

AFLOAT

Episode 6: "The Father and the Son"

FADE IN:

EXT. U.S. 2 WEST OF WILLISTON - EVENING, OCTOBER 1955

KARL MYERS stands a few feet from the graveled shoulder of the two-lane highway and gazes at the undulating curtains of the Northern Lights. His 1952, Glenmist green, four-door Ford Customline sedan

Myers' expression conveys sadness and loneliness.

SOUND of an approaching, east-bound SEMI.

Myers looks at the headlights less than a mile off and then returns his gaze to the aurora borealis.

SOUND of TRUCK DOWNSHIFTING.

Myers turns and waits; the semi pulls to the shoulder. Myers steps toward the cab as it stops. The DRIVER's face appears in the open passenger-side window. The voices are raised above the SOUND of the RUNNING ENGINE.

TRUCK DRIVER

You need a hand, buddy?

KARL MYERS

I'm good. Sorry you had to stop.

TRUCK DRIVER

Not a problem. Saw your car and couldn't take the chance on leaving somebody out here.

Myers jerks his head toward the aurora borealis.

KARL MYERS

Just stopped to enjoy the show.

The truck driver looks at the sky for a beat.

TRUCK DRIVER

She is something, ain't she?

(beat)

Well, I'll let you get on with it.

KARL MYERS

Thanks for stopping.

The truck driver gives Myers a thumbs up, returns to the steering wheel, and drives the truck down the highway.

Diminishing SOUND of SHIFTING GEARS and an ACCELERATING SEMI.

Myers leaves the shoulder and turns back toward the aurora borealis. The expression he had directed toward the truck driver morphs into an expression even more forlorn than that before the semi arrived.

He looks nearly straight up at a sky filled with stars for a beat, and then closes his eyes. He reaches inside his jacket and extracts his pistol from its shoulder holster; he stares at the gun.

Increasing SOUND of WHINING TIRES from an approaching, westbound vehicle. Myers looks in the direction of the sound.

SOUND of DOWNSHIFTING; SOUND of WHINING tires diminishes.

Myers replaces the revolver in the holster and turns toward the headlights of a dented and dirty, Oxford maroon, 1948 Chevy pickup, which stops on the shoulder a car-length behind Myers' Ford.

The pickup's headlights shine, and its engine remains on.

REGINALD "REGGIE" RHODES is barely visible in the glow of the pickup's dashboard lights. Rhodes is a fifty-year-old, African-American man with a full beard containing patches of gray.

Rhodes slowly gets out of the pickup and looks ovetop of the truck's roof. He is six-foot-four; his great bulk fills out his jacket in a way that suggests muscle, not fat.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)

(guarded)

Can I help you?

Rhodes' voice is gentler, more refined, and higher pitched than might be expected from such a large man.

REGINALD RHODES

Man, I was going to ask you the same thing.

KARL MYERS

(at ease)

I'm okay. Just taking a break.

Rhodes walks to the front of the pickup and stands between it and Myers' car. He slips his hands into the pockets of his Levi's and stares at the aurora borealis.

REGINALD RHODES
Don't think I'll ever get tired of
seeing that.

KARL MYERS
You live around here?

REGINALD RHODES
Not permanent. You?

KARL MYERS
Just passing through.

Myers nods toward the aurora borealis.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)
First time for me.

REGINALD RHODES
Where you headed, man?

Rhodes steps to within a few feet of Myers and glances at him before looking at the sky show. It is sufficiently dark to make visual recognition of either man a challenge, but Myers stares searchingly at Rhodes.

KARL MYERS
Washington. Olympic Peninsula,
actually.

REGINALD RHODES
No man, I mean tonight. Got a lot of
empty miles ahead of you on this road.
Been cloudy all day, and it's going to
get cold tonight. I hear early snows
aren't uncommon on the northern
prairie.

KARL MYERS
Actually, I was planning on staying in
Williston, but I had a change of
plans.

Rhodes turns toward Myers. Each man appears to be concentrating on the other's face.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)
You look like YOU'RE headed down those
empty miles.

REGINALD RHODES

Well man, it's like this: about two miles up the road there's a man camp where us colored roustabouts live. More friendly out here than closer to a town filled with a bunch of Indians and -- no offense, man -- a bunch of crackers who don't quite know what to make of us.

Rhodes glances at Myers.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

Got us an extra bunk if you don't mind bunking with colored folks.

KARL MYERS

That, my friend, would be much appreciated.

Something about the response appears to strike Rhodes. He cocks his head and leans toward Myers.

REGINALD RHODES

Man, do I know you?

KARL MYERS

I'm thinking I know YOU, but that can't be possible.

Rhodes steps back and slams his hand over his heart; his expression conveys astonishment.

REGINALD RHODES

(emotional)

Jesus H. Christ. You're First Sergeant Myers.

KARL MYERS

My God! Reggie?

The two men grasp hands, pull their chests together, then separate, stare at each other in disbelief, and continue to clasp each other's hand. Then they laugh out loud.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN, TWENTY MILES EAST OF THE DELAWARE BAY -
SPRING AFTERNOON, THE PRESENT

Ultima Thule sails over long ocean swells under full sail in fifteen knots of a northwest wind beneath clear blue skies.

ROLL CREDITS

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A) Susquehanna Water Gap north of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
- B) Clearing along the Yellow Breeches near New Cumberland, PA
- C) The prairie west of Williston, North Dakota
- D) Port Townsend with the Puget Sound and snow-capped Cascades in the distance
- E) The Serenity (aka Ultima Thule) rounds Point Wilson seen from the gun emplacements at Fort Worden
- F) The snow-covered Elwha Valley in Olympic National Park
- G) The Serenity (aka Ultima Thule) plows through high seas near Cape Flattery, Washington
- H) Aerial shot of Tahitian mountains and coastline
- I) Ultima Thule (aka Serenity) sails across the Rangiroa Lagoon
- J) Inner Harbor, Baltimore, Maryland, 1970
- K) 1985 Midtown Manhattan from an Upper West Side penthouse
- L) Homes on Pilottown Road and canal, the present, Lewes, Delaware

END CREDITS

M) Ultima Thule (aka Serenity) in the present with Billy Benton at the helm, diminishes in view as she sails under full sail toward the Atlantic's eastern horizon in fifteen knots of a northwest wind beneath clear blue skies.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAN CAMP BARRACKS, OFF US 2 WEST OF WILLISTON - NEXT MORNING

Myers sits alone at a long table made of broad planks laid across saw horses; he scrapes scrambled eggs from a tin plate with a fork. The table is one of three in the low-ceilinged, ramshackle but clean, mess hall.

Myers is the only white man among the eleven black ROUSTABOUTS quietly finishing their breakfasts at the other two tables. The roustabouts are dressed for a workday on the oil fields near Williston.

ROUSTABOUT ONE
Time we got us a move on.

ROUSTABOUT TWO
(sarcastic)
Come on, Massa, just one more pancake?

The roustabouts laugh, stand, bus their tin plates, dinnerware, and coffee mugs into a tub on a counter along a side wall. As they leave the mess hall in good spirits, a few nod and smile at Myers, who nods in return.

As the last roustabout leaves, Rhodes enters the mess hall.

REGINALD RHODES
(cheerful)
Good morning, First Sergeant!

Rhodes fills two mugs with coffee from an urn on the counter.

KARL MYERS
We're not in the Marines anymore, my friend.

Rhodes slides a mug in front of Myers, places the second on the other side of the table.

REGINALD RHODES
Old habits die hard, First Sergeant.

Rhodes sits opposite Myers.

KARL MYERS
That might be, Gunney, but the last thing I want is for these guys to see you deferring to me. I outranked you once, but you and I both know which of the two of us was the better Marine.

Rhodes flashes a shy smile, looks uncomfortable for a beat, then lifts his mug to Myers.

REGINALD RHODES
We can argue that one later, but if you insist on my calling you Karl, I hope you don't mind if I accidentally backslide from time to time.

KARL MYERS
You've never backslid in your life.

Rhodes chuckles and then waves his mug across the room.

REGINALD RHODES
This remind you of anyplace?

Rhodes drinks from the mug.

KARL MYERS
(sly smile)
Except for that beard of yours, it's
Montford Point, and I'm outnumbered
again, thirty to one.

Rhodes guffaws.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)
And as organized and clean as this
place is, I'm thinking you're not the
only Marine here.

REGINALD RHODES
You'd be right. There's a half-dozen
of us here, including Baxter
Washington.

KARL MYERS
He was in my first platoon at
Montford. Skinny guy, right?

REGINALD RHODES
Still has to run around in the shower
to get wet.

Rhodes and Myers both laugh.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)
He's half dying to see you after all
these years, but he had to leave early
for the rigs.

KARL MYERS
Skinny, but I remember him being
strong as hell.

REGINALD RHODES
Still is and as good a Marine as there
ever was. He gets a clean-up detail
going every now and again, which is
why this place doesn't look half-bad.

Both men drink from their mugs; their expressions are
thoughtful. Rhodes looks at Myers.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

(teasing)

Your face doesn't look half-bad for an old man.

Myers smiles a slight smile, takes a slug of coffee, and then looks down.

REGINALD RHODES

But I see something half-bad in those baby-blues of yours too.

Myers turns his gaze back to Rhodes; there is a strong suggestion of sadness in Myers' eyes.

KARL MYERS

(near whisper; forlorn)

I don't know what I'm doing here.

REGINALD RHODES

Right here, sitting at this table with a man who owes you his life for what you drilled into his delusional, college-educated but clueless mind in a Carolina backwater ...

Myers appears ready to interrupt but Rhodes holds up his massive right hand.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

Let me finish.

Rhodes gestures with a broad sweep of the mess hall.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

Or is "here" the middle of this vast, grassy, God-forsaken no-man's land?

Myers' eyes drill into Rhodes' eyes.

KARL MYERS

(rhetorical resignation)

What do you think?

Rhodes sits back, looks at Myers, tugs his beard for a beat, and then leans forward.

REGINALD RHODES

I think you look lost, man. Dead lost, with no map, no compass, and no idea where in the Sam Hill you're going.

Myers looks away. Rhodes reaches across the table and touches Myers' arm; Myers looks back at Rhodes.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)
 What the hell's in Washington, Karl?
 You're a Yankee boy.

Myers stands and takes their mugs to the coffee urn. Rhodes turns toward him.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)
 Why are you running as far away as you
 can get from what you know? 'Cause
 that's what I think you're doin',
 runnin' away from something.

Myers fills the mugs with coffee.

KARL MYERS
 I guess I am, in a way, but that's not
 it.

Rhodes watches Myers return to the table with the mugs.

REGINALD RHODES
 You're gonna have me solving riddles
 then.

Myers puts the mugs on the table and sits.

KARL MYERS
 I'm running to someone.

REGINALD RHODES
 Come on, man. Spit it out.

Myers looks away for a beat and then looks into the mug.

KARL MYERS
 I'm going to see Laura.

REGINALD RHODES
 (clearly surprised)
 That mean you two have things worked
 out?

Myers looks into Rhodes eyes for a beat, and then looks down at his mug. Rhodes leans back and gives out a low whistle.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)
 Maybe not.

Myers drinks from his mug, glances at Rhodes for a beat, then puts the mug down and stares at it.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)
 Man, she don't even know you're coming, does she?

KARL MYERS
 I don't even know if she's still there.

REGINALD RHODES
 (somewhat incredulous)
 Where is there?

CUE BALL, a short, very round, completely bald, middle-aged African-American man, appears in a doorway to the mess.

CUE BALL
 Reggie, you got a minute?

REGINALD RHODES
 Brother, can't you see I'm getting deep into something here?

CUE BALL
 I can see it, but this is important. Just need a second.

REGINALD RHODES
 (to Myers)
 I'll be right back.

Cue Ball backs up as Rhodes approaches and fills the doorway.

SOUND of INDECIPHERABLE TALKING between Cue Ball and Rhodes.

Myers drinks his coffee.

Rhodes returns to the table and sits. He looks at Myers for a beat.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)
 You told me you didn't stay in Williston because you had a "change in plans." Is there something more you might've told me about that?

Myers looks into his mug and does not respond.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)
 (raised eyebrow)
 Uh HUH.
 (MORE)

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

(beat)

Seems like they had a riot at Fermamont yesterday. We heard the sirens out at the rigs. Apparently, a guard got stabbed to death and some inmates escaped. Anything ringing a bell?

Myers looks up, takes a slug of coffee, and does not respond.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

Okay, play it that way.

Rhodes sips his coffee and stares at Myers.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

But this is what Cue Ball just told me. Seems like there's this mysterious white guy in a saloon that up and shoots one of the escapees -- kills him -- and has the others under control by the time the sheriff arrives. Saved the asses of everybody in the saloon, but here's the thing: the guy disappears. You know anything about that?

Myers stares knowingly at Rhodes, who chuckles quietly.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

Man, you are something else, you know that? The sheriff wants to talk to this mysterious cracker, probably just to say "thanks," but maybe there's something else, something about that gun he used. Now here's the thing, one or more of these boys is going to say something about a white man staying at this colored man-camp, which'll give the sheriff a reason to come out here where he might take issue with moonshine and gambling and the occasional whore.

KARL MYERS

Which means?

REGINALD RHODES

It might give him reasons to think about shuttin' this place down.

KARL MYERS

(sighs)

I guess the best thing would be for me to head back to Williston and clear things up.

Rhodes stands up, picks up his mug, and walks toward the tub overflowing with dirty dishes.

REGINALD RHODES

(over his shoulder)

Best thing you can do is head the opposite direction, like right now.

Rhodes places his mug into the tub and turns to Myers.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

Big country out there, Karl. Not many roads, but there aren't many cops either. We could be long gone before anyone started looking.

Myers stands, coffee mug, plate and fork in hand.

KARL MYERS

We?

Myers walks toward the tub.

REGINALD RHODES

First Sergeant, our paths have crossed three times, and as far as I'm concerned, three's the charm. If anybody understands semper fidelis, it's you and me, so why don't you and me head on down the road. Washington's as good a state as any other.

Myers places the plate et al in the tub.

KARL MYERS

What about your truck?

REGINALD RHODES

That piece of crap? There's only a handful of guys here right now, but I guarantee one of them'll give me fifty bucks for it.

KARL MYERS

You're certain about this?

REGINALD RHODES

The truck?

KARL MYERS

Coming with me.

REGINALD RHODES

Dead certain. Never been more certain
about anything in my life.

INT. FERMAMOUNT FEDERAL PENITENTIARY - MID MORNING

MARILYN BAGGETT, carrying a short stack of crammed manila folders in the way of schoolgirls, walks briskly down a sterile-looking, institutional hallway in the administrative wing.

Baggett is forty-nine and Rubenesque. Sharp raps of her high heels on terrazzo flooring echo as she sashays down the hallway.

She wears a single strand of faux pearls, matching earrings, a white blouse, blue skirt, and nylons; her face is heavily made up. Her blond hair is by Clairol; the waves in it are from a Toni home perm.

CLAYTON DORION, wearing a dark-green, prison guard uniform and duty hat, emerges from a side hallway.

When Baggett sees him her lips form a pert smile, she walks more erect, and she reflexly pats the back of her bouffant hairdo with her free hand.

As Dorion nears her, he raises an eyebrow in arrogant nonchalance.

CLAYTON DORION

(in greeting)

Miss Baggett.

Dorion walks by Baggett, whose expression is one of instant disbelief. She stops and looks at him.

MARILYN BAGGETT

(angry whisper)

Clayton Dorion!

Dorion stops and turns toward Baggett.

MARILYN BAGGETT (CONT'D)

(with attitude)

All I get is "Miss Baggett?"

Dorion looks guiltily up and down the hall.

CLAYTON DORION

(lubricious)

I've got a lot more than that for you,
woman, just not here in the hallway.

Baggett giggles, pats her bouffant, and steps toward Dorion.

MARILYN BAGGETT

(tittering)

Clayton, you are positively
scandalous.

CLAYTON DORION

(lubricious)

Come over tonight and I'll be
positively whatever you want.

MARILYN BAGGETT

(nearly overcome)

Oh *my!*

Baggett pats her bouffant and directs a pouty smile at Dorion.

CLAYTON DORION

I've got to get a move on so ...

Dorion turns; Baggett grabs his sleeve and looks up and down the hall.

MARILYN BAGGETT

(conspiratorial)

Wait. You heard all about yesterday?

CLAYTON DORION

I got a lot of shit about calling in
sick, but if it wasn't for your heads-
up, I could've been the one who got
stabbed.

MARILYN BAGGETT

Isn't it just awful about Officer
Burdett?

CLAYTON DORION

That Mato-whatever bastard had a shiv
when we captured him. I know he did
it.

MARILYN BAGGETT

I'm so proud of you. I'd think your capturing him made up for your calling out.

CLAYTON DORION

(slightly uncomfortable)
Maybe. And maybe this time he's going to swing.

MARILYN BAGGETT

I should hope so.

CLAYTON DORION

You know, I'd sure love to see his file.

MARILYN BAGGETT

(aghast)
I can't do that.

CLAYTON DORION

Of course you can. You've got it right there.

Dorion taps the bottom folder.

MARILYN BAGGETT

Clayton, I could lose my job if the warden found out.

CLAYTON DORION

Just bring it over tonight.

Dorion looks up and down the hall and leans toward Baggett's ear.

CLAYTON DORION (CONT'D)

(whispers)
I'll do that thing you really like.

Dorion puts his cupped hand on Baggett's crotch; she jerks away.

MARILYN BAGGETT

(shocked but delighted)
Clayton!

Baggett looks up and down the hallway, pats her bouffant, and directs her version of a sultry glare at Dorion.

MARILYN BAGGETT (CONT'D)
 All right, but this file has to be
 back first thing tomorrow morning.

CLAYTON DORION
 (arch smile)
 We can look at it together. Naked.

MARILYN BAGGETT
 (shocked but delighted)
 Clayton Dorion, you are absolutely the
 worst!

CLAYTON DORION
 (libidinous smile)
 That's why you adore me.

Baggett rolls her eyes and her smile tightens; she turns and
 walks briskly away from Dorion. The CLACK-CLACK SOUND of her
 HEELS on the terrazzo echoes down the hall.

Dorion smirks as he watches her walk away.

I/E - MYERS' FORD/U.S. ROUTE 2, MONTANA- CONTINUOUS

Rhodes is at the wheel of Myers' Ford, which travels at high
 speed west on the two lane. There is no traffic approaching or
 following for miles.

Rhodes glances at Myers, who stares straight ahead.

REGINALD RHODES
 So let me see if I understand this.
 You had no idea this kid, this twelve-
 year-old boy, killed his buddy?

KARL MYERS
 No idea.

REGINALD RHODES
 And you managed to sleep with this
 kid's mother before you figured it
 out?

KARL MYERS
 One night.

Rhodes glances at Myers, who stares straight ahead.

REGINALD RHODES
 And her kid gets killed?

KARL MYERS

The very next night.

Rhodes whistles a long, low whistle. Both men stare at the highway for a few seconds.

REGINALD RHODES

You know, Karl, one night or thirty don't make much difference. So you are runnin' then, from that woman and not from the other stuff.

Myers looks at Rhodes.

KARL MYERS

I'm not proud of any of it.

REGINALD RHODES

Didn't say you were.

Myers looks at the highway; Rhodes glances at him.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

So you're thinking, I'm going to go find Laura. She'll save me.

Myers looks out the side window; Rhodes glances at him.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

Man, didn't we spend hours talking about her in Korea?

KARL MYERS

We did.

REGINALD RHODES

You told me she left because she thought you were responsible for Dorothy getting hit by the taxi. You said Laura hated you, man.

Myers looks at Rhodes.

KARL MYERS

She did.

Rhodes glances at Myers. They make eye contact. Rhodes looks back at the highway.

REGINALD RHODES

What makes you think she doesn't hate you now?

Myers looks out the side window without response.

Rhodes glances at Myers, directs a sympathetic shake of his head toward his friend, and returns his eyes to the road.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

Why do I feel like this is the last time we'll be talking about Dorothy for a while?

Myers looks at Rhodes.

KARL MYERS

Prescience.

The road is becoming more elevated as it nears the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in Montana; the men stare at the scenery for a while.

REGINALD RHODES

You know what my daddy told me when I started talking about coming out here to the oil fields?

Rhodes and Myers glance at each other.

KARL MYERS

I don't, my friend.

REGINALD RHODES

He said, "son, after serving in two wars and with a college degree in hand, I don't think you've learned that no matter where you go, there you are."

KARL MYERS

Your daddy is a wise man.

REGINALD RHODES

Was a wise man. Died two weeks before I left to come out here.

KARL MYERS

Sorry to hear that.

REGINALD RHODES

Thanks. Daddy was a special man.

Some seconds pass as they stare at the scenery.

Myers looks at Rhodes.

KARL MYERS

If I remember right, he was a teacher.

REGINALD RHODES

He was. Wanted me to be one too.

Myers looks at the approaching mountains.

KARL MYERS

It's why he sent you to college.

REGINALD RHODES

That's right, but I knew from the get-go that I didn't want to be a teacher.

KARL MYERS

You what, wanted to be a roustabout instead?

REGINALD RHODES

(laughs)

The day I was discharged, I started talking to a Marine while the two of us were waitin' for a bus outside of Pendleton. He told me he was headed home to North Dakota because he had a job as a roustabout. I didn't have a clue what roustabout meant until he told me.

(beat, serious cynicism)

Course I didn't really have a clue about what it meant to be a teacher either. A lot of good that sheepskin's done me.

Myers looks at Rhodes.

KARL MYERS

Helped you be one of the first colored men to become a marine in the big war.

REGINALD RHODES

Might've helped me get in, but it was damned useless once I got in and even more useless once I got out. I'll be damned if I can find a door that degree will open.

The men stare at the highway as the Ford climbs a grade.

Seconds pass. Rhodes chuckles. Myers looks at him.

KARL MYERS

What?

Rhodes smiles at Myers.

REGINALD RHODES

Man, you're the only damned Marine I ever met who would know a word like prescience and then use it right.

Myers smiles in return.

KARL MYERS

And you're the only Marine I ever met, noncom or officer, who would understand what I meant when I said it.

Both men laugh as they stare at the climbing highway.

INT. CLAYTON DORION'S HOUSE IN WILLISTON - EARLY EVENING

Dorion and Baggett sit opposite each other at a very small kitchen table. They are naked but for bifocals worn by each, Baggett's high heels, her string of faux pearls and matching earrings, and Dorion's white socks and wristwatch.

The contents of Mato-sa's file are divided into two piles on the table, one in front of each inquisitor. They lean forward as they refer to files and argue. From time to time, one or the other will raise a page to punctuate a point.

CLAYTON DORION

Look at this. His name's actually Richard Clemont. This is goddamned America, and I'm sick of these Indians pretending it ain't. Mato-sa. Red Bear. What bullshit.

MARILYN BAGGETT

(challenging)

Isn't your name a French name?

CLAYTON DORION

It's the name on my birth certificate. I didn't change it to Pepé Le Pew!

MARILYN BAGGETT

(laughs)

Sometimes you are so silly.

CLAYTON DORION

(incensed)

And look at this. He's got a half-brother in Leavenworth for kidnapping and raping a fourteen-year-old girl.

MARILYN BAGGETT

You're getting yourself all worked up.

CLAYTON DORION

You're damned right I am. Who are these people?

MARILYN BAGGETT

(authoritative)

Well, it says here that his father was a Hunkpapa and his mother was Assiniboine.

CLAYTON DORION

I don't care if his grandpa was Sitting Bull! He's carrying bad blood that needs to be wiped out.

MARILYN BAGGETT

(a tad scandalized)

Clayton, that's a bit much, don't you think?

CLAYTON DORION

No! I DON'T think it's a bit much.

MARILYN BAGGETT

But Clayton, it says here that when he was ten, his mother abandoned him. The poor little fella was raised by all sorts of folks, foster parents, distant relatives. Never lasted long with any of them. All these lawyers and judges and social workers say he was a victim of his childhood.

Dorion sits back and stares at Baggett for a beat.

CLAYTON DORION

Victim? I was an orphan from birth, raised in the middle of freeze-your-balls-off Montana. My step-father was the meanest son-of-a-bitch that ever lived, and there was no getting away from him because our soddy was miles from anywhere.

Dorion picks up a lit cigar from an ashtray, takes a drag, and exhales; he uses the cigar to punctuate his points.

CLAYTON DORION (CONT'D)

Hell, he used to get drunk and make us watch him rape my step mom while she screamed for bloody mercy. Even the girls had to watch or he'd do it to them, and you don't see me using that for an excuse for anything do you?

Baggett looks at Dorion open-mouthed and does not reply. Dorion leans in.

CLAYTON DORION (CONT'D)

This bastard ain't no victim. He's a conniving son-of-a-bitch. And look at this.

Dorion sorts through pages until he finds the one he wants, slides it in front of Baggett, and points to a sentence.

CLAYTON DORION (CONT'D)

Read it. Go ahead. Read it out loud.

MARILYN BAGGETT

(reads)

"The social worker determined that Richard was overtly pleasant and compliant but covertly incorrigible."

CLAYTON DORION

Exactly. "Covertly incorrigible." I ain't no scholar but that's just social worker talk for a conniving son-of-a-bitch.

MARILYN BAGGETT

Well, maybe.

CLAYTON DORION

Maybe? He got out of his first murder charge by turning state's evidence against two buddies who ended up getting hung.

MARILYN BAGGETT

The jury must've seen something in him. They apparently believed him.

CLAYTON DORION

Damn them, they were blinded by his
"overtly pleasant and compliant"
bullshit! *Goddamn* him!

MARILYN BAGGETT

You're getting awfully worked up,
Sweetie. I'm going to get you a beer.

Baggett gets up and waddles to the refrigerator; her high heels click on the linoleum. Dorion glances at her before returning his attention to the pages in front of him.

CLAYTON DORION

(raises voice slightly)
And this is my favorite. He gets
furloughed -- *furloughed!* -- to attend
some Indian ceremony.

Baggett takes a beer from the refrigerator and pops the top with a "church key."

CLAYTON DORION (CONT'D)

And then he escapes! For three years!
Which was when he got his hands on my
Viola.

Baggett waddles back to the table, places the beer in front of Dorion, and sits demurely in the chair opposite him.

MARILYN BAGGETT

It just seems to me you're letting
this get too personal.

CLAYTON DORION

Too personal? It can't get *more*
personal. At least this time, I know
he's going to swing. Ain't no judge
alive would let a man get away with
killing a prison guard, no matter how
bad he had it growing up.

Baggett reaches across the table and places her hand on top of his.

MARILYN BAGGETT

The thought of that should make you
feel better, Sweetie.

Dorion downs half of the bottle of beer and smacks it down on the table.

CLAYTON DORION

It *does* make me feel better.

MARILYN BAGGETT

(uber coy)

I can think of something *else* that'll
make you feel better, big boy.

Baggett stares into Dorion's eyes, raises an eyebrow, kicks off a high heel shoe from her left foot, and stretches her left leg until her foot is buried deep between Dorion's thighs.

Dorion stares back and smiles a lubricious smile.

I/E - MYERS' FORD/U.S. RTE 2 IN IDAHO - CONTINUOUS

The sun has just set behind Katka Peak in Idaho.

Myers drives the Ford; Rhodes softly snores on the passenger side. Myers glances at his friend, smiles, and returns his eyes to the road. He glances at the sunset slightly to his left.

Rhodes snorts, shakes himself, yawns and opens his eyes. He stretches his massive arms.

KARL MYERS

Good snooze?

REGINALD RHODES

The sleep of the blessed. How's the
drive been?

KARL MYERS

Uneventful. Sun's down.

Rhodes looks out the front and left side windows.

REGINALD RHODES

So I see. Beautiful country. Can't
imagine ever going back east.

KARL MYERS

I'm beginning to feel like a convert
myself.

REGINALD RHODES

Some guys hate the isolation.

KARL MYERS

After what I've gone through over the
past few months, it's a welcome
change.

REGINALD RHODES

I hear ya. Wanna switch up?

KARL MYERS

There's a town not far up the road.
I'm thinking it'll be about time to
get a cup of coffee.

REGINALD RHODES

If anything's open.

KARL MYERS

Fingers crossed.

Rhodes smiles and looks at the scenery. The men are silent for some seconds.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)

So did you ever truly figure out what
your daddy meant?

REGINALD RHODES

Say what?

KARL MYERS

No matter where you go, there you are?

REGINALD RHODES

(chuckles)

Sure as hell didn't register at the
time, but it has now.

When Rhodes doesn't continue, Myers glances at him.

KARL MYERS

Well?

Rhodes glances at Myers and then stares through the windshield for a beat.

REGINALD RHODES

About a month after I get out here, I
figure I'm learning the ropes, making
pretty good money for a colored man
with no place to spend it except on
moonshine some Kentucky boys brew, or
on some bullshit poker with sharks
lucky to keep their skin. And of
course, there're the women who come to
the man camp to spread joy and the
clap.

KARL MYERS

In other words, most of the money you and your buddies earn is gone in a heartbeat.

REGINALD RHODES

Maybe theirs, but not mine, First Sergeant, no.

KARL MYERS

Your service pay went right home if I recall.

REGINALD RHODES

You would be correct.

KARL MYERS

And you're still sending it home?

REGINALD RHODES

Nobody to send it to. Daddy's gone and my mother died almost two years ago.

KARL MYERS

What about your brother?

REGINALD RHODES

I don't know where he is. I got no woman in my life, not even my sister because she's married to a preacher who doesn't think a whole lot of me.

KARL MYERS

So Gunney, where's all this money you've earned?

REGINALD RHODES

Got a nice roll in my pocket, but most of it is in a Williston Bank. Williston folks may not be comfortable around a big ol' colored man, but they're sure comfortable being around cash earned righteously, no matter the color of a man's skin.

KARL MYERS

All this is interesting, but you still haven't answered my question about what your father meant.

Rhodes turns his body toward Myers.

REGINALD RHODES

Now hold on, First Sergeant. You're the one asking the questions that got me off track.

KARL MYERS

(smiles)

You're right, my friend; you're right.

Rhodes smiles and sits back against the seat.

REGINALD RHODES

So I'm working the rigs for about a month and decide to try a little exploring. I gave a guy a five-spot to let me use his jeep, and I end up about ninety miles deep into the Badlands on top of a place I found out later is called Bullion Butte.

KARL MYERS

Bullion Butte.

REGINALD RHODES

That's right. Not a soul for as far as the eye can see. Spent a cold night in a bed roll, woke up before sunrise, and made myself some coffee with a little alcohol burner I bought in town. Never felt so damned alone in my life.

KARL MYERS

I can imagine.

REGINALD RHODES

When the sun came up, I could see down the north slope of the butte, and scattered among the rocks and boulders were hundreds, thousands maybe, of scrubby pines of some kind, and I start thinking to myself, here are these trees, not much more than bushes, living large in a place I couldn't survive more than two or three days without somebody bringing me water.

Rhodes stares out the windshield for a beat; Myers glances at him.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

Now you know I'm not a religious man,
and I'm not saying I found religion
that morning, but I found something.
I'd just turned fifty, and for the
first time in my life, I felt totally
insignificant.

KARL MYERS

You're saying that like it was a good
thing.

REGINALD RHODES

It was. I felt liberated, free from
all the horseshit of humanity because
I felt no more significant than one of
those bushes. Are you with me?

KARL MYERS

Don't know where this is going, but so
far, I'm with you.

REGINALD RHODES

It was at that moment I felt like I
was a part of all of it.

KARL MYERS

It?

REGINALD RHODES

Everything. And I mean everything.
Everything I could see stretching out
for miles and beyond that, maybe to
the stars. My body felt electric ...
Ah hell, I can't explain it.

Myers chuckles; Rhodes looks at him.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

What?

KARL MYERS

(smiles, keeps eyes on road)
Larry Darrell.

Rhodes throws his head back and guffaws.

REGINALD RHODES

(slight disbelief)
You know that book?

KARL MYERS

It's one of five I brought with me.
It's in the trunk.

REGINALD RHODES

You see the movie? That's what I was
thinking about up on the butte, when
Tyrone Power was on the mountain.

KARL MYERS

The "sense of peace, joy and assurance
that possessed me in that moment of
rapture abides with me still."

REGINALD RHODES

(laughs with surprise)
Damn! That's *it*!

Both men look through the windshield. Slowly, their smiling
expressions turn serious, their eyes look beyond what they see.

KARL MYERS

We've gotten into some pretty profound
things for a couple of old Marines, my
friend.

REGINALD RHODES

Like remembering being scared shitless
our boys might never get off that
Korean mountain.

KARL MYERS

A lot never did.

REGINALD RHODES

Bunch of old white men, sitting safe
as an old lady's cat, sending boys to
die for no apparent reason.

KARL MYERS

But we made it and here we are, my
friend, in the middle of the American
wilderness, and your daddy's telling
us, no matter where we are, we're
still who we are.

REGINALD RHODES

That's right.

KARL MYERS

Don't have to be some special place to
figure out what life has in store for
us.

REGINALD RHODES

I don't think we should even worry
about it.

Myers and Rhodes exchange glances.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

Those junipers, or whatever they were
out on Bullion Butte, don't worry
about what life has in store for them.

KARL MYERS

(scoffs)
They're just trees, my friend.

REGINALD RHODES

They're not "just trees." They're
remarkable living things, made out of
stardust, part of the universe, just
like you and me. They're no more or
less important than you or me. And
they don't worry about the future.

KARL MYERS

Not sure they have the capacity to
worry.

REGINALD RHODES

I know you know I'm speaking
figuratively.

KARL MYERS

(chuckles)
I do, professor.

REGINALD RHODES

(laughs)
My point is, we don't have to worry
about the future; all we have to do is
just live. Here.

