

DONE IN PRISON

by
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FADE IN:

EXT. WORK SITE -- DAY

A DEER stands watching KURT, early 20s, dig in the small yard of a ramshackle house surrounded by woods. Kurt toils in the late morning sun just beyond the protection of a shade tree. He is knee-deep in a narrow trench about 15 feet long, his skin red from heat and exertion.

The deer bolts as PETE'S oversized pick-up tears into the yard. Pete makes an aggressive turn by Kurt's small Toyota and reverses to the edge of the trench, shoving the giant American flag on his tailgate right up there. Printed below the flag is a phone number and the message, "Repairs That Rock!"

Two rough-and-tumble carpenters spill from the cab. Sporting a buzz cut and Y-Back suspenders, Pete is somewhat shorter and thicker than his wiry partner, LEROY. Both are mid-30s and speak fluent Redneck.

PETE

Goddamn, Kurt. And I thought it would be a miracle if you finished by suppertime.

THWACK! Kurt digs, ignoring the men. Pete moves directly into the shade with a grocery bag labeled, "FRANK'S PLACE." Extracting a diet soda, he pops the tab and stands marveling at Kurt's progress.

LEROY

Move your ass, Pete. If this keeps the basement dry tonight we can reframe that stairwell.

Leroy unlatches the tailgate. The bed holds a load of gravel, some irrigation tubing, and a crossover tool box.

PETE

I don't need to play in the mud. That's why I hired him.
(points at Kurt)
Besides, I'm fixing to rip out that fuse box.

Leroy glares at Pete while removing his shirt, revealing several prison tattoos including a sloppy word, "BEER," on his shoulder. Leroy lights a cigarette, plucks a shovel from the grass, and begins scooping gravel into the trench.

PETE (CONT'D)

Take a break, Kurt. Drink some water before you pass out. That reminds me...

Pete rustles a bottle of iced tea from the grocery bag. Leroy pauses, noting Kurt's agitation.

LEROY

Alright there, bub?

PETE

(to Kurt)

Frank sent you a present. Old fart was still rattled from choking on his donut yesterday.

(to Leroy)

Hell, I nearly busted a gut myself: Kurt all bug-eyed, squealing, "Hold on Frank! I'm gonna' give you Heimlich!"

Pete feigns panic and pantomimes the maneuver.

LEROY

Ain't funny.

PETE

Sure it is. Who the hell chokes on a donut? Lonesome codger just wanted a hug.

Still no response from Kurt. Pete drops the tea in the dirt.

PETE (CONT'D)

What's up his ass?

LEROY

Got me. I know he can hear us: ain't wearing his headphones.

PETE

Honestly, Kurt, I want to know what RACHEL put in your oatmeal this morning to make you dig so fast?

Kurt freezes momentarily at the sound of her name. THWACK! He stabs the ground with enhanced anger.

Pete sips his beverage, eyeing Kurt.

PETE (CONT'D)

Who'd she fuck?

LEROY

Leave the man alone and get to work you prick.

PETE

I am working: I'm the supervisor. Isn't Rachel the lunch waitress today?

(MORE)

PETE (CONT'D)

Just think, Leroy, if we convince her to cheat every night we could have this shit-hole rebuilt by Friday.

Kurt wheels about.

KURT

It's not fucking funny, Pete!

PETE

Right, I'm an asshole. Who's the stud?

LEROY

(to Kurt)

Let's whack him in the skull and bury him in this nice trench.

KURT

He's the new liquor rep for the tavern. I want to hurt that sneaky bastard.

LEROY

So stomp his ass.

PETE

He doesn't want to go to jail, Leroy.

KURT

I don't know what to do. She swore it was a mistake and she still wants to be with me.

(pause)

I don't even look at other girls.

PETE

There's your problem. Dump her or keep enjoying the pussy, but don't say you love her.

KURT

Everything is about pussy with you, Pete.

LEROY

Now that he ain't getting any.

PETE

Goddamn! Lighten the fuck up you two.

Pete storms off toward the woods to relieve himself, hollering over his shoulder.

PETE (CONT'D)

Christ, kid! You've got your whole life ahead of you. When I was your age I was banging a different girl every weekend.

LEROY

Almost won himself a trophy.

Kurt sits on the edge of the trench, defeated. Leroy passes him the iced tea and begins spreading gravel along the bottom.

KURT

I feel like there's a hole in my stomach.

Leroy gives Kurt an empathetic look.

LEROY

Sometimes life serves you up a shit sandwich.

KURT

Thanks Leroy. That helps.

Pete can be seen from behind, doing his business. Determining that he is out of earshot, Leroy indicates the "BEER" tattoo on his shoulder.

LEROY

Had this one done in prison. We were engaged, too.

Leroy lights a cigarette. Kurt regards the tattoo, unamused.

KURT

Beer? Everything is a fucking joke with you guys. I knew I should have kept my mouth shut.

LEROY

Used to say, "BECA." I thought of her every day for two years inside. Three months from release I found out she was fucking my buddy. I laid awake each night, imagining them. Made me so sick sometimes...

Kurt makes eye contact with Leroy. Uncomfortable with the connection, Leroy continues shoveling and speaking away from Kurt.

LEROY (CONT'D)

I wanted to hurt him bad. But I was flat broke when I got out. He had my old job waiting for me.

Kurt glances suspiciously at Pete, who is zipping his fly.

KURT
Jesus, Leroy, how could you go back
to that job?

LEROY
Ever fill out an application?

KURT
Of course.

LEROY
Then you know about the part asking
if you're a convicted felon.

KURT
Shit, man, I wasn't thinking--

Leroy mocks the interview he never attempted:

LEROY
Look sir, them assault and battery
charges were bogus. That teenager I
put in a coma was a meth-head. He
and his buddies tried to rob me. I
said, "please stop," but they didn't
listen...

Observing Pete's return, Leroy trails off. He resumes
spreading gravel in silence.

Pete opens his truck and rummages under the seat. Emerging
with a gun, he offers the weapon to Kurt, handle first.

PETE
Here, this will make you feel better.

KURT
(studies the gun)
I only want to teach him a lesson.

LEROY
What are you gonna' teach a guy who
fucks another guy's girl?

KURT
That there are consequences.

LEROY
Consequences for everything.

PETE
Why are we even talking about this
asshole? The man did you a favor if
you ask me.

(MORE)

PETE (CONT'D)

You found out what Rachel's like
before you got married and had kids.

KURT

I don't even know what he looks like.
I just want to--

LEROY

Make sure he's out of the picture.

KURT

All I know is he drives a purple
convertible. Rachel said he gave
her a ride before a lunch shift last
week.

Pete raises a finger, intent on seizing the obvious joke.
Leroy accidentally heads him off, however, scoffing at the
idea of a grown man in a purple convertible.

LEROY

Sounds like a goddamn fairy. You
sure that's him? You wash dishes
there every night--ain't never met
this asshole?

KURT

He always comes before lunch.

PETE

Early riser, huh?

Kurt's attention remains on the gun. Unaccustomed to
dispensing sound advice before his nightly six-pack, Pete
decides to give it a shot.

PETE (CONT'D)

Look, here's what you do--

CUT TO:

EXT. FRANK'S PLACE -- DAY

The three men stand beside Kurt's Toyota in the parking lot
of Frank's general store. Gas pumps and garden supplies
adorn the lot. The "Friendly Tavern" is closely situated
across the road.

Leroy glances about in confusion at being jerked into Pete's
hypothetical situation.

Beautiful Rachel, 20s, can be partially seen as she enters
the tavern.

PETE

Drop Rachel off for the breakfast shift tomorrow, then wait 'til her new friend shows up. She'll think you're meeting us for coffee and donuts.

(jerks a thumb at
Frank's Place)

Kurt moves to the edge of the road and scans the empty stretch. Pete gestures irritably at the tavern's large windows.

PETE (CONT'D)

Not where everyone can see you, dumbshit. Wait in your rice cooker.
(indicates Toyota)

Leroy moves with curiosity toward Frank's Place as Kurt aims for his car.

PETE (CONT'D)

Now where the hell are you going Leroy?

LEROY

Thought I'd say hello to Frank. Who knows when this sum-bitch is gonna' show.

Kurt stops, awaiting Pete's response.

PETE

This here's a hypothetical situation, moron. You can't go in there.

LEROY

Well goddamn, why'd you drag me along? I was working--

Leroy suddenly vanishes. That settled, Pete fixes on a point in the distance where a slick, purple convertible creeps into view.

PETE

Here he comes. Wait 'til he parks, then say, "Hey, aren't you friends with Rachel?" When he says, "Yeah, real good friends," you say, "I'm her boyfriend."

Placing his hands on his hips, Pete positions his jacket to reveal his weapon.

PETE (CONT'D)

Make sure he sees the .45 in your holster, then just drive away.

(pauses, chuckles)

Now watch this.

Apparently driving itself, the convertible zooms into full view with a captive, glaring Leroy behind the wheel. The car stops before Pete and Kurt.

PETE (CONT'D)

Nice wheels, sugar plum.

Leroy glares and glares...

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. WORK SITE -- DAY

The men remain in their previous positions.

LEROY

That's a dumb-ass plan, Pete. Nothing beats a good old-fashioned monkey stomp if you ask me.

PETE

You're missing the point, Leroy. There's no direct threat this way, nothing reportable. You want Kurt in prison?

Mesmerized by the gun, Kurt's expression begins to reveal a dark fantasy.

LEROY

The man's already locked up if you ask me.

Pete scoffs in surprise.

LEROY (CONT'D)

What's so goddamn funny about that?

PETE

Nothing. I just never heard you make a metaphor, Leroy.

LEROY

Metaphor? You think I don't know what that means?

(to Kurt)

Before I boned Pete's sister I "metaphor" a drink.

PETE

Real funny, smart-ass.

LEROY

But not as funny as our pal Frank
choking on a donut, right?

PETE

Let's quit jaw-jackin' and get this
job done.

LEROY

I swear I'm about to kill you.

KURT

(stands)

Can I borrow your holster, too?

Silence. It takes Pete a moment to register the question.

PETE

Borrow my--shit no! Get your own
equipment.

KURT

Then why the hell did you hand me
your gun?

CUT TO:

EXT. WORK SITE -- DAY

Discarded soda cans are positioned on a pile of construction
debris near the woods for target practice. Standing between
the two vehicles, Pete loads a clip and takes aim while the
others watch.

PETE

This always makes me feel better
after a shitty day. Hold her with
two hands, like so.

Pete grips the gun in his right hand and cups his left
underneath for support.

KURT

I know how to hold a gun, Pete.

Pete regards Kurt as he would an interrupting child, then
hands him the weapon.

PETE

Alright hotshot.

BLAM-BLAM-BLAM! Kurt fires intensely with one hand, emptying
the clip and knocking down most of the cans. Leroy snickers.

PETE (CONT'D)

Feels good, right?

KURT

Yeah, let me do another.

LEROY

Uh-uh, my turn.

Kurt begins to pass the gun to Leroy, but Pete's words make him hesitate.

PETE

Alright, enough jerking off. Let's get back to work.

Leroy gives Pete a long, cold look.

LEROY

Let the man do another. I think it was helping.

Leroy takes a few backward steps toward Pete's truck.

LEROY (CONT'D)

Besides, I got something better.

KURT

You have a gun in there, too?

Leroy opens the crossover box and produces a tomahawk.

LEROY

I like to get up close and personal.

Leroy steps toward them quickly, wielding the tomahawk. He appears to be rushing Pete. Pete jumps back.

THUNK! Leroy impressively lodges the tomahawk into the board supporting the cans.

KURT

Oh shit!

LEROY

Beats a pea-shooter any day for stress relief.

PETE

What the fuck was that, Leroy?

LEROY

You didn't want to share your toy, so I got mine.

Kurt approaches the target while the men argue. Their voices become more inflamed and gradually unintelligible.

PETE

I told you not to take your bullshit out on me. I'm your friend.

LEROY

Yeah, well you got a funny way of showing it sometimes.

PETE

You get all fired up and who knows what comes next...

Kurt reaches the target and secures the gun in his waistband. Dislodging the tomahawk, he slices his hand.

Kurt moves trancelike back toward the men and his car, bleeding on the tomahawk. His expression reveals an even darker fantasy as the argument culminates between Pete and Leroy.

LEROY

I reckon you thought bringing me a carton of cigarettes every other month would make up for it!

PETE

No one blames her for choosing a man with more to offer than two years in state correctional!

Leroy lunges for Pete and the men crash to the ground in a tangle of blows and expletives, deaf to the sound of Kurt's engine REVVING as he PEELS away.

INT. KURT'S CAR -- DAY

Kurt blasts down a narrow country road, punching his horn and screaming. HEAVY METAL BLARES. The bloodstained tomahawk rests on the passenger seat. Kurt glowers at the weapon.

Fast approaching a vintage hearse, Kurt veers in time to avoid collision. Farther ahead a FARMER slowly hauls an enormous load of garbage, consuming the road with his tractor. Kurt barely passes without slipping off the thin shoulder.

Remembering the gun in his waistband, Kurt moves it to the passenger seat beside the tomahawk. His expression grows more determined as he floors the gas pedal.

Frank's Place appears and Kurt steers into the lot. Frank's sign advertises ammunition among such necessities as food and beer. The purple convertible can be seen across the street. Kurt eyes the gun, the convertible, and Frank's advertisement for ammunition.

INT. FRANK'S PLACE -- DAY

Frank sits alone behind the register, a kindly old man with sailor tattoos on his forearms. He slices a watermelon. The storefront contains a few tables and chairs. Rows of general goods lead to the rear.

Kurt enters with venom and fixates on the display rack full of ammunition behind Frank. Intent on his watermelon, Frank does not immediately register Kurt's agitation.

FRANK

Hey Kurt. I was hoping you'd...
(sees Kurt's wound)

Frank drops what he is doing and moves around the counter, placing a concerned hand on Kurt's shoulder.

Kurt shoves Frank's hand away. Too hard! Frank stumbles and collides with the counter. His startled YELP summons Kurt back to reality.

Frank steadies himself and reaches out again. Ashamed, Kurt hangs his head.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(wide-eyed)
Easy now. What the hell were you
boys doing out there?

KURT

I'm sorry... if I hurt you.

FRANK

Let's get you fixed up, son.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S PLACE -- DAY

Having cleaned and dressed his wound, Frank and Kurt walk from the rear of the store past aisles of hunting and fishing equipment, auto supplies, and food. Calmer now, Kurt soaks up Frank's advice.

FRANK

If you think you can salvage the
trust, why not? Give her another
chance. Everyone makes mistakes.

A well-dressed YOUNG MAN waits at the register; Frank diverges to ring him up for some condoms and cigarettes.

Kurt moves to the large front window and gazes at the purple convertible across the street. He waits for the customer to leave, then turns back to Frank.

KURT

Thank you, Frank. You're a good friend. I'm gonna' head over there now--just say hello.

FRANK

Hold up a minute. I was hoping you'd stop by today. Certainly not like this.

(picks up watermelon)

Grew this watermelon myself--like to see what you think.

Frank moves to one of the storefront tables. Kurt glances at the tavern again, sighing deeply. He sits with his back to the window as Frank serves him a slice.

Kurt takes a bite. A little smile appears.

KURT

That's really good.

Frank shares the smile and nods. Kurt unconsciously eats faster, his body desperate for fluids. Frank hands him one slice after another as they continue talking.

KURT (CONT'D)

I thought Pete and Leroy were best friends.

FRANK

More like brothers.

(smiles)

I've known those two knuckleheads since they were five or six--

KURT

Maybe I'm too serious. Or I just don't understand people.

FRANK

How's that?

KURT

If they were really best friends, how could Pete sleep with Leroy's fiancée?

FRANK

Who told you that?

(thinks)

I reckon a man can get lonely around here--and Pete is a mite thick. But I don't believe he ever slept with his own sister.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

Pete's truck is sandwiched in a column of backed-up traffic. The slow tractor now prevents anyone from passing. The hearse crawls behind the tractor, followed by Pete and Leroy.

FRANK (V.O.)

It's been just as hard for Pete,
stuck in the middle. Leroy's anger
gets the best of him sometimes, but
he knows Pete was loyal.

Close on the passenger door: a magnetic sign reads, "LP Remodeling." The company logo is a cartoon record. "Repairs That Rock!"

FRANK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hell, Pete left a successful
partnership to start a new one from
scratch with Leroy. I reckon he's
about as loyal as they come.

INT. PETE'S TRUCK -- DAY

Pete and Leroy are battered from their brawl.

Through the front windshield: a coffin can be seen inside the hearse. The farmer's mound of garbage looms ahead.

Pete lays on his HORN for a long, inappropriate moment. Silence, then:

PETE

Which one of them boys do you reckon
is hauling more trash, Leroy?

Leroy begins to chuckle, then bursts out laughing.

LEROY

Now that's funny.

Pete beams with bloody teeth.

INT. FRANK'S PLACE -- DAY

FRANK

Those boys mean well, Kurt. But
they never left this Podunk town.
Makes it hard to grow up sometimes,
when your world doesn't change.

Frank regards Kurt as though he expects more from him. Kurt eyes the sailor tattoos on Frank's arms.

Behind him through the window: the purple convertible is gone. The tractor crawls into view with its gigantic load of trash.

The hearse creeps by next. Pete tailgates so intensely he might as well be pushing.

EXT. FRANK'S PLACE -- DAY

Pete pulls into the lot and parks beside Kurt's car. Climbing out, he spies the gun and tomahawk through Kurt's window and gestures for Leroy. The men hastily retrieve their weapons.

They turn to discover Frank staring them down from his front door.

PETE

Uh... hey Frank. Everything alright?

FRANK

Get in here you sons-of-bitches.

Frank's reproof has visible effect. The men hang their heads and shuffle forward obediently, the bloody tomahawk dangling from Leroy's hand, the pistol from Pete's.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Give me those!

Frank snatches the weapons and follows them into his store.

FADE OUT: