necked and mean-eyed drag DR. LEE down the corridor. His hands are shackled, his face bloodied and bruised from earlier beatings.

GUARD EARL

Well I'll be... first time I seen a Chinaman in this hellhole.

GUARD BUCK

Ain't he s'posed to be Japanese or somethin'? I can't tell 'em apart.

GUARD EARL

Don't matter none. They say he's some witch doctor that done butchered folks like hogs in a slaughterhouse.

GUARD EARL kicks the back of Dr. Lee's knees. Lee drops with a grunt.

GUARD TONY

(stepping out of the shadows, cold eyes)

What's your name, boy?

DR. LEE doesn't answer, trying to keep his dignity.

GUARD BUCK

Says he's a doctor. But far as I see, he's just a devil with a needle.

GUARD TONY (smirking, voice low and mean)

We'll see how much he likes playin' doctor when he's in *my* ward (spits) Welcome to your own little piece of hell.

INT. PRISON SOLITARY CELL - NIGHT

Dr. Lee is shoved roughly into a pitch-black cell by the guards. The heavy iron door SLAMS shut behind him, the sound echoing endlessly through the darkness.

A suffocating silence falls over the entire prison.

Staggering forward, Dr. Lee spins around in confusion, then rushes back to the bars, pounding on them.

DR. LEE

(*desperately*)

"I'm innocent! Please... someone get me out of here!"

No response.

Only silence.

He keeps banging on the bars, shouting into the void.

DR. LEE

(*louder, more desperate*)

"Please! Anybody! I didn't do anything—please believe me!"

He collapses to the ground.

Broken.

The darkness seems to tighten around him, and with it, hope begins to fade.

DR. LEE

(*in agony, crying out toward heaven*)

"Please...! Don't leave me here!"

But the prison remains as still as death.

Only the shadows gather closer around him.

His cry of despair echoes through the empty corridor, but no one answers.

Only the void swallows his voice.

The camera slowly moves in—

A close-up of his tormented face, now buried in darkness.

INT. PRISON SOLITARY CELL - LATE NIGHT

Dr. Lee lifts his head.
He senses something... off—an ominous presence.

Footsteps echo down the dark hallway.
Slow.
Deliberate.

His eyes snap to the door.
His heart pounds.

Suddenly—
A rope tightens around his neck.

He gasps, clawing at his throat.
The rope only tightens.