With an appreciable effort due to his bulk, Rhodes turns
around, extracts a small, well-worn leather journal from a
duffel on the back seat, and then turns back around and sits.

Myers glances at Rhodes and smiles before looking back at the
road.

KARL MYERS

(scoffs)
That was easy.

Rhodes laughs and flips through pages of the journal.

REGINALD RHODES

Here it is: "carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero."

KARL MYERS

Don't know Latin, my friend.

REGINALD RHODES

(chuckles)

I wrote it down in college.

KARL MYERS

Ancient history.

REGINALD RHODES

In more ways than one. A professor translated it for us; means pluck the day, trust as little as possible in the next day.

KARL MYERS

Pluck?

REGINALD RHODES

Or grasp, seize, you know, something like that. The point is, all that happened on that butte was, I stumbled onto something I wrote down years before, something ...

Rhodes reads from the journal.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

... Quintus Horatius Flaccus wrote ...

KARL MYERS

Horace.

Rhodes sends a surprised glance at Myers.

REGINALD RHODES

The same. Something he wrote two thousand years ago.

KARL MYERS

Does that diminish what you found out on your own?

REGINALD RHODES

No.

(beat)

(MORE)

REGINALD RHODES (cont'd)

It just made it more real is all, and it's freed me up to do things like jump in this Ford, not because I should or because it'll bring me fame or money, or get me into some old man's heaven. None of that means shit to those junipers, and those things sure as hell don't mean shit to me.

KARL MYERS

(smiles)

Carpe diem, my friend. Carpe diem.

INT. FERMAMOUNT FEDERAL PENITENTIARY - NEXT MORNING

Clayton Dorion enters the anteroom of the Warden's office carrying daily roster tallies. Baggett sits at her desk typing.

Baggett notices Dorion. Her expression changes to one of urgency, and she beckons him after a furtive glance at the door to the Warden's office.

CLAYTON DORION

(frowning)

What?

MARILYN BAGGETT

He's gone.

CLAYTON DORION

Who's gone?

MARILYN BAGGETT

That Mato-sa fella.

CLAYTON DORION

(shocked whisper)

Gone where?

Baggett takes another furtive glance at the Warden's office door, turns back to Dorion, and leans across her desk.

MARILYN BAGGETT

(whispers)

I don't know. That Marshal Messina and another marshal -- never saw him before -- took him out of here just as I got here this morning.

Dorion directs a raging glare at the Warden's door.

CLAYTON DORION
 (clenched teeth)
 Jesus, Mary and Joseph!

Baggett's eyes widen and puts a hand over her mouth as she looks at Dorion.

MARILYN BAGGETT
 (apprehensive)
 Oh my!

EXT. MV QUINAULT - HOUR AFTER SUNSET

Flecks of clouds, backlit by a half-moon, scud across the sky as the ferry crosses a quiet Puget Sound.

Myers and Rhodes stand with their hands grasping the metal railing that borders the forward deck above the maw of the vehicle deck below. The apparent wind from the moving ferry ruffles their clothing.

Myers and Rhodes stare at the mounded silhouette of the small peninsula upon which Port Townsend has been built.

Occasional lights twinkle from windows in the Uptown section of the town. The shapes of larger buildings along the waterfront are outlined by light from streetlights on Water Street.

The flash of the Point Wilson light to the north catches Myers' attention.

Rhodes nudges Myers with his elbow and nods toward the south where an approaching freighter's white masthead light and green starboard bow light shine.

Myers glances at the freighter and then gazes at their nearing destination.

REGINALD RHODES
 So tell me again how we know she's
 there?

The two men exchange glances. Myers looks back toward Port Townsend; Rhodes continues to look at Myers.

KARL MYERS
 Before I left Baltimore to take the
 job in Pennsylvania, I talked to her
 brother.

REGINALD RHODES
 You reached out to him?

KARL MYERS

Stumbled across each other in my old neighborhood. I think he felt sorry for me, thought she was being unreasonable. I guess he wanted to, I don't know ...

REGINALD RHODES

Make amends for his sister?

KARL MYERS

I guess. Said he'd send me her address, but he never did.

REGINALD RHODES

It's been how long since you talked with him?

KARL MYERS

I don't know, year and a half maybe.

REGINALD RHODES

So she might not even be there.

KARL MYERS

I've been thinking maybe if she had moved on it wouldn't be such a bad thing.

REGINALD RHODES

(slightly annoyed)

How long've you been thinking that?

KARL MYERS

The last two hundred miles or so.

Rhodes looks at Port Townsend.

REGINALD RHODES

Cold feet, First Sergeant. Cold feet.

KARL MYERS

She left me for a reason.

REGINALD RHODES

No doubt.

KARL MYERS

And nothing's changed in sixteen years, Gunney. Why would she want to have anything to do with me now?

REGINALD RHODES

Man, I bet there's a few things
that've changed in sixteen years. I
mean like *everything*.

Myers looks at Rhodes.

KARL MYERS

This is helping?

Rhodes glances at Myers, and then both look at the approaching town.

REGINALD RHODES

Come on, man. You're not the man you
were sixteen years ago. She can't be
the same woman. We all change over
time, don't we? You're going to be
strangers to each other. You know
that, right?

Rhodes looks at Myers, who continues to stare at Port Townsend.
After a few seconds Rhodes looks toward the ferry terminal.

KARL MYERS

How come you don't smoke?

Rhodes looks at Myers.

REGINALD RHODES

Man, how come you're changing the
subject? How come you don't smoke?

KARL MYERS

Don't like anything about it, my
friend.

REGINALD RHODES

Ditto, so now that that's out of the
way, what happens if she's here and
doesn't want anything to do with you?

KARL MYERS

I guess I'll jump off that bridge when
I get to it.

REGINALD RHODES

Man, there'll be no jumping off
bridges long as I have something to do
with this, you hear?

Myers glances at Rhodes and smiles slightly. Myers looks at the ferry terminal.

KARL MYERS

I hear, but maybe the best thing will be if she isn't anywhere near here.

REGINALD RHODES

And then what?

QUINAULT CAPTAIN

(LOUDSPEAKER)

All passengers are asked to return to their vehicles at this time. Please return to your vehicles at this time.

Rhodes follows Myers toward a door that opens into the forward passenger cabin.

REGINALD RHODES

And then what?

KARL MYERS

And then what, what?

INT. MV QUINAULT - CONTINUOUS

Rhodes follows Myers through the door and through the passenger cabin where PASSENGERS are in various stages of response to the Captain's direction.

Rhodes and Myers join a queue moving to stairs that lead down to the vehicle deck.

REGINALD RHODES

Then what the hell are we doing here?

KARL MYERS

You have any better place to be?

REGINALD RHODES

(chuckles)

I'll let you know in a day or two.

KARL MYERS

Carpe diem?

REGINALD RHODES

Something like that.

Rhodes and Myers descend the stairs among the other passengers. All walk to their cars and enter them. The Ford was the last vehicle to board and sits closest to the stern.

The Quinault slows as it nears the ferry terminal.

I/E - MYERS' FORD/PORT TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON - CONTINUOUS

Myers sits behind the wheel of the Ford; Rhodes sits beside him.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

I can't believe that two days ago we didn't even know each other existed, and here we are, one fucking odd couple of brothers in some godforsaken place neither of us knows a damned thing about.

KARL MYERS

We do know how to have fun, my friend.

REGINALD RHODES

(laughs)

That we do, man; that we do.

The Quinault touches the dock with a slight bump. Myers starts up the Ford.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

Any ideas where to go?

KARL MYERS

I'm thirsty.

REGINALD RHODES

Thirsty?

KARL MYERS

Has to be some kind of bar or tavern near a ferry terminal.

REGINALD RHODES

Oh, that kind of thirsty.

Vehicles disembark; the Ford climbs a ramp to Quincy Street.

To the right on the short block between the terminal and Water Street is a three-story, brick building. The side wall nearest the corner has a large, ground floor window through which bright interior light shines.

A DRUNK emerges from double doors angled across the front corner of the building. He staggers for a few steps and fetches up against a lamppost.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)

(nods at drunk)

Looks like you were right.

Myers turns the Ford right onto Water Street, which is a broad boulevard that runs parallel to the shoreline. Myers drives a hundred feet to where there is space along the curb. He parks, turns off the engine, and looks at his watch.

KARL MYERS

Ten-twelve.

REGINALD RHODES

Wonder when last call is out here?

KARL MYERS

We'll soon find out.

Myers and Rhodes exit the car and shut their doors.

SOUND of SILENCE as the engines of the Quinault shut down, save for the faint SOUND of WAVELETS brushing a shingle beach. The off-loaded vehicles are far down Water Street.

