

BLUE ENGINE

A Screenplay

Written by

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Prepared for:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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FADE IN:

MOVEMENT ONE -- BLEACHED LIGHT

The beginning is too bright.

**INT. MOUNTAIN COVE RESORT ROOM -- BLEACHED AFTERNOON --
SUMMER**

It could be any of several summers. The clothes and the language do not quite match. Nobody notices.

Steam rolls out from beneath a bathroom door.

DAD sits on the edge of a hotel bed, already dressed for the pool. He looks at his watch, then at the bathroom door.

DAD

You planning on coming out this summer?

The shower stops. A long, joking grunt. A towel POPS and is rapidly worked over somebody who has no reason to be in this much of a hurry.

IVAN (O.S.)

Yeah, Daddy.

DAD

You said that ten minutes ago.

Ivan finally emerges, pink from the heat and wrapped in a towel. He has spent nearly an hour getting ready to do absolutely nothing.

DAD

You know we could have taken a shower together and saved time. I am paying for this shit.

IVAN

Together? At the same time? That seems -- I don't know. Pretty fucking gay, Daddy.

DAD

Your generation calls everything gay and also says nothing is gay. It contradicts itself. It isn't like I'm trying to buttfuck you, kid. Back in the sixties and seventies, people were freer. Men hung out with their wangs out. Nobody called a committee meeting.

IVAN

Where?

DAD

Everywhere. Locker rooms. Rivers.
The Army. That's not the point.

EXT. MOUNTAIN COVE BEACH SHOP -- LATER

Ivan turns a rack of cheap seashell necklaces. He picks one with a small white shell at its center.

CLERK

Girlfriend?

IVAN

Girl from back home.

CLERK

Same thing?

IVAN

Even more gay, I guess. I'm a late bloomer when it comes to women.

CLERK

That's a good thing. You know that, right? You want some sage advice from a motherfucker who's fucked up his life from the very beginning? Hang out with your boys for a couple of summers. Get to know yourself. Fuck women. I mean fuck 'em, fuck as many as you can. But one girlfriend? Fuck that shit.

IVAN

Ten-four. Fuck that for sure.

CLERK

Back in the eighties, people were freer. I am telling you, we fucked. Even with AIDS, we fucked. You kids have cell phones and still can't close the deal. Fucking ridiculous.

IVAN

This is the sage advice?

CLERK

No. I changed my mind. That's what wisdom is.

He pays five dollars and slips the necklace into his pocket beside the key to his faded beige Toyota Corolla.

EXT. MOUNTAIN COVE RESORT COURTYARD -- BLEACHED AFTERNOON

A beach resort during COLLEGE WEEK -- except almost nobody is here.

Empty balconies. Empty plastic chairs. A lazy river moving without riders. The air is so humid that the concrete seems to sweat. The sun has washed the color from everything it touches.

IVAN, seventeen, crosses the deserted courtyard carrying a football he cannot throw well. He is in no hurry.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

I was seventeen. Young enough to start wanting a life I hadn't lived yet. Old enough not to know that Friends was just a television show. The Dukes of Hazzard was just a television show, too. I hadn't met Billy Swank yet.

A luggage cart rolls ten feet by itself and stops. Somewhere, an arcade game celebrates a winner who isn't there.

EXT. BEACH HOTEL POOL -- WASHED-OUT AFTERNOON

The pool is almost painfully bright. Chlorine, white concrete, blue water. IVAN and DAD stand chest-deep, throwing the football back and forth.

They have thrown baseballs since Ivan was little. A football is different. It wobbles every time it leaves his hand.

DAD

You keep throwing it like that, you're gonna take my head off.

IVAN

You still caught it, though. So my system technically works.

Dad tosses it back. Ivan catches it against his chest.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

I could see my whole life from that pool. I was going to stay at the beach. I was going to have buddies I hadn't met yet. We were going to drink Bud Lights and smoke Marlboro Lights in a summer that surely wouldn't end.

A group of YOUNG WOMEN passes behind Dad. Ivan watches them and throws without looking.

The football sails past Dad and strikes one of the women squarely on the backside.

She turns. This is SASH, nineteen, amused by the terror on Ivan's face.

SASH
Thanks, kid.

She flashes one breast -- too fast for Dad to see -- then rejoins her friends. Their laughter disappears around the hotel.

DAD
What'd she say?

Ivan looks at the football floating between them.

IVAN
That ho just showed me her booby,
Dad.

Dad studies him.

DAD
Don't call women hoes.

IVAN
Yes, sir.

DAD
And quit throwing sidearm.

The football slowly turns in the water. Sunlight fractures across it.

SMASH TO:

A JIMI HENDRIX track erupts.

The football becomes a SPINNING TIRE.

Pool water becomes chrome.

White sun becomes blue engine paint.

ONE YEAR LATER

EXT. KENTACOHUT -- MERCILESSLY BRIGHT DAY

A vape store, gas station, chicken shack and fireworks stand forced into one low building beside the highway.

The hand-painted sign reads:

KENTACOHUT -- GAS / CHICKEN / FIREWORKS / VAPORS

A BLUE 1969 NOVA waits beside the dumpster. The paint is a deep Chevy engine blue -- cleaner and more beautiful than anything surrounding it.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

The next summer I got the buddies.
I got the beer. I got the
cigarettes. I even got the beach. I
should've been more specific about
the rest of it.

INT. KENTACOHUT -- CONTINUOUS

Heat lamps shine on old fried chicken. Fireworks crowd the aisles. A tiny television mounted near the ceiling plays THE OMEGA MAN with the sound turned low.

IVAN, now eighteen, works the register.

ROBBIE, twenty-one, stacks beer while rubbing his teeth with one finger. He stacks every case harder than necessary.

RORY, nineteen and deaf, wipes the same patch of counter while watching everyone's mouths. He signs, speaks and reads lips, but the others rarely wait long enough to make any of those things easy.

