

ELLIS
You need me to come get you?

MUD
Naw. I can manage. Hell I got out here didn't I?

Ellis smiles.

They sit in silence. Ellis stares up at the boat hanging over them, its peeling hull lit by the firelight.

Mud pinches the ash from the end of his cigarette, places the stub back in his shirt pocket. Noticing Ellis, Mud tilts his head back to take in the boat.

MUD (CONT'D)
It's a helluva thing.

Mud pauses, his mind working on something.

MUD (CONT'D)
Helluva thing.

The two sit by the campfire staring up at the suspended boat.

INT. ELLIS' ROOM - MORNING

46

Mary Lee knocks on her way into the bedroom.

MARY LEE
Time to get up.

She begins picking clothes off the floor. Ellis, in bed, raises up on his elbows. He's tired from a late night.

ELLIS
It's Saturday.

MARY LEE
I'm going to Wal-Mart. I need you to come with me.

ELLIS
(moaning)
Mom.

MARY LEE
Come on.

She pulls the covers off of him.

47

I/E. MARY LEE'S CAR/INTERSTATE - DAY

47

The two ride in an awkward silence.

MUD

START
46

Ellis stares at the farmland passing by outside as Mary Lee steers the compact Toyota down a four-lane interstate.

MARY LEE

Ellis I know what your father told you last night. That's not what I wanted. I wanted to sit you down and talk about it.

ELLIS

What do you wanna talk about? You want to leave and that means they can tear up our house.

MARY LEE

I've spent my whole life on that boat. I don't think it's too much to ask for your...

Mary Lee is interrupted by a line of traffic backed up in front of her. She slows to a stop.

MARY LEE (CONT'D)

Oh no. I hope no one's hurt.

There are flashing police lights up ahead. Ellis tries to see what's going on but can't make anything out past the line of cars. They inch forward.

MARY LEE (CONT'D)

I'm just saying there are two sides to this. I haven't made up my mind about anything because I want you to be involved in my decision, but I need a change Ellis. I deserve one.

As they approach the flashing lights, they see three State Trooper vehicles parked to funnel traffic down to one lane. The STATE TROOPERS stop each car, checking the trunks.

MARY LEE (CONT'D)

I think they're searching people.

A Trooper signals Mary Lee to pull up to a stop. Two other Troopers approach her vehicle. The first begins looking in her back windows as the second leans down to speak to her. She lowers her window.

TROOPER

Can you open the trunk please ma'am?

MARY LEE

Of course.

Mary Lee pulls the lever by her knee, and the second Trooper walks around the back of the car.

TROOPER
Have you picked up or seen any
hitchhikers today ma'am?

MARY LEE
No sir.

The Trooper produces a flier with a color photo on it.

TROOPER
Have you seen this man?

MARY LEE
No sir.

~~The Trooper leans over and holds the paper out to Ellis.~~

~~TROOPER
Son, have you seen this man?~~

~~Ellis looks at the photo. It's of Mud. He looks exactly the same as he did last night, down to the shirt. In the photo, Mud's smiling, revealing his missing tooth.~~

~~ELLIS
No.~~

TROOPER
We've had reports that he's in this area. If you see him, call 9-1-1 immediately.

MARY LEE
We will officer.

The Trooper pulls his head from the window.

~~ELLIS
What'd he do?!~~

The Trooper bends back down and looks at Ellis.

~~ELLIS (CONT'D)
(more calm)
What'd he do?~~

~~TROOPER
move along please.~~

Mary Lee pulls forward and speeds back up on the interstate.

MARY LEE
My lord.
(rolls up her window)
(MORE)

MARY LEE (CONT'D)

How would you feel about moving
into town with me?

(no answer)

Please don't tell your father this,
but I've been looking at a couple
of places. I know it would be a
big adjustment for you, but it
might end up being something you
like. You know living on the river
isn't exactly everyone's idea of
the good life. Ellis?

He looks at her.

MARY LEE (CONT'D)

Are you even listening to me?

END

48 INT. ELLIS' ROOM - DAY

48

Ellis busts through the door, grabs his backpack and is gone.

49 EXT. HOUSEBOAT - CONTINUOUS

49

Ellis is off the houseboat and running up the bank.

He heads down the dirt path, grabbing the Walkie Talkie out
of his backpack.

ELLIS

(into the Walkie)

Neck! Neck, pick up!

50 EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

50

Ellis removes branches and readies the flat bottom boat to
launch. The sound of Neckbone's bike arrives before he does.

Neckbone crests the sand covered slope. He dismounts and
starts to chain the bike up to a tree trunk.

NECKBONE

So what's the big deal?

ELLIS

My mom and I were headed to Wal-
Mart on 165. There was a roadblock
with state troopers. They searched
our car and showed us a picture of
Mud. They're lookin' for him.

NECKBONE

I knew it! I told you that crazy
sonofabitch was trouble. Did they
say what he did?

ELLIS

No.