But for the drunk pinballing his way down the sidewalk, the town appears empty.

Myers leans on the Ford's roof and looks west down Water Street; Rhodes turns and looks at Myers overtop of the Ford.

REGINALD RHODES

(slightly spooked)

Where the hell are we?

Myers nods toward the two large windows on the Water Street side of the establishment on which Town Tavern is painted.

KARL MYERS

It appears we're in front of the Town Tavern.

REGINALD RHODES

I haven't felt this strange since I dropped my duffle on a bunk at Montford.

Myers walks around the back of the Ford and heads for the tavern.

KARL MYERS

That worked out okay.

Rhodes contemplates for a beat.

REGINALD RHODES

I guess it did.

Rhodes follows Myers into the Town Tavern. An ancient, upright grand piano is in a far corner of the expansive, high-ceilinged room; a number of large, round, poker tables surrounded by chairs are distributed around the space.

HENRY "BIG BUBBA" JONES and MARVIN "MARV" WATERS sit at one of the tables with TOM, DICK and HARRY. Bubba is a very large, broad man with porcine eyes and a weak chin. A dozen other MALE CUSTOMERS are interspersed among the tables.

All of the men wear work boots, some version of a plaid flannel shirt, and blue jeans, either overalls or held up by suspenders; a third of the men have large beards, as does Bubba, and most have crew cuts or severe flattops.

SUSAN "SUZY" KINCAID and five other HOOKERS are seated among the men and engage with them in INDECIPHERABLE REPORTEEE spiced with LAUGHTER.

CHARLES "CHARLIE" PARKER, bartender, is at work behind a massive, ornately-carved bar that runs nearly the entire length of the side wall of the tavern, on which hangs a huge oil painting of a reclining nude.

Charlie is of average height and has the look of someone who has led a soft life, but his hands still bear the scars and callouses of the lumberjack he once was.

Charlie's voice is gravelly from continuously smoking Dutch Masters Coronas like the one hanging from his lips, but the voice is friendly. He calls out to Myers and Rhodes over the lively din of the customers.

CHARLES PARKER

I bet you fellas must've just landed.

REGINALD RHODES

You'd bet right.

Myers and Rhodes approach the bar.

CHARLES PARKER

What can I get you?

REGINALD RHODES

Well, to start, you can set up a beer for me ...

(nods toward Myers)

... and a bourbon for my friend.

Charlie reaches his hand across the bar toward Rhodes.

CHARLES PARKER
Names Charlie, Charlie Parker, and no,
the Yardbird ain't my father.

Charlie and Myers smile, and Rhodes laughs as he shakes
Charlie's hand.

REGINALD RHODES
Folks call me Reggie.
(gestures toward Myers)
This here is Karl.

Myers and Charlie shake hands.

KARL MYERS
I see an empty table. Mind if we sit
there?

CHARLES PARKER
Not at all. Could you guys use some
grub?

REGINALD RHODES
Praise Jesus. I was just about to ask.

CHARLES PARKER
Got some really good fish chowder left
in the pot and some sourdough biscuits
fresh this afternoon.

REGINALD RHODES
Done and done.

CHARLES PARKER
Rainier's a popular beer out here,
Reggie. That be okay?

Rhodes gives Charlie a thumbs up. Charlie fills a mug from a
tap and hands it to Rhodes.

CHARLES PARKER (CONT'D)
You fellas go have a seat.
Mirabelle'll bring the food and the
bourbon.

KARL MYERS
Might want to send a bottle.

CHARLES PARKER
In that case, I'll bring the bourbon
myself.

REGINALD RHODES
Thanks Charlie.

Myers touches his forehead and nods thanks at Charlie.

Myers and Rhodes sit at an empty table near the front door. The eyes of several of the customers watch them.

REGINALD RHODES (CONT'D)
(confidential)
Looks like we're the entertainment
tonight.

KARL MYERS
To be expected in a small town, don't
you think?

Charlie approaches the table with a bottle of bourbon and a tumbler; he places them on the table.

CHARLES PARKER
Bourbon for Mr. Karl. Mirabelle will
be out in a second. Bottoms up.

Charlie walks back behind the bar.

REGINALD RHODES
I wonder when the last time was that a
colored man walked in here?

KARL MYERS
Can't imagine that's an issue.

REGINALD RHODES
It's always an issue.

Rhodes scans the room.

REGINALD RHODES
(teasing)
Don't suppose any of these girls is
Laura.

KARL MYERS
(smiles, raised eyebrow)
You'd suppose right. If you're asking
me, these girls are working.

Rhodes stares beyond Myers toward the bar, his eyes wide with wonder, and his beer at half hoist. Myers turns to see what Reggie is looking at.

MIRABELLE CHARLES walks toward them carrying a tray holding two bowls, a basket of biscuits, a dish of butter, and silverware.

Mirabelle is a petite Klallam woman of some indeterminate age between eighteen and forty who moves with natural grace and athleticism; her flawless skin is somewhere between honey and maple syrup in tone.

Her jet-black hair is pulled back into a ponytail that reaches her waist; her face is exotic: almond-shaped eyes, high cheekbones, an aquiline nose, and a broad mouth that turns into a shy smile when she reaches the table.

Mirabelle slides the tray onto the table and distributes its contents in front of Myers and Rhodes; Rhodes remains staring, his beer halfway between the table and his mouth.

Mirabelle glances at Rhodes, who is still mesmerized. She chuckles in surprise and casts her eyes down.

MIRABELLE CHARLES
(gentle and sweet)
Can I get you anything else?

REGINALD RHODES
(terminally smitten)
Are you Mirabelle?

Mirabelle nods; Myers smiles.

BIG BUBBA JONES (O.C.)
(yells with a remnant of a
Carolina twang)
Mirabelle! Get your skinny little ass
over here.

Mirabelle appears embarrassed, picks up the tray, and bows apologetically.

MIRABELLE CHARLES
(whispers to Rhodes)
Excuse me.

Rhodes watches Mirabelle as she hurries toward Bubba, who has turned his chair perpendicular to the table.

When Mirabelle reaches Bubba, he grabs her hand, pulls him close enough to wrap his other hand around her waist, and hoists her onto his lap. Bubba's friends laugh as she struggles to get away.

BIG BUBBA JONES
 (to Mirabelle)
 How about you and me have a little
 fun?

Rhodes is on his feet with such speed that his chair goes flying. The chair's clatter gets Bubba's attention.

KARL MYERS
 (low but firm)
 Easy, my friend.

Bubba and Rhodes glare at each other. Bubba stands. Mirabelle slides off Bubba's lap and lands on the floor, butt-first; she drops the metal tray which clatters on the floor.

Mirabelle is on her feet with the tray in hand in an instant and hurries toward Rhodes.

MIRABELLE CHARLES
 It's okay. He means no harm.

Rhodes does not take his eyes off Bubba.

REGINALD RHODES
 (low and rumbling)
 It's not okay.

Rhodes gently pushes Mirabelle aside with the back of his hand.

Bubba steps toward Rhodes.

BIG BUBBA JONES
 (fearless challenge)
 You got a problem, boy?

KARL MYERS
 (low but insistent)
 Easy, Reggie.

Bubba continues his approach; Rhodes stands his ground.

Charlie dials the operator on a phone behind the bar. The men at Bubba's table stand. Marv steps forward.

BIG BUBBA JONES
 (loud, challenging)
 I asked you a question, *boy!*

REGINALD RHODES
 (controlled)
 Apologize to the lady.

BIG BUBBA JONES
 (surprised smile)
 Apologize?

Bubba turns toward his friends and laughs.

BIG BUBBA JONES
 (to Marv)
 Apologize?

Bubba and his friends laugh. Bubba turns back to Rhodes with a mean squint in his little pig eyes; his jaw juts forward.

BIG BUBBA JONES
 (sneers)
 She ain't no lady.

REGINALD RHODES
 (controlled)
 Apologize.

Myers stands and approaches Bubba until his chest touches Bubba's left arm. Tom, Dick and Harry stand behind Marv.

KARL MYERS
 Easy.

Bubba approaches until his large belly butts against Rhode's muscled middle.

BIG BUBBA JONES
 Make me.

Bubba's friends grin at one another.

Charlie hangs up the phone, comes out from behind the bar, and watches. Mirabelle, her dark eyes wide and staring, backs away, drops the tray on a table, and holds both hands to her mouth.

Every customer in the tavern is watching; many are standing, including two hookers who stand on chairs.

REGINALD RHODES
 (controlled)
 Do the right thing, man. Apologize to the lady.

Bubba laughs and turns as if he will walk away; instead, he rounds on Rhodes with a clenched right fist aimed at Rhodes' face.

With startling quickness, Rhodes' enormous left hand rises and intercepts Bubba's fist with a smack. Rhodes' massive fingers envelope the fist and squeeze.

Bubba's face shows surprise, then pain as Rhodes slowly twists the fist.

Bubba's friends move forward; Myers steps between them and Bubba.

Bubba drops to his knees as Rhodes twists the fist.

BIG BUBBA JONES

(pleads)

You're gonna break my arm.

Marv directs a roundhouse punch at Myers.

Myers blocks the punch with his forearm, twists behind Marv, wraps his arm around Marv's back, grabs the waist band of Marv's jeans, leans into him, and throws him several feet onto an unforgiving table. Marv, groaning, rolls onto the floor.

Myers whips around toward Tom, Dick and Harry and takes a defensive stance. Bubba's friends back up.

Bubba, clearly in pain, is on his knees with his forehead nearly touching the floor as Rhodes continues to twist the fist.

REGINALD RHODES

(a tad winded but controlled)

Apologize to the lady.

BIG BUBBA JONES

(gasps)

I'm sorry.

Rhodes ratchets up another tweak to Bubba's fist.

REGINALD RHODES

(encouraging)

To the lady and louder: I'm sorry,
Mirabelle.

BIG BUBBA JONES

(grimacing, loud)

I'm ... sorry ... *Mirabelle!*

SOUND of approaching SIREN.

Rhodes releases Bubba's hand.

On hands and knees, Bubba looks up at Rhodes, who extends his hand. After a beat, Bubba takes it, and Rhodes helps him to his feet. Tom, Dick and Harry help Marv into a seated position on the floor.

FLASHING RED LIGHT illuminates the tavern.

The SIREN STOPS.

All eyes turn toward the front door, which opens. Port Townsend Police Chief, SAMUEL "SAM" SHEPHERD enters; he taps the end of a Billy club against his left palm with the confidence of a man who has engaged in other barroom brawls and emerged victorious.

Shepherd is middle-aged, six-feet tall, and somewhat handsome. He is in uniform beneath a shearling-collared, bomber jacket; he wears a typical policeman's duty cap.

Bubba drops into a chair as Shepherd walks slowly forward and surveys those who seem to be the principal players: Myers, Rhodes, Bubba and Marv.

SAM SHEPHERD

What seems to be the problem, Charlie?
Just the usual Friday night fun and
games at the Town Tavern?

Charlie steps to Shepherd's side; Shepherd keeps his eyes on the principals.

SOUND of approaching SIREN.

CHARLES PARKER

Well, Chief, I don't rightly know.
(points at Myers and Rhodes)
These two fellas come in here, seemed
to be minding their own business, and
it seems like Big Bubba took offense
to something the colored fella said.

SAM SHEPHERD

Uh huh. What about the fella sitting
on the floor?

CHARLES PARKER

Well, I don't rightly know about that
either.

More FLASHING RED LIGHT enters the tavern; the SIREN STOPS.

Officer RONALD WILLIS, young, tall, lean, uniformed and breathless, hustles into the tavern and goes to Shepherd.

RONALD WILLIS
What's up, Chief?

SAM SHEPHERD
(eyes on Myers et al)
Got us what appears to be a case of
disorderly conduct.

Shepherd steps closer to Myers and Rhodes.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)
We're going to put the cuffs on each
of you boys and walk you down to the
jail. It's not far.
(to Bubba)
Ain't that right, Bubba?

Bubba stands.

BIG BUBBA JONES
(deferential)
You're sure right about that, Chief.
Uh huh, not far at all.

SAM SHEPHERD
(smiles at Bubba and Rhodes)
The night air just might cool your
heads. By the time we get to the jail,
you should have your stories worked
out right well.
(to Charlie)
You think you could mosey over in a
couple of minutes to give me a
statement?

Charlie scans the customers, all of whom are still watching the
drama unfold.

CHARLES PARKER
It's like this, Chief. I don't think I
ought to leave Mirabelle here to
handle a late-night crowd.

Shepherd bites his lower lip and concentrates for a beat, but
does not respond to Charlie; instead, he looks at Officer
Willis.

SAM SHEPHERD
Ronald, cuff Big Bubba and Marv.

Willis complies.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)
 (to Myers and Rhodes)
 You two: turn around.

Myers and Rhodes comply and hold their hands behind their backs; Shepherd cuffs them.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)
 (to Charlie)
 Officer Willis will stay. I don't
 expect there'll be any more nonsense.

Shepherd surveys the room.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)
 (loud)
 Isn't that right, ladies and
 gentlemen?

There is a general murmuring of assent from the customers.

SAM SHEPHERD
 (to the prisoners)
 All right, gentlemen. Let's move out.

Officer Willis leads the party to the door and holds it open. Myers, Rhodes, Bubba, Marv and Shepherd exit in that order.

EXT. WATER STREET, PORT TOWNSEND - CONTINUOUS

When Myers emerges from the Tavern, he nearly collides with LAURA BENTON (MYERS) MURDOCH, who is laughing and walking hand-in-hand with GEORGE MURDOCH, a man twenty years her senior.

Laura, a ravishing natural beauty with shoulder-length auburn hair, is five-seven, with long, slim legs encased in black cigarette pants; she wears a plaid suburbanite jacket and new flatties.

Myers, stunned, stops stock still. Rhodes nearly collides with him; Bubba and Marv are not paying attention and do collide with Rhodes.

Utter disbelief and near horror flash into Laura's expression. She grabs George's arm and stops his progress; he looks at her with bewilderment.

SAM SHEPHERD (O.C.)
 Let's keep moving, gentlemen.

Bubba moves to the head of the column and starts walking east on Water Street. Rhodes gives Myers a shove; Myers looks at the sidewalk and follows Bubba; Rhodes and Marv follow in turn.

Shepherd touches the brim of his duty cap as he passes Laura and George.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)
Evening, Miss Laura. George.

GEORGE MURDOCH
(nods)
Chief.

Laura holds back, almost wild-eyed, and watches the column walking away on the sidewalk. George leans down and looks at her.

GEORGE MURDOCH
Are you okay?

Laura appears overwhelmed but forces a smile and shakes her head slightly.

LAURA
It's nothing. Nothing. I don't know
what got into me.

George holds the Town Tavern door open. As Laura nears the doorway, she directs a fleeting glance in the direction of the departing prisoners.

EXT. WATER STREET - MORNING, NEXT DAY

The air is cold, but the sun is bright; the sky is blue and flecked with a few, quick-moving, bright-white clouds.

Myers stands in front of the entrance to the Town Tavern and stares down Water Street at the Olympics, which soar above plumes of smoke and steam belching from the paper mill west of town.

Vehicles begin to disembark from the MV Quinault to his left and stop to wait for the red light to change at the corner.

Myers absently looks into a large, black, four-door, 1954, Ford Customline that has stopped in front of him. Staring back at him from the rear seat and wearing a fedora with a large floppy brim is MATO-SA (aka Richard Clement).

Two MARSHALS, one of whom is VINCENT "VINNIE" MESSINA, sit in the front seat; a third MARSHAL sits next to Mato-sa. The marshals have flat tops and wear suits.

The light changes and the sedan moves forward; Mato-sa smiles mockingly at Myers and places his left hand on the front seat as he turns and stares at Myers as the Ford turns onto Water Street.

Myers takes quick steps as if to follow the sedan, but his expression reflects the futility of pursuit as well as confusion caused by what he has just seen.

Myers focuses on the diminishing license plate, and then stares at the departing car.

SOUND of a CAR HORN'S HONK from the opposite side of Water Street.

Myers looks in the direction of the honk, which has come from Shepherd's police cruiser on Quincy Street on the opposite side of the broad boulevard.

Shepherd beckons Myers with a wave through the open driver's side window.

Myers crosses the lightly traveled street and stands next to the open window.

SAM SHEPHERD

How about a tour of the town?

Myers looks toward the Olympics and then back at Shepherd.

KARL MYERS

Why not? And anyway, I just saw something I think you need to know about.

SAM SHEPHERD

Hop in.

Myers goes around the back of the cruiser and enters the passenger side of the car.

I/E - POLICE CRUISER/WATER STREET - CONTINUOUS

The cruiser proceeds slowly west on Water Street.

SAM SHEPHERD

Glad we got all that hoo-haw worked out last night.

KARL MYERS
 (chuckles)
 Great way to introduce ourselves.

SAM SHEPHERD
 Consider yourself introduced.

Myers chuckles.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)
 And how about Big Bubba and your
 buddy?

KARL MYERS
 Thick as thieves by the time Bubba
 left.

