

Old Growth

Paul Hans Strebe

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paul.strebe@gmail.com

ACT I

1 INT. BACK OFFICE, HOTEL CHICORY - 1903

Cold Open: Sitting at a desk is ALEKSI LAKSO (60s, white-grey hair, hardened features, dressed in business suit) in backroom hotel office. Pictures and decorations show lumber industry and north woods. There is a knock on the door.

ALEXSI

Yes, enter.

FRONT DESK CLERK

opening door

Mr. Lakso, there's a man to see you.

ALEXSI

Yes, show him in.

CUSTOMER (well-dressed business man in his 50s) enters and wait for FRONT DESK CLERK to close door

I brought the amount we discussed.

handing ALEXSI a BAG

ALEXSI

Excellent. I trust I won't have to count it?

CUSTOMER

No, sir.

ALEXSI

Well, Olaf and I know where to find you if there's a problem

beat

Very well. I'll meet you out back in five minutes.

CUSTOMER

Thank you, sir.

exits

ALEXSI walks to corner of office where a statue of the town founder sits on a pedestal. He moves little ax in statue's hands and the bookcase next to him shifts to reveal a dimly-lit stairway leading into the basement. ALEXSI rapidly descends steps.

2 INT. BASEMENT ALCOVE - SECONDS LATER

ALEXSI emerges into small windowless room with a low ceiling. ALEXSI removes keys from pocket, opens a heavily-fortified door, and enters a large room.

3 INT. BASEMENT JAILHOUSE - CONTINUOUSLY

Along the walls are jail cells containing girls in their teens. OLAF (20s, male, muscular) sits on a chair outside the cells.

ALEXSI

Olaf, we'll need number 4.

OLAF

Alright, then. I'll get her suitcase.

ALEXSI

to a GIRL (about 16, long hair, torn dress, burns on her legs) in one of the cells

Today's your checkout day. We hope you keep your new employer happy. Remember what happens to girls who don't.

GIRL

But please, I just want to go home!
Please! Please! Noooooo!!

ALEXSI puts CANVAS BAG over GIRL'S head and she stops crying abruptly.

Title sequence

4 INT. HENRY'S SHOP - DAY

A late summer's day. HENRY LAKSO (50-something, lumpy, balding, poorly-shaven) sits behind a sparse display case in his shabby music store talking on phone. MIKA LAKSO (Henry's 13-year old son, acne, pudgy, poorly groomed) in background trying to play a banged up guitar. No customers in store.

HENRY

Look, I know it's been 14 days, but I'm just having some cashflow issues right now. I'm expecting things to turn around soon.

Looks at PHONE screen.

Say-say Bill, I'm going to need to call you back. Yeah... it's my mom.

Pushes button on PHONE.

Hi, Mom. What's up?

5 INT./EXT. DORIS'S CAR ON CITY STREET - DAY

Driving erratically, DORIS LAKSO (Henry's mother: early 80s, once confident, now confused.) On street of

DORIS

Henry, I seem to be a little lost. I wanted to over to this new craft shop Margie told me about to get a pattern for some larger mittens for Mike, since last winter I noticed he wasn't wearing any, maybe because he's getting so big and all, and it was so cold...

HENRY (O.S.)

Mom, you know Dr. Sonstadt said you should restrict your driving to just the places you know well, like the grocery and the drug store.

DORIS

I know, but Margie said this store is really something and she had this coupon...

HENRY (O.S.)
Mom, where are you?

DORIS
Well, that's the thing. I took a right
on the road by Maxwell's and...

Looking around, drives through intersection with red light
and is hit very violently by large vehicle coming at her from
driver's side. Blur of glass, metal and fire.

6 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - AN HOUR LATER

HENRY and MIKA standing. CANDY LAKSO enters. (Henry's wife:
Early 30s, attractive and well-dressed, but shallow and self-
centered.)

HENRY
Hey. Thanks for coming down.

CANDY
Well, I was on break.

HENRY
Doctor says lots of internal bleeding.
Probably won't make it. Want to see
her?

MIKA nods.

CANDY
I guess...

7 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - MINUTES LATER

HENRY standing over DORIS, who is connected to various
monitors but looks comfortable. CANDY and MIKA in background.

HENRY
Mom, I just...

DORIS
I know, dear. It's just my time, I
guess.

HENRY

Mom, I just wanna say...

DORIS

Henry, Listen. I know your life hasn't been very easy or happy. But if I don't make it out of here, I want you to have something that's in the bottom of my dresser. It was your father's. He probably forgot about it. He'd probably want it destroyed if he were still alive, but I think enough years have passed and maybe it'll give you a new start. I don't know.

HENRY

OK, thanks.

Kisses DORIS on forehead.

8 INT. DORIS'S KITCHEN - A WEEK LATER

CANDY and MIKA in formal clothes, standing. Piles of dirty dishes, papers, etc., clutter the counters.

CANDY

Well, it was a nice service. But I wonder how much they charged? Those flowers...

MIKA

Looking in cabinets and refrigerator.

Man, I could use something to eat.

CANDY

Looking in cabinets, wrinkling nose.

I know. That chicken salad was, like, ewww.

HENRY enters with PAPERS.

MIKA

Dad, did you find it?

HENRY

Reading and flipping pages.

I think so.

CANDY

Is it money? We could use more of that.

HENRY

Looks like a deed to some land up in... Anola -- where my dad's family was from.

MIKA

Weird. How many... yards?

HENRY

Acres. Looks like about 30.

CANDY

Is that a lot? Because it would be nice if we could sell it, you know, for the cash. Or at least sell off the trees and minerals or whatever...

HENRY

Anyone feel like going up to look at it this weekend?

CANDY

I've got the day shift Saturday.

MIKA

Yeah, I'd be up for it.

HENRY

Tentatively pats MIKA on shoulder.

Great!

9 INT./EXT. HENRY'S TRUCK ON TWO-LANE ROAD - NEXT MORNING

HENRY and MIKA driving on mostly flat land scattered with modest homes and small wooded areas. Exterior shot shows them in older van with "Quality Music" on side.

MIKA

So what's the deal? Why did grandma keep this land? I mean, you guys haven't even been here. And it's actually in grandpa's home town? So weird.

HENRY

Yeah, well, I'm not so sure myself. I do know that your grandpa's family was, "colorful", so to speak.

MIKA

What do you mean?

HENRY

Well, grandma said something about his family being involved in, sort of, illegal stuff I guess.

MIKA

You mean like, what? Drugs?

HENRY

No, nothing like that. Probably, you know, just like, I don't know... bootlegging?

MIKA

Huh?

HENRY

You know, selling alcohol when it was illegal.

HENRY

Oh, OK.

10 INT./EXT. HENRY'S TRUCK, LAONA - A COUPLE HOURS LATER

HENRY and MIKA are driving down main drag of small northern town of about 1,000. A couple shuttered businesses, but also some new ones. The only cars parked on the street are in front of the many taverns. The foundation remaining from a large building on the corner is overgrown with weeds.

MIKA

This is the town?

HENRY

Yep.

MIKA

What do people do here?

HENRY

"Live", I guess. This area used to be known for lumbering. Back in the early 1900s, wood from here built houses as far away as Chicago.

MIKA

So what happened?

HENRY

Well, all the old-growth timber was cut down. The only way they could make a living was a plant new trees and wait. And most didn't want to I guess.

MIKA

Why did grandpa's family live here?

HENRY

I don't know much about it, but I guess his father moved here from Finland and raised the family here.

They turn and drive past a high school and library that's well-kept.

HENRY

Not a bad looking school and library. Some civilization up here, anyway.

MIKA

School? Civilization? Whatever.

A beat. Then puts hands on side of head and then looks at HENRY.

What?

HENRY

I didn't say anything, buddy.

MIKA

Well, someone did.

HENRY
What did they say?

MIKA
"No one will like you."

HENRY
Hmmm... well, I certainly wouldn't say
that.

11 EXT. RESORT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

HENRY and MIKA turn again on to side road and drive through trees until they come out to a clearing in front of a lake and the tumble-down remains of an old 1920s resort.

MIKA
Whoa... But you said acres. I thought
it was a farm?

HENRY
Me too... But the soil up here isn't
that good for farming, so...

HENRY and MIKA stop and get out of truck. There's a big building and little cabins extending out along the shore.

HENRY
Wow, an old resort.

HENRY and MIKA walk toward the main building. The windows are boarded up and parts of the roof are caved in, but the building is in otherwise decent shape.

HENRY
This would have been the restaurant
and office I guess.

MIKA
But I thought this was, like, a lumber
town?

HENRY
Well it would have been until that
industry died out. Then I suppose they
switched to tourism.

MIKA

You think someone is living here? I mean, look at the tire tracks and all the garbage over there.

HENRY

Don't know.

Old truck comes down driveway and stops close to HENRY and MIKA. WENDELL rolls down window.

WENDELL

Greetings!

Extending hand out window.

Welcome to the beautiful environs of Anola!

HENRY and MIKA step forward.

HENRY

Ah, thanks. I'm Henry Lakso. This is my son, Mike.

Shaking hands.

WENDELL

The name's Wendell.

HENRY

Well, we just inherited this land.

WENDELL

I know. We've been wondering when you'd show up.

HENRY

Really?

WENDELL

Nah. Just saw your truck from across the lake.

Pointing.

My place is over there.

But you're Alexi's great grandson,
right?

HENRY
Uh, yeah. How'd you know?

WENDELL
Well, a town like this keeps tabs on
stuff like that.

HENRY
I see.

WENDELL
Well, you might run into Cliff.

HENRY
Who's that?

WENDELL
Oh, just a local who likes to come
around. Well, best of luck to you!

Pulls away in truck and drives back up road.

12 INT. HENRY'S SHOP - NEXT DAY

HENRY on phone. MIKA trying to play old banjo.

HENRY
Evict me? No, you can't do that. I
said I can get the money. I'm just...
give me a couple more days, OK?

Hangs up

We're going to lose the store. I don't
know what I'm going to do.

MIKA
Dad, maybe it's a sign.

HENRY
What's a sign?! My inability to
succeed at anything?

MIKA
No. That we should move.

HENRY

Where?

MIKA

You know, to Anola.

13 INT. HENRY AND CANDY'S KITCHEN - THAT EVENING

HENRY, CANDY and MIKA at dinner table.

MIKA

And the lake is really clear, Mom. We could get a boat and...

CANDY

And what? Fish? Those things are gross. I still say we sell it. Lake-front property? I bet we could make a killing.

MIKA grabs side of head again and looks confused.

HENRY

Well, Candy, here's the thing. The store... it's not doing so well and...

CANDY

What? You want to give up on it just like you did on the little music school and high school teaching and the jazz whatever-you-call-it...

HENRY

Conservatory. And no, I didn't give up those, I failed. I flunked out of the conservatory, was fired from high school and went bankrupt with the music school.

CANDY

Well, you did succeed at one thing -- you got me from your high school class.

HENRY

Yes I did. But listen: Maybe we should think about selling everything and

moving up to Anola. We could start fresh and...

CANDY

To Anola!? Some dump up north!? Forget it. You can leave me out of it.

Standing up from table.

I'm going to go get ready because *I'm* going to the movies with Celeste. You two can do the dishes.

CANDY walks upstairs indignantly. HENRY writes something on a piece of paper and hands it to MIKA, who reads it, nods, and places it on table. They get up and grab their coats, go out to the garage and quietly load camping equipment into car. They get into car and slowly back out of the garage. CANDY looks out window and smirks.

ACT II

14 EXT. RESORT - NEXT MORNING

Tent pitched next to resort office. HENRY hunched over fire with grill and coffee pot. MIKA unzips tent and steps out, rubbing eyes and yawning.

HENRY

Hungry?

MIKA

Yeah.

HENRY

Well, I'll get some oatmeal together.

points to outhouse

I put some toilet paper in the Biffy.

MIKA

Biffy?

HENRY

The crapper.

MIKA nods and walks towards the resort office while HENRY pulls out more supplies.

15 INT. RESORT OFFICE - A COUPLE MINUTES LATER

MIKA enters and walks through the rooms -- front room, hall, dining room, kitchen. Sees bed and clothing, along with bottles and other garbage in back part of kitchen.

16 EXT. RESORT - CONTINUOUS

MIKA emerges from resort office.

HENRY

Anything interesting?

MIKA

It's weird. Looks like maybe someone was living in there at some point. A bed, blankets...

HENRY

Hmm...

handing MIKA BOWL of oatmeal

Yeah, I saw similar signs when I looked in a couple of the cabins earlier this morning.

MIKA

crouching down next to fire and eating

Dad, you think Mom will care that we left without her?

HENRY

It's hard to know what Mom cares about these days.

MIKA

Dad, you know how she said she was out with Celeste last Saturday? I heard her when she came home and it was real late and I looked out the window and a guy was at the wheel...

HENRY

sighs

Yeah...

a beat

But what do you say we look around some more and then drive into town? I tell ya, this place has some potential. I mean, it looks pretty rough, but the bones are intact. The power's been upgraded and the furnace isn't even that old. The kitchen appliances are serviceable...

MIKA

Yeah, Dad. This is pretty cool.

smiles and stands up

I'm going to walk up the shore and
check stuff out.

17 INT./EXT. HENRY'S TRUCK - AN HOUR LATER

HENRY and MIKA driving. They see sign "Tourist Office" and
little building attached to larger souvenir shop.

HENRY

Let's see what they can tell us.

pulling into parking lot

18 INT. TOURIST OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

HENRY and MIKA enter. TOURIST OFFICE HOST behind counter.
Woman in 70s, well put together.

TOURIST OFFICE HOST

Good morning.

HENRY

Well, hello. We're new to town and
just thought we'd stop in and kind of
get our bearings.

TOURIST OFFICE HOST

Well, great. Are you here for a few
days, or...

HENRY

No, we, well... we own some property.
Actually, the old resort out on
Brinspar Road... on Delco Lake.

TOURIST OFFICE HOST

Ahhh... You mean the old Revere Resort
and Supper Club. Has been out of
business for, oh, twenty-some years
I'd say. Did you just buy it?

HENRY

No, I inherited it from my mother.

TOURIST OFFICE HOST

The Laksos?

HENRY

Yes, I'm Henry and this is my son,
Mika.

TOURIST OFFICE HOST looks startled, but then tries to
maintain composure.

TOURIST OFFICE HOST

Well, I'm Ethel Zinkle. I've lived
here 72 years.

HENRY

Well, pleasure to meet you.

TOURIST OFFICE HOST

Ah, well... what are you planning to
do with the property?

HENRY

laughs

Well, not exactly sure just yet.

TOURIST OFFICE HOST

Well, so, what do you know about
Anola?

HENRY

Not much, I'm afraid. My father's
family was from here, and --

TOURIST OFFICE HOST

Oh, I knew your father and your
grandfather... Although I'm a bit too
young to have known your great
grandfather, Alexi. Anyway, Anola was
pretty much built so-to-speak, on
lumber. I'm afraid it's fallen a bit
from its hey day. Fire destroyed much
of the main street back in the 1920s.
That included your great grandfather's
hotel, you know.

HENRY

Wait, my family had a hotel before the resort?

TOURIST OFFICE HOST

Oh yes. Your great grandfather and grandfather built the resort after the fire.

MIKA

What caused the fire?

TOURIST OFFICE HOST

Well, no one's quite sure, but there were rumors... I'm sure you know more about it than I do. Anyway, here are some pamphlets and some maps that might help you get around and get to know the areas.

HENRY

Well, thank you.

HENRY and MIKA exit.

19 EXT. TOURIST OFFICE PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

MIKA

Dad, that was kind of weird -- what she said about us knowing. What else do we know?

HENRY

I don't know.

looking at phone

Hmm... it's the mortgage company. They've been calling all week. I better take this.

pushing button

Hello? Yes, that's me.

beat

What? No...

beat

But we've been making payments...?

beat

What?

beat

No, this is some sort of mistake. Can
I call back in a bit? OK, thanks.

hanging up

MIKA

What was that about?

HENRY

They said their foreclosing for non-
payment of three months and we have
ten days to vacate.

dialing phone and waiting for voice mail message

Candy, it's me. Can you call back as
soon as you get this? Thanks.

hanging up

MIKA

Dad this is scary.

HENRY

I know, buddy. But we'll figure it
out. OK, let's swing up to the high
school and have a look around.

MIKA

OK.

20 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER

HENRY and MIKA get out of truck and walk toward school
entrance.

21 INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

HENRY and MIKA walk down deserted hallway. They hear a saxophone practicing. They follow the sound to a door marked "Music Room." HENRY looks in the window and then turns to MIKA. Music stops.

HENRY

Looks like she's giving a lesson --
getting the kids ready for the school
year. I remember those days.

MIKA

What are we doing here?

HENRY

I'd just like to introduce myself to
the band director.

door opens and student exits. BAND DIRECTOR (female, mid-40s,
attractive but coldly professional) comes out into hallway.

BAND DIRECTOR

Hello. Can I help you find something?

HENRY

Actually, uh... I'm Henry Lakso. I
used to be a music teacher myself, so
I thought I'd introduce myself.

BAND DIRECTOR

I see. Well, I'm Susan Fondum. Are
you... new to town then?

HENRY

Well, we just inherited some land, so
we're in town to look around.

BAND DIRECTOR

Oh. So where did you teach music?

HENRY

Well, it's been a few years, but back
in Knoddle Lake. I have a music store
now -- sell band supplies and repair
instruments, tune pianos -- you name
it. Oh, and have worked as a high
school substitute too.

BAND DIRECTOR

Well, we have a contract with Gambini's down in Angle Bay... But if you want to get on the sub list, you'll want to fill out the paperwork with the office after school starts. It can take quite a while to get approved.

HENRY

I understand. Well, thank you.

HENRY and MIKA walk away.

22 INT./EXT. HENRY'S TRUCK ON TWO-LANE ROAD - MINUTES LATER

MIKA

Where are we going now?

HENRY

I thought we'd check out this historic sight.

handing MIKA a brochure

MIKA

Huh. "Anola Lumber Camp Museum"?

HENRY

Yeah. Could be interesting. You know, educational.

MIKA

Great...

23 EXT. LUMBER CAMP MUSEUM - AN HOUR LATER

HENRY and MIKA walking out of museum and to parking lot.

MIKA

That was pretty cool. I can't believe they let 16 year olds work in the camps. I don't think I could do it.

HENRY

Yeah, it's a bit more demanding than
video games, eh? Well, let's get
something to eat.

24 EXT. TAVERN PARKING LOT - A WHILE LATER

Truck pulls into parking lot of old tavern. Sign in window
says "Live Music."

25 INT. TAVERN - A FEW MINUTES LATER

HENRY and MIKA seated at bar and just finishing hamburgers.
BARTENDER slouched against back wall. The tavern is dingy and
only a couple other people are there. A small plywood stage
is in the corner with a battered piano.

HENRY

to bartender

Looks like you have live music
sometimes. Ever need a piano player?

BARTENDER

Well, we're gettin' into the slow
season, with tourists and cabin owners
leaving town, so not right now.

HENRY

OK. Thanks.

pulls out wallet to pay bill and looks through bills

to MIKA

Looks like we're gettin' low...

puts down some pills and they get up off the stools

26 EXT. TAVERN, INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

HENRY and MIKA outside.

HENRY

looks at phone

Looks like Mom called.

dials

CANDY (O.S.)

Yeah.

lying in bed

HENRY

Listen, Candy. The mortgage company called. Haven't you been paying them with the money from the store I've been depositing?

CANDY (O.S.)

Well, maybe not.

sits up in bed. She's naked, but pulls sheet up to cover herself

HENRY

"Maybe not"? Jesus, Candy. What do you mean?

CANDY (O.S.)

I mean, I was going to, but I've had some emergency expenses come up the last few months.

A naked man, comes up behind CANDY and cups her breasts and starts kissing her neck, but she pushes him away.

HENRY

Expenses? Like what?!

CANDY (O.S.)

Well, stuff. I mean clothes and...

HENRY

God-damn it, Candy!

CANDY (O.S.)

OK, I've been meaning to talk to you and Mika. You see, I have an offer to wait tables at a friend's club in Conner City, so I've been saving up for an apartment and...

HENRY

And you just thought you it would be no big deal to abandon your husband and son and let the bank take our house, is that it?? Well??

CANDY (O.S.)

Well, I didn't think of it that way.

HENRY

No. You didn't think about it at all. That's your problem, Candy. When are you going to grow up?

CANDY (O.S.)

I am grown up! I'm sick of you and your dumb schemes, always failing...

MIKA puts his hands on the sides of his head and starts rocking back and forth.

HENRY

Schemes?! It's called trying to put food on the table -- and it's not going to happen with your wages.

CANDY (O.S.)

Your mom was right. She told me...

HENRY

God-damn it, I don't care what she told you. She's dead. And as far as I'm concerned, so are you!

CANDY (O.S.)

regaining composure

Well, OK then. But now I've gotta go. Tonight I'll be staying at a friend's house right now. I'll be back to get my things in a couple days. Tell Mika I love him and will talk to him soon.

HENRY

Fine!

HENRY hangs up and tries to calm down. MIKA is still rocking back and forth. HENRY puts his arm around MIKA and he starts to cry. HENRY tears up as well. After a bit, HENRY releases MIKA.

HENRY

Hey, listen. How about we pick up some bait and see if that old lake has any fish?

MIKA rubs eyes and nods head. They get in truck and drive off.

27 EXT. RESORT - 15 MINUTES LATER

Another truck is parked outside. HENRY and MIKA park. Before they are barely out of the truck, a shirt-less man with large gut and crooked teeth emerges from the resort office pointing a rifle at them. This is Cliff, a 70-something who is well-known by the local police.

CLIFF

Just *what* the hell are you and your god-damned tent doin' on my property?

HENRY and MIKA show their hands and stop walking

HENRY

Now, I was just thinking the same thing. Ya see, we inherited this.

CLIFF

Nope, I don' think ya did. I own it free and clear. Now, how 'bout youse just get in that truck and hit the road for whatever city ya come from.

HENRY

No, see, I can show you the deed if you just let me...

walking sideways slowly toward truck

CLIFF

fires warning shot in the air

I don't think so. Ya see, I won it in a poker game 'bout two years ago in an ice fishin' shanty over there.

pointing across lake

Got it from a guy by the name of Fritz. And I'm gonna fix this sucker up real good and reopen it one of these days. But for now, I just come out here when I need to get away from the girlfriend.

laughs, showing yellow teeth

HENRY starts to smile and laugh, but CLIFF fires another shot in the air and HENRY stops abruptly

CLIFF

It ain't that funny. She's got a lot of issues...

HENRY

I see. Well, I'm Henry. Henry Lakso.

CLIFF

Lakso? Now there's a name I ain't run across in a while. They was a rough crowd I heard.

HENRY

I don't know, but I'm telling you, I own this property and if the two of us can just...

CLIFF

Like hell...

fires another shot into air, then another into headlight of truck, shattering it

Now pack up that tent and get out!

HENRY and MIKA scramble to take down tent and other equipment inside and throw it into the back of the truck and drive away as fast as they can. CLIFF fire one last warning shot as the leave the parking lot.

28 INT./EXT. HENRY'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

MIKA

Holy shit, Dad! The guy's crazy!

HENRY

I know, I know.

MIKA

What are we going to do though? Drive home tonight?

HENRY

No. I want to get to the bottom of this ownership thing while we're still here. Maybe go to the county court house tomorrow and look up the property. Who knows, maybe Grandma actually sold it and forgot she did.

MIKA

That would suck.

HENRY

Yes. Yes it would suck, son. But how about we find a motel and just hole up for the night? Order in some pizza, watch a movie...

MIKA

OK. Sure.

29 EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NEXT MORNING

HENRY and MIKA walking out of motel. It's a pleasant, clear morning.

HENRY

OK, so the court house is over in Krumbutsberg. After we take care of that, how about we drive up the Scattlebag Springs and do some of that fishing we missed out on yesterday?

MIKA

Sure. But Dad?

HENRY

Yeah?

MIKA

Why hasn't Mom called me yet? She said she would.

HENRY

Son, some people just seem born to take on responsibility and lead others.

MIKA

Yeah?

HENRY

But your mom's not one of them.

phone rings and HENRY looks at screen

Uh-oh. Our building owner.

pushing phone button

Hey Bill, I've been meaning to call.

beat

Yes, I know.

beat

I know.

beat

I guess we'll have our stuff out by the 20th then.

beat

OK.

beat

Bye.

sighs

Well, that's that I guess.

MIKA
Dad, maybe it's for the best.

HENRY
I hope so.

30 EXT. COURT HOUSE - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

MIKA slumped against truck, looking at his phone. HENRY exits court house.

MIKA
So, what did you find out?

HENRY
Well, not as simple as I'd hoped.
Suggested we hire a lawyer to
straighten it out.

MIKA
Well, that's good, right?

HENRY
Yeah, all it takes is a little money.

lets out big sigh

31 EXT. STREAM - HOURS LATER

MIKA and HENRY walking out with fishing poles and smiles on their faces.

MIKA
Now that almost makes up for getting
shot at yesterday!

HENRY laughs

32 INT./EXT. HENRY'S TRUCK AND MOTEL - A HALF HOUR LATER

Their truck pulls into parking lot.

33 INT. MOTEL LOBBY - MINUTES LATER

CLERK behind front desk as HENRY and MIKA walk in.

CLERK

Oh, Mr. Lakso, we had a little issue
with your transaction.

HENRY

Oh?

approaches desk

CLERK

I'm afraid your credit card was
rejected. Do you have another card I
could try? Otherwise, I'll need you to
pay with check or cash.

HENRY

Well, I'm...

MIKA

approaching desk and looking concerned

What's going on?

HENRY

to MIKA

It's nothing. Probably just an issue
with us being out of our normal area.

to clerk

We'll be back in just a bit to settle
up, OK?

CLERK

Great. But I'll need your key cards
until then.

HENRY and MIKA put their cards on the desk and begin to exit
lobby.

HENRY

We just need to swing by an ATM and get some cash.

34 INT. GAS STATION - MINUTES LATER

MIKA waiting in truck. HENRY at ATM reading "Insufficient funds" on screen and HENRY looking very upset. He gives up and goes up to counter and buys some sandwiches, drinks and other snacks.

35 INT./EXT HENRY'S TRUCK, GAS STATION LOT - MINUTES LATER

MIKA

What are we going to do? You really only have about \$40 in cash on you?

HENRY

Well, I mean, I have other money. It's just that it's... tied up in other things -- inventory for the store, etc.

MIKA

But what are we going to do tonight? We still haven't paid for last night and our stuff is back at the motel.

HENRY

Fuck!

bangs on steering wheel, his eyes teary with anger

Maybe we should just drive home. God, I really am a fuck up...

MIKA sits thoughtfully

MIKA

OK, Dad. I have a plan.

36 EXT./INT. MOTEL PARKING LOT, MOTEL HALLWAY - HOURS LATER

It's now dark. HENRY backs up pickup truck close to motel wall. MIKA waits by security-locked door on the side of the motel until another couple uses their cards to get in. HENRY follows behind them. He then goes up to second floor. A maid's cart is in the hall and two room doors are open. The sound of a vacuum is heard coming from one room and the TV is coming from another.. MIKA carefully walks up to the cart and takes a key card from a plastic cup. He walks back to their room and quietly lets himself in with the key card. MIKA slides open the window and signals to HENRY before tossing their baggage down.

37 INT./EXT. HENRY'S TRUCK AND STREETS OF TOWN - MINUTES LATER

HENRY and MIKA driving through town.

HENRY

But How did you know the key card
would be on the cart?

MIKA

Well, it was kind of a hunch, but Aunt
Meg said one time she accidentally
flushed the card down the toilet when
she worked at the Motel 6, so they
told her to always keep it on the
cart.

HENRY

God, I can't believe we are doing
this, but...

MIKA

Sometimes desperate times call for
desperate actions, dad.

HENRY

Well, I do plan to send them a check
when I'm back and I straighten things
out.

MIKA

Sure.

38 INT. TRUCK EXT. PARKING LOT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

They pull into a secluded parking lot next to a church. It's dark and there are no other cars around.

HENRY

Well, this will have to do for the night.

beat

bangs on steering wheel angrily and begins tearing up

Fuck! What have I done with my life?
It's like I'm King Midas -- except
everything I touch turns to shit!

MIKA

sitting quietly

Well, if it means anything, you've
been a great dad -- even when I
haven't been the best kid.

HENRY raises his head, looks at MIKA and smiles

HENRY

Thanks, son.

puts arm around MIKA

39 INT./EXT. TRUCK AND PARKING LOT - NEXT MORNING (SAT.)

HENRY and MIKA are slumped back on pillows in truck cab with windows cracked. They are awakened by slamming car doors and woman knocking on window. This is Estelle -- 50s, attractive and well put together.

HENRY

rolling down window

Yes?

ESTELLE
I'm sorry, but I saw your truck and I
thought you might know someone who
plays piano.

Exterior shot of van with "Quality Music" on the side.

HENRY
Well, uh...

ESTELLE
You see, my niece is getting married
but our piano player had an
accident...

MIKA
Dad, you should do it.

ESTELLE
So you play?

HENRY
Well, uh...

MIKA
Yes he does. And he's really good.

HENRY
Well, I don't have much to wear...

ESTELLE
Don't worry, I'll find something for
you.

40 INT. CHURCH - AN HOUR LATER

Wedding party walking out to wedding march. HENRY at piano.

41 INT. CHURCH - A FEW MINUTES LATER

ESTELLE approaches HENRY and MIKA in church lobby.

ESTELLE
Henry, that was just marvelous! We're
so fortunate to have found you!

HENRY
Well, thanks.

The father of the groom approaches.

FATHER OF BRIDE
Hey, that was great. We can't thank
you enough. Here's a little extra on
top of what we planned to pay the
other person.

handing HENRY a wad of bills

HENRY
Oh, thanks, but I couldn't...

holding up palm of his hand

MIKA
Dad...

gesturing to HENRY to just take the money

HENRY
Well, thank you.

taking money

FATHER OF THE BRIDE
No, thank you!

patting HENRY on shoulder and walking away

ESTELLE
Listen, how about I take you two out
for lunch?

touches MIKA on his sleeve affectionately

I bet this boy didn't even had
breakfast yet.

HENRY
Sure, that would be really nice.

42 INT. RESTAURANT - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

ESTELLE, HENRY and MIKA at table. ESTELLE and HENRY have
finished their food, but MIKA is still eating.

ESTELLE

So you own a music store in Gotham?

HENRY

Well, yes, at least I did.

ESTELLE

You mean...?

HENRY

Well, I've had issues lately with my lease, so...

ESTELLE

I understand. So you're up here on business?

HENRY

laughs

Well, no. Actually, we just inherited some land that has apparently been in the family and we were just checking it out. At least until we discovered a problem with it.

ESTELLE

Oh? What kind of problem? Septic system?

HENRY

No, but almost as stinky.

MIKA rolls eyes

HENRY

There's a man living on the land and claiming he owns it. We went to the court house today to look up records, but the clerk said it seemed like a pretty complicated issue. Would need to go to court...

ESTELLE

Well, I might be able to help. I'm an attorney, you see.

HENRY

Oh wow, that's.... but I'm not sure we could pay you right now. My business is...

ESTELLE

Don't worry about that. Are you handy around the house?

MIKA

Yes, he's very handy.

ESTELLE

Because I have a bunch of things that need repair. We can trade.

HENRY

That would be wonderful. I mean, I can't...

ESTELLE

So where are you staying right now?

HENRY

laughs

Uh, yeah. Well, right now we're...

MIKA

Sleeping in our truck.

HENRY

Well no, we're camping.

ESTELLE

Nonsense. I have a lower level with a walkout to my backyard. It's not fancy, but there are two bedrooms and a bath. You're welcome to stay there until we get this deed cleaned up for you.

HENRY

Well, I don't know...

MIKA

That would be great!

ESTELLE

Then it's settled.

taking a scrap of paper and pen from her purse and beginning to write

I need to pick up some things at the store, but you're welcome to go on over to my place and get settled in. The spare key's under the milk can next to the door. Here's my address.

hands paper to HENRY

HENRY

reading

Orchard Road.

ESTELLE

Yes, just off of Old 32.

HENRY

Thank you so much Estelle...

ESTELLE

nbn. And your last name is...?

HENRY

Lakso.

ESTELLE

Looks startled, then regains composure.

Oh. I see. Well...

ACT III

43 INT. ESTELLE'S HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

HENRY installing shelves in kitchen. MIKA enters looking groggy.

HENRY

Morning, sleepy head. You slept in.
There's cereal in the cupboard there
and coffee.

pointing

Help yourself.

MIKA

OK.

gets out bowl and cereal

Where's Estelle?

HENRY

She drove over to the court house to
see about the land. Should be back by
noon. Think you can help with some
things once you've eaten? We need to
clean out her gutters and fix some
downspouts.

MIKA

Sure.

44 EXT. ESTELLE'S HOUSE - AN COUPLE HOURS LATER

MIKA up on ladder cleaning out gutters. HENRY screwing
together downspouts. ESTELLE enters.

ESTELLE

Well, look at you two going at it!
Thank you so much for helping me out.

HENRY

Oh, happy to do so. What did you find out at the courthouse?

ESTELLE

Well, good news. I got an order showing you have clear title to the property. All's we have to do now is get the sheriff to escort us out there to evict the guy.

HENRY

So we can't just do it ourselves?

ESTELLE

Well, we can, but it's safer if we do it with the sheriff.

HENRY

Got it.

ESTELLE

I already called the sheriff's department, but they're too busy today.

HENRY

Oh, that's fine. Got plenty to keep us busy around here today anyway.

ESTELLE

Well, I was thinking we could go up to Campbell's in Lake Forrest this evening so you can see a real north wood supper club.

HENRY

That would fun. What do you think, Mika?

MIKA

Uh, sure... But what's a "supper club"? Do you have to be a member?

ESTELLE

laughs

No. It's just what they call a sort of "fancy" restaurant in these parts -- at least, ones that used to starting in the 20s and up through the 70s. Families would get dressed up and drive up for an evening of dinner, dancing. They've mostly died out, but a few remain. Campbell's has been around since the 40s.

45 INT. SUPPER CLUB - THAT EVENING

Restaurant with knotty pine paneling. Swing music playing the background. ESTELLE, HENRY and MIKA sitting around table. IOn the center is a relish tray with pickles, olives, fresh vegetables and candied apple slices, along with a bread and cracker basket and cheese spread. MIKA eagerly feeding himself. ESTELLE and HENRY both have brandy old-fashioned glasses and the remains of salads in front of them.

ESTELLE

Well, I want to thank you so much for all your work today. I'm afraid I've let things go since George died.

HENRY

No problem. Happy to try to repay you for what you've done for us so far.

SERVER enters carrying plates.

SERVER

OK, here we go. The surf and turf.

passing plate to ESTELLE

And the prime rib.

passing plate to HENRY

And the fish fry.

passing plate to MIKA and starting to clear plates

46 INT. RESORT GRAND ROOM - CONTINUOUSLY

CLIFF huddled near fire in fireplace, mumbling to himself in in decipherable language. He is dirty and disheveled. There are the remains of his dinner around him -- bean cans, etc. He is holding two dolls made out of sticks and other vegetation. He holds one out to the flames and starts it on fire and then tosses it in and laughs. Then does the same to the second one and laughs harder.

47 INT. BEDROOM - FLASH BACK TO EARLY 1900S

Partially dressed DIRTY MAN is on top of young female body dressed in rags and is thrusting roughly in copulation. His smiling dirty face with crooked teeth is visible but not the face of the other person. DIRTY MAN laughs manically. Camera pans to face of other body and it is face of a dead and partially-decomposed woman.

48 INT. SUPPER CLUB - CONTINUOUSLY

HENRY, ESTELLE and MIKA are finishing their meals.

HENRY

holding stomach in satisfaction and smiling

Mmmm... now that's a meal.

to MIKA

How was your fish fry, son?

MIKA

Not bad. But a little fishy.

ESTELLE

It's kind of past season, so maybe not as fresh as earlier in the year.

turns to HENRY

Henry, you know, your family -- the Laksos -- was known for their, uh... colorful exploits around here.

HENRY

So I've heard.

ESTELLE

now more serious

Well, you may not know everything.
It's not all good.

HENRY

I see. I'm afraid I don't know much of anything. My father was pretty tight-lipped about his family. Everything I know has been pieced together from a couple cousins.

ESTELLE

now brightening

Well, I wouldn't worry too much about it. People do move on -- even in a small place like this. Tomorrow, we'll drive out to your place with the sheriff and get you settled in.

49 EXT. RESORT - NEXT MORNING

CLIFF's truck is parked outside resort office. SHERIFF's car pulls up and parks, followed by HENRY's truck carrying HENRY, MIKA and ESTELLE, which parks on incline next to lake.

50 INT. HENRY'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

HENRY leaves manual-transmission truck in gear, but turns off engine and doesn't engage parking brake. They all stay in HENRY's truck. MIKA is in the middle. SHERIFF exits his car carrying paperwork and knocks on door. CLIFF appears at door. SHERIFF says something inaudible to CLIFF and hands him papers.

HENRY

I just hope he leaves peacefully.

CLIFF and SHERIFF engage in more inaudible dialogue, with CLIFF growing more agitated.

HENRY

reaching for door latch and starting to get out

Maybe I can talk to him.

MIKA

Dad, no!

51 EXT. RESORT - CONTINUOUS

HENRY

begins to walk slowly toward CLIFF and SHERIFF

Hey, there. Now, we don't want any trouble.

CLIFF

suddenly reaches back into doorway and pulls out rifle and points it at HENRY. SHERIFF ducks around corner of office.

You get the hell off my property!

52 INT. HENRY'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

MIKA

Dad!

trying to get out drivers' side door, bumping stick shift into neutral, and causing truck to begin rolling downhill towards lake

53 EXT. RESORT - CONTINUOUS

HENRY sees truck rolling and freezes. CLIFF fires and HENRY

falls to ground. CLIFF aims at HENRY's truck shoots out windshield. SHERIFF pops up from around corner and shoots CLIFF just as truck splashes into lake with MIKA and ESTELLE screaming.

54 INT. DARK HALLWAY OF HOSPITAL - THAT EVENING

ESTELLE and MIKA looking disheveled and talking inaudibly to NURSE outside hospital room. DOCTOR exits room and says something inaudible to ESTELLE and MIKA, who both respond in shocked manner.

55 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ESTELLE and MIKA enter. HENRY in bed and conscious.

ESTELLE

The doctor says you're a lucky man.

HENRY

Just my kind of luck. Have to get shot at first.

MIKA

He says they had to take out your spleen?

HENRY

Yup. Apparently you can live without it. Nice to know you have spare organs. And I guess I won't get so angry now.

MIKA

Huh?

HENRY

How's the truck?

ESTELLE

The garage says it's likely a total loss. We'll need to get a loaner.

HENRY

Oh well. I'm just glad you two are OK.

MIKA

Hey, you're a tough guy.

HENRY

Well, I guess I have to be. They said they're sending me home tomorrow.

ESTELLE

You're welcome to stay with me as long as you need to.

HENRY

Thanks so much.

56 INT. BASEMENT OF ESTELLE'S HOUSE - A COUPLE DAYS LATER

HENRY lying in pajamas on couch and watching TV. Old dishes and medication bottles around on floor. MIKA in chair.

ESTELLE

enters

Mika, think you could run into town with me and help with the shopping?

MIKA

Sure.

ESTELLE

We also need to stop by your resort and meet Wendell.

HENRY

Wendell from across the lake?

ESTELLE

Yes. I ran into him at the gas station and I thought he could change the locks for you -- as the sheriff suggested.

HENRY

Thank you, Estelle. I don't know how we'll ever...

ESTELLE

Don't worry. I think things always
even out in some way.

57 EXT. RESORT - 15 MINUTES LATER

Estelle's car is parked. ESTELLE and MIKA waiting outside.
WENDELL's truck pulls up and parks. WENDELL and his daughter,
KAYLA (attractive, about Mika's age), exit truck.

ESTELLE

Hi, Wendell. So glad you can help.

WENDELL

No problem, Aunt Estelle. Happy to
help.

ESTELLE

Wendell, have you met Mika, Henry's
son?

WENDELL

Yes, we did. Just briefly. Mika, this
is my daughter, Kayla.

KAYLA

Hey.

ESTELLE

motioning towards WENDELL's truck

Well, get your tools and I'll show you
which locks. I picked up a bunch of
new ones...

ESTELLE and WENDELL enter resort office door.

MIKA

So you live across the lake too?

KAYLA

Yeah, well, part of the time. The rest
of the time I'm with my mom who lives
with her new boyfriend a couple miles
from here.

MIKA
So were you born here?

KAYLA
In Ilona?

MIKA
No, I mean on the lake?

KAYLA
Well, not *on* the lake.

laughs

HENRY
I mean, at the place where your dad
lives.

KAYLA
Well, I was actually born in the
hospital, but I grew up here.

laughing and pointing out to the lake

HENRY
We're from Gotham.

KAYLA
I know.

awkward silence

HENRY
So, is there much to do here?

KAYLA
Well, yeah. I mean, if you like the
outdoors. C'mon, I'll show you.

smiling and gesturing enthusiastically, KAYLA leads HENRY
along the shoreline

58 EXT. LAKE SHORE - AN HOUR LATER

KAYLA and MIKA sitting in a secluded spot. The remains of a
bonfire are seen, along with a lot of empty beer cans.

KAYLA

They have a lot of parties here on weekends.

MIKA

Do you go?

KAYLA

Well, I'm not supposed to...

MIKA

Oh.

KAYLA

So are you going to school here?

MIKA

I don't know. It's weird. Everyone in this town seems to know a lot about us.

KAYLA

Well, I guess your family was sort of famous here.

MIKA

Famous?

KAYLA

Well, maybe infamous.

MIKA

Isn't that the same?

KAYLA

Well, I suppose we'll find out in Mrs. Kelley's Freshman English class.

MIKA

How did you know I'll be a Freshman?

KAYLA

Well, I guess I just guessed.

MIKA

Hmmm...

59 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - A WEEK LATER

HENRY and MIKA are packed and by door leaving.

HENRY

Well, we can't thank you enough for putting us up this last week.

ESTELLE

Well, now, happy to help.

HENRY starts opening door.

HENRY

The doc says I still can't lift more than ten pounds, but I'm excited to get out and start on rehabbing the resort so we'll at least have a place before the snow flies.

ESTELLE

I understand.

60 INT. RESORT - 15 MINUTES LATER

Wordless montage of HENRY and MIKA cleaning and hauling out trash from various rooms of resort. Finally see HENRY and MIKA laying down in their beds after night fall.

61 INT. RESORT KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

HENRY cooking breakfast. MIKA enters looking sleepy.

HENRY

Rise and shine for brunch at the posh resort, "Lakso's Lair".

MIKA

Dad, I don't know where you find the energy after all that work yesterday.

HENRY

I know. I think I almost popped by staples. But still lots to get it ready for just us. We should really

drive into town and pick up stuff to fix the roof.

MIKA

Dad, do you think I can take the day off? It's Sunday.

HENRY

OK, Mr. Holy Roller Man.

MIKA

No, it's just that KAYLA asked me to go on a hike.

HENRY

Ah-ha, I see. Yes, take the day off. We'll hit it again tomorrow.

MIKA

Thanks.

62 EXT. RESORT - SOMETIME LATER THAT DAY

HENRY looking at row of about ten small 1940s-vintage cabins set along the shore next to the resort office. He has a bucket of tools. HENRY enters the first one.

63 INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

HENRY looks around. Furniture is in disrepair, trash strewn about.

64 EXT./INT. RESORT/CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Montage of HENRY methodically exiting and entering little cabins down the row and seeing mostly the same thing as in the first.

65 EXT. RESORT - CONTINUOUS

HENRY at last cabin in row. Struggles to get door open.

Finally has to kick it in, as it appears to be barricaded. Unlike the others, it is pitch black inside, as windows are boarded up. HENRY takes out flashlight and hammer and enters slowly.

66 INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

HENRY shines flashlight around cabin. Not much furniture except a bed. Dirtier than the others. HENRY takes hammer and pries planks off one of the windows and light shines in through dirty glass. HENRY sees unusual panel in ceiling. He takes screwdriver from pocket and uses hammer to pry it off. The panel falls to the floor in a cloud of dust and a large packet of mouse-eaten letters bound with twine falls out. HENRY is surprised at first, but then relieved as he picks up letters and pulls one out of stack and unfolds. Holds up to the light and reads.

NARRATOR

"February 5th, 1903. Dear Jimmy, sorry to have been so tardy in responding to your most recent correspondence. I have been quite occupied with moving forward with the plan we discussed at Christmas time, and this plan has proven quite fortuitous for us, both financially and otherwise. I will remit your share of the proceeds shortly. Meanwhile, I am moving forward with using some of these funds to procure additional prospects. Your Brother, Aaron."

HENRY looks slightly amused but confused. He drops letter to ground and reaches up into cavity in ceiling to feel around. His face changes to concern as he picks up something and removes it from the cavity, but then drops it quickly to the floor in shock. The object rolls and comes to a stop. HENRY looks closer. Looking up at him is a SKULL.

