

ROSALIE

Written by

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One-Hour Pilot

"Sunny Side of the Street"

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FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY 33 - DAY

A jack rabbit innocently hops onto the asphalt. It sniffs the road. Raises its head thoughtfully... sniffing the air.

TITLE CARD "SOMEWHERE IN OHIO, 1955"

On the other side of a wall of heat shimmer, a '51 Mercury suddenly looms into view.

We HEAR MUSIC coming from inside the vehicle, Louis Armstrong's 'On the Sunny Side of the Street'.

The car very purposely swerves all the way over to the other side of the road to THWACK the rabbit, sending the helpless creature tumbling off into the brush in a furry mess.

INT. '51 MERCURY - CONTINUOUS

A portable phonograph bounces on a pregnant woman's lap - ROSALIE (16). The record SCRATCHES as the song ends abruptly.

Rosalie clutches the record player protectively, cringing at the sound. A wedding ring gleams on her white knuckled hand. She wears victory rolls in her hair and a polka dot dress.

ROSALIE

Charlie! For crying out loud!

CHARLIE (21), behind the wheel, wears a sweat stained white button shirt and a high quiff-pompadour that glistens with attitude. He wears a matching wedding ring. He half grins.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

That was a goddamn living thing!

CHARLIE

Well now, ain't that a bite.

He chuckles. She's not impressed, and makes a big deal out of sulking. Charlie tries his best to ignore it.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Pass me my cheaters.

She reaches into the glove compartment and hands him a pair of sunglasses aggressively. He puts the shades on just as the sun comes out of a cloud. He smiles at his timing.

ROSALIE

Are ya *trying* to bring us bad luck?
We're barely a day out of McMechen.

He flashes her an alarmingly charismatic smile.

CHARLIE

There's no such thing as bad luck
when you're my lucky charm.

She looks out the window wistfully.

ROSALIE

Luck can run out.

CHARLIE

Only thing we might run out of are
these.

He pulls out a pack of Lucky Strike cigarettes, flicks one
between his lips, expertly flicks one out for her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Roll up your window, kitten.

She does. He does too, one hand on the wheel. He flicks a
match, dangles it off the folder, lights them both up.

POV FROM THE REAR OF THE CAR: the back seat is piled high
with boxes, suitcases, a big, long floor lamp.

BACK IN FRONT, Rosalie holds up the record she was playing.

ROSALIE

Nuts, it's all scratched.

CHARLIE

Don't flip, just grab another one.

She playfully slaps him. He playfully recoils from it.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Where we're going... records
everywhere. I'll buy you whatever
you want.

ROSALIE

Well stop the world.

When sarcasm doesn't affect him. She tries to be more direct.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

I'll believe that when I see it.

His eyes reveal conflicting emotions.

Rosalie yanks another record from the back, puts it on.

'Gum Drop' by the Crew-Cuts PLAYS.

She flicks her fingers, smiling pleasantly, annoying Charlie.

CHARLIE

Maybe I'll bake my own biscuits.
How about that?

ROSALIE

You make it sound like we're off to
see the wizard.

CHARLIE

Oz *is* LA, baby.

He chuckles. Now she's annoyed, feeling laughed at.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Didn't ya know that flick was a
metaphor?

ROSALIE

It was a book first, silly billy.
Back in 1900. When LA was probably
no bigger than McMechen is now.

Charlie's brow furrows.

CHARLIE

I said the flick, not the book.

Rosalie notices his frown, and seems satisfied by it.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

McMechen is Nowheresville. As in,
good riddance. As in, that place
wouldn't know a dream if it fell
out of the sky and wiggled on its
face.

ROSALIE

Okay then.

Long pause.

CHARLIE

So what do *I* do when we get there,
Charlie? So far I've only heard
about all *your* plans.

He shrugs like anything is possible.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
You play guitar, I sing. Folks say
I sound just like Frankie Laine.

ROSALIE
Is 'folks' another word for 'I'?

CHARLIE
No. I say I sing like me.

She watches a a bird fly beside them.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
We'll practice up. Get some gigs.
And be so darn famous your cute
little head will spin clean off
those pretty little shoulders.

She smiles widely now, eyes sparkling. She glances over at him furtively a few times. She toes his leg with a bare foot.

ROSALIE
Well now you're just turning me on.

He looks over, flashes that smile, furrowed brow loosening.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The car is pulled over. It shakes and rocks.

The sole of a bare foot slaps a fogged window and pushes against it -- as cars WHIZ by.

The foot disappears, and the palm of an outstretched hand now slaps against the glass... and SQUEAKS all the way down.

INT. '51 MERCURY - MOMENTS LATER

The pair are rumped. Sweaty. Relaxed. No music, just the harmonious duet of their heavy breaths.

New cigarettes are lit. Charlie crumples the pack and throws it out the window.

ROSALIE
You sure know how to razz my
berries. Were you really a virgin
when we first met? The *truth*.

CHARLIE
Pure as the virgin snow.

He winks at her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Even though you weren't.

She playfully slaps him again, harder this time.

ROSALIE
Ha, ha. But, really, though? I mean
there must have been-

He knows where she's going, cuts her off-

CHARLIE
I was a virgin, baby. In all the
ways that matter.

She looks at him hard. She doesn't let go of stuff, he knows
it. He flicks at the hanging car key and elaborates.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Sure there were boys in juvie. But
that wasn't real sex. Hell, I never
even wanted it.

He butts his cigarette and flicks it out the window. Spits.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Let's peel a wheel.
(beat)
We need another deck of Luckies.

He STARTS UP the car and RIPS OFF down the highway.

EXT. GAS STATION - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Their car glides into a Mobil oil gas station.

They both open their doors and put their shoes on in unison.
They get out to stretch and straighten their clothes.

Charlie proceeds to fill the car with gas.

Rosalie grabs her purse from the back seat, winks at Charlie.

ROSALIE
Gonna go put my face back on.

CHARLIE
Don't get dolled up on my account.

She smiles pleasantly and heads around to the side of the main building.

INT. GAS STATION LADIES' BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rosalie stands at the sink putting on lipstick. She studies herself as she takes a square of toilet paper and blots it.

She smiles. Then... her smile drops.

Her eyes begin to deepen.

EXT. GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie squats next to a Coke machine, sharing a bottle with a MANGY MUTT that sits beside him.

Rosalie walks on by.

ROSALIE
I'm gonna call home.

CHARLIE
Miss everyone already?

She smirks and keeps on walking.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Classy chassis there, glamour puss.

He whistles. She accentuates her walk in response.

He chuckles and finishes his Coke. The dog whines. He looks at the dog as his eyes dart around, brain always cooking.

Charlie takes off his sunglasses and pockets them as he spots a '55 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL pull up to the second pump, scattering gravel and dust into the bright air.

A MAN (40) in a slim fitting suit, fedora, and black and white shoes steps out majestically. He takes his hat off and fans himself as he heads around to the side of the building.

Charlie frowns after him --

Pan over to Rosalie inside a phone booth, by the highway --

Pan back toward the side of the building.

Charlie stands up, calmly WHISTLING 'On the Sunny Side of the Street' as he slowly pours the rest of the Coke onto the gravel.

It FIZZES. The dog LAPS at it.

Charlie discreetly brandishes the bottle like a weapon as he saunters around the side of the building, casually looking over each shoulder in a very practiced way.