SAM SHEPHERD
 Their families are from the same town
 in South Carolina?

KARL MYERS
 Apparently.

SAM SHEPHERD
 Bubba can be a total fool when he's
 had too much to drink. He and I've
 been doing the disorderly dance since
 I started working here at the end of
 the war.

KARL MYERS
 Bubba's been here since then too?

SAM SHEPHERD
 (chuckles)
 He and I were bunk mates at Fort
 Worden during the war. I was from
 Maine, him from Carolina. We were an
 odd couple, I can tell you that. Took
 us months before we could understand
 each other.

Myers chuckles and glances at Shepherd before turning his eyes
 back to the street scene.

SAM SHEPHERD
 You said you saw something I should
 know about.

Myers appears to be pondering something.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)

Karl?

KARL MYERS

On my way out here, I happened to
stumble across a prison break.

SAM SHEPHERD

Not your everyday tourist attraction.
Where?

KARL MYERS

Near Williston. North Dakota.

SAM SHEPHERD

That's where Fermamount is, isn't it?

KARL MYERS

It is.

Shepherd issues a low whistle.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)

I saw one of the escapees, face-to-
face, just before he was captured.

SAM SHEPHERD

And?

KARL MYERS

And I just saw him again in the back
of a black, fifty-four, Ford
Customline with North Dakota plates
just disembarked from the ferry. I got
a partial on the plate.

SAM SHEPHERD

Are you sure it was him?

KARL MYERS

Positive.

SAM SHEPHERD

What in God's name would explain that?

KARL MYERS

I can only think of two possibilities.

SAM SHEPHERD

He escaped again?

KARL MYERS

He was with three guys in suits. Army butch cut on the one in the passenger seat. Couldn't see the faces of the other two guys. Almost looked like this guy was being chauffeured, which doesn't jive with an escape.

SAM SHEPHERD

Maybe the mob sprung him.

KARL MYERS

That only happens in movies. And if he escaped, wouldn't there've been an APB from the Feds?

SAM SHEPHERD

I'm afraid I don't pay too much attention to those unless they're from my corner of the world.

KARL MYERS

Since escape doesn't seem likely, there's the second possibility.

SAM SHEPHERD

Which is?

KARL MYERS

The Feds are transferring him to another facility.

SAM SHEPHERD

Why would they do that?

KARL MYERS

Don't they do that sometimes when an inmate's been threatened by other inmates?

SAM SHEPHERD

Got me. The only problem with that is that there aren't any federal facilities on the entire Olympic Peninsula.

The men are silent for several seconds. Shepherd bears left where Water Street continues to the Port Townsend Boat Haven.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)

Was he cuffed?

KARL MYERS

When he saw me -- and he did recognize me because he kept staring -- and smirking now that I think of it. Anyway, when he saw me he put his left hand on the front seatback.

SAM SHEPHERD

So not cuffed. I'd think he'd be an escape risk. Not being cuffed sounds extra-procedural. You know anything about this guy?

KARL MYERS

I don't, other than the fact one of the other escapees called him Mato.

SAM SHEPHERD

Mato? And he escaped from a maximum security federal pen. He an Indian?

KARL MYERS

Yep.

SAM SHEPHERD

I'm not sure I can just let this go.

KARL MYERS

Probably nothing, but if it was me back in Pennsylvania, I would've wanted to know what was up.

(looks at Shepherd)

But Sam, I'm in no way ...

SAM SHEPHERD

Trying to tell me how to do my job.

KARL MYERS

Not at all.

SAM SHEPHERD

(glances at Myers)

You sure sound like a cop.

KARL MYERS

Once a cop ...

SAM SHEPHERD

Not always a cop, apparently; otherwise, you'd consider the offer I made last night before you left.

KARL MYERS

I'm embarrassed to say it, but I've lost confidence in my judgement, Sam.

SAM SHEPHERD

Maybe so, but how about putting your head together with mine over a cup of coffee from time to time?

The cruiser pulls to a stop in the parking area of the Boat Haven overlooking the boat basin. The basin is large and rectangular and divided into two sections with several floating docks and up to four hundred small craft.

KARL MYERS

About what?

SAM SHEPHERD

Well, like this Mato fella as a for instance.

Myers stares at the boats in the basin and does not respond.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)

You know how this job isolates you. There's virtually no one to give you council.

KARL MYERS

And you'd be willing to take mine?

SAM SHEPHERD

Call me crazy.

KARL MYERS

Don't you want to get to know me a little better?

Shepherd and Myers look at each other.

SAM SHEPHERD

That'll happen if we let it.

Myers stares at Shepherd as though trying to get the measure of the man; Shepherd appears to be doing the same.

KARL MYERS

Don't know how long I'll be here.

SAM SHEPHERD

It'll be longer than you think.

The men return their gapes to the boats.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)
Where's your gun?

KARL MYERS
In Charlie's safe.

SAM SHEPHERD
Good. Leave it there.

Shepherd looks at Myers and waves his hand across the view of the boat basin.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)
You ever know this life?

KARL MYERS
When I was a teenager. My stepfather couldn't stand me ...

SAM SHEPHERD
Or you him, from the sound of your voice.

KARL MYERS
Or me him. Anyway, he had a lotta dough and sent me to a boarding school with a sailing program on the Chesapeake. I was there for a couple years. Actually got pretty good at it. Small boats though.

SAM SHEPHERD
I'm a stink potter myself. See that black-hulled beauty in front of us? That little sweetheart is mine.

Shepherd's Orca is a forty-five-foot troller tied up to the floating dock closest to the yard. Tied to the dock forward of the Orca is a sixty-foot, black-hulled yawl with a center cockpit: The Serenity.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)
Took eight years to restore it. Found her rotting in the back of the yard after the war.

Shepherd pulls a pack of Viceroy's from his jacket, and offers it to Myers, who waves it off. Shepherd taps out a fag and lights it with a gold-plated lighter.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)
 Rebuilt it myself -- at least most of
 it -- right here. Been living onboard
 for almost two years.

KARL MYERS
 Nice lighter.

SAM SHEPHERD
 Christmas present from an old
 girlfriend.

KARL MYERS
 She's not around anymore?

SAM SHEPHERD
 She's why I'm living on the Orca.

The companionway hatch to the forward cabin of the Serenity
 slides back, and George Murdoch emerges wearing a heavy wool,
 navy blue turtleneck and a black watch cap. He holds a mug of
 something steaming hot.

George stands in the center cockpit, sips from the mug, and
 stares at the Olympics.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)
 You were asking me about Laura Benton
 last night.
 (nods toward George)
 That's her husband.

Myers snaps a look at Shepherd and holds it.

KARL MYERS
 Her husband?

SAM SHEPHERD
 Has been for over a year.

KARL MYERS
 (nods at Serenity)
 That's his?

SAM SHEPHERD
 It is. Laura's such a beauty, I knew
 it'd take somebody like Murdoch to get
 her to say yes.

KARL MYERS
 What do you mean?

SAM SHEPHERD

A classy, good-looking woman like her can hold out until she finds a guy with deep pockets. He's a Seattle surgeon, plus his family has big holdings in Oregon land and lumber.

KARL MYERS

So Laura lives in Seattle?

SAM SHEPHERD

Comes up here some weekends with Murdoch; sometimes just by herself.

As the men stare at George, sixteen-year-old WILLIAM "BILLY" BENTON emerges from below. He wears a turtleneck and watchcap similar to George's, and carries a steaming mug.

Billy stands next to George and says something that makes George laugh.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)

(casual)

That's her boy.

Myers body tenses; his eyes widen.

KARL MYERS

(snaps)

Whose boy?

SAM SHEPHERD

Laura's.

KARL MYERS

She has a son?

Shepherd does not notice that Myers is struggling to breathe, that he has gripped the door handle as though he is about to rip it from the door.

SAM SHEPHERD

Hell of an athlete. One of the best ever in this town. Broke a single-game rushing record as a freshman. The coach about had a stroke when Billy went to live down in Seattle after his mom got married.

Myers is silent; he stares at Billy who is the spitting image of what Myers might have looked like at that age. Shepherd looks at Myers and notices the change in Myers' demeanor.

SAM SHEPHERD (CONT'D)

You okay?

KARL MYERS

(struggles to speak)

How old is he?

SAM SHEPHERD

Sixteen, if memory serves.

Billy and George laugh at another shared joke and raise their mugs to one another. Billy looks toward and recognizes the Chief's car. With a broad smile, Billy waves to Shepherd, who sticks his hand out the window and waves back.

Myers' jaw is clenched; his eyes well up as he stares for the first time at his son.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE SIX