

LOVING

Written by

Jeff Nichols

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Crickets. A spring night in rural Virginia.

MILDRED(18) seems nervous. Her eyes cast down. She's beautiful. A slender, light skinned black woman. High cheekbones hint at a mix of Native American ancestry.

She picks her head up and takes a deep breath. Her big brown eyes are soft in the light of the front porch.

MILDRED

I'm pregnant.

RICHARD(24) listens. He's a white man with close cropped blonde hair and a dark neck burned from working outside.

He takes in the information.

A smile breaks across his face, revealing a mouth full of crooked teeth. He quickly draws his lips over them, swallowing the smile. He's shy, self-conscious of the teeth.

He begins to nod, a more reserved smile coming through.

RICHARD

Good. That's real good.

At this, Mildred's shoulders drop with relief.

They sit close to one another on the front steps of a one-story wood planked house.

It's 1958. They are young, but a rural working life makes them seem older than their years.

Richard takes her hand. She leans into him.

An ominous SOUND grows in the distance. A rumbling like thunder. It builds.

The chassis on an early 50's Chevy rocks back and forth as gas charges through the idling motor.

VIRGIL(25) continues to rev the car as he steals a glance at his competition, another bulked up American machine primed to explode off the starting line.

Virgil is a mustached black man with thick eyebrows. He wears a bowler hat and clinches a toothpick in his teeth. He catches the OTHER DRIVER's eye, a white man. Virgil smiles.

A Man snaps a rag into the air.

Tires smoke. Rubber streaks the asphalt as the cars light out down the strip.

Richard pops off the hood of a parked car and tracks the race. He's part of a GROUP gathered on the dirt swath that borders the track.

Mildred is with her sister GARNET(20), a woman of similar features and beauty. The Group of seven is made up of blacks and whites. Most hold cans of beer. All follow the race.

The two cars race neck and neck, their chrome bumpers straining for the lead. Virgil's car manages to pull ahead.

Standing by Richard are RAYMOND(20), a thick-necked black man who is easy to smile when not sweating a race, and PERCY(25), a tall man who watches more than he talks. At Virgil's car taking the lead, Raymond's hand comes up.

RAYMOND

There goes.

The other Driver leans into the wheel as if to aid his chances, but it doesn't help.

Virgil manages a car length lead as he tears across the finish line. He yells and punches at the roof.

Richard's arm flies up, but he's silent. Raymond lets out a whooping sound before swinging out his massive palm which Richard meets with a slap. The Group cheers behind them.

Richard walks back to Mildred, but on his way...

RICHARD

Timing's still off 'bout two degrees.

RAYMOND

Looked fine to me.
(to Percy)
What you think?

PERCY

I think we won.

Mildred runs up and gives Richard a big hug.

3 EXT. DRAG RACING STRIP - DAY - LATER

3

Virgil and Percy stand in front of the other Driver and his CREW, all white, as the Driver counts a stack of cash out and places it in Virgil's outstretched bowler hat.

VIRGIL

Now that's just fine right there, I
told them 'bout ya'll that you boys
have ya'll's, yes keep on now, you
boys have a fast car right there
but ya'll is fine to let us race
wit you.

Virgil's words come out in a jumble, making their meaning nearly imperceptible though their intention is clear.

The money counted, Virgil sets the cash filled hat on his head and nods at the other Driver. He cuts a smile at Percy before they turn back to join their own group.

The disgruntled men rest against their beaten car. Their attention is not on Virgil's collection, but rather on Richard and Mildred across the track.

Richard holds Mildred close, kissing her proudly. The Crew just stares across at them, visibly seething.

A4 EXT. SHOTGUN SHACK - NIGHT

A4

A hillbilly house party in full swing.

A few cars come and go, but most are parked in an array around the yard. People spill out of the tiny house.

4 INT. SHOTGUN SHACK - NIGHT

4

The shack is brimming with bodies, thick smoke and booze. Laughter and shouts fill in amidst fast paced fiddles, banjo and upright bass pounding out a bluegrass stomp.

The crowd is mostly black, though a few whites are mingled throughout. Many look to be Native American.

Richard, his arm around Mildred, clutches a beer and struggles to shout his point into Raymond's ear. An inaudible reply from Raymond brings a red faced gut laugh from Richard. Percy looks over to see what was so funny.

Virgil bumps through the crowd half dancing while carefully balancing his jar of clear liquor. He bows the drink to Mildred, but Garnet's hand swoops in to take it.

Garnet wags a finger before taking an eyebrow raising sip at the stout stuff. She eyes Mildred, who smiles back at her.

Virgil pulls Garnet up to dance not forgetting to reclaim his drink. He proceeds to dance in a way that spreads the crowd. Mildred nudges Richard.

They laugh watching their friends dance, happy in this place.

5

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

5

Mortar is thrown onto a brick and buttered with a jointer before another brick comes down on top. It's a rhythmic task, done with precision.

Richard stands in front of a growing wall amongst several OTHER MEN laying brick at a bustling job site.

BRICKLAYER

Damn Richard. Slow down.

Richard smiles to himself. He finishes out his course of bricks and quickly gathers his tools. Walking away...

RICHARD

All right now.

BRICKLAYER

Where you goin'?

Richard doesn't answer. He moves toward a collection of cars parked nearby.

6

EXT. UNCULTIVATED FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

6

A light breeze moves through full summer leaves shading a hillside. Grass bends in a low-lying field down below.

Richard's feet move heel to toe, counting out a length. Still in his work clothes, he pauses and stares out at the field down below before finally turning to Mildred.

Time has passed since seeing her last. A growing belly shows six months of her pregnancy. She watches him curiously.

RICHARD

Do you like it?

MILDRED

Like what?

RICHARD
Right here. This spot.

MILDRED
You mean this field?

RICHARD
Yeah.

MILDRED
This field not a mile from my house
that I've been knowin' all my life?

RICHARD
Yeah.

She cocks her head at him, puzzled by this.

MILDRED
Yes. I like it.

Richard breaks away and faces the lower field again.

RICHARD
I'd put the kitchen back here.

MILDRED
Richard stop this. I don't know
what you're sayin'.

RICHARD
I bought it. This whole acre. I'm
gonna build you a house right here.
Our house.

Mildred is speechless. Her eyes wander over the ground as if seeing it for the first time. She barely notices Richard move close, taking her hand.

Her eyes finally meet his. He looks serious.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Mildred?

7 EXT. GROVE - EVENING

7

Feet rushing through tall grass, dodging in and out of limbs and brambles.

Mildred, as best she can carrying the extra weight, darts through a grove of trees.

8 EXT. TOBACCO FIELD - EVENING

8

The tobacco field is vast, bordered on one side by a thicket of trees and falling off to a horizon on the other.

The sun is quickly setting behind the field, but a DOZEN PEOPLE, black and white, still toil there. They slouch over the plants, weeding grass from between thick green leaves.

Mildred emerges from the thicket of trees, moving fast. She rushes into the field weaving between rows.

Garnet barely straightens before Mildred has grabbed her by the hand and pulls her away from her work.

GARNET
What's this now?

Garnet is led out of the field back into the trees.

9 EXT. GROVE - EVENING

9

Fireflies have begun to rise in the grove. Mildred is tucked against a tree in the midst of a whisper to her sister.

MILDRED
Said he'd bought it for me. And
then he asked me to marry him.

GARNET
No he didn't.

MILDRED
Yes.

Mildred's hand covers her mouth trying to contain her excitement.

GARNET
Right out in the field? Oh Lord
that man might be crazy. When you
gonna do it?

MILDRED
He didn't say. Soon though.
Before the baby comes.

Garnet's eyes move upward as she takes in a long breath. She seems troubled.

GARNET
He's gonna take my sister from me.

MILDRED

No. We'll be right down the road.

Garnet takes Mildred's hand and holds it to her face. Mildred smiles, which leads her sister to as well. They giggle at one another as evening takes hold.

10 EXT. LOLA'S HOUSE - DAY

10

Chickens peck the morning dew in the yard around a tin roofed shack. This is one in a collection of houses built together in a small community.

Richard's car pulls in next to a rusty pickup. He climbs out as LOLA(48), a weathered woman already missing teeth, helps a very pregnant WHITE GIRL(17) out of the front door.

RICHARD

Hey Momma.

LOLA

They out back.

RICHARD

Here now.

Richard grabs the young Girl's hand to help her down the porch steps. On the ground, she heads to the pickup.

PREGNANT GIRL

Thank you Miss Lola. We'll see you soon.

LOLA

We'll be here.

As Richard moves around to the back of the house, the Girl cranks up the pickup and rattles away.

11 INT. BARN GARAGE - DAY

11

The wooden barn has a poured concrete floor showing its conversion to a makeshift garage. The walls are lined with tools and parts.

Raymond takes a bite from a bologna sandwich before ducking under the hood of their Chevy race car parked inside.

Richard walks in and surveys the work.

RICHARD

How we doin'?

RAYMOND

Get that board and get up under there. See if you can't get this manifold loose.

Richard snags a roller board and wrench from the corner and slides on his back under the front end.

The two work in tandem, Raymond from above, Richard from below. They work in silence for awhile. Then...

RICHARD

I'm gonna take Mildred up to D.C. to get married.

Raymond takes this in, but doesn't stop working.

RAYMOND

You sure about that?

RICHARD

Yeah.

Raymond lifts the part out and carries it to a table.

RAYMOND

Hold on, stay under there.

Raymond returns with another piece that he drops under the hood. Richard, with no need for explanation, grabs the piece and starts to affix it to the car.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

You need a witness?

RICHARD

No. I was gonna ask her Dad to come with us.

As they continue to work, Virgil enters the barn. He immediately finds Raymond's sandwich. He picks it up and smells it.

RAYMOND

Rich is gonna take Mildred up to D.C. to get married.

Virgil takes a bite. With a full mouth...

VIRGIL

String Bean? That don't make no damn sense.

Virgil chunks the rest of the sandwich into a metal bin as he walks back out of the garage. Trailing off...

VIRGIL (CONT'D)
 You'd be livin' up in da house wit
 no wife jus' fine 'fore you'd...

Virgil is gone before concluding his thought. Richard, still tucked under the car, smiles to himself.

12 I/E. RICHARD'S CAR/HIGHWAY TO D.C. - DAY 12

Richard drives on the open highway with the windows down and music drifting from the radio. Mildred sits up front next to him. They wear their finest clothes.

Mildred's father, THEOLIVER "Jake" (52), rides quietly in the backseat. He wears a suit and hat.

MILDRED
 You think they'll see us today?

RICHARD
 I called up there.

THEOLIVER
 Seem like a long drive to me.

RICHARD
 Thanks for coming Jake.

MILDRED
 Daddy what's the city like?

Theoliver shrugs, unimpressed.

THEOLIVER
 It's fine.

13 INT. COURTHOUSE CHAMBERS - DAY 13

Richard and Mildred stand in front of a MAGISTRATE in the courthouse office. Theoliver stands behind them.

Richard slips a slight gold band on Mildred's finger. She smiles at him, her round belly filling the altered church dress.

MAGISTRATE
 By the power vested in me by the
 District of Columbia, I now
 pronounce you husband and wife.

Richard and Mildred kiss.

14 INT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT 14

Garnet studies Mildred's ring as their mother, MUSIEL(46), sits at the table snapping beans.

GARNET
I may not forgive him.

MILDRED
Come on now.

GARNET
You lucky if I forgive you. No reason to go all the way up there for this and not take us.

MILDRED
We took Daddy.

GARNET
Like that means a thing.

MILDRED
Richard said there was less red tape in Washington. That's all.

Garnet, not convinced, tosses Mildred's hand back at her and grabs a fistful of beans to snap. Mildred's eyes go back to the ring.

GARNET
You can stop lookin' at it String Bean, you know it's pretty.

Mildred smiles at her sister, using the edge of the table to stand. She leans over and gives Garnet a kiss on the forehead before walking out.

A14 INT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' - FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS A14

Theoliver, coat off and tie loose, dozes off in a deep cushioned chair next to a radio in the corner.

Richard sits at the dining table under a bare bulb. He's hunched over a sheet of drafting paper. He moves a pencil around a slide rule sketching plans for their house.

Mildred enters and stops to look over his work. She places her hands on his shoulders and leans down to him.

MILDRED
I'm turning in.

RICHARD
What you think about our bedroom in
the back?

MILDRED
I'll love it however you make it.

She moves away and he grabs her hand, pulling her back in for
a kiss.

RICHARD
I'll be in there soon.

MILDRED
Okay.

Mildred exits to the bedroom. Richard returns to his plans.

15 EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY 15

Bricks laid, mortar spread. It's a routine at the bustling
job site.

Richard moves with the bricks. He barely pauses to run his
sleeve across his brow in the summer heat.

16 INT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' FARMHOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY 16

Mildred runs fabric through a foot pedal sewing machine.

She examines the stitch. Pleased, she carries the blanket
over to Garnet who is preparing a basket as a bassinet.

Mildred's hand moves to her stomach, wincing at a kick.
Garnet reaches out to feel for herself.

17 INT. GENERAL STORE - AFTERNOON 17

Richard stands at the back of the store scanning a pegboard
of automotive belts. He already cradles an assortment of
other items.

AT THE FRONT OF THE STORE,

A few CUSTOMERS mingle around. Mildred stands near the door
flipping through a box of packets containing clothing
patterns. She is being watched by the CASHIER(52), an older
black woman smoking a long cigarette.

The Cashier watches Mildred's fingers flipping through the packets. She sees the ring.

Richard approaches Mildred with his items. He stands close behind her. Mildred removes a pattern to show him.

MILDRED
I thought like this?

He nods in agreement and places his hand on the small of her back. At this, the Cashier's mouth furrows.

Richard breaks away and walks toward the Cashier. He sets his items on the counter.

RICHARD
Hey Clara. That frame come in for me?

CASHIER
It's in the back.

The Cashier climbs off her stool and shuffles away.

18 INT. BARN GARAGE - NIGHT 18

Richard and Raymond work under the body of the race car illuminated by a metal flood lamp.

Mildred, in silhouette, leans against a table watching them.

19 EXT. LOLA'S HOUSE - DAY 19

Lola dumps a tin of water off the front porch as Richard's car pulls up and parks. He climbs out.

RICHARD
Hey Momma.

Richard walks toward the barn in back.

LOLA
Sheriff's Deputy came by lookin' for you.

This stops him. He turns back to her.

RICHARD
What'd he want?

LOLA
Wanted to find you.

RICHARD
You tell him where I was?

LOLA
I didn't have nothin' to tell him.

Lola begins scrubbing the tin down.

Richard processes this news, unsettled by it. He continues on to the barn.

20 INT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' FARMHOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY 20

A blank plaster wall.

The back of Richard's head raises up. He hammers at the wall for a moment before bending back down leaving a nail in place.

He stands back up now holding a large picture frame. He places it on the wall, making sure it's straight before walking out of the bedroom.

Richard and Mildred's marriage certificate is left hanging there.

21 INT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' FARMHOUSE - NIGHT 21

Bowls of food are passed for supper at Mildred's house. Her parents, Garnet, Richard, and two cousins, GERALD(27) and DAVIS(22), are all there around the table.

It's a nice meal and everyone seems at ease.

DAVIS
What you like Rich? Ford or Chevy?

RICHARD
Not much difference.

DAVIS
But which one faster?

RICHARD
That just depend on who built it.

GERALD
That's what I said.

DAVIS
How much money you win with that car?

GARNET

Boy why you askin' him 'bout his
money?

DAVIS

He don't have to answer me.
(back to Richard)
How many races you won?

Richard looks up from his plate for the first time. He takes
time to calculate on his fingertips.

RICHARD

A lot.

This makes Mildred laugh.

22 EXT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' FARMHOUSE - NIGHT 22

It's late. The farmhouse is dark and the surrounding
countryside is even darker.

The night is hot and still.

23 INT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 23

The front room is dark.

The icebox hums in the kitchen.

24 INT. MILDRED'S PARENT'S FARMOUSE - BEDROOM 24

In the bedroom, Richard and Mildred sleep soundly.

25 EXT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 25

ON THE DIRT DRIVE LEADING UP TO THE HOUSE,

Two police cars are parked off to the side under the trees.
No headlights. No engines running.

After a moment, the doors open and THREE MEN quietly step
out. Two from the first car and one from the second.

They walk toward the house in the dark.

ON THE PORCH,

A hand reaches for the front door. It turns the knob. The
unlocked door falls open.

The Men enter.

26 INT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' FARMHOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT 26

Richard and Mildred sleep undisturbed. Still no sounds in the house. Until...

WHAM!

The bedroom door is kicked open as blinding flashlights pop on.

SHERIFF BROOKS (O.S.)

In here!

The Three Men rush inside. Richard sits up, a hand out to shield his squinting eyes.

SHERIFF BROOKS (CONT'D)

What you doin' in that bed boy?

Richard is yanked out of the bed wearing only boxers and an undershirt. Off balance, he's slung to the floor.

MILDRED

Richard?

SHERIFF BROOKS

(to Mildred)

Get outta that bed.

Mildred, wearing a nightgown, slowly climbs out of the bed.

SHERIFF BROOKS (CONT'D)

(over Richard)

What're you doin' in bed with that woman?

MILDRED

I'm his wife.

Richard points to the wall leading SHERIFF BROOK'S flashlight up to the framed marriage certificate.

SHERIFF BROOKS

That's no good here. Get your pants on boy.

The other two men, a DEPUTY and the COUNTY JAILER, pick Richard up by the arms as he scrambles to put on the work pants he'd left over a chair.

Mildred's father appears in the doorway as Sheriff Brooks leads her out of the bedroom in her nightgown.

Theoliver steps out of the way, saying nothing as Richard is led out behind her.

27 EXT. CAROLINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE/JAIL - NIGHT 27

The two police cars are parked in a dirt lot behind the red bricked county jail.

Richard and Mildred, both in handcuffs, have been carried in separate vehicles. They are removed from their respective backseats by the Deputy and Jailer.

Sheriff Brooks, with no comment, walks off toward an adjacent parking lot as the prisoners are led around front.

A bare bulb mounted above the barred door is all that lights the dark, two story structure. Bars cover the windows on the second floor.

28 INT. CAROLINE COUNTY JAIL - NIGHT 28

The jail is dark and dank.

The large metal front door opens directly onto a flight of concrete steps that lead up to the cells. The barred windows offer no protection from the elements.

Metal creaks as Richard is the first to enter and be led upstairs. Mildred is close behind.

A tiny, single cell waits at the top. The Jailer holding Richard addresses the Deputy.

JAILER

She goes in there.

Richard is turned and taken further inside toward a large communal cell down the hall. Richard strains to turn back. He's able to catch Mildred's eye.

RICHARD

It's all right.

Mildred, still in her slippers and nightgown, looks terrified. The Deputy unlocks the door to her cell.

Richard tries to keep an eye on her as the Jailer removes his handcuffs and unlocks the communal cell.

Richard is pushed inside.

IN THE COMMUNAL CELL,

Richard immediately turns back to the bars being slammed in his face. He tries to see down the hall to Mildred but can't.

He steps back, his eyes darting around trying to find an answer that isn't coming. He brings his hand up to his face to cover his hurried breathing.

Stuck, he begins to gather himself. He turns to the large open cell. Shadowy FIGURES line the walls and pace around the windows. Mostly drunks, one mumbles in the corner.

Richard backs into an open spot on the wall by the door. He leans there, keeping his eyes on the room.

IN THE SINGLE CELL,

Mildred is balled up in the corner. The cell is barely big enough to contain the filthy cot she's huddled on.

She's trembling, trying to control her tears.

29 EXT. CAROLINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE/JAIL - NIGHT 29

Outside, the town of Bowling Green is quiet.

The jail sits just a few yards away from the county courthouse. A statue of a confederate soldier stands between the two buildings.

30 INT. CAROLINE COUNTY JAIL - DAY 30

Sunlight streams through the bars of the communal cell.

Richard hasn't moved from his spot on the wall. Several other MEN, black and white, are sprawled out across the cell.

The sound of traffic bustles from the town outside.

Richard barely moves his head at the sound of the big metal door downstairs opening. Footsteps climb the steps in no kind of hurry.

Keys jingle and the cell door opens.

JAILER
Richard Loving?

RICHARD

Here.

Richard straightens, stiff from the long night, and moves to the door.

JAILER

You made bail.

Richard quickly steps out of the cell and moves down the hall looking for Mildred.

He sees her still huddled on the cot in her cell.

RICHARD

Bean?

Mildred lifts her head to find Richard approaching. She immediately gets to her feet and goes to the cell door.

MILDRED

Richard?

As Richard approaches her, the Jailer grabs him by the shoulder to steer him downstairs.

JAILER

On down.

Richard resists.

RICHARD

What about her?

JAILER

Just you.

MILDRED

Richard?

The Jailer moves Richard further down the stairs. Richard tries to pull back.

RICHARD

Wait.

The Jailer yanks his arm.

JAILER

Don't pull me again.

RICHARD

That's not right.

The Jailer moves him on downstairs. Richard turns to see Mildred. She stands at the bars watching him go.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
That's not right now!

At the bottom of the steps he loses sight of her. The Jailer shoves him outside.

31 EXT. CAROLINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE/JAIL - DAY 31

Richard stumbles out the door into bright sunlight. He covers his eyes as the metal door slams shut.

The Jailer keeps a hold of him and leads him across the lawn toward the courthouse.

Richard looks over to the small Sheriff's office that sits in a building behind the jail. Sheriff Brooks stands outside sipping a cup of coffee.

He watches Richard. Richard averts his eyes.

32 INT. CAROLINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE/CLERK'S OFFICE - DAY 32

Richard stands in front of a desk in the CLERK'S office collecting his wallet and keys.

CLERK
Sign at the bottom.

The Clerk, a white man in his early 60's, presents a paper and pen to him. Richard bends over to sign.

RICHARD
What about my wife?

CLERK
You'll have to talk to the Judge about that on Monday.

RICHARD
Monday?

Richard waits for a response, but the Clerk just hands him a receipt for his things. Richard walks out.

33 EXT. CAROLINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 33

Richard walks outside to find Raymond waiting for him by his car on the street.

They don't speak. They just climb in the car and Raymond drives away.

34 INT. LOLA'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

34

A scream.

The pregnant young White Girl sits in a bed in the center of the front room in the midst of labor. Her HUSBAND(25) stands by looking pale.

Lola performs her midwife duties in the middle of it all.

LOLA

Richard!

Richard enters from the front porch.

LOLA (CONT'D)

Bring me that fresh water and take this one out.

Richard moves to the wood stove and a uses a towel to grab the fresh bucket of water. He replaces it with one at Lola's feet and heads back out to the front porch.

35 EXT. LOLA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

35

Richard walks onto the porch and dumps the bucket off to the side of the house.

Setting the bucket down, he joins Raymond on the railing looking out over the small community of houses. SEVERAL PEOPLE mill about.

RAYMOND

What you gon' do?

Richard shakes his head, unable to unclench his jaw. He studies the people in the nearby houses, black and white. All poor.

RICHARD

How'd they know to come get us?

RAYMOND

Somebody talked.

Richard looks at him. Nods.

He turns his attention back to the neighbors. The sounds of the Girl's labor continue inside.

36 INT. LOLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 36

Lola has cleaned up the room from the birth.

By the light of a bare bulb, she folds a clean sheet and places it in a large wooden chest.

37 EXT. LOLA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 37

Richard sits alone on a stoop smoking at the back of the house. The moon is bright. His mind works on the problem.

Stumped, he stands with a flick of his cigarette and begins to pace. His head moves as if making an argument with no words.

He finally sits back on the stoop and stares up at the moon. He rubs his fingers over his face.

From inside, Lola watches her son through the screen of the back door. She returns to her work.

38 INT. CAROLINE COUNTY JAIL - NIGHT 38

Mildred tries to straighten a stiff leg while leaning on the edge of the cot in the cramped cell. She massages her belly with a wince.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

HEY!

Mildred flinches at the sound from down the hall. A shouting match erupts between two men in the communal cell.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

GET OFF ME! I SAID GET OFF ME
NIGGA!

Mumbling. Someone laughs. Then silence.

Mildred draws back onto the cot, trying to make herself small.

39 INT. CAROLINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE/CLERK'S OFFICE - DAY 39

Richard stands in front of the Clerk's desk already frustrated by the situation.

CLERK

We told you to come back on Monday
and talk to the Judge.

RICHARD
I can't let her be in there 'til
Monday. That's not right.

CLERK
Talk to the Judge. You're not
allowed to bail her out.

RICHARD
I get a lawyer?

CLERK
You can.

Richard swallows his frustration and walks out.

40 EXT. COURTHOUSE/CLERK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 40

Richard storms out of the clerk's office door. He stops to take a breath, trying to stay calm. He moves across the lawn toward his car parked on the main street.

SHERIFF BROOKS (O.S.)
Hey boy!

Richard stops to see Sheriff Brooks standing outside his office. Richard doesn't move.

The Sheriff beckons him.

SHERIFF BROOKS (CONT'D)
Come on!

Richard watches the Sheriff walk back into his office. He looks around, then walks over.

41 INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY 41

Richard steps inside to find Sheriff Brooks seated behind his desk. They are alone.

SHERIFF BROOKS
Sit down.

Richard takes a seat in front of the desk, apprehensive.

SHERIFF BROOKS (CONT'D)
You back tryin' to bail her out?

Richard nods.

SHERIFF BROOKS (CONT'D)
 You know they aren't gonna let her
 out to you?

Richard wants to protest, but doesn't.

SHERIFF BROOKS (CONT'D)
 You best send one of her people up
 here, 'cause they won't let her out
 to you.

RICHARD
 She's pregnant.

SHERIFF BROOKS
 You shut your mouth about that.
 I'll throw your ass back in there
 for that. You know better.

Richard mumbles something.

SHERIFF BROOKS (CONT'D)
 What's that?

Richard says nothing.

SHERIFF BROOKS (CONT'D)
 You do know better don't you? Or
 maybe you don't. Your daddy worked
 for a nigger didn't he? Runnin'
 timber?

The Sheriff shakes his head, feigning remorse.

SHERIFF BROOKS (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry for you. I really am.
 All ya'll over there in Central
 Point don't know up from down. All
 mixed up. Half Cherokee,
 Rappahannock, part niggra, part
 white. Blood don't know what it
 wants to be. You just got born in
 the wrong place is all.