INT. GAS STATION, MENS' BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie opens the door -- sunlight splashes in.

The man stands at the urinal.

Charlie steps inside and the door swings shut, darkening the room except for a slit window at the top of the far wall.

Charlie holds the Coke bottle tighter.

The man ignores him until he can't... slowly looking over.

MAN

Take a picture. It'll last longer.

CHARLIE

Darn. I forgot my camera.

The man bristles.

MAN

Can I help you, son?

CHARLIE

I don't know, *man*... *can* you?

Charlie laughs like he threw out one hell of a zinger. An awkward beat. The man shakes himself off.

MAN

It was a rhetorical question.

He flushes and raises his zipper.

MAN (CONT'D)

Now put an egg in your shoe and beat it.

Charlie smiles widely as he seems to glow with excitement.

Before the man can fasten his belt, Charlie steps forward aggressively.

The man turns, tries to back up, incredulous.

Charlie raises the Coke bottle like a knife in a Hitchcock movie and makes a ferocious slashing movement. It connects with the top of the man's head.

Glass explodes -- the man falls back to bounce off the paint peeled wall, blood gushing from a gash on his forehead.

The man scrambles, and tries to make a dash for the door. Disoriented, his pants drop instead, and he clobbers himself against a corner of a bathroom stall.

Charlie smiles, enjoying the madcap dance. He calmly raises a leg as the man tries to scramble again, kicking the man further into the stall. The stall door breaks and collapses.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - SAME TIME

Rosalie, on the phone, twirling the cord with her fingers.

ROSALIE

Just put Daddy on. I don't have all goddamn day. Jesus, Buster...

She waits, twirls some more, looks around for Charlie. She sees the dog licking at a dark, bubbly puddle on the ground.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

Hi Daddy. No, we're long gone now.

(beat)

Yesterday. I told ya we couldn't afford the rent, and all the other bills were piling up. Charlie lost his job at the race track and no one wants him weeding their gardens anymore. Pretty sure I told you that already.

(beat)

No, I don't want to work at the hospital cafeteria serving soup to sickos for the rest of my damn life. I know you're sore, but Eileen can move into our place. Or Amy. Hell, even Buster. They just need to clean up a little.

INT. MENS' BATHROOM - SAME TIME

Charlie has the man's hair in his fist, as he holds his face deep down inside the toilet bowl. Bubbling sounds.

Charlie yanks the man's head back up, who gasps and sputters.

Charlie turns him right around so he's now face up. Blood trickles down his face.

CHARLIE

I'd love to keep this party going,
my man, but I got bigger fish to
fry.

Charlie holds up the broken bottle that he still holds extremely tightly in his other hand.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You better have one fat fucking
wallet, or I'll be carving you up
like a Thanksgiving turkey.

The man frantically wipes toilet water and blood off his face with the back of his hand, his eyes as wide as they can possibly go.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Your wallet!! Are you deaf?

The man fumbles for the wallet in the pocket of his pants, now crumpled around his ankles. He holds it up with a trembling hand, looking like he's about to cry.

Charlie makes a beckoning motion with an outstretched hand.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

That's it. Come to Daddy.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - SAME TIME

Rosalie on the phone, curling the phone cord tighter.

ROSALIE

Daddy. Charlie's mom is there. She
says we can stay at her place as
long as we need, until we're
settled.

(beat)

Lots of ideas. I play guitar. Did
ya know Charlie can sing? Folks say
he sounds just like Frankie Laine.

She tightens her face as she gets an earful. She takes it patiently, holding the phone away from her ear slightly, distracting herself by cars blasting by.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

(a refrain)

Yes, Daddy...

EXT./INT. GAS STATION / CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie sits in the car, counting a thick wad of cash. He's now in a white undershirt. His sunglasses are back on.

The Mercedes-Benz sits empty, clicking as it cools down.

Charlie puts the money away as Rosalie gets in the car.

ROSALIE

Where's your shirt?

CHARLIE

Got piss on it. Left it in the trash. Damn urinals, they always splash back on ya. Especially with a pecker as long as mine.

ROSALIE

Charming. We could've washed it. You can't throw everything away, ya know.

CHARLIE

I need new threads anyway.
(beat)
Everything new. From now on.

He stands up and gives her a big kiss.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Except you. How's Cowboy doin'?

ROSALIE

His name is *Clarence*.

CHARLIE

That's not how he introduced himself to me.

ROSALIE

That's cuz you met him in a goddamn card room.

Charlie shrugs nonchalantly. Then frowns.

CHARLIE

So how the hell is he?! What ya changing the subject for?

ROSALIE

He's peachy keen, what do ya think?

CHARLIE
That bad, huh?
(beat)
So?

ROSALIE
So what?

CHARLIE
So screw him. That's what.

ROSALIE
Easy for you to say.

Charlie gets close to her. It's intimidating for a second, then he puts his hands on her cheeks like she was a child.

CHARLIE
It's easy for you to say too,
Rosalie.
(beat)
You just need to say it. Not with
your lips. Not with your tongue.
(beat)
With your *mind*.

He points to his head with a bony index finger to really emphasize his point.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
SCREW. HIM. It ain't that hard.
(beat)
None of them wheels ever cared a
lick about you anyhow, and you know
it. They only care about you *now*
'cause we're gone. Know why? 'Cause
they can't control us no more. You
and me are a couple o' free birds.
(beat)
And we're gonna make all our dreams
come true. Even some we don't know
about yet.

There's that smile. It melts her resolve and all her doubts.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
They'll change their fuckin' tune
when we're rolling in the bread.
You watch. Then we can have our
people call their people and
schedule a fuckin' appointment.

He almost gets in the car.

ROSALIE

Promise?

He stops, turns slowly.

CHARLIE

I don't need to promise shit. I
know we're on the right trail.

(beat)

Now come on snake, let's rattle.

He gets in. She hops in on the other side. She glances at the dog that seems to be curiously watching her.

The car sweetly HUMS to life -- and they RIP OFF down the highway.

In the background the man crawls out of the bathroom, blood trickling down his face. He yells something we can't hear.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Rosalie sits in her bra and panties on the edge of the bed, looking at herself in the dresser mirror.

She places a delicate hand on her belly bulge.

Charlie comes out of the steamy bathroom in white underwear. He's short and sinewy, moving like a coiled spring.

He sees her and grins. He kneels down and kisses her belly. He lifts each foot one at a time and kisses them too.

CHARLIE

Look at you. Mother Mary herself.

(beat)

You're a vision, sweetheart. So
damn beautiful you make my heart
want to cry.

She smiles serenely at him.

He places a gentle hand on her belly.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

How's he doin'?

ROSALIE

What makes you so sure it's a he?

He puts his cheek against her belly tenderly. He gets knocked right off by whatever's inside. Cracks up.

CHARLIE

'Cause the l'il punk just gave me a
knuckle sandwich.

(beat)

Now *that's* a boy. A boy who takes
after his old man to boot.

She smiles, eyes full of wonder. She looks at their tableau
in the mirror.

She places one hand on her belly and one on Charlie's head,
who is still on his knees like he's praying before bed.

ROSALIE

I think he has the hiccups.

CHARLIE

Bastard's probably hungry. Let's
split and get him some meat loaf.

