

1 INT. WILLIE JR'S BEDROOM - DAY

1

Super wide angle panning across bedroom. Panning past the top of a chest of drawers laden with family pictures... Panning onto a wall as light from the setting sun beams abstracts the view more... Shotgun blast... View extremely abstracted... Blood spatters on the blank wall. A cat scurries out through the nearly-closed door... screams. Close, of shoes moving past the door, then stop. Woman's scream... Extreme close head as gun's load impacts. Off-angle hands trying to keep what's left of the head together; soaking blood with paper towels. Close, blood dripping from blood-soaked sheets... Crying... Body slumps over... Close, shoes run out, slams door.

2 EXT. WILLIE SR'S BRICK HOUSE, DAY

2

Through the kitchen window, MABLE, a black woman in her late 60's, can be seen talking to people seated at the dining room table.

MABLE

You'll need to eat now...keep your strength up!

3 INT. DINING ROOM, DAY

3

The mood is sober, sad and heavy. Everyone is wearing simple dark clothing. RUSTY--a first cousin and MANE are just sitting down as MABLE enters with rolls. Sitting at the table are JACKIE--signs of the graveyard shifts drape her eyes; JONY--the oldest child, now a sophomore in college; NICHOLAS the planner--most like his father; AUGUST--the youngest; and MARCUS--the joy of the family.

Mable wearing a dark blue dress contrasts Jackie's dark Chanel Jackie O. shift. Jackie is adorned with necklaces, headband and rings on every finger but two. August PICKS at his food.

Rusty smolders. Marcus--red eyed. Jony--a curtain of determined resolve.

Mane and Nicholas--guilt ridden--neither did the last thing asked of them by their father.

MABLE

Listen to me Mane, its not your fault. It's not anybody's fault.

RUSTY

That's right Mane, it's not your fault ...definitely not yours.

Rusty looks at Jackie angrily--gets up from the table. August looks confused.

AUGUST

What's wrong with him?

NICHOLAS

Forget it... (to Mane)--if I hadn't gone to see Andrena the other night...

MANE

Don't worry about it man. What's one is done.

JONY

This is going to sound awfully strange...but I've got a feeling that this may have been the best thing that could have happened.

MABLE

Don't you talk like that! It's just so--

JACKIE

--sad. What could he have been thinking? All this time you think you know someone and you build a life together, you share yourselves... and then this.

NICHOLAS

(blamefully)

You weren't there mama.

JONY

What you mean? She couldn't have changed anything.

NICHOLAS

But she didn't know for a long time. For a very long time--

JACKIE

What? I wasn't there? I didn't know? You children better stop talking to your mama like that.

MARCUS

Yeah. It wasn't like anything you know. I just can't understand. Can't relate...

MABLE

Well the Lord will help us out of these hard times---and we don't have to understand the why of it all.

JONY

Well at least I did what he told me to do.

MANE

I'm telling you Jony, you don't know what you're talking about. You were in school--Miss Independent--and I was hanging out.

MABLE

(to Jackie who is looking away)  
Woman's got no business being too far afield. A family needs her home.

JONY

(to Mable)

I was just going to school...

MABLE

I know child. I wasn't talking about you.

JACKIE

(to JONY)

You should've been here darling...you would have known.

3 INT. LIVING ROOM, DAY

3

The living room which is that of a typical southern black middle class widow. The room is filled with the evening light as it filters through the large fern sitting next to the window.

The black Steinway player piano is covered with old high school pictures of the grandchildren which are by the portrait of their grandfather.

The mantle is full of baby pictures of both parents and children. There is a series of pictures of WILLIE JR which descend back in time to one which stands out: he is standing in front his newly completed brick house posed in a loving embrace with Jackie.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK

4 EXT. CLOSE-MUD AT A BUILDING JOB SITE, DAYBREAK

4

A boot steps into the mud. Willie Jr and BUBBA JOHNSON are coming to work. They greet younger black BRICK MASONS and APPRENTICES.

The black masons congregate in an area separate from their white counterparts.

BUBBA

Good morning.

WILLIE JR

How you guys doing today?

YOUNGER GUYS

Good morning. Just fine, just fine.

As they walk along, BJ tags along with them. JIMMY BUGG, and his ALLIES who are envious and resentful of Willie Jr, look on in DISGUST.

Willie Jr, Bubba, and BJ are walking towards their work location.

BUBBA

Hey, Willie, how you liking your new house? Sure didn't take you long to build it.

WILLIE JR

Oh, I tell you man, life couldn't be better...mighty fine. Jackie's decorating the house and I'm loving it.

BUBBA

Well she sure is a beauty...

BJ

Willie, you could of built the house in a month if you'd wanted to, couldn't you?

Willie Jr looks at BJ in cold disbelief.

WILLIE JR

Come on, let's get to work!

A series of angles showing brick masons working, summer. The Georgia sun bakes their arms and necks. Willie Jr and Jimmy Bugg are working towards the middle on the same wall--they get CLOSER.

JIMMY BUGG

Willie my boy, you think you are so good, but I'm a better man than you'll ever be. Better than you ever dreamed of.

WILLIE JR

Come off of it Bugg, don't start anything. Don't bug me!

The younger masons LAUGH at Willie Jr's comment.

BJ

(laughs)

Don't bug me. Don't bug me!

WINNY

(laughs hysterically)

Did you hear what Willie said, Don't bug me.

TOOTHLESS MITCHELL

(laughs and points to Bugg)

Yeah, Jimmy the bug man...don't bug me! What kind of bug is he? Must be a stinkbug!

BUGG

(speaks more loudly)

You think you're better than the rest of us. You're trying to be like The Man, ain't you Willie my boy?

WILLIE JR

I ain't got time for this. What are you trying to prove Bugg?

BUGG

I'm trying to prove that a mama's boy can't do a man's job!

The younger masons say "UUHHHHH" in the background. Willie pulls his trowel out with a ZING.

WILLIE JR

What'll it be bugman!

BUBBA

Three rows, starting at opposite ends. The first man to hit the middle the second time is the winner. See you there boy.

Willie Jr and Bugg both look angrily at one another.

WILLIE JR and BUGG

Right!

Job site in pandemonium. Willie Jr and Bugg march off to the end of the wall.

The younger masons are making bets on who is going to win. Money and cigarettes exchange hands.

White workers in the distance look curiously towards the excitement. The younger masons express their opinions of

both masons, holding their crotches, laughing and slapping each other on the back.

Willie Jr and Bugg SQUARE OFF.

TOOTHLESS

On your mark,...

Willie Jr--tense and nervous.

TOOTHLESS

Get set,...

Bugg--angry and happy at the same time. Fiendishly he smiles.

TOOTHLESS

...Go!

There is ROOTING and CHEERING, SLAPPING of hands with hands and hats, and FLYING DUST.

Willie Jr's hands and eyes concentrate with rapt attention.

Bugg's hands and eyes are filled with malice. Bugg works to the middle first.

Willie Jr reaches the middle and has to cut a brick with his trowel to fit into the wall.

On the second row, Bugg is ahead but not by much. By the end on the second row Willie Jr has caught Bugg. Willie Jr keeps his eyes on the bricks. Bugg keeps looking up at Willie Jr.

on the third and final row the CHEERING increases. Willie Jr keeps smacking the bricks onto the mortar.

Bugg keeps looking up at Willie.

Willie Jr is seven bricks ahead and taps his last brick into place with his trowel.

Job site in JUBILATION, Bubba rushes over to congratulate Willie Jr who turns to Bubba with his trowel in the air and they both smack trowels in the air. The young masons supportive of Willie Jr HOOP and HOLLER.

Those supportive of Bugg walk away sullenly.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. PICK UP TRUCK, DAY 5

Willie Jr's truck is moving down a dirt neighborhood road. Dogs BARK along in the dust of truck as it passes children playing in the road.

6 INT. PICK UP TRUCK, DAY 6

Willie Jr WHISTLES as he drives along. His eyes are full of life as he checks his rear view mirror for traffic. He is happy and checks his appearance in the mirror, then puts the mirror back into its proper position. A brick mason's level is in the back window of the pick up truck and a bag of tools are in the bed. The pick up truck pulls into the driveway of WILLIE SR's house.

7 EXT. WILLIE SR'S HOUSE, DAY 7

Willie Jr gets out of the truck with the level and reaches over to get the bag of brick mason tools--then walks into the house.

8 INT. WILLIE SR'S LIVING ROOM, DAY 8

WILLIE JR

Coming in!

Mable rushes to fuss over and cuddle him. He kisses her on the cheek. His hands are full. She tries to help him with his load.

MABLE

Hi puddin'! How's my baby?

WILLIE JR

Hi mama! I'm just fine.

MABLE

Let me help you with that.

WILLIE JR



I got it mama, that's alright.

He gets around her but her finger is caught in the straps. He tugs at the bag releasing her. She immediately brushes dandruff from his shoulders.

WILLIE JR

(annoyed)

Mama...I got it!... I got it!

He spots a place to set the tools in the hallway--speaks loudly enough for Willie Sr to hear him in another room.

WILLIE JR

Papa I'm returning your tools...  
thank you very much.

Willie Jr sets the tools down on the floor. Mable grabs Willie by the arm moving him to the sofa.

MABLE

Willie, sit down...I'll get you  
something to drink..um.. some  
lemonade?

Willie shakes his head no.

MABLE

Yes, lemonade...you just sit here  
and rest. You shouldn't work so  
much.

Mable walks out of the room to get the lemonade.

WILLIE JR

Mama that's ok, I just came to drop  
the tools off.

Willie Sr enters from hallway adjacent kitchen.

WILLIE SR

Boy, why you bringing these tools  
in the house? Sometimes I don't  
know if you have goat sense... You  
know, boy, I been thinking. If  
you'd built that house like I told  
you to, you'd have something to be  
proud of.

Willie Sr turns his back and goes to the kitchen.

Mable enters from kitchen with drinks, gives Willie Jr. a glass of lemonade which he sets on the table--without drinking.

Willie Jr recognizes this RECURRING SCENE and wants to leave now before he says something he will later regret. But his newly found confidence will not allow such a hasty retreat.

WILLIE JR  
(slowly, resentfully)  
Well Daddy, I'm sure you're right.

Mable sits down beside Willie Jr and starts to PREEN him.

MABLE  
(turns his head towards her)  
Listen sugar bear don't let your daddy worry you. You cut yourself shaving.

She pulls a Paper tissue from a box, wets it with her tongue and rubs the dried blood from his face.

MABLE  
Well puddin', how's the house coming?

WILLIE JR  
(softly)  
Everything's coming along just fine.

MABLE  
I've got just the curtains for you! They just beautiful, a beautiful blue.

WILLIE JR  
Oh, that's okay. Jackie's got some picked out.

MABLE  
(shaking her head)  
Oh, no, no, no Willie.

Mable holds one of Willie's hands in hers--with her other hand pats Willie's.

MABLE

Now listen Willie these are just perfect. I saw them in the window of the FIVE-N-DIME.

Willie shakes his head in disbelief--sighs. Willie Sr speaks from kitchen, just loud enough for them to hear.

WILLIE SR

(sarcastically)

You know the old man said it'd be days like this. Boy, it sure would have been nice if you had put my tools up.

Willie Jr freezes as hears his father--slowly turns with a frozen angry stare to his mother.

WILLIE JR

(speaks angrily, to his mother)

I can't do anything to please that man.

Willie Jr stands and speaking in the general direction of the kitchen.

WILLIE JR

I could do everything you asked me to and that wouldn't be enough.

Willie Jr moves quickly past Mable to the front door in an angry huff, before Mable can say a word.

Mable gets up as Willie Jr reaches the door. She hurries over, stopping at the screen door as she catches it from slamming.

MABLE

Willie, please don't be angry...I'll bring the curtains over soon.

CUT TO:

Jackie is at the stove cooking. Jony and Mane are playing outside; they can be HEARD in the background.

Willie Jr enters the kitchen UNNOTICED, slips his arms around her from behind--she turns around in his arms, kisses him, and grabs his behind.

WILLIE JR

Hey baby, how's my sugar?

JACKIE

I'm fine.

WILLIE JR

I know that's right. You're as fine as a new Indian head nickel...Nah!...Finer than that! Finer than a crisp hundred dollar bill. Ah, baby you're just too fine. (they nuzzle) What's smelling' so good?

She turns around to the stove and forks a pork chop. She opens the lids on the pots.

Mane BURSTS through the back door--smelling the food cooking, heads for the stove and his daddy. Willie Jr turns around, picks up Mane and they both survey the meal.

JACKIE

Pork chops, cabbage, stewed tomatoes, and in the oven we have some cornbread and corn pudding.

Jackie looks at Willie Jr from over her shoulder.

JACKIE

(lustfully)

And you know what's for dessert.

Reaction--Willie Jr, bashful and embarrassed, casts a quick glance at Mane. He sets Mane down--who is getting a little too heavy to hold these days.

WILLIE JR

I took the tools back to papa. You know, they can really get on your nerves.

JACKIE

Can they ever.

Mane mimicking his mother.

MANE

Can they ever.

Willie Jr ignores the comment.

WILLIE JR

Mable says she's got some curtains for you.

Jackie turns with the fork in her hand.

JACKIE

I already have some picked out. Didn't you tell her...didn't you tell her that I had some picked out? Willie,... this is our place. You built it...and I'm going to fix it up!

He draws closer to Jackie--to embrace her--she brushes him off.

WILLIE JR

(weakly)

But Jackie, she's just trying to help...that's all--

JACKIE

But I don't want it to feel like we're still living there with them.

(more)

JACKIE (Cont'd)

It was hard enough when we did. Don't you remember? Papa rode you plenty.

He draws closer again. This time with success. He holds her in his arms.

WILLIE JR

Forget about those times...Don't  
worry about anything baby, this is  
our place...our castle...and you my  
dear ...are my queen...

They KISS. Jony walks in from the back door--scrutinizes  
them, then shakes her head--

JONY

Kissing again.

CUT TO:

10 INT. A.M.E. ZION CHURCH, DAY

10

The CHOIR is in the middle of a rollicking gospel song. The  
congregation is swaying. A number of OLD WOMEN look  
disapprovingly at Jackie who, at the height of fashion,  
commands much attention.

After the song, amid an ocean of AMENS and HALLELUJAHS, the  
minister motions the congregation to stand for benediction.

REV. MOYD

May the Lord watch between me and  
thee while we are absent one from  
another, Amen.

People move out of the pews--some slower than others.

11 EXT. A.M.E. ZION CHURCH, DAY

11

Little CHILDREN leave the church playing with one another,  
some stop on the steps. Women follow, some with children,  
others with their husbands--but most alone. A group of old  
black women have congregated on the top on the steps--keeping  
an eye out for the fashion conscious. Jackie is waiting for  
Willie Jr on the bottom on the steps.

Mable leaves the group of old women, who give a condescending  
look towards Jackie, and walks down to her.

MABLE

I hear you want to go to school girl.

JACKIE

(jokingly)

Well hello mama! Yeah mama, how do you expect us to keep up with the Perrys? Thelma is going to Shaw now you know. (in a more serious tone) You know how much better it would be if we had two incomes.

The group of older woman are not very gracious about the information they just overheard. Nor are they very respectful of Jackie who can faintly understand what they are saying--so JACKIE finds herself listening to Mable and them at the same time.

WOMAN #1

The nerve of this new generation. They got it so easy-

WOMAN #2

--and they're so self-centered.

WOMAN #3

Uh huh, in my day--

WOMAN #2

--a woman wanted to take care of her man.

MABLE

Willie Jr makes enough money for y'all to live. Besides who's going to take care of the kids while you at school?

JACKIE

(jokingly)

Well mama, I've been meaning to talk to you about that.

WOMAN #3

Yeah, she wouldn't leave them babies either--

WOMAN #1

--Uh uh, just take care of her man,  
she would.

WOMAN #2

It ain't no wonder children are  
growing up like they do these days.

MABLE

Jackie, what you want with going to  
school, girl?! Leaving your man  
and your babies at home.

Jackie looks at Mable, flabbergasted--unbelieving.

JACKIE

Scuse me! Mama! I don't think it's  
any of your business!

MABLE

My son and my  
grandchildren...that's what makes  
it my business! You better leave  
well enough alone.

Jackie turns her head away from Mable--towards the ground.  
Willie Jr walks up having HEARD the end of the conversation.

ANGLE ON WILLIE JR, MABLE, JACKIE

WILLIE JR

Yes, we all ought to leave well  
enough alone should we?

He KISSES Mable on the cheek and puts his arm around Jackie.

MABLE

Hi, baby.

WILLIE JR

Well baby, you ready to go home?

JACKIE

(solemnly)

Yes. Definitely.

Mable starts to preen his hair.

MABLE



Junior, you got something in your hair.

Willie Jr and Jackie walk off while Mable's fingers are in his hair-she trails a few steps then stops.

Jackie, just under her breath--but not very tempered.

JACKIE

I wish that woman would keep her hands out of your hair--and out of our business--

WILLIE JR

--I know Jackie...but that's my mother. She means well...

WOMAN #1

Ain't no family without a man.

WOMAN #2

Hey, sometimes ain't no family with a man.

WOMAN #3

Girl you don't know what you talking about.

CUT TO:

12 INT. JACKIE'S KITCHEN, DAY

12

Willie Jr at the kitchen table with a pad and pencils. Jackie is behind him at the stove cooking. He's figuring out the finances that will be necessary to send Jackie to college; he REALIZES they have enough money for her to go.

JACKIE

Jony, you and Mane go wash your hands so you can set the table!

JONY AND MANE

Yes, ma'am.

Willie rips the sheet from the pad--turns to Jackie.

WILLIE JR

Well baby, we've got enough money  
to get you started in school.

Jackie turns from the stove, joyfully, and hugs his neck.

JACKIE

Sweet cheeks, I just love you! I  
really do. I can't wait to get into  
school!

He leans back and puts his head into Jackie's bosom.

JACKIE

Let's see, when does the next  
semester start? Shaw University  
here I come! Baby, you've made my  
day!

WILLIE JR

If it makes you happy, I'm happy  
too. Like the old man said, if you  
work hard and plan, things will  
work out.

The children come in with a pleasant temperament and set the  
table.

WILLIE JR

You know I'm really a happy man.  
God has really blessed us! God, I  
sure do love you guys...come here  
and give me a hug!

They all embrace with Willie Jr as the centerpiece.

JACKIE

You know I got to buy me some new  
clothes.

DISSOLVE TO:

13 EXT. CAMPUS OF A BLACK UNIVERSITY AT SPRING TIME, DAY

13

Jackie walking hurriedly across the campus lawn from the  
Infirmary. A friend, GERDDY, stops her with a look of  
concern. Jackie doesn't stop--keeps walking.

GERDDY

Jackie, what in the world is wrong with you girl? You look like you lost your best friend in the world!

JACKIE  
(Sniffles.)

I don't know what I'm going to do! ...Willie is going to kill me when he finds out.

GERDDY  
Find what out? Come on girl tell me what's happening!

JACKIE  
I can't tell you!

Jackie begins to run.

JACKIE  
I just can't tell anyone!

Gerddy stands there as Jackie runs across lawn.

GERDDY  
(calling after Jackie)  
What is it? Talk to me Jackie!

CUT TO:

14 INT. WILLIE JR'S HOUSE, CHILDREN'S BEDROOM, DAY

14

Jackie daydreaming, while ironing --the misery of an unwanted pregnancy --not realizing that she is BURNING one of Willie's favorite shirts. The burning smell brings her back to the present.

JACKIE  
Oh shit!

Just then she HEARS Willie's car pull up. She turns off the iron, grabs the smoldering shirt. In the bathroom under the faucet it goes--water on then off. She scurries to the front door and leans on the screen door--CRYING SILENTLY.

Willie Jr does his regular routine of taking his shoes off on the back porch. His dirty clothes go into a laundry hamper located on the porch.

WILLIE JR

Jackie, I'm home!

He realizes there is no reply from Jackie who is generally there at the door to meet him. He HEARS the radio playing in one of the children's rooms, where Jackie normally irons clothes. As he enters the house he SENSES that something is wrong.

jackie quietly cries into her apron.

Willie Jr smells the burned shirt as he walks into the bathroom to wash his hands--only to discover his favorite shirt--immediately he is extremely angry.

WILLIE JR

(under his breath)

I paid good money for this shirt!  
Damn it Jackie!

He storms into the room where Jackie has been ironing. He checks the iron to see if it's turned off. But as he turns to leave the room, he gets overly concerned for Jackie's welfare. He begins to check the rooms looking for her.

WILLIE JR

Jackie...Jackie...where are you  
baby?! ...You alright?

Willie walks into the living room--there she is--pressed against the screen door. From across the room, he faintly hears her crying.

He walks towards her saying nothing. He gently places his hand on Jackie's shoulder he SOFTLY speaks her name.

WILLIE JR

Jackie.... Baby, don't worry about  
the shirt. I can always buy another  
one.

Jackie slowly turns around into his arms, afraid to look into his eyes. She puts her head on his chest. She snuffles as she tries to get enough composure and courage to talk to him.

JACKIE

It's not the shirt... Willie.. I  
don't know... how to tell you this.

There is a PREGNANT PAUSE as she pushes herself to tell him.

WILLIE JR  
What is it then Jackie?

Jackie--SILENCE

WILLIE JR  
You can tell me baby.

JACKIE  
I know how you feel about this...  
but I went by the infirmary today  
and... (pause)

WILLIE JR  
What is it baby? Nothing could be  
that bad--I love you!

JACKIE  
Willie... I'm pregnant.

Willie Jr--stunned--silence

15 EXT. WILLIE SR'S HOUSE, DAY

15

An argument in progress is faintly heard.

JACKIE  
I'm just not going to have it!

WILLIE JR  
And that's it. No way we can afford  
it anyway.

16 INT. LIVING ROOM, DAY

16

Jackie is sitting on the couch, Willie Sr is rocking in his  
favorite rocking chair smoking from his favorite pipe. Willie  
Jr is leaning against the fireplace mantle.

Mable with her hands on her hips speaking loudly.

MABLE  
You can't kill my grandbaby.

She is holding a rolled up newspaper which she is nervously tapping into her free hand with more than little force.

WILLIE JR

Damn it mama, this is my life!

Mable points with an air of disgust to Jackie.

MABLE

I thought we were talking 'bout that life inside Jackie. You know that baby's got a life you know.

WILLIE JR

Bullshit mama, we're talking 'bout-

WILLIE SR

--Boy don't you talk to your mama like that. Don't you talk to your mama like that. Like the old man says, if you hadn't let the horse out of the stable you wouldn't be in this predicament.

Willie Jr runs his hand across the mantle as if looking for dust. At the end of his trail he picks up a photo that is sitting on the mantle and looks at it.

WILLIE SR

Boy it's your fault, you made your own bed so now you got to sleep in it. (chuckling) And look like you stepped in it too!

WILLIE JR

Give me a break! Help me out here daddy. You had two kids yourself. You know that's enough...

WILLIE SR

If you had listened to me and had her fixed like I told you...you wouldn't be in this mess. Yeah boy, looks to me you got a tough row to hoe.

Jackie glances at Mable. Mable looks down at her hands which are twisting a handkerchief. Willie Jr speaks calmly but firmly to Willie Sr.

WILLIE JR

Man can't you see...I try to make you happy but you ain't never going to be satisfied....I bust my ass laying bricks....built my own house before I'm thirty..and you still won't get off my back...

Willie Sr slowly turns his face away from Willie Jr and shifts his eyes.

WILLIE JR

I'm the best brick mason in the state...I've got the perfect little family and I don't want to ruin it! And you of all people should understand that! You'd do the same thing if you were in my shoes...

MABLE

But you're talking about killing my grand-baby!

WILLIE JR

Wait a minute mama! Daddy knows the only way our children can have a college education and for us to get ahead is to only have two children....How am I going to take care of three babies? I've got this thing planned out...and ain't no three babies in it! There's a pretty wife, a new brick house, two children with everything they can dream of, and I'm going to be somebody!

Jackie can't believe that she is being treated like someone with no say in the matter--a child. Jackie slowly rises, seething.

JACKIE

What are y'all talking about? You're not the one who's pregnant.

You talk as if I'm not even here...but I am...and this is our choice and we will live with the consequences!

(more)

JACKIE (Cont'd)

You don't know what you are talking about. You act like you own us, like we've got to do what you say. Well we're going to do what we gotta do, and that's that. Period. End of conversation.

17 INT. EXAMINING ROOM AT A HOSPITAL, DAY

17

A light reflector swings towards DOCTOR who is in a smock and he is ready to prep Jackie. Jackie is on the prepping table--Willie--holding her hand. They look deeply into each other's eyes.

DOCTOR

You'll have to leave now Mr. Jones.

Willie Jr holding jackie's hand and stroking it.

WILLIE JR

This is what we wanted isn't it, Jackie?

Jackie with reservation. She sighs deeply, nods yes--softly almost inaudible.

JACKIE

Yes... Yes.

Willie Jr pierces Jackie's eyes with his own. Jackie examines Willie Jr's eyes. Her eyes are brimming with tears--lips trembling.

JACKIE

I can't do it Willie.

Willie Jr also Teary-eyed. Resolves to have another child.

WILLIE JR

Let's go home baby.



JACKIE

I love you.

Willie smiles.

Willie

I love you, too, baby.

DISSOLVE TO:

TITLE: SEVERAL YEARS HAVE PASSED

18 EXT. JONES' BACK YARD, SUMMER, DUSK 18

The Jones children and neighborhood children are playing in the back yard.

19 INT. KITCHEN, NIGHT

19

Jackie and Jony preparing dinner meal, stove burners--full of steaming pots; Jony sets the table. Willie Jr can be seen watching television in the next room.

20 INT. DEN, NIGHT

20

Willie--watching television.

JACKIE

Come on Willie, dinner's ready.

Willie Jr does not respond. Stares blankly at television. Lethargically he gets up to go to the bathroom.

21 EXT. BACK YARD, NIGHT

21

Children playing--Jackie sticks her head out of the back door and YELLS to children.

JACKIE

Mane...you boys come on in...its time to eat. Sonny, Salty...you guys need to go home now... they got to eat.

22 INT. KITCHEN, NIGHT

22

Jackie goes back inside where Jony continues to assist her with the evening meal. Willie washes his hands in the kitchen sink as the children enter the kitchen en route to the bathroom arguing NOISILY, LAUGHING and JOKING.

Willie Jr sits at table with his eyes FIXED on the television which can be seen from the kitchen. The children enter and sit down.

Jackie places food on table, everyone serves themselves. Jackie--standing because there are not enough seats. Jony, sits across from Willie, and slides her seat over so as not to block Willie's view of the television.

Willie starts to eat. Nicholas looks at Willie Jr.

NICHOLAS

Is someone going to bless the table?

Willie Jr looks down at his plate--up again--then at Mane.

WILLIE JR

Mane, you bless the table.

MANE

Bless o'Lord this food to our use,  
and us to Thy service, and  
make us ever mindful of the needs  
of others, in Jesus' name, we pray,  
Amen.

Everyone starts to eat, Willie eats faster than the rest. The children watch television--Jackie quietly begins to wash the pots.

MARCUS

Mama you can have my seat.

JACKIE

Naw...honey. I'm getting ready to lay down before I got to go to work. I want to finish the pots before I lay down.

MANE

Oh mama...you're on third shift  
again huh?

He shoves a forkful of food into his mouth.

JACKIE

Right. And before you go to bed  
this kitchen better be cleaned up!  
I'll do the pots and the rest is  
yours.

Marcus and August WHISPER and POKE each other and then LAUGH.

MANE

Aw ma, it's not my turn...I did  
them last night!

Jackie turns halfway around to make her next point stronger.

JACKIE

And when I come in in the morning  
Mane, this place best be cleaned up  
and you help Jony feed these boys  
in the morning.

Willie Jr annoyed by the laughter of Marcus and August--

WILLIE JR

Did you boys clean out the  
chinchilla pen like I told you to?

MARCUS

Yes sir, we did.

Jackie leaves the pots and walks over to Willie Jr.

JACKIE

Willie, are we really going to make  
some money from those chinchillas?

WILLIE JR

As soon as the new babies grow up,  
we'll sell them and make a killing.

Jackie puts her arm around Willie, bends down and gives him a  
kiss. He seems disinterested, but she cannot see his face.

Marcus and August--JUBILANT at the thought of more money--CHEER. And equally humored by their parents affection. They MIMICK the hug and throw in some kisses.

CUT TO:

23 EXT. CARPORT, LATE AFTERNOON, DAY

23

Tall pines sway in the hot summer breeze. The children are in the carport playing as Willie Jr pulls in.

Mane no longer plays with his younger brothers because he thinks he is too grown. The children SCATTER to make room for the car--but Willie stops short of their playing area.

Willie Jr gets out of the truck, wipes his brow. Reaches for canvas tool bag and the kids run over to help unload the truck. Willie carries the bag towards the tool shed; a trowel falls out.

WILLIE JR

Boys, don't touch those tools...they stay in the truck.

MARCUS

What about this, daddy?

WILLIE JR

I told you it stays in the truck, knucklehead!

NICHOLAS

Daddy, SONNY and TUCKER are going to camp out with us in the back yard!

WILLIE JR

Uh-huh.

NICHOLAS

That's alright ain't it?

Willie Jr walks unresponsively to the tool shed with tool bag and then over to the water hose to wash off his boots--Nicholas tags along.

The children move with him to the backyard--sort of tagging along--distantly, having to wait for their answer--all anticipating approval from Willie Jr.

Nicholas cocks his head to the right and smiles a big smile.

NICHOLAS  
How about it  
dadddd?..plleeaassee...

WILLIE JR  
Go on..if it will make you happy.

Nicholas disguises his enthusiasm. He walks solemnly over to the other children.

TUCKER  
Well..what did he say?! What did he say?!

NICHOLAS  
He said we could!

Nicholas leads the children in a chorus of HOOPS and HOLLERS.

CHILDREN  
All right! Okay! This going to be fun, man. Alright!

MARCUS  
We can be settlers! Just like Daniel Boone!

NICHOLAS  
Yeah man, I'm going to be an Indian cause an Indian can walk like a ghost.

SONNY  
I'm Daniel Boone and I can split a tree with a tomahawk.

TUCKER  
Ain't nothing man! My knife can split your tomahawk.

SONNY  
That ugly knife ain't worth nothing!

Willie Jr's washes mortar off his boots, using a trowel to pick mortar out of the welt of his boots. Wiping the trowel off on a brick he then scrapes the trowel on the side of the brick. He thinks he hears one of the children say something bad about Jackie.

WILLIE JR

Damn those kids!

He walks menacingly toward the kids with trowel in hand.

The children oblivious to Willie, continue to play--they are trying to sit cross legged like an Indian. Willie walks right up to them and throws the trowel down and it sticks in the ground by one of the neighbors child's hand. The children are instantly silent.

WILLIE JR

Who said that? Who said that?

The children look at each other INNOCENTLY. The child whose hand is near the trowel pulls his hand away and looks at Willie with FEAR.

WILLIE JR

I heard you all over here talking about Jackie. (to Nicholas) Boy, why you let them talk about your mama like that?

NICHOLAS

But Daddy, we didn't say nothing.

WILLIE JR

Don't lie to me, boy. I heard what one of you boys said.

NICHOLAS

But Daddy....

WILLIE JR

I'm not going to have you talking about my wife like that. You all going to get hurt if you keep on talking that crap. Start some mess and I'm going to rip your drawers.

Willie walks into house angrily.

MARCUS

Did somebody say something? Who  
said something?

Sonny--stands with a gesture to leave.

SONNY

Man, I didn't say nothing. I don't  
know what he's talking about.

TUCKER

Me neither.

NICHOLAS

Well I didn't hear nobody say  
nothing wrong. What did somebody  
say?

MARCUS

We weren't even talking about mama.  
What was he talking about?

NICHOLAS

Nobody said nothing about my mama,  
but your mama...

Nicholas puts hand on his chin and turns his head, facing  
away from Sonny, mumbling...

NICHOLAS

...is another matter.

Sonny pushes Nicholas and they all LAUGH in their uneasiness.

24 INT. BATHROOM, DAY

24

Willie Jr walks into the bathroom in a RAGE to wash his  
hands. He STARES into the MIRROR at his reflection with a  
look of confusion--what just happened? Had he reacted  
appropriately? He contemplates his actions--grabs a towel and  
exits.

25 INT. KITCHEN, DAY

25

Jackie cooking at the stove as Willie Jr walks into the room.  
He hugs Jackie from behind.

WILLIE JR

Have you seen my other sock  
baby...I've been looking all over-

JACKIE

--No I haven't--why don't you put safety  
pins in them so you can keep track of  
them--

WILLIE JR

--Well how bout some breasts then?

Willie Jr caresses her breasts with both hands. Jackie  
BRUSHES his hands away.

JACKIE

Ain't nothing but drumsticks in  
this pan.

WILLIE JR

I got your drumstick baby.

He reaches down with one hand and squeezes her butt. Jackie  
brushes his hand from her butt as she turns around.

JACKIE

Oh, come on baby, I'm trying to  
cook.

Willie Jr grabs her hand firmly, brings it up to his lips to  
kiss. She tries to jerk her hand away--she can't.

WILLIE JR

Come on baby let's go lay down.

JACKIE

No, Willie, not now!

Willie pulls Jackie out of the kitchen into the hallway--  
heading to the bedroom.

26 INT. HALLWAY, DAY

26

Jackie struggling to get away from Willie Jr--she can't quite  
get free.

WILLIE JR



Woman when I want it, I want it.  
And I want it now!

JACKIE

Willie, you got to control  
yourself! Just wait! Come on, this  
isn't funny. I'm serious--let me  
go.

Jackie continues to struggle as he drags her to the bedroom  
door.

WILLIE JR

Just get your ass in here bitch!  
I'm tired of you playing games with  
me! I know what you been up to!

Willie pulls her by the arm--dragging her through the  
doorway--into the bedroom.

JACKIE

What the hell are you talking bout?  
Nigger please... what are you  
doing?!

Willie Jr SLAMS the door.

27 INT. KITCHEN, DAY 27

Smoke rises from the frying pan as the chicken burns.

28 INT. HALLWAY, DAY 28

Jackie flings the door open and storms out of the bedroom.  
The door CRASHES against the door stop and closes LOUDLY--

29 INT. KITCHEN, DAY 29

Jackie walks into the kitchen, smoothing her hair back and  
smoothing her skirt down.

Her mascara--smeared--anger, fear and emotional anguish---  
apparent as she works to regain her composure before the  
children come in and see her. She can hear the children  
BOISTEROUSLY making their way into the house.

The children come BURSTING through the back kitchen door,  
with raucous joy.

NICHOLAS

Mama, something's burning, Marcus,  
stop playing, stop playing.

Marcus trips Nicholas as they come through the doorway--

MARCUS

Ain't that chicken burnt? Give that  
chicken to Nicholas, it'll give him  
some color.

Marcus and August laughing.

NICHOLAS

Boy, that ain't funny.

Nicholas swings at Marcus.

Marcus ducks and August gets hit in the shoulder--

AUGUST

Ow! What you hit me for!

August kicks Nicholas--They start brawling with each other.

JACKIE

I'm sick of you boys acting like  
animals! Haven't I taught you  
better?

Jackie sobs out the last words as she starts to lose her  
composure. The kids notice and become more solemn.

JACKIE

Now, go wash your hands and set the  
table.

The children leave the room and head to the bathroom--

30 INT. HALLWAY, DAY

30

Willie Jr comes out the bedroom into the hallway, ZIPPING up  
his pants and buckling his belt. Willie has a look of  
dominant satisfaction.

The children look at Willie Jr--cease their chattering--  
knowing somehow that he is the cause of their mother's grief.  
They draw closer together and file into the bathroom.

Close-bathroom door closing.

August the last one to enter the bathroom closes the door slowly and peers through the diminishing slit. The door closes shut.

CUT TO:

31 EXT. WILLIE JR'S PICK UP TRUCK, DAY

31

Willie Jr drives down the street towards the children who are playing flag football in the street.

The children expect Willie Jr to turn right and drive around back to park the truck, but instead he DRIVES THROUGH THE MIDDLE of them, slowing only enough to make the turn into the driveway. The children SCATTER to avoid being hit. They stand in disbelief at the near miss.

Willie Jr--EYES GLARING, gets out of the truck and goes to the back of the truck to get his tools. He reaches in the back to pick up his tool bag.

Sonny comes over to speak to him.

SONNY

Hello Mr. Jones how are you doing today?

Willie Jr turns briskly without getting any tools.

WILLIE JR

Boy, I don't like your attitude.

SONNY

You mind us playing ball in front of your house?

WILLIE JR

Boy, you have a nasty mouth. Didn't your mama teach you anything?

SONNY

Sir?...

Sonny turns his head and looks at the other children. Nicholas shakes his head in disbelief and some of the other

children make similar gestures. Tucker motions to Sonny for them to leave.

SONNY

Well sir, we be going now. Hey, we see you guys later.

Sonny and Tucker leave as their fear of bodily abuse rises. Willie Jr glares at Salty and Ajax.

WILLIE JR

Ain't you boys leaving too?

Ajax looks at Salty--motions to him with his hands for them to leave. Salty does not retreat.

AJAX

Yes sir. Come on Salty let's go.

Salty speaks to Ajax with effeminate overtones--

SALTY

I'm not going anywhere. This is a public street, my daddy pays taxes just like he does. Who does he think he is anyway?

Salty turns to Willie Jr--

SALTY

I'm tired of going through changes for him!

WILLIE JR

Let me tell you something boy. And you listen real good. If your mama hadn't been a whore your daddy wouldn't have left her!

SALTY

Wha...?...You just crazy man. Everybody knows you crazy.

WILLIE JR

Boy why don't you come over here and say that.

Ajax grabs Salty by the arm to keep him from Willie Jr.

SALTY

Man you been out in the sun too long. Your brain is fried. You think everybody is trying to screw your wife.

Ajax tugs at Salty's arm and pulls him down the road. Salty continues to talk to Willie Jr as he is taken away--

SALTY

We can't play in the yard when you get home cause you too crazy.

WILLIE JR

I know you always talking behind my back, why don't you come back here and say it to my face?

Ajax continues to pull Salty down the road.

SALTY

He keep running us away. He's building a wall around them. That man needs professional help, I'm telling you. Ajax...I hate to be in their shoes.

Willie Jr turns to Nicholas, Marcus, and August.

WILLIE JR

I don't believe you boys let them talk about your mama like that.

Willie Jr pulls off his belt. Marcus and August run around to the back of the house seeking hiding places.

Nicholas stands there and tries to reason with Willie Jr.

NICHOLAS

Daddy, nobody said nothing about mama or you or us or anybody.

Willie Jr BEATS Nicholas with the buckle end of his belt. Willie Jr holds his arm while he is beating him. Nicholas is beaten outside for a few moments.

Marcus and August watching from the side of the house--duck back when they see Willie Jr turn towards them.

Nicholas cries for help. He slips away from Willie Jr--runs into the house as Willie Jr follows continuing the beating.

32 EXT. HOUSE, DUSK

32

SOUNDS of the beating emanate from the house. The children are hiding behind some trees, afraid to go into the house.

CUT TO:

33 INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM, NIGHT

33

Close-nicholas's arm covered in bruises and scabs. Hands clasped in prayer; Nicholas, Marcus and August are praying on their knees, against a set of twin beds.

ALL THREE CHILDREN

Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray  
the Lord my soul to keep. If I  
should die before I wake, I pray  
the Lord my soul to take. Amen.

Jackie enters the doorway and leans against it. She's working the graveyard shift at the glass factory--she's dressed, ready to go.

CHILDREN

God bless Mama, God bless Daddy,  
God bless Grandma and Pa-Pa.

NICHOLAS

And God keep Daddy from beating us  
when we ain't done nothing wrong.

CHILDREN

Amen!

NICHOLAS

And God, we love you..(they stretch  
out their arms like Jesus on the  
cross) this much. Amen.

Jackie enters the room, to say goodnight to the children. She tucks them in--August and Marcus in one bed and Nicholas in the other. She sits on Nicholas's bed.

JACKIE

Don't worry baby, God's watching over us....let me see your arm baby. (examines his arm) What did you do to deserve this?

NICHOLAS

Nothing.

JACKIE

Well, you must have done something.

NICHOLAS

I didn't do anything. We were just playing and then Daddy got upset about something...

JACKIE

Well, what did he say?

NICHOLAS

He didn't say nothing he just started hitting us.

MARCUS

Yeah, and yesterday he said that Sonny said something bad about you and that Nicholas didn't take up for you.

NICHOLAS

Uh-huh.

MARCUS

Yeah, and then he took his belt buckle and beat him with it.

AUGUST

Mama, I'm scared. I'm scared when you're not here.

The children all nod in agreement.

Jackie looks concerned--then dismisses the thought.

Mane enters the room with a bathrobe on prepared to get into bed.

JACKIE

Get in the bed now, I've got to get to work.

The children climb into bed. Jackie stops at the doorway--looks back at the children.

JACKIE

I love you guys!

THE CHILDREN

We love you too, mama!

She turns off the light and slowly closes the door as she leaves the room.

Mane is up putting on his clothes as soon as things settle down in the room. Mane leaves via the window.

34 INT. DEN, NIGHT

34

Willie Jr is sitting in front of the television, the 11 o'clock news is going off.

He gets up, turns the set off and goes to the children's bedroom to check on them before he retires. He turns on the light and sees that Mane is not in the bed. He is IMMEDIATELY ANGERED.

WILLIE JR

Damn, that boy has snuck out again!

35 INT. KITCHEN, NIGHT

35

Close-clock; it's three a.m. The SOUND of the clock ticking is PROMINENT.

Willie Jr's silhouette--projected onto the wall as light comes inside the house from an exterior street light. He steps forward--his silhouette moves off. He looks haggard--he brings his hand up to scratch his face--it has a GUN in it. He begins to MOVE through the house.

The fluorescent light above the sink shines into his GLAZED eyes. He checks the clock on the stove for the time. It is 3:30 a.m.



His anger mounts. The SOUND of the CLOCK is AMPLIFIED. Willie Jr digs in his ear-with an agitated shaking motion.

His heart pounds in his throat from his anger--he walks out of the kitchen--into the hallway and flips on the light. He MOVES to the boys bedroom--deftly pushes the door open with the gun. He enters the room--light from the hallway illuminates a section of the room.

36 INT. BOYS BEDROOM, NIGHT

36

August and Marcus are sleeping in the small twin bed at close quarters. The covers are disheveled and Marcus' leg hangs out of the bed. August mouth is wide open--he's almost snoring.

Nicholas is sleeping alone. Willie Jr walks in, stands at the end of Nicholas's bed with the gun by his side.

Willie Jr looks past Nicholas at the window to ensure it is locked; this is how Mane usually gets in. Pausing--he silently pivots and walks out of the room.

Nicholas' eyes open slowly as he hears his father turn. He lies very still-- afraid to take a breath. Quietly, slowly-- he swallows. At the SOUND of the door CLOSING he breathes deeply and sighs.

37 EXT. HOUSE, NIGHT

37

Mane reaches under the door mat to get the house key. Slowly he turns the screen door handle. The screen door slowly CREAKS open.

Mane winces at the noise--looks over his shoulder--the CRICKETS get LOUDER.

38 INT. LIVING ROOM, FRONT DOOR, NIGHT

38

Willie Jr walks past the door with gun raised and the barrel pointing to the ceiling. He flattens his back against the wall by the door. The TICK of the CLOCK is replaced by the POUNDING of Willie Jr's heart.

The door knob slowly turns. Mane slowly steps inside.

Willie Jr smoothly lowers the gun to Mane's ear--pulls the hammer back--an OMINOUS CLICK--Mane freezes. His eyes shift to the gun--then his father.

Mane in a whisper, barely able to speak.

MANE

Daddy, Daddy, don't shoot me, don't shoot, it's me. It's Mane. Your son.

Long pause. Willie Jr slowly lets the hammer down with his thumb while the gun is still pointed at Mane's head. Slowly he lowers the gun. Willie Jr's eyes, still glazed as he brushes past Mane--saying nothing.

Mane stands in the doorway--in a cold sweat, mouth open breathing laboriously.

DISSOLVE TO:

39 EXT. REAR OF HOUSE, DAY

39

JAZZ the dog is on a chain behind the house. The back screen door creaks slowly open--Willie Jr walks out to bring Jazz scraps from last night's meal.

Willie Jr is tired and the children haven't taken out the leftovers which by now have started to smell. Willie Jr holds the leftovers at arm's length.

As Willie Jr gets closer to Jazz with the food, Jazz hungrily jumps around as he pulls against the chain--barking excitedly.

WILLIE JR

Hey boy, hey Jazz. How you doing boy? Look what I brought you. Yeah, well I got some good home cooking for you. Nicholas should've had this to you sooner.

Willie Jr kneels down beside the dog. He keeps the food just out of Jazz's reach so he can pat him. Willie Jr gets another whiff of the food.

WILLIE JR

This food really stinks Jazz. I don't know if you want to eat it or not. I sure wouldn't.

Jazz continues to jump around BARKING and TUGGING at the chain. Willie Jr sets the plate down and Jazz scarfs down the food.

Nicholas walks along the side of the house towards the back yard playing with a yo-yo. Turning the corner he sees his father feeding Jazz.

NICHOLAS

Oh man, I don't believe I forgot to feed Jazz.

He backs up to the security of the corner and watches.

Jazz finishes the food and Willie Jr strokes his back. Jazz looks up at Willie Jr as if to say, "Is there any more food?"

Jazz licks water from his water bowl and then licks Willie Jr's face cheerfully.

WILLIE JR

Well boy, wasn't that good?

Willie Jr continues to pat the dog and enters into a silent communion with him.

WILLIE JR

I don't know what I'm going to do about that boy. When I was his age my daddy would tear the skin off my back if I acted like him...Hell, he still would...

Nicholas, terror in his eyes, afraid he has angered his father. He looks up to heaven and silently lips "Oh no!".

WILLIE JR

He just won't listen, staying out to all times of night.

There is a sigh of relief as Nicholas wipes his brow. It is difficult to hear so Nicholas moves closer.

WILLIE JR

There's just no sense in it. What  
am I going to do Jazz?

Jazz licks his face.

WILLIE JR

Seem like nothing's going right any  
more! I think some of the guys at  
work are talking about Jackie.  
Everybody is after my woman. I  
don't know what to do.

Jazz starts to bark towards an overgrown field. Willie  
briskly turns towards the overgrown field where he apparently  
sees evil aberrations. Willie Jr--face contorted with anger.

WILLIE JR

You go to hell! Back where you  
come from! And leave my baby alone!  
Damn you if you ever talk about  
her again!

Overgrown field where Willie Jr is looking--revealing that  
Willie Jr is talking to nothing but bushes. Jazz calms his  
barking and tucks his tail and goes into his dog house.

WILLIE JR

I can trust her. I know I can!

Nicholas in the foreground behind a tree--in awe. Willie  
moves closer to the overgrown field.

WILLIE JR

You evil bastard! Don't fill my  
mind with  
those  
thoughts!

Willie Jr snaps off a stout branch and whirls around again,  
shouting at the bush and SCREAMING at the top of his lungs.

WILLIE JR

You all get away from me and my  
family. Right Now! Damn you! Or I'm  
going to kill you now!! I'm going  
to kill all of you!!!

Nicholas watching all of this from behind a tree. He recalls theology taught to him in church.

NICHOLAS

I rebuke you Satan in the name of Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ be against you demons! The power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ be against you right now!

WILLIE JR

You all better just get out of here now, just get out of here!!

Willie throws the branch into the bushes. Stands there--staring at the spot and listening. After a moment, Willie--satisfied--turns and walks towards the chinchilla hutch.

40 INT. CHINCHILLA HUTCH, DAY

40

As the CHINCHILLAS eat, Willie opens the hutch door and enters. A cage door opens and a hand moves over the fur of a chinchilla--cautiously petting it.

Willie Jr the chinchilla cages in the foreground--delivers the dialogue in a sing song way.

WILLIE JR

That's right. Be nice. I'm going to make a fur coat out of you. Eat lots of food---and get fat and shiny---and then I'm going to skin your fat little hinnies.

He closes the cage door and heads out.

41 INT. DEN, DAY

41

Willie Jr settles into the chair in front of the television. His eyes are quite heavy. A commercial advertising the new 1966 THUNDERBIRD is on.

Willie Jr falls asleep and dreams the driver of the Thunderbird to be him.

42 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE, DAY

42

A shiny, new Thunderbird SWOOPS into the lot.

In one fluid motion Willie Jr gets out with blueprints in one hand. He's dressed in expensive slacks with braces, a nice shirt with french cuffs and a silk tie. White men in hard hats kowtow--offering their hands; one opens a gate--Willie Jr jumps into the car and drives through.

Now Willie Jr is walking along and people are moving wheel barrows and opening gates for him. He stands for a moment with his hands on his hips and smiles. He hears nicholas...turns his head slightly and Frowns.

43 INT. DEN, NIGHT

43

Marcus and August sit around the television as their father sleeps. Nicholas has come in with the change from the convenience store run.

NICHOLAS

Daddy, here's your change.

MARCUS

Man, you must be crazy, trying to wake him up.

NICHOLAS

Yeah, but you remember the last time I didn't give daddy his change.

AUGUST

Uh, huh. And I remember the last time you did too. I'm out of here boy!

MARCUS

Me too!

Marcus and August quickly leave the room.

Nicholas reluctantly places his hand on Willie Jr's arm and gently shakes it.

NICHOLAS

Daddy, Daddy, are you alright?  
Here's your change.

Willie Jr is startled back into reality--looks left and right, trying to place the noise--the incongruity of hearing Nicholas's voice in his dream.

NICHOLAS

Daddy, I'm back from the store.  
Here's your change.

WILLIE JR

Just put it on my dresser. And  
don't steal any.

Willie Jr--puzzled, pauses to consider what just happened. He stares blankly and then rubs his hands over his face.

CUT TO:

44 INT. BEDROOM, MORNING, DAY

44

Close-alarm clock. the hammer of the clock striking the two bells and a hand swiftly and deftly shutting off the clock.

Willie Jr swings his hand back and quickly swings out of bed. He reaches down by his shoes and puts on his socks. Jackie still lying down.

JACKIE

Why you got to get up so early?

Willie Jr pulls his pants up and slips on his shirt.

WILLIE JR

Got to see somebody about some  
work.

Jackie slowly pulls herself up into a sitting position.

JACKIE

Why you need to see about work? You  
already got a job. And who you  
going to see?

Willie stuffs his shirt into his pants and slowly buckles his belt.

WILLIE JR

A million questions! A million questions! What difference does it make?!

JACKIE

What do you mean a million questions?

(more)

JACKIE (Cont'd)

If you'd tell me something I wouldn't have to ask! You never tell me nothing! Willie? Willie!...damn it.

Willie steps into his shoes and walks out of the room.

CUT TO:

45 INT. KITCHEN, DAY

45

The washing machine is just completing a NOISY SPIN CYCLE. It SQUEAKS to a stop.

Jackie walks in and raises the top to get the clothes out. She puts the clothes in the basket. There is a KNOCK at the front door.

JACKIE

Somebody get the door!

She continues to take the wash out of the machine and into the basket. The KNOCKING continues.

JACKIE

Mane, Nicholas get the door.

Jackie straightens up and listens for the movement of children going to answer the door--there is no one around.

JACKIE

Doggonit! (to herself) Wait a minute! (yells to the person at the door)

She puts down the basket and goes to the door straightening her dress and primping.

46 INT. LIVING ROOM, DAY

46



She looks through the window to see that it's Bubba.

JACKIE  
(to herself)  
Oh, it's just Bubba.

She opens the door. Bubba holds the screen door open with his body.

JACKIE  
Well hello there Bubba, how are you doing?

BUBBA  
Oh fine Jackie, how you been doing?

JACKIE  
Are you looking for Willie? He's not here.

BUBBA  
Where did he go? Will he be back soon? I really wanted to talk to him.

JACKIE  
Well I don't really know, he didn't tell me what time he would be back. He said something about a job. What did you want to talk to him about?

BUBBA  
I guess it wouldn't hurt to mention it to you, you being his wife and all. Things have been a little strained at work. I wanted to come over to see if there was anything I could do to help him. At least get him to talk about it.

JACKIE  
C'mon on in and talk to me while I hang out the clothes.

Jackie and Bubba enter the kitchen. She starts to pick up the basket and Bubba reaches for it.

JACKIE

Oh that's okay I got it.

Jackie picks up the basket and heads outside to hang out the clothes. Bubba follows.

48 EXT. BACK YARD, THE CLOTHESLINE, DAY

48

Bubba sits down at the picnic table while Jackie hangs up clothes.

He notices how shapely Jackie is from the rear, especially in this tight knit dress. He slowly shakes his head and sighs deeply.

JACKIE

Well Bubba, what's going on at work?

Bubba nervously moves the rim of his hat through his fingers as he speaks.

BUBBA

He's just not himself any more. He stays off to himself. He doesn't have much to say any more.

Bubba places his hat on the grass beside the basket. He reaches into the clothes basket and pulls up a shirt in an effort to assist Jackie who is pinning a shirt to the line.

Jackie turns to reach for the next piece of clothing. Bubba has it in his hand.

JACKIE

Bubba you don't have to help me with the clothes, I can manage myself.

Jackie turns back to line to hang up Willie Jr's shirt.

JACKIE

Now, I don't see much harm in Willie staying off to himself. He

stay out of trouble that way, don't he?

BUBBA

Yeah, that's true, but things just aren't the same. Lately he's been saying things that aren't true.

JACKIE

Like...what? (slowly stops)

BUBBA

He thinks we been talking about you.

Jackie swings around with curious emotion.

JACKIE

(coquettishly)

Talking about me...well have you?

BUBBA

No we haven't, but Willie says we do. Jackie, Willie accused Toothless of sneaking...well, sometimes he gets this wild look in his eyes and he says things that just don't make sense. And then a few minutes later he don't remember what he said.

Jackie pauses--thinking.

JACKIE

I know what you mean...I've seen that look myself.

Jackie daydreams off into the distance. She looks towards the clothesline--the clothes blowing in the breeze.

BUBBA

I'm afraid he may lose his job if things keep going the way they are. If there is anything that I can do, give me a call.

FADE TO WHITE

DISSOLVE TO:

49 INT. DEN, TELEVISION WITH CARTOONS PLAYING, DAY

49

The CHILDREN are playing monopoly in front of the television, which is playing TOO LOUDLY. August and Marcus tussle over a yo-yo.

50 EXT. CHINCHILLA HUTCH, DAY

50

Willie Jr walks up to the door of the hutch in concert with the cartoon audio, which is only background. An EXAGGERATED CAR CRASH can be heard on the television at the moment Willie Jr opens the hutch door.

51 INT. CHINCHILLA HUTCH, DAY

51

Close-dead chinchillas.

Close-Willie Jr, emotionless.

A chinchilla--in the foreground. looking out over the dead body of the chinchilla, Willie Jr gradually reacts.

Willie's face transforms from shock and disbelief into anger, then rage. Willie Jr grabs a cage and HURLS it to the floor--KICKS it across the room--pulls another down and SLAMS it into a wall.

52 INT. DEN, DAY

52

The children stop their horsing around to listen to the chinchilla cages being thrown around. Nicholas turns off the sound on the television. The noise of the cages can be heard clearly now.

NICHOLAS

Listen! Shut up you guys.

MARCUS

What's going on? I'm getting out of here!

AUGUST

Me too!

53 INT. CHINCHILLA HUTCH, DAY

53

Willie Jr KICKS another cage. He tries to calm himself--sits down on a cage. He turns his eyes toward heaven and speaks in a lowered voice.

WILLIE JR

Lord!, why you making my life so hard? It's two steps forward and one step back. Seem like nothing I do works out!

54 EXT. THE CHINCHILLA HUTCH, DAY

54

Willie Jr walks out of the hutch and slowly closes it shut as if it were a crypt. He walks dejectedly towards the house as if his spirit is broken.

55 INT. KITCHEN, DAY

55

Willie Jr slowly walks into the kitchen. He pauses at the back door and leans on it until it closes.

He walks over to the refrigerator, opens it and stares unseeingly. He picks up a beer and walks over to the kitchen table and sits down looking blankly into the television which is in the adjacent den.

Jackie is in the living room dusting to a tune in her head.

JACKIE

Willie Jr? Guess what Willie Jr? CALVIN JAMES called a few minutes ago--said he's in town from Washington. Says he might stop by this afternoon.

WILLIE JR

Call him back and tell him not to bother. He's not going to like what I'm going to be fixing.

Jackie walks into the kitchen and stands behind Willie Jr, just to his right. Both look forward towards the television.

JACKIE

Say what? I don't understand--what you mean, you going to be fixing something?

WILLIE JR

(no emotion on his face)

I going to fix his ass right out of this house.

JACKIE

(disturbed)

What?!

She looks down at Willie Jr and sits at the kitchen table. She pulls her chair closer to the corner of the table so she can be closer to him.

JACKIE

Willie Jr, what are you talking about?! (calmly) What's he ever done to you? (more excitedly)

WILLIE JR

I don't like anybody talking about my woman!

JACKIE

Talking about me?! I haven't seen him for years! How could--

WILLIE JR

--That's not what I hear!

Jackie flabbergasted, stands but leans on the table with both hands. She stares angrily into his face.

JACKIE

Who told you that? You know that ain't true! Who said anything to you? Was it that Toothless creep?

WILLIE JR

Never mind who told me that, he's not coming over here and that's that!

Willie Jr gets up and walks into the den. He turns the sound up on the television loud enough to exacerbate the situation. "Gunsmoke" is starting to come on. He then plops into his favorite chair.

JACKIE

Well, you ain't telling me what to do! This is my house too, you know. I invited him and he's coming over. You are not the only one living here Willie Jr!

WILLIE JR

Well we'll see about that. We'll see soon enough. You just bring him on over here and we'll see what happens...let him come on by.

Close-telephone. Jackie picks up the kitchen telephone and dials Calvin James back to tell him not to come. Jackie is aggravated and listens to the telephone ringing on the other end. She--fidgets, now she's beginning to worry.

JACKIE

(to the telephone)

Come on, dammit. (to Willie Jr)  
Willie Jr don't you turn your back on me! This ain't over yet!

Jackie's practically yelling while the phone continues to ring.

JACKIE

Come on pick it up, Hot dammit!  
Pick it up!

Jackie slams the handset down and walks over to Willie Jr. She stands there with her hands on her hips, then moves between Willie Jr and the television.

JACKIE

Nigger, don't you ignore me...why don't you answer me? If you were

really a man, you'd stand here and  
talk to me!

Willie Jr considers standing, shifts his weight in the chair  
as if to stand and then decides not to play by her rules. He  
remains seated, and LAUGHS.

JACKIE

It's not funny Willie Jr.

The doorbell RINGS. They stare maliciously at one another.  
The doorbell RINGS again. Jackie goes to answer the door.

56 EXT. FRONT DOOR, DAY

56

Calvin James tries to find his reflection in the glass of the  
opened door. He smooths his hair back, wetting his index  
finger with saliva to smooth his eyebrows into place on his  
handsome face. Dressed in the newest fashion, he eagerly  
awaits showing off.

Jackie comes to the door.

JACKIE

Calvin James. Well don't you look  
too fit to be tied.

CALVIN JAMES

Girl, it's so good to see you, you  
look better than ever.

57 INT. LIVING ROOM, DAY

57

Jackie opens the door for Calvin who gives her a hug. He  
walks past her into the living room.

CALVIN JAMES

And where is Willie Jr? I can't  
wait to see how he looks. You  
know, how good father time has been  
to him.

Willie Jr's eyes glaze over upon hearing Calvin James' voice.  
He stands and walks out of the den--MOVING to the living  
room--WIDER.



CALVIN

Hi you Willie Jr, how you been doing?

Calvin extends his hand. Willie Jr does not shake hands but continues to the bedroom and gets his gun.

Angle on Calvin James and Jackie.

CALVIN JAMES

Willie?...uh, is something wrong with Willie?

JACKIE

Oh no, no. It's just that...uh..uh..this isn't really a good time.

CALVIN JAMES

I was just passing through...that's all...thought I'd just stop by--you know.

JACKIE

I'm sorry but this just really isn't a good time.

Jackie turns to look down the hallway.

Willie Jr coming up the hallway with the gun. Each footstep poignantly emphasizing his anger.

JACKIE

I tried to call and tell you not to come over here.

CALVIN JAMES

What's going on? Do you need me to stay?

JACKIE

No, I need you to leave. Now!

Willie Jr comes into the living room with the gun.

Calvin James looks down and sees the gun.

CALVIN JAMES

Jackie...you know...I think you're right, it is time to go.

Calvin turns on his heels, looking at his watch in a nervous comic effort to relieve the tension. He heads towards the door.

CALVIN JAMES

Would you look at the time, I really have to be going! Well nice seeing you Jackie...and you too Willie...bye.

He exits hurriedly. Jackie does an immediate about face, turning towards Willie Jr. Her face is set in anger.

JACKIE

Willie, are you crazy?

Close-Willie Jr, eyes emotionless and glazed. He's ready to explode with anger. The nerve of Calvin James coming into his house, his castle--his domain--after his woman.

Close-Jackie, her reaction to Willie Jr's expression causes Jackie's face to change from anger to fear.

SILENCE--TENSION BUILDS

Willie Jr in a sea of uncertainty and fear, languishes back and forth--from reality to the unreal. The fear of losing control--slipping over the edge--the uncertainty of his jealousy. The uncertainty of his life.

Jackie, gripped in absolute fear, bordering on panic--unable to get her feet to receive the message to run. A fearful tear washes over her eyes. She gently shakes her head--she is in trouble.

With his eyes fixed on Jackie's, Willie Jr gradually raises the gun to just above his shoulder.

He ABRUPTLY HITS Jackie across the face with the gun and she crumples backwards against the wall in the corner. He turns slowly without emotion and walks away.

CUT TO:

The house is quiet. The sound of a field rat gnawing can be heard.

Rats sit atop an empty bag of chinchilla feed in the old chinchilla hutch. A rat runs out of the hutch and along the foundation on the outside of the house. Every now and then it stops and digs.

Mane leaves the house, slipping out for the night on his now nightly foray with his partners in crime.

59 INT. KITCHEN, NIGHT

59

It's dark. Rats are heard gnawing.

CAMERA MOVING--through the kitchen, slowly past three dark figures of what seems to be small cats feasting on tonight's dinner--chicken left on the stovetop--down the hall towards the children's room, stopping at the door. After a hesitation continues into the room over the shape of a child lying under the covers. The covers rustle--a large, powerful FART.

AUGUST

You stinky dog!

Marcus laughs. August laughs, too.

NICHOLAS

Y'all shut up over there and go to sleep!

There is a brief silence, then Marcus farts again. Now they all laugh.

NICHOLAS

Y'all ain't nothing but a bunch of farheads!

MARCUS

You're the biggest farthead!

Marcus fakes a fart and laughs.

AUGUST

Yeah, you're the biggest farthead!  
Farthead, farthead.

August fakes a couple of farts with his mouth. August and Marcus laugh.

NICHOLAS

You better be quiet before you wake daddy up.

Children keep laughing and August falls out of the bed laughing hitting the floor with a loud thud. The laughter stops--the room fills with the children's fear. They await the dreaded response from Willie Jr's adjacent room. TENSION GRIPS their bodies.

Nicholas swallows hard. Marcus beseeching Nicholas for help--tries to control his laughter. August--frozen in fear. Willie Jr's booming voice from the next room--

WILLIE JR

You all be quiet in there...don't make me have to come in there!

August quickly crawls into the bed. The children are silent.

60 EXT. MOON SKIRTED with CLOUDS, NIGHT

60

61 INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM, NIGHT

61

In the window sill there is a rat moving towards Nicholas's arm which is resting on the sill as he sleeps. The rat CRAWLS down Nicholas's arm into the bed--under the covers and then resurfaces by his face. The rat's whiskers BRUSH Nicholas's face--waking him.

Nicholas sees what he thinks is a rat. His eyes widen as he realizes it is a rat. He SCREAMS--jumps out of bed and into Marcus and August's bed--waking them up and creating pandemonium. August and Marcus don't know why Nicholas's in their bed--but they start SCREAMING too.

The door BURSTS open with a BANG, silhouetting Willie Jr's frame. The children's screaming comes to an ABRUPT STOP as the fear of the rat is replaced by that of their father.

NICHOLAS

There's a rat in here! There's a rat in here!

WILLIE JR

I don't care what's in here...keep  
the noise down! Be quiet in  
there...

NICHOLAS

But daddy there's a rat in my--

WILLIE JR

--Didn't you hear me boy! If I hear  
another peep out of one of you--all  
of you going to get a killing--you  
got that?

He slowly closes the door.

NICHOLAS

(quietly)

There's still a rat in here. If  
mama was here she would do  
something.

Scared and remaining motionless, Nicholas cuts his eyes left  
and right trying to locate the rat. He reluctantly and  
quietly tip toes over to the dresser reaches in and retrieves  
a flashlight.

He turns and promptly tip toes back to the bed picking up a  
shoe on the way back; he sits in the bed Indian style. While  
sitting up in the bed he pans the room with the light. He  
flashes the light directly into the camera.

CUT TO:

62 INT. GLASS FACTORY, DAY

62

A conveyor belt filled with red hot bottles, just out of the  
oven. Hundreds of them. The bottles are winding their way  
down the line towards the inspector.

Jackie PICKS a defective bottle off of the line and throws it  
down a chute. She's wearing glasses to keep flying glass out  
of her eyes, and a bandanna around her head which makes her  
look like a gypsy. In the background, another worker  
approaches Jackie and then taps her on the shoulder. It's  
break time.

WORKER

Break time!

The woman GESTURES with her hands simulating breaking a stick.

JACKIE

Thank you! I need a break.

Jackie heads to the breakroom. Her shapely figure beckoning the lustful looks of old and young men alike.

63 INT. GLASS FACTORY, BREAKROOM--DAY

63

The walls are lined with snack machines, a refrigerator and soda machines. On the opposite wall are the cubby holes for individual lunches, and a distant ice machine. There are tables in the middle with vinyl red and white tablecloths.

As Jackie enters the breakroom BESSIE, sitting all alone, excitedly motions her over to sit with her. Bessie stares curiously at Jackie's face as she approaches and starts to talk before she can sit down...

BESSIE

Girl...your face is looking better.

Jackie immediately veers off to the snack machines, touching her face lightly, Jackie's face shows the pain which she has been trying to forget. She gets a snack and goes over to the table.

BESSIE

Come on girl, tell me what's going on...anything new from the Twilight Zone?... Huh? Tell me how you got smashed like that in the face.

JACKIE

It's a long story.

BESSIE

That's okay, I'm not going nowhere.

JACKIE

(trying to control her emotion)  
What do you do when....when...when  
a man's insanely jealous.

(more)

JACKIE (Cont'd)

He's not the same--not the same man  
I married. I don't know what to  
do...with him...myself...the  
children. God, it's such a mess.

BESSIE

(overly anxious)

What do you mean--did he--did he do  
something else stupid? Did he smash  
your face? Is that what happened?

JACKIE

(more cautiously)

Naw, I just fell.

BESSIE

You going to stick to that lie  
girl? You know everybody's talking--  
talking about Willie Jr--say he's  
flipped out. This is a small town  
you know...and people are talking.

JACKIE

I know, I know--let them talk.  
Willie Jr ain't crazy--he's just  
mean like his daddy. I guess fruit  
don't fall too far from the tree.  
The children all say that he's been  
acting crazy--he ain't crazy, he's  
just mean--I ain't seen nothing but  
mean out of him for months. (pause)  
The children say they supposed to  
be some rats in the house too. I  
ain't seen no rats either--

BESSIE

--rats!?

JACKIE

--they're just scared of Willie Jr--  
they just have to make something  
up. We ain't got rats.

BESSIE

--Come on honey, you look a mess.  
Talk to me girl. I'm your best  
friend, girl.

JACKIE

I'm just...so tired, I don't feel  
like I can make it  
anymore...sometimes. I'm about to  
give up on life. The other week--  
he just went off. I don't know what  
happened. I just don't know. We  
didn't have a fight. He just went  
off. The life just went out of his  
eyes. It was scary. (Pause) Do you  
remember Calvin James?

BESSIE

From high school?

JACKIE

Yeah. Well, he came over a couple  
of weeks ago.

BESSIE

Did he?...and?

JACKIE

He called out of the blue, said he  
was coming over and Willie Jr acted  
like we'd been carrying on.

BESSIE

Well, he is fine. I can see how  
Willie Jr might wonder.

JACKIE

Well he ain't got nothing to wonder  
about.

BESSIE

Sure you know that Jackie, but  
maybe Willie Jr don't.

Jackie shifts towards Bessie, SETS her face, her eyes still.

JACKIE

That don't give him the right to  
hit me, does it?



She starts to CRY and her hands TREMBLE.

JACKIE

Why do men think they can do this to women? Does he think I'm going to sit around and take this? I'm going to pack up my things and get the hell out of there.

BESSIE

What about the kids? How you going to...

Jackie isn't listening to Bessie.

JACKIE

...Yeah, that's what I'm going to do.

Jackie hears Bessie's question.

JACKIE

...I...I'll just take them with me.

BESSIE

--Well, how you going to do that? How you going to take care of those kids by yourself?

JACKIE

Well, I already do. Willie don't do nothing around the house.

BESSIE

--Yeah, but he brings home the money!

JACKIE

I know, but not all of it. I just got to do something.

BESSIE

You better sit down and think good and hard before you do something stupid that you gonna regret.

A WHISTLE BLOWS, drowning out any remaining conversation. They get up to go back to work.

DISSOLVE TO:

64 INT. MABLE'S KITCHEN, DAY

64

Close-pressure cooker, steam being released from the top of the pressure cooker. There's water running in the sink.

Mable walks over to the stove and turns off the gas, picks up the pressure cooker and sets it in the sink where the cold water can cool it. Mable then turns to Jackie, wipes her hands dry on her apron then rests her hands on her hips.

MABLE

What you think you got to gain from coming over here and telling me lies?

JACKIE

(pointing to her face)

Is this a lie?!! He hit me with a pistol! Are my babies lying too??!!....Something's wrong with him!

MABLE

Oh, come on Jackie...I just can't believe my boy would do something like that. Anyway, you probably brought it on yourself. What did you do to make him so mad?

JACKIE

What makes you think I did anything? And who does your precious boy think he is that he can go around beating up on people? It ain't right mama.

MABLE

Why should I blame Willie?

JACKIE

What makes you think I'm to blame? Mable you know that I love Willie.

MABLE

Then why you always do things that  
aggravate him?

JACKIE

(hysterically)

What are you talking about?!

Jackie SLAMS her fist down on the table--a fork goes flying into the air. Jackie watches the fork fly through the air--giving her a little RELIEF.

JACKIE

Listen Mable I'm trying to tell you, something's wrong with your son and my husband. The children have been trying to tell me for months that there's something wrong with Willie but I didn't believe them. Now, I know there's something wrong... THERE-IS-SOMETHING-WRONG! You got to believe me mama...we got to do something!

Mable doing busy work--cutting potatoes for potato salad. Not wanting to believe the bitter truth.

MABLE

(quietly)

Hmmm...Well I don't know. I just don't know.

JACKIE

My babies crying to me with bruises on their arms... and welts on their backs...and I didn't believe them! Just like you don't believe me!...I turned them away...didn't believe them!...(cries from guilt)...my babies!

Mable goes over to Jackie--puts her arm around her and pats her on the back.

MABLE

(patronizingly)

Growing pains, that's all...just growing pains...

Jackie languidly, silently shakes her head side to side, signaling "no" as she SOBS in Mable's arms.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

65 EXT. BRICKLAYERS JOB SITE, DAY

65

The FOREMAN puts his fingers in his mouth and WHISTLES. Bricklayers quit working, getting off the wall to get their lunch pails and bags. The black bricklayers move to the spot where they always eat.

BUBBA

What did you bring for lunch today?

WILLIE JR

I hadn't looked yet but I'm going to eat all of it, even if it's still alive.

Toothless looks into his lunch bag.

TOOTHLESS

Damn! An apple! I'm going to have to talk to that woman about her cooking.

SUGAR WILLIAMS

I got tuna! My baby's trying to tell me something!

TOOTHLESS

I don't ever eat no tuna! Tuna!  
(spits) You boys crazy!

Sugar grins at Bubba and they start LAUGHING.

Jimmy Bugg with some friends comes over and in the process of sitting down scrapes some dirt near Willie Jr's lunch.

WILLIE JR

Hey! Hey! (in a deep monotone)

TOOTHLESS

Speaking of tuna! The buggman can tell us all about eating tuna!

BUGG

That sandwich is about as close as you're going to get to it. The only chance you going to have to get to it is if your woman is passed out cold and tied down.

Bugg's bunch LAUGH at Toothless. DEREK a friend of Bugg.

DEREK

Bubba's tuna's so old it squeaks! You need a can of three-in-one oil to get near it!

Bugg and his friends LAUGH again. JACKSON a friend of Bugg.

JACKSON

You couldn't pay me to go near Bubba's tuna! Ain't that right Bubba!? So Bubba tell us, where is the best fishing?

BUGG

Well, the finest tuna around comes from your neighborhood Willie Jr.

Willie just sits there and STEAMS.

BUBBA

Don't get started.

JACKSON

We ain't getting started. We ain't talking about your mama.

TOOTHLESS

Your mama! Your mama's been whoring around for years.

The guys say "OOOOOOHHH!"

DEREK

You can't talk old man. You don't even know who your daddy is and neither does your mama!

BUGG

Shoot! One of Willie Jr's boys looks like me for the world! How bout that Willie? That's why he doesn't have his boys out here working with us.

BUBBA

(quietly to Bugg)  
Cool out man.

WILLIE JR

(under his breath)  
I'm going to fix your ass, buddy!

Willie Jr walks down the hill to the truck with angry determination.

JACKSON

Look like you too much for him to handle.

BUGG

He ain't nothing but a big pussy.

DEREK AND JACKSON

Yeah, yeah..

Work crew in the foreground--Willie Jr in the background.

the taunting continues as Willie Jr walks to the truck and reaches for something under the front seat.

TOOTHLESS

You done it now. You done pissed Willie off.

BUGG

You boys are just as soft as my boy Willie.

DEREK

Right. A bunch of sissys. Listen Jackson let me hold ten til friday.

Willie Jr quickly rotates as he shoves something in his pants. He closes the driver side door and starts back to the work area.

Willie Jr--a deranged look walks briskly in the direction of the work crew. He continues towards the group--the SOUND of his footsteps pronounced--the conversation is subdued.

JACKSON

Man, what you mean asking me for money! I got to hold on to everything I got! My babies eat tens left and right. I don't believe babies eat up so much money.

BUBBA

Well if you didn't have so many babies you would have more money.

Willie Jr emerges in the center of the group with his shirt tail out covering the bulge in his pants.

Bugg--paying no attention to Willie Jr, who eases the gun into his hand and with lightning speed STRIKES Bugg on the side of his head--as he falls, Willie HITS him again.

BUGG

Uhhhh...What the he....?

WILLIE JR

That will keep you from talking like that.

BUGG

What the hell's wrong with you?  
What the he....?

WILLIE JR

...you talking like that about my woman.

TOOTHLESS

Hey, man, cool out. Take it easy now--

BUGG

--Yea, man, relax. It's okay. I was just joking, is all.

WILLIE JR

Can't have you talking about my woman, nigger. Think you can talk like that around here? You going to show some respect man--

BUGG

--Respect? Respect? Man, we just talking. Ain't nobody mean nothing by it. Come on, now.

TOOTHLESS

Yeah, we just talking. Nobody disrespecting you! Take it easy.

Willie Jr glances at Toothless recklessly, then twisting-- STRIKES Bugg across the head. Willie straddles him and hits him again.

BUGG

Ugghhhhh...

BUBBA

Jesus, man. Get off him. You trying to kill him?

TOOTHLESS

C'mon, this got to stop.

The crew moves towards Willie Jr who is now in a frenzy. They all grab at him to pull him away from Bugg.

WILLIE JR

--Going to teach you not to run your mouth boy. Y'all been talking about me...talking about my family... going to show you--

BUGG

--not talking about you. We just playing. You gone crazy, man. You done lost your senses.

TOOTHLESS

Sure look like he done lost it.



Close, Bugg's bloody face.

TOOTHLESS

(to Bugg)

Shoot man, he done messed you up.

BUBBA

Oh man, look at that. Get him out of here.

Bugg, Toothless and Bubba are tending to Bugg's face. The rest of the crew is restraining Willie--still in a rage trying to get Bugg.

WILLIE JR

Get off me, get off me!

(more)

WILLIE JR (Cont'd)

You think you can just talk about me in my face. Y'all trying to disrespect me in my face. You're going to pay. All of y'all are going to pay.

TOOTHLESS

Come on now Willie, come on now. Cool off man before something really happens. Nobody's disrespecting you here.

BUBBA

Take it easy Willie, it's alright.

The crew members let go of Willie Jr's arms.

Willie Jr's face contorts--he lunges violently at Bugg.

WILLIE JR

You son of a bitch. I'll kill you.

BUGG

Oh shit...get him off! Get him off! You need to be locked up, you crazy!

WILLIE JR

I'm going to kill you, man. I'm not going to forget what you did. I'm going to show you something now....

The crew pulls Willie Jr forcefully away from Bugg--wrestles him to the ground. Bugg scrambles to his feet--backing away.

BUGG

Get him the hell out of here. He's crazy, man. He's just out there man. You're gonna go to jail for this!

TOOTHLESS

Yeah, get him out of here. Get the hell out of here.

BUBBA

Willie, go! Get out of here quick. Get out of here. Shit!

WILLIE JR

You all trying to play with me. I'm not going to let any of you fools play with me. Y'all talking about me, I know you want my woman. You're not going to get away with it... I'm not going to forget.

CUT TO:

66 EXT. WILLIE JR'S HOUSE, DAY 66

All is QUIET.

67 INT. DEN, DAY 67

Willie Jr sits in the living room in the dark, staring into space with a glazed expression on his face. He is fondling something in his hand.

68 EXT. WILLIE JR'S HOUSE, DAY 68

Jackie with children PULL into the driveway. Jackie, Nicholas, Marcus and August get out of the car. Jackie hands

them each a bag of groceries and takes two herself. They walk into the house and Jackie contends with her two bags.

69 INT. DEN, DAY

69

Willie Jr's BOOTS, CAMERA MOVING UP his pant leg reveals his gun in his lap. Willie Jr is ABSENTMINDEDLY SPINNING the cylinder. He stops when they enter.

70 INT. KITCHEN, DAY

70

Jackie leads the children into the kitchen and they set the bags down and begin to unload them. They are oblivious to Willie Jr's presence--therefore more rambunctious.

JACKIE

Get me those peas there Marcus,  
Mane, uh, Nicholas. Lord, y'all  
sure eat up some food.

NICHOLAS

Here, mama. You want me to put  
these to soak?

MARCUS

And soak your head, too?

Marcus and August LAUGH.

71 INT. DEN, DAY

71

Willie Jr continues to play with the gun, gazing into space. He appears inattentive to Jackie and the children--showing no reaction to their conversation.

JACKIE

Come on now boys. Give me a hand  
here. Marcus put those cans up over  
there.

NICHOLAS

What about the peas, mama? We  
having these tomorrow?

JACKIE

Yea, baby. That's right. You sure  
do help me out here. You two could  
learn something from him.

Willie Jr stands up and walks with premeditation to the kitchen doorway--leans against the doorjamb, framing the kitchen. Willie Jr holds the gun behind his back. Jackie and the children continue to put up groceries.

MARCUS

Yea, that's right August. You got to be like Nicholas.

AUGUST

(sullenly)

Right.

MARCUS

Soak those beans, soak those beans, soak those beans till they're fat and clean.

Marcus and August laugh. Jackie turns to put a can of beans in the cabinet--jumps when she sees Willie Jr in the doorway observing them.

JACKIE

Well hey Willie. I didn't know you were home!

Nicholas takes a half step backwards--August moves behind Marcus. All three--suddenly quiet--averting their eyes.

JACKIE

Willie would you put this on the top shelf for me please?

Willie Jr hesitates--oppressively gazing at each child--then at Jackie. He slowly raises his hands from behind the door frame and....they are empty. He reaches for the can and puts it on the shelf.

The doorbell RINGS. August takes off for the front door with Marcus on his heels. They race to the door.

JACKIE

Stop running in the house!

THE CHILDREN

It's the police!

DISSOLVE TO:

TITLE: SIX MONTHS LATER

72 INT. CHURCH BASEMENT, DAY

72

August's smiling face being lowered from Rev. Moyd's outstretched arms onto the floor amid a bunch of SCREAMING happy children--YELLING for them to be the next one lifted. Tables are laden with an assortment of food. There are many older women and children but few men in attendance after an afternoon program.

BIG KID

Me next! Me! Me! Me!

REV MOYD

No. You're too big now. That's enough. That's enough! Lord! You all got me tired out now.

Two old women are nearby gossiping.

1ST WOMAN

Reverend Moyd sure is a politician.

2nd WOMAN

And he's a fine catch too.

Marcus chases August past Jackie and Mable.

JACKIE

You all stop running in church now!

MABLE

You boys mind your mama. I remember when Willie Jr used to run through here like that. (pause) You know, I sure miss my boy.

JACKIE

I know what you're saying mama... but we've known nothing but peace since they locked him up. Seems like things are getting better now that he's gone. I hate to say it, mama, but it's just so much quieter. The children are happier.

August's asthma's cleared up.  
Nicholas ain't as nervous anymore.  
And I can sleep...thank God I can  
finally sleep.

MABLE

(shocked)

You can sleep?! What about Willie  
Jr in prison? What you talking  
about, things are better. How can  
things be better with your man  
away?

JACKIE

Mama...you just don't know. The  
children are scared of him. He  
just...he just acts like...well  
sometimes he would walk around with  
his gun...like somebody else. It's  
like he didn't even know we're  
there sometimes. You know mama,  
they didn't put him in there for  
nothing.

MABLE

Oh you're unbelievable. There ain't  
nothing wrong with Willie. He's  
just tired sometimes...that's all.

JACKIE

Tired? You're not there Mable.  
You don't know what its like. I get  
scared when he's around. I'm scared  
now. He's going to be home soon  
and I don't know how he's going to  
be...but mama I do miss Willie..I  
really do.

MABLE

I miss my baby too. Six months is a  
long time.

JACKIE

(under her breath)

Not long enough.

MABLE

What did you say?

JACKIE  
Uh...it's long enough.

CUT TO:

73 INT. WILLIE JR'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM, DAY

73

Jackie lies on her back playing with August. Marcus is sitting and watching. There is a KNOCK on the door. Marcus gets up to answer the door.

Willie Jr wears a cap with moveable ear flaps attached to a string. Willie pulls the string causing the ear flaps to move up and down. He smiles at Marcus, pulls the string again.

WILLIE JR  
Hello there young fellow. I just  
flew in from the Capitol and my  
ears sure are tired.

Jackie sits up and LISTENS.

WILLIE JR  
I'm about out of gas too. Can I  
come inside and gas up.

MARCUS  
(haltingly)  
Yeah...daddy, come on in.

Marcus steps back to allow his daddy entrance.

Willie Jr walks into the living room--Marcus follows--Jackie gets up. Willie starts flapping his ears again while looking at August who is standing in front of Jackie. Nicholas comes into the room and posts behind Jackie.

WILLIE JR  
Look what they done to my ears!  
Boy, have you ever seen anything  
like this before?

August shakes his head.

WILLIE JR

You have to nail down my feet cause  
when the wind comes up I lift right  
off the ground!

Everyone is paralyzed, no one says anything--but are inwardly  
humored.

JACKIE

Willie, why didn't you call?

Willie Jr surprised with her tone of voice and question. He  
grabs August.

WILLIE JR

Come here.

Willie sits with August on his lap.

WILLIE JR

I was just in such a hurry to get  
home and see my family, that I  
didn't want to waste no time  
dialing numbers.

JACKIE

Come on and have a cup of coffee  
with me in the kitchen.

Jackie walks into the kitchen--Willie Jr follows.

74 INT. KITCHEN, DAY

74

Jackie, cagey--keeps her distance from Willie Jr.

JACKIE

Listen Willie, I'm glad to see  
you're back and okay.

WILLIE JR

Yeah me too! How's papa doing? Any  
better?

JACKIE

No, he's taken a turn for the  
worse. You know it's been rough  
here while you've been gone, but  
we're hanging in there.

WILLIE JR



Oh Jackie...I'm sorry to put you through all this, but some things just have to be. I couldn't help things going like they did. It's like something I can't control. Baby, I love you and sometimes people just get on my nerves... they get on my nerves real bad, I feel like I'm going to explode.

Willie Jr sighs deeply--shakes his head. He drags his hand across his face--sighs again remorsefully.

WILLIE JR

I just couldn't control it. That time it did explode... and I paid for it!

JACKIE

Yeah, but you made us pay for it too!

WILLIE JR

Baby I'm sorry...I just want to make it up to you.

JACKIE

(indignantly)

Make it up to me? How you think you going to make it up to me? How you going to make up six months time, all the bills, taking care of these kids...?

But, Willie it's good to see you... we just don't want any of that old Willie Jr here. You going to have to learn to control your temper.

WILLIE JR

Oh baby, oh I don't know..I don't know how you put up with me. It's just that...well, I don't really know, but sometimes things just don't go right. I mean, it's not like I don't try to make everything work out right, but sometimes things just happen...seem like I can't do anything about it. People want to make it hard for me, like

those guys at work. I know they talk about me and about you, too. I just can't let it get to me, but I don't know how to make it stop. It just rolls by itself Jackie. I know that I have had a problem with my temper baby, and I'm trying to make it right. I'm going to make it all right for you, for the children. It's just going to take some time, take a little time. That's all. You got to understand me. You just got to know what I mean.

Willie Jr walks over to Jackie--softly embraces her.

WILLIE JR

I can't go through it again. Man, can I tell you some stories.

JACKIE

Please, no stories.

Willie Jr backs away.

JACKIE

Willie, you just got to pull yourself together.... Anyway, what are you doing with that silly hat on your head?

WILLIE JR

Because I knew it would make you smile. Your smile brings sunshine to my life.

Jackie walks over to Willie--hugs him. She raises her head to him so he can kiss her.

JACKIE

Oh Willie, I missed you.

They kiss passionately and lustfully. Nicholas, Marcus and August stand there watching.

WILLIE JR

Let's go in the back.

JACKIE  
What about the children?

WILLIE JR  
Send them outside.

JACKIE  
Nicholas, Marcus, you boys go  
outside and play.

AUGUST  
But I don't want to go outside.

JACKIE  
Just do what I tell you.

AUGUST  
Yes, ma'am.

The children go outside happily--exchanging knowing looks.

75 INT. BEDROOM, DAY

75

Jackie holds Willie's hand as she leads him to the bedroom.  
They make TENDER LOVE.

DISSOLVE TO:

76 EXT. WILLIE JR'S HOUSE, DAY

76

Singing birds saturate the crisp morning air.

77 INT. KITCHEN, DAY

77

Jackie humming contently as she cooks Willie Jr's breakfast.

Willie comes into the room as he pulls his suspenders up. He  
walks up behind Jackie--slowly slides his hands around her  
waist as he embraces her. Willie whispers in her ear.

WILLIE JR  
You're still cooking baby!

Willie chuckles at his own humor.

JACKIE

I figured you'd need something to restore your energy.

WILLIE JR

Don't you be worrying about that, I haven't even switched over to my reserves.

The children peer into the kitchen from the doorway--whispering and giggling. They enter the kitchen somewhat hesitantly.

WILLIE JR

Good morning children. How y'all doing?

NICHOLAS

Hey daddy, hey mama.

MARCUS AND AUGUST

Good morning.

JACKIE

Y'all just sit on down. Are your hands clean? Wash them real good now.

MARCUS

Mine already clean.

AUGUST

Are not!

MARCUS

Are to! They're cleaner than your old dog paws are.

NICHOLAS

You just lick them off like Jazz does. You just an old dog.

MARCUS

Yea, an old dog that's going to bite your head off!

JACKIE

Boys....

NICHOLAS

Yes mama. Come on Marcus, knock it off. I want to eat.

JACKIE

Well sit down, cause I'm fixing some eggs, bacon and grits...and I got some fatback, too.

EVERYONE

Alriiiiiight!

WILLIE JR

You kids act like you never had good eatin' before. You know your mama takes good care of you...and of me too!

Willie laughs and rolls his eyes up.

JACKIE

Oh hush, Willie.

Jackie snaps the dishtowel at Willie.

WILLIE JR

Come on now, Jackie. You come set yourself down here. I'll get those dishes to the table.

Willie stands--holding his chair out for Jackie--helps her into it.

JACKIE

Oh, Willie, that's alright. I'm fine....well, thank you! (under her breath) You should go away and come home more often.

WILLIE JR

No, I'm happy here. Let me bless the table.

They all bow their heads, Willie standing.

WILLIE JR

Dear Lord, thank you for letting me be back home with my wife and family, thank you for keeping them free from harm while I was gone. Let everything we do from here on out give glory to your name. Bless this food, amen! Over the lips, pass the tongue, look out tummy here it comes! Let's eat.

They all LAUGH and begin to eat. Willie leaves the room and returns with a chair.

WILLIE JR

Slide on over, Jackie. I know you got plenty of room for me!

Willie laughs. The telephone RINGS, Willie answers it.

WILLIE JR

Hello?

VOICE OVER-MABLE

Willie? Is that you? How are you doing?

WILLIE JR

Yeah mama, it's me. I'm just fine.

MABLE

When did you get in?

WILLIE JR

Just got in last night. I was meaning to call you today.

MABLE

Well I'm glad you're home, Willie, but I got some bad news. I wish you'd have come over to see your daddy last night.

WILLIE JR

I just got here, mama. What's wrong?

Willie's face becomes very serious. The children and Jackie see this and fall silent.

MABLE

Your daddy is dead, Willie. He passed last night.

WILLIE JR

What? What happened? Oh, no...Papa is gone.

JACKIE

What? Papa is gone?

Willie nods at Jackie. The children push their plates away, except August.

NICHOLAS

Papa is gone? He's gone?

MARCUS

He's gone?

AUGUST

Where did he go?

NICHOLAS

Papa is dead, he's gone to heaven.

AUGUST

Why'd he do that?

NICHOLAS

Hush, August. Be quiet.

MABLE

Seem like he just run out of steam, the life just left him Willie. He'll be happier now.

JACKIE

Ask her what we can do for her.

WILLIE JR

What can we do for you? Do you need anything?

MABLE

I just need my family near me,  
that's all. I just need you all  
with me.

WIPE TO:

78 INT. CHURCH, DAY

78

Choir clapping their hands and singing mournfully and rhythmically, "Swing Low Sweet Chariot". The Reverend Moyd is in the pulpit. Willie Sr's coffin lies in front of the kneeling rails.

Willie Jr, Jackie and Mable in all dressed in black, sit in the front row. The song ends and Rev Moyd steps forward boldly to the podium.

REV MOYD

Dearly beloved we are here today to pay our respects and say good bye to our dear friend Willie. Man that is born of a woman has but a short time to live and is full of misery. O'Lord deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death. Deliver us from those evil thoughts and spirits that enter our minds and soul and seek to turn us from you, o'Lord.

Various angles on Jackie, Willie Jr, Mable and the children.

Parishioners intermittently say, "Amen".

REV. MOYD

Brother Willie was a hard working man, a family man, save him Lord. In this life we are surrounded by sin and temptation of sin. Lord forgive us the times we let the evil spirits have the best of us. Forgive us the times when we do not recognize the evil spirit when it comes over us. Forgive us the times when we do things in the evil spirit that you o'Lord would not have us do! Brother Willie was a



hard man. He may have been harder than he needed to be.

Various angles on women, children and men.

Parishioners intermittently say, "Amen".

REV. MOYD

Lord he gave himself to you, but the turning away from sin must be constant because if you quit turning away from sin it will catch up to you. Repent means to turn away from sin. Let all of us continue to repent and turn away. Now, Brother Willie Sr was a regular church going man as is Sister Mable.

79 EXT. GRAVESITE, DAY

79

Mable sits weeping at the gravesite.

REV MOYD

Willie was a good man. He overcame a lot of trouble in his life including demon alcohol.

Willie Jr weeping at the gravesite.

REV MOYD

And Willie's suffering was caused by the spirit of alcoholism. The Lord like only He can do...gave him a way out.

ONLOOKERS

Amen!

Jackie weeping at the gravesite.

REV MOYD

We all can overcome these demons that tempt us and try to lead us down the wrong paths in life. Only goodness and mercy keep us on the straight and narrow.

Solemn ONLOOKERS.

ONLOOKERS

Amen.

REV MOYD

Willie overcame that demon in his life...

Angle on Willie Jr.

REV MOYD

...and he expected all those around him to overcome the evil spiritual forces affecting them. Maybe that's why Willie was so hard on the people he loved.

Angle on Jackie.

REV MOYD

In love we sometimes hurt those we love the most by expecting from them more than they can give.

Angle on Jones family.

REV MOYD

But we understand that the love of Christ can help us bear all our burdens. Our spirits can bear a great deal, cause we can do all things in the name of Jesus. Willie tried to live in the spirit of Christ and was a good Church-going man.

Close-coffin.

ONLOOKERS

Amen.

REV MOYD

Lord, we commend this body to you at this time. May his soul be preserved in your Holy Presence. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, bless

o'Lord this precious child into  
Your care as we commend his body to  
the ground.

DISSOLVE TO:

TITLE: THREE YEARS LATER

80 EXT. FRONT OF WILLIE JR'S HOUSE, SUMMER DAY

80

Jackie drives into the driveway with a new Buick LaSabre. The children cease their playing in the yard to gather around the car with a million questions.

MARCUS

Mama, what are you driving that car  
for?

AUGUST

Whose car is that?

NICHOLAS

Man, look at this big car. It sure  
put daddy's car to shame.

JACKIE

I told you I was going to buy a  
car. You like it?

MARCUS AND AUGUST

Yeah!

MARCUS

Can we go for a spin?

NICHOLAS

Does daddy know? Did you buy that?

Jackie looks defiantly at Nicholas.

Willie Jr, curious about the commotion outside comes him out of the house. His curiosity changes to controlled anger as he assesses the situation. He approaches the car.

Jackie sees Willie come out of the house. She walks along the length of the car caressing it as she walks. She has purchased the car without his consent.

JACKIE

Hey Willie, how you like my new car? Don't you think this will get me around town?

Willie Jr a pensive look on his face. He just stands there without replying. Marcus comes over to Willie and tugs at his sleeve.

MARCUS

This car'll turn a lot of heads, won't it daddy?

Willie Jr quickly turns--backhands Marcus, sending him sprawling. He turns on his heel and walks away. The children look at Jackie bewildered.

Jackie--puzzled. She mumbles--

JACKIE

What's got into him? It's my money anyway... I'll spend it like I want to.

She runs over to comfort Marcus.

CUT TO:

81 INT. DEN, LATE AFTERNOON, DAY

81

The Saturday matinee is on TV, an old western movie. Willie as usual is parked in front of the tube. Jackie--in the middle of getting dressed for work, pokes her head in the doorway.

JACKIE

I start second shift tonight, Willie. It'll be a big help if you'd feed the children; help them get to bed on time.

WILLIE JR

Uh huh. (without looking up)

Jackie looks at him somewhat disgusted--then leaves to go to work.

82 EXT. UNDERNEATH THE STREET LIGHT, NIGHT

82

The children are throwing rocks at the bats which are flying near the street light next to the house. The bats follow the rocks as they leave the childrens' hands. The children run inside the house WHOOPING and HOLLERING.

83 INT. DEN, NIGHT

83

Willie Jr is watching television.

The children enter the house making enough NOISE to drown out the sound of the Hee Haw television show. this upsets Willie Jr. They come in heading for the den.

AUGUST

There's a bat in your hair, a bat  
in your hair...it's going to bite  
you.

He picks at Nicholas's back as high up as he can reach.

MARCUS

It's a vampire bat, it's a vampire  
bat. It's going to suck your blood.

He picks at Nicholas's neck. Nicholas LAUGHS as the two younger brothers tease him.

NICHOLAS

I eat vampire bats for breakfast.  
They can't hurt me.

MARCUS

Yeah, well go back outside then.

He LAUGHS. August joins in the LAUGHTER.

WILLIE JR

I'll hurt you boys if you don't  
shut that noise up!

He sets his beer bottle in the window sill.

The children who are standing in the room adjacent to the den instantly exchange glances--and shut up. They nudge one another.

AUGUST  
Ask him. (to Nicholas)

MARCUS  
C'mon...ask him. (to Nicholas)

Nicholas walks up to the doorway--respectfully waits for a commercial to come on.

NICHOLAS  
Daddy.

WILLIE JR  
Yeah. What do you want?

NICHOLAS  
Uh, can we watch TV? --Please?

Willie Jr without looking away from the television--

WILLIE JR  
Did you do your homework for tomorrow?

ALL THREE CHILDREN  
Yes sir! (nodding their heads)

WILLIE JR  
You can come in if you be quiet.

The children file in and sit down on the floor. The children sit silently. Willie Jr hears VOICES which he thinks are the children talking.

VOICE AS AUGUST  
If mama was here she'd let us cut up as much as we wanted.

Willie Jr stares hard at August. After a moment he turns back to the television.

VOICE AS AUGUST  
Did you see how dressed up mama was when she went to work?

VOICE AS MARCUS

She said she was going somewhere  
after work.

VOICE AS NICHOLAS  
Where is she going?

VOICE AS MARCUS  
She is going for a drive.

VOICE AS AUGUST  
That bitch is whoring around again.

The children laugh at a punchline to a joke on TV.

WILLIE JR  
(to August)  
What the hell did you say?

AUGUST  
What?! Me! I didn't say anything.

WILLIE JR  
You heard me boy!

August, Marcus and Nicholas--looks of disbelief and terror.

WILLIE JR  
How dare you talk about your mama  
like that!

Willie Jr reaches out and BACKHANDS August, knocking him to  
the floor.

WILLIE JR  
Nicholas and Marcus, you two are  
just as guilty as he is!

NICHOLAS  
--But --we didn't say anything!

MARCUS  
But, we didn't say nothing!

Nicholas and Marcus scramble to their feet and run through  
the doorway to avoid being hit.

Willie Jr hovers over August.

Willie violently pulls off his belt. His arm cocked--he swings the belt towards August, buckle first.

Close, August--cowers and shields his head with his hands. Willie Jr mumbles and curses at August as he beats him.

August scrambles around to get on his feet--runs down the hallway. Willie Jr chases him, striking him with the buckle of the belt. He runs into the bathroom and cringes under the sink. Willie Jr strikes him twice more and turns away.

WILLIE JR

That'll teach you. Maybe you'll think about that the next time you talk about your mama.

CUT TO:

84 INT. BOYS BEDROOM, MORNING, DAY

84

The boys are asleep. The sun can be seen rising through the window. August is lying on his stomach sleeping peacefully.

As Marcus rolls over he reveals the scourge of his beating. Blood is caked on his back.

Jackie comes into the boys room to get them up.

JACKIE

C'mon boys it's time to get ready for school.

She spots the blood on the sheets and walks over to the bed.

JACKIE

What's this on your bed?

Close, bloody sheet. She picks up the bloody sheet.

JACKIE

Is this blood? What happened to you?

August starts WHEEZING. The children trade glances.

MARCUS

Mama we been...

JACKIE



How'd this happen? Who did this?

MARCUS

When you were at work...

He sits on the edge of the bed. Jackie looks over to Nicholas. August starts wheezing louder.

JACKIE

Have you been fighting again? Who's been fighting this child?

The children gather around Jackie. The children look at one another--emotionally distraught.

NICHOLAS

Mama....

JACKIE

Who you been fighting with?

August starts to cry.

NICHOLAS

We ain't been fighting!

JACKIE

Well what happened then?

MARCUS

It was daddy...daddy beat him up.

Jackie--stunned.

NICHOLAS

We been trying to tell you! Daddy said we were talking bad about you,...but nobody had said nothing!

MARCUS

Yeah and he said Salty said something bad too...the other day.

AUGUST

But he didn't!

JACKIE

Wait a minute, wait a minute. Slow down! What did you say?

NICHOLAS

We were watching TV and daddy starting talking to us like we said something bad.

AUGUST

But we didn't say nothing.

MARCUS

Then daddy came after us with the belt.

JACKIE

These cuts came from the belt? You mean he beat you for nothing?

THE CHILDREN

Uh-huh. (looking at one another)

JACKIE

(quietly)

Why would he do that?

NICHOLAS

Mama, he's been acting weird for a long time.

MARCUS

Yeah, like that time he cursed out Mrs. Hargrove for talking to the chinchillas!

NICHOLAS

Mama you should have seen the time he was talking to the bushes!

AUGUST

He hit me one time cause he said I was hiding his socks! (sobs)

JACKIE

Are you boys making this up? I can't believe it!

NICHOLAS

Mama you weren't here, you were at work!

JACKIE  
I haven't seen any of this stuff.

AUGUST  
(between sobs)  
Mama its true, we're not lying.

He nestles in her arms.

MARCUS  
Mama you got to believe us.

The tears well up in his eyes. He fights the tears.

AUGUST  
Help us mama!

He starts to cry outrightly. Jackie starts to cry. Marcus starts to cry. He piles into her arms also. Nicholas starts to cry and moves close to them all.

Jackie comes out of the room and shuts the door. She leans on the doorway, emotionally exhausted. Willie Jr comes out of the his bedroom and walks down the hall towards Jackie.

JACKIE  
What happened to the children Willie?

Giving her a vacant look--he walks on by.

JACKIE  
What happened to my babies?

She starts crying.

CUT TO:

85 INT. KITCHEN, EARLY AFTERNOON

85

It's Saturday afternoon and Mane and some of his friends, BOBBY and MICKY are playing cards at the kitchen table. The last cards are being dealt in a game of Gin Rummy.

RUSTY

Come on man, don't you have some coffee for your running buddies?

BOBBY

Coffee will do but don't you have something stronger?

MICKY

Yeah, I bet there's liquor in here.

He stands up to go into the cabinet.

MANE

Cool out man! My old man is in the other room. Let's play cards!

RUSTY

I sure wish I was with you guys last night. What time did you all get in?

MANE

Four o'clock.

RUSTY

Boy grandma would kill me if I stayed out that late.

MANE

Yeah, daddy almost killed me once... come on Micky, let's play.

MICKY

I'm going to pluck me a good one!

He draws from the deck. He discards a card.

BOBBY

You mean like the dog you were talking to last night.. She don't need no gold, all she need is a collar.

They all LAUGH. Bobby picks a card. He has a three card spread and he throws it down.

BOBBY

Take that dirty dogs.

MANE

Man you always so lucky.

They shuffle the cards and deal another hand. Mane picks a card. He looks at the card he just picked and discards it.

RUSTY

Here comes the lucky pluck!

He says loud enough for Willie Jr to hear in the other room. The play moves to the next person.

MICKY

Man you don't know what luck is.  
And you sure can't pluck!

BOBBY

I got so much luck you ain't left  
with squat.

RUSTY

No man, you got plenty of squat.

MANE

Nah man, he got plenty of squat.

BOBBY

I'm going to squat you in between  
your eyes.

MICKY

You better look twice before you  
sit in your car, or other wise you  
going to be sitting in squat.

Willie Jr walks into the room and puts a pot of water on the stove to heat. He turns and walks out.

BOBBY

Hey Mr. Jones, I hope you got some  
money for your son cause I'm going  
to take all of it.

Willie Jr does not respond.

BOBBY

What's wrong with him?

MANE

Who knows? He's just a big pussy.  
(low enough for Willie not to hear)

BOBBY

Right. Man, I hear he been acting  
all crazy.

MANE

Not as crazy as you. Man you could  
of got us all locked up last night.

MICKY

Yeah, but I didn't...you just a  
pussy.

MANE

Pussy hell, I don't want to get my  
butt greased.

BOBBY

If you a man you ain't going to  
worry 'bout butt greasing. I ain't  
never going to get caught, no how.

RUSTY

What did you do last night anyhow?

They look around at each other.

MICKY

None of your business!

Close-two quart saucepan of boiling water. Rusty notices the  
water boiling.

RUSTY

Uncle Willie, your water is ready!

Willie Jr walks into the kitchen, goes over to the stove and  
turns the burner off. SMOOTHLY, CALMLY with COMPLETE

NONCHALANCE picks up the saucepan--moves towards Mane and SLOWLY POURS the boiling water down Mane's back.

Close-mane's face, wide eyed, open mouthed terror. Mane SCREAMS in pain, bolts up, tears at his shirt--turns in circles as he tries to reach his back.

WILLIE JR  
(emotionlessly)  
Excuse me, I didn't mean to do it.  
I'm sorry.

Bobby and Micky run out the back door as Nicholas, Marcus and August run in. Willie Jr exits the room.

WILLIE JR  
(matter of factly)  
That'll teach you to talk about  
your mama like that.

Rusty is trying to get Mane's shirt off.

RUSTY  
Stand still, stand still so I can  
help you.

MANE  
Get it off, get it off!

CUT TO:

86 EXT. WILLIE JR'S HOUSE, DAY

86

Willie Jr trimming the hedges with hedge clippers as Jackie pulls into the driveway in her car. Jackie gets out of the car and walks towards the house.

JACKIE  
How you doing Willie Jr?

Willie Jr does not respond. She walks into the house. His behavior is not so unusual now.

87 INT. KITCHEN, DAY

87

Jackie walks into the kitchen and abruptly stops. There are dirty dishes piled up in the sink and food on the stove. Glasses and cards are strewn about the table.

Sensing that something is wrong--Jackie wheels around and walks out of the kitchen concerned. As she rounds the corner to the living room, the SOUND of the hedge clippers is MAGNIFIED in her ears. She slowly raises her head and peers out the window at Willie Jr.

88 EXT. WILLIE JR TRIMMING HEDGES, DAY

88

Willie Jr continues to methodically clip the hedges.

Jackie is in the house in the foreground and Willie Jr is outside clipping the hedges.

JACKIE

Oh my God... the children!

Jackie rushes towards the children's bedrooms.

JACKIE

August... Marcus...  
Nicholas...where are you?!

Jackie bursts through the bedroom door.

The children are sitting on the bed. Mane is sitting between Nicholas and Marcus. August jumps up and runs to Jackie. August bursts into tears.

JACKIE

It's alright baby, mama's here.  
It's alright. Just calm down now.  
Shhh, It's alright...

NICHOLAS

Mama, come look at Mane's back...

MARCUS

Mane's back...mama, come look at  
Mane's back.

She walks over to Mane.

JACKIE



Mane, oh sweet Jesus, what happened?

She holds mane by the arm to assist him off of the bed, then turns him around by the elbow to see his back. As she peels his T-shirt up, he MOANS in pain as his skin sticks to the surface of the T-shirt. Close, Mane's back.

AUGUST

Daddy did it!

89 EXT. HOUSE, DAY

89

Willie Jr still out front cutting the hedges. Jackie ushers the children out. She keeps herself between the children and Willie Jr.

Jackie and the children SCRAMBLE into her car. Mane sits in the back seat, being careful not to brush the seat with his back. Jackie backs out of the driveway in a HURRY, without a word to Willie Jr.

Willie Jr BLEAKLY turns around when he hears the car pull out of the driveway. Jackie JERKS the car into forward gear--CHIRPPING the tires as she speeds off.

Mane shoots Willie Jr the bird through the back window. Willie Jr sees Mane and stares.

Mane observes Willie Jr looking at him and ducks down in the seat. The car speeds off.

CUT TO:

90 INT. MABLE'S LIVING ROOM, DAY

90

Mable is working on a crossword puzzle and listening to the television.

Jackie and the children BURST through the front door. They head over to Mable with everyone trying to talk at once. August--CRYING.

MARCUS

Grandma, grandma he's been hurt!

NICHOLAS

And he didn't do anything!

MARCUS

It wasn't his fault either!

Mable directs her attention towards the CLAMOR.

MABLE

(standing)

What in the world...Jackie...

JACKIE

Y'all be quiet! --Mama, we got a problem.

MABLE

What you mean? What's wrong with you?

JACKIE

It's Willie Jr.

MABLE

Oh my God! He's been hurt!

JACKIE

No Mama, Willie Jr's not hurt, but he's not alright either!

MABLE

Slow down girl and sit down here...tell me what you trying to say!

Jackie--not sitting.

JACKIE

There is something wrong...there is something wrong with Willie Jr. The man is gone crazy.

MABLE

What you mean crazy?

Mable--listens intently.

JACKIE

I'm on the way to the hospital right now and I just had to come by here and show you what he's done.

Jackie turns Mane around so Mable sees the blood on his shirt.

JACKIE

Look at your baby!

MABLE

You saying my child did this?! What have you done child to deserve this? Was it an accident?

MANE

No Grandma, he poured hot water on me.

MABLE

You sure you didn't bump him while he had it?

MANE

No ma'am. I was just sitting there playing cards and he poured it on me. (sobbing)

JACKIE

I'll tell you what else... They say he beats them for no reason.

Nicholas showing Mable an old wound on his arm.

NICHOLAS

Look what he did?

JACKIE

Remember that time my mouth was puffed out...and my cheek was bruised. He had pistol whipped me.

MABLE

You must have done something. He wouldn't just--

MANE

--I didn't do nothing. There's something wrong with him.

AUGUST

He said I said something about mama too!

MARCUS

But he didn't!

MABLE

You must have done something!

JACKIE

Mama, nothing this boy has ever done can deserve this! The man done lost his mind!

Mable--perplexed. Jackie spins Mane around and pulls up his shirt.

JACKIE

Look at this!

Close, Mane's back. Mane MOANS and Mable gasps--horrified.

CUT TO:

91 INT. DARKENED DOCTOR'S OFFICE, DAY

91

Dr. Brown, the family physician stands by the venetian blinds in the darkened room. He snaps the blinds open. Light rushes in from outside silhouetting him. He walks back over to the desk.

Jackie sits in a chair in front of the desk. Her movements reflect her nervousness.

DOCTOR

For treating schizophrenia, there are a number of options available...

JACKIE

...like what?

DOCTOR

Some of them have proven more successful than others. Of course that depends on the patient...

JACKIE

What are my options?

DOCTOR

And some patients are more responsive to some treatments than another.

JACKIE

Doctor Brown, will you please answer my questions, what are my choices? What can I do?

DOCTOR

Well, Jackie that's hard to say...

JACKIE

Tell me, I need to do something!

DOCTOR

Okay Jackie. First I suggest we try intensive vitamin therapy. Vitamins will help...

JACKIE

No.

DOCTOR

Well there's some drugs which may help. Some new psycho-active drugs which might help.

JACKIE

No, that won't do either.

DOCTOR

Schizophrenics are badly affected by criticism and a negative environment. Anything you can do to make his home life happier will help.

JACKIE

You don't seem to understand. It's beyond that. You're the one who treated my face. And you saw what Willie Jr did to Mane's back.

DOCTOR

--Maybe some family counseling.

JACKIE

No, I'm afraid. I'm afraid of him. And I'm afraid for the children. We have to get him out of the house.

DOCTOR

Have you considered leaving? Or moving in with one of your relatives?

JACKIE

You know I can't do that. Where am I going to go with four children? Willie Jr's got to go.

DOCTOR

Well Jackie--

JACKIE

--How can we get him out? His black ass got to hit the road.

DOCTOR

There is one thing to do...

JACKIE

What? Tell me.

DOCTOR

He can be committed for psychiatric evaluation and treatment.

JACKIE

Good. How?

DOCTOR

It requires a bit of paper work and a preliminary evaluation by me and then by the Milledgeville staff. It

would require you and another member of your family, like his mother, to certify that he is unstable and dangerous.

JACKIE

Dangerous?

DOCTOR

...that you fear for your safety. Then he can be sent to Milledgeville for treatment.

JACKIE

How long does it take?

DOCTOR

It's something you need to really think about, Jackie. Committing him is a serious step...

JACKIE

...I got to do it. I can't have them children getting beat up by him. I got to have some peace.

DOCTOR

If you're sure...

JACKIE

I am. You know he ain't himself.

DOCTOR

Well, alright. How about his mother?

JACKIE

That's not a problem. When can you do it?

DOCTOR

We can start the paperwork now.

CUT TO:

Willy Jr. is one of only four men in the adult choir. The other eight members of the choir are elderly women. The choir is at the end of a song before the minister gives the "Sick and Shut In" report and the "Announcements". Jackie tries to share with Mable the reality of having Willie Jr committed.

MABLE

(whispering)

Jackie, I'll think about it.

JACKIE

(in hushed tones)

I'm not doing it just for myself, I'm thinking about your grandchildren too.

MABLE

Well I just don't know if that's the best thing.

JACKIE

I'm telling you mama, it's the only thing to do. He just ain't right. He just ain't himself no more.

MABLE

Well there must be something else we can do.

The choir completes the song and the choir director motions them to be seated.

PREACHER

Mrs. Wimbush is in the hospital with kidney problems. Let's all keep her in our prayers. The sisters of Zion will be meeting at 4:00 this afternoon in the church hall. Don't forget the Deaconess Board is having a gleaners campaign for the new addition to the church. Bible study meets every Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to Sunday school every Sunday at 9:00 before the service.



The minister sits down and immediately Willie Jr stands--  
LAMBASTING Rev. Moyd.

WILLIE JR

To hell with you, Reverend Moyd!  
You ain't got no sense nohow. My  
mama ain't been late a day in her  
life. You ain't got no right to  
talk about her anyhow, and my wife  
either. Who you think you are  
talking about her like that? You  
just a lying devil!

The congregation--AWESTRUCK, DEAD SILENCE--then the rising  
hum of people talking.

The minister twists his head to look back at Willie Jr--  
standing quickly the minister motions to the choir director  
for another song. He stands and waves his hands in the air.

PREACHER

--Lord, bind all the spirits in  
your house. We rebuke you Satan in  
this place in the name of Jesus  
Christ. We bind you in hell  
forever.

Mable, a tear runs down her face as she realizes that Jackie  
and the children have been telling her the truth about Willie  
Jr. Mable extends her hand to Jackie.

Jackie and Mable exchange glances. Jackie looks relieved;  
Mable--heartbroken.

The children, supreme satisfaction beams from their faces--  
finally someone, some adult believes them--in fact, the  
entire church does now.

CUT TO:

93 INT. MABLE'S DINING ROOM, AFTER CHURCH SERVICE, DAY

93

The family is just finishing dinner. Mable and Jackie clear  
the dishes and carry them into the kitchen.

Willie Jr steps outside for a smoke.

JACKIE

Mama, we need to talk.

MABLE

Yeah, baby.

JACKIE

We got to do something, you know. He's just getting worse every day. Seems like he just don't have sense any more.

MABLE

Don't you think he's just tired, Jackie, is all? He just needs some rest.

JACKIE

No, mama. That ain't it. Something's wrong with him. Just ain't safe to have him round the house no more. The children are scared because he ain't right. And I tell you, I never know what he's going to do...it's no way to live. He ain't even like a husband anymore...and I ain't feeling too good with him near by.

MABLE

What you saying, girl? What you trying to say?

JACKIE

Mama, I went to see Dr. Brown. He says Willie Jr need some help. There ain't nothing we can do for him at home. We got to get him some help...

MABLE

Some help? Did Dr. Brown say that? Well when did he ever see Willie Jr? He ain't seen my baby for years.

JACKIE

He don't need to see him. He knows him. He says there's something wrong. He say we got to get him out of the house.

MABLE

Out of the house? What you mean? Where's he going to go?

JACKIE

What I'm saying is that he got to go to the hospital for a while.

MABLE

The what?

JACKIE

He want to send him to Butner, mama. They can help him....

MABLE

God...ain't there something else...

JACKIE

I'm sorry mama. That's what he said.

MABLE

Oh, my baby. What's going to happen to him? Can't you work it out with him? Can't Dr. Brown give him some pills or something?...

JACKIE

No. He got to go to Butner first. Maybe they can give him something. Maybe that'll make him better.

MABLE

I suppose you're right...if that's what Dr. Brown said.

Willie Jr enters the kitchen from the back door.

MABLE

Baby, why you act like that at church? Why'd you shout at Rev. Moyd?

WILLIE JR

Huh? Shout at Rev. Moyd? What are you talking about?

MABLE

You know, Willie Jr. What you did at church today.

WILLIE JR

Say what?

MABLE

Willie Jr, why did you shout like that? What were you thinking?

WILLIE JR

I couldn't let him talk about you like that! Who does he think he is, talking like that?

MABLE

--talking? Talking like what?

WILLIE JR

Come on mama, you heard him talking about you!

MABLE

--He wasn't talking about me. What are you saying??

WILLIE JR

I get tired of people talking about you and my family. These people on the street don't think nothing about you. They up to no good. They just want to hurt you. You just don't know who to trust any more. You just can't trust anybody. They all want to hurt you. Why that Rev. Moyd, he be talking about you all the time. Who knows what's on that nigger's mind.

Jimmy Bugg's always trying to get on Jackie. Just don't respect her at all. I should have killed him while I had a chance.

Jackie gives a meaningful glance to Mable.

MABLE

Oh, God, no...please, no...what's happening to my baby?

JACKIE

Calm down, Willie Jr, just calm down. Mama come over here and help finish these dishes. Come on.

Jackie and Mable dry the dishes hurriedly. Willie Jr lights a cigarette, spots a knife that is stuck in the ham.

Jackie catches him looking at the knife. Willie Jr slowly pulls knife from the ham--holding it at his side. Jackie elbows Mable so she'll notice.

WILLIE JR

Have you all been talking about me?

MABLE

(softly)

Come on, honey bear. Let me have that, now.

Willie Jr taps the blade against his thigh--he considers the irony of that request. Mable retardedly reaches for the knife with one hand--caressing his arm with the other--not about to consider the irony continues--

MABLE

--Give it to mama. We don't want anybody to get hurt.

WILLIE JR

Mama, what were you two talking about?

MABLE

It's alright, now baby. Everything's alright.

WILLIE JR

What were you saying?

MABLE

Listen, honey, Jackie told me that Dr. Brown said that things have been hard on you lately. He said you need some help, Willie Jr.

WILLIE JR

Dr. Brown? When has she been sneaking off to see him? I knew she'd been sneaking off. I don't need any help--especially not from him.

MABLE

He said there's nothing he can do.

WILLIE JR

Nothing he can do? About what? He thinks I need some help? What are you talking about?

MABLE

Jackie and the children are scared Willie Jr. You're not acting like yourself. Dr. Brown thinks you need to go to the hospital.

WILLIE JR

Jackie?

JACKIE

She's right.

WILLIE JR

Mama, there ain't nothing wrong with me. I'm not sick. I don't need to go to the hospital. That Dr. Brown don't know what he's talking about. Hell, he's not even seen me. What does he know?

MABLE

Willie Jr, he thinks you need to go to Milledgeville for psychiatric evaluation.

JACKIE

It's the best thing. Think of the children.

WILLIE JR

Milledgeville?! Milledgeville?! That's where them crazies go. I ain't crazy! What's wrong with you? Why are you ganging up on me? There's nothing wrong with me...and I damn sure ain't going to no Milledgeville, that's for sure.

MABLE

It's for the best--

WILLIE JR

--No, sir. They'd have to take me over my dead body. I ain't going there. No, no. You all can't really think I'm going to go there. What are you thinking? You'll have to fight me every step of the way, I can promise you that. You're going to have a fight with me. And that's the truth.

CUT TO:

94 INT. JACKIE'S BEDROOM, NIGHT

94

Willie Jr paces back and forth like a caged animal. Jackie, lying on the bed, watches his every painful movement.

WILLIE JR

So you in on it, too, huh Jackie? You join up with Mable on this? You plotting together now?

JACKIE

No, baby, its not like that at all...

WILLIE JR

You turn your back on your own husband? Don't you think I do enough for you? I work hard to keep food on that table for you and those children. What's got into you, woman? How long you been sneaking off like that?

JACKIE

Oh, Willie Jr, I'm so sorry.

WILLIE JR

You're sorry? You don't know what sorry is. You and mama think you got this all worked out, you think its just that clean and easy, don't you? I'm telling you baby, it ain't like that. I ain't going to go.

JACKIE

Don't you see Willie Jr? They going to make you get better. Going to make you feel right. Everything's going to be fine...it's going to be alright.

DISSOLVE TO:

TITLE: SIX MONTHS LATER

95 INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL NURSE'S STATION, DAY

95

NURSE I

Come on, Mr. Jones, time for your pills.

WILLIE JR

Don't need them.

NURSE II

Come on now, Mr. Jones, you know you got to take them. The doctor says so.

WILLIE JR



Don't need them and you know it. Ain't nothing wrong with me. That doctor don't know what he's doing. Hell, there a whole lot of crazies out there and here I am where I don't need to be. No sense in it, it just ain't right. I'm going to get that son of a bitch who put me in here.

Willie Jr walks off down the hall after taking the pills.

NURSE I

You know something, he's got a point.

NURSE II

Yeah, he don't seem so bad. Wonder what they put him in here for anyhow?

NURSE I

They say schizophrenia, but he sure don't act like it to me. I never seen him act out or anything. Never seen him talking to voices like they say he does.

NURSE II

Me neither.

NURSE I

His chart says his family says he gets violent.

NURSE II

What? Mr. Jones?

NURSE I

Yeah. Says he hit his wife or something. I tell you what...I bet she just got tired of having him around.

NURSE II

Oh come on. She not going to have him put in here for that. Besides,

she couldn't do it without the doctor's approval and the family's consent. But still, doesn't seem like he's schizo to me....

NURSE I

Oh, I don't know. It doesn't take much to get them all to sign... You ever seen him do anything strange?

NURSE II

No.

NURSE I

Me neither. And I've been here the whole time he's been here. I'm telling you, nothing's wrong with him.

CUT TO:

96 INT. LIVING ROOM, JACKIE'S HOUSE, AFTERNOON, DAY

96

It's the afternoon before HALLOWEEN and the kids are in the living room watching television. Willie KNOCKS on the back door and comes on into the kitchen.

97 INT. KITCHEN, AFTERNOON

97

WILLIE

Anybody here hungry for pumpkin pie? Look at this baby I brought you.

AUGUST

Daddy! Daddy, it's daddy, mama.

WILLIE

Hello, to the house! May I come in?

JACKIE

All depends...you know how to behave?

WILLIE

Know all about it. Wrote the book.

Marcus and August continue to watch the television, though they have heard their father come in.

WILLIE

And what are you up to young man?

AUGUST

I'm stirring this stuff. We're all helping, Daddy.

JACKIE

(pointing to the other children)  
They're helping by staying out of the way.

WILLIE JR

Well..help me with this pumpkin.  
Give me a knife.

JACKIE

You sure move yourself in here real easy don't you? You act like you just came home from a day at work. Like nothing has happened.

August gives him a long butcher knife. Willie carves a jack-o-lantern as he speaks.

WILLIE JR

Well, that sure ain't the truth. A lot's happened. That doctor Green...he's something...he put the cure on me good and fast. Gave me some pills and some good talking too. Lord that man can talk! I didn't want to hear nothing he had to say...but I had to listen...and...he was right. Lord, I sure done you wrong...

(more)

WILLIE (Cont'd)

Done you all wrong. And I'm sorry. Got to apologize now... right here and now.

JACKIE

You sound like you running for office Willie Jr.

WILLIE JR

I am. The best, most important office in the whole, damn land. (to the children watching television) Marcus and August! How you guys doing?

MARCUS AND AUGUST

Hi daddy. We're okay. How are you doing?

WILLIE JR

Oh, I'm fine. You guys want to go outside with me and throw the ball?

They parade outside. Willie Jr plays with the children for a very short while--tossing the ball into the bushes. While they search for the ball, Willie Jr goes back inside the house--sneaks in on Jackie who went to lie down for a nap.

JACKIE

EEEEK! No! Damn you! Don't think you can charm your way back into my house and into my bed with that slick apology! Smooth talk don't make no nevermind.

The children hearing the scream and come running up to Jackie's bedroom and stand by the door witnessing the completion of the declaration.

JACKIE

You ain't welcome here Willie Jr.! You can sleep on the couch tonight; but tomorrow you'll be gone. Don't think you going to eat here tomorrow, either. You can't stay here no more!

Willie Jr--crushed, brushes dejectedly past the children.

WILLIE JR

(to himself)

Halloween, damn it...they got me  
this time...halloween...

98 INT. MABLE'S HOUSE, NIGHT

98

Mable is in the living room watching television. (Hee-Haw)  
She HEARS someone outside and goes to the door.

99 EXT. MABLE'S FRONT PORCH, NIGHT

99

Willie Jr is sitting in the glider on the porch--oblivious to  
Mable; his face--full of anguish.

WILLIE JR

Demons. Must be demons on me. It's  
killing me. Feel like my chest is  
breaking open. Ain't no demon going  
to get the best of me. Bring them  
on! Come on you little bastards!  
I'll show you a fight. You're  
nothing to me.

MABLE

Willie Jr? Is that you? Why ain't  
you home with your family?

WILLIE JR

I guess I should have listened to  
you in the first place. There ain't  
no place for me.

MABLE

What you doing out here son?

WILLIE JR

It ain't home no more. Hah ha. Knew  
all along and let me fall on my  
face. I should have seen that you  
knew what you was talking about. I  
should have accepted it then.

Mable picks up his bag and leads him inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

100 INT. MABLE'S KITCHEN, DAY

100

It is almost THANKSGIVING. Pies are cooling on the counter. Willie is sitting at the table reading the newspaper. Mable--at the stove pouring tea.

MABLE

Here you are.

She sets his cup and saucer down beside his breakfast plate. Willie Jr continues to read the newspaper ignoring Mable. She picks up his bottle of medicine, reads the label. She notices how FULL the bottle looks.

MABLE

Willie Jr! You know you got to keep taking your medicine! Here drink this cup of tea. You can take your pills with it.

Mable picks up the plate, walks over to the sink.

MABLE

Is the light strong enough for you?

WILLIE JR.

Uh-huh.

Willie Jr sips the tea--disregards the pills. He dismisses Mable completely.

MABLE

Would you like some strawberry jam on your muffin? Lordy, I'm sure looking forward to having the whole family over for Thanksgiving. It seems like ages since I've seen the grandchildren.

Close, obituaries. Willie Jr reads about a man named Willie Jones who died two days ago. Startled by seeing his name in the obituaries, he chokes and coughs as he attempts to swallow some of the tea.

MABLE

You okay sugar?

WILLIE JR.

Uh-huh. Excuse me please.

Willie Jr goes into the living room--dials his house to talk with Nicholas.

WILLIE JR

Hello, let me speak to Nicholas.

NICHOLAS

It's me daddy. How you doing?

WILLIE JR.

What you doing this afternoon? I thought you might come over and spend some time with me.

NICHOLAS

I'd love to daddy...but I've got a date with my girl friend this evening. Going down to the lake.

WILLIE JR.

Okay, when you get some time...drop over and see me.

NICHOLAS

Okay daddy, I'll do that....bye now.

WILLIE JR.

Goodbye.

Nicholas notes the finality in Willie Jr's voice but gives it no thought.

101 EXT. MABLE'S HOUSE, DAY

101

Willie Jr on Mable's porch, smoking and brooding after Nicholas's rejection. He sits on the glider smoking.

A little sports car pulls up to the curb. Mane, his girlfriend, TAMELA and Marcus get out.

MANE

Hey, Daddy.

MARCUS

How you doing?

WILLIE JR

Who's this?

MANE

This is my girlfriend.

WILLIE JR

Does she have a name?

TAMELA

Tamela.

WILLIE JR

Where are you going? You going  
somewhere?

MARCUS

They going to D.C. Going to go see  
Jony...in the chocolate city.

WILLIE JR

Chocolate city? When you plan on  
leaving?

MANE

Soon. I told grandma Mable we would  
come over to say bye before we  
left.

TAMELA

Yeah. We came to say bye to  
Grandma Mable.

WILLIE JR

But not to me, cause I'm going to  
come too.

MANE

What?

WILLIE JR

I want to come too. You got enough  
room, don't you?

MANE



Well, I don't think so, Daddy. Just going to be me and Tamela.

MARCUS

I don't want to go to D.C. It's too long a ride. Let's go play ball daddy.

WILLIE JR

Come on, Mane. Does your Daddy need to beg? Come on now, it'll be fun. Besides, I ain't seen Jony for a while. Be good to go back to D.C. We need to spend some time together. Y'all are the most important thing to me...I might not get the chance to see you all together again.

MANE

Naw...dad, I don't think so.

Marcus tosses a football to Willie Jr.

MARCUS

Come on Daddy, catch!

WILLIE JR

Mane?

MANE

No. Come on Tamela, let's go say bye to Grandma Mable. We got a long drive.

102 INT. KITCHEN, DAY

102

Mable washes the dishes. She turns as they enter--wipes her hands on her apron and gives them a hug.

MABLE

Well hello Mane! Hello Tamela! How are you? You look wonderful. You all ready to go?

TAMELA

Hi Mrs. Jones.

MANE

Hi grandma. We just dropped by to say goodbye. We got a long drive ahead.

MABLE

You want something to eat?

MANE

Naw, we got to go, we have lunch packed. I'll come by when I get back.

MABLE

Well, y'all be safe now.

Mane hugs Mable's neck and kisses her on the cheeks.

103 EXT. MABLE'S BACK YARD, DAY

103

Marcus and Willie Jr toss the football back and forth. Willie Jr moves sluggishly, without enthusiasm or amusement. After they toss the ball several times, Willie Jr misses the ball. He walks slowly after it. Marcus runs up behind him--playfully jumping on his back, hugging him from behind. Willie does not react at all. Marcus slides off, very gently, patting Willie Jr on the back.

MARCUS

Daddy, what's wrong? What's the matter?

Car horn BLOWS, Mane is signaling Marcus to go.

MARCUS

Gotta go dad, Mane is going to drop me off at a friend's house. See you later. Stop worrying dad!

Marcus runs to the car, jumps in and they speed off.

104 INT. MABLE'S HOUSE, HALLWAY, DAY

104

Mable walks down the hallway to her bedroom. She sits down on her bed, picks up Willie Jr's picture from the bedside table before she lies down.

MABLE

Oh Willie Jr...Willie Jr.

105 EXT. FRONT PORCH, DAY

105

Willie Jr sits in the glider--gets up and walks into the house--and heads for his bedroom.

106 INT. WILLIE'S BEDROOM, DAY

106

He walks into his bedroom and goes over to the dresser mirror. There are family pictures stuck on the dresser mirror.

Close, Willie Jr's reflection. he gazes into the mirror, studying his face. He shudders then his eyes glaze over.

He walks over to the closet looking in with a vacant stare. He reaches down and gets the shotgun, turns and goes over to the chest of drawers where he gets a box of shells.

Family pictures are sitting on the chest of drawers. He places the shells on the top on the chest and breaks the shotgun. He points the gun towards the window so he can see the light coming down the barrel.

Close-shotgun. He lowers the gun and with an exaggerated slowness--slides the shells into the barrel and quickly snaps the gun shut.

Willie Jr in the stillness of the moment, walks carefully out of his room. Willie Jr's point of view, MOVING into Mable's room across the hall to the foot of her bed.

107 INT. MABLE'S BEDROOM, DAY

107

Close, Mable in a peaceful slumber. Close-Willie Jr's perspective. Willie looks down at the gun in his hands. The gun--poised to be fired. Mable rolls over in the bed.

Willie Jr takes a step back--shudders. His face--contorted in tormented struggle. Close, Willie Jr's eyes, a tear forms in the corners of his eyes and rolls down his cheeks.

Willie Jr gasps--takes a deep breath and walks out of the room--closing Mable's door with loving tenderness and pats the door.

108 INT. WILLIE'S BEDROOM, DAY 108

He goes back into his room. Places the gun on the middle of the bed. He sits on the edge and swings his legs up with his back against the head board.

109 INT. MABLE'S BEDROOM, DAY 109

Mable tosses and turns in her sleep.

110 INT. WILLIE'S BEDROOM, DAY 110

Willie Jr holding the shotgun--COCKING the HAMMERS. The gun is laying across his lap.

111 INT. MABLE'S BEDROOM, DAY 111

Close-Mable tossing and turning restlessly--MOANING--

MABLE

No, no, no...

A loud SHOT rings out. She SCREAMS an anguished scream.

Mable BOLTS up to a sitting position SCREAMING all the while.

112 EXT. MABLE'S HOUSE, DAY 112

Mable storms out of the house with blood on her dress SCREAMING at the top of her lungs.

MABLE

Why? Why? Why?

FADE OUT.

THE END