Richard stays still.

SHERIFF BROOKS (CONT'D)
 See you got to thinkin' it was
 fine. You might think people
 around here wouldn't care. Hell
 maybe they wouldn't if your dumb
 country ass hadn't gone off and
 married her, but not me. You hear
 me? That's God's law.

(MORE)

SHERIFF BROOKS (CONT'D)
 He made a sparrow a sparrow and a
 robin a robin. They're different
 for a reason.

The Sheriff stares him down, just hoping he makes eye
 contact, but Richard never does.

SHERIFF BROOKS (CONT'D)
 No. No. You go on now. Get on
 home.

Richard lifts from the chair but is stopped at the door.

SHERIFF BROOKS (CONT'D)
 You send some of her people down
 here tomorrow to get her. I see
 you try and bail her out again I'll
 arrest you.

Richard exits.

42 EXT. CAROLINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE/JAIL - CONTINUOUS 42

Richard walks across the lawn. He looks up at the jail, but
 doesn't stop moving.

43 EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY 43

Richard lays brick. He's off his pace. His mind wanders.

44 EXT. CAROLINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE/JAIL/MAIN STREET - NIGHT 44

Richard sits alone in his car at night.

The engine is off and light from a distant street lamp barely
 illuminates him.

His arm is propped on the door and he holds his head. He's
 been here awhile.

His eyes eventually drift to something across the street.

He is parked on the main street of Bowling Green. In the
 distance, he watches the jail.

45 INT. CAROLINE COUNTY JAIL - DAY 45

Daylight streams in through the bars. Mildred sits in the
 cell.

She jumps at the sound of the loud metal door opening downstairs. She leans over to see who will appear.

Sheriff Brooks walks a PRISONER up. The Prisoner doesn't take his eyes off Mildred. The Sheriff notices.

SHERIFF BROOKS

I should let you go in there with her tonight.

This said, the Sheriff never stops walking and disappears with the Prisoner down the hall.

Mildred retreats to the back corner of her cell. Her eyes stay locked on the empty hallway.

It's quiet.

Sheriff Brooks reappears in the hallway. He's alone.

He walks up to Mildred's cell and unlocks the door. She stares up at him with wide eyes. She can't get any further away but tries. Pressing her back into the wall.

Sheriff Brooks swings the bars open and takes a step back. After a moment...

SHERIFF BROOKS (CONT'D)

Come on. Your daddy posted your bail.

Mildred pauses, unsure, but then bolts up and is moving down the stairs.

46 INT. CAROLINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE/CLERK'S OFFICE - DAY 46

The doors open and Mildred steps inside the Clerk's office.

Theoliver is waiting there. She runs up and embraces him. She's crying. He holds her.

47 I/E. THEOLIVER'S CAR/COUNTRYSIDE - DAY 47

Theoliver drives as Mildred stares out the passenger window. They ride in silence.

Mildred watches the trees and countryside passing by outside. It's a beautiful summer day.

48 EXT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' FARMHOUSE - DAY

48

Mildred gets out of the car.

Garnet rushes off the front porch to give her a hug. Mildred accepts this but cranes her neck, searching. Musiel steps out onto the porch alone.

MILDRED

Where's Richard?

Theoliver walks up to the house and doesn't stop to speak.

THEOLIVER

Moved his things out.

Theoliver continues inside the house. Mildred looks confused. Garnet takes her hand and leads her to the house.

GARNET

Said they'd arrest ya'll again if
they catch him here with you.

Mildred stops on the porch and looks back to the road. No one is there, but it doesn't stop her from searching. Garnet takes her on inside.

49 EXT. LOLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

49

The sound of crickets fill the warm night air.

Richard steps quietly out the back door of his mother's house. He waits on the top step, scanning the other houses. There is no one around.

He moves quickly away from the house and disappears into a treeline that borders the community.

50 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

50

Richard moves through dark woods. Branches and brambles pull at his pants and scratch his arms.

A50 EXT. WOODS/ROAD - NIGHT

A50

Richard pauses to survey a road in the distance.

Headlights appear and he crouches.

The car passes without slowing. Richard waits to be sure, and then sprints out of the woods.

He crosses the road and enters the treeline on the opposite side. He falls out of sight.

51 EXT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' FARMHOUSE - NIGHT 51

Richard appears from the woods on the side of Mildred's parents' house.

He hangs close to the trees as he maneuvers to a spot where he can see the dirt drive. It's empty.

Richard moves toward the front door. He eases open the screen slips inside.

52 INT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 52

The house is dark and quiet, similar to the night they were arrested.

Richard makes his way through, wary of his creaking footsteps.

53 INT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' FARMHOUSE/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 53

Mildred bolts up in bed at the sound of the bedroom door opening.

RICHARD (O.S.)

Bean?

Mildred tries to get up but Richard is already beside her. She wraps her arms around him tight. She's crying.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

It's okay. I got you.

She begins to settle and Richard pulls back to look at her.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

You okay? Did they hurt you?

MILDRED

No. I'm just scared. They said I couldn't see you.

RICHARD

I know.

Mildred wipes at her face, letting a hand cradle over the top of her belly.

MILDRED

What are we gon' do?

RICHARD

I got a lawyer. They say he's the best in the county. He'll get it straightened out.

MILDRED

I don't know.

RICHARD

It's fine. We just gotta keep to ourselves for awhile. This'll blow over.

Mildred is comforted by the words even though she doesn't entirely trust them. Richard leans in to kiss her. He keeps his head close to hers.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I better go.

Mildred tightens her grip. It pains him to separate. They lean back together on the bed. He pulls his legs up to her.

They lie together on top of the covers. His pants and shoes still covered in mud from the trek over.

They stay this way for a long time.

54 INT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' FARMHOUSE - NIGHT - LATER 54

Richard gently shuts the door to Mildred's bedroom.

He maneuvers to the back of the house but is stopped by the sight of Garnet.

She doesn't speak. She just stands in her doorway staring him down. He feels the weight of this stare.

Unable to plead his case, he averts his eyes and continues out of the house.

Garnet never moves. She watches him leave.

55 INT. FRANK BEAZELY'S LAW OFFICE - DAY 55

Richard and Mildred, dressed for court, sit in leather wing chairs in front of a big mahogany desk.

The law office is small, but well appointed. Stacks of books and files give it a functional feel.

FRANK BEAZELY (O.S.)
We'll walk over there in a minute,
but I met with the Judge this
morning and I was able to work out
a deal that I think is fair.

FRANK BEAZELY(58) is a polished small town lawyer.

FRANK BEAZELY (CONT'D)
Judge Bazile is a friend, but he is
not a fan of your particular
situation. If you all plead
guilty, the judge is willing to
suspend any prison time.

Mildred lets out an audible sigh of relief. Richard takes her hand and nods at Frank.

RICHARD
We'll do it.

FRANK BEAZELY
Now in exchange for suspending the
jail time, you and your wife,
unless of course you choose to
dissolve the marriage, will be
forced to leave the state.

RICHARD
Leave the state? What's that mean?

FRANK BEAZELY
It's exactly what it sounds like.
You will not be allowed to remain
in the state together. Richard,
you'll be allowed to return for
work, and Mildred can visit, but
the two of you are never allowed to
be in the state at the same time
and certainly aren't allowed to be
here together.

MILDRED
For how long? How long will that
last?

Frank chews on his cheek, reluctant to give the details.

FRANK BEAZELY
Twenty five years.

Mildred is stunned. Richard's jaw goes slack with disbelief.

RICHARD

That can't be right.

FRANK BEAZELY

Look, you got a year in state penitentiary, which I remind you could have been up to five years at the maximum, you got a year in prison on one hand or leavin' the state on the other. That's an easy choice.

Mildred, a panic growing, looks to Richard, but his head is down. He can't look at her.

56 EXT. BOWLING GREEN/CAROLINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY 56

Their dress shoes click across the main street.

Frank leads Mildred and Richard from his office in downtown Bowling Green over to the courthouse.

FRANK BEAZELY

Try not to talk unless he directly asks you a question, which he won't.

Frank doesn't turn to address them as they walk. Richard and Mildred follow, but aren't touching.

FRANK BEAZELY (CONT'D)

Just like we talked about, he'll ask what you plead, you say guilty, and this'll be over quick enough.

Richard tries to catch Mildred's eye, but she's keeping her head down.

They reach the lawn that connects the courthouse to the jail.

57 INT. JUDGE BAZILE'S COURT ROOM - DAY 57

It's a picture perfect small town county courthouse. One large, open room with an upper and lower gallery. All polished wood and natural light from tall shuttered windows.

Richard and Mildred sit at one of two tables in front of the judge's elevated bench. Frank Beazely sits next to them with his hands folded in front of him.

They listen to the COURT SECRETARY reading the charges aloud. There is no jury, but a BAILIFF stands by a rear exit.

COURT SECRETARY

...the said Richard Perry Loving, being a white person and the said Mildred Dolores Jeter being a colored person, did unlawfully and feloniously go out of the state of Virginia, for the purpose of being married in the District of Columbia on June 2nd, 1958, and afterwards returned to and resided in the County of Caroline, State of Virginia, cohabitating as man and wife against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth.

The Court Secretary takes a seat as JUDGE BAZILE(68) shuffles some papers at his bench. He's a withered looking man in horn-rimmed glasses.

JUDGE BAZILE

Stand.

Frank stands, cuing Richard and Mildred to do the same.

JUDGE BAZILE (CONT'D)

How do you plead?

RICHARD

Guilty.

MILDRED

Guilty.

JUDGE BAZILE

The court doth accept the pleas of guilty and fix the punishment of both accused at one year each in jail.

Richard looks to Frank, who keeps an unflinching stare ahead.

JUDGE BAZILE (CONT'D)

The court does suspend said sentence for the period of twenty-five years upon the provision that both accused leave Caroline County and the State of Virginia at once and do not return together or at the same time to said county and state for a period of twenty-five years. Do either of you have anything to say?

Richard drops his eyes. He shakes his head, "no."

Mildred looks up to the Judge, still processing this. She slowly shakes her "no" as well.

JUDGE BAZILE (CONT'D)

You're released from custody. Settle your court costs with the clerk.

Judge Bazile smacks a gavel and stands to exit the court.

As Frank Beazely packs up his things, Mildred and Richard stand frozen.

58 INT. CAROLINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE/CLERK'S OFFICE - DAY 58

The Clerk tabulates on a form.

Richard and Mildred stand in front of his desk. Richard holds his wallet. Mildred looks dazed.

CLERK

It's 36 dollars and 29 cents a piece.

Richard opens his wallet and begins counting cash.

59 EXT. MILDRED'S PARENTS' FARMHOUSE - DAY 59

Richard ties down luggage loaded on the top of their car.

Mildred's parents, along with Garnet, stand at the steps of the porch. Mildred explains her writing on a piece of paper to her mother.

MILDRED

The first number is Nancy's brother Alex.

(MORE)

MILDRED (CONT'D)

His wife Laura is there most days.
If you need to get us, just call.

MUSIEL

Okay.

Mildred hugs her mother tight. Moving to her father, she begins to tear up.

MILDRED

Daddy?

THEOLIVER

You okay.

Mildred approaches Garnet who stands with arms crossed. Mildred hugs her, but Garnet can't handle it. She breaks free and levels a finger at Richard.

GARNET

You knew what you was doin' takin'
her up there! You had no right for
that!

Richard doesn't argue, just deflects with a nod.

Garnet storms into the house. Mildred watches her go, barely able to keep it together.

Richard holds his hand out.

RICHARD

Bean?

Mildred attempts a smile to her parents before walking over and taking his hand. He helps her into the car.

Richard nods to her parents as he walks around the hood. He climbs in and the car pulls away.

Her parents remain on the steps. They can see Mildred through the rear window. She can't help but look back.

The car disappears down the dirt drive.

60

EXT. TREE IN FIELD/ROAD - DAY

60

An oak tree stands by a curve in a country road. Sun shines through its canopy. It is tall and beautiful.

The Loving's car passes by, leaving the tree's branches swaying gently.

With the car gone, the countryside is still. Almost silent. This silence continues...

61 EXT. RICHARD'S CAR/D.C. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY 61

Mildred rides in the passenger seat. Her eyes are locked on the world passing outside her window.

After a time, she cracks the window.

The SOUNDS OF THE CITY come flooding in.

Cars honking. Dogs barking. R&B trickles from distant radios. People shout at one another across the streets. A cacophony.

Mildred seems to wither slightly.

The SOUNDS are soon joined by images. It's a poor black neighborhood in Washington D.C.

Life spills across the streets. Dogs eat trash from tumbled cans. Concrete and asphalt cover everything. Kids run wild, zagging across the pavement. Men and women hover in groups.

Mildred, without taking her eyes off the scene, reaches for Richard. He takes a hand off the wheel and finds her grip.

62 EXT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - DAY 62

Mildred steps out of the car as Richard is already untying the luggage on the roof.

She studies the tall slender row house in front of her. It's one of many sandwiched in a line that goes on forever down the street.

She looks up at the green leaves of a solitary young tree planted in a hole made for it in the sidewalk.

LAURA(32) comes out of the house and greets Mildred with a hug at the bottom of the stoop.

LAURA
How ya'll doin'?

MILDRED
We're fine. Thank you for taking us.

LAURA
We've got lots of room.

MILDRED
You remember Richard?

LAURA
Yes.

Richard walks over and offers his hand.

RICHARD
Thank you.

LAURA
Glad to have you.

She takes Mildred by the hand.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Come on in I'll show you the house.

Richard watches them go inside. He studies the street for himself, takes a deep breath and goes back to unpacking.

63 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C./BEDROOM - NIGHT 63

The room is dark, but light from a street lamp spills in through the sheer curtain.

Mildred and Richard lie in bed.

The room is small but comfortable with minimal furnishings. The window is open in an attempt to let a breeze in. A metal fan blows from the corner.

Richard is asleep. Mildred is on her side with her back to him. She is wide awake.

She listens to all of the new sounds outside. The din of traffic, a distant siren, an occasional shout.

She tries to keep her eyes closed, but can't.

64 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C./KITCHEN - DAY 64

Mildred's cousin, ALEX(35), sits at the kitchen table reading a paper. Mildred, still in her night clothes, sips a glass of juice. Laura is at the stove.

Richard walks in dressed for work. He bends down and speaks in Mildred's ear.

RICHARD
I'm goin'.

Mildred sets her glass down and follows Richard out of the kitchen.

65 EXT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - DAY 65

Richard steps out of the front door. He pauses to turn and kiss Mildred who is just behind him.

Richard walks down the steps to the sidewalk but hesitates there. He looks back up to Mildred. He doesn't want to leave her and he can see she doesn't want to be left.

RICHARD
I'll be home by dinner.

Mildred nods. Richard, reluctant, breaks the look and goes to climb in his car.

Mildred stays put until his car disappears around the corner.

66 EXT. RESIDENTIAL JOB SITE - DAY 66

This is a new job site, but some of the crew are the same as before. They are building a house in a more residential neighborhood.

Richard works on setting bricks in an intricate pattern that forms the front walk.

67 INT. JUMBO FOOD STORE - DAY 67

Mildred pushes a cart down the aisle of a large grocery store. She seems lost in thought passing the stacks of labels that line the shelves.

She emerges from the aisle and pauses. She studies a list in her hand against the numerous rows.

As other CUSTOMERS pass by, she just stops. Feeling every bit of her pregnancy, she leans against the cart, overwhelmed by her situation.

68 EXT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - EVENING 68

The sun has just set in an AUTUMN SKY.

Richard climbs out of his car parked across the street from their cousin's row house. Met by a cool wind, he pops the collar on a red and black flannel coat and crosses.

He walks inside past the small tree out front showing bright orange leaves.

69 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - NIGHT 69

A TV in the front room shows a news program describing Pioneer 1, a space probe.

Their cousin Alex reclines in a soft chair nearby.

Richard watches from one end of the couch. Mildred sits on the other. Her belly is massive, having reached full term.

Richard looks over to Mildred. She isn't watching the TV. She stares off at nothing. It's a despondent look.

Richard studies her long enough to see no change. He goes back to the TV, concerned.

70 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C./BEDROOM - NIGHT 70

Richard and Mildred are in bed under a heavier blanket. Mildred is on her side again, her back to Richard.

He watches her shoulders. They rise and fall with deliberate breaths. He moves close, putting his arm over her and pressing his face into her hair.

RICHARD
What can I do?

MILDRED
Nothing.

RICHARD
Bean.

MILDRED
It's just...I always thought your mother would be the one to deliver the baby.

This isn't news to him, but it strikes him to hear it said aloud. He begins to nod. He rolls onto his back again.

He stares at the ceiling, making his choice.

RICHARD
Okay.

She turns to see him. He looks at her and nods again.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Okay.

She wraps her arms around his chest. His mind is already working on the task.

71 EXT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - LATE AFTERNOON 71

Richard, a blanket tucked under his arm, helps Mildred into the backseat of his idling car. She has a dark scarf tied over her hair.

Richard hands her the blanket before grabbing a small suitcase off the curb. He places the bag in the trunk and climbs behind the wheel.

They drive away from the house.

72 I/E. RICHARD'S CAR/HIGHWAY - MOVING - NIGHT 72

The highway is dark at night.

Richard scans the road. A set of headlights appear up ahead. Richard follows them getting closer. He grips the wheel.

The headlights pass.

Richard's eyes dart from the road to the rearview in quick succession, but the taillights continue shrinking.

Richard takes a breath.

In the backseat,

Mildred is lying down with the blanket draped over her. She listens to the tires thump the road.

73 I/E. RICHARD'S CAR/COUNTY LINE HIGHWAY - NIGHT 73

Richard's car slows on its approach down the highway.

The headlights snap off as the car eases over to a stop on the shoulder. It sits idle in the dark.

INSIDE THE CAR,

Richard sits in the dark watching the road. Nothing.

Waiting. Still nothing.

Headlights appear. They approach fast and then fly by.

In the rearview, Richard watches as the car pulls a U-turn in the middle of the highway.

It speeds up to them and brakes to a quick stop.

It's Raymond in his own car. He smiles across the bench seat at Richard before hopping out. He leaves his car in idle.

OUT ON THE HIGHWAY,

Richard quickly gets out and opens the back door. Raymond joins him and they help Mildred step out and transfer over to Raymond's car.

Raymond rushes to get back behind his wheel. The car speeds off, leaving Richard alone in the road.

He watches their taillights disappear before climbing back into his own car.

74 EXT. LOLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

74

Richard's car pulls into the drive at his mother's house. Raymond's car sits parked on the front lawn.

Richard maneuvers his car around back.

AT THE BARN GARAGE,

Richard passes their race car, which has been parked outside of the barn and covered with a tarp. Richard pulls into the open bay.

Richard peeks out of the open barn doors. He sees no one and makes a B line for the back of the house.

75 INT. LOLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

75

Richard enters the kitchen area at the back of the house. He hears voices in the main room.

IN THE FRONT ROOM,

Richard enters to find Mildred sitting with her family. Raymond hangs out by the front door and Lola tends the fire in the stove.

RICHARD

Hey Momma.

LOLA

Fetch me that wood.

She points to a pile in the corner. Richard grabs two logs and delivers them.

Mildred, flanked by her parents, makes eye contact with Garnet and motions her toward Richard.

Garnet stands and goes over to him at the stove.

GARNET
Thank you for this.

Richard smiles at her. She gives him a hug.

RAYMOND
All right String Bean. It's on you now.

Theoliver laughs and the room relaxes. Lola carries a cup of steaming liquid and puts it in Mildred's hand.

LOLA
Drink this.

Lola exits to the back of the room. Mildred looks up to Richard, smiling. She takes a sip. It's stout.

76 EXT. BARN GARAGE - DAY

76

The tarp covered race car sits shaded under a tree beside the barn out of view from the other houses.

Richard lies underneath adjusting something on the rear end. A shout comes from inside the house.

GARNET (O.S.)
Rich!

Richard pushes himself free and runs to the house.

77 INT. LOLA'S HOUSE - DAY

77

Lola is helping Mildred onto the bed that has been pulled to the center of the room. Garnet helps.

Richard runs inside.

GARNET
Her water broke.

Richard grabs a bucket and rushes back out of the room.

78 INT. LOLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 78

Mildred is still in labor. She is drenched in sweat and pushing hard. She's at the brink of giving birth.

Richard, at home in this situation, holds her hand. Lola is by her legs keeping count by tapping her foot.

LOLA
Keep on. And...bear down.

Mildred pushes.

79 EXT. LOLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 79

It's late. The house is quiet as is the neighborhood.

Richard stands on the front porch smoking. Lola steps out side and dumps a bucket of water off the side of the porch.

Richard speaks just before she's back inside.

RICHARD
Thank you Momma.

Lola pauses in a rare moment of introspection.

LOLA
You never shoulda married that girl.

Richard doesn't even turn to answer this.

RICHARD
I thought you liked her.

LOLA
I like a lot of people. That doesn't mean you shoulda gone and done what you did. You knew better.

Richard doesn't engage. He takes a pull from his cigarette and goes back to watching the street.

Lola walks inside.

80 INT. LOLA'S HOUSE - DAY 80

A new baby's face swaddled tight.

GARNET (O.S.)
Sidney. Sidney.

Garnet holds him, speaking gently.

Mildred and Richard sit on the couch watching. Mildred is dressed and looking somewhat recovered.

Mildred's mother is also there. They all study the child. Garnet stands and hands the baby back to Mildred.

The SOUND of cars pulling up.

Richard cranes his neck but has to stand to see out front.

He sees two Sheriff's patrol cars in the front yard. Sheriff Brooks steps out of one and the Deputy from the other.

The two men walk forward and stop by the hoods of their cars. They wait there.

Richard turns to Mildred.

RICHARD
Call Frank Beazely.

Richard walks outside. Mildred doesn't move from the couch.

81 EXT. LOLA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

81

Richard steps onto the front porch. His eyes meet the Sheriff's. He steps down into the yard.

Richard stays several feet back from the men. He and the Sheriff stare at one another.

SHERIFF BROOKS
Tell that woman to come out here.

RICHARD
She's not here.

SHERIFF BROOKS
Boy. I will split your head to the white meat and then go arrest every soul in that house. I won't ask again.

82 INT. LOLA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

82

Mildred kisses the baby on the forehead and hands him over to Garnet.

GARNET

No.

Mildred stands and slips on her coat. She walks out of the house. Lola has appeared at the kitchen door. She watches this all.

83 EXT. LOLA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 83

Sheriff Brooks sees Mildred step outside.

Never looking up, Mildred passes behind Richard and heads for the Deputy's car. He opens his door and Mildred takes her place in the backseat. The Deputy closes her in.

Sheriff Brooks stares at Richard. He eventually follows suit and walks toward Brooks' vehicle.

84 INT. DEPUTY'S PATROL CAR - MOVING - DAY 84

Mildred sits quietly in the backseat.

The Deputy barely turns his head to speak to her, but given the circumstances his voice is kind.

DEPUTY

You're in luck. The Judge is in today. You'll go straight there.

Mildred takes this in. Nods a little.

85 INT. CAROLINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY 85

Richard and Mildred find themselves standing once again at the table in front of Judge Bazile's bench.

The Judge studies a transcript and looks lowly at them over the bridge of his glasses.

JUDGE BAZILE

For violation of your parole, you are ordered to post a two-hundred-dollar bond and are to appear in front of this court on...

The Judge looks to the COURT SECRETARY for his answer.

The doors at the back of the courtroom swing open, interrupting the proceedings.

Frank Beazely rushes inside.

He begins to gather himself as he walks up to join the Lovings. Bazile waits for him to catch his breath.

JUDGE BAZILE (CONT'D)

Yes Frank.

FRANK BEAZELY

We ask the court for leniency. I incorrectly told the Lovings it was okay to return home together for the birth of their child. It uh, it was my mistake.

This foils the Judge's response. He re-calibrates for a moment, pretending to study a paper in front of him.

FRANK BEAZELY (CONT'D)

Your Honor...

Judge Bazile holds up a hand.

JUDGE BAZILE

Okay.

86

EXT. CAROLINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

86

Richard and Mildred stand beside Frank Beazely in front of the Courthouse doors.

Richard holds his hand out to Frank.

RICHARD

Thank you.

Frank doesn't take it.

FRANK BEAZELY

Don't come back here again. You do and you go to prison. This doesn't happen a second time.

With that, Frank Beazely straightens his tie and relieves himself of their company.

Mildred and Richard are left alone in front of the courthouse. The town goes about its business around them.

Mildred straightens her coat.

87

EXT. D.C. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

87

Winter has arrived in the city.

A light sleet falls but doesn't stick to the streets. The tree in front of the row house has lost its leaves.

88 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - DAY 88

Mildred stands at the ironing board. She bobs slightly to soothe the crying baby on her hip.

89 EXT. JOB SITE - DAY 89

Richard works in the snow.

The rhythmic routine of brick after brick.

90 EXT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - DAY 90

The tree out front is covered in lush green leaves. A box fan at the top of the stoop fights against a hot summer day.

Richard plays on the sidewalk with SIDNEY, now a two-year-old toddler. Richard marks the sidewalk with chalk and Sidney jumps across the newfound lines.

Mildred emerges from the house holding a new baby, DONALD.

She eases herself onto a step in front of the box fan and watches Richard and Sidney as she feeds Donald a bottle.

91 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C./CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 91

Sidney, now age four, rushes into the bedroom closely trailed by Donald, a two-year-old.

Sidney leaps onto the twin bed against the wall and bounces on his knees as Donald scrambles up to join him.

Mildred enters. She is once again PREGNANT.

She pulls back the covers on the twin bed as the boys climb in together. She covers them up as they fidget into place.

Mildred grabs a children's book off the floor. She holds up a patient hand to quiet the boys and opens the book to read.

92 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - DAY 92

IN THE KITCHEN,

Mildred spoons applesauce to PEGGY, a baby, sitting in a high chair wearing a pink dress.

The doorbell RINGS.

Mildred quickly wipes at Peggy's face and scoops her out of the high chair.

IN THE FRONT ROOM,

Mildred rushes to the front door and calls upstairs.

MILDRED

Sidney! Don! Come on down!

She opens the door to find Garnet standing there.

Mildred throws herself at her sister. Hugging her fiercely. Garnet smiles at this, but the hug is severe.

Mildred pulls back and Garnet sees the tears in her eyes. Mildred takes her by the hand and drags her inside.

93

INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - LATER

93

Garnet sits on the couch holding Peggy. Mildred sits close to her. Donald and Sidney run up, then down the stairs.

GARNET

...and Sue and Terry send their love. They just had a little girl too.

MILDRED

Really?

GARNET

Their second.

MILDRED

Oh.

A BOOM as Sidney jumps from a high stair and hits the floor. He dares Donald.

SIDNEY

You go.

MILDRED

Sidney, don't jump in the house.

The boys disappear back up the stairs. Garnet smiles as she watches them go.

GARNET

They're big.

MILDRED

Yes. I hate it for 'em. It's like they're caged. Not even any grass to run in.

Garnet can't think of a response.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

And Daddy?

GARNET

He's fine. He stays up in that chair more than in the field. I told Momma if he don't start getting some work done Mr. Banks liable to find someone else for it. Clay said he'd have to...

As Garnet continues, Mildred watches her but can't help feeling distant even with her there.

94 EXT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - DAY 94

Mildred holds Peggy in one arm and keeps Donald at her leg with the other. Sidney is on the steps behind them.

Garnet honks the horn and throws a wave from the window as she drives away.

Mildred watches her go.

95 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C./KITCHEN - NIGHT 95

Richard holds baby Peggy on his lap at the dinner table and helps Sidney put a puzzle together. Donald watches intently from his seat.

Mildred is at the sink washing dishes. Her back is to them.

RICHARD

How was your sister?

MILDRED

She's fine.

Mildred doesn't turn, doesn't engage. Richard picks up on it. He watches her slowly scrubbing at the dishes.

96

INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - DAY

96

Mildred sits on the couch brushing Peggy's hair. She is now two-years-old.

The television plays in front of them. Images of the 1963 civil rights march on Washington show on the screen.

Laura walks in the front door carrying two grocery bags. She pauses in front of the television to watch the march.

A commotion upstairs sends Mildred's attention there.

MILDRED

You boys stop that wrestlin'! Come help Miss Laura with these groceries!

LAURA

They say over a hundred thousand people are there.

Laura moves into the kitchen. From there,

LAURA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Can you imagine?

Mildred speaks low, to herself.

MILDRED

Might as well be half way 'round the world.

LAURA (O.S.)

What?

MILDRED

Nothing.

Laura walks back in holding items from her grocery bags.

LAURA

You know what you need to do?

MILDRED

What?

LAURA

You need to write Bobby Kennedy.

Mildred laughs this off.

LAURA (CONT'D)

I'm serious. That's what he's up there for.

Laura goes back into the kitchen, continuing her thought.

LAURA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

All this talk of civil rights. You need to get you some civil rights.

Mildred shakes her head at this. She watches the images. She notices Peggy's face, engrossed by the TV.

Mildred's eyes go back to the images.

97 EXT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - CONTINUOUS 97

A view from the rooftop of their row house in D.C. The neighborhood expands into the distance.

A faint din can be heard. It's the sound of the civil rights march, just over a mile from their house.

98 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C./BEDROOM - DAY 98

Mildred stares blankly at the wall. She's lost in thought, and this continues for a long moment.

She sits at a desk in the bedroom holding a pen. Eventually, her eyes move down to sheets of loose notebook paper set out in front of her.

She puts the pen to the paper and begins writing in a handsome cursive.

It reads:

"Dear Sir: I am writing to you concerning a problem we have..."

99 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - NIGHT 99

Richard enters the dark house carrying his items from work. His clothes are dusty from a day's labor.

He walks into the kitchen.

IN THE KITCHEN,

Richard takes a seat at the table. He sets his lunch pail and tool bag down. He's beat.

Mildred enters. Without a word, she goes to the sink to get him a glass of water.

RICHARD
They in bed?

MILDRED
Yes.

She places the glass in front of him and moves behind him. She rubs at his shoulders. He relaxes at this.

RICHARD
Sorry I missed 'em. They ask for me?

MILDRED
Peggy did, but she went down fine. Will you get Saturday off?

RICHARD
I hope.

He takes her wrist and guides her around the chair. She sits in his lap. He lays his head on her shoulder, closing his eyes. She kisses his forehead.

They sit quietly together in the dark house.

100 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - DAY 100

IN THE CHILDREN'S ROOM,

Peggy has grown. She's nearly three. The boys have too.

Peggy watches Donald play a game trying to get a ball on a string into a cup. Sidney reads a book on the bed.

PEGGY
My turn. My turn. My turn.

Donald doesn't agree. He continues.

Mildred enters with a basket of laundry.

MILDRED
Sidney, get up and strip those sheets for me?

Sidney does.

The phone begins to RING downstairs. On her way out,

MILDRED (CONT'D)
Don, give Peggy a turn.

101 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

101

Mildred rushes to catch the phone, balancing the laundry basket on her hip.

MILDRED
Byrd residence.

BERNIE COHEN (O.S.)
(through the phone)
Hello, I'm calling to speak to a Mildred Loving.

MILDRED
This is she.

BERNIE COHEN (O.S.)
Hello Mrs. Loving, my name is Bernard Cohen, I'm a lawyer that was referred to you by the ACLU. Are you familiar?

MILDRED
I'm sorry. No.

BERNIE COHEN (O.S.)
You wrote a letter to Attorney General Kennedy, is that right?

Mildred hesitates.

MILDRED
Yes.

BERNIE COHEN (O.S.)
He was not able to help with your particular case and sent your letter on to the American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU contacted me, I'm a lawyer in Virginia, and we would like to help you with your case.

MILDRED
I see.

Donald runs into the room with the toy. Peggy is in hot pursuit.

PEGGY
 Momma! Momma!

Mildred covers the phone.

MILDRED
 Baby hush. Don.

The children are out the back door.

BERNIE COHEN (O.S.)
 Would it be possible for you and
 your husband to meet with me?

MILDRED
 I would have to check with my
 husband.

BERNIE COHEN (O.S.)
 Okay. I'm based in Alexandria, but
 I have an office in D.C. if that is
 a concern.

MILDRED
 Well, as I said in my letter, we
 really can't afford a lawyer.

BERNIE COHEN (O.S.)
 No ma'am. The ACLU would take care
 of any fees.

Mildred nearly drops the phone.

BERNIE COHEN (CONT'D)
 Mrs. Loving? Are you there?

MILDRED
 Yes, we'll see you.

BERNIE COHEN
 Wonderful. I'll have my secretary
 call you back to set up a time.
 Nice speaking to you Mrs. Loving.

The line is disconnected but Mildred keeps the phone in her
 hand until it beeps.

102

INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C./BEDROOM - NIGHT

102

Richard stands at the dresser prepping for a shower. He
 removes his watch and takes out his wallet.

Donald stands with his shirt off watching Mildred as she darns it with a needle and thread.

MILDRED
I got a call from a lawyer today.

RICHARD
Lawyer?

MILDRED
Yes, from the American Civil
Liberties Union. Robert Kennedy
told him to call us.

Richard continues undressing, not taking it in. Mildred finishes the shirt and hands it to Donald.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
Go help your sister brush her
teeth.

Donald exits as he pulls the mended shirt over his head.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
They'd like to help with our case.

RICHARD
We can't afford a lawyer.

MILDRED
They said they wouldn't charge us.

This stops Richard. He's paying attention now, but looking skeptical.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
We're going to see him on Thursday.
His name is Cohen.

Richard gives a faint nod. Mildred smiles and exits to the children's room.

Richard processes what may have been an ambush.

103 INT. OFFICE BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

103

Polished shoes tap along a linoleum hallway.

BERNIE COHEN(29) is a dapper man in a suit and hat. He carries a briefcase and walks with a confident stride.

He enters a glass door.

104 INT. LAW OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

104

A SECRETARY sits at a desk just inside the law office.

BERNIE COHEN

Hi, I'm Bernard Cohen. I'm in from Richmond. I talked to Jack about using his office for a few hours.

SECRETARY

Yes Mr. Cohen, do you know it?

BERNIE COHEN

Third door?

SECRETARY

Yes.

Bernie walks to a connecting hall but turns back on his way.

BERNIE COHEN

My clients are Mr. and Mrs. Loving. Could you send them down when they arrive?

SECRETARY

Certainly.

Bernie finds the third door. There is a name plate there reading "JACK GREEN."

Cohen slips the plate out of its holder and places it in his jacket pocket. From the same pocket, he produces a plate of his own and slides it into the slot on the door.

It now reads "BERNARD COHEN." He enters.

105 INT. D.C. LAW OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

105

The office is tidy and nicely furnished.

Bernie immediately goes to the desk and begins gathering up a collection of frames containing pictures of the other lawyer's family.

He goes behind the desk and places the frames in the top drawer. He lays out a pad and pen from his briefcase.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

Cohen takes a seat in the desk chair and readies himself.

BERNIE COHEN

Come in.

The door opens and Mildred enters, followed by Richard. Bernie immediately stands and comes around to offer his hand.

BERNIE COHEN (CONT'D)

Mrs. Loving?

MILDRED

Yes.

BERNIE COHEN

So nice to meet you. Please, have a seat.

He turns to Richard and they shake hands.

BERNIE COHEN (CONT'D)

Bernard Cohen. It's a pleasure.

Richard sits, staying quiet. Bernie takes note of his demeanor as he goes back behind the desk.

BERNIE COHEN (CONT'D)

Thank you for coming in today. So as we discussed on the phone, the ACLU would like to take on your case. I was actually a charter member of the ACLU here in Virginia which is why they assigned me to you. The bottom line is, we want to get you all some relief.

MILDRED

That's very generous. Thank you.

BERNIE COHEN

I took the liberty of contacting the courthouse in Bowling Green and have started a file for you. Now the first step is to appeal the sentence in Caroline County. That will be our fastest route into Federal Court. The problem is...

RICHARD

Federal court?

BERNIE COHEN

Yes, the goal is to try and get the Federal Court to hear this case so we can get...

RICHARD

'Scuse me, but I don't understand
Federal Court.

BERNIE COHEN

Well I see it as the best route...

RICHARD

Can't you just go talk to Judge
Bazile? I mean we aren't hurtin'
anybody. Can't you just go tell
him that?

BERNIE COHEN

I don't think...

RICHARD

Just talk to him. Tell him if he
lets us back in the state we won't
bother anybody.

Bernie takes a moment, recalculating his approach.

BERNIE COHEN

Look, I do not think this is going
to be resolved in Judge Bazile's
court, or probably any other court
in the state of Virginia for that
matter. I believe this is a court
battle that could possibly go all
the way to the highest court in the
land.

Richard looks at him blankly. Bernie gets specific.

BERNIE COHEN (CONT'D)

It is very likely that this case
could go all the way to the Supreme
Court.

Richard's eyebrows raise, incredulous. He slumps back in his
chair. It's a dismissive posture.

Bernie looks puzzled by this, unsure of his next move.

MILDRED

We're listening.

Seeing an ally in Mildred, he starts back in with his focus
toward her.

BERNIE COHEN

Our problem is that in order to appeal the judgment of conviction, we would've needed to do so within 60 days. Now given that it's been five years since that conviction, we have to find a way to get this case back into the courts. Are you following?

Mildred nods with a pleasant smile. Richard gives a nod.

BERNIE COHEN (CONT'D)

I've given this some thought and I have a somewhat unorthodox idea on how to do this, but in order to get this back into the stream of the courts, given that you are currently on probation, my suggestion would be for the two of you to return to Caroline County, get re-arrested, and then we will have an avenue for our appeal.

Richard looks at him as if his face is on upside down.

RICHARD

You want us to get arrested again?

BERNIE COHEN

Yes. It's an idea. I of course would be there to bail you out.

Richard looks to Mildred. She catches his eyes, but then looks down. She tries to keep her smile.

RICHARD

We aren't gonna do that.

Bernie chews on this, realizing his misstep.

BERNIE COHEN

Right. That's not...I can see how that was a bad idea. I understand. Look, I need to do some more thinking on this first issue, but again, bottom line, we're gonna get you all some help.

Mildred smiles at him and stands. She reaches her hand out across the desk.

MILDRED

We appreciate you. We really do.

Richard stands and shakes Bernie's hand but is quickly out the door. Mildred follows.

The door shuts and Bernie is left alone.

He leans back in the chair and let's out a breath. He tosses his pen down, displeased with his performance.

106 EXT. DOWNTOWN PARKING LOT - DAY 106

Richard walks to their car five paces ahead of Mildred.

Without waiting, he climbs behind the wheel and cranks the engine. He sits there in idle.

Mildred, not hurrying her walk, eventually makes her way to the passenger side and climbs in.

The car pulls out of the parking lot.

107 I/E. RICHARD'S CAR/D.C. NEIGHBORHOOD - MOVING - DAY 107

The two ride in silence. Mildred stares out at the city.

MILDRED

If it gets us home, we'll take their help.

RICHARD

Well. You get what you pay for.

Mildred keeps her eyes out the window.

108 EXT. DOWNTOWN JOB SITE - DAY 108

Richard stands at the base of tall scaffolding. He stares up the side of a growing building under construction.

A pallet of bricks hangs overhead being slowly lifted up on a rig of pulleys.

Richard, his tools strapped around his waist, begins to climb the scaffolding.

109 EXT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - DAY 109

Sidney, now six-years-old, rushes down the stoop of their row house. He carries a baseball bat and flies into the street.

Donald, now five, manages to stay on his heels.

A car honks as the kids dart across its path untouched.

Sidney scrapes his baseball bat over trash cans as they disappear around the corner.

110 EXT. DOWNTOWN JOB SITE - DAY 110

Richard is four stories up and still climbing. Feet following hands.

Above him, the rope holding the pallet of bricks creaks as it runs through the pulleys.

111 EXT. D.C. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY 111

Sidney plays baseball in the street with a GROUP OF KIDS. Donald watches from the curb.

Cars line the sidewalk.

A pitch is thrown and ANOTHER BOY tattoos the baseball sending it bouncing across the sidewalk toward an intersecting street.

Donald hops up to chase it.

DONALD

I got it!

112 EXT. DOWNTOWN JOB SITE - DAY 112

Richard halts his ascent. Giving his hands a rest, he wraps his arm over the scaffolding and rolls his wrist.

The rope holding the pallet of bricks SLIPS in the pulley.

The pallet falls several feet before catching with a snap. The bricks BANG against the plywood.

Richard flinches at the sound. He looks up to see the pallet slowly getting pulled up again.

Richard continues his climb.

113 EXT. D.C. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY 113

Sidney watches as Donald disappears between parked cars.

A PICKUP-TRUCK turns onto the street Donald is headed for.

The baseball rolls across the street as the Truck rumbles toward it.

Donald POPS OUT from behind a parked car. He flinches as the truck barrels toward him.

TIRES SQUEAL!

Sidney's eyes go wide.

SIDNEY

Don!

114 EXT. D.C. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY 114

Sidney's feet sprinting through the neighborhood.

115 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C./KITCHEN - DAY 115

Mildred stands at the ironing board as Peggy, now three, sits at the kitchen table coloring a paper doll.

From outside,

SIDNEY (O.S.)

MOMMA! MOMMA!

Sidney's voice is shrill.

Mildred immediately scoops Peggy up and rushes outside.

116 EXT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - EVENING 116

The sun has just set.

Richard drives down the street and parks near the front of their house.

He climbs out, collecting his things from the back seat.

Richard enters the house.

117 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE/ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS 117

The house is unexpectedly dark and quiet.

Richard walks over and clicks on a lamp in the front room.

He notices FOUR PACKED SUITCASES lined up by the stairs. SEVERAL BOXES are stacked next to them.

Richard begins to look worried.

RICHARD
Mildred!

MILDRED (O.S.)
Up here!

Richard bounds up the stairs.

He sees a light on in the children's room and heads for it.

A117 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE/CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS A117

Richard rushes in to find Mildred sitting next to Donald, who lies in bed with a wet towel pressed against his head.

Sidney holds Peggy on an opposite bed.

RICHARD
What's goin' on?

MILDRED
Donald got hit by a car today.

Richard goes to him.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
He's fine. Just scraped and
bruised is all.

Richard is immediately relieved but stays perched on the bed next to him. He runs his hand gently over the boy's chest.

Mildred stands and exits the room.

Richard watches her go, trying to put things together. He turns back to Donald.

RICHARD
You okay?

Donald nods sullenly.

118 INT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - NIGHT

118

Richard reaches the bottom of the stairs in the front room to find Mildred sitting rigid on the couch.

MILDRED

We're moving back to the country.
I don't care what they do to us. I
won't raise my family here.

Richard looks at the luggage and boxes. He stands there for
awhile. Both are silent.

Richard finally walks over and sits next to her on the couch.
He places his arm around her.

Her face finally breaks. She leans into him.

119

EXT. COUSIN'S ROW HOUSE IN D.C. - DAY

119

Mildred's car is loaded with bags and boxes. Sidney and
Donald laugh playing grab ass on the sidewalk.

RICHARD

Ya'll get loaded up now.

Richard leaves the car door open and walks over to Laura and
Alex at the bottom of the stoop. Mildred is there with
Peggy.

Richard shakes Alex's hand.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Thanks Al.

ALEX

All right.

He hugs Laura, then grabs Peggy and steps back toward the car
to herd the kids.

RICHARD

Come on now.

Mildred hugs Laura.

LAURA

Just go on.

Mildred exchanges a smile with her.

MILDRED

Thank you.

Laura and Alex walk back inside as Mildred turns to the car.
Richard has the kids loaded. Mildred gets behind the wheel.

RICHARD
I'll see you tonight.

Richard kisses her through the open driver's window. He raps on the roof and eyes the children in the backseat.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Ya'll be good.

Mildred pulls the car away.

Richard takes keys out of his pocket and crosses the street to his own car, which is also packed with boxes.

120 EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - EVENING

120

The three-story Victorian-style boarding house stands secluded in the middle of farmland. The sun has recently set and a blue hue hangs over everything.

ON THE WRAP AROUND PORCH,

A young black BOY(9) sits in a rocking chair next to his GRANDMOTHER(72). They are enjoying the night air.

Headlights appear and lead Richard's car down the dirt drive.

The Boy watches as Richard's car pulls around to the back of the house to park.

The Boy gets up and walks to the edge of the porch.

He sees Richard climb out of his car, one of many parked in the back lot. Richard carries his tools toward a back door.

The Boy runs inside through the front entrance to the house.

121 INT. BOARDING HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

121

IN THE MAIN SITTING ROOM,

The Boy stands unseen in the front room. He spies on Richard walking in the back door near the kitchen.

Richard disappears up a back set of stairs.

The Boy rushes up the main stairs.

UPSTAIRS,

A long hallway shows several numbered doors.

The Boy reaches the top of the stairs in time to spy Richard standing at a door at the end of the hallway.

Richard knocks lightly and checks over his shoulder. He doesn't see the Boy.

The door opens and the Boy sees Mildred there.

Richard slips in. Through the sliver, the Boy makes out Donald and Sidney jumping on the bed behind Mildred.

The door closes. With the show over, the Boy disappears back downstairs.

122 EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY 122

Sidney, Donald and Peggy run alongside the field that borders the house. The Boy from the porch runs with them.

They laugh, playing tag and dodging in and out of the crops.

123 INT. BOARDING HOUSE/ROOM - CONTINUOUS 123

Richard pulls back a curtain to see outside. He spots the children playing.

Mildred sits on the bed and Raymond stands against the door.

RAYMOND

My cousin has a house he might rent out.

MILDRED

I thought Jim's brother said it was fine here.

RICHARD

I don't trust it. Too many people.
(to Raymond)
Where is it?

RAYMOND

King and Queen County. Just a farmhouse up there. I figure it gets you out of the county but keeps you close. You'll be on your own out there. It don't have no phone or nothin'. But no one's gonna find you less they know to look. I can get word to you when you need it.

RICHARD

How much you think he'd want for
it?

RAYMOND

He'll be fair.

Richard nods. He hasn't taken his eyes off the window.

124 EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - DAY 124

Red-winged black birds glide over a rolling hillside planted with corn.

Mildred steers the car up a gravel path with Peggy and Donald beside her. She studies the tree canopies that line the drive and then slows the car to a stop.

Mildred takes in the house up ahead. It's perfect.

A white farmhouse with a wide porch. There are multiple out buildings and a massive oak tree in the yard. Grass everywhere leads to rolling farmland.

A horn honks behind her, snapping her out of the gaze.

Richard is with Sidney in the car behind them. Mildred pulls ahead.

125 EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 125

Mildred has parked near the house. She steps out of the car.

The children burst off the front seat and sprint for the house. They start running circles around it.

Richard parks nearby. Sidney jumps out and joins his siblings. Richard begins untying the luggage on the roof.

Mildred meanwhile slips off her shoes. She puts her feet in the grass. Closing her eyes, she takes a breath and curls her toes.

Richard watches her, happy to see her there. He takes in the property. It's a nice spot with a high vantage point. You can see who might be coming in multiple directions.

Richard goes back to the luggage.

126 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY 126

Richard, dressed for work, enters the kitchen to kiss Mildred goodbye.

RICHARD
I'll try and get home 'fore dark.

MILDRED
We'll be fine.

Richard is out the door.

Mildred sits at the kitchen table as a pot of something steams on the stove.

She is in the middle of writing another letter.

A portion of it reads:

"...We haven't heard anything from you for so long we had given up hope."

127 INT. BERNIE COHEN'S LAW OFFICE - DAY 127

Bernie sits behind his desk reading Mildred's latest letter. He mouths a collection of the words.

Bernie puts the letter down, frustrated. He thinks for a moment and then presses the intercom button on his phone.

BERNIE COHEN
Martha, I need you to call Chet Antieau's office at Georgetown and try to set a meeting.

128 INT. GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY/ANTIEAU'S OFFICE - DAY 128

A SECRETARY knocks at an office door.

CHET ANTIEAU (O.S.)
Come in.

The Secretary enters and finds CHET ANTIEAU(51) sitting in a high backed chair talking with PHIL HIRSCHKOP(27), a baby-faced man with dark hair wearing a neat blue suit.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP
I'd never seen anything like it.
No matter how many times I go down there I find something that surprises me.

ANTIEAU'S SECRETARY

Excuse me.

The Secretary sets a note down in front of Chet who gives it a glance.

CHET ANTIEAU

Oh yes, please bring him back.

The Secretary exits.

CHET ANTIEAU (CONT'D)

This is good timing. I want you to meet a former student of mine. He called about a case you may find interesting.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP

Sure, what's it about?

At that moment, Bernie Cohen is shown into the room. He enters with a smile and a hand extended to Chet.

BERNIE COHEN

Hello Professor, thanks for seeing me.

Chet stands to shake.

CHET ANTIEAU

My pleasure. You came at a good time Bernie. This is Phil Hirschkop, he's a brilliant civil rights lawyer.

Phil scoffs at this.

CHET ANTIEAU (CONT'D)

Is it all right if he joins us?

BERNIE COHEN

Please. It's nice to meet you.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP

(shaking hands)

You too.

Bernie takes a seat in the open chair.

CHET ANTIEAU

So what's the problem?

BERNIE COHEN

Well, I'm a bit stumped. The ACLU referred this case to me concerning an interracial couple that was married in D.C. They were arrested for living together in Virginia and the judge suspended their prison sentence under order that they leave the state for 25 years. I filed a motion to vacate the judgement with Judge Bazile, the original trial judge in Caroline County, but he's stonewalling me. He's had my motion under advisement for months, and I feel like he could keep it that way until he retires. Of course the ACLU sees this, and I agree, as a potential contender to repeal anti-miscegenation laws nationwide. I just need to get the ball rolling as it were.

Chet looks over to Phil, whose eyebrows are raised.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP

That's a remarkable case.

BERNIE COHEN

I'm stuck.

129

EXT. GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY - EVENING

129

Bernie and Phil walk through the campus continuing what has been a very long conversation.

BERNIE COHEN

But that may not solve the issue.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP

It's a very delicate situation because by appealing you open up the possibility of sending both of them to prison. I think regardless you file the 1983 motion explaining your complaint. It'll force Bazile's hand and get you in front of a federal three-judge panel.

Phil checks his watch.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP (CONT'D)
 Look, I'm catching a plane to New
 York tonight. I'll work up a draft
 on the plane and find you Monday.

BERNIE COHEN
 That's great. That's just great.
 Thank you.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP
 Bernie, if you don't mind me
 asking, how much experience do you
 have with constitutional law?

BERNIE COHEN
 Some.

Bernie takes a moment, then amends.

BERNIE COHEN (CONT'D)
 Very little.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP
 You realize this case could alter
 the constitution of the United
 States?

BERNIE COHEN
 I do.

Phil smiles at him.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP
 I'll call you on Monday.

Phil walks away. Bernie takes a deep breath, left alone with
 the ivy under the tower of Healy Hall.

130 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - DAY 130

Lola helps Mildred roll out dough in the kitchen. Both wear
 aprons and have flour up to their elbows.

MILDRED
 I never can get mine to rise.

LOLA
 It's not you. It's the humidity.
 Just thick.

Peggy, now four, runs in and tugs on her Grandmother.

PEGGY
Come look Meme. Come look.

MILDRED
Peggy.

LOLA
She's fine.

Lola lets herself get taken outside.

LOLA (CONT'D)
What you want from your Meme?

131 EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 131

Richard stands on a ladder hammering together a wooden frame against the doorway of one of the out buildings. It will hold a winch to lift the motor that sits rusting nearby.

Peggy drags Lola onto the porch to see a makeshift play table set for tea with a collection of dolls. She picks one up.

PEGGY
Lilly won't share her tea.

LOLA
She must be upset.

Richard, from the vantage point of the ladder, sees Raymond's car tearing toward the house. Dust flying.

Richard watches, but a panic slowly takes over. He slides off the ladder and runs toward the house.

RICHARD
Bean! Call the boys! Peggy take
Meme inside.

Richard runs down the drive toward Raymond's car.

The car slides to a stop in a cloud of dust. Raymond climbs out, in no real hurry.

Richard arrives out of breath. His hands hit his knees.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
What is it?

RAYMOND
I got a message for you.

RICHARD

What?

RAYMOND

That lawyer called. Says he needs to meet with ya'll.

Richard stands straight. He looks back at the house to hear Mildred calling for the boys from the porch. His attention goes back to his friend.

RICHARD

Raymond, why you driving so fast like that?

RAYMOND

What you mean? That's how I always drive.

Richard shakes his head, slowly coming around. He snorts out a laugh and walks back toward the house.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

What?

132

INT. BERNIE COHEN'S LAW OFFICE - DAY

132

Bernie sits behind the desk in his office as Phil, in a chair on his left, reads from a file.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP

(reading)

Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay, and red, and he placed them on separate continents.

Mildred and Richard listen from wing chairs facing them. Richard is slouched in dirty work clothes.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP (CONT'D)

...And but for the interference with his arrangement there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix.

Phil looks up from the paper and smiles at the Lovings.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP (CONT'D)

I know it sounds strange, but this is really wonderful.

Richard squirms in his seat, not convinced.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP (CONT'D)
By issuing this ruling, Judge
Bazile has really given us a road
map to the Supreme Court.

MILDRED
I'm sorry, I'm confused. He ruled
against us, again.

BERNIE COHEN
That's right, but now we're allowed
to appeal this ruling to the state.
From there, if they rule against
you, we'll have a chance at the
Supreme Court.

Richard just stays quiet. Mildred nods politely.

MILDRED
That sounds wonderful.

BERNIE COHEN
Now, a little bit of housekeeping,
LIFE Magazine contacted us about
sending a photographer out to you
all. Keeping the possibility of
the Supreme Court in mind, I think
it's a fair idea to raise the
profile of your case, but I of
course want you all to be
comfortable with it.

Mildred looks over to Richard, who shrugs.

MILDRED
That will be fine.

BERNIE COHEN
Okay, great. We'll set that up.

Mildred raises out of her seat and shakes Phil's hand.
Richard follows her lead.

MILDRED
Thank you for everything.

Bernie stands and escorts them to the door. They exit.

Bernie closes the door behind them. He turns and looks at
Phil who is still in his chair.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP

You know Bernie, I've spent a lot of time down South, between the marches and working with Kunstler, and one thing I can tell you, that guy looks like a redneck.

133

EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - DAY

133

Richard strains against the chain that lifts the rusted motor through the winch. It hangs precariously above a cavity in an empty car's hood.

Richard locks off the chain with a hook on the side of the outbuilding and goes to start pushing the car away.

Something catches his eye. He raises up.

A MAN APPROACHES ON FOOT UP THE DRIVE.

Richard walks over and makes himself known.

The man is tall, standing 6'4". He wears a lean suit, carries a suitcase, and has a camera dangling from his neck. This is GREY VILLET(39).

Grey holds a hand up to wave as he approaches.

GREY VILLET

Hello.

Richard stands his ground. Grey approaches and holds out a hand. Richard takes it tentatively.

GREY VILLET (CONT'D)

Grey Villet. LIFE Magazine. What you got there, a V8?

Grey doesn't seem the least bit flustered by Richard giving him a wary eye. He makes his way over to the dangling engine.

GREY VILLET (CONT'D)

What's the trouble?

Richard allows himself to be drawn in.

RICHARD

Camshaft.

GREY VILLET

Then you're a better mechanic than me.

Grey walks toward the house, not stopping to speak.

GREY VILLET (CONT'D)
Of course all that rust on the
crankshaft would be your second
chore. Your wife inside?

As Grey walks up to the house, Mildred steps out onto the porch. Grey continues approaching with a wave.

GREY VILLET (CONT'D)
Mrs. Loving, Grey Villet, LIFE
Magazine. Something smells good in
there. May I?

Grey wipes his feet and disappears inside. Mildred follows. Richard is left by the rusty motor. He smiles at the oddity of this man.

134 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT 134

Laughter.

The family sits around the dinner table hanging on one of Grey's stories.

GREY VILLET
...I couldn't go back with no
photo. No photo, no job, and this
is LIFE Magazine and the pigeon guy
wasn't around.

DONALD
(laughing)
Pigeon guy.

GREY VILLET
So I look up at this office
building and it hits me. I go 55
stories up and talk some office
girls to let me by the window.
Before they could do anything, I
threw open the window and dangled
my feet out. They start screaming,
but I got this great shot of my
feet flying over 42nd and 5th
Avenue.

RICHARD
So what happened?

GREY VILLET
Security threw me out head first.

This makes Richard laugh.

GREY VILLET (CONT'D)
LIFE hired me the next day.

Richard finishes off his plate.

RICHARD
That's a story all right.

135 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE/KITCHEN - LATER 135

Mildred stands at the sink cleaning up the dishes. Grey stands next to her holding his camera.

Behind them in the den, Richard crosses from the couch to join the kids upstairs, who can be heard playing.

GREY VILLET
So you go to the Virginia State Court tomorrow.

MILDRED
Yes.

GREY VILLET
You nervous?

MILDRED
I suppose. The lawyers told us not to expect much.

GREY VILLET
You think you'll lose?

MILDRED
Well, yes. But I think it's all right. We may lose the small battles but win the big war.

Grey smiles at her. He snaps a photo, making her blush.

136 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE/DEN - NIGHT 136

Grey sits on the floor with his back against the wall. A cigarette dangles from his lips as he polishes the face of his watch. His camera sits next to him.

The kids are in bed. Mildred and Richard sit on the couch next to each other watching the Andy Griffith show on TV. They laugh at the episode.

Grey watches as Richard makes himself more comfortable. He stretches out on the couch, placing his head on Mildred's lap. It's a delicate pose. A happy one.

Grey quietly reaches for his camera and snaps a quick shot from his chest.

He gently sets the camera back down and goes back to polishing the watch.

137

EXT. VIRGINIA SUPREME COURT BUILDING - DAY

137

Richard and Mildred walk hand and hand out of the massive Virginia Supreme Court Building in Richmond.

Mildred wears a long coat and Richard is dressed in a three button suit and tie.

REPORTERS, armed with film and still cameras, track them down the sidewalk. Richard walks stiff as a board.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP

Mr. Loving?

Richard and Mildred turn at the sound of Phil's voice.

Phil is standing by one of the many film crews and waves them back toward him. Richard and Mildred walk back.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP (CONT'D)

They just want to ask you a few questions.

A NEWS ANCHOR with a large microphone approaches and speaks to Mildred first.

NEWS REPORTER

Mrs. Loving...

He pauses to address his CAMERA MAN.

NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)

You rolling?

(to Mildred)

Mrs. Loving, the Virginia Supreme Court just ruled against you, how do you feel about what happened here today?

MILDRED

Well, I feel hopeful. I'm hopeful.

NEWS REPORTER
Where are you going now?

MILDRED
I guess we'll go back to
Washington.

NEWS REPORTER
You'll go back to Washington. Mr.
Loving, do you have anything to say
about what went on in the court
today?

RICHARD
No I don't have anything to say.

NEWS REPORTER
Okay.

Mildred nods to the Reporter and Richard has already turned
to leave. She keeps hold of his hand.

NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)
Okay, cut Tommy.

Richard and Mildred try to walk toward their car. Phil walks
close behind them.

Bernie is giving an interview to a different CAMERA CREW when
he sees them pass by.

BERNIE COHEN
Mr. And Mrs. Loving?

Bernie walks over to them with the Camera Crew in tow. Phil
takes a position next to him.

BERNIE COHEN (CONT'D)
I wanted you all to know, with this
travel back and forth to Virginia,
you all have my number and if
anybody arrests you, just have them
get in touch with us and we'll hop
right to it. We won't let you stay
in jail one minute longer than it
takes us to get down there and get
you out, okay?

RICHARD
Okay.

BERNIE COHEN
All right. Good luck to you.

Richard reaches out to shake both Bernie and Phil's hands.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP
You did a good job today.

Richard, painfully shy in front of the cameras, sheepishly smiles. Mildred gives a polite laugh.

RICHARD
Well thank you, I sure appreciate
what ya'll's doing.

BERNIE COHEN
It's all right. Okay. See you.

Richard and Mildred walk to their car. Richard checks over his shoulder, rattled by the whole affair.

The Camera Crew has backed off and is packing up their equipment.

Phil and Bernie wave as the Loving's car pulls away. Phil leans in to Bernie.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP
You know there's no guarantee that
we can get them out if they get
arrested again?

Bernie watches the news media wrapping up. Showing unease now that the cameras are off, he nods to Phil.

138 EXT. POWER STATION JOB SITE - DAY 138

Richard works at a big job site out in the country.

The 20 man CREW is constructing a power station. Richard, along with a few others, sets brick for a substation.

The routine is there. Brick and mortar.

139 EXT. RURAL JOB SITE - LATER - AFTERNOON 139

Richard has wrapped up his work for the day and walks over to his car. It's one of many parked nearby.

Other Crew mingle about in the lot.

Richard throws his tools into the backseat and reaches for the driver's door.

He pauses.

Richard checks over his shoulder to see if anyone is watching him. Though seeing other workers, no one is looking at him.

Richard opens the door and leans in.

He picks up a BRICK that has been placed on the driver's seat. It is wrapped in the spread from LIFE Magazine complete with Grey Villet's photos.

Richard tears off the magazine pages and crams them in his pocket. He drops the brick to the ground and climbs in.

140 I/E. RICHARD'S CAR/BACK ROAD - MOVING - AFTERNOON 140

Richard drives through the back country on a rural road. He continually checks the rearview.

A TRUCK appears behind him.

Richard studies it, not changing his speed. The truck hangs back at a distance.

Richard comes to a turn and takes it sharply. Again, he maintains his speed, studying the rearview.

The truck turns in behind him. Still at a distance.

Richard pushes down on the pedal and speeds up. The truck follows suit.

Richard's speedometer climbs higher and higher.

He eyes the rearview and sees the truck has maintained its distance. Richard is nervous.

He approaches a curve.

Once around, Richard floors the car.

The engine chugs as he flies down the back road.

141 EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - EVENING 141

The sun has almost disappeared behind the fields that surround the farmhouse.

Richard's car flies down the gravel drive and skids to a stop near the house.

He jumps out and rushes to the porch.

RICHARD

Sidney!

Richard watches the drive to see if anyone appears.

Sidney, now eight years old, walks out of the house. He immediately can see his dad is on edge.

Richard takes him by the shoulder.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Run over to the neighbors house and ask to use their phone. Call Raymond. Tell him to get over here and bring his gun. Go through the field.

Sidney runs off without questioning.

Mildred pokes her head out of the front door.

MILDRED

Everything okay?

RICHARD

It's fine. Just go on inside.

Mildred looks concerned but can sense the tone in Richard's voice. She returns inside.

Richard goes back to staring at the distant tree lines that border their house.

He watches, and waits.

142 EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

142

Headlights light up the side of the house as Raymond's car rumbles up the drive.

The lights wash over Richard, who hasn't moved from his post on the porch.

Richard steps down into the yard as Raymond climbs out of his car. He reaches into the backseat and takes out a shotgun.

Raymond walks toward Richard.

RICHARD

Thanks for coming.

143 EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

143

It's late. Richard still stands guard on the porch.

Raymond has taken a seat. He smokes a cigarette with the shotgun set across his lap.

RAYMOND

That truck may just been goin'
fishin'.

RICHARD

Could be.

RAYMOND

You ever hear from anyone at your
work about it?

RICHARD

Not to my face.

Raymond studies his friend. He shakes his head.

RAYMOND

I'll say this Rich, nobody's gonna
tell you what you can't do.

Richard wishes he could smile at this.

144 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

144

Peggy eats a Popsicle and stares at the TELEPHONE MAN
installing a phone in their kitchen.

The Man's head is tucked near the wall finishing some wiring.
He lifts the receiver off its base and finds a dial tone.

TELEPHONE MAN

You're all set.

Mildred moves from the stove, wiping her hands on an apron.

MILDRED

Thank you.

She opens the back door for the Man to let him out.

PEGGY

Who we gonna call Mamma?

MILDRED

I don't want you callin' anybody.

Peggy stares at the phone finishing off her dessert.

145 EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 145

Mildred steps outside in time to see the Telephone Man's truck pulling away.

Another car is parked in the yard. Garnet and their Mother are climbing out of it.

Garnet has to balance her weight as she is pregnant and showing.

MILDRED

How'd that go?

GARNET

Doctor said she'll be fine. Just put her on aspirin. Who was that?

MILDRED

Telephone man. Richard had them install a phone. Momma you feel okay?

MUSIEL

Yes. You have some tea I can drink?

MILDRED

Come on.

Mildred shepherds her Mother inside as Garnet follows.

146 EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON 146

Richard parks his car near the house.

He gets out with his tools and studies a van parked in the yard. He walks inside.

147 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE/DEN - LATE AFTERNOON 147

Richard enters the house and is surprised to see a TWO PERSON FILM CREW standing in their den.

The INTERVIEWER, a young woman, holds a microphone. A YOUNG MAN holds the camera.

They film Mildred on the couch as the children play around them.

RICHARD
Mildred. Come here.

Richard walks outside on the porch.

148 EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 148

Richard paces on the porch. Mildred steps outside and he gets close. He speaks in a forced whisper.

RICHARD
I don't want those people here.
I'm done with all these cameras.

Richard steps back, waiting for Mildred to do something.

MILDRED
I think it's important. These
people want to help us.

Mildred walks back into the house.

Richard bites at his lip, frustrated.

149 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE/DEN - CONTINUOUS 149

Richard walks back inside. Mildred is on the couch again being interviewed.

MILDRED
...it's the principle. It's the
law. I don't think it's right.
And if we do win we will be helping
a lot of people.

Richard walks over and takes a seat in a chair. Peggy walks up and leans against her father.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
And I know we have some enemies,
but we have some friends too. So
it really don't make any difference
about my enemies.

Mildred gives a polite smile.

Richard looks up and sees that the Young Man has pointed the camera at him. He looks down, trying to avoid it all.

150 EXT. DRAG RACING PARK - DAY

150

This strip is big. It's a rally with cars lined up waiting for their turn on the track.

People mingle around, drinking and watching cars race.

Richard stands on the track at the rear of their car. Raymond is beside him. Their car idles next to another vehicle at the starting line.

Percy stands near the front of the car watching Virgil behind the wheel.

A pole of lights cycle to green and the cars launch off the starting line.

The race is over quickly, with Virgil barely pulling out a win.

RICHARD
Car looks good.

RAYMOND
It's runnin' all right.

151 INT. JUKE JOINT - NIGHT

151

The small shack is filled with music and people dancing.

Richard sits at a table with Percy, Raymond and Virgil. They're well into a bottle of liquor and not bothering with setups.

VIRGIL
I miss you Rich. Hell I can say
it. Percy, don't you miss Rich?

With a shrug,

PERCY
Yeah.

RICHARD
I miss you too Virgil.

VIRGIL
So what's with all this?

RICHARD
All a what?

VIRGIL

What you got. You just made it too hard now.

Richard fends this with a half smile and nod.

VIRGIL (CONT'D)

See you think I'm crazy but you know what hard is now don't you?

RICHARD

Yeah.

Raymond keeps a watchful eye on Virgil.

VIRGIL

You white Richard. You think you like a black man but you white. You hang 'round all these black folks but when you go to work you still white. But not now. Now you know what it's like. You black now aren't you? You a damn fool.

RAYMOND

Come on now.

VIRGIL

He need to hear it. Every nigga up in here wish he were you Rich, and you ain't got sense enough for it. But see you got the fix. I ain't got no fix. Yourn easy. All you gotta do is divorce her. That's easy. That's all you gotta do.

RICHARD

Divorce her?

VIRGIL

That's right. Easy.

Richard smiles and nods.

RICHARD

I'm gonna divorce her.

VIRGIL

That's all you gotta do.

Richard's smile fades as he picks up the bottle and pours another round. He slams back the drink.

Raymond stares down Virgil, who is oblivious.

152 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT 152

Mildred lifts her head off the pillow when she hears Richard enter the room.

He takes a seat on the end of the bed and removes his boots. She can't see his face.

He sits there, quiet. Until finally mumbling, inaudible.

MILDRED
Come to bed.

RICHARD
We been talking to lawyers near ten years now.

MILDRED
Let's go to bed.

Mildred tries to see his face but can't.

She moves to the end of the bed to sit next to him.

RICHARD
I can take care of you.

Mildred can see he's drunk and speaks slightly dismissive.

MILDRED
I know that.

She puts her hand on his back.

He finally looks at her. His eyes have tears in them. She has rarely seen him like this.

RICHARD
I can take care of you.

Mildred begins to nod.

MILDRED
I know.

Richard looks down.

153 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - DAY 153

Richard, his heavy coat on, steps outside the front door.

154 EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - DAY 154

The ground is covered in snow. The fields and trees are all white with ice.

Richard crunches across the yard to a wood pile and begins gathering up a stack.

A shiny black Lincoln is parked in the yard.

155 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY 155

Richard enters the kitchen with the wood.

Bernie and Phil are seated at the kitchen table across from Mildred. Bernie sips a hot cup of coffee.

BERNIE COHEN

It's good.

Richard adds the wood to the stove and takes a seat at the table next to Mildred. Bernie can't contain his smile.

BERNIE COHEN (CONT'D)

So I have some really terrific news. The Supreme Court of the United States has agreed to hear our case.

MILDRED

Oh!

Mildred's hands go to her face, ecstatic.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP

Of course, the state of Virginia will mount their defense, but we are feeling very good about our chances here. You've got the full weight of the ACLU behind this.

MILDRED

It's a miracle.

Mildred grabs Richard's hand. Richard has not moved, nor smiled.

RICHARD

What's their defense?

BERNIE COHEN

I'm sorry?

RICHARD

Virginia. How are they gonna defend what they done to us?

BERNIE COHEN

I guess we won't really know until the hearing, but it's expected they'll use a defense similar to something they've used before.

RICHARD

And what's that?

Bernie looks to Phil. They realize they can't avoid it.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP

It's your kids.

RICHARD

Our kids?

BERNIE COHEN

Yes. The state of Virginia will argue that it's unfair to bring children of mixed race into the world. They believe they are bastards.

Richard stares at Bernie on this point. It's rare for him to make this much eye contact. Bernie looks down.

After a moment, Bernie tries to pick things up.

BERNIE COHEN (CONT'D)

Now, as the defendants in this case, you both are allowed to come hear the arguments.

RICHARD

No. We won't need to do that.

BERNIE COHEN

Well it's a very big honor to sit in front of the Supreme Court. Very few people...

RICHARD

No. That's fine. Scuse me.

Richard stands and leaves the room. Bernie looks at Mildred, who just smiles.

BERNIE COHEN

Mildred?

MILDRED

I wouldn't go without him.

156 EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - DAY

156

Richard stands on the porch smoking a cigarette. He looks out over the cold landscape.

Bernie exits the house and takes a place on the steps.

BERNIE COHEN

You know, Richard, it's of course up to you not to attend, but you should know, the Supreme Court only hears maybe 1 out of 400 cases. It's historic.

RICHARD

Thank you Mr. Cohen.

Bernie is stumped.

BERNIE COHEN

Well. Is there anything you want me to tell them, and of course by them I mean the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States?

Richard thinks on this for awhile. He nods.

RICHARD

Yeah. Tell the judge, tell the judge I love my wife.

This strikes Bernie. He understands Richard, possibly for the first time.

157 EXT. JOB SITE - MORNING

157

Sunlight breaks through just above the horizon.

The snow has all melted. Spring has started, signaled by buds sprouting on the trees.

Richard arrives at work alongside other workers.

He makes his way to a newly started wall of bricks, sets down his work bag and begins taking out his tools for the day.

158 EXT. SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES - DAY 158

Several cars idle at the curb.

Phil, accompanied by his FATHER, climbs out of the first car.

Bernie climbs out of the other. He reaches in for his WIFE and leans down to address his Secretary, who is driving.

BERNIE COHEN

You're okay to park? Thanks
Martha.

Bernie shuts the door. Both cars drive away.

He turns and is stopped by the sight in front of him.

The Supreme Court of the United States.

It's a massive stone building with expansive white steps leading up to it. It's both daunting and inspiring.

Bernie looks to Phil, who is also pausing to take in the breadth of the building.

They look at one another, nervous yet determined, and begin making their way up the steps.

159 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - DAY 159

Mildred sits in their bedroom at a push pedal sewing machine.

She runs fabric through, pausing occasionally to inspect her stitching.

160 INT. SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES - DAY 160

A microphone stands empty atop a lectern.

Phil Hirschkop approaches. He looks nervous, but speaks with authority.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP

May it please the court...

161 EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - DAY 161

Sidney scales up a tree in the yard. He drags a braided rope up with him and begins tying it around a fat limb.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP (V.O.)
 You have before you today what we
 consider the most odious of the
 segregation laws and the slavery
 laws, and our view of this law, and
 we hope to clearly show is that
 this is a slavery law.

Donald and Peggy stare up at their brother in the tree. The
 rope begins to dangle of its own accord, and they quickly
 take hold. Swinging, they laugh and shout.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP (V.O.)
 We ask that the Court consider the
 full spectrum of these laws and not
 just the criminality, because it's
 more than the criminality that's at
 point here.

Richard patches a board on one of the out buildings. He
 pauses at the cackling of the children.

PHIL HIRSCHKOP (V.O.)
 It's the legitimacy of children,
 the right to inherit land, and
 many, many rights...

He watches them playing at the tree. There couldn't be a
 happier place.

162 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY 162

Donald stands on a chair at the sink filling a pitcher with
 water.

Mildred bounces between the table and the stove. She sets
 plates, stirs a boiling pot, and guides Donald all at once.

MILDRED
 Just stir it now.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN (V.O.)
 Mr. Cohen.

BERNIE COHEN (V.O.)
 Mr. Chief Justice may it please the
 court...

Donald grabs a big spoon and begins stirring as Peggy runs in
 and finds a spot nearby to observe.

Richard enters with his hand on Sidney's head. He steers him
 toward the table and they take a seat.

BERNIE COHEN (V.O.)
 What is the danger to the state of
 Virginia of interracial marriage?

Peggy helps Donald carry the heavy pitcher over to the table.
 Richard leans over in his chair to help make sure it finds
 its way onto the table.

BERNIE COHEN (V.O.)
 What is the state of the danger to
 the people of interracial marriage?

Mildred brings a bowl of food over with her and the family
 find their respective spots at the table.

BERNIE COHEN (V.O.)
 Marriage is a fundamental right.

Scooping, pouring, passing. The family eats.

163 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT 163

The boys' bedroom is dark, lit only by light from the hall.

Mildred moves from Donald's bed to Sidney's. She straightens
 the covers at his neck. Both boys are asleep.

She quietly exits the room.

164 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE/HALLWAY - CONT 164

Mildred finds Richard standing in the hallway at Peggy's
 door. He watches her through the doorway. She too is asleep
 in her bed.

Mildred takes his hand and they walk down the hall. Richard
 pulls a chain on a bulb turning the hallway dark.

They head toward the light spilling from the door of their
 own room.

They enter, closing the door behind them.

The hallway is dark and the house is quiet.

165 EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - DAY 165

Summer is in full swing, with the oak tree showing bright,
 lush green leaves.

It's hot and Richard swipes a rag across his face and tucks his head back under the hood of one of his rusted cars in the front yard.

The children play nearby, rolling a tire through the yard.

166 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY 166

Mildred gathers clothes from a pile on the floor of their bedroom. She lifts a pair of Richard's pants off a chair and begins emptying the pockets.

The phone RINGS in the kitchen.

Mildred takes her time, adding the pants to her pile and then walks out.

167 INT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE/KITCHEN - CONT 167

Mildred enters the kitchen and reaches for the phone.

MILDRED
(into the phone)
Hello?

The voices on the line are barely audible.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
Yes. Hello Mr. Cohen. What's
that?

Though the voices are unintelligible, excited shouting can be heard. Mildred smiles at this.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
Yes. I understand. Yes. That's
wonderful news.

The voice continues, but Mildred's mind is already racing. She holds her head up, closing her eyes.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
I'm here. Okay. Thank you.

Mildred hangs up the phone. She pauses there, taking in the moment.

168 EXT. KING AND QUEEN COUNTY FARMHOUSE - DAY 168

Mildred steps onto the front porch. She shields her eyes from the sun and scans the yard.

She finds the children with Richard by the car he's working on. Richard chases them with their rolling tire around and around the vehicle.

The kids shout.

Richard pauses to catch his breath. He looks up to see Mildred on the porch. She's smiling at him.

Richard smiles back.

169 INT. BERNIE COHEN'S LAW OFFICE - DAY

169

Cameras roll and flash bulbs pop.

A row of reporters stand to one side of a conference room in Bernie's law office.

All eyes are on Richard and Mildred.

They sit at a table covered with microphones in front of a wall lined with shelves of law books.

The reporters shout questions.

REPORTERS

(a cacophony)

Mr. Loving? Mrs. Loving? What's this mean for your family? Do you plan to return to Virginia? Mr. Loving. How does it feel to have the Supreme Court of the United States rule in your favor?

Richard squints under the hot lights. He looks to Mildred, who is doing the same.

In front of the crowd, Richard reaches his arm out and wraps it around Mildred's neck.

He pulls her in close, their foreheads touching. Mildred has tears in her eyes and Richard is not far behind.

170 EXT. UNCULTIVATED FIELD/CONSTRUCTION SITE - LATE AFTERNOON 170

The rhythm of bricks and mortar continue. Brick, then mortar, then brick.

Richard is on his knees just having started a course of cinder blocks.

Sidney and Donald sit on a pallet of the blocks just behind him. They watch their father's hands move quickly through the work.

Nearby,

Mildred sits in the open door of their car. Peggy digs into a cooler at her feet. She produces a bottle of soda and hands it to her mother.

Mildred finds an opener and snaps off the cap.

MILDRED

Take that to your father.

Peggy runs toward Richard.

A foundation has been readied in the field where Richard first proposed to Mildred.

Richard works at the edge of that foundation, slowly building up what will be the front wall of the house.

Peggy runs the bottle to her father. He pauses for a sip.

Blue sky hangs over it all.

OVER THE IMAGE,

TEXT:

Loving v. Virginia made the prohibition of marriage based on race unconstitutional. The Supreme Court stated that marriage is an inherent right.

TEXT:

Seven years after the Court's decision, Richard Loving was killed by a drunk driver. Mildred never remarried and lived the rest of her life in the home Richard built for them.

TEXT:

Though shy of press and ever reluctant to be called a hero, Mildred was interviewed shortly before her death in 2008. She spoke of Richard, saying, "I miss him. He took care of me."

As wind passes through the leaves that look out over the lower field, Mildred walks over to join her family.

THE END.