ROSALIE

How much money do we have?

CHARLIE

Don't worry 'bout that. They say
money don't grow on trees, but
that's just all the fools who don't
know where the damn trees are.

Charlie scratches a match on the wall, lights a cigarette.
Looks out the Venetians, paranoid. Eyes the car thoughtfully.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Quietsville out there. There must
be something still open.

ROSALIE

Look at you, strutting like a
tiger, why's your pot always
boiling?

He chuckles.

CHARLIE

'Cause I play the game of life
hard. I ain't screwing around.

ROSALIE

Like the night I met you, when you
won all that loot off my pop?

CHARLIE

Yeah. You know what happens? I get this feeling in my spine, and my whole body starts buzzing like a goddamn tuning fork. And then, when the world wants to stop me, and it always tries, it can't.

His charisma is at a fever pitch. Rosalie feels the heat.

ROSALIE

Want a quickie before we chow down?

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER

Rosalie eats a burger in bed while she watches 'The Johnny Carson Show'. Charlie sits at the window and smokes.

ON SCREEN: a B & W image of James Arness from 'Gunsmoke' in cowboy gear, trying to outdraw himself as he faces a mirror. He shoots. The mirror cracks. His reflection falls, 'dead'.

ON Rosalie, as she laughs along with the LIVE AUDIENCE, who TITTER in delight. The TV light dances on Rosalie's face.

ON SCREEN: a young, black haired, super skinny Johnny Carson stands next to James Arness, who turns to camera.

JAMES ARNESS (ON TV)

Kids, this is Marshall Matt Dillon of Gunsmoke talkin' to ya. Get to bed early and get some rest, 'cause you don't want to miss my new CBS television show.

JOHNNY CARSON (ON TV)

And that's Gunsmoke. Thank you very much, Marshall.

JAMES ARNESS (ON TV)

Thank you, Johnny.

The outro horns PLAY as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Rosalie wakes up peacefully.

Grease splotched takeout bags are on the bedside table.

Her eyes suddenly open wide. She turns over. Charlie is gone.

She hears an engine ROAR outside, followed by a SCREECH of tires. A shadow blooms across the drawn window curtain.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Rosalie has a floral bathrobe on as she steps out and looks at Charlie, now wearing a black and white bowling shirt.

He lords over an aqua blue 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air, presenting it like a magician performing a magic trick.

All of their stuff is now packed in it.

ROSALIE
Charlie? What the hell?

CHARLIE
We needed something more hopped up
to get where we're going. That last
chariot was too Mickey Mouse.

Charlie runs his palms across it like it was a living thing.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
This hot mama's a rocket, and she
hauls ass. A nice young fella was
more than willing to make a trade.

ROSALIE
That makes no damn sense.

CHARLIE
Lookie here. He threw in this.

Charlie opens the back and pulls out an acoustic guitar.

ROSALIE
How on earth was that a trade?

CHARLIE
I could talk the hat off the pope,
sugar, you know that.

She isn't sure. He hands her the guitar.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
For you. Hey, maybe you can teach
me how to play. What do ya say?

Rosalie looks at him, half touched, half confused.

EXT. HILL - DAY

Charlie and Rosalie sit on a picnic blanket, eating from another couple of grease covered bags of takeout. Their new car is parked nearby, twinkling in the sunshine.

Below them, a baseball game plays out at an outdoor stadium. They can hear the crowd CHEER every now and then.

CHARLIE

So what do ya think of Speedee Service System?

ROSALIE

Tastier than White Castle.

CHARLIE

Used to only be able to get 'em in California. Now stands are popping up all over hell's half acre.

He looks her in the eye.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

We're still heading the right way. Everything's in California. Why do you think my mama moved there?

ROSALIE

I'm not sure why your mama does anything, but I'll take your word for it, for now. I'm still with ya, ain't I?

He smiles and pulls up the acoustic guitar, tries playing it but definitely doesn't know any chords. It's a jangly mess.

CHARLIE

Here, you play it, girl.

She plays a few pretty chords, fingers expertly picking with perfectly groomed nails.

ROSALIE

You wanna sing, Charlie?

He smiles and nods excitedly. Clears his throat.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

(doing an announcer voice)
The Johnny Carson Show. Starring.
Johnny Carson!

(Johnny Carson voice)

(MORE)

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

My first guest is a dear friend,
currently appearing at the
Hollywood Bowl... ladies and
gentlemen... Charles Manson!

Charlie loves this.

CHARLIE

Glad to be here, Johnny. Hey there,
Rosalie. You know the chords to
this one?

ROSALIE

I don't know, Charlie, try humming
a few bars.

CHARLIE

Why don't I try singing a few bars?
(sings)
*Rosalie, my darling, Rosalie, my
dream...*

ROSALIE

Oh yeah I got it. You keep singing.

She noodles with some chords as he continues:

CHARLIE

(singing)
*Since one night when stars danced
above, I'm oh oh so much in love...*

She starts nailing the chords. It sounds lovely. Charlie
stands up like he really is performing on a stage.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(singing)
*So Rosalie, have mercy. Rosalie,
don't decline. Won't you make my
life thrilling, and tell me, you're
willing to be miiiiine....*
(really big finish)
ROSALIE, MINE!

Just as he finishes they hear the CRACK of a home run below.
The spectators ROAR with excitement. Charlie takes a bow.

When he comes back up from the bow his eyes are a-blaze.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. 1955 CHEVROLET BEL AIR - DAY

Rosalie is pale, forehead pressed weakly against the closed passenger side window as the car speeds along.

CHARLIE
You okay, honey bun?

She manages to shake her head feebly.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
You wanna toss your cookies again?

A tiny nod.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Okay, don't get it all over the new car now, lemme pull over.

Charlie puts on his indicator and gently pulls the car over.

INT. 1955 CHEVROLET BEL AIR - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie smokes and plays with the RADIO as Rosalie sits on the edge of her seat, door open, puking onto the grass.

CHARLIE
See all the perks this hot mama has?

He finds a station PLAYING Elvis Presley's "Baby Let's Play House" as he lights a cigarette and takes the song in, TURNING UP THE VOLUME to dominate her retching.

She sits back in the seat and breathes deeply. She has a little bit of speckle on her chin. Charlie puts a hand on the nape of her neck and squeezes gently.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Life's a rocky road, ain't it?
(beat)
I heard a cat once say that life is a spark between two identical voids, the darkness before birth, and the one after death.

She rubs her belly with her palm in soft circles.

ROSALIE

I think his life's already begun.
It's not a void in there.

Charlie just smiles at her, eyes glinting.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

What?

CHARLIE

You calling him a he now too?

ROSALIE

I guess. He reminds me of you.

He chuckles and keeps looking at her with a slight grin.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

What else?

CHARLIE

You got some crap on your face.

ROSALIE

Rats. Maybe there's some tissues in
the glove box.

She opens it, fishes around. Pulls out a giant ring.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

What the holy hell is this?

He takes it from her, twirls it in the light. It's a diamond
encrusted horseshoe with a silver horse in the middle.

CHARLIE

Worth a pretty penny I'll tell you
that much.

He puts it in the breast pocket of his shirt.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

So what you say, darlin'? You ready
to tear ass again?

She finds a handkerchief in her purse and wipes her face.

ROSALIE

I want to stop moving for a day. We
aren't in such a hurry are we?

Charlie takes a deep breath and lets out a sigh.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

Charlie, I got morning sickness,
and car sickness on top of that. I
need to stop moving.

CHARLIE

We don't have the money to stop.

ROSALIE

What about them money trees you
were rapping about? Surely there's
some around here?

Charlie mulls this over and changes his tune.

CHARLIE

Fine. We'll stop at the next town.
But just 'til you feel better.

ROSALIE

Deal.

Back on the trail they go.

EXT. SANTA CLAUS, INDIANA - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The car drives by a welcome sign for 'Santa Claus, Indiana'
with a big statue of Santa Claus with a big bag of presents.

Inside the car, we see Charlie and Rosalie point and laugh.

INT. CHRISTMAS THEMED DINER - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Charlie and Rosalie sit at a chrome and vinyl diner booth.
Rosalie looks cheered up as she finishes a burger and fries.
Charlie finishes a plate of sunny side up eggs. They both sip
big glasses of Coke through straws.

There's a checker board floor, a juke box, lots of tinsel and
sprigs of fir and holly all over the walls. Framed paintings
of St. Nick everywhere.

FAMILIES line a few booths. Some PEOPLE sit on stools at the
counter. A WAITRESS with a Santa hat on flits around busily.

Rosalie burps. She covers her mouth and giggles, blushing.

CHARLIE

That a girl. You look made in the
shade now. Feeling better?

ROSALIE

A lot better.

She takes his hand.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

What if we lived here? Do we really need to go all the way to LA?

CHARLIE

You like it here, huh? Christmas every day. I take it you have good memories of ol' Santa Claus?

ROSALIE

Of course. Doesn't everyone?

CHARLIE

Not me.

(beat)

One of the first Christmases I ever remember... I didn't get a goddamn thing.

He wipes ketchup off his lips with a napkin and looks out the window, squinting.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I think all I had to my name, when I was about 5, was a red wagon and a box of matches that once belonged to my daddy.

(beat)

I dragged that wagon 'round the neighborhood one fine Christmas morning, saw all the kids playing with all their shiny new toys.

(beat)

Not one kid invited me to play. Fine. So... around lunch time, when they all get called in for their perfect little peanut butter sandwiches and their cute little glasses of milk, I rounded up all the toys left behind, put 'em in that big red wagon until they were piled as high as the sky. I took toy mountain to a garbage dump. Took my daddy's matches, and used every single one of 'em to light the biggest damn fire I ever saw. Smoke all over town.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Word spread, soon there's a whole gaggle of crying kids gathered around, wailing their little butts off.

He laughs at the memory.

We cut to Rosalie. She's profoundly disturbed. She glances at a painting of Santa Claus beside them almost guiltily.

ROSALIE

Charlie. That's horrible.

CHARLIE

That's what they all told me. That was my very first brush with the law. Copper sure gave me a piece of his mind. I got a licking from damn near everybody. But I felt good, what I done. Hell, still do.

He points to his head and like a mantra says:

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Screw. Them. Remember? It's easy.

There's a JINGLE at the door as a new CUSTOMER walks in. He's super polished with slicked back hair, and a beautiful patterned cardigan with a shirt and tie underneath.

Charlie leans out to get a good look at him -- peers down at the man's rockabilly shoes: half leopard print, half leather.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Always look at the shoes. That's how you know someone's in the bread.

Rosalie takes a peek too. The man sits at the counter and orders a coffee which arrives seconds later. He sips at it.

Charlie takes the ring out of his pocket and hands it to Rosalie. Fishes a dime out of his pants pocket.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Put this ring on, go on over, put a dime in that juke box. Play whatever. Get the guy to notice ya.

Rosalie grins and blushes.

ROSALIE

Why?

CHARLIE

'Cause we're going to sell him that ring, that's why. If you make it twinkle, and he asks about it, tell him it used to belong to Elvis Aaron Presley.

ROSALIE

What?

CHARLIE

How do we know it didn't? We don't, right? It ain't a lie if we don't know. Leave the rest to me.

He slides the dime and ring toward her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Go on. I'll show you how it's done. And then we'll have ourselves a big old steak for dinner. Well done. With *all* the trimmings. Mmm. I can taste it already!

Rosalie looks over her shoulder. The man is handsome, like a matinee idol. She bounces out of her seat suddenly.

The juke box is right next to him. She puts the dime in, one foot on tip-toe, trying - and succeeding - to be alluring.

She glances over to Charlie. He makes a motion like 'move the ring around'.

She runs her finger along the edge of the juke box, catching the sunlight, making it cast little reflections everywhere. Other people start to notice. The man looks up and says:

CUSTOMER

When you due, little lady?

Rosalie doesn't get it, then does. Rubs her belly.

ROSALIE

Oh. I'm, uh, four months in. Making it due sometime next easter.

CUSTOMER

Well I hope the easter bunny is good to you. God bless.

ROSALIE

Why thank you, kind sir.

She curtseys, then glances over to Charlie. He's making wildly unsatisfied and frustrated gestures. She digs in.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

I don't know what song to play.
Could you be a sweetie pie and help
me decide?

The man sips his coffee, smiles at her, then stands up. He walks over and looks at the selections.

CUSTOMER

What do you like? Rock, country?

ROSALIE

Oh I like everything.

She flirts with him with her eyes, twirling the ring around.

CUSTOMER

I've always been partial to Johnny
Cash. You heard 'Cry Cry Cry' yet?

ROSALIE

I have not had the pleasure.

She traces the number, slides her ringed finger along the buttons.

CUSTOMER

Oh my gosh. That's a dazzling ring,
where'd you get that beauty?

She smiles and turns to wink at Charlie. He makes a gesture like 'don't look at me, look at him'.

ROSALIE

You'll never believe it... but it
used to belong to Elvis Aaron
Presley.

CUSTOMER

No fooling? Wait. You're fooling.
That can't be right.

(beat)

I know the man likes his rings
but...

The man *wants* to believe it. That's Charlie's cue. He's there like a shot.

CHARLIE

What's the tale, nightingale, you
showing off that darn ring again?

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Come on now. Someone's going to want to have it all to themselves.

He nods at the man.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

How you doin' there, fella? Nice shoes. I admire them greatly.

CUSTOMER

Thank you. I admire that ring. Say, is that really Elvis' ring? Elvis Presley? The man himself?

CHARLIE

Judy. Did you tell him that too? Geez Louise, I can't take you anywhere.

She looks at Charlie confused, but then her eyes sparkle as she suddenly gets it. She completes the music selection and Johnny Cash PLAYS.

ROSALIE

I sure did tell him, *James*. Can't help myself.

CHARLIE

You're gonna get it stolen one day.

CUSTOMER

But is it really his? Cuz... that'd be a hell of a thing.

CHARLIE

Nah, just a tall tale. Come on, hon.

ROSALIE

James, it's okay. He obviously ain't the stealin' type.

The man smiles, watching their banter closely.

CUSTOMER

Is it?

(beat)

'Cause if so... how in the blazes did you get your hands on it?

Charlie leans in.

CHARLIE

You really want to know? Okay, but we'll have to keep this between us.

(beat, conspiratorial)

I was recording a song over there at Sun Records, in Memphis? I used to go to school with Sam Philips' younger brother so I always got free studio time. Anyhow, so this kid comes in, shy as a dang old bunny, wants to record a song for his mama's birthday. But, wouldn't you know it? He has no money. I tell the kid that's a hell of a ring you got there. He says his Grampy gave it to him. So I buy it, for \$300. Got myself a beautiful piece of jewelry. He gets to make his mama happy. Win win, chicken din. So later on, when this kid's shaking his pelvis on TV...

Charlie shakes his own hips with crazy agility. People notice. He nods to everyone, then leans in with a whisper.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

...I realize, we got his ring. It must be worth a fortune by now. Anyways, we gotta go... we don't want to be late for church.

They both nod at the man and Charlie gently takes Rosalie by the arm as they go to the counter to pay the bill.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(whispering to Rosalie)

Don't look at him.

She looks around at the Christmas decorations instead.

EXT. CHRISTMAS THEMED DINER - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Charlie and Rosalie walk out the front doors.

ROSALIE

Really? That's it? What are you rushing out for? We had him.

CHARLIE

Keep walkin'. And pipe down.

They do.

The doors open behind them. Charlie smiles. Rosalie notices.

CUSTOMER

Hold on!

They turn, acting innocent. The customer catches up to them.

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)

I'm a collector. Go to trade shows all the time, I could fetch a hell of a price for something like that.

CHARLIE

Oh gee, mister, that's swell and all, but we could never part with such a fine souvenir.

They turn again.

CUSTOMER

How about six hundred dollars? Make it six hundred and fifty. I've got the cash right in my car. I was just on my way to the bank.

Charlie turns and raises an eyebrow.

He looks down at the man's shoes. The customer blinks first.

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)

Fine. I'll throw in the shoes.

Charlie grins. Rosalie, wide eyed, holds her breath.

INT. 1955 CHEVROLET BEL AIR - A LITTLE LATER

Charlie and Rosalie are driving along, screaming. Charlie is pounding the wheel. His new shoes are on the accelerator and riding the clutch.

The radio blasts Bill Haley's 'Rock Around the Clock'.

They are over the moon.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

They're both dressed to the nines, enjoying a candlelit steak dinner. Their faces aglow with romance.

ROSALIE

That was so fun today, Charlie. Maybe the most fun I've ever had.

CHARLIE

I told ya, you're my lucky charm.
My negotiating skills, your Zip-a-
Dee-Doo-Dah... everyone's going to
know our names one day.

ROSALIE

So what you want to do after this?
Not that I don't want this moment
to last forever.

CHARLIE

Why don't we really bust it out,
and hit the biggest, brightest
casino we can find and turn this
haul into a jackpot bigger than our
wildest dreams.

ROSALIE

Really? I know you have your
talents, but what if we lose it?

CHARLIE

You just have to be there to
sprinkle some of that pixie dust
around and we'll be king and queen
before the night is out.

He takes her hand and gives it a squeeze.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You, me, and our little prince.

ROSALIE

Oh, Charlie. I do love you so.

CHARLIE

I know, baby. Me too.

EXT. CASINO - NIGHT

The front doors open. Charlie and Rosalie walk out in SLOW
MOTION. For a split second we think maybe they're on a roll
or leaving victorious.

A split second later we see the ashen look on Rosalie's face,
her furtive glances to Charlie. His brow is completely
furrowed, his eyes glistening like a trapped animal.

She tries to grab his arm. He shakes it off and walks ahead.
She follows him like a nervous pup.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. 1955 CHEVROLET BEL AIR - NIGHT

They drive in cold silence. Rosalie tries to turn on the radio but Charlie flicks her fingers away from the controls.

ROSALIE

Goddammit, I'm feeling queasy again and trying to take my mind off it. It's either the radio or we stop again.

CHARLIE

We can't stop. We don't have any money to stop. Not a goddamn red cent. And I only listen to music when I'm happy.

ROSALIE

How are we going to eat without no damn money?

CHARLIE

Maybe you should have thought of that when you decided to leave the table, when your man was on a roll?

ROSALIE

I had to use the bathroom. The baby is using my bladder as his own personal throne!

She pulls out a cigarette from his breast pocket. She sits with it in her mouth unlit, fuming.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

You gonna be a gentleman and spark a lady up? And please stop talking to me like I was a bee or a sting.

Charlie half heartedly gets his own and lights them both up, all his previous flair and flourish noticeably absent.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

What do we do when we run out of gas? Then what? Are we just gonna-

CHARLIE

Oh would you shut your goddamn trap for five goddamn minutes?

She gasps, anger making her breath steaming hot.

ROSALIE

Don't you dare talk to me that!

He pulls off the road and SCREECHES to a halt. Turns to her in a fury. But she's defiant.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

Oh really? You gonna crack me in the mouth now? Well go ahead! Get it over with! *But you better knock me out 'cause then it's my turn!*

Her temper is white hot heat. Her eyes are on fire. It stops Charlie in his tracks. She means it.

He takes a moment and then pulls back out onto the road and drives off into the night smoothly.

A stony silence lingers like unventilated smoke.

Angry tears run down Rosalie's face. She sniffs.

Charlie glances over but doesn't say anything. She's the one to break the ice:

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I just don't know what comes over me sometimes.

Charlie keeps quiet, angling for leverage. She looks over at him and tries to read his expression.

CHARLIE

That's okay...
(beat)
...your mood's understandable.

She looks relieved.

ROSALIE

So what do we do? Let's put our noggins together and figure this out.

CHARLIE

There is one thing.

He looks at her out of the corner of his eye.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

If we really want to sleep in a bed tonight.

ROSALIE

What?

CHARLIE

Let me find the next town, next bar, then we'll see where we're at.

ROSALIE

Okay then.

More silence. But the anger is gone, and hope has returned.

EXT. EVANSVILLE, INDIANA / BAR / CAR - NIGHT

The car is parked in front of a bar with a blinking neon martini glass next to the name: 'HARRY'S'.

Through the glass they see a few MEN bellied up to the bar as a BARTENDER in a bowtie and vest serves them.

INT. 1955 CHEVROLET BEL AIR - CONTINUOUS

Charlie has his eyes peeled on every detail the bar has to offer from the outside.

CHARLIE

Classy place. Those cats all have money. And if they're out this late, and alone, they're lonely.

Rosalie doesn't know where this is going.

ROSALIE

We're not robbing anyone, Charlie. That's a line I won't cross.

CHARLIE

We ain't robbing anybody. Sure, it ain't exactly a legal transaction, what I have in mind... but at least I know a way they'll give us their money willingly.

She tries to mask her naiveté but she smells something wrong.

ROSALIE

And how's that exactly?

Charlie lights a cigarette.

CHARLIE

Kid in the cooler told me how this works. You're beautiful, I always tell you that, right? Well, a lonely man will pay just about anything to be in the arms of someone as beautiful as you.

ROSALIE

What are you monkeying about?

CHARLIE

You won't have to do much. Just make sure he gets off. If he squirts in his pants while you're licking his ear it's still the same price tag.

ROSALIE

Oh my God, Charlie. Oh my God! Are you actually trying to get me to be... a *dirty tramp*?

CHARLIE

You want to sleep in the car? Go hungry? You've got a bun in the oven to think about, it's not just about you no more.

ROSALIE

I never said it was, Charlie, but Jesus tap dancing Christ.

CHARLIE

You wasn't even a virgin when I met you - at 16 years old. You know tricks beyond your years.

ROSALIE

I'm pregnant.

CHARLIE

That don't matter, trust me.

He changes tact like a bullfighter.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I'll find you someone handsome. I'm sure you've fantasized about being with an older man at least once before, with all your daddy issues.

ROSALIE

Don't. You are cruising for a bruising, Charlie Brown.

(beat)

Fantasy and reality are two different things.

CHARLIE

Gee. Thanks for the philosophy class.

(beat)

I thought you wanted adventure. You sure talked a big game, little Ms. I'm So Independent. Fine, chuck it, we'll just goose it on out of here.

He goes to start the car but pauses because he knows she's about to:

ROSALIE

Hold on.

(beat)

How would we even begin to do something like this?

CHARLIE

I'll be the pimp. You know what a pimp is?

ROSALIE

Sure.

CHARLIE

I'll go in, set it all up. Leave that part to me.

He looks at the patrons again. Game on.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I'll say you're in the car waiting. We'll park you 'round back where it's dark. Man comes out. Probably loaded. You sweet talk him and more or less cuddle him, make him feel loved, maybe show a little skin. Play the part of a young shy gal and before you know it it'll be over. It won't have to get too rank, trust me. Older guys are more like little kids. It's cats my age that like it all rough and jazz.

She takes his cigarette and takes a long drag.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I'll be right around
the corner, keeping an eye on you
the whole time.

Another long drag.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

In 20 minutes we'll be in a nice,
warm, clean bed. We can order
champagne up to the room to
celebrate. What do you say?

ROSALIE

I'm thinking.

CHARLIE

Well don't think all night, ya got
to strike while the iron's hot.

She looks him in the eye. A world of thoughts behind her own
eyes. She takes a drag. Charlie smiles, knowing he's got her.

INT. BAR - A FEW MINUTES LATER

We see Charlie work the whole bar, interacting with FOUR MEN
in their 50's and 60's that all drink separately.

We don't hear any sound other than the Perry Como song, "All
at Once You Love Her".

The bartender watches suspiciously, drying glasses as Charlie
holds court, telling some far fetched story that has the
guys' attention.

He rolls up a sleeve and shows off a long scar, tells an
animated story that obviously involves a fight. They laugh
and one guy buys him a drink.

He clinks glasses with them all, then puts an arm around one
of the older men. Whispers in his ear.

EXT. BAR - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Charlie walks with the awkward older man toward a parking lot
with one streetlight lighting up a corner of it.

On the other side of the lot sits the Chevy. Charlie points
to the car. Rosalie looks out her window nervously at them.

The song from the previous scene ENDS as Charlie counts some
cash and watches the man stumble toward the car.

The man clumsily gets in the driver side. The door shuts.

ON Charlie, as he looks sick to his stomach for a moment. He blows it off, pointing to his head, turning back to the bar.

We follow him as he walks all the way around and in.

We see through the window as he orders himself a drink, suddenly all smiles.

INT. 1955 CHEVROLET BEL AIR - SAME TIME

The man sits in the driver's seat. Rosalie rolls her window down and lights a cigarette with a trembling hand.

ROSALIE

You want one?

The man is drunk and soft and having trouble looking her in the eye. It makes her feel more relaxed.

OLD MAN

No thanks. I don't smoke no more.
My doctor says all those ads saying
it's good for you are outright
lies.

ROSALIE

Everything is a lie when it comes
right down to it.

The man looks down and notices her belly.

OLD MAN

Dear lord, are you with child?

ROSALIE

Oh no no no, just a pot belly. I do
like my beer.

She flashes a phony smile. He doesn't look convinced. He's growing uncomfortable.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

So what did my boss tell you we
could do?

OLD MAN

He said there's nothing we *can't*
do. That there's nothing you don't
know *how* to do. Something along
those lines.

ROSALIE

So what do you like?

Her voice gets caught in her throat. She clears it.

OLD MAN

Maybe we could just talk for a spell? I didn't know how much I'd had to drink until I got up.

ROSALIE

We've got time. No rush.

OLD MAN

Where you from?

ROSALIE

Hollywood. We're just taking a road trip out East.

OLD MAN

Visiting family?

ROSALIE

No. My family all died in a fire. It was in the newspaper and everything.

OLD MAN

Oh I'm very so sorry to hear that.

ROSALIE

That's okay. It happened when I was little. I grew up in an orphanage in downtown LA.

OLD MAN

That must have been hard.

ROSALIE

More like one big family. I still keep in touch with most of them.

OLD MAN

What do you and your boss do in Hollywood? This sort of thing?

ROSALIE

Oh yeah, we work the Sunset Strip mostly. One time I even spent a little quality time with Alan Ladd.

OLD MAN

Really? Ain't he married?

ROSALIE
Sure. Ain't you?

OLD MAN
No. Actually. I'm a widow.

ROSALIE
Oh. Now I'm the one who's sorry.

OLD MAN
It's okay. I've made my peace with it. Well, best I can anyway.

ROSALIE
Kids?

OLD MAN
Yeah but I don't talk to them no more. They always blamed me for what happened to Carol.

ROSALIE
What did happen to her?

OLD MAN
Well, it's hard for me to talk about, but, well, she-

Rosalie tosses her cigarette out the window and picks up the man's hand, kisses it.

ROSALIE
It's okay.

Suddenly the man is crying. She keeps kissing his hand, rubs it on her cheek softly.

A car pulls up behind them. They both freeze, and wait for the moment to pass.

Suddenly they both react as a car door opens behind them and a flashlight swoops and sweeps.

Rosalie looks back and sees a POLICE OFFICER standing behind the car. She goes instantly pale, looks to the old man.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)
It's the heat. What do we do?

OLD MAN
I don't know, where's your boss?

EXT. 1955 CHEVROLET BEL AIR - SAME TIME

The police officer steps back to his car and reaches inside for the radio receiver.

POLICE OFFICER

(into receiver)

This is Unit 17. Just zeroed a blue Chevy Bel Air, 1955. Corner of Avon and Westport. Looks like the car. Two people inside. Gonna check it out.

He walks toward the Chevy as we

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. BAR - SAME TIME

Charlie is in the middle of hustling a couple other older men.

CHARLIE

(to the men)

And this hotel was so swanky I had to shave *before* I went to the barber shop.

The old guys laugh as Charlie heads to the middle of the bar.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(to the bartender)

What's buzzin', cousin? How about supplying me with another one of them fine whiskey sours?

BARTENDER

I think it's high time you left. I know the game you're playing.

CHARLIE

Oh yeah, what game's that, knucklehead?

BARTENDER

Look. I just called the police. I don't want any trouble.

Charlie swipes the glasses and a jar of peanuts right off the bar, climbs right up and over, and has the bartender by the scruff in a heartbeat.

CHARLIE

Tell me again what you done.

The other customers protest loudly. He turns on them.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Oh what are you gonna do, dick licks? Look at your damn guts. Ain't one of you could fight your way out of a wet paper bag.

Charlie takes a bottle and smashes it, holding the sharp end up to the bartender's throat.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

And now, you better just be giving me static or I'll be back to mess you up. You'll be dead. Cold. Get me?

The bartender doesn't say anything or move a muscle. Charlie takes the broken bottle with him as he jumps the bar and heads out.

EXT. PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

The police officer knocks on the Chevy's driver's side window. The old man winds it down with a trembling hand.

POLICE OFFICER

Evening. So what we got here?

The old man is tongue tied. Rosalie takes over.

ROSALIE

Nothing sir, we were just shooting the breeze.

POLICE OFFICER

Oh yeah? Is that what they call it these days?

He looks in and shines his flashlight on Rosalie's face.

OLD MAN

Sir, we really weren't doing anything wrong. Scout's honor.

POLICE OFFICER

Tell that to the judge. You both step out of the car. I'll ask you politely the first time.

Rosalie looks at the older man. He nods. They step out.

ROSALIE

I don't understand it. Why you wanna bother us when we're doing nothing wrong?

POLICE OFFICER

Bartender of this establishment called it in. Says you've got an accomplice promising the world to everyone in that bar. This ain't Nevada.

OLD MAN

Officer, we ain't up to any mischief. You can see the young lady is with child. She needed some air.

Rosalie looks over to him for a moment, touched in a way that he really did know all along.

The car radio SQUAWKS.

POLICE DISPATCH (ON RADIO)

Unit 17, this is dispatch, requesting an update.

POLICE OFFICER

Stay there. I don't want to have to cuff you but I will if I have to.

The police officer heads over to his car and takes the radio receiver, holds it up, keeping a watchful eye on the pair.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)

Unit 17.

POLICE DISPATCH (ON RADIO)

Unit 17, we ran the license plate. That vehicle was reported stolen in Leavenworth by the local mayor's son.

We RACK FOCUS past the police officer to the bushes to see Charlie's face, eyes wide, hanging on every word and detail.

POLICE OFFICER

Copy that, it also looks like we got a 647b in progress. I'll bring the occupants in and keep my eye out for the accomplice.

POLICE DISPATCH (ON RADIO)

10-4.

The police officer heads back to the car just as Charlie emerges, standing up, looming behind the police officer like a monster from a B movie.

He cracks the police officer over the back of the head with his bottle. The bottle shatters in his hand.

The cop falls forward, cap tumbling to the pavement, a little blood trickling through his hair.

Rosalie screams. Charlie gives her a withering look.

CHARLIE

Are you *trying* to attract more attention?

The older man holds the car for support, weakening.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Old timer. Here's what's happening. We're taking your car and we're getting out of here lickety split. And if you speak a damn word of this to anyone I'll search the ends of the earth 'til I find you.

Charlie runs a finger across his neck with menace.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You know what that means, don't ya?

ROSALIE

Charlie!

He turns to her with another withering look.

CHARLIE

You already messed enough up enough for one night.

ROSALIE

How'd I mess up? I did everything you told me!

OLD MAN

Now take it easy, son. She's-

CHARLIE

I ain't your son. Get your car. Bring it over. No funny stuff or it'll be the last thing you ever do.

Rosalie looks at Charlie like she has no idea who he is.

He sees her horror and makes a joke, doing an Oliver Hardy impression.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Well, here's another nice bucket of suds you've gotten me into.

ROSALIE

How can you joke at a time like this? We're going to jail.

CHARLIE

I ain't afraid of jail. But if you stick with me and do exactly what I say, maybe we can avoid it.

A RUMBLE of a car engine as the older man brings his 1945 Opel Kapitän over to them, a grim expression on his face through the rolled down window.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Now start transferring all our stuff. We need to be in the next state like yesterday.

Rosalie has an out-of-body experience as she proceeds to take one thing after another from their old car to the new car.

The old man gets out and just stands there, looking more awkward than usual. He puts his hands up to convey that he doesn't want any trouble.

OLD MAN

You should probably make sure that officer is still alive.

CHARLIE

You should probably stop being such a wise ass. Got any more money?

The man takes out his wallet and gives some bills to Charlie.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

And your watch. Quick now.

The old man gives him his watch with a pained expression.

OLD MAN

I got that when I retired.

CHARLIE

Life's a joke sometimes, ain't it? A cat once said not to take life too seriously 'cause none of us are making it out alive.

The old man slumps, the quote seeming to shatter him.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Now help a lady out, where's your manners gone?

The old man starts to help Rosalie daisy chain the couple's possessions.

Charlie goes over and pokes the police officer's gun with his shoe. Mulls over whether to take it or not.

He finally does, pockets it. Drags the police officer over to the bushes. Gets in the police car and drives it into the bushes haphazardly, but a little more out of immediate sight.

He gets out, pulls the gun out and holds the gun to the cop's head. Looks to see whether Rosalie and the old man are looking. They're quietly getting the job done, haunted.

Charlie pokes the man's lips with the gun barrel. Then he gently slides the barrel right into his mouth, CLANKING between his teeth.

He starts to slide the barrel back and forth, back and forth.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

That's it. Yeah. You're really good at that.

(beat)

Oh yeah. I could pop at any moment.

Charlie's finger tightens on the trigger.

Something makes him stop. Some kind of calculus that right now the crime count is *just* low enough that he could actually deal with it all if he was caught.

He emerges from the brush just as the last item, the floor lamp, is slid into the new car.

He goes to the back door of the new car and puts the police officer's gun in the pocket behind the shotgun seat.

He then takes a rag out of the door pocket of the old car and wipes down the Chevy's steering wheel, glove compartment, door handles, window rollers, then tosses it into the bushes.

He turns to the two who gape at him in dull shock.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(to the old man)

Not a word to anyone, pops. Don't ever go back to that bar and we can forget this ever happened. Don't tell a soul you met the devil tonight. We clear?

The man nods sadly.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(to Rosalie)

You. Get in that new chariot.

Charlie gets in. Rosalie gives the old man the sorriest look she can muster. He nods. She gets in, and the car TEARS OFF.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY 60 - MORNING

The car blasts by a 'Welcome to Missouri' sign as the sun bleeds into the horizon. A crow flies off the sign.

INT. 1945 OPEL KAPITÄN - MORNING

Charlie drives, smoking, as intense as ever, bathed in red light. Rosalie is asleep, her head leaned against the window.

She stirs. Looks around with sleepy eyes.

ROSALIE

Where are we?

CHARLIE

We made it two states over. We should be okay if we're careful. No more sloppy mistakes though.

She looks at him for a long time like he was a complete stranger she was examining for the very first time.

ROSALIE

I did what you told me. Why do you insist I messed up?

CHARLIE

How'd you manage to get the police to notice you?

ROSALIE

He came out of nowhere. He said the bartender reported us.

Charlie frowns, face tightening.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

The bartender only saw you. You sure it wasn't you made the mistake?

Charlie shakes his head and his eyes glaze over.

CHARLIE

You don't get it.

ROSALIE

No. I don't. And I don't think I want to.

(MORE)

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

I heard the lady on the police radio, she said our car was reported *stolen*. The one you said you got in a *trade*?

Charlie stays quiet, on a low simmer.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

So that means you lied to me. What else have you been lying about? Besides *everything*?

He's tight lipped. Her frustration spills over and tears run down her cheeks.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

Is your mother really in LA?

He doesn't say anything.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

Charlie?

CHARLIE

Yes! Goddammit, YES!

ROSALIE

Well how am I supposed to know what's a lie and what isn't?

(beat)

My daddy always said you were the best con man he ever met. He said you learnt it all from your mom. "An apple never falls far from the tree". That's what he said.

Charlie steams in silence.

A car comes up behind them. Charlie squints, adjusts the rear view mirror, slows down a touch to let it pass. Glances over.

A 1955 Ford Station Wagon with a MOM, DAD, and a young BOY and GIRL in the back, float on past. The boy has a cheap plastic feather headdress on and a toy bow and arrow.

He pretends to shoot at Charlie. Charlie gives him a look that makes the boy's excited expression drop. The boy suddenly looks like he's about to cry.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

I guess I thought you turned that all off when we were together. That I was an exception.

She turns her head to look at him.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)
That I was special.

Nothing.

ROSALIE (CONT'D)
Charlie?

He looks over with his best asshole look.

CHARLIE
I'm sorry dear, was you saying something?

She grits her teeth and looks out the window.

ROSALIE
Fine. Be that way. But I won't let our son lie to me. He's going to learn the value of the truth.

CHARLIE
Aw, it ain't up to you. He'll be whoever he's destined to be.

ROSALIE
Oh like you were destined to be you? You don't think it had anything to with your mama being a jailbird most of the damn time?

He looks like he's going to lose it. But he won't give her the upper hand, even if it kills him. He sighs instead.

CHARLIE
I was me from the get go.
(beat)
One time I attacked my cousin when she was babysitting me, with the biggest knife in the kitchen. Tore a screen door to shreds just to scare the bejesus out of her. Don't know why. It's just who I am.

ROSALIE
Well I'm not that.

CHARLIE
So what're you saying, woman? Spit it out!

ROSALIE

I can't do any more of this stealing and whoring and knocking out cops stuff! Jesus. As if I have to even say that.

(beat)

I'll stay with you, maybe, but it has to be roses and sunshine from now on. That's what I thought you wanted. And that's what I signed up for.

CHARLIE

So did I. But going straight never works out. For anyone. I see how all them rubes get screwed over every damn day.

ROSALIE

Well which is it gonna be?

CHARLIE

I don't have to choose.

ROSALIE

Yes you do. You choose day or you choose night. What's it gonna be?

CHARLIE

We don't get to choose that. One rolls into the other, when it's time. Go ahead, change it to night right now.

(beat)

I'm waiting. Why ain't it dark yet? Click your damn fingers.

ROSALIE

You're just crazy. That's what I think. That's what all this is. You're not a bad man. But you sure are crazy.

CHARLIE

The whole world's crazy, kid. Get used to it.

She bristles and folds her arms.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

So what are you gonna do, hitchhike back home if I play your silly little game and choose night instead of day?

ROSALIE

I will if I have to.

CHARLIE

No you won't. Not with my kid
inside ya you won't.

ROSALIE

Is that a threat?

CHARLIE

Yes it is. And you know what I'm
capable of, at least now you do.

(beat)

I know you got a temper, but that
ain't nothing compared to what I
got. You don't want to know what
flavor this soda pop is, *kid*.

ROSALIE

I ain't a kid!

CHARLIE

Oh you're a kid, believe me. And
from now on you do as I say. That's
the only way any of this is gonna
work. You're out of options. So
buck up, little lady.

She sullenly looks out the window and starts to plan her
escape, letting him have the final word... for now.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A little B & W TV is on in a corner of the dark room. It's
raining outside.

A 'Band-Aid plastic strip' commercial is on. A woman in a
kitchen hangs an egg with a band-aid on it into a pot of
boiling water to show how strong it is.

WOMAN (ON TV)

Maybe you don't want to boil eggs
this way, but you do want the extra
protection of Band-Aid Plastic
Strips. They take better care of
little cuts and scratches. They
stay put.

The commercial continues as Charlie comes stumbling out of
the bathroom, sipping loudly from a can of beer.

He trips and falls to the floor. He laughs to himself.

Rosalie looks annoyed but can't help ask:

ROSALIE
You okay?

He gets up, crawls onto the bed.

CHARLIE
(voice slurred)
Yeah, just feeling no pain.

He tickles her feet.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Won't you please have one with me?

She shakes her head and pulls her feet away.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
You're stubborn. That's your
problem. You're stubborn. I know
you want one.

He pulls one out of a brown paper bag and holds it up to her
with a wavering hand.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Please. Pretty please. For me?
It'll calm you down some, you've
been sore at me all day. Come on.

He cracks it for her. She won't take it. He slumps.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Rosalie. I can't tell you how damn
sorry I am. Please, just have it,
let's talk.
(beat, sincere)
I'm so sorry it hurts.

She eyes him with distrust, but this tactic at least seems
new. She reaches out and takes the can, even if just to shut
him up. But then she proceeds to down the whole thing.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
There she is. That's the woman I
married.

She burps loudly. He laughs and laughs and can't stop.

It finally gets her laughing.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I just love you so damn much is all. I love the angel in you, and I think you kind of love the devil in me.

She just looks at him stone faced.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I think our secret is to meet somewhere in the middle. I messed up. The last couple days have been one jam after another.

He finishes his beer and crumples the beer can in his hand.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

It's whenever my mama comes up.

ROSALIE

Why's that?

CHARLIE

Because you're right. She is the reason I am the way I am.

He goes and cracks another beer, stands by the window. Looks out at the rain, eyelids heavy with tears welling up.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I only know one thing, how to be bad. But you make me want to be better. If I just stay with you, on the sunny side of the street.

(beat)

I'll try harder, Rosalie. I promise you right here and now, I'll try harder.

He comes and sits next to her on the bed.

ROSALIE

I know you will, Charlie. Hush now.

He dissolves into her.

A few sniffs. Silence except for the TV.

Then, a snore.

Rosalie carefully takes the beer can still clutched in his hand and puts it on the side table.

She lays him down, takes his shoes off, pulls his legs up onto the bed. Puts a pillow under his head gently. Rolls the quilt over on top of him.

She looks down at him with pity, but not love.

She's changed her mind about things.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Rosalie stands in a phone booth twirling the cord. We move in closer and closer on the booth and see that she's crying.

We don't hear what she's saying but we hear the rain and the trucks that RUMBLE by on the slick highway, splashing water around.

INT. LIVING ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

CLARENCE 'COWBOY' WILLIS slowly puts the phone back down in its cradle. He wears a tank top and flannel pajama bottoms.

He sits on a couch. A framed oil painting of a landscape hangs on the wall behind him.

The TV is on. We can HEAR that it's the Johnny Carson show.

He takes a big sip of whiskey from a glass with the bottle always close and adjusts his thick glasses.

He gets up and paces. Then sits back down next to the phone again. Looks at a scrap piece of paper beside it.

Picks up the receiver and dials one number. The rotary wheel clicks for a few seconds.

CLARENCE

Yeah, operator, connect me to the local police department if you would be so kind.

Clarence finishes his whiskey like it was water.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Good evening. May I speak to Detective Fremick, please? Uh huh.

He looks around, tapping his fingers on the receiver. Taps some more. Then-

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Evenin' Detective, Clarence Willis,
how are you?

(beat)

Well not too great to be perfectly
frank. It's Rosalie. She's in a
whole heap of trouble.

(beat)

I want to report a federal crime.
Do you happen to know anyone in the
FBI?

We drift across the room, to the window, and out... as the
convo continues... into the starry night sky as we slowly

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE