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PROD. #K0601  
July 25, 1995 (F.R.)W

AMERICAN GOTHIC

"A Tree Grows In Trinity"

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#K0601

AMERICAN GOTHIC

"A Tree Grows In Trinity"

CAST

SHERIFF LUCAS BUCK  
GAIL EMORY  
DR. MATT CROWER  
SELENA COOMBS  
MERLYN TEMPLE  
CALEB TEMPLE  
BEN HEALY

DANIEL TRULANE  
DEPUTY #1  
HARLAN JEETER  
TEAPOT  
THE STRANGER/MANUEL SANTO  
REVEREND  
LITTLE GIRL  
CURTIS Z. WEBB  
NURSE  
ALBERT

SETS

INTERIORS:

HUNTING LODGE  
MAIN ROOM  
BACK ROOM  
HOSPITAL  
TREATMENT ROOM  
MATT'S OFFICE  
HALL

EXTERIORS:

COUNTRY ROAD  
BURNED OUT FARMHOUSE  
TOBACCO FIELD  
WOODS  
HOSPITAL  
RIVER FRONT  
WESTERN RIVER BANK  
HUNTING LODGE  
PAUPER'S CEMETERY  
CURTIS Z. WEBB'S HOUSE  
HIGHWAY

AMERICAN GOTHIC

"A Tree Grows In Trinity"

TEASER

FADE IN

1 INT. HUNTING LODGE - MAIN ROOM - DAY

1

Out of the darkness, a door flies open and a shaft of light hits us dead on. In silhouette, a curvaceous figure enters FRAME, closes the door, and FLICKS on a lighter. We discover SELENA COOMBS, replete in tailored suit, and carrying a leather bag. Throughout the following, she addresses CAMERA likes she's talking to a favorite pet.

SELENA

Hello, lover. How you feelin'?

Lighting a wall candle, she drops her coat to the floor and slithers toward us.

SELENA

Brought you a present.

She pulls a chocolate cupcake from her bag.

SELENA

Ms. Carter and her twins whipped these up for my English class...  
Mighty tasty.

Selena holds up the cupcake like an offering.

SELENA

(with concern)  
Come on, darlin'. You got to eat something. I'm gettin' worried about'cha.

We hear an O.S. MOAN. Selena sighs.

SELENA

Alright. We'll save this for dessert.

Putting the cupcake aside, Selena kneels to the ground, and pulls a thermos and sponge from her bag.

SELENA

Just got to make the best of things, don't we... amor?

CONTINUED

## 1 CONTINUED

1

She pours a bit of steaming water from the thermos onto the sponge, unbuttons her blouse, and squeezes some of the water between her breasts. As she sponges herself...

SELENA

Yes... Just gotta make the best of things.

Another MOAN. Selena smiles...

SELENA

Time for your wet down.

And Selena lifts the sponge toward CAMERA. As she pushes it into the LENS, the screen goes BLACK and we HEAR...

SELENA (O.S.)

Oww!...

(then; likes it)

Nasty boy.

## 2 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY - TIGHT ON CALEB

2

As the boy runs into FRAME with terror in his eyes. CAMERA slowly circles Caleb as he attempts to catch his breath. We WIDEN to discover that he is surrounded by corn fields and has stumbled on a crossroads. A sign ahead reads "TRINITY: SIX MILES." Caleb considers this, looks over his shoulder, then resumes running down the road leading away from town. We PAN UP TO REVEAL an ominous looking scarecrow hovering above us, and...

LUCAS (V.O.)

We got a ten-year-old kid with a thirty minute start. I want him back by sundown.

## 3 EXT. BURNED OUT FARMHOUSE - DAY

3

SHERIFF LUCAS BUCK is surrounded by troopers. His deputy, BEN HEALY, lingers nervously among them while MATT CROWER looks on intently. In the b.g. we see firetrucks, yellow tape, etc.

LUCAS

Man who comes through for me wins a steak dinner.

CONTINUED

3 CONTINUED

3

MATT

What is this?! High Noon?  
(to the troops)  
The boy isn't a criminal. He's  
running because he's lost his  
family and he's scared...

LUCAS

(pissed)  
He's runnin', Doctor, because you  
couldn't keep him in your  
hospital...

MATT

(right back at him)  
And I couldn't keep you out. You  
want to do something for this boy?  
Leave him the hell alone.

GAIL (O.S.)

We're wasting time.

Lucas turns toward the voice. We pick up GAIL EMORY,  
staring darkly into the smoking embers of the farmhouse.

LUCAS

I don't believe we've met.

GAIL

I'm Gail Emory...  
(pointedly)  
And I know we have.

LUCAS

Well... where you been all these  
years, Missy? Lose your car keys?

BEN

She's Caleb's cousin.

LUCAS

Was I talkin' to you?

GAIL

I'm going with you to find Caleb.

Gail pulls a laminated press I.D. from her purse and holds  
it before him.

LUCAS

Oh... Got the family nose for  
news, do ya?

CONTINUED

GAIL

If that's what it takes to get your attention.

LUCAS

You already have my attention, Ma'am.

(smiles)

It's Sheriff Lucas Buck... That's Buck with a B.

Lucas turns to the troopers.

LUCAS

Gentleman, we have an esteemed member of the press joining our party this afternoon. Please make her welcome, and feel free to sing my praises.

(re: Matt)

Sadly, the good doctor...

Suddenly, Matt's BEEPER goes off.

LUCAS

...will be needed elsewhere.

Matt checks the number on the beeper, then glances up at Lucas, who is already moving toward a van. Matt and Gail follow him...

MATT

(re; beeper)

Something's up at the hospital. I have to get back.

GAIL

Go ahead. I'll be fine.

MATT

(calling to Lucas)

Caleb will need immediate medical attention as soon as he's found. You understand me?

Suddenly, Lucas swings open the cargo doors of the van  
REVEALING

THE EYES OF A HALF A DOZEN DOGS

glaring at us ominously from behind a screen. A low GROWL resonates from within.

CONTINUED

LUCAS  
Howdy, boys. Meet Dr. Crower.

BANG! The lead dog jumps ferociously at the screen. Matt takes a wary step back.

LUCAS  
Funny... He don't seem to like you.  
(yells)  
Let's move out!

Lucas opens the screen, the dogs leap into the air, and we

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN

4 EXT. TOBACCO FIELD - DAY - ON THE FEET OF THE HOUNDS 4

As they thunder through the tobacco field. PAN UP TO REVEAL LUCAS AND GAIL, hot on their heels.

LUCAS  
Where'd you hear about this mess?

GAIL  
I saw you on the news.

LUCAS  
Really? How'd I look?

GAIL  
(no compliment)  
Haven't changed a bit.

LUCAS  
Well, it's a terrible tragedy.  
Caleb's daddy just went on a  
rampage. Killed his daughter with  
a shovel, then offed hisself in my  
jail. Been a helluva day.

GAIL  
Does Caleb know his father's dead?

LUCAS  
Don't see how he could. He's been  
runnin' all night. You have to  
understand, Ma'am, when something  
like this happens to a child...

GAIL  
I lost my parents when I was eight  
years old. I do understand.

LUCAS  
Oh, shoot... 'Course you did. Then  
you know how traumatic something  
like this can be. I believe Caleb  
burned his house down as a cry for  
help; to protest the loss of his  
sister.

GAIL  
That's one theory.

LUCAS  
Got a better one?

CONTINUED



4 CONTINUED

4

GAIL  
Maybe he just wanted to get away  
from you.

5 INT. BEN'S PATROL CAR - DAY - MOVING

5

Ben's at the wheel. Matt's shotgun.

MATT  
How long have you been with the  
Sheriff?

BEN  
'Bout fifteen years.

MATT  
Pay you well?

Ben glances at him. Knows where this is leading.

BEN  
I get by.

MATT  
Must be tough working for a man  
like that, eh?

Ben doesn't respond.

MATT  
Or maybe not.

BEN  
Look... Whatever you think of  
Lucas, he's helped a lot of folks  
in this town.

MATT  
How?

BEN  
By giving them a second chance.  
After high school, I went down to  
Georgia to run tailback, right?  
Broke my collarbone Junior year.  
That same week, my girlfriend got  
pregnant. Suddenly, I had no  
scholarship, no money, and a baby  
on the way.

MATT  
So he gave you a job.

CONTINUED

5 CONTINUED

5

LUCAS

Not only that, he paid for my damn wedding. "Every man deserves a second chance," he said.

(darkening)

Course, now I'm divorced, hardly ever see my kids... but I'll never forget what Lucas done.

Matt considers the irony of this.

MATT

You're a loyal man.

BEN

Gotta be.

MATT

No matter what it costs you?

BEN

Doctor... I know who I work for.

(a confession of sorts)

But sometimes it's easier to try and change what you know... than face what you don't.

(looks at him)

You understand?

And as Matt considers the implications of this remark, we go

6 EXT. WOODS - DAY

6

Caleb is running along a creek. Hearing the hounds BAYING in the distance, he searches for a place to hide.

He sees a large tree that's been felled by lightning. Digging out some mud, he creates a crawl space in the trunk and starts to pull himself inside.

7 EXT. WOODS - DAY

7

Lucas, Gail and the posse have reached the crossroads.

LUCAS

What are your intentions once we find the boy?

GAIL

In what sense?

CONTINUED

7 CONTINUED

7

LUCAS

Well, you're the only family he's got now. You lookin' for custody?

GAIL

I just want to see that he's taken care of... You can't always depend on the child welfare system.

LUCAS

You seem to come out all right.

GAIL

(a jab)  
Relative to whom?

LUCAS

You know, if I weren't so damn romantic, I might think you didn't like me.

GAIL

If you weren't so damn smug, you'd know it.

Suddenly, a DEPUTY runs up to them.

DEPUTY #1

Sheriff? We got somethin'.

Lucas glances ahead and sees

THE FALLEN TREE

that Caleb crawled into, now surrounded by dogs. The lead hound is viciously ravaging something inside the trunk. LUCAS AND GAIL race ahead. Lucas pulls the deputy's gun from his holster and FIRES into the air. The lead dog immediately ceases his attack. Lucas bends down to the hole, points his flashlight inside, and his face darkens...

LUCAS

Oh, Hell...

He reaches in and pulls out a dead opossum.

LUCAS

(with disgust)  
Mountain rat.

Lucas tosses it to the dogs with a THUD, as Gail lets out a sigh of relief and we go back to

8 EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY - BEN'S PATROL CAR - MOVING

8

Ben and Matt, right where we left them. They're closing in on the hospital.

BEN  
Hey, Doc... You, uh... You gonna be  
examinin' Mr. Temple's body any  
time soon?

MATT  
Not officially. That's up to the  
coroner.

BEN  
Oh, right. Yeah.

MATT  
Why?

BEN  
Oh, nothin'. Just, uh... Well... I  
don't know if you heard 'bout how  
the man died...

MATT  
I found the body.

BEN  
Oh, right... Then I guess you know  
about the, uh... The, uh...

Ben makes a lame gesture to his throat.

MATT  
The pen in his windpipe?

BEN  
Yeah. Right. The pen.

MATT  
What about it?

BEN  
(testing the water)  
Well, this was... suicide, right?

MATT  
Looked that way.

BEN  
(relieved)  
Right. Uh... Did anyone happen to  
mention... who the pen belonged to?

CONTINUED

MATT

No.

BEN

Well...

(looks around; whispers)

It was mine.

(off Matt's reaction)

Now, you gotta believe me when I say I had nothin' to do with Gage's death. I swear, I'd never do nothin' like that. But...

(completely sincere)

I loved that pen.

MATT

I see.

BEN

And I'd really like it back. My mama gave it to me and it was kind of a lucky charm.

MATT

(thinks he's kidding)

A lucky pen... from your mama.

Ben smiles sheepishly.

MATT

Well... I'm meeting the coroner this afternoon. After he's completed his autopsy, I'll... see what I can do.

BEN

Thanks, Doc. I'd really appreciate that.

Matt gets out of the car, shakes his head, and starts moving toward the hospital. Ben calls after him through the window.

BEN

You take care of yourself now. And don't worry 'bout Caleb. We'll find him. Everything's going to be fine, you'll see.

But Matt's already gone. Ben lets out a great sigh.

BEN

Everything's going to be fine.

And as the deputy wipes a bead of perspiration from his brow, we go

9 EXT. RIVER FRONT - DAY

9

Caleb reaches the edge of a river, banked by a number of giant trees. He can hear the HOUNDS BAYING IN THE DISTANCE. Exhausted, he falls to the edge of the water, and cups his hands to drink. As he lifts his head, he sees

THE IMAGE OF MERLYN

standing next to him in the reflection.

GO WIDE

As Caleb jumps to his feet with a start. Merlyn is now beside him in all of her astral glory, seemingly transfixed by her image in the water.

CALEB

(awestruck)  
Merlyn...

MERLYN

Is this what I look like?

CALEB

You look the same.

MERLYN

I don't feel the same. Everything is different...

CALEB

For me too, Merly. The Sheriff is after me. He thinks he's my daddy.

Merlyn turns to the boy.

MERLYN

What do you think?

CALEB

I think he's crazy. This whole thing is crazy.

MERLYN

He was with our mother, Caleb... And he wants to raise you in his image.

CALEB

Well, that ain't gonna happen.

MERLYN

You can't run forever.

CONTINUED

9 CONTINUED

9

CALEB

Why not? I don't need him. I  
don't need nobody.

Caleb defiantly rips a branch off an adjacent tree, pulls  
off his sweat shirt, and ties it around the tiny limb.  
After tugging on it a couple of times, he tosses it into the  
current and it begins floating downstream.

CALEB

You remember that old huntin' lodge  
we found?

MERLYN

Yes.

CALEB

That's where I'm goin'. You want  
to come with me?

MERLYN

I'll always be with you.

CALEB

Alright, then...

We go

TIGHT ON CALEB

As he braces to jump...

CALEB

We gotta go upstream. Hope you're  
swimmin's better then it used to  
be.

...and off he goes, diving into the air, and we PULL BACK TO  
REVEAL that Merlyn has vanished.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN

10 INT. HOSPITAL - TREATMENT ROOM - DAY - ON A BARE SHOULDER 10

In a curtained-off cubicle, Matt applies a cold compress to a woman's shoulder. As he lifts it, we see what appear to be human teeth marks in the flesh.

MATT (O.S.)

This isn't exactly an emergency.

We pull back to REVEAL SELENA, who smiles coquettishly.

SELENA

I'm sorry... Guess I got a little hysterical.

MATT

How did this happen?

MATT

Well, you know kids. Sometimes they like to rough-house.

MATT

A child did this?

SELENA

I'm a school teacher, Dr...

(off his badge)

Crower? And I was wrestlin' with one of my boys on the playground and he got a little frisky.

MATT

Must have been a pretty big boy. You're going to need a tetanus shot.

SELENA

Will it be painful?

MATT

Not really.

SELENA

(mildly disappointed)

Oh.

Matt moves to a counter, picks up a syringe. Selena calls after him.

CONTINUED



10 CONTINUED

10

Hip?

SELENA

Matt glances at her.

MATT

That'd be fine.

Selena eases her skirt down just below the panty line.

SELENA

Which one would you prefer?

Matt turns. Selena is smiling at him lasciviously. Off the doctor's reaction, we go

11 EXT. WOODS - DAY

11

As Lucas and Gail lead the search party.

GAIL

You sure this is the right way?

LUCAS

What's a matter? Don't trust my  
doggies?

GAIL

I might...

(glancing back)

But they seem to be following  
you.We PULL BACK TO REVEAL that the lead hound has indeed fallen into step behind Lucas, the others taking up slack with the troopers. Lucas shrugs.

LUCAS

Well, between you and me...

(confidentially)

They're more for show.

GAIL

We're moving away from town.

LUCAS

Caleb wouldn't go back there. Town means hospital.

GAIL

Dr. Crower thinks the only reason he ran off was because you scared him.

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED

11

LUCAS

That doctor should take a pill. If Caleb'd been with me last night, none a this woulda happened.

GAIL

What do you want with him, anyway?

LUCAS

Just doin' my job, Ma'am. Gotta protect my people.

GAIL

Like you did my parents?

GRRRRRR. Gail turns to discover the lead hound baring his teeth at her menacingly.

LUCAS

I believe your tone has offended someone.

GAIL

You found their bodies. How come you never contacted me?

LUCAS

Might ask you the same question, Ma'am.

GAIL

I was a little girl...

LUCAS

Not so little now. If you really wanted the grisly details, you knew where to find me.

(beat)

Did you really want to know?

Gail glares at Lucas, takes a deep breath, and walks off. Lucas sighs, looks down at the hound.

LUCAS

Give her time... She just hasn't faced her demons yet.

12 EXT. WESTERN RIVER BANK - DAY

12

A drenched Caleb pulls himself to the shore. Shaking himself off, he climbs a steep embankment toward an old wooden fence. Once there, he rips aside a rotting picket, pulls himself through, and disappears into the foliage.

13 INT. HOSPITAL - MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

13

Matt is glancing at his watch, trying to remain patient.  
Selena lounges in front of him, eating ice cream from a cup.

SELENA

Will I have any side effects? I've  
got a luncheon with the ladies  
auxiliary tomorrow and I need to  
look my best. Presentation is  
everything, don't you agree?

Selena sucks on her little wooden spoon. Matt rises.

MATT

Miss Coombs...

SELENA

Selena.

MATT

I really need to get going.

SELENA

Oh, I'm sorry.

(rising)

Here I am going on about me, when  
you've got all these wounded souls  
to heal...

She nonchalantly picks up a photo on Matt's desk.

SELENA

This your family?

MATT

(with hesitaion)

Yes.

SELENA

Beautiful ladies.

He moves toward her, gently taking the photo from her hand.

MATT

Yes... They were.

SELENA

(hopeful)

Past tense?

(then; realizing)

Oh, Doctor... I am so sorry. I...  
I didn't realize...

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED

13

MATT

It's okay.

(smiles)

Now, if you don't mind...

DANIEL pops his head in the door.

DANIEL

Am I interrupting something?

MATT

No.

(then; to Selena)

Feel better.

Selena nods sadly, squeezing past Daniel at the door. Dan gives Matt a look, which he ignores.

MATT

Is the coroner here yet?

DANIEL

Just left.

MATT

I thought he was doing autopsies on the Temple girl and her father.

DANIEL

So did I... But he just hauled their bodies outta here.

MATT

(shit)

Oh, no...

Matt moves to the phone.

DANIEL

He, uh... left somethin' for ya.

Daniel pulls a plastic bag from his lab coat. Inside, in all it's glory, is the lucky, monogrammed, platinum... pen. Matt shakes his head.

MATT

Sorry, Dan. I'd have been there, but that woman just wouldn't leave...

14 INT. HOSPITAL - HALL - DAY - ON SELENA

14

Selena is listening raptly. After slathering her lips with gloss, she slips down the hall, massaging her hip.

15 EXT. WOODS - DUSK

15

Caleb is weaving through old growth woodland. As the last rays of sunlight seep through the trees, he stumbles upon

CALEB'S POINT OF VIEW - A PAUPER'S CEMETERY

Right out of Dickens. Overgrown with moss and weeds, a number of dilapidated wooden tombstones dot the landscape. Hearing VOICES, Caleb ducks behind an ancient arbor.

CALEB'S POINT OF VIEW - AN OLD PICKUP

is parked alongside two freshly dug graves. A seer-suckered man of fifty, HARLAN JEETER, and his tomboy daughter, TEAPOT, nineteen, are in the middle of unloading a new, wooden burial marker from the truck.

HARLAN

Watch it, girl... Waaaatch it.

TEAPOT

They really buryin' these two side-by-side?

HARLAN

First thing in the mornin'.

TEAPOT

That's foul.

HARLAN

Just 'cause he killed her, don't mean they can't share the same worms.

CALEB

reacts. He watches as

HARLAN AND TEAPOT

carry the wooden marker toward an identical one already mounted at one of the open graves. The marker faces away from us; we can't read the legend. As they mount it in wet cement, Teapot runs her hand along the front.

TEAPOT

No offense, Daddy... But this ain't your best work.

HARLAN

Well, I only had two hours. Sheriff put in a rush.

CONTINUED

15 CONTINUED

15

TEAPOT

(reading)

Rest... in... Pease.

(laughs)

Rest in peas? You got him restin'  
in peas, Daddy!!

HARLAN

I'll rest you. Come on Teapot,  
we'll fix that tomorrow...

(teasingly)

Gotta shovel at home with your name  
on it.

Daddy wraps his arm around daughter, and they move toward  
the pickup. As they get in...

TEAPOT

(teasing him)

If you ever kill me, hope you use  
somethin' cleaner than a shovel.

HARLAN

(laughs)

How 'bout a pen?

As they both break up, the truck drives off and

CALEB

emerges from the arbor, warily approaching the tombstones.  
Moving to face them, his eyes widen as we reveal these  
legends painted beneath two, crudely painted trees.

GAGE TEMPLE  
(1946 - 1995)  
REST IN PEASE

MERLYN ANN TEMPLE  
(1978 - 1995)  
REST IN PEACE

CALEB

(in disbelief)

Daddy...

Caleb's lip starts to tremble, he looks back toward the  
pickup... and begins running after it.

CALEB

Hey!

(screaming)

HEY!

THE PICKUP

is already out of sight, but that doesn't stop

CONTINUED

15 CONTINUED 2

15

CALEB

who picks up a rock and throws it at the truck with all his might, as he keeps running, deeper and deeper into the dark woods, running from his pain... until he can run no more. He stumbles to a halt, the tears streaming down his face.

16 EXT. RIVER FRONT - DUSK

16

Lucas and Gail are standing where Caleb had been on the bank. The Sheriff is staring at the water intently.

Sheriff? DEPUTY #1 (O.S.)

Lucas turns and Deputy #1 runs up, holding the sweat shirt/branch decoy that Caleb had thrown into the water.

DEPUTY #1  
Dogs found this about a quarter  
mile down river.

LUCAS  
(proudly)  
Smart boy.

Lucas gingerly unties the wet sweat shirt and hands it back to the Deputy. Moving to an adjacent tree, he places the limb against the fresh gash: Perfect fit. Then Lucas does something odd... he closes his eyes.

GAIL  
What are you doing?

LUCAS  
Prayin'.

There is a moment of silence, then...

LUCAS  
Time to go home, Miss Emory.

GAIL  
What do you mean? Caleb's still  
out there.

LUCAS  
It's gettin' dark. We'll find him  
tomorrow.

GAIL  
I'm not giving up now.

CONTINUED

16 CONTINUED

16

LUCAS  
You want to spend all night out  
here alone?

Gail stares at him. Really doesn't like this guy. He  
raises the tiny branch before her eyes.

LUCAS  
We've already found him, Ma'am...  
He just don't know it yet.

17 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

17

Caleb is on his last legs when he comes upon

18 EXT. OLD HUNTING LODGE - NIGHT

18

Rotting and abandoned, strangled by creeping vines and black  
oaks, it is Hansel and Gretel's worst nightmare.

Caleb cautiously approaches the Gothic front door. It's  
locked. He creeps around to a crumbling stone chimney.  
Alongside is a small, iron panel: The wood bin. Caleb  
wrenches it open... and slips inside.

19 INT. HUNTING LODGE - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

19

A dark, oppressive room flanked by two doors leading to the  
main hall. Caleb moves to a window and wipes years of dust  
from the glass. He peers into the forest to see if he has  
been followed, then lets out a great sigh: Safe at last.  
As he settles on to a large, deerskin rug in the corner...  
we HEAR A SOUND.

Caleb reacts. He glances around nervously... We HEAR it  
again. It seems to be coming from behind one of the doors.  
Caleb rises, moves to the first one... and cautiously pries  
it open.

20 INT. HUNTING LODGE - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

20

Pitch black. Caleb pulls out his matchbook... and strikes.

CALEB'S POINT OF VIEW - THE MAIN ROOM

A great hall crowned by an octagonal cathedral ceiling. A  
number of animal skins line the walls.

Caleb cautiously moves forward when suddenly... MOAAAANNN.  
The boy spins on his feet, coming face-to-face with

CONTINUED



20 CONTINUED

20

A DARK STRANGER

bound by ropes to the main support beam of the lodge. He is shirtless.

CALEB'S EYES

widen in horror as

THE STRANGER

suddenly lets out a piercing SCREAM and

CALEB

bolts to the entry hall, slams the door, and we slowly PAN DOWN TO

A TINY CUPCAKE

smashed to bits on the floor.

GO BLACK

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN

21 EXT. HUNTING LODGE - MORNING - ESTABLISHING 21

A new dawn. The SOUNDS of the forest just coming alive.

22 INT. HUNTING LODGE - BACK ROOM - MORNING 22

As the first rays of sunlight stream through a stained glass window, we discover

MERLYN

facing the glass, trying to feel the light on her face.

CAMERA continues moving to discover

CALEB

huddled on the deerskin rug, clutching a two by four, fast asleep.

MERLYN (O.S.)

Why are you still running?

The boy stirs. Opens his eyes...

CALEB

(seeing her)

Hey...

Merlyn turns toward him.

MERLYN

Why are you still running, Caleb?

CALEB

Daddy's dead, Merly. I saw his grave. Yours too...

(with great sadness)

Everybody's dead.

MERLYN

Not everybody.

Merlyn nods toward the door leading to the main hall.

CALEB

I ain't goin' back in there.

MERLYN

That man needs your help.

CONTINUED

22 CONTINUED

22

CALEB

He's a monster.

MERLYN

No... He's just hurt.

Caleb turns away from her.

MERLYN

He doesn't have much time.

CALEB

What am I supposed to do?

MERLYN

Help him. Set him free.

CALEB

Why should I?

MERLYN

Because you can.

Caleb looks at her. Senses her longing.

CALEB

I miss you, Merly...

MERLYN

I miss you too.

Merlyn's image slowly vanishes. The boy sighs.

CALEB

Wish I could do that.

23 INT. HUNTING LODGE - MAIN ROOM - MORNING

23

The door CREAKS open and light shoots into this dark chamber. With great reluctance, Caleb enters. Hearing a BUZZING sound, he looks down and sees

THE TRAMPLED CUPCAKE

covered with flies.

Caleb studies it for a beat, then continues moving into the room, finally reaching

THE STRANGER

pale and drawn, his head hanging toward the floor.

CONTINUED

CALEB

(warily)

Hey...

The man doesn't move. Caleb takes a step closer.

CALEB

You awake?

The man slowly lifts his head... squints. He is barely conscious.

CALEB

You get in trouble or somethin'?

The man just stares at him blankly.

CALEB

I'm talkin' to you, man.

The man lowers his head again.

CALEB

Look, I want to help ya, but if you don't answer me...

THE MAN

(a wail)

Ahhhhhhhhh...

Caleb jumps back with a start.

CALEB

Don't do that.

The boy holds for a beat... then moves closer still.

CALEB

I'm gonna free ya. But if I do, we gonna be friends, right? No more wailin'.

Nothing.

CALEB

Okay. We gonna be friends.

Caleb glances around the dark room, sees

SOME OLD BOTTLES

piled in a corner. Caleb moves to the bottles, picks one up... And SMASHES it against the wall. The man jerks his head up in fear.

CONTINUED

CALEB

It's alright. Just need somethin' for them ropes.

The man stares at him warily. Caleb moves to the man and begins cutting at his bonds with the sharp edge of the bottle.

CALEB

Sorry I ran out on ya last night, but I didn't know what you was about.

Caleb takes a few final slashes at the rope, and it snaps. The Man's arms fall to his sides and Caleb eases him to the floor, propping him up against the beam...

CALEB

You're freezin'. Can you walk?

The man shakes his head weakly.

CALEB

Come on, let's try...

Caleb attempts to lift him; the man lets out a MOAN.

CALEB

Shoot...

(sighs)

We gotta find you a doctor.

Caleb starts to rise, but the man stops him. With his free hand, he slowly traces these cryptic letters into the dust on the floor: SOL.

CALEB

Sol?

The man reaches into his pocket, pulls out a money clipped wad of bills, and holds them out to the boy.

CALEB

You don't have to pay me nothin'.

The man urges him to take it.

CALEB

Well... I guess we could use some food.

Caleb takes the bills and slips them into his pocket.

CONTINUED

23 CONTINUED 3

23

CALEB

Alright, Sol. I'll get us some food and find you the doctor...  
(rising; to himself)  
If the sheriff don't find me first.

24 EXT. PAUPER'S CEMETERY - MORNING - TIGHT ON BRANCH

24

as two hands plant it in the black earth. We PULL BACK TO REVEAL LUCAS at Gage and Merlyn's graveside. He is surrounded by a few locals, Ben, Selena... and Gail. As a REVEREND looks on warily, Lucas rises from the ground, resuming his "eulogy".

LUCAS

No one knows why these things happen...  
(glancing at Gail)  
And maybe it's not our job to ask.

ON GAIL

staring at him intently.

LUCAS

But like the Reverend said...  
(pointedly; to Ben)  
We can take comfort knowin' that Gage and Merlyn are in a better place.

ON BEN AND SELENA

as the deputy shakes his head. Selena places a comforting hand on his shoulder. Ben looks at her warily.

LUCAS

I plant this tree in their memory, hopeful that it might someday capture the spirit of the family.  
(dramatic beat)  
Thank you all for coming.

REVEREND

Thank you, Sheriff.

Lucas turns to the Reverend, surreptitiously slips a C note in his pocket. Just as quickly, the Reverend removes it.

CONTINUED

24 CONTINUED

24

REVEREND

Normally, I'm happy to receive donations...

(coolly handing it back)

But in this case, I'll make an exception.

LUCAS

(ice)

You are truly a selfless man.

Selena approaches them.

SELENA

That was beautiful, Lucas.

LUCAS

Thank you, Miss Coombs...

(spider to the fly)

Have you met the Reverend?

Selena smiles coquettishly. The Reverend doesn't. Meanwhile...

GAIL AND BEN

are talking it up.

GAIL

How well did you know Mr. Temple?

BEN

Not well. Old Gage pretty much kept to himself.

Lucas drops an arm around Ben's shoulder.

LUCAS

Neighbors said he was a quiet man, never gave anyone any trouble...

(smiles; to Gail)

Gettin' all the facts, Ma'am?

GAIL

What's happening with Caleb?

LUCAS

Crew's been out since dawn. Now that we know where he's travelin', should have your little cousin home in no time.

We PULL WAY BACK TO REVEAL

CONTINUED

24 CONTINUED 2

24

CALEB

watching all from the edge of the forest. Having overheard Lucas' remark, he studies Gail intently. Cousin? He lingers a moment, then slips back into the forest. Back to

LUCAS, BEN AND GAIL

LUCAS

Can we offer you a ride back to town, Miss Emory?

GAIL

No, thank you.

LUCAS

Just want to make sure you're taken care of. Tourists are our lifeblood, aren't they Ben?

GAIL

Is that why they keep disappearing?

LUCAS

(to Ben)

Fire up the car.

Ben clears his throat, and dutifully stumbles off.

GAIL

According to my editor, this county is the Bermuda Triangle of tourism.

LUCAS

We rank lowest in serious crime in the entire state, Ma'am.

GAIL

And highest in missing persons. Last spring, a reporter from the Miami Herald came up here to investigate!.. He hasn't been heard from since.

LUCAS

Well, this is a recreational area. Between the woods and the beaches, accidents happen. Maybe he was a poor swimmer.

GAIL

Or a poor judge of character.  
(beat)  
Good day, Sheriff.

CONTINUED



24 CONTINUED 3

24

Gail turns and walks off. As Lucas looks after her, Selena sidles up to him.

SELENA

Sorry I didn't get to meet your little friend.

LUCAS

(darkly)

You will.

Off Lucas' gaze, we PUSH PAST him toward the tiny tree planted at the graveside.

TIGHT ON THE TREE

As something strange begins to happen... Something miraculous. A tiny branch sprouts right before our eyes. Off this little slice of God's Green Acre, we go to

25 EXT. CURTIS Z. WEBB'S HOUSE - DAY - ON MATT

25

As he opens the sidewalk gate and moves up the front steps. Reaching the screen door, he hits the bell. He notes an old ice box on the front porch. Suddenly

A GOAT

leaps through the door, almost knocking the doctor off his feet. As he catches his breath

A LITTLE GIRL

of about six appears in the doorway, holding another goat by the scruff of the neck. She lets this one outside, then looks up at Matt.

LITTLE GIRL

Yes, sir?

Matt takes her in. She is truly lovely -- what his daughter might have been.

MATT

Is your father home?

LITTLE GIRL

(calling offstage)

Daddy?

(then; to Matt)

We're eatin' cake.

CONTINUED

25 CONTINUED

25

MATT

(smiles)  
What kind of cake?

CURTIS Z. WEBB

pops his head over his daughter's shoulder. He is a big, beefy man of forty-five.

CURTIS Z.

Goat cheese.

Matt looks up at the man.

MATT

Mr. Webb?

CURTIS Z.

Yessir.

MATT

I'm Matt Crower. I missed you yesterday.

CURTIS Z.

Oh, right... The new doctor.

MATT

Can we talk for a minute?

CURTIS Z.

Go on to your Mama, Taylor.

The Little Girl stares at Matt for a beat, then disappears into the house. Curtis steps outside, moves to the ice box.

CURTIS Z.

She's a sweet, girl. Little slow.

(beat)

How can I help you, Doc?

MATT

I was curious about the result of your autopsies on Gage and Merlyn Temple.

CURTIS Z.

(calling)

Eli? Get over here.

The larger of the two goats approaches Curtis.

CURTIS Z.

This here's Eli. He's our big boy.

CONTINUED

MATT

Why you were so eager to get their bodies out of the hospital?

Curtis reaches into the fridge and pulls out a handful of feed. The goat begins eating from his hand.

CURTIS Z.

You know the amazing thing about goats? They'll eat anything. Most self-sufficient creatures in the world. You feed 'em shoes -- get back milk.

MATT

Mr. Webb...

CURTIS Z.

That nanny over there's expectin'. Should have kids by Christmas.

MATT

The Temples were buried this morning. How did you have time to complete your work?

CURTIS Z.

(sighs)

The girl took a shovel to the head, am I right?

MATT

According to the sheriff.

CURTIS Z.

And the father was found with a pen in his throat, self-inflicted.

MATT

That's your finding?

CURTIS Z.

There was blood all over his hands.

MATT

What about the angle of entry? Or the depth of the wound?

Curtis pats the goat's head thoughtfully.

CONTINUED

CURTIS Z.

You know why I love these animals?  
(pointedly)  
They accept things as they  
are.

Matt stares at him a long beat.

MATT

You didn't do any autopsies, did  
you?

Curtis dusts off his hands.

CURTIS Z.

I take pride in my work, Doctor.  
But sometimes... other forces  
prevail. Girl died of head trauma,  
father was a suicide. I accept  
that...

(clear warning)

And I suggest you do the same.

MATT

Lucas Buck was the last person to  
see these people alive.

Curtis turns, moving for his door. Matt is right behind  
him.

MATT

He was also the last person to see  
Caleb's mother before she died.  
Three members of the same family  
gone...

The coroner opens the screen door, about to step inside...  
Matt spins him around forcefully.

MATT

Why are you protecting him?!!

CURTIS Z.

Because...

(tough)

I have a family too.

And with that, Curtis slips into his house. Off Matt's look  
of contempt, we go to

26 INT. GAIL'S CAR - DAY - MOVING

26

Gail has an open Powerbook at her side. Keeping one hand on the wheel, she types with the other, intermittently taking her eyes off the road. Suddenly...

CALEB

appears in her windshield, blocking an entrance to a bridge.

GAIL

slams on the brakes in astonishment as

THE CAR

SCREECHES to a halt, just inches from the boy.

GAIL

Caleb...

She leaps out of the car... He stops her with his tone.

CALEB

You really my cousin?

GAIL

Yes.

SELENA

CALEB

How come I never heard of ya?

GAIL

I... I left town a long time ago.  
Before you were born.

CALEB

You workin' with the Sheriff?

GAIL

No... I'm here to help you.

CALEB

I don't need no help...

(beat)

I need a ride.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

27 EXT. PAUPER'S CEMETERY - DAY - ON A SIX FOOT TREE

27

The same one Lucas had planted earlier. A man's coat is hanging from a lower branch. After taking in it's size, we PAN to discover

HARLAN AND TEAPOT

back at work. Paintbrush in hand, he is just putting the final touches on his repair of "Rest in Pease". Lucas' tree is now OFF CAMERA.

TEAPOT

Daddy... Why do ya put trees on these things?

HARLAN

Supposed to represent Death... and Rebirth.

(smiles)

Also easy to paint.

Harlan rises, examines his work.

Snacks to.

HARLAN

What'd ya think?

ON GAGE'S MARKER

"Pease" has been replaced by "Peace". Back to

TEAPOT

who shrugs.

TEAPOT

I liked him better in peas.

HARLAN

(slaps her butt)

Get me my coat, girl.

Teapot moves OFF CAMERA. After a beat...

TEAPOT (O.S.)

Hey, Daddy...

We hear a RUMBLING SOUND. Harlan is cleaning his brush...

TEAPOT (O.S.)

What was you sayin' 'bout... rebirth?

CONTINUED

27 CONTINUED

27

Harlan turns, suddenly seeing

LUCAS' TREE

now a towering giant, looming ominously above the graves. Harlan's coat dangles precariously on a limb high above Teapot's head, as the branches continue their slow RUMBLE...

HARLAN

stares at the tree, thunderstruck.

HARLAN

My God...

TEAPOT

(awed)

This wasn't no bigger then a shrub an hour ago.

Harlan hurriedly moves to his daughter.

HARLAN

(fearfully)

Come on, Teapot.

TEAPOT

(this is bitchin')

I can get it.

Teapot jumps up and catches the lowest branch...

HARLAN

(terrified)

No... Come on!

And as Harlan pulls his daughter OUT OF FRAME, we slowly PUSH IN on his jacket, now enveloped by the branches.

CALEB (V.O.)

(insistently)

You can't keep me here!

28 INT. MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

28

Caleb and Gail are standing before Matt, who is gripping the boy tightly by the arm.

CALEB

We gotta help Sol.

MATT

Who's Sol?

CONTINUED

28 CONTINUED

28

GAIL

The man he found in the woods.

CALEB

If we don't get there, he's gonna die.

Matt picks up the phone.

MATT

Rita? I'm going to need an ambulance...

CALEB

They'll never find him. I gotta take ya.

MATT

Caleb, I can't let you leave again. If anything happens...

CALEB

But the man's expectin' me. Look...

Caleb pulls the money clip from his pocket.

CALEB

He even gave me money for food.

Matt takes the money clip from the boy. As he does, a plastic card falls from between the bills to the floor. As Gail picks it up...

CALEB

You gotta trust me. I won't run off, I promise.

GAIL

Matt... look at this.

Matt glances over her shoulder and sees

MATT'S POINT OF VIEW - A PRESS BADGE

There is a photograph of a dark, clean shaven man in his early thirties. Beside it is his name, Manuel Santo. Place of work... The Miami Herald.

GAIL (O.S.)

He's the guy.

BACK WIDE

CONTINUED



MATT  
What guy?

GAIL  
Manuel Santo is the man my editor told me about. He's been missing for months.

MATT  
(to Caleb)  
I thought you said his name was Sol?

CALEB  
Well, who cares what his name is... We gonna help him or not?!!

29 INT. HOSPITAL - HALL - DAY

29

Lucas and Ben are plowing down the hall.

LUCAS  
This son-of-a-bitch is really beginnin' to irk me.

BEN  
(trying to calm him)  
Well, don't doctors usually talk to a coroner after there's been a...

Lucas glares at him.

BEN  
Suicide?

LUCAS  
Yeah, but my coroners don't usually talk back.

A heavy set NURSE approaches them.

NURSE  
Hey, Sheriff...  
(smiles flirtatiously)  
Got your chocolates.

LUCAS  
Glad to hear it, Louise. You have a killer birthday, now.

The Nurse giggles, moves off.

CONTINUED

29 CONTINUED

29

BEN

Maybe Curtis thought he was doin'  
you a favor.

LUCAS

Are you defendin' him?

BEN

No, I'm just...

LUCAS

Don't drop the loyalty ball, Ben.

They reach an elderly gent, ALBERT, who's seated in a  
wheelchair.

LUCAS

Feelin' better, Albert?

ALBERT

Should be back at work in a couple  
weeks. Appreciate you smoothin'  
things out with my boss, Lucas.

LUCAS

That's what I'm here for.

Albert smiles, Lucas slaps him on the shoulder, and he and  
Ben continue moving ahead.

LUCAS

This coroner made a big mistake,  
Ben. And if you don't know that,  
you don't know much.

BEN

I'm not bein' disloyal Lucas, I'm  
just tryin' to clarify, that's all.

LUCAS

Good. Because if this doctor gives  
me any more trouble... You're  
gonna shoot him.

As Ben reacts, Lucas reaches for the door to Matt's office.

30 INT. MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

30

The door flies open, REVEALING

LUCAS' POINT OF VIEW - AN EMPTY ROOM

Caleb, Matt, and Gail are long gone.

CONTINUED

30 CONTINUED

30

LUCAS AND BEN

enter purposefully, the sheriff scanning the room, seeing

THE PRESS BADGE

lying next to the wad of bills on Matt's desk.

LUCAS

picks it up, studies it for a moment...

LUCAS

Hell...

Then suddenly bolts from the room. Ben starts to follow, but hesitates, glancing back at

THE WAD OF BILLS

just sitting there, waiting to be plucked.

BEN

looks over his shoulder cautiously, then slowly creeps toward the desk top, reaches down, and picks up... the pen. Right behind the money, still in the plastic bag... and lucky as ever. Like a schoolboy on Christmas morning, Ben eagerly opens the bag, slipping the ballpoint into his pocket. With great relief, he looks skyward...

BEN

(reverently)

Thank you.

31 EXT. CURTIS Z. WEBB'S HOUSE - DAY

31

Our friendly neighborhood coroner enters his front gate, and lugs up the steps toward his door. The nanny goat is doing circles on the lawn. Curtis glances around for Eli. Reaching the front porch, he calls his name...

CURTIS Z.

Eli? Come on. Lunch time for everybody.

The nanny approaches... but no Eli in sight.

CURTIS Z.

(to the nanny)

Where's your boyfriend?

CONTINUED

31 CONTINUED

31

As he pets the nanny's head, Curtis opens the fridge, reaches inside... and feels something odd. Turning, his face goes white.

ELI'S HEAD

is staring back at him from the icebox. As

CURTIS

stumbles back in horror, we gratefully leave him for

32 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY - ON LUCAS' PATROL CAR - MOVING

32

Racing down the interstate like a shark.

33 INT. LUCAS' PATROL CAR

33

Lucas is at the wheel, Selena shotgun. She is clearly upset.

LUCAS

You told me this was handled.

SELENA

I'm sorry, Lucas, but I just couldn't hurt him.

LUCAS

(outraged)  
So you kept him as a pet?

SELENA

I liked him, alright?  
(off his look)  
And if you want to know the truth,  
he kinda liked me.

LUCAS

(dark)  
This is a real problem, Selena.

SELENA

Look, if the doctor finds him before we do, maybe it's not such a bad thing. Manuel hasn't been eating lately and I've been kinda worried...

LUCAS

"Manuel" is a reporter. He's gonna "report" things.

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED

33

SELENA

(sighs)  
He won't say a word.

LUCAS

Oh, really?  
(sarcastically)  
What'd ya do? Bite off his tongue  
in a fit of passion?

Selena averts her eyes. As Lucas stares at her in disbelief, we go to

34 INT. HUNTING LODGE - MAIN ROOM - DAY

34

Caleb enters, Matt and Gail right on his heels.

CALEB

(with urgency)  
He's in here.

The boy moves to Santo, who's barely conscious.

CALEB

Hey, Sol... I got the doc for ya.  
Snacks too...  
(emptying his pockets)  
Chocolate bar, Peanut butter cup,  
taffy...

GAIL

(seeing him)  
Oh, my God...

MATT

Caleb... Would you grab some  
blankets from the car?

CALEB

Sure. Doc's gonna take care of ya,  
Sol. Just hang in there.

As Caleb moves to the back room, Matt leans over the man, checks the pulse in his neck. His breaths are fast and shallow.

MATT

Mr. Santo... Can you hear me?

The man nods weakly. Matt puts his hand on Santo's chest for a beat... does a couple more tests... then rises.

CONTINUED

34 CONTINUED

34

MATT

He's hypothermic... He won't make  
it to the hospital.

Realizing the implications, Gail moves past Matt, kneeling  
at the man's side.

GAIL

Is there anything we can do for  
you?

The man weakly points to the letters he'd drawn for Caleb in  
the dust: SOL.

GAIL

I'm sorry, I... I don't know what  
this means.

Slowly and deliberately, the man draws a circle around the  
letters.

GAIL

(dawning on her)

Sol...

(beat)

Matt... It's Spanish.

Gail slowly raises her eyes toward the ceiling, seeing

A BOARDED UP WINDOW

Matt is perfectly in sync.

MATT

Sun.

CALEB

reenters, hauling a couple of blankets.

CALEB

Where do you want em?

Matt pulls a chair from the wall...

MATT

Come here, Caleb....

(to Gail; re: the chair)

Will you hold this for me?

Gail steadies the chair as Matt gets on top of it.

CONTINUED

MATT

(to Caleb; pointing at  
the ceiling)  
If I lift you up there, think you  
can pry off one of those boards?

CALEB

Sure, but...

Caleb puts down the blankets and Matt lifts him skyward. As  
Caleb begins prying the board loose...

CALEB

Why we doin' this?

MATT

It's what your friend wants.

CALEB

Well, if this what Sol wants...  
This what Sol's gonna get.

RIIIIPPPPP! Caleb pulls the plank from the window and

A GREAT SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT

suddenly shoots through the ceiling and floods Santo.

Matt eases Caleb to the floor, steps off the chair, and our  
three heroes move to the man's side.

SANTO

opens his eyes, drinking in the sun's warmth. He raises his  
head slightly...

CALEB

Y'all were right. Sol's warmin'  
right up.

(to the man)

This is just whatcha needed, huh  
Sol?

The man reaches for Caleb's hand... and squeezes it tightly.

CALEB

Yeah... Just whatcha' needed.

Matt notices that the light has illuminated more than Sol...  
There is a knapsack now visible behind him.

MATT

Gail...

CONTINUED

34 CONTINUED 3

34

She moves toward it, opens it up... pulls out papers, film, computer discs...

GAIL

Is this what you wanted us to see,  
Mr. Santo?

The man nods weakly, shares a moment with Caleb, then closes his eyes... and dies.

CALEB

reacts. Looks at Matt...

CALEB

Hey... What's a matter with him?

Matt reaches for Santo's neck, feels for a pulse...

MATT

He's gone, Caleb.

CALEB

But he can't be. I... I gotcha  
here in time...

GAIL

You did the best you could.

CALEB

But, this wasn't supposed to  
happen...

(rising; with mounting  
anger)

It wasn't supposed to happen...

GAIL

Caleb...

The boy runs from the room. Suddenly, the main door bursts open and

LUCAS AND SELENA

enter. There is a tense moment as the four size each other up, then seeing the dead man, Lucas strides forward, dragging a shocked Selena in tow.

LUCAS

Well... look who's found our  
fugitive.

(to Selena, re: Santo)

This the man?

CONTINUED



34 CONTINUED 4

34

Selena nods sadly.

MATT

What the hell's going on here?

LUCAS

Been huntin' this fella for months.  
Ever since he attacked and robbed  
Miss Coombs...

Selena looks away, guilt stricken. Gail holds up the knapsack.

GAIL

This man was a journalist. Someone  
was keeping him here.

LUCAS

That someone was his partner,  
Ma'am...

(off Santo)

A partner who obviously took his  
share of the money and double  
crossed him.

MATT

I go (incredulous)

What partner? You have this person  
in custody?

LUCAS

Well, we did... 'til we buried him  
this morning.

(off Gail's reaction)

'Fraid Gage Temple was more  
dangerous than anyone realized.

(taking the knapsack)

I'll need this as evidence.

And as Gail and Matt react, Selena sadly draws the blanket  
over the dead man's face and we go to

35 EXT. PAUPER'S CEMETERY - DAY

35

The sky is quite dark now, and the wind is on full HOWL as  
Caleb comes tearing across the landscape...

CALEB

Merlyn!

(screaming)

Merlyn!!!

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED

35

MERLYN (O.S.)

I'm here Caleb.

Caleb turns to discover the image of his sister, standing between the boy and Lucas' monstrous tree.

CALEB

You lied to me!

MERLYN

No...

CALEB

You said I could help that man.

MERLYN

You did help him. You gave him what he needed.

CALEB

He didn't need to die.

(then)

I don't want to see you no more, ya understand? You're dead. Dead as he is.

MERLYN

I live in you, Caleb...

(darkly)

And so does your father.

CALEB

Just get outta here, will ya?  
Leave me alone!

BOOM! A lighting bolt EXPLODES into Lucas' tree, and in SLOW MOTION, the giant begins to fall.

CALEB

Merly... Look out!

As Caleb starts to run, the massive tree comes CRASHING down, right through Merlyn's image, eclipsing her... and trapping the boy in it's cage-like branches. As Caleb struggles to free himself...

CALEB

(screaming)

Merlyn! Merrrrrlllyyn!

LUCAS (O.S.)

It's alright, son.

Caleb reels back in fear as

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED 2

35

A HAND

suddenly drops into FRAME, reaching out to him. The boy looks up to discover

LUCAS

towering above.

LUCAS

Time to go home.

As Caleb stares at Lucas with trepidation, A GREAT FLASH OF LIGHTING EXPLODES IN THE SKY and we

GO BLACK

THE END