POLYCRONOPOLIS, forties, counts money in the office. Everyone calls him POLY when he is not close enough to hear it.

A CUSTOMER holds an empty watermelon-vape display box.

CUSTOMER

Do you have it in the back?

IVAN

No.

CUSTOMER

Could you check?

IVAN

I checked earlier, but I can check
again in case it developed.

Ivan opens the stockroom door. There are chicken boxes and fireworks. No watermelon vapes.

He closes it.

IVAN

It continued not to be back there.

A SECOND CUSTOMER places a quarter on the counter.

SECOND CUSTOMER

Can I buy one cigarette for a quarter?

IVAN

No. Weirdly, I can sell you twenty, which feels less responsible, but that's how the law organized it.

POLYCRONOPOLIS (O.S.)

Stop selling loose cigarettes.

IVAN

I didn't.

POLYCRONOPOLIS (O.S.)

Then stop discussing it for free.

A LITTLE GIRL stares at a colorful vapor display while her mother pays for gasoline.

IVAN

(to the girl, mock
salesman)

You wanna buy some vapors, little girl? That came out worse than it sounded in my head.

Her mother pulls her away. Ivan gives a harmless little wave.

ROBBIE

Yeah, you can get your buttohole pierced in this state, but you can't get a tattoo. Go figure.

POLYCRONOPOLIS (O.S.)

Stop discussing buttoholes with the customers.

ROBBIE

She already left.

Rory looks up.

RORY

(signing)

Who pierced what?

Ivan signs a clumsy version of BUTTHOLE. Rory corrects his hand shape.

IVAN

I don't want to be dramatic, but this sucks, man. We are barely making it.

ROBBIE

I know. That's why we need to roll this place tonight. Come back with some hard-pipe-hitting motherfuckers and just roll the whole place. Take the bongos and all.

IVAN

Just so I understand the staffing, who's your hard-pipe-hitting motherfucker?

Robbie points to Rory.

Rory reads his lips.

RORY

I don't want the bongos.

POLYCRONOPOLIS (O.S.)

None of you are hard anything.
Rotate the chickens.

EXT. KENTACOHUT -- MOMENTS LATER

BILLY SWANK is supposed to be checking the pump receipts. Instead, he polishes chrome that is already spotless.

He might be twenty-two. He might be thirty. Nobody has asked him.

Ivan, Robbie and Rory emerge carrying fountain drinks.

ROBBIE

Ivan, this is Billy Swank.

IVAN

Hey. Your car is aggressively clean.

BILLY

That's intentional. You know the Japanese became very OCD about their yards? They would cut them with scissors and shit.

IVAN
I love those fucking people.

Billy does not stop polishing.

BILLY
Yeah, me too. Tacomas rock.

ROBBIE
Tell him about the sand hooker.

BILLY
No.

ROBBIE
Then I will.

A loud guitar riff starts.

MUSIC-VIDEO BREAKAWAY -- THE LEGEND OF BILLY SWANK

TITLE CARD: BILLY SWANK

-- Billy drives the Nova at night, smoking with one hand out the window.

-- Billy asleep beneath the Nova in a motel parking lot, a wrench still in his hand.

-- Billy and Chad push the Nova to the top of a hill. Billy jumps in. Chad keeps pushing.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)
Billy Swank was already a legend at whatever the fuck age we decided he was. Most of the stories were about the Nova. The other one was about his brother Chad and the Sand Hooker.

EXT. MOUNTAIN COVE BEACH -- NIGHT -- THE LEGEND

BILLY and his brother CHAD lean over a hotel balcony. Far below, a WOMAN walks alone beside the black water.

BILLY AND CHAD
Come up here!

She looks up.

She does.

INT. MOUNTAIN COVE HOTEL ROOM -- LATER -- THE LEGEND

The music gets faster.

-- The woman kicks the door shut.

-- The curtains move. The lamp shakes. One of the beers falls off the nightstand.

-- Later. Billy and Chad lie under separate motel blankets, pleased with themselves.

-- The SAND HOOKER gets dressed and starts going through the room.

-- She takes Chad's wallet.

-- She dumps the drawers, suitcases and bathroom cubbies onto the floor.

-- Billy watches from the bed. Somehow, she does not get his money.

 OLDER IVAN (V.O.)
 Nobody knew where Billy put his
 wallet. Chad said it had to be up
 his ass. I never asked Billy.

-- The Sand Hooker enters the tiny hotel kitchen.

-- She empties the kitchen cabinets onto the floor.

-- She pulls a thirteen-inch cookie sheet from a lower cabinet.

-- On the cookie sheet now rests a thirteen-inch, giant, solid MAN SHIT.

-- She slides it into the oven.

-- The dial turns to BROIL.

-- The heating element glows red.

A few seconds later, Billy and Chad smell it.

They charge into the kitchen. The Sand Hooker slips out the hotel door with Chad's wallet while both brothers gag into dish towels.

SMASH BACK TO:

EXT. KENTACOHUT -- BESIDE THE BLUE NOVA -- DAY

The guitar riff stops dead.

Billy continues polishing the same piece of chrome.

BILLY
The smell got into the curtains.

IVAN
That story is horrible. You should
change that story, man.

BILLY
It has changed. First time Chad
told it, the shit was only nine
inches.

ROBBIE
Inflation.

Rory looks from face to face.

RORY
What did she cook?

Nobody answers him.

Billy looks better standing beside the Nova than he does
anywhere else. The four young men gather around the blue
car.

ROBBIE
You ever think maybe we should just
leave this place?

BILLY
Everybody says that.

IVAN
Nobody leaves before payday.

Billy shuts the hood with both hands. The sound makes all
three boys look at him.

He opens the passenger door for Ivan, revealing a spotless
seat.

BILLY
I own twenty-five acres about
thirty miles from here. I can get
us there in twelve and a half
minutes.

IVAN
No, you can't.

BILLY
I didn't say you would enjoy it.

Ivan smiles. Billy doesn't.

INT. KENTACOHUT -- LATER

On the tiny television, pale creatures with dark, violently outlined features swarm through the night in THE OMEGA MAN.

Ivan watches the screen. Then he looks at a moth-eaten KENTACOHUT MASCOT HEAD hanging above the office door -- a smiling chicken in a cowboy hat.

A thought passes through him.

Not yet a plan.

Almost.

MOVEMENT TWO -- THE PERFECT DAY

The light turns golden.

EXT./INT. BLUE NOVA -- HIGHWAY TOWARD FRENCH MOUNTAIN -- PERFECT DAY

The blue Nova moves through afternoon sunlight. Windows down. The engine is loud enough that everybody has to turn when they talk.

Billy drives. Ivan rides shotgun. Robbie and Rory are in back.

This is the first mountain drive. This time the road is fun.

IVAN

How far does this road go?

BILLY

Depends where you stop.

Robbie leans between the seats.

ROBBIE

Man, when I make my first million, I'm going to buy land up here. Like five thousand acres. We'll build our own roads. Have our own saloon and an Old West town. Ride horses and drive fucking Ford Broncos.

IVAN

I'd take a Blazer over a Bronco. I don't know why I felt required to announce that.

Rory leans forward so he can see their faces.

RORY
I will take the 4Runner.

ROBBIE
I am serious. I want my own ranch.
This is one of the few places on
the East Coast with a mountain this
close to the beach. People don't
even know how nice these mountains
are because they aren't as tall as
Mount Fuji. Well, fuck Mount Fuji.
Fuck Mount Fuji in its cold ass.

Rory catches only the end.

RORY
You say you like asshole?

ROBBIE
No, you dumb bastard. Mount Fuji's
asshole.

BILLY
Mount Fuji isn't a person.

ROBBIE
Everything is a person if you hate
it enough.

Ivan watches green mountains rise beyond the blue hood.

IVAN
What would we call the town?

ROBBIE
Robbie.

RORY
No.

INT. OLD BEACH HOTEL ROOM -- LATE AFTERNOON

A borrowed room full of beer cans, wet towels, boogie boards
and floaties. The air conditioner rattles like it is dying.

Ivan hears water moving behind the bathroom door.

INT. OLD BEACH HOTEL BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

MARK SUMMERFIELD, eighteen, lies in a bathtub of cooling
water. He has apparently been there for days. A new beard
has begun growing around his face.

IVAN
Mark?

MARK

Maybe.

IVAN

How long you been in here?

MARK

What day is it?

IVAN

Thursday. Unless it changed.

MARK

Then a week.

He keeps his mouth mostly closed.

MARK

I haven't brushed my teeth either.

IVAN

Your parents know you're here?

MARK

My parents announced a scholarship on Awards Day. Thousand dollars to any student who does what I did.

IVAN

Maintain a B average? I'm trying to guess something your parents would reward without liking you.

MARK

And never miss one day of school from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

IVAN

Nobody is ever going to win that.

MARK

That's how they can afford a thousand dollars.

Ivan considers this. He takes a beer from the sink.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

Mark Summerfield had gone to school every day for thirteen years. I figured he deserved a break.

Ivan closes the door and leaves Mark in the tub.

EXT. BEACH -- PERFECT GOLDEN AFTERNOON

The ideal beach day. No wind. Warm water. Music from a radio. Bud Lights pushed into the ice. Marlboro Lights passing from hand to hand.

The four young men play football near the tide line.

Behind them, a LITTLE BOY and his FATHER construct an extraordinary sand sculpture: towers, bridges, shell windows, a whole city raised by hand.

Ivan studies it. He steps back from his friends.

IVAN

Throw it high.

Robbie launches the football toward the sculpture.

Ivan runs. He has room to stop. He could let the ball land.

Instead, he dives.

He crashes through the sculpture, destroying the towers with his chest and shoulders. Sand erupts. His friends howl with laughter.

The little boy stares at the ruins. His father looks at Ivan and understands that it was deliberate.

Billy takes a drink.

BILLY

Kid's got plenty of time to build another one.

Ivan stands, brushing sand from his arms. For a second, he cannot look at the child.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

I made it look like I was trying to catch the ball. I wasn't.

The father comes at Ivan.

BOY'S FATHER

I should bust you up, motherfucker.
I'mma bust you the fuck up.

A WOMAN runs over and grabs the father's arm.

WOMAN

Stop. He is a kid.

BOY'S FATHER
So is my son.

Ivan stops smiling.

Ivan looks at the collapsed city and remembers:

FLASH CUT -- YEARS EARLIER

Ivan's dad crouches in the sand, helping LITTLE IVAN reinforce the wall of a castle. Dad stands and immediately grabs his lower back.

DAD
Oh, hell. This is what freedom does
to your lower back.

Little Ivan laughs, then realizes Dad is actually hurt.

BACK TO BEACH

Ivan finds the football half-buried in the wreckage. He offers it to the little boy.

The boy will not take it.

EXT. BEACH -- LATER -- SUN LOWER

The destroyed sculpture is behind them.

The same four young men sit in a half-circle around a cooler. The Nova shines up in the parking lot.

Ivan draws a rectangle in the sand: the Kentacohut floor plan.

IVAN
Eighty-five thousand. Not for us. I
mean, technically it could be for
us. I was just saying a number
first.

ROBBIE
What?

IVAN
Fourth of July. Gas, chicken,
fireworks. Eighty-five thousand for
the day. Cash.

ROBBIE
How do you know?

IVAN

I work there. Last year it was eighty-six. Year before, eighty-four. The year before that, it was eighty-five thousand, nine hundred ninety-one dollars and five cents.

ROBBIE

Why do you know the five cents?

IVAN

Poly tells the story every Fourth. I wish I didn't know the five cents.

Robbie sits forward. Rory studies Ivan's drawing. Billy keeps watching the water.

IVAN

We go in after the last rush. Faces painted like those things in The Omega Man. Nobody sees people. They see a movie.

ROBBIE

Nobody has seen that movie, dude. But I see your point. You got a floor plan?

IVAN

You're sitting on it.

Robbie jumps up and crouches over the drawing.

BILLY

What do you need my car for?

IVAN

To get gone.
(then)
That sounded much better before I heard myself say it.

BILLY

You don't rob a place you work at.

IVAN

Why? Because they'd know me? That's a real question. I heard how stupid it was after I said it.

BILLY

Because you'll have to remember it.

Ivan redraws the front entrance after Robbie's heel wipes it away.

IVAN

We will be masked. We put up the flashing sign that says TEMPORARILY CLOSED. There is even a steel gate left over from the gas shortage during the Carter administration.

ROBBIE

The summer is basically over on July Fourth. I've been down here five fucking years. I've seen this place robbed before, but never for a haul like this.

IVAN

Nobody gets hurt.

ROBBIE

We give Poly ten grand and tell him to keep his fucking mouth shut.

BILLY

And if he doesn't want ten grand?

ROBBIE

Everybody wants ten grand.

BILLY

That isn't what I asked.

Robbie looks at the floor plan.

ROBBIE

Then we improvise.

Rory catches that on Robbie's lips.

RORY

Improvising is not a plan.

ROBBIE

Fine. Here is the plan.

FLASH-FORWARD -- ROBBIE'S VERSION OF THE ROBBERY

Everything is lurid, fast and ridiculous, like a fever dream directed by someone raised on late-night cable.

-- The Kentacohut gate SLAMS down.

-- Three OMEGA MAN CREATURES leap across the counter in slow motion.

-- Ivan, wearing the giant smiling mascot head, points two finger guns.

-- Cash flies through the air like confetti.

-- Polycronopolis reaches for an alarm.

-- Robbie and Rory seize him.

-- They swing Poly ASS-FIRST toward the open fryer.

-- The oil erupts. Poly's face becomes a rubbery TALES FROM THE CRYPT nightmare. His eyes bulge. His mouth screams smoke.

FANTASY POLYCRONOPOLIS
You boys have fried my ass!

-- The four friends roar away in the blue Nova while the Kentacohut explodes for no reason.

BACK TO BEACH

Robbie is laughing. Ivan laughs because it is too stupid not to.

Rory does not laugh.

RORY
Sounds like a plan to me.

IVAN
That story is horrible. You should change that story, man.

ROBBIE
It isn't a story. It's an operational scenario.

IVAN
Then change the scenario. It is not a plan. It is a joke.

ROBBIE
Sure.

BILLY
If it becomes a plan, we go to my land. No hotels. No downtown. Straight up French Mountain.

IVAN
Still a joke. I want the minutes to reflect that.

Billy looks at the floor plan in the sand.

BILLY

Then stop drawing it so well.

A thin wave reaches the bottom edge of the Kentacohut and erases the front door.

INT. KENTACOHUT OFFICE -- NIGHT

Polycronopolis counts the day's money. Ivan mops outside the open office door and watches every movement reflected in the glass.

Poly opens the safe. Inside: cash straps, keys and a handwritten JULY FOURTH projection.

Ivan sees the number: \$85,000.

Above him, THE OMEGA MAN continues on the television. White faces. Black contours.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

People always figured I got mixed up with those guys. That wasn't exactly how it happened. I found the guys I needed.

POLYCRONOPOLIS

Ivan. Office.

Ivan steps inside.

Poly hands him a pay envelope. It is thin.

IVAN

This is forty short.

POLYCRONOPOLIS

Drawer came up forty short Tuesday.

IVAN

I didn't work register Tuesday.

POLYCRONOPOLIS

Then consider it management training.

Poly closes the office door.

POLYCRONOPOLIS

You have potential to run this whole Kentacohut one day. College is a waste of time for somebody like you.

IVAN

Somebody like me? I don't love how open-ended that is.

POLYCRONOPOLIS

Don't get a big head. Your only competition is a burnout who cleans his car more than his pits, a lunatic who hasn't brushed his teeth since Memorial Day and a deaf guy who has diarrhea half the time.

Through the office glass, Rory sees Poly laughing but cannot read his mouth.

Poly gives Ivan a fatherly pat on the shoulder.

POLYCRONOPOLIS

You could be important here.

Ivan looks at the safe behind Poly.

IVAN

Can I still have my forty dollars? I feel like we drifted away from the forty dollars.

POLYCRONOPOLIS

That's exactly the small thinking I'm trying to train out of you.

Poly settles behind his desk as if the lesson has gone beautifully.

POLYCRONOPOLIS

Back in the seventies, workers were freer. A man didn't need every dollar itemized. He trusted his boss to have a boat.

IVAN

Did the worker also have a boat?

POLYCRONOPOLIS

See? Small thinking.

INT. OLD BEACH HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Robbie tests the disguises.

First, charcoal-black theatrical greasepaint.

Then chalky white painted over it, leaving thick black strokes around the eyes, mouth and edges of the face -- apocalyptic movie creatures copied from THE OMEGA MAN.

Rory examines himself in a mirror. Ivan tries on the enormous Kentacohut mascot head. The smiling chicken turns him into something ridiculous and anonymous.

ROBBIE
Nobody moves till I say.

IVAN
It's my plan. Technically. I'm
starting to dislike saying that.

ROBBIE
Then you should've planned who says
move.

Billy Swank watches from the doorway. He has not put on paint.

BILLY
Driver doesn't wear paint.

ROBBIE
Driver wears what we say.

Billy looks at him. Robbie looks away first.

Rory signs to Ivan.

RORY
(signing)
Are we really doing this?

Ivan stares at his own eyes through the mascot mouth.

IVAN
At face value? Apparently.

RORY
(signing)
What does that mean?

IVAN
I don't know. I was hoping you did.

Robbie smiles inside the white paint. Billy stays in the doorway. Rory watches all three of them.

Ivan lifts off the mascot head.

IVAN
I need some air.

He walks out.

ROBBIE
He is going to bail.

BILLY
Then we do it without him.

Rory watches the open door.

EXT. OLD BEACH HOTEL -- NIGHT

Ivan sits inside his faded BEIGE TOYOTA COROLLA.

The cheap seashell necklace from the previous summer hangs from the rearview mirror. He never gave it to the girl back home.

Ivan starts the engine. It coughs, catches and settles into an ordinary hum.

He looks across the lot at Billy's blue Nova.

The Nova shines under the parking-lot lights. The Corolla does not.

MOVEMENT THREE -- RAIN

The same places after the rain.

EXT. KENTACOHUT -- RAIN -- DAY

Rain erases the hard beach light. Water runs through the Kentacohut parking lot carrying cigarette butts, chicken breasting and red firework wrappers.

The four young men stand around the blue Nova in the exact arrangement as before.

Nobody has a fountain drink now.

Nobody touches the car except Billy.

ROBBIE
We need two more bags.

IVAN
For what? Like, volume?

ROBBIE
The money.

IVAN
You don't know how much space
eighty-five thousand takes. Neither
do I, but you seem more wrong.

ROBBIE
Neither do you.

Rory watches their faces, missing pieces whenever they turn away.

ROBBIE
Look, Ivan. You are a
bitch-made-ass faggot. But you are
a bitch-made-ass faggot who comes
from money, so I'm going to give
you a hall pass.

IVAN
Thank you, professor.

ROBBIE
The rule of the poor is one is
none. What if a bag rips? What if
there is something in that safe
worth a ton, but we don't have a
motherfucking bag for it? Go to the
bag store and get two bags.

IVAN
There is no bag store. I feel
strangely confident about this.

ROBBIE
Every store is a bag store if you
buy a bag.

Rory signs to Billy.

RORY
(signing)
Is this still a joke?

Billy keeps polishing rainwater from the same piece of
chrome.

BILLY
Ask Ivan.

IVAN
Jesus. Okay. I am going to a store
that becomes a bag store when I buy
the bags. That's apparently my day.

Robbie smiles. Ivan doesn't. Rory looks between them.

INT. MOUNTAIN COVE BEACH SHOP -- RAIN -- LATER

Ivan sets two canvas duffel bags on the counter.

The same CLERK from the seashell necklace looks up from a magazine. He recognizes Ivan after only a moment.

CLERK
Girl from back home work out?

IVAN
No.

CLERK
There you go. My advice worked.

IVAN
I never called her.

CLERK
Exactly. People were freer back in the eighties because we didn't know where anybody was.

He rings up the bags.

CLERK
What you need two bags for?

IVAN
Laundry.

CLERK
Never tell a stranger what's in your bag.

IVAN
You asked me.

CLERK
That was before I remembered the rule.

IVAN
Is that wisdom again?

CLERK
No. Store policy.

Ivan pays and leaves with the bags.

INT. KENTACOHUT -- RAIN -- LATER

The chicken wilts beneath the heat lamps.

Robbie rubs his teeth with one finger. He has not brushed them in a week and seems proud of the fact.

Polycronopolis orders Rory to clean the fryers, speaking while turned away so Rory cannot read his lips.

RORY
What'd he say?

IVAN
Said take your break. I was trying to help and then, halfway through, made a different choice.

It is funny for one second.

Then Poly returns, furious.

POLYCRONOPOLIS
You fucking little cocksucker.
Smart ass.

IVAN
He couldn't see you. Volume was not the missing ingredient.

POLYCRONOPOLIS
I was talking loud.

RORY
That is not how deaf works, dude.

Poly points at Robbie.

POLYCRONOPOLIS
I'm going to take a big shit. I had Spam again last night, and that stuff runs right through my butt gutters. Robbie, it is your turn to clean the bathroom.

ROBBIE
I'll clean it when you're done.

POLYCRONOPOLIS
You will clean it while I'm taking my shit. Save time. Back in the seventies, people were free to work during another man's bowel movement.

ROBBIE
What the fuck, man?

IVAN
I can help him. With the cleaning.
Not with the bowel movement.

POLYCRONOPOLIS
No the fuck you will not. You will
watch the front, bitch-made boy.

Poly enters the restroom with a newspaper.

Robbie stares at the closed door.

ROBBIE
Ten grand is off the table.

IVAN
It was never on the table. It was
hypothetical bribery.

ROBBIE
It was to him.

INT. KENTACOHUT RESTROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Robbie scrubs the sink while Polycronopolis sits in the
stall behind him.

POLYCRONOPOLIS (O.S.)
You missed a spot.

ROBBIE
You can't see the sink from there.

POLYCRONOPOLIS (O.S.)
I can smell your work ethic.

Robbie looks at himself in the mirror. Poly's shoes are
visible beneath the stall.

For one moment, Robbie holds the wet toilet brush like a
weapon.

Then he drops it.

INT. OLD BEACH HOTEL BATHROOM -- RAIN -- NIGHT

Mark Summerfield is still in the tub. His beard is
unmistakable now. The water is gray and low. Rain taps the
small frosted window.

MARK
Y'all going somewhere?

IVAN
Maybe.

MARK
Bring me back a toothbrush.

Ivan closes the door without answering.

He stops, opens it again and sets a wrapped hotel toothbrush on the sink.

Mark does not reach for it.

EXT./INT. BLUE NOVA -- FRENCH MOUNTAIN ROAD -- RAIN -- NIGHT

The second mountain drive.

Same seats, different weather.

The windshield wipers cannot keep up. The road appears only a few yards at a time.

ROBBIE

You ever think maybe we should just
leave this place?

Billy does not repeat his old answer.

IVAN

It's still a joke till the Fourth.

ROBBIE

No. It ain't.

Lightning shows a collapsed barn beside the road and,
farther up, an abandoned turnout hidden by trees.

Billy drives faster.

BILLY

You know what makes women happy?

IVAN

Money.

BILLY

It goes deeper than that. What does
a fresh hundred-dollar bill look
like?

RORY

Smells good. Crisp.

BILLY

Also new. Shiny. Back in the
caveman days, people were freer.
One man would beat another man and
take his woman. Sometimes she'd be
shocked, but a couple days later
she would be happy because the new
man was bigger. Better. Shinier.

IVAN

I am getting lost here, and I stayed with you all the way through cavemen.

BILLY

Women always have a backup plan for something bigger. They have to be savages to save their young ones. It isn't a diss on women.

IVAN

It sounds exactly like a diss on women. Like, definitionally.

ROBBIE

No. I get what he's saying.

Ivan looks back at Robbie.

IVAN

Of course you do. That makes me more concerned, not less.

ROBBIE

Poly is the only real problem. He knows our voices. He knows how we stand. He knows Rory signs.

IVAN

That's why we bribe him.

ROBBIE

No. That's why if he says one of our names, he doesn't say another one.

The car becomes very quiet.

IVAN

What does that mean? I know what it sounds like. I'm giving you a chance to say it doesn't mean that.

Robbie reaches beneath his jacket and shows Ivan the handle of a small REVOLVER.

ROBBIE

It means one is none.

IVAN

You said bags. You were extremely specific about bags.

ROBBIE
I was talking about everything.

IVAN
Stop the car.

BILLY
Not on this road.

IVAN
Stop the fucking car.

Billy does not.

Rory watches Ivan's mouth.

RORY
(signing)
Are you out?

Ivan looks at Robbie's gun. Then at Billy. Then at the road vanishing behind them.

IVAN
I was never in. I was near it. That
felt different at the time.

ROBBIE
You drew the map.

Lightning reveals the abandoned turnout again.

Ivan memorizes it.

EXT. ABANDONED TURNOUT -- FRENCH MOUNTAIN -- BEFORE DAWN

Rain has weakened to a mist.

Ivan returns alone in his faded beige Toyota Corolla. He pulls beneath the trees, kills the lights and covers the car with a weathered brown tarp.

The others believe the Corolla is sitting dead at a transmission shop near the hotel. Ivan told them it had finally quit.

Inside the car:

- Clean clothes.
- Forty-six dollars.
- A paper highway atlas.
- Two bottles of water.

-- No weapon.

The seashell necklace hangs from the rearview mirror.

Ivan checks the driver's door and tapes the spare key beneath the frame.

Then he starts walking toward a twenty-four-hour truck stop six miles down the mountain, where no one will ask why he needs a ride back to Mountain Cove before sunrise.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

Robbie crossed the line in the car.
I couldn't have told you where the
line was before that. Once he
crossed it, I found it very easy to
see.

EXT. BEACH -- AFTER THE RAIN -- PALE AFTERNOON

Ivan walks alone. The crowds are gone.

Far down the beach, a LITTLE BOY builds a sandcastle with both hands.

Something about the boy -- his hair, his shoulders, the way he digs -- resembles Ivan as a child.

The boy looks up.

CUT TO:

YELLOWED HOME-MOVIE FOOTAGE -- THE BEACH -- YEARS EARLIER

The real Ivan, much younger, builds castles in the sand.

The film skips and trembles.

A light rain begins, darkening the sand and softening every sharp edge.

The castles become ancient ruins in miniature.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

When I was little, I built these
castles down here. It started
raining right before we had to
leave. Not hard. Just enough to
make them sink down a little.

The image jumps.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)
 It made them look weathered. Like
 they'd already been there a hundred
 years. But I had to leave before
 the tide came in.

His father calls from somewhere beyond the yellow frame.
 Little Ivan stands and looks back at what he built.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)
 I thought about them all the way
 home. I knew the water was going to
 take them. But I couldn't
 understand why they couldn't just
 stay there forever.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. BEACH -- PALE AFTERNOON

The mysterious little boy is gone.
 A thin wave reaches the castle he left behind.
 Ivan turns away before it falls.
 He makes it six steps, stops and turns back.
 He forces himself to watch the water take the first tower.

MOVEMENT FOUR -- DUSK

The robbery starts before dark.

EXT. KENTACOHUT -- JULY FOURTH -- LATE AFTERNOON

The biggest day of the year.
 Cars crowd the pumps. Families carry fireworks by the
 armload. Grease, gasoline and gunpowder hang together in the
 heat.

The sun descends while the Kentacohut fills with cash.

INT. KENTACOHUT -- SERIES OF SHOTS -- AFTERNOON INTO DUSK

-- Chicken disappears from trays faster than Ivan can
 replace it.
 -- Robbie watches the safe instead of the customers.
 -- Rory misses an order and Polycronopolis screams it
 directly into his face.

-- Billy waits at the far pump, polishing one small piece of chrome.

-- Ivan switches on the flashing TEMPORARILY CLOSED sign to test it.

-- Poly switches it off and slaps the back of Ivan's head.

-- The office ledger climbs toward \$85,000.

-- The sky outside turns gold, then orange, then bruised purple.

INT. OLD BEACH HOTEL ROOM -- DUSK

Robbie and Rory transform.

Charcoal-black paint. White over it. Heavy black contours left around eyes and mouths.

Robbie's hands shake from excitement.

Rory watches the mirror.

Billy pockets the Nova keys. He remains unpainted.

The giant Kentacohut mascot head sits empty on the bed.

ROBBIE
He bailed.

BILLY
Then we go without him.

Rory signs.

RORY
(signing)
Without the man who knows the safe?

ROBBIE
I know the safe.

Rory points to the mascot head.

RORY
(signing)
Without the chicken?

The hotel door opens.

Ivan stands there in clean black clothes.

He lifts the mascot head and lowers it over his face.

IVAN
Nobody gets hurt. We take the cash
and go.

ROBBIE
Nobody gets hurt if nobody does
anything stupid.

IVAN
That includes us. Mostly us,
actually.

BILLY
When the money touches my car, the
road belongs to me.

Rory looks between them.

RORY
What includes us?

Ivan lifts the mascot head just enough to look at Robbie.

IVAN
Poly lives. I don't want to phrase
that like a request.

Robbie wipes white paint from his teeth.

ROBBIE
Then Poly better be smart.

Rory catches that sentence.

He quietly picks up two of the empty bags.

EXT. KENTACOHUT -- DUSK

Billy parks the Nova behind the dumpster with its engine
running.

Ivan switches on the TEMPORARILY CLOSED sign.

Rory pulls down the old steel gate from the Carter years.

Robbie watches the last customer drive away.

INT. KENTACOHUT -- DUSK

The front doors BURST OPEN.

Ivan enters beneath the grinning mascot head.

Robbie and Rory follow, their faces painted like apocalyptic
creatures from THE OMEGA MAN.

Outside, the first fireworks detonate in the violet sky.

Ivan gives the orders. He knows exactly where everyone has to stand.

IVAN
(through mascot head)
Lock the door. Robbie, office.
Rory, watch the pumps.

Polycronopolis freezes beside the fryer station.

POLYCRONOPOLIS
What the hell is this?

IVAN
Open the safe. You get ten thousand
for forgetting us.

POLYCRONOPOLIS
I know you.

Ivan tilts the smiling chicken head.

IVAN
Then forget harder.

Poly studies him. He does not have it yet.

Robbie moves toward the office.

ROBBIE
Open it.

Poly looks at Robbie.

Robbie rubs his teeth with one finger.

Recognition arrives.

POLYCRONOPOLIS
Robbie?

Robbie draws the revolver.

IVAN
No.

Robbie fires.

The gunshot is swallowed by a FIREWORK exploding outside.

Poly falls beside the fryer. His hand knocks a basket into the oil. The sound is small. Nothing like the fantasy.

For a beat, nobody moves.

Rory did not hear the shot. He sees Poly on the floor and drops beside him.

IVAN
You brought a gun.

ROBBIE
He said my name.

IVAN
You killed him.

ROBBIE
He said my name.

IVAN
You're already changing the story.
He's still dead in both versions.

Rory presses both hands against Poly's chest. Blood pushes through his fingers.

Poly looks up at Ivan's smiling mascot face.

POLYCRONOPOLIS
I told you that you had potential.

His eyes lose focus.

Rory looks at Ivan and shakes his head.

Robbie yanks open the office door.

ROBBIE
Get the money.

Ivan does not move.

Robbie shoves one of the empty bags into Ivan's chest.

ROBBIE
You made the plan.

Ivan takes the bag and enters the office.

They empty the safe.

Cash straps fill three bags.

Rory takes one.

Robbie takes one.

Ivan takes one.

Ivan looks back at Poly. Rory closes Poly's eyes.

EXT. KENTACOHUT -- DUSK

The blue Nova erupts from the parking lot beneath fireworks.

The blue Nova crosses the last orange strip of sky and disappears.

INT. BLUE NOVA -- HIGHWAY -- DUSK

The third mountain drive and the first true getaway.

Billy drives.

Ivan holds a money bag. The mascot head sits on his lap, still smiling.

Robbie has white paint on his teeth and a revolver in his hand.

Rory holds pressure on his blood-covered palms with a hotel towel. The other money bags are at his feet.

RORY
Is he alive?

ROBBIE
Who?

RORY
You know who.

IVAN
Nobody talks till we're off the highway. I realize I am talking while I say that.

ROBBIE
Now you want to be in charge.

IVAN
You murdered him.

ROBBIE
He recognized me.

IVAN
Because you rubbed your teeth like you do every minute of every day. I cannot believe that's part of the explanation.

ROBBIE
Then I fixed it.

BILLY
Put the gun away.

Ivan looks at Billy.

IVAN
You knew?

BILLY
I knew he had it. I didn't know he
would use it.

IVAN
Why else would he bring it? That
was not rhetorical.

Nobody answers.

Fireworks grow smaller behind them.

Rory silently pulls all three money bags toward his side of
the back seat.

ROBBIE
Poly was going to throw us under
the bus.

IVAN
Poly is dead.

ROBBIE
Then he learned.

Ivan stares at Robbie.

ROBBIE
What?

IVAN
You are the crazy thing you kept
warning us might happen.

Robbie lifts the revolver. Everyone stops moving.

BILLY
Put it down or get out.

ROBBIE
You can't do this without me.

Rory watches the gun, not their mouths.

BILLY
We already did it.

The last firework vanishes behind the mountain.

EXT./INT. BLUE NOVA -- FRENCH MOUNTAIN ROAD -- NIGHT

The Nova climbs into darkness.

Fog. Curves. Headlights. Engine noise.

Robbie turns around to check for headlights. Billy looks at him instead of the road.

BILLY
Sit down.

A deer flashes across the beams.

The Nova swerves off the road.

Ahead: the old barn.

The blue Nova SMASHES THROUGH IT.

Rotten boards, hay and blue engine noise explode together.

The car vanishes inside the structure --

-- then punches through the opposite wall and drops back onto the mountain road.

Silence in the car except for the injured engine.

RORY
What happened?

Nobody knows whether he is joking.

The Nova limps another fifty yards before Billy wrestles it into a pull-off.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PULLOFF -- NIGHT

The damage reveals itself.

The Nova's hood is folded. Steam rolls from the radiator. Its beautiful blue body is powdered with old barn wood.

Billy has a deep cut over one eye.

Ivan's mascot head is split along its permanent smile.

Robbie's ankle is trapped beneath the twisted passenger seat. He screams when Ivan and Billy pull him free.

One money bag has torn open. Loose bills and cash straps lie among hay and broken glass.

Rory is the only one who is not badly hurt.

While the others argue over Robbie's ankle, Rory gathers the loose money. He packs it into the two intact bags.

The revolver lies beneath the driver's seat.

Rory sees it.

He leaves it there.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PULLOFF -- BEFORE DAWN

The Nova finally dies.

The four men gather around it like they did on the bright first day. Now the mountains are black around them.

Robbie sits on the ground, his ankle swelling inside his boot.

Billy listens to the ruined engine.

Rory stands beside the two intact money bags.

Ivan looks uphill toward the hidden turnout.

ROBBIE
Count it.

RORY
No.

ROBBIE
Count the money.

Rory signs something. Robbie cannot understand it.

ROBBIE
Use your mouth.

RORY
No.

Ivan starts uphill.

BILLY
Where are you going?

Ivan stops.

ROBBIE
He has another car.

Billy looks at Ivan.

BILLY
Do you?

Ivan says nothing.

Robbie reaches through the broken driver's window and finds the revolver beneath the seat.

He points it at Ivan.

ROBBIE
You planned to leave us.

IVAN
I planned to leave you.

ROBBIE
Same thing.

IVAN
Not anymore.

Robbie tries to stand. His ankle folds. The gun swings toward Billy, then Rory.

Billy steps between the barrel and the Nova.

BILLY
You fire that near my car, I'll
kill you myself.

ROBBIE
With what?

Billy takes one step closer.

Robbie lowers the gun.

Rory lifts both money bags.

ROBBIE
Put those down.

Rory turns toward an old service trail descending through the trees.

ROBBIE
Rory. Put the money down.

Rory keeps walking.

Robbie raises the gun again.

Ivan kicks Robbie's broken ankle.

Robbie collapses with a scream. The revolver slides beneath the Nova.

Rory looks back.

He signs slowly enough for all of them to understand.

RORY
(signing)
You all kept talking. I listened.

Then he disappears down the service trail with the money.

ROBBIE
He can't get far.

IVAN
You forgot he has legs.

Far below the mountain, a siren begins.

Billy looks toward the sound, then toward the Nova.

Ivan picks up the cracked mascot head and starts uphill.

MOVEMENT FIVE -- DAWN

Morning.

EXT. ABANDONED TURNOUT -- DAWN

Pale light enters the mountains.

Ivan pulls the tarp from his BEIGE TOYOTA COROLLA.

It is a beige Toyota Corolla. Nobody would look at it twice.

He retrieves the key from beneath the frame and opens the driver's door.

Clean clothes wait on the passenger seat.

The seashell necklace hangs from the mirror.

Ivan places the split mascot head beside the clothes. The chicken continues to smile at him.

Billy appears at the edge of the turnout. Blood has dried beside his eye. He does not raise a weapon. He does not call the others.

BILLY
You planned this part too?

IVAN
I planned needing another way out.

BILLY
Same thing.

Billy looks inside the Corolla.

BILLY
Rory took everything.

IVAN
Good.

BILLY
Nobody got away clean.

Ivan looks down the mountain toward the Nova.

IVAN
Come with me.

Billy looks back toward the blue car.

BILLY
I don't leave my car.

IVAN
You should.

Billy does not move.

Ivan gets behind the wheel.

BILLY
It made it through the barn.

IVAN
I know.

Billy closes Ivan's door for him.

INT. TOYOTA COROLLA -- MOUNTAIN ROAD -- DAWN

The fourth and final mountain drive.

Ivan is alone now.

No blue hood in front of him.

No friends in the mirror.

The cracked mascot head rides in the passenger seat. The seashell necklace trembles above it.

Ivan drives into cold dawn light.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

It was my plan. I spent a long time saying I wasn't the one who made it serious.

The road brightens.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

By breakfast, Robbie was in a hospital with a deputy beside him. Billy was sitting next to the Nova when the state police found him. Rory walked off French Mountain with seventy-nine thousand dollars and change. Nobody ever found him or the money.

Ivan passes a sign:

MOUNTAIN COVE -- 27 MILES

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

I made it six days. Billy gave them my name first. Robbie gave it second. They called me the mastermind. That wasn't fair. It also wasn't false.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BEACH HOTEL ROOM -- MORNING -- MEMORY

An empty hotel room.

Curtains breathe in the ocean air.

Boogie boards lean against the wall.

Floaties rest in the bathtub.

The wrapped toothbrush remains on the sink.

Sand glitters in the carpet.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

I felt the same way about the hotel room. Some part of me believed it stayed exactly the way we left it. The boogie boards against the wall. The floaties in the bathtub. Sand in the carpet. Everything everybody ever left behind when they had to go home.

The indentation of a sleeping body remains on one bed.

Distant laughter rises from the pool, although nobody is there.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

Those were the salad days, though none of us would have called them that. I was happy. I loved those guys. I didn't trust them. Both things were true.

Sunlight moves slowly across the empty carpet.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

Every man I knew had a decade when people had supposedly been freer. Dad had the sixties and seventies. The seashell guy had the eighties. Poly also claimed the seventies, mostly for labor violations. Billy went all the way back to cavemen.

Nobody ever picked the year we were actually standing in. Freedom was always something that had ended five minutes before you got there.

EXT. BEACH -- YELLOWED HOME-MOVIE FOOTAGE

The childhood castles sink slightly beneath the gentle rain. The tide waits beyond them.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)

For years I kept changing the story until it sounded like summer happened to me. Billy's car. Robbie's gun. Rory and the money. Every version still had the floor plan in my handwriting.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD -- DAWN

The beige Corolla becomes smaller against the pale road until it is only another moving object in the morning.

OLDER IVAN (V.O.)
We threw each other under the bus
because every one of us thought
there would only be room for one
when morning came.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PULLOFF -- DAWN

The blue Nova sits wounded in the new light.
Robbie lies beside the road, holding his ankle.
Red and blue police lights move through the distant curves.
Billy gets behind the wheel of the Nova.
He turns the key.
The blue engine catches once.
For one beautiful second, it ROARS.
Then it dies.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH -- MORNING

The little boy's abandoned sandcastle stands at the edge of
the tide.
A wave reaches the first wall.
The final tower folds into the water.

FADE OUT.

THE END