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Brick Walls

By

Tina Chapman DaCosta

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of**

Master of Fine Arts in Film, Scriptwriting Concentration

School of Film and Animation

College of Imaging Arts and Science

Rochester Institute of Technology

Rochester, NY

December 2014

COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

Howard Lester
Thesis Advisor

Date

Franklin Deese
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Date

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ABSTRACT

This paper will outline the scriptwriter's experience and creation process for writing the feature film script *Brick*. A summary of the preparation, writing process, advisor meetings, research, committee feedback, and writing challenges will be shared along with the screened script reading's audience responses. The thesis proposal, story elements, representative photos and the *Brick Walls* script are included.

Brick Walls chronicles the life of my father Elza "Buddy" Cannaday (1922 – 2006) from ages 8 to 32, between the years 1930 to 1954 in the cities of Mechanicsburg, Springfield, Urbana, and Cleveland, Ohio. Young Buddy is the son of Hazel Lee Cannaday and Elza "Elzie" Summerfield Cannaday, a family of African American brick masons. In one night, 8-year old Buddy loses his family's brick home, his father, and grandfather during a race riot in Springfield. Buddy is whisked away to a farm in Urbana for his protection. Under the tutelage of farmer John L. Jones, Buddy learns the wonders of farm life, until he discovers his father is alive ten years later. Buddy finds Elzie in a Cleveland after-hours place and experiences a less-than-welcoming reception from him and the police. In time, Buddy discovers the truth about his father's absence and the cause of the race riot. Buddy also meets Eleanor Askew Linn, who later becomes his wife, and a catalyst for Buddy and Elzie healing their broken relationship.

Buddy also faces many societal obstacles that confront African Americans such as, housing and mortgage lending practices, bricklayer union membership, and Tuskegee Airmen contractor services. Buddy transcends societal injustices and his painful past to become a loving husband, father, and the first licensed and bonded African American contractor in Cleveland building homes for his family and many others.

PREFACE

This thesis is an original intellectual product of the author, Tina Cannaday Chapman DaCosta. The film script, *Brick Walls*, working title, is based on true events told to the author by family and friends. Noted interviews and quotations are based on notes and recordings captured by the author. Some names and dates have been changed in the script.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMITTEE APPROVAL:	II
ABSTRACT	III
PREFACE	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS	V
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VII
DEDICATION	IX
WHY THIS STORY?	1
PREPARATION FOR SCRIPTWRITING	2
MY WRITING PROCESS	3
THESIS COMMITTEE	3
MEETINGS WITH MY ADVISOR	4
“RELY ON REAL STORIES FIRST.”	4
“WHO’S VOICE IS IT?”	5
“FIND THE HEART BEHIND THE FACTS.”	5
FAMILY RESEARCH	7
ELEANOR CANNADAY	7
COUSIN LORRINE MOORE	8
COUSIN HAZEL “WITT” CARTER	9
CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE	10
FEEDBACK	10
WRITING DRAFT 1	11
COMMITTEE FEEDBACK - DRAFT 1	12
FRANK’S FEEDBACK	12
CHARLES’ FEEDBACK	12
WRITING DRAFT 2	14
DADDY’S BED	15
ORGANIC SCENE DEVELOPMENT	16
BUDDY CONFRONTS HIS FATHER SCENE	16
ELZIE AND ANNA SCENE	17
COMMITTEE FEEDBACK – DRAFT 2	18

SCREENINGS	19
FILMED READING	19
MY PRESENTATION	19
RESPONDER JOSE CASADO:	19
AUDIENCE RESPONSE #1:	20
AUDIENCE RESPONSE #2:	20
AUDIENCE RESPONSE #3:	21
AUDIENCE RESPONSE #4:	21
CLOSING COMMENTS	22
APPENDIX A - THESIS PROPOSAL	23
TABLE OF CONTENTS	25
SYNOPSIS	26
RATIONAL	26
TREATMENT	27
TIME LINE	33
BUDGET	34
APPENDIX B – CHARACTER ANALYSIS	36
APPENDIX C - READING	40
TINA’S DRAMATIC INTRODUCTION OF BRICK WALLS SCREENING	40
CREDITS – BRICK WALLS FILMED TABLE READING	42
APPENDIX D – PHOTOS	44
SCRIPT READING	44
BUDDY AND ELEANOR	48
ELZIE CANNADAY	49
HOWARD WITH ADVISEES	50
APPENDIX E – SCRIPT <i>BRICK WALLS</i>	51

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I want to thank my family for their support and understanding, and especially my husband for gifting me with a four-day hotel get-away to complete Draft 2. I also want to thank Frank, Charles and Howard, my amazing thesis committee. Thank you RIT for giving me this wonderful opportunity to work with and learn from an outstanding group of faculty, staff, and students at the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences' School of Film and Animation (SOFA). Most impactful to the writing of *Brick Walls* were the instruction, coaching, criticism, and tremendous support received from my professor, advisor and friend Howard Lester.

My initial introduction to Howard occurred several years before I applied to the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) Film program. I was interested in learning more about acting and directing for film. I discovered RIT offered such a course and received permission from the instructor to sit-in. That experience introduced me to a directing style I was missing in my acting work. The instructor, Howard Lester, had a way of bringing out our best performances in a way I had not experienced before. I wanted more. I applied for the MFA in Film Scriptwriting Concentration, and met Howard again as the graduate coordinator and professor of many graduate courses. I learned a great deal from Howard's truthful and thought provoking teaching style. When it was time to seek an advisor for my thesis, Howard was beginning his transition into retirement after 30 plus years of teaching; however, he agreed to be my thesis advisor.

During my writing, I frequently struggled with story challenges, breaking bad writing habits, and personal doubts about my ideas. Every time I presented my problems to Howard, he gave me sound advice that helped me eliminate obstacles I thought were insurmountable. Sometimes he reminded me of my father, with his constant optimism and belief in my abilities. After one such meeting, I wrote this in my writing journal:

2/4/14

Thank you Lord for my advisor Howard. He believes in my abilities. He listens to what I've said, currently say, and weighs it all before giving me his advice. He's honest; he reveals himself, his true self. With Howard, the adjectives "true" and "honest" in the words like "true self" and "honest feedback" are redundant. If one reveals something about themselves then by definition it's true. If one gives feedback then by definition it's honest. However, many of us have learned to hide our true feelings, our true opinions, in order to be polite, to not offend. With Howard, if he wasn't truthful and honest with his feedback, he would be offending you! Because he would be lying to you, not forthcoming, not giving you all of what he can offer.

I imagine Howard sleeps well at night from hard work, from exhausting his energies in an effort to help others. Howard takes the time to listen and to respond. This takes energy, more energy than offering up a cliché or a half thought out answer.

By the time this paper is published, Howard will have officially retired from teaching at RIT. I hope he will have time to sleep soundly, spend time with his family, and perhaps replenish the energy he gave us over the past 30 plus years at RIT.

DEDICATION

For Buddy & Eleanor

For Cannaday, Aaron, & Ana

For Monk

For Jan, Lee, Zell, John, & Michelle

For Howard

“Good night Irene. Good night Irene. I’ll see you in my dreams.”

Goodnight, Irene, Huddie “Leadbelly” Ledbetter, 1933

WHY THIS STORY?

Somewhere in my readings, I recalled hearing the story of a little girl who loved to tell stories and act out scenes for her elderly neighbors. The neighbor and his wife loved the little girl, and watched her grow into a young woman. The young woman went away to college. During her freshman year, the neighbor became sick, and she rushed home. She performed for him, doing her best dramatic interpretations hoping to revive his youthful spirit. The neighbor began to feel better, and the young woman returned to school. The next time the neighbor fell ill, the young woman couldn't return immediately due to college finals and life events. When she arrived days later, ready and armed with her best stories, she discovered her old friend has passed. She cried, "If only I had come sooner." The neighbor's widow told her, "Ever since you were little, he has been listening to your stories, and it's been your stories and friendship, and seeing you live your life, that made him smile for so many years. His living had a lot to do with you. So don't ever feel guilty for his dying." After this, the young woman realized she wanted to be a writer.

I suppose I felt like this girl or maybe the little girl was me, especially when my father was diagnosed with a rare strand of Leukemia in 2006, and I couldn't get to him. I was teaching at RIT, and had so much work to complete I couldn't leave immediately. That's when I began writing my father's stories in the hopes that I would send them ahead and others would entertain him with the stories he told me about the fun times he had growing up on the farm. I created a short manuscript of his stories called "Bud's Bedside Stories, He's so Funny He'll Make a Dog Laugh," and faxed it to the hospital in Bedford, Ohio. At the end of the week I was by his side trying to make him laugh by reminding him of his jokes and fondest boyhood memories he shared with me throughout my life. Dad died six weeks later.

The main reason I applied for the RIT MFA in Film program was to share my father's stories. My father told me so many stories about farm life, animal jokes, and as I got older stories about his challenges. Writing a thesis script about my father's life was a dream come true.

The facts of my father's story are contained in the Abstract, although; *Brick Walls* goes behind the wall of facts and tells the story of how a young man transcends pain, rejection, and systemic obstacles to be able to forgive and become his own man. *Brick Walls* is a story about building family love and houses, brick by brick.

PREPARATION FOR SCRIPTWRITING

My initial attempt at writing a screenplay about my father's life began in Professor Sam Mark's classes, *Writing the Feature I & II*. I wrote a feature length film script about Buddy growing up during the Great Depression without his father who he believed died in a race riot. I began working with characters that would later be featured in *Brick Walls*, including Buddy and Elzie of course, but also Buddy's mother Hazel, and John L, the farmer. My father spoke often of these real life people whenever he talked about his childhood.

Sam's class also introduced me to proper scriptwriting format, story structure, and dramatic film composition in short and long forms. I learned scriptwriting techniques from Blake Snyder's *Save The Cat*, Robert McKee's *Story*, Syd Field's *The Screenwriter's Workbook*, and Dan Gurskis' *The Short Screenplay*, to name a few. I analyzed films scripts and films, broke them down into plot points, beats, and analyzed their character developments.

To understand the filmmaking process I made several short films and crewed several student films as a producer, assistant director, assistant camera operator, grip, gaffer, sound engineer and set designer. When given the option of making an additional student film, called the 2-quarter film, I jumped at the chance most scriptwriting majors avoided.

My 2-quarter film, *Remembering The Pythodd*, was a 12-minute documentary about the famed Rochester jazz club popular in the 1950's and 1960's. Musicians like George Benson, Cannonball Adderly, Pee Wee Ellis (James Brown's musical arranger and saxophonist), and Roy McCurdy, graced its stage until it was destroyed in 1972 due to urban renewal. *Remembering The Pythodd* was well received, having been selected for the 2013 High Falls Film Festival Women of SOFA Shorts Program, RIT Honors Show Honorable Mention, featured at the 2013 Clarissa Street Reunion, and most recently viewed by the Landmark Society of Western NY as a resource for creating the proposed Pythodd Jazz Room Memorial of African American historical sites.

MY WRITING PROCESS

THESIS COMMITTEE

I was blessed to have an amazing thesis committee led by my advisor Howard Lester, RIT Professor, past Department Chair, founder of the School of Film and Animation, filmmaker, and soon to be retiree after 30 plus years of teaching. The other members of my committee included Franklin Deese, RIT Assistant Professor and accomplished scriptwriter and Charles Price, retired Rochester City Police Captain and Tuskegee Airman.

Howard and I met weekly, usually two hours plus, and each major project deliverable was reviewed with the entire committee when completed. We established my

deadlines and writing deliverables: a step outline, the first 40 pages, a draft 1, a draft 2, and a filmed table reading. My step treatment and timeline are contained in the Thesis Proposal found in the Appendices.

I began writing my thesis script, initially called *Buddy*, from the script I began a year ago in the *Writing The Feature* classes. However, I quickly discovered my character knowledge was shallow. I didn't really know Elzie and I didn't have a clear focus on who's story it was. I was relying too much on dramatic clichés. Learning the writing tools helped, but I couldn't rely solely on them to find the right story and structure. I had to go through the fire, that is, the ups and downs of what RIT writing Professor Vincent Golphin called writing true. This involved regular meetings with my advisor to review my writing and ideas, conducting more research and rewriting until I found the heart behind the facts. I also had to let go of bad writing habits, and start trusting my work.

MEETINGS WITH MY ADVISOR

Getting approval from the Thesis Review Committee to do a script for my thesis was my first deliverable (although I was bitten by the "live-action bug" and initially got approval to create a film for my thesis, the scriptwriting concentration required a script thesis project). As stated earlier, I began with my script *Buddy* and made a new step treatment, but it was not easy, and required several rewrites. Howard offered several solutions and asked many thought provoking questions.

"Rely on Real Stories First."

In the script that I created in *Writing the Feature*, Elzie was a bootlegger. I made this decision for dramatic reasons. Although it was well received in the writing class, Howard felt differently. Howard knew my father's real story, and he told me, "Why are you introducing a bootlegger into the story? It's too soon to do this... Rely on real

stories first.” In other words, Howard was saying trust the real story because it has its own dramatic elements. To do otherwise, would prevent me from doing the work of finding the real story. He was saying don’t rely on clichés or insert stuff just to make it more dramatic.

“Who’s Voice Is It?”

My outline had too many possible protagonists and too many stories. Howard asked, “Is it Buddy’s voice, his father Elzie’s voice, the grandfather’s voice, or a hodgepodge of multiple voices telling their Point of View (POV) of the story?” Although Elzie has a very dramatic story, I knew ultimately that I wanted the script to project my father’s POV. Howard asked me to consider beginning the story where a young Buddy, 5 or 8 years old, watches his father’s arrest and consider how this experience might affect Buddy, such as, “Does he feel it’s his fault, is he glad his father is gone, does he become angry with society?” My writing explored these possibilities.

“Find the Heart Behind the Facts.”

Howard felt my scene where his father has just rejected Buddy was “too clean.” He said, “There isn’t enough explosive energy for a 16-year old boy after his father rejects him.” In the scene, Buddy arrives at the Askew house where he’s renting a room from Eleanor’s uncle, just after being rejected by his father. Before going to bed Buddy writes a list of resolutions about how he’ll take care of his mother. Eleanor finds the list, as she washes his clothes, and that’s how they meet. Howard asked me to consider other options such as, Buddy going outside and hitting a tree, running down the street into the woods, getting bloodied, wet, dirty, and then going to sleep on the couch, waking up with Eleanor staring at him, and perhaps she becomes interested in him through seeing his pain or his clever explanation for his appearance. Howard shared a similar real life experience.

While living in California, Howard was in desperate need of a new motorcycle and a place to stay. He had recently broken his bike and ended his relationship with his live-in girlfriend. A friend arranged for him to share a house with several other friends. On the evening of Howard's move to the new place, he entered a most grotesque costume contest because the winning prize was a motorcycle. Howard transformed himself into a hideously grotesque person and just before he went on stage he crushed a pack of fake blood in his mouth. With blood oozing down his face he shocked the audience and judges and he won. After the contest Howard went directly to the new house he was sharing with several other people, none of whom he had met before. When Howard arrived that night everyone was asleep, and he didn't know which bedroom was his so he crashed on the couch. When Howard awoke the next morning, several people were staring at him. He figured these must be his new roommates. He sat up and said, "Hi," but they just continued to stare. It wasn't until a few minutes later Howard realized he was still dressed in his grotesque costume and dried blood. He said he tried to do some quick explaining, and it was the funniest thing.

Howard understood my concerns and told me, "Find the heart behind the facts." He urged, "Understand the facts about your father's experiences but go deeper, go beyond the facts and find the heart... the motivating factors, the feelings, and the emotional drivers." Howard suggested I do more research with my family, to talk more with my mother, my dad's cousin Witt, and my siblings to discover my dad's voice. I was a bit conflicted because I wanted to stay true to the real story but I knew I needed to understand more about my character's actions and the reasons behind them.

Without the presence of my father, talking to my immediate family was a logical place for researching my father's life. Paradoxically, the closer the family member the harder it was to get them to open up.

FAMILY RESEARCH

Eleanor Cannaday

My mother, Eleanor met my father around 1940-41 when she was 16 and he was 18. They married in 1942 and remained married until his passing in 2006. My expectation was to rely heavily on my mother's memory about my father's life during the period of my story, 1930's to 1950's; but, she didn't seem comfortable offering more details beyond what I already knew. However, when I asked about my older siblings, Mom gave me rich mental pictures, which I tried to recreate in the script. On October 14, 2014 she shared this,

We were living on 84th street, renting ... We had 3 small children then, Jan, Lee, and Zell ... Your father used to nail the lids of tin cans over the holes in the floor to keep the rats from coming in ... Everyone was renting a house. No one owned their own home. Your father asked for another son and I told him, "I'm not having another baby until I have my own house." Like Granny Hazel had her own house, you know? ... Not an apartment or sharing with other people ... That's when your father commuted between Springfield and Cleveland ... working with his uncle to learn bricklaying ... He went all over Cleveland looking for property, out in the woods too.

This exchange told me more about my mother's influence on my father and his source of motivation. This insight would serve me well in writing other scenes, and using Eleanor as a catalyst for helping Buddy build a better life for his family and eventually transcend his pain.

My mother also shared,

On Sunday's our 84h street neighbors and family would visit ... Other men helped your father build the house. He would tell them what to do... Elzie, Uncle Jimmy, Uncle Al... it was like an outing – bring a picnic, have dinner ... We had a big freezer... your dad would give people frozen meat to take home ... Everybody was crazy about your daddy ... Summer of 1953 we moved in ... It was like a caravan of cars going to the country, neighbors driving cars... helping us move... Jan and Lee ran around the house saying, 'We gonna live here Daddy? Is this our

house? We gonna pay rent here?’ Your father’s reply was, ‘No, we ain’t paying no more rent. We’re the landlords now.’

I could really picture this scene, the family’s big move-in day, and their little children running around the newly constructed house with excitement. This scene made a perfect bookend for my beginning scene of a young 8-year old Buddy running around the construction site of his home as his uncles laid its bricks. I began to understand Buddy’s pride in building a home for his family, his desire to take care of them, make a better life for them and his friends. I found my father’s voice beyond the facts I knew. I knew my father started a construction company and built homes for many people who couldn’t afford them, but I didn’t know his heart, the heart behind the facts. This image became the final scene in the script.

Cousin Lorraine Moore

I interviewed my cousin Lorraine Moore on November 3, 2014. Her parents were George and Josephine Askew, Eleanor’s uncle and aunt. Buddy’s father, Elzie, rented a room from George and Josephine with a white woman named Anna Scanlon. Talking with Cousin Lorraine helped me understand my grandfather’s heart behind the facts I knew about him. Lorraine told me,

No one knew he had a son ... He just kept saying, ‘My son is here; my son is here.’ He seemed surprised, nervous ... Elzie and your daddy looked alike, Bud was taller ... Elzie had a fuzzy mustache and smoked stubby cigars. He was very jovial... we didn’t know we were poor ... Anna was a very nice lady ... She use to walk me to school, kids made fun of me because they thought ... I had a white mother ... I didn’t care. When Buddy came to town he wore a funny hat, a farmer’s hat with a wide brim ... His suit was too little for him, jacket too little, pants were short, shoes too big.

Along with my previous knowledge, Lorraine’s description of Elzie, Anna, and Buddy gave me a better understanding of who they were. When Buddy arrived in Cleveland to find his father at age 18, he was fresh off the farm entering a big city. Lorraine’s description of Buddy arriving in Cleveland to find his father makes sense. As Buddy’s daughter, I

had a hard time imagining him as a scrawny young man out of place in the big city. I also never thought of Anna beyond being the woman my grandfather lived with. To Lorraine, Anna was a surrogate mother and Elzie a surrogate father.

After these interviews, I rewrote the scenes of Buddy finding his father and their reactions (script pages 39-48).

Cousin Hazel “Witt” Carter

I interviewed my father’s favorite cousin Hazel “Witt” Carter on several occasions. Cousin Witt was two months older than my father and they grew up together in Springfield. Cousin Witt told me several details that occurred on the day my grandfather Elzie left Springfield and more about Anna. She said,

Bud and I were like brother and sister ... he was a good little guy ... He wanted to work and help his ‘Maw’ ... That’s what he called his mother, my Aunt Hazel ... Anna Scanlon lived one block over from us ... inter-racial thing was very dangerous back then ... It was Uncle Clarence and Uncle Bink (Elding) who got money together ... to send Elzie to Cleveland ... Clarence was a sharecropper and bought his own land. Bink was a successful mason, a builder ... He built his house and was building one next door for all of us, Buddy, me, and our families ... Elzie was slick ... He played baseball for a semi pro-team ... He would run numbers, run houses where they sold drinks, play cards for money... got a split on the house money ... He wasn’t a regular 9-5 kind of guy. He didn’t wear overalls and work clothes like Uncles Bink and Clarence ... He was always dressed slick.

Hearing Cousin Witt’s stories gave me a clearer picture of Elzie and his relationship with the family. Elzie wasn’t a bad man; he was a man who wasn’t satisfied with working a “regular job” like his brothers-in-laws. Elzie preferred living on the edge of excitement. With Cousin Witt’s recollections, I found Elzie’s voice in my writing and wrote the after-hours-place and opening scenes with more heart and authentic dialogue beyond the mere facts.

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Knowing my father came from a family of businessmen and brick masons expanded my family pride and caused me to seek additional family history. Through family and county clerk records, I discovered my paternal grandmother's family, the Lees, were released from bondage in 1847 when the Orange County Virginia plantation owner, Webb, died and made the decree in his will. Therefore, the Lees had been "freed people" for almost 20-years before Emancipation in 1863 and freed almost 90-years when my story begins in 1934. The Lees had established themselves as brick masons, farmers, and landowners for many years before Buddy was born.

Brick Walls is a slice of American life reflected in the lives of an African American family as they work thorough some of America's greatest challenges, such as Reconstruction era politics, the Great Depression, and an increase in segregated laws and practices. The story also covers pivotal moments in American history, such as Buddy working for the Tuskegee Army Air Corp. during WWII.

FEEDBACK

Following my new step treatment, I met with Howard, and together we agreed that I had found the right voice for the story and the heart behind the facts. We then met with my entire committee, where Frank and Charles also agreed the voice of the story should be Buddy's and his relationship with his father. Frank noticed a "brick laying" or "building foundations" theme, as the story opens with a community coming together to help the father and ends with the community coming together to help the son.

I presented my new proposal to the Proposal Review Committee on December 3, and received approval for my script thesis project. My next step was to write the 90-page Draft 1.

WRITING DRAFT 1

I completed an early version of Draft 1, v1.6, at the end of February; however, it was 139 pages, or approximately 50 pages over my target of 90 pages. I had way too much “stuff” in the story, I wasn’t sure about the choices I made, and I couldn’t tell if a scene was good or bad. I tried to apply the writing tools, such as checking if my plot points and beats were in the right places, including reversals, and increasing the drama, but I was stuck because I didn’t know what my audience would find interesting. For example, I liked introducing little Lorraine as the young girl who meets Buddy as he wakes on the couch, and offers him a bite of her toast before running into the kitchen. It didn’t necessarily add to Buddy’s dramatic need, but it fed mine. So much violence and bitter treatment had been thrown at Buddy; I felt the need to give him a smile from a cute little girl; however, I wasn’t sure.

When I met with Howard in March and shared my doubts, he said frankly, “Stop judging your work.” He elaborated further with the following explanation,

The right brain collects data, stores it, labels it as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ and creates problems. The left-brain solves problems organically, creatively ... It’s when our right brain shuts up long enough to allow our left-brains to get a word in, that we have the moment of greatest discoveries – the aha moment when we know the solution to the problem ... That’s why our biggest discoveries are found while in the bathroom or driving a car.

I fully agreed with Howard’s analogy. When I entered into analysis mode, I had great difficulty writing. I couldn’t write and analyze my writing at the same time. It’s like driving and constantly stopping to look under the hood to gauge the motor’s performance. Once I just continued to write, regardless if I felt good about the scene, I surprisingly found uses for my previous uneventful scenes or ideas.

The other question I kept asking myself was, “Will the audience think it’s a good scene?” Howard’s advice was, “You’re not a mind reader.... If it makes you cry it’s a good scene. If it makes you laugh it’s a good scene. You’re the audience.” Once again, Howard’s

advice was sound. It freed me from prematurely judging my work and writing for an unknown audience. I began writing for me, for what pleased me. Therefore, I kept the scene with little Lorraine, and went on to complete Draft 1, v1.6.8. It was time to meet with my full thesis committee for feedback.

COMMITTEE FEEDBACK - DRAFT 1

Frank's Feedback

The Draft 1 feedback Frank gave was, "Watch out for giving too much exposition... It's like toxic waste, the writer has to find where to bury it." Frank advised me not to worry about being misunderstood by the audience. He said, "Give the audience room to figure out what's going on ... Too much exposition weighs down the story, and too little confuses the audience." Frank also suggested more tension for Buddy, temptations along the way that give the audience a sense that Buddy could be like his father.

Frank's detailed notes helped me to correct logic holes, provide proper period dialogue, and affirm what was working well. Frank liked the scene of Buddy building the stove on the farm, using his hands to build something and the scene between Buddy and the white bricklayer on his first day on the job. Frank said, "There's major competition going on disguised as brick laying" (script pages 85-86). Frank also applauded the story's opening and closing images, serving as bookends for the story.

Charles' Feedback

Charles' feedback was very helpful in reflecting historically accurate terms and practices. For example, the U. S. Air Force was called the U.S. Army Air Corps. during the time of the WWII Tuskegee Experiment. The U.S. Air Force name wasn't used until 1947. Charles and my father were Tuskegee Airmen. Charles was an enlisted man serving in Intelligence, and my father was a paid contractor working as an airplane mechanic.

Charles also taught me the difference between an after-hours-place and a speakeasy. Charles said the term “after-hours-place” is more appropriate than “speakeasy” in describing where Buddy finds his father. African Americans were allowed to play in clubs but not be patrons. Therefore, after the clubs closed, many black musicians would play at someone’s home or another club type setting open to African Americans. A speakeasy was more of a house of ill repute.

Being a retired police officer and captain, Charles was very familiar with police practices and street weapons. Charles explained to me the difference between a switchblade and a razor, and suggested Elzie’s weapon of choice would be a razor and not a knife or switchblade. Charles said,

A switchblade would be considered a concealed weapon ... and any man caught by the police with one would face charges ... In the 1940’s, a razor, a shaving razor ... was a personal hygiene tool ... and if stopped by the police, and this was discovered, they couldn't arrest you.

The Buddy and police confrontation scene was greatly influenced by Charles. Charles pointed out that if Buddy’s reacts with a questioning response to the police officer’s order to “Assume the position” the officer could interpret him as being insubordinate. Using Charles’ suggestion and Cousin Lorraine’s description of Buddy being “fresh off the farm,” I rewrote the police scene on pages 47 to 48 of the script as follows:

Buddy walks through several neighborhoods. He doesn’t pay attention to where he is or the police car that’s been following him.

The police car pulls up to Buddy and stops. A second police car pulls up and blocks Buddy’s path at the corner.

Buddy stops. The COPS get out of their cars and approach Buddy.

COP #1
(calling)
Where’ya going Boy?

BUDDY
Ah, nowhere. I was, I was just walking.

COP #1

What'cha doing in this neighborhood?

BUDDY
Nothing...I was just walking.

COP #1
Assume the position.

BUDDY
What position?

The Cops draws their guns and point at Buddy.

COP #1
(ordering)
Assume the position!

Buddy just stands there. He doesn't know what they're talking about. Cop #1 grabs Buddy, spins him around to face the car and slams him against the hood. Buddy WINCES from the pain.

Cop #1 goes through Buddy's pockets and pulls out his wallet. He takes out \$12.

COP #1
Looks like you stole some money.

Like my girl friend's pre-teen son who came home from his first day of football practice and asked his mother, "The coach said we all need to 'get a cup'... A cup of what?," Buddy didn't have the foggiest idea what the officer was talking about, and it resulted in him being accosted by the police and his clothes torn.

My next goal was to write Draft 2 and improve each scene by starting at the beginning and rewriting one scene at a time.

WRITING DRAFT 2

According to my committee, completing Draft 2 would be easier than Draft 1 because I now knew my story line and what happened before and after each scene.

The goal for Draft 2 was to improve each scene by writing dramatically satisfying scenes, reducing redundancy, and hiding expositions. However, staying focused and finding the

best place to write was a bigger challenge. Many times I became distracted by phone calls, neighbors, and working on other projects. Eventually, our attic became my best place to write and sitting in my father's bed.

DADDY'S BED

My father built a replica of the bed John L. made for him when he lived on the farm. The queen size bed was made from split logs with a large headboard and footboard with pegs on which clothes could be hung; it was similar to a sleigh bed but more rustic and without the fancy curved ends. Over the years, my father told my mother he wanted my husband Jose and me to have his bed one day. In late November 2013, my mother moved from our family home, a 2-story brick house my father built around 1964, to a new apartment in an independent living facility for seniors. A few weeks before her move, Jose and I traveled to Cleveland to pick up my father's bed.

With the bed securely packed in a U-Haul truck driven by Jose behind me, as I drove our Camry, we headed East on I-90 to Rochester. It was 4AM and dark. A deer ran into my car. The deer came from the median, slammed into my driver's side, rolled across the hood and then proceeded down the road. Next, I found myself stopped on the side of the road covered in glass and shaking. When I touched my face, I felt several shards of glass, like coarse sand, covering my face. I prepared myself for the worse as I looked at my face in my rear view mirror. Thank God; my face was in tact! My windshield had cracked but it was holding; but, my driver's side door window was completely shattered. When Jose approached the passenger side and opened the door, he immediately said, "Roll up the window." Through my shock, all I could say was, "It's gone!" In an instant Jose realized the deer hadn't just run past my car as he had thought. He now saw the broken glass covering me, the car and my bleeding hand.

Within minutes the ambulance and police arrived. Thank God, I only had a small scratch on my writing hand. We left the car at a garage in PA and drove back to Rochester in the U-Haul. We setup dad's bed in our attic, and I transformed the room into my writing lodge. Whenever I wrote sitting in dad's bed, my writing was inspired, and frequently I imagined Buddy sitting in a similar bed on John L's farm.

ORGANIC SCENE DEVELOPMENT

I became very pleased with my writing, and especially thrilled with some of the scene development after much rewriting and searching for the right voice. The scene where Buddy confronts his father and where Buddy discovers Elzie is secretly helping to build his house, represent some of my "aha" moments; when my left-brain was quiet enough for my right-brain to organically find the right way of telling the story.

Buddy Confronts His Father Scene

Writing the pivotal scene where Buddy finds his father was very difficult. I thought, "What does Buddy say to him? What does Elzie say?" I didn't want to rely on clichés; I wanted honest dialogue appropriate for Buddy and Elzie. Howard suggested I think like an actor and explore different responses from my characters. We thought, perhaps Elzie's own sense of self-preservation would not permit him to take any responsibility for the death of his father, even if that meant rejecting his son a second time.

To authentically get at Buddy's voice, Howard said I have to answer the question, "What does Buddy want from his father ... revenge, a relationship, an explanation, forgiveness?" I hadn't really thought about it. So, I acted out different scenes as to why Buddy goes to Cleveland and how Elzie would respond. A character only speaks to get what he can't immediately have, and a character will use many different tactics to fight for his or her goal. I decided Buddy's wants an explanation; he wants to know why his father left.

After Buddy asks Elzie for an explanation for why he left, Elzie pushes him away again, and Buddy responds with a different tactic to get what he wants. Buddy yells, “You killed Grandpa!” Now Buddy uses the tactic of revenge, of hurting his father. I don’t know if Buddy really blamed Elzie for his grandfather’s death, but in this scene (found on pages 43-46 of the script) it’s quite plausible for a child, although somewhat grown, to attempt to hurt his parent by saying something extremely damaging to get what he wants. Buddy wants his father to care about him.

Elzie and Anna Scene

The other scene development where I experienced an aha moment was writing the scene where Buddy catches Elzie secretly leaving building materials at his work site. Later, each man returns home to his wife. Up to this point, I never thought about the relationship between Elzie and Anna beyond it being the catalyst for Elzie’s disappearance

As a little girl, I remember visiting Grandpa and “Aunt Ann,” that’s what my sister and I called her, and I didn’t know Aunt Ann was white, nor did I take notice of calling her “Aunt” and not “Grandma.” I don’t remember much else besides, climbing the long stairs to their apartment with them waiting at the top landing, whenever we visited after church with my mother, and sitting in their kitchen playing with Aunt Ann’s cats as they went in and out of the open fire escape window. Aunt Ann was nice to my sister and me.

Years later, as I helped my mother pack up her household belongings for her move, I discovered my grandfather Elzie’s obituary in my father’s basement workshop. Elzie and Anna were married. This discovery opened my eyes more to the “heart behind the facts” about my grandfather. This wasn’t just an illicit affair that caused a riot; it was a love story, just like Buddy and Eleanor had a love story unfolding on my pages. When I wrote the scene about Buddy and Elzie talking (script pages 100-102), I was in my attic-

writing-lodge sitting in my father's bed. It was a late Sunday night, and my radio was tuned to WDKX. John Legend's song "All of Me," from his album *Love in the Future*, began to play. John Legend, who's real name is John Stephens, is a Grammy Award singer and composer from Springfield, Ohio. How appropriate that a love song by a Springfielder would be played while I wrote a scene about other Springfielders.

All of Me reminded me of my love for my husband Jose. The song made a connection with my deepest feelings, like a person reaching inside, embracing my spirit, and together dancing the dance of love. It's one of my favorite songs. Suddenly, I realized this may be what Elzie and Anna felt for each other, and what Buddy and Eleanor felt. Experiencing great adversity together can create a deep love between two people that forever binds them together and helps them weather life's storms, like a ship in a storm securely anchored to the bottom of the ocean. I got it! I understood my grandfather's actions, I found his heart behind the facts, and I knew his voice for my story. I was able to see them crawling into their respective beds with the women they loved, surrounded by the environments they've chosen, Elzie sleeping with Anna in a rented room, and Buddy lying next to Eleanor after a long day's work building their home.

COMMITTEE FEEDBACK – DRAFT 2

I completed Draft 2 v2.9.6, 106 pages, by early May. Many of the issues in Draft 1 were addressed. My committee gave me detailed notes on additional changes to consider, but felt it was a worthy script that satisfied my MFA scriptwriting requirement. The next step was to film a staged reading and present the film at the RIT screenings.

SCREENINGS

FILMED READING

A new requirement for the Scriptwriting concentration was to film a reading of about 10-pages of the script and present it at the end-of-term film screenings. SOFA no longer required a full live script reading. I chose the scene where Buddy finally finds his father.

I'm very grateful to the talented actors, cinematographer and assistants who helped create the filmed reading. A complete lists of the participants are found in the Appendices under Credits.

MY PRESENTATION

Dressed in a dark grey pants suit and my father's stingy brim hat, I introduced my filmed reading with a dramatic introduction (a copy is in the Appendices under Reading). I summarized the story and then introduced the filmed scene reading. After the reading was shown, I quickly summarized the rest of the story. Next, my respondent, Jose Casado, spoke. Jose is a new professor in SOFA and an accomplished scriptwriter. Following Jose's comments I took questions from the audience. Below are some representative comments from my respondent Jose, the audience and my responses.

Responder Jose Casado:

Tina you're a good writer ... I wanted more ... It felt like the story was about forgiveness, and something that had to do with manhood. Even Elzie as an older gentleman ... There's room in the screenplay for us to see that, to work that out.

Buddy forgives Elzie, I think there's a way for Elzie to work harder for that, and for that forgiveness to be much more difficult for Buddy ... The arc can be much greater before you get there.

Elzie abandon's him. That's a very traumatic experience ... so I want to see more of that ... that effect on him, what ever that is, anger rage ... You can turn up the volume on that.

My Response:

I agreed with Jose's comments; I am glad he suggested making Buddy's forgiveness harder for Elzie to earn. It was a very difficult thing for my father to do. I was looking for ways to increase the dramatic tension; perhaps Buddy's road to forgiveness is where to do that.

Audience Response #1:

You first started working this in *Writing The Feature* ... I was really interested in the characters ... I want more from that relationship ... and I like Tony ... I just want to say you did a really good job, and your details are amazing ... You're a really good writer. Congratulations on finishing this. I want to read it.

My Response:

This comment was from Monzerrat "Monze" Lozano, my fellow *Writing the Feature* classmate. It was great hearing her support and pleasure with my script. Monze is a very talented writer, her interest is in mid 1900's stories and she's the most detailed writer I know.

Audience Response #2:

I think I heard Jose say this was Elzie's film. Is it Elzie's film or is it Buddy's?

My Response:

My response to this question was, “It’s Buddy’s film.” Keeping the story about Buddy was always a struggle. I purposefully pulled back on Elzie’s story to tell my father’s story. I told the questioner that I chose Howard as my advisor because I knew he would hold me to the fire; he knew I wanted to write the story about my father. I entered the MFA program because I wanted to share my father’s stories, and I felt great to have stood there and done that.

Audience Response #3:

So what happened to Buddy’s actual mother?

My Response:

Buddy’s mother lost her house after the riot, and she moved in with her brother. My grandmother Hazel found work as an elevator operator in a hotel, until Buddy began working with his mason uncle and strongly encouraged her to quit so he could take care of her; and he did! I was surprised to discover that I didn’t include more of my grandmother in the script. Before writing *Brick Walls*, I knew more about her than my grandfather.

Audience Response #4:

Wonderful introduction, gripping to hear you tell your story like that. Great seeing the actors. I think you gave what happened after the screening a short change ... a quick summary ... because there’s a lot happening after the screening in the story with the unions and the banks ... there’s a lot ... just for the record.

My Response:

This comment came from committee member Frank. I appreciated him sharing what I had left out. I had felt rushed and didn't think I had enough time to share more after the reading was shown. However more was needed to give the audience a better sense of the depth of the script.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Writing *Brick Walls* was a labor of love. I hope this paper will serve not only as a fulfillment for my MFA degree, but also as an account of my father's life between 1930 to 1950's, a man who transcended pain, rejection and systemic obstacles to become his own man and reunite with his father. *Brick Walls* is a story about building family love and houses, brick by brick.

I believe I met my personal goal of writing truthfully, not relying on clichés and quick dramatic fixes. I've learned that I cannot multi-task doing major projects and write. In order to remain in the "writing zone" I must keep my writing warm. It's like exercising a muscle and then staying limber to work the muscle. Being a writer, is like giving birth or voice to something that doesn't exist. It could be a story from the past or a totally new story I've created. However, I find real-life stories so fascinating that I rarely create an entirely new story. Someone's story I've read or heard inspires me, and my imagination takes off; like a kid on a roller coaster going down the first hill. It's invigorating, sometimes scary, and very surprising to find where you'll end up or what will happen next. I plan to continue improving *Brick Walls* and work to have it made into a film. A copy is in the Appendices under Script

APPENDIX A - THESIS PROPOSAL

RIT School of Film and Animation

Master of Fine Arts

Thesis Proposal

November 8, 2013

Tina Chapman DaCosta

“Buddy”

Approved For Submission

Chair:	Howard Lester	Date
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Table Of Contents

<u>SYNOPSIS.....</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>RATIONAL.....</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>TREATMENT</u>	<u>27</u>
<u>TIME LINE</u>	<u>33</u>
<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>33</u>

Synopsis

Eight-year-old Buddy Cannaday wants to grow up and be a brick mason like his father, uncles, and grandpa. When his father is arrested during a race riot in rural Ohio in 1930, in one night Buddy loses his grandfather, father, and their home. Buddy is separated from his mother and sent to live on a farm for his protection. As time passes, Buddy grows up and learns where his father is living, and he goes to bring him home, only to discover his father doesn't want to return. After being rejected by his father, Buddy commits to supporting his mother, becoming a brick mason, and owning his own construction business. Along the way, he meets and marries Eleanor, and together they face life's challenges of racial discrimination, WWII, an absentee father, an ailing mother, and the real cause of the race riot that took Buddy's grandfather's life. In the end, Buddy is able to reach his dream of building a home for his family and coming to terms with his past.

Rational

This story is based on a true story told to me over 20 years by my father "Buddy" Elza C. Cannaday. I have been a listener of my father's story as long as I can remember growing up in the house he built. When I first learned of my father's horrific childhood, I couldn't imagine someone growing up like this and becoming the first license and bonded African-American contractor in Cleveland, Ohio, owning a successful construction business, keeping a sense of humor, and not having a formal education beyond the 5th grade. I began writing his stories down in 2006 when he was diagnosed with a rare strand of Leukemia. My first publication was called "Bud's Bedside Stories" that I shared with family members while visiting my dad in the hospital. My father died 6 weeks after his diagnoses at age 84. Ever since I began the MFA program I've wanted to tell my father's life story.

Over the past 2 years, I have done research by interviewing family members in Cleveland and Springfield. Sometimes the stories differ, but that's to be expected when remembering 80-year-old events. The biggest challenge has been fitting the story into a 90-minute feature film length, deciding which events to share, and maintaining the original realities while creating what Syd Field calls in his book, *The Screenwriter's Workbook*, "dramatic realities." This is my attempt, and I welcome the challenge.

Treatment

WORKING TITLE: "Buddy"

GENRE: Coming of Age

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE – SPRINGFIELD OHIO – DAY (1930)

BUDDY, 8, cute adorable boy, hammers pieces of wood together trying to make a scooter. Behind him several adult men, his GRANDFATHER and UNCLES, build a brick house. The work of the brick masons is musical. The sound of slapping down the mortar, smoothing it out, setting down a brick, whipping off the excess, and slapping it back on the trowl is done with precision and rhythm. Buddy imitates the men's concentration but he misses the nails as he whacks them with a hammer he holds with two hands. His MOTHER is nearby setting out lunch. Buddy's father, ELZIE, 25, wears baseball jersey #23, arrives in his car. He quickly changes into work clothes and helps his son make the scooter. He teaches Buddy how to drive a nail correctly, "It's all in the wrist," he tells him. They finish the scooter and Buddy tries it out. Grandpa tells Buddy's father to mix the concrete.

Buddy enjoys riding the scooter but stops as a sheriff car quickly approaches. Several other cars follow. The cars stop at the construction site. The SHERIFF and DUPTY carry shotguns and get out the car. Several white men get out of the other cars carrying shotguns. A man points at his father and says, "That's him #23." The officers arrest Elzie and take him away. The other cars follow. Grandpa tells Buddy's mother to go home and wait while he finds out what's happened. An uncle grabs Buddy off his scooter and gets into the wagon with Buddy's mother and leaves. Grandpa and the other uncle leave in their horse buggy.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SPRINGFIELD – 10 MINUTES LATER

Buddy and his family ride through town. Buddy sits in the back of the wagon and sees several white people in the streets yelling and crowding around the sheriff station. His Grandpa and Uncle Bink go inside. Several black people run and hide, some get roughed up by small groups of white people.

INT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Buddy and his family reach their modest brick house and enter. Grandpa and Uncle Bink arrive. Grandpa says Buddy's father was arrested for raping a white woman named Anna. They need \$10,000 for bail. Family and friends come and put money on the table. Buddy gets some coins hidden under a flap in the floor and puts it in the pile of money. Grandpa takes the deed to the house out of a hiding place in the wall. Uncle Bink stops him, asks his father not to use their house for collateral. Grandfather says Elzie didn't rape her, the trial will prove that, and everything will be fine, but they have to hurry and get Elzie out

before a mob takes him from jail. Grandpa tells Buddy's mother to go to Uncle John's farm and wait. Grandpa and Uncle Bink leave.

INT. SHERIFF STATION - DUSK

Grandpa signs a contract and gives the deed and money to a BAIL BONDSMAN. The Bondsman tells him he's responsible for his son getting to trial; otherwise they'll lose the house. Elzie is released; he says he didn't rape the woman, that her father said that. He tells Uncle Bink it was Anna; her father saw them together. Uncle Bink punches him across the jaw. Elzie ushers his sons out the rear door avoiding the crowds. ANNA, white, 18, and her PARENTS, white mid 30's, are talking with the Sheriff. Someone sees Elzie and points. Elzie, Grandpa, and Uncle Bink get into the horse and buggy and take off.

EXT. ALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

An angry mob of white people marches towards the black section of town. Several black men who hold rifles and form a human wall at the entrance of the street and several fire barrels align the street entrance. Buddy watches as his uncle drives them away. The car drives through the back roads and Buddy sees a horse and buggy stopped on the train tracks surrounded by cars. Buddy's father and grandfather are in the buggy. Several white men get out of the cars and grab Buddy's father. Buddy screams. The men look up, and one of the cars goes after Buddy and his family. Uncle Bink takes off and gets away. They arrive at the farm.

INT. FARM HOUSE - 1 HOUR LATER

Uncle Bink enters and tells the family Grandpa was killed, something about a train accident, and Buddy's father jumped a train to Cleveland. Buddy's mother collapses. Buddy runs to his mother and sits next to her while the family tries to revive her.

EXT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - FEW DAY LATER

Buddy's uncles and his mother carry their belongings from the house and load them in the wagon and cars. Buddy's mother tells him he's going to live on the farm a while and she'll live with his Aunt so she can go to work. Buddy cries. He doesn't want to go. Buddy's mother leaves in a car. Buddy's Uncle John drives him away in a wagon. Uncle John tells him it's for a short time while they wait for his father to make a home for them in Cleveland.

EXT. FARM

Uncle John shows buddy around the farm. Buddy says he doesn't want to live on the farm; wants to live with his father in Cleveland and help him build their house. The uncle tells him he'll teach him how to work hard so he'll be ready when he joins his father.

INT. FARM HOUSE – 8 YEARS LATER (1938)

Buddy, 16, lean but muscular, gets up early works on an old car then does farm chores. Buddy builds a small brick chimney with a stove near the fence where he and Uncle John are working. They keep warm at the chimney and cook lunch while working. Uncle Bink comes by and admires Buddy's brickwork. He tells Buddy his mother is sick.

INT. DOWNTOWN BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Buddy visits his mother at her job as an elevator operator in a downtown building. She's very thin, sickly and sits inside the elevator. Buddy tells her he's going to see his father to ask for help. She tells him not to go, that he won't help them.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND - NIGHT

Buddy drives his car down the street looking for an address. He stops, gets out, carries a travel bag, approaches a house and rings the bell. Elzie, 33, answers. He's taken back. Buddy says, "Hi Dad." Elzie steps outside, closes door behind him. Elzie wants to know who sent him, his mother? Buddy tells him she's sick and they need him at home. Buddy tells his father nobody believes he raped that girl. Anna, 25, comes to the door. Elzie says, "Anna go back inside." Buddy sees her, and recognizes the name. Buddy becomes angry and tells his father they don't need him, and tells him he's responsible for Grandpa dying, and everybody losing their homes. He gets back in his car and drives away.

SPRINGFIELD - MONTAGE

Buddy arrives at a construction site and approaches his Uncle Bink. He puts him to work. Uncle Bink pays Buddy at the end of the day.

Buddy brings groceries to his mother's house. He cleans up the house and fixes holes in her walls. His mother enters and Buddy tells her to quit her job, that he's making enough money for both of them. Buddy continues to work with his uncle and remodels his mother's small 2-room house and puts in a kitchen and bathroom. He drives his mother to the farm to visit her relatives. She begins to feel better.

INT. MOTHER'S HOUSE

Buddy tells his mother he wants to start his own construction company but he has to join the Brick Layer's Union. He applies, and then gets a letter stating he needs his father's signature because he's not 18.

INT. CLEVELAND SPEAK EASY - NIGHT

Buddy enters a small house throwing a rent party. He looks around and sees his father. He approaches his father and tells him he needs his signature. His father mocks him for coming back and asking for his help. Buddy turns to leave and bumps into ELEANOR, 17, beautiful, she spills a tray of drinks on his clothes as he rushes out.

INT. CLEVELAND ROOMING HOUSE – NEXT MORNING

Buddy rents a room in a rooming house. He hangs his clothes in the bathroom to dry. The next morning he wakes to find his clothes cleaned and pressed hanging in the bathroom. He dresses and comes to the breakfast tables. Eleanor sits at the table serving food to other people at the table. Buddy discovers she washed his clothes for him. He remembers her from the speakeasy. They exchange glances throughout the meal. Buddy asks if he can write to her and she gives him her address. He tries to kiss her, but she backs away.

INT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Buddy returns to Springfield. He writes Eleanor a letter and apologizes for trying to kiss her but thought city girls liked that. She writes back and says she's really a homebody but was working there to help her family. They write several letters in between Buddy working as a brick mason and airplane mechanic in Springfield and Eleanor working odd domestic jobs in Cleveland. Buddy's mother helps him with his penmanship. Buddy tells Eleanor his dream of building a construction company, how he wants to be his own boss and build a house for his family. They fall in love. Two years pass.

TUSKEGEE AIRFORCE BASE – SERIES OF SHOTS (1942)

Buddy and Eleanor get married in Cleveland. They move to Tuskegee Air force base in Alabama to support the war effort. Buddy works as a civilian aircraft mechanic. Eleanor tries to fix up the small shack they live in. Buddy complains to the officer his pay is late again. He's fed up and quits. Eleanor tells Buddy she's pregnant. He's excited and decides to move back to Cleveland, join the bricklayers union and build houses. He's old enough to get his card without his father's help.

EXT. CLEVELAND BUDDY AND ELEANOR HOUSE – NIGHT – 1 YEAR LATER

Buddy, Eleanor and their baby son, 2, live with Eleanor's relatives in a cramped apartment. Buddy remodels the apartment and improves the interior. At night he tells stories to his son about the big house he's going to build for them, and how they'll have scooters and go-karts and can race them in the streets. The son falls asleep excited about their future.

INT. ABC BANK - AFTERNOON

Buddy, wears a suit that's too small, is called over by the LOAN OFFICER. Buddy presents his business plan and loan application for starting his construction company. The officer takes his application. Comes back and tells him it's been denied due to insufficient credit. Buddy explains his business plan but the Officer still denies him. Buddy leaves.

EXT. CLEVELAND CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Buddy goes to work on a construction job. He presents his union card to the FOREMAN who makes a few phone calls before reluctantly admitting Buddy on the job. Buddy gets on the scaffold and all the white masons come down; they complain and say, "We ain't gonna work with no colored." The foreman puts Buddy in a stairwell to work alone. Buddy is furious.

INT. BUDDY'S AND ELEANOR'S HOME - NIGHT

Buddy arrives home. His mother is visiting and helps Eleanor do the laundry and watches her two children. Several people come to the house and pick up their laundry and pay Eleanor. Buddy tells his wife and mother not to do laundry, that he's going to make enough for them not to work. Buddy's mother is moving slowly and has to sit while she folds. His mother has a heart attack and they call an ambulance. Buddy and Eleanor rush to the hospital. The relatives stay and watch the kids.

INT. HOSPITAL – MOMENTS LATER

Buddy sits with his head in his hands in the hallway. A doctor approaches, speaks, Buddy breaks down.

EXT. BUDDY'S AND ELEANOR'S HOME

Buddy returns home. Elzie sits in the living room. Buddy wants to know why he's there. Elzie says he sorry for Hazel's loss. He tells Buddy he never planned to leave them. How he and Grandpa were heading to Uncle John's farm when several white men, who thought he was trying to skip bail, over took them.

FLASHBACK – EXT. TRAIN TRACKS

We see Elzie trying to fight them off; his Grandpa is held at gunpoint in the buggy. The train comes and the men force Grandpa to stay in the buggy on the tracks or they will shoot Elzie. The train comes. Elzie is mortified. Elzie breaks loose, the men chase him. Elzie outruns them and jumps on the passing train.

EXT. BUDDY'S AND ELEANOR'S HOME

Buddy asks him about Anna. His father tells him they grew up together, but couldn't be together. Elzie says he tried to forget her when he and his mother married but couldn't. When Anna's father found out about them, he made her say I raped her. After I left town, your mother said she didn't want to be with me, so Anna came. Elzie tells his son he's sorry for the pain he caused, and that Buddy is a better father than he was, and not to let life get him down. Elzie leaves.

INT. ABC BANK – MORNING – NEXT DAY

Buddy, wears a nice but modest suit, sits in the ABC Bank waiting area. The loan officer recognizes him and calls him over. He presents his business plans and loan application for building his house. The Officer reminds him it's been turned down. Buddy explains his business plan again. The loan officer goes and talks with the bank manager in a nearby office. The manager pokes his head out, looks at Buddy and shakes his head no. Buddy walks straight to the bank manager's office. Inside an older woman sits in a chair talking to the manager. Buddy explains to him all that he's done that proves that he's responsible, how he took care of his mother when his father left, comes from a family of talented brick masons, remodeled several homes, etc. The older woman asks him about his mother, and he tells her he put in indoor plumbing and a kitchen for her. The old woman smiles and says, "Sounds like you're the kind of customer our bank needs, isn't that right son?" Later we see Buddy shaking hands with the loan officer, he smiles and exits the bank with a package of new account papers.

INT. CANNADAY AND SONS CONSTRUCTION - DAY

Buddy and his crew build a home. A sign nearby reads, CANNADAY AND SONS CONSTRUCTION. Buddy's Uncle John and Bink arrive. Buddy is happy to see them. The men get on the scaffold and begin to lay brick. A car pulls up and Buddy's father Elzie gets out carrying tools. The men stop and stare. Uncle Bink tells Elzie to get the concrete mixed. Elzie begins work.

Other cars come. Eleanor gets out with the children and other friends and relatives. Several people come bringing supplies and food. Buddy's sons run around the new house asking, "We gonna move here? We gonna pay rent here?" Buddy's replies, "No; we ain't paying rent no more. We're the landlords now." The men get into the rhythm of laying bricks, slapping mortar, and working in harmony.

Time Line

[illegible]

Budget

Account #	Quantity	Fee/Cost	Subtotal	Acct Total
100 Story				\$200
Story and Script	1	\$0	\$0	
Research	50 hours	\$0	\$0	
Travel			\$200	
200 Talent				\$250
Lead Actors TBD - Buddy, Elzie, Grandpa, Eleanor, Mother	3-5	\$0	\$250	
Cast TBD		\$0	\$0	
Extras TBD		\$0	\$0	
300 Production Personnel				\$0
Producer	1	\$0	\$0	
Director	1	\$0	\$0	
Director of Photography	1	\$0	\$0	
Gaffer	1	\$0	\$0	
Grip	1	\$0	\$0	
Art Design	1	\$0	\$0	
Assistant Director	1	\$0	\$0	
Still Photographer	1	\$0	\$0	
Sound Recorder	1	\$0	\$0	
Boom Operator	1	\$0	\$0	
400 Travel and Locations				\$340
Cast and Crew Meals	2 Days	80	160	
Location Fees (studio)	2 Days	50	100	
Auto Mileage and Gas	10 miles		40	
Miscellaneous Expense	2 Days	20	40	

500 Production Equipment				\$0
Camera		\$0	\$0	
Lighting		\$0	\$0	
Grip		\$0	\$0	
Sound		\$0	\$0	
600 Art Direction				\$250
Props & Set Dressing			\$100	
Costumes		\$0	\$100	
Makeup Supplies		\$0	\$50	
700 Sound and Music				\$150
Band			\$150	
Music Rights			\$0	
Sound Effects		\$0	\$0	
Sound Mixing		\$0	\$0	
800 Editing and Finishing				\$0
Editor	1	\$0	\$0	
Sound Editor/Mixing	1	\$0	\$0	
Color Correction	1	\$0	\$0	
Effects	1	\$0	\$0	
900 Final Post Production				\$625
Website Designer	1		50	
Graphic Artists	1		50	
Duplicating	20 DVD and prints	\$25/pack	\$25	
Postage & Shipping			\$200	
Festival Fees and Marketing			\$300	
Total				\$1,815
1000 Contingency				
Contingency		10%		\$182
Total with Contingency				\$1,997

APPENDIX B – CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Early Character Analysis and Character Backgrounds

(created before aha moments in deeper character discoveries)

Buddy (12)

He's a good little kid. Educated up to the 5th grade. Left schools to live on a farm.

He's a visionary. He can see how to put things together to build stuff, such as play forts made out of scrap wood, boxes and cardboard, a scooter made out of odd materials. He used the casters from the bottom of the baby bed crib, or from the cart his mother used to roll the food into the front room. "Buddy!" He used an old dresser drawer from the garage.

He likes to play with other kids. He's quick to join in playing a game without thinking about any consequences. He rides his scooter as fast as he can to win the race, but doesn't see the car coming down the street. The car stops but he keeps going, looking behind him, adjusting his handle bar; he runs into the stopped car. He's startled, shaking.

He likes people, he likes to laugh and have fun. He likes everybody to be treated fairly. He doesn't like to fight but will fight if someone isn't being fair.

Buddy (19)

He's most comfortable at home in familiar surroundings. He knows what he's good at, plowing, building things, taking care of livestock, hunting. He's shy or uncomfortable in unfamiliar surroundings, such as big cities, dances. On the farm everything is black and white, right or wrong, a man knows what to do, and it's important to have a family and take care of your family. He takes care of his mother. He's overly protective of her needs. He lives on the farm to work and get food, and then comes to see his mother on the weekends and brings her all kinds of meats, dried meats, cheese, eggs, apples, sausage, milk, berries. He fixes up her small house. His goal is to get some land of his own and build a house get married and have kids.

Buddy (24)

A busy man. Hard worker, always has a job and maybe two. He's a husband and a father of 2, he works hard to provide for his family; although, he faces a lot of challenges in finding housing and employment in a highly racist society.

He has a firm foundation of who he is. He learned to stand on his own two feet when he accepted the fact that his father was not going to help them, when he took care of his mother and built her a house and remodeled her house with indoor plumbing, when he made the decision that was best when he was in the Army Air Corp., when he didn't allow the engineers to okay an engine that he knew was faulty. He

discovered that he has gifts and a responsibility to use these gifts to make things better.

However, he's uncertain at times, he has his doubts. He decides to try a short cut in resolving getting into the union. It requires a lot of money. He gets the money, but the deal goes bad, and he loses everything, so he contemplates leaving his family. He goes to the bridge to jump. He's reminded of his responsibility to his family, he's reminded that giving up is not what a good man does, he's reminded of what his mother taught him, of what John L taught him, of what Uncle Bink taught him, of what Eleanor believes in him. Not to give up. Never give up. It's always the darkest before the dawn. He learns to forgive himself and to forgive others.

Elzie (32)

Born in 1895. His father is white and his mother is black. He looks white except for his curly dark hair. He grew up on a farm, but prefers the fast city life. He went to a one-room schoolhouse but didn't get much learning, kids made fun of him because he was very light. He's a jokester, charming, slick kind of man. He's always cleanly dressed in either his baseball uniform or suit even if it's the same suit. He refuses to let the ugliness of life get him down, the limitations placed on him because he's a black man.

Every time he hits the baseball, it's like whacking that white male face that spit at him; every time he runs the bases it's like running and racing through a new world, it's like,

The crowd yelling my name and cheering for me, it's like I'm a white man and I'm owning the world, the world loves me, even if it's only for one game, but I let myself feel appreciated, like I'm the one on top of the world, yes me Elzie, black Elzie, is the one everyone wants to be like, to love, to get to know, to succeed.

And I want that feeling every day. So I wear my baseball shirt, or hat, or I wear my nice shirt and pants when I'm outside, because I not a nigger, I'm Elzie the man who just hit that home run, the man who made our team a winning record last season. I'm the bell of the ball, the mack daddy, and as long as I know that, as long as I believe that, can't nobody bring me down.

He knows he's half white, so at times he demands to be treated as such.

Elzie (39-44)

Elzie tells jokes to lighten the mood, to keep his illusion of happiness in his life. He can't handle being in a negative place or situation. This is how he deals with his demons. His philosophy is, if Mister Charlie won't let him take care of his family, job and nice home, it's too painful to face, then his solution is not to have the responsibility. "If something pains you remove it, cut it out, remove it or remove yourself; that's what the Bible says."

He has demons. He has done things, which he can't forgive himself for. He tries to forget them, to keep his illusion of happiness, but at night he can't. It's like his dreams torment him, so he drinks and tries to get drunk before he falls asleep. He doesn't want to remember that his father died because of him, that he left his wife and child to struggle alone in the world, that he's ashamed that at times he depends on his white wife Anna or uses his white side, to do what any man should be able to do, open a bank account, rent a house, speak with the insurance agent.

His son teaches him how to stand up and be a black man in an unjust society. He discovers that being part of a family is true happiness no matter what else you've got going on. He learns this by watching his son with his family, and he's sorry for the choices he made.

Eleanor (17)

Graduating from high school. She enjoys life. She has girlfriends and they like to go dancing, to the picture show, she likes to read especially adventure books and those that are well written, such as *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand, 1943, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde (1890), and Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*, 1931. She's an avid reader, which has expanded her view of the world, and what she knows is possible for her. She wants a family and a good life, and believes she can achieve this despite the racial discrimination she sees around her. Her family, Aunt and Uncle, look out for her and make sacrifices for her. They have taught her what it means to have a family, be a respectable person, and have dignity. Through her reading she's able to transcend her limited surroundings and hope for a better life, and with hard work she believes she can achieve this.

She's a hard worker. She's serious, she doesn't play around. She will only spend time with a man if he's a hard worker and determined to build a better life than their current circumstances. She has no time for bitterness and pity parties. Her family has taught her to not cry over spilled milk, you're better off cleaning it up, milking the cow again, and this time put the milk in 2 containers.

She's tired of sleeping on her Aunt's couch, and going from her Aunt's house to her Uncle's house. She doesn't live with her mother and her father is deceased. Her dream is to have her own home, her own bedroom.

Eleanor (22)

She wants her own home for her family. She's a mother and wife of 2. Her dream is to have a home decorated like the homes she's read about in her books. To be able to hang up portraits on her walls, to make nice curtains, to use the nice doilies and curtains she got for wedding gifts, to set her own table, a nice table, to sit and read to her children.

Hazel (29)

Born in 1900. Home schooled. Her family owns land. Her ancestors came to Ohio in the 1840's when the plantation owner upon his death gave them their freedom and

land. Her family is prominent in the community. Her mother died in childbirth. Her father and brothers, she has 2, build houses, they have a successful construction company, Lee Masonry. She's not fancy, pretty in a simple plain kind of way. She didn't date much until Elzie came along. She felt lucky to be married to someone like him, handsome, athletic, confident, popular. He was exciting. She's quiet, shy, and cooks and cleans all the time.

Hazel (36)

She's still holding her breath waiting for her husband to send for her. She still has a suitcase packed in the corner. The house isn't decorated, she doesn't want to do much because she's waiting for Elzie to send for her and Buddy. It's not until she gets a letter from him asking for a divorce that it finally hits home, that he's never coming back to her.

Hazel (41)

Enjoys life, entertains friends in her home. Content. Buddy has done the best he can to make her happy.

Uncle Bink (31)

Born in 1893, Older brother of Hazel. Prominent brick mason of Lee Masonry. Believes in hard work and being the best at your profession. He devotes time and study to master his craft. He's always looking over his shoulder to be prepared for others who want to see him fail. He carries a gun at all times especially to his work sites.

Grandpa Cannaday (62)

Looks white, friendly man, soft spoken, a farmer.

Grandpa Lee (57)

Born in 1864. Father of Hazel, Alice, Bink and Clarence. A skilled mason. His parents and other families hired a teacher and established a school for colored children. He became a brick mason apprentice and learned his craft well. He taught his sons how to do brick masonry work and established his own company, C. R. Lee and Sons Masonry. He employs other young men, mainly black and teaches them how to lay brick, build homes, and mix concrete, everything dealing with building. He's a nurturing kind of man. He wants to see his fellow brother and sisters succeed in America. He's opposed to Marcus Garvey's back to Africa movement. He says his people helped build this country and it's ours.

APPENDIX C - READING

Tina's Dramatic Introduction of Brick Walls Screening

It's 1934, Springfield, Ohio. It's not the hometown of Bart Simpson, but of 11-year-old Elza "Buddy" Cannaday.

Buddy, adorable little boy, small for his age, sits on the ground in his yard building a scooter with a hammer. His grandfather (60's) and uncle (30's), brick masons, build an addition to Buddy's house. Buddy's grandpa teaches him how to drive the nails, "It's all in the wrist," he says. Buddy's father, Elzie (32), cool, charming, and handsomely dressed in a Negro baseball league uniform, emerges from the house. He slicks his hair back with his hand displaying a large pinky ring. Buddy's mom, late 20's, quiet, plainly dressed, follows behind carrying a bagged lunch. She hands it to Elzie as he announces he can't work on the house today because he has baseball practice. Buddy pleads to go with him. Elzie begins playing a game with Buddy. He pretends Buddy's a great pitcher striking out batters. While Buddy pitches an imaginary ball, Elzie slips down the road, tipping his hat, to the neighbor ladies as he passes.

Buddy races his scooter in the alley with other kids. He's fast but misses the corner turn and wipes out. He's tough, unhurt. As he gets up, he notices a man climbing out of a second story window of a house. He slides down the slanted roof of the addition, drops to the ground, and runs. The man wears a baseball jersey; it is Elzie. An angry white man (50's) runs from the house after him. Buddy follows on his scooter.

Elzie dashes between houses and down alleys. Buddy tries to keep up. Elzie loses the angry man. Elzie finally reaches his house, stops, and goes inside. Buddy follows.

The angry white man, Stockton, and 2 other white men drive up to the house. They get out. Grandpa and Buddy's uncle meet them in the driveway. Stockton demands to know, "Where is Elzie?" Grandpa says, "He's not here." Stockton demands to search the house, he says, "Elzie assaulted my daughter." Stockton and his men advance towards the house. Suddenly, several male neighbors with shotguns surround Stockton and his men. Out numbered, they leave.

Inside the house, Elzie says, "I didn't touch Stockton's daughter." Buddy's uncle punches him across the face. Grandpa tells Elzie, "You've got to get out of town now." Grandpa pulls money from a hidden place in the wall.

Outside Elzie and Grandpa sit in the wagon. Buddy runs from the house carrying a paper sack. He jumps in the wagon and sits next to his father. Elzie tells him, "Buddy you can't go; I'll get settled and send for you and your maw." Buddy refuses to get out of the wagon. Buddy tries to hold on to the wagon as his mother painfully pulls him away.

Grandpa drives Elzie to the train station.

Stockton returns with more men. Buddy's house is empty. They burn it to the ground. A riot breaks out. Buddy and his family are whisked away to a friend's farm in Urbana. The family is told, "Grandpa and Elzie were killed in a train accident."

Buddy's mother leaves him in the care of the childless farm couple, John L. and Mable Jones (late 50's) while she sorts out what to do.

A city boy, Buddy isn't interested in farm life. He's bored. He sells the farmer's potbelly stove in exchange for a pair of roller skates. The farmer discovers the stove is missing and Buddy lies when asked about its whereabouts.

Buddy overhears the farmer and his wife contemplating how to pay for a new stove before winter comes. The next day, Buddy collects bricks from old dilapidated houses; he mixes concrete from clay and sand, and begins repairing the farmer's crumbled brick chimney and living room fireplace. His first attempt is disastrous, but eventually he builds a decent chimney that pleases the farmer and his wife.

Buddy asks to stay on the farm. Now called Uncle John and Aunt Mable, the Jones's convert the attic to Buddy's room and build him a bed with a quilt and matching curtains.

Seven years pass. Buddy works on the farm like an old pro. He visits his mother regularly, brings her food, and repairs things in her house. While building cabinets he finds a letter. It's from his father to his mother with a return address of Cleveland, Ohio. Buddy confronts his mother who confesses his father is alive. She begs him not to go, but Buddy travels to Cleveland to find his father and confront him.

Credits – Brick Walls Filmed Table Reading

PRODUCER
Jose Santiago DaCosta

DIRECTOR
Tina Cannaday Chapman DaCosta

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPY
Rajesh Barnabas

SCRIPTWRITER
Tina Chapman DaCosta

EDITORS
Rajesh Barnabas
Tina Chapman DaCosta

CAST

BUDDY	Nickolas Santiago
ELZIE	David Shakes
TONY	Vincenzo McNeill
ELEANOR	Tiffany McFarlane
COP, GEORGE	Ed Stone
GLORIA, JOSEPHINE	Shirlyn Washington
NARRATOR	Marcia Fugate

MUITÍSSIMO OBRIGADA / SPECIAL THANKS TO

ADVISOR EXTRAORDINÁRIO
Howard Lester

MFA COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Frank Deese
Capt. Charles Price

CONSULTANTS and REVIEWERS
Eleanor Askew Cannaday, Hazel "Wit" Lee Carter, Lorraine Askew Moore,
Zell Cannaday Sinclair, Lee "Hawk Jr." Cannaday, Michelle Cannaday,
Tsing Xiaoqing Yue, Rachel Foley, and 505/635 Acting For Film Class

Jonathan Ntheketha, Marie Rivers, Clarice Owen, Jay "Anthony" Termotto,
Levon "Rassta" Von, Reinaldo Gentile-Rondon, Jack Kong,
Ashley Ferguson, and Tsing Xiaoqing Yue

ROCHESTER COMMUNITY TV 15

RIT SOFA FACULTY

RIT SOFA STAFF

THE OUTSTANDING CLASSES of 2013, 2014, and 2015

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the MFA degree in the
School of Film and Animation,
Rochester Institute of Technology

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APPENDIX D – PHOTOS

Script Reading

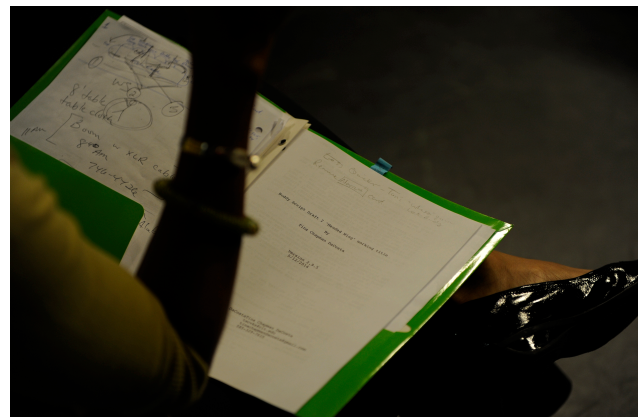
Table reading filmed at Rochester Community Television Studio, Rochester, NY
3 – Camera setup



Actor table and narrator table with character tent cards



My DP and me.



Full Cast and Crew

Back row top picture: Rajesh Barnabas, Tina, Jose DaCosta

Back row bottom picture: Tsing Xiaoqing Yue, Tina, Jose DaCosta

Seated: Shirlyn Washington, Ed Stone, David Shakes, Nickolas Santiago, Vincenzo McNeill, Tiffany McFarlane



Buddy and Eleanor

Upper left: circa 1940-41.

Upper Right: circa, 1942-43

Lower left: circa 1975 (Blue Goose Roller Skating Rink owners)

Lower right: circa 2000



Elzie Cannaday

Upper left: circa 1905.

Upper Right: circa, 1940

Lower left: circa 1915



Howard with Advisees

My advisor Howard Lester with his last 2 advisees,
Sully Slentz and me, May 2014



APPENDIX E – SCRIPT *BRICK WALLS*

Brick Walls

Tina Chapman DaCosta
Mended Wing Productions

Version 2.9.6

5/12/2014

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE - SPRINGFIELD OHIO - DAY (1934)

A 2-story brick home sits in a quiet African American neighborhood. The surrounding homes are small, mostly made out of wood on small lots. A doublewide garage sits behind the house. Behind the house is an alley that runs behind the houses and the neighboring houses on the next street. An old model-T Ford without wheels is planted next to the garage amidst grass and weeds. A horse drawn wagon sits in the driveway filled with bricks.

SEVERAL BRICK MASONS, in work overalls, build an addition to the house making it a side-by-side duplex. One side is finished and has a lived in look and the other side has wood framing. A wooden scaffold surrounds the new side of the house. Two Masons stand on the scaffold laying brick. Their work is musical. The sound of slapping down the mortar, smoothing it out, and setting down bricks is done with precision and rhythm. Another Mason mixes concrete near-by in a wheel barrel. Although unfinished, the new side looks lived in. NEIGHBORS walk by, stop and admire the Masons' work.

EXT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE - BACK DOOR

BUDDY (11), small for his age, cute, bright eyed little boy, with a determined look on his face races out the back door of the house carrying a roller skate. He wears pajamas he's outgrown and old shoes. He runs into the garage.

INT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE - GARAGE

Large building tools, ladders, shovels, picks, and saws, hang on the walls. Bags of concrete materials are neatly stacked in a corner. A large old dresser sits along the wall next to several containers filled with different types of nails. Buddy runs in and pulls open the top drawer of the dresser revealing a row of neatly arranged hammers by size and type. He removes a large hammer, grabs a handful of nails from the container and runs out.

EXT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE - GARAGE

Buddy runs to the side of the garage carrying the skate, nails, and hammer. He plops himself on the ground next to an old orange crate and a scrap piece of wood. Buddy pulls the skate in two. He tries to hammer one half of the skate to the wooden board.

(CONTINUED)

CHILDREN VOICES are heard playing in the alley. LITTLE GIRL (12), cute, hair in braids, simple dress, dirty socks and shoes, runs up to Buddy.

LITTLE GIRL

Come on Buddy, the race is start'n.

Buddy holds the hammer with two hands and with the same concentrated look as the Masons, but the skate slips off.

BUDDY

Darn it!

EXT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE

The oldest Mason watches Buddy work. This is Buddy's GRANDPA LEE (60), hard chiseled face but bright warm eyes like Buddy's. His hands are large and muscular and show years of manual labor. Grandpa comes down from the scaffold.

EXT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE - GARAGE

Grandpa walks to Buddy. He pulls out a small hammer from his side pocket and a pencil. Grandpa shows Buddy how to mount the skate to the board, mark the nail spots with the pencil, and using the smaller hammer, Grandpa drives the nail with one blow.

GRANDPA

See, it's all in the wrist.

Grandpa gives Buddy the smaller hammer and he nails the other half of the skate to the rear of the board. Grandpa admires his fast learning. They smile at each other.

EXT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE - BACK DOOR

Buddy's father ELZIE (32), handsome, athletic, wears a baseball uniform and nice polished shoe, steps out the back door. His hair is dark, wavy and combed back like Duke Ellington's. He smooths his hair back with his hand. We see a large pinkie ring on his finger. He has an infectious smile and greets the day as if it was made just for him. He carries a gym bag with the lettering TAYLOR'S BALL CLUB on the side.

Buddy's UNCLE BINK (35) stands on the scaffold working with the other Masons. He wears overalls and a nice pair of working boots. His hands are strong showing years of masonry work.

(CONTINUED)

UNCLE BINK
(sarcastically)
We could use a hand with the house
today.

Elzie holds up his hands and mimics throwing a pitch.

ELZIE
Not these hands... these hands are
gonna throw a fast ball down home
plate... and knock the Monarchs on
their...

HAZEL (O.S.)
Elzie!

Buddy's MOTHER (25), naturally beautiful, soft spoken, a little timid, but a bit slow moving from years of being sick, exits from the door of the house carrying a bagged lunch. She wears a modest housedress under an apron. Her shoes are old. She and Elzie make an interesting couple, like two peacocks where the male bird is flamboyant and the female is very plain in comparison.

ELZIE
(quietly but with
annunciation)
... on their ass!

UNCLE BINK
(shaking his head)
If that don't beat all... you can't
even help build your own house.

She hands the bag to Elzie and notices dirt on his uniform and brushes it off. Elzie moves away and goes to Buddy.

ELZIE
Nice job... But when my money comes
in I'm buying you a real scooter.

Elzie looks at his son's scooter. Grandpa helps Buddy attach the orange crate.

ELZIE
Hey, this looks nice.

BUDDY
Can I come daddy?

ELZIE
(to Buddy)
No not today son, I have practice.

BUDDY
(excited)
Can I come to practice?

Elzie pretends to be an announcer.

ELZIE
"Buddy Cannaday is on the mound.
It's the bottom of the 9th and the
count is 3:2..."

Buddy takes his cue and pretends to stand on a pitcher's mound. He mimics what his father says.

ELZIE (CONT.)
"...Old man slugger is up at bat...
Buddy stretches, he winds up...Oh
no, he's preparing to throw his
special fastball, super duper,
spin... He throws."

Elzie picks up his gym bag and begins to leave. Buddy continues pretend pitching.

ELZIE (CONT.)
(calling back to Buddy)
"Old Slugger swings... and...
Heeees, OUT! The crowd goes wild!"

Buddy dances around and celebrates.

EXT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE - ROAD

Elzie struts down the dirt road carrying his gym bag and waving to Neighbors.

Two FEMALE NEIGHBORS (early 20's), pretty, stand across the street and wave to Elzie.

FEMALE NEIGHBOR1
(flirting)
Good luck on Saturday Mr. Cannaday!

Elzie quickly straightens up, and throws on the charm.

ELZIE
Thank you ladies.

EXT. ALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD - 1/2 HOUR LATER

Buddy, in pants and shirt, and several other CHILDREN race scooters in the alley. Buddy is fast and begins to take the lead. The Little Girl and other Children CHEER from the side.

Buddy races neck and neck with another Boy Racer. The boys approach the intersection. Buddy keeps going fast and takes the left turn without slowing down. He crouches down behind his crate box and sails past the other boy around the corner. The KIDS CHEER.

We see a CAR coming towards Buddy. Buddy doesn't see the car until it's too late. The car stops, Buddy swerves and falls on the side of the road. The DRIVER gets out, runs to Buddy. Buddy lies on the ground LAUGHING. The Kids run over and help him up. The driver gets in his car and drives off.

The Children race back down the alley.

Buddy's examines his wheels, one has fallen off. He takes the small hammer from his pocket and fixes his scooter.

EXT. ALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD - ANNA'S HOUSE

Behind Buddy we see a MAN slipping out of a second story window of a house, half dressed in a baseball uniform. carrying nice shoes. His hair is dark and wavy and disheveled. Buddy watches him. It is his father, Elzie.

Elzie quickly slides down the sloped roof under the window (the attached bathroom) and drops to the ground. He takes off running like lightening past Buddy. He looks at Buddy but keeps running. He darts between two houses. An OLDER MAN (55), white, runs out of the house and in Elzie's direction. He stops, out of breath.

Buddy takes off on his scooter and follows his dad.

EXT. ALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD - FAIR STREET - CONTINUOUS

Elzie runs through the alley streets like he's running for his life. He leaps over garbage cans. We see Buddy following him on the adjacent street.

EXT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE - MINUTES LATER

Elzie runs down the street towards Buddy's house. He stops in an alley. Looks behind him. He tucks in his shirt, puts on his shoes and fixes his hair.

EXT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE

Uncle Bink and other Masons work on the house. Elzie quickly walks to the house.

UNCLE BINK

Back so soon?

ELZIE

(out of breath)

Practice was canceled. I'm gonna change and give you guys a hand.

UNCLE BINK

Oh not the hands that are gonna strike out the Monarchs, ooh.

Elzie enters the house.

INT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION - FRONT ROOM

Modest home of the newly built side of the house. There's one large room with a small table and a few chairs. In the back is a living room empty of furniture. A bedroom is through a side door way. There is a door leading to the cellar. Hazel and Grandpa sit at the table eating a modest breakfast.

Elzie bursts through the front door. Wide-eyed. Hazel and Grandpa look up in surprise. Elzie exits to the bedroom. Grandpa and Hazel look at each other as if something is strange.

Buddy enters. He goes to the bedroom.

INT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE - BEDROOM

A small room with 2 twin beds neatly made up with homemade quilts. One bed has a few toys on the bed. Several newspaper clippings about Elzie's baseball team hang on the walls along with a picture of Christ and a rosary. Elzie quickly changes into work overalls.

Buddy enters and sits on the bed with toys and watches his father. Elzie avoids his look.

(CONTINUED)

GRANDPA (O.S.)
(sternly)
I said he's not here.

Elzie looks up in a panic. He freezes. Buddy watches him.

EXT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE

A car sits in the driveway. The Older Man STOCKTON (55), heavy, white, holds Elzie's gym bag. Two other WHITE MEN with shotguns stand next to him. Grandpa and Uncle Bink stand in the yard between the White Men and the house.

STOCKTON
Don't lie to me Charles. If he's
inside we're gonna get him.

GRANDPA
I told you Elzie's not here. Now
y'all get off my property.

STOCKTON
Your son-in-law tried to rape my
daughter, now send him outside or
we'll come in and get him our
selves.

Uncle Bink grabs a shovel and stands ready.

FISHER (O.S.)
What's going on Charles?

Buddy's neighbor MR. FISHER (60's) in overalls, holds a shotgun and walks towards Grandpa. Two other NEIGHBOR MEN with shotguns guns and shovels follow Fisher. The neighbors surround Stockton and his Men. Stockton assesses the situation.

STOCKTON
(to his men)
Come on.
(to Grandpa)
We'll be back.

Stockton and the White Men drive off.

INT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION - CELLAR

The cellar is dark except for the setting sunlight streaming in through the small square windows on the west wall. It's empty except for crates and boxes stacked against a wall. A staircase leads up to the kitchen. Elzie crouches in the corner. He occasionally peeks out through the window. Grandpa and Uncle Bink descend the stairs.

GRANDPA

What the hell did you do?

ELZIE

(convincingly)

I didn't rape her! Stockton is lying!

Elzie looks at Uncle Bink pleadingly. His eyes confirm Bink's suspicion. Bink punches Elzie across the face. Elzie goes down. Bink pounces on him. The men roll around on the dirt floor fighting. Grandpa breaks them up.

GRANDPA

Stop it! Stop it Bink!

Hazel comes down the stairs. Buddy follows.

Buddy runs and wraps his body around his father's hips shielding him from Uncle Bink.

HAZEL

What's going on?

UNCLE BINK

Your husband has gotten himself in trouble with Stockton's daughter Anna.

HAZEL

(gasps for air)

Elzie?... Anna?

Elzie reaches out to Hazel, she backs away.

ELZIE

(pleading)

It wasn't me Baby. It wasn't me!

Grandpa goes to the wall and takes out a loose stone. He reaches inside and pulls out a small packaged wrapped in an old cloth. He unwraps a small pile of money.

(CONTINUED)

GRANDPA

You're taking the train to
Cleveland tonight; you'll get a
job, and then send for Hazel and
Buddy.

ELZIE

Yeah, yeah, I'll go to Cleveland,
I'll get settled...

UNCLE BINK

(steaming)

You'll go to Cleveland, get a job,
and then send for Hazel and Buddy.

ELZIE

(to Hazel)

Yes. I'll get a job, and then send
for you and Buddy. I will.

EXT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE - FEW MINUTES LATER - NIGHT

Grandpa sits in the wagon. Elzie wears pants and a shirt
under a long coat, He hugs Hazel goodbye before getting into
the wagon. He looks around for Buddy.

Buddy comes running out the house carrying a large paper
bag. He climbs into the wagon and sits next to his father.

ELZIE

As soon as I'm settled I'll send
for you and your maw, okay?

Buddy just sits there. His father hugs him. Buddy doesn't
move. Hazel reaches for him to help him out of the wagon.
Buddy resists.

HAZEL

Come on Buddy.

BUDDY

No. I'm going with Pa.

ELZIE

Buddy not now. I have to go alone.

GRANDPA

We've got to go. Train leaves in an
hour.

Elzie and Hazel grab Buddy and carry him off the wagon.
Buddy kicks and SCREAMS.

(CONTINUED)

ELZIE

(stern father)

Listen, listen to me Buddy...I need
you to take care of your Ma until
ya come, okay? Okay?

Buddy nods his head.

Hazel holds Buddy as the wagon pulls off.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SPRINGFIELD - NIGHT - 20 MINUTES LATER

A car, driven by Stockton with other WHITE MEN drives down the main street of town followed by two pick up trucks carrying White Men with shotguns. Several TOWN RESIDENTS, black and white, watch from the sidewalks, some run for cover. SHOP KEEPERS close up shops.

EXT. BUDDY'S NEIGHBORHOOD - FAIR STREET

Fisher, the Neighbors and a large group of BLACK MEN hold rifles and form a human wall at the entrance to FAIR STREET, Buddy's street. Several fire barrels also block the street's entrance. No one is outside except for other Black Men running patrol.

Stockton and the other vehicles reach the street's entrance. The car stops and turns. They don't stop but continue towards the street. The Black Men jump out of the way. They shoot at the vehicles. One of the trucks crashes. Stockton and the other truck continues.

EXT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE

The vehicles pull up to Buddy's house. The men jump out and bolt through the door. White Man #1 comes back and yells to Stockton who waits in the car.

WHITE MAN #1

They're not here!

EXT. HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE - NEIGHBORHOOD

We see Uncle Bink driving a wagon with Buddy, Hazel, and other FAMILY MEMBERS inside down the street. Several Men run past them with shotguns in the opposite direction.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD TRAIN STATION - HALF HOUR LATER

Grandpa and Elzie pull up to the empty train station. Suddenly several cars and trucks surround them. Grandpa tries to get away but the White Men have guns and force the wagon onto the tracks. Stockton gets out of one of the cars.

Grandpa aims his shotgun at Stockton.

GRANDPA
Back off Stockton.

Grandpa is overtaken by two men from behind. The men grab Elzie too. Someone pulls out a rope. Grandpa shoots one of the men. The men shoot back wounding Grandpa in the shoulder. Elzie lunges at the men and they grab him.

A TRAIN SOUND can be heard.

STOCKTON
Strap them both to the buggy.

The men tie Grandpa and Elzie down on the buggy. The TRAIN SOUND gets closer. They tie the horse and buggy to the train track. The TRAIN SOUND is closer.

INT. FARM HOUSE - KITCHEN - TWO HOURS LATER

We see a large farmhouse kitchen with a large stove against the wall, an icebox in the corner, and several shelves filled with canned foods and some grocery items. A large wooden table sits in the center surrounded by chairs and a wooden bench. Along the ceiling is a shelf filled with a collection of ceramic chickens. A worn calendar hangs on the wall displaying JULY 1930.

MRS. JONES (50's), large woman, wears an apron over a bathrobe, set out food on the table. Hazel, Uncle, Bink, and other adult family members sit at the table but no one eats. Occasionally someone looks out the window.

JOHN L. JONES (late 50's), wears overalls over a nightshirt, and work boots enters. His hands are large and hard. His face is sun kissed, especially the back of his neck from years of work in the sun. He has a kind face; although, at the moment he looks very serious.

Uncle Bink rises from the table as soon as he enters. Jones shakes his head no.

INT. FARM HOUSE - KITCHEN - UNDER THE TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Buddy sits under the table. We see the feet of his mother and the other adults standing near by.

FARM NEIGHBOR (O.S.)
(searching for the right words)
Hazel,... your father and Elzie,...
they're gone. Hit by a train...
They say Stockton and his boys
caused it... I'm so sorry.

HAZEL (O.S.)
(in disbelief)
Daddy?... Elzie?

Hazel's feet become unsteady. Other feet rush to her.
Hazel's feet are lifted up. Buddy peeks out from under the table.

INT. FARM HOUSE - KITCHEN

Buddy sees his mother being held by Uncle Bink. She's partly unconscious. Uncle Bink carries her to the living room and place her on the couch. Buddy follows.

INT. FARM HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Mable cooks breakfast at the stove. John enters.

JOHN
Is he up yet?

MABLE
No.
(beat)
I wish you had asked me first.

JOHN
I'm sorry, they left early this morning. His mother was in a bad way.

MABLE
How long is he staying?

JOHN
Just till the end of the week.

(CONTINUED)

MABLE

A week? On my couch?

JOHN

They burned down their house Mable. Buddy's mother is staying with relatives and she asked if he could stay until she works things out.

JOHN

Mable, he's barely 80lbs...okay, He doesn't eat much, and he won't destroy the front room furniture.

John puts his arms around Mable. She softens but only a little. John sees the fried apples in the pan.

JOHN (CONT.)

Fried apples... You only cook that for special breakfasts.

John tries to take a fork full of the apples and Mable swats his hand away.

MABLE

Well the apples were sitting on the table. I thought you wanted me to cook them.

JOHN

I didn't do that.

INT. FARM - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

We see a small living room modestly furnished. Morning sunlight streams in through the windows slightly covered with homemade curtains. There's a potbelly stove in the center of the room, a chair and end table with a Tiffany lamp. A cart sits near the entrance to the kitchen door but it's lopsided. There's a front door that leads to the porch. A nice sofa with sits against the wall. It looks slept upon with covers thrown back.

John carries a tray of food into the living room. He notices the couch is empty and looks about the room for Buddy but he's not there. He sets the tray on the cart. The cart is uneven and the tray almost slides off. He catches it. John notices two of the casters are missing from the cart.

EXT. FARM - ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The road is empty except for Buddy who drives a scooter made from Mable's apple crate and the casters from the living room cart.

EXT. FARM - ROAD - A FEW MINUTES LATER

John rides in a wagon pulled by a large mule, BIG RED. He catches up to Buddy.

JOHN

Buddy, where are you going?

BUDDY

Those men might come back. I'm going home.

JOHN

Well, Springfield is a good 2 hours away, maybe 4 by scooter.

Buddy scoots faster.

JOHN (CONT.)

A horse would be faster.

EXT. FARM - 20 MINUTES LATER

A small farmhouse with a porch sits on a vast amount of land mainly used to grow corn and various vegetable. A few cows graze in the grass. Behind the house is a large barn, weathered. Behind the barn sits a pigpen. Chickens run freely across the property. An outhouse sits behind the house. A wooded area is just beyond the plowed land.

John and Buddy ride in the wagon across the property behind the barn. They ride past the crops to the edge of the wooded area and stop.

JOHN

I've got to make a stop before we go. If you help me, it will go faster.

John climbs down from the tractor and walks into the woods. Buddy follows.

EXT. FARM - SHACK

John and Buddy walk through the wooded area to

A small dilapidated shack sits tucked away in the woods. A creek runs beside it. A partially built fence is on the other side of the shack.

John walks to shack and looks under the porch.

EXT. FARM - SHACK - UNDER THE PORCH

We see a dog nursing several pups. John takes a piece of food from his pocket and holds it, and the doge comes out and eats the food from his hand. Buddy watches.

John picks up a small empty dish nearby and hands it to Buddy.

JOHN

Can you get her some water?

BUDDY

(looking around)

Where's the pump?

JOHN

(slight chuckle)

Don't need one.

Buddy looks around, then he gets it.

EXT. FARM - CREEK

Buddy walks to the edge of the stream and fills the dish with water.

EXT. FARM - SHACK

Buddy returns with the dish, and he puts it on the ground near the dog. She laps up the water. Buddy reaches to touch her, John stops him.

JOHN

Don't ever touch an animal when they're eating or before they know you. Or they might take a bite out of you, ha ha.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY
What's her name?

JOHN
Hank.

BUDDY
But that's a boy's name.

JOHN
So.

Buddy looks puzzled.

JOHN
Put your hand out so she can sniff
you. That's how she can get to know
you, sort of like saying "Hi I'm
Buddy."

Buddy puts his hand in front of Hanks' face. She sniffs and
licks Buddy's hand.

JOHN
She'll let you pet her now.

Buddy runs his hand across her head and down her back.

JOHN (CONT.)
Later she might let you hold her
pups, but not today, they're too
young, only about 3-4 days old.
(pause)
Your mama is staying with your
uncle, and she's going to be fine.
She'll be back at the end of the
week for you.

One of the puppies waddles out from under the porch.

JOHN (CONT.)
I sure could use some help with
Hank. Somebody's got to make sure
she eats. She won't come to the
house, not while she's nursing.

BUDDY
I can do that.

INT. BARN - AFTERNOON

The barn is stuffed full with supplies, farm tools and equipment neatly arranged. An old arm cot is folded up in the corner with other old pieces of furniture and an old wheel barrel. A wired chicken coop sits on the ground with several laying chickens inside. Buddy feeds them corn.

John enters carrying the potbelly stove from the living room and sits it in the corner with the rest of the storage stuff.

JOHN
(to Buddy)
Mable needs some eggs.

John leaves carrying the army cot. Buddy throws some of the corn in the opposite direction of where the chickens laid their eggs. As the chickens eat and move away from their eggs, Buddy sneaks in and grabs the eggs. A big hen comes back and pecks at Buddy. She chases him out of the cage.

The chicken escapes from the cage and chases Buddy around the barn. Buddy tries to catch the hen but she keeps pecking at him.

EXT. BARN

Buddy runs out of the barn followed by the chicken. He runs into the house.

INT. FARM HOUSE - KITCHEN

MABLE, puts a large country breakfast on the table, pancakes, fried chicken, grits, biscuits, etc.

Buddy runs in. He hands Mable the eggs.

MABLE
Only two? You can wash up over there.

Mable points to a washbasin and towel in the corner. She goes back to cooking. Buddy washes his face and hands. John comes in from the living room and washes up too.

They all sit at the table. Uncle John says grace and everyone closes their eyes except Buddy.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Dear Lord, we thank thee for this
food...

Buddy takes a biscuit and puts it in his pocket.

JOHN

...and for the nourishment for our
bodies...

Buddy takes a piece of chicken wraps it in a napkin and
hides it in his shirt. Buddy reaches for another piece of
chicken.

JOHN CONT.

Lord have mercy and don't punish us
with fire and whippings if we don't
thank you properly before we eat.

Buddy closes his eyes and sits with his hands in his lap.

JOHN

In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Mable passes the food around and everyone fills their plates
and eats. Buddy fills his plate again. Mable looks
surprisingly at John with a look that says, "You said the
kid didn't eat much."

INT. FARM HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The wheels are back on the cart. An army cot sits on the
floor where the potbelly stove was. John sits in a chair in
a chair writing notes in his farm logbook. Mable fluffs the
pillows on the couch and straightens the dollies. Buddy
enters wearing an over sized nightshirt carrying his
clothes. Mable looks at Buddy.

MABLE

Did you wash?

Buddy nods. He walks across the floor leaving dirty
footprints on the floor. Mable notices.

MABLE

Now how did you get into the tub
and manage to leave your feet out?

Buddy looks at his feet. They are dirty. Mable rises.

(CONTINUED)

MABLE
(exasperated)
Come on.

JOHN
Mable, you sit down and rest
yourself. I'll make sure Buddy
washes.

Uncle John gets up. Mable shakes her head in frustration.

INT. FARM HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Buddy sits in a large tin tub in the corner of the kitchen
filled with water. John sits next to him writing in his
book.

JOHN
We had a neighbor once, who didn't
like to wash, dishes, his house, or
his body even. One day it rained
really badly, so Pritchard, that was
his name, Mr. Pritchard, he took all
of his dirty dishes and sat them
outside in his yard, including
himself.

BUDDY
He did?

JOHN
That's right. He fell asleep. A big
flock of geese flew by. They saw
Pritchard but thought he was a
statue and they landed on him. When
Pritchard woke his dishes were
clean.

BUDDY
What happen to Mr. Pritchard? Was
he clean too?

JOHN
Nope. Pritchard was covered in bird
doo doo.

Buddy laughs a little.

INT. FARM HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - 15 MINUTES LATER

Buddy, squeaky clean, even his feet, kneels next to the cot with John in prayer. John teaches Buddy to pray.

JOHN

I pray the Lord my soul to keep...

BUDDY

(repeating)

I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

JOHN

If I should die before I wake...

Buddy doesn't respond.

JOHN

If I should die before I wake...

Buddy opens his eyes.

BUDDY

What does that mean?

JOHN

It means if you die in your sleep
you'll go to Heaven.

BUDDY

Are my Daddy and Grandpa in Heaven?

JOHN

Yes, I think so.

They return to their praying positions.

INT. FARM KITCHEN - DOORWAY

Mable stands in the doorway listening.

JOHN (O.S.)

I pray the Lord my soul to take.

BUDDY (O.S.)

(repeating)

I pray the Lord my soul to take.

JOHN (O.S.)

Amen.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY (O.S.)
(repeating)
Amen.

EXT. FARM - WOODS - NEXT DAY

Buddy and Uncle John ride in the tractor towards the woods. Buddy sits in the driver seat. John shows him how to steer.

EXT. FARM - SHACK

Buddy unwraps a piece of chicken from a napkin. He feeds Hank the chicken from his hand. He eats a piece too.

EXT. FARM - ROAD - DAY

Buddy sits on a fence near the road and watches SEVERAL KIDS play stickball in the street with a broomstick. HARRY (12), an awkward chubby boy in pants and a dirty t-shirt, is at bat. Harry swings, misses. He tries again, misses, becomes off balance and falls. JEFF (15), tall athletic, the pitcher, cracks up LAUGHING and the other KIDS LAUGH too.

JEFF
I told you not to let him play.
Harry takes a seat next to Buddy.

HARRY
I'm Harry. What's your name?

BUDDY
Buddy.

HARRY
Where are you from?

BUDDY
Springfield.

HARRY
Springfield? What'cha doing here?

BUDDY
Why you ask so many questions?

HARRY
Hm, can I try your scooter?

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

I don't have it anymore, I had to
give the wheels back.

HARRY

I know where you can get some more
wheels.

EXT. BARN - MINUTES LATER

An old mule stands hitched to a small wagon full of old odds
and ends of rags, papers, and metals.

BUDDY (O.S.)

What about this?

INT. BARN

Buddy, Harry, and a PAPER RAGS PEDDLER, male, 50's, worn out
clothing, are in the barn. The Peddler looks around like a
fox in a chicken coup noticing the display of tools. Buddy
holds up an old hammer.

The Peddler looks at the hammer without much interest. He
sees the potbelly stove in the corner.

PEDDLER

(hiding his pleasure)

Well, looky here. This old broken
down stove is just taking up space.
Now most people would just throw
this away.

BUDDY

How much?

PEDDLER

I can take this old thing off your
hands for a pair of roller skates.

BUDDY

Two pair.

Buddy and Harry smile at each other.

EXT. BARN - MINUTES LATER

The Peddler loads the stove into his wagon. He hands Buddy two pair of roller skates and rides off.

EXT. FARM - ROAD - HALF HOUR LATER

Buddy and Harry race down the street each on a scooter. Both scooters have a double set of wheels, racing stripes are painted on the crates. They look very slick. They pass by the Kids playing stickball, who watch with envy.

FARM - MONTAGE

Buddy plays with the puppies. He sits on the ground and they run around his legs. Hank sits next to Buddy.

Buddy wears gloves and feeds the chickens inside the coop. He collects the eggs. A chicken escapes. Buddy quickly grabs it and places it back inside the pen.

John and Buddy fix wood panels on the shack. Buddy's hammering is efficient, rhythmic. He works up a pattern of placing the slate, holding a nail in his hand, placing the slate and hammering the nail with tap, tap, whack, tap, tap, whack. John notices Buddy's building skills.

INT. FARM HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Buddy enters the kitchen. Dinner food is on the table. Mable stands at the stove. John enters. He looks for something in the closet.

MABLE

Did you look in the barn? You
always put it in the corner near
the feed.

JOHN

I know but it's not there.

MABLE

John L. are you sure?

UNCLE JOHN

Yes woman. I know what a potbelly
stove looks like.

(CONTINUED)

MABLE
(angry)
It's starting to get cold John L.

Buddy eats in silence. John eats too. Buddy doesn't ask for seconds but goes outside when he's finished. Uncle John follows him.

EXT. FARM

JOHN
Buddy. Do you know where the stove is?

BUDDY
No.

JOHN
Well, we've got a problem. What do you suggest?

BUDDY
Can't you buy another stove?

JOHN
Well, I guess I'll have to pick up one in Springfield when I take you home on Sunday.

INT. FARM - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Buddy lies awake on the cot. John and Mable talk in the kitchen. Their voices are barely noticeable. Buddy gets up and stands near the kitchen door listening.

INT. FARM - KITCHEN

Mable and John sit at the table. Mable holds a large ceramic chicken.

MABLE
I was saving this for my new curtains.

JOHN
Do you want to be warm or have new curtains?

Mable removes the top of the chicken and pours out its contents onto the table. A few dollars and some change fall out. John counts it.

INT. FARM - LIVING ROOM - VERY EARLY MORNING

Buddy pushes the cot away and looks at the sealed up hearth in the wall where the stove was attached. He cleans out the hearth and removes the broken bricks.

Buddy sits on his bed. He sketches on a piece of paper an illustration of a brick stove with a chimney. He writes the dimensions of the stove and calculates the number of bricks he needs.

FARM - MONTAGE

Buddy scavenges for bricks from the ruins of a burned out brick house in the neighborhood. He puts them into a wheel barrel.

Buddy unloads the bricks on the side of the house. We can see an old stove flue sticking out of the side of the house.

Buddy uses a shovel to dig up clay near the edge of a creek and puts it into the wheel barrel. He examines the soil by running it through his fingers, the grittier the better. He digs up soil from the area with the most grit, sand. With a coffee can he takes water from the creek and adds it to the dirt.

Buddy begins to build the brick chimney on the side of the house. He lays down the brick and slabs his concert mixture he made from the wheel barrel. The mixture is too hard. The concert has started to dry.

Buddy goes back to the creek and gets more water.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - SIDE OF THE HOUSE

The chimney is starting to take shape. Several bricks are laid, but the concert is oozing out of the sides. Buddy lays the upper layers of brick. The lower layers give way, and the bricks fall out. The chimney topples. Buddy tries to hold it together but to no avail.

BUDDY

Shit!

Buddy examines his concrete. He rubs it between his fingers. The mixture is very thin. Buddy takes a few bricks and crushes them into powder. He adds the powder to the mixture.

EXT. FARM

John L. rides the wagon up the driveway to the house.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - SIDE OF THE HOUSE

Buddy stands on a ladder and lays the last layers of the brick chimney. His rhythm is better.

We see a brick chimney. The chimney is a bit crooked, made out of whole bricks, brick pieces, and in some spots clumps of cement. John approaches.

JOHN

Well, I'll be John Brown the catfish.

John examines the chimney.

BUDDY

I didn't have enough bricks.

JOHN

You ever build a chimney before?

BUDDY

No. Once I get more bricks I can replace some and make it...

JOHN

(smiling proudly)

This is mighty good work Buddy. To take the initiative and build the fireplace. That's what a good man does. You don't sit around worrying about things, you take initiative, you get important things done.

Buddy grins.

INT. FARM HOUSE

John guides Mable into the living room with her eyes closed. Buddy stands near the fireplace. Mable opens her eyes and sees a beautiful fireplace. Mable hugs John. John points to Buddy. She grabs Buddy and hugs him so tight he can barely breathe.

INT. FARM - KITCHEN - EVENING

Buddy, John, Harry and Harry's parents BRUCE and JANE EDWARDS (50's), farmers, sit in the living room after dinner. The mood is relaxed, upbeat and every belly is muito satisfacto, full.

Mable pushes a cart in with coffee and pie on a tray with matching plates and cups.

MABLE

I hope you all left room for
dessert.

JANE

Let me help you Mable.

Jane helps her serve the dessert. She sneaks a peek under the cup reading the label, CHINA, she's impressed.

Bruce nods to John indicating "Let's go out to the porch."
John and Bruce carry their dessert outside.

MABLE

John L. don't leave my good dishes
outside.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - PORCH

It's a clear September night. The stars shine bright. A jug and a banjo sit on the porch. John and Bruce come out of the house carrying their cups. Bruce picks up the jug.

JOHN

I thought you forgot to bring it.

BRUCE

I didn't want to cause Mable to
fuss.

Bruce pours moonshine from the jug into their coffee cups.
John tastes it.

JOHN

Bruce you did it again.

BRUCE

That was nice of Buddy to make a
scooter for Harry.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Oh.

BRUCE

He put extra wheels on it, so it's easier for Harry to ride. He has a little problem with balance. He didn't want me to say anything. But I wanted you to know. I appreciate that.

Buddy and Harry come out to the porch.

MABLE (O.S.)

Make sure you bring those dishes back.

Buddy and Harry sit on the porch eating.

BRUCE

(animated storyteller)

Did ya hear the one about the farmer with the sick cat?

Buddy shakes his head no.

BRUCE (CONT.)

Well you see this farmer had a sick cat so he called the vet. The vet told him to give the cat 2 quarts of Castor oil. After a few days the vet stopped by the farmer's place to see how the animal was doing. He said, "How's your sick calf?" The farmer replied, "Sick calf? I didn't have a sick 'calf.' I said I had a sick cat." The vet was surprised. He realized he'd made a mistake. So he asked him, "Where's the cat now?" The farmer said, "Oh he's out in the field with 6 other cats." The vet said, "6 other cats? Why?" The farmer said, "Well 2 are digging holes, 2 are covering up, and 2 are searching for new ground!"

Everyone roars with laughter.

MINUTES LATER

John picks up a BANJO and begins to play a fast tempo COUNTRY SONG. Bruce picks up his BANJO and joins in. Harry plays along with TWO SPOONS. He can't quite get the rhythm right. He gives them to Buddy and picks up a jug. Harry blows into the JUG and joins in making music. Buddy tries his hand at PLAYING SPOONS. He's not too bad.

Mabel and Harry's mother join them on the porch. Jane sits next to Bruce enjoying the music. Mable starts to dance a jig. She grabs Buddy up to dance with her. He doesn't know how. He's embarrassed. Mable shows him how to dance. Buddy tries, then he gets it. Buddy lets loose. His feet move quickly, back and forth, he's light on his feet. Jane CLAPS to keep time. Buddy and Mable tear it up dancing under the stars.

EXT. FARM TOWN - NEXT DAY

Buddy rides with John into town in the wagon.

BUDDY

Mr. Jones, can I stay?... Can I stay on the farm with you? I don't want to go back to Springfield.

JOHN

Well we ain't never had any children, that lived I mean. It sure would be nice. But I can't feed you and send you to school too.

BUDDY

I learned more on the farm than I did in 5th grade.

JOHN

Well let's see what your mama has to say, and Mable.

Buddy and John ride into town. We a main street with rows of small stores along the streets. A few cars drive by along with people on horses and wagons. Several PEOPLE, white and black, shop and work in the town. Buddy looks at the faces of the white people and turns his head away. He's uncomfortable.

The wagon stops at a store. John gets off but Buddy doesn't. John motions for him and Buddy slowly gets out of the wagon watching the white people. They enter the store.

INT. FARM TOWN STORE

Stockton and Several CUSTOMERS, mainly white, shop in the store and a STORE CLERK waits on them. John enters followed by a shy Buddy. The Clerk comes to them.

STORE CLERK

And the farmer says, "I have a sick cat not a sick calf," ha ha. I told my wife that joke and she nearly died laughing. Ha ha! How can I help you today John L?

JOHN

Curtain fabric. Mable ordered some last month.

STOCKTON

(highly impatient to the Clerk)

What's wrong with your eyes. You can't see me over here?

CLERK

Oh, I'm so sorry Mr. Stockton. John L. I'll be right back.

Buddy recognizes the name and looks up. The Clerk waits on Stockton.

FLASHBACK - BUDDY'S HOUSE - UNDER TABLE

Buddy is under the table listening to the adults.

NEIGHBOR (O.S.)

(searching for the right words)

Hazel,... your father and Elzie,... they're gone. Hit by a train... They say Stockton and his boys caused it. The whole town is going crazy.

HAZEL (O.S.)

Elzie? Pa?

Hazel's feet become unsteady. Other feet rush to her. Hazel's feet are lifted up. Buddy peeks out from under the table.

INT. FARM TOWN STORE

Buddy watches Stockton purchase items from the Clerk.
Stockton exits. Buddy's eyes follow him out.

The Clerk pulls out several bolts of fabric.

CLERK

How many yards John L?

JOHN

Two.

Buddy watches Stockton from the window.

EXT. FARM TOWN STORE

Buddy and Uncle John exit the store with the flue. Buddy gets in the wagon. He grabs the shotgun. John gets in the wagon.

JOHN

Son, what'cha getting ready to do?

BUDDY

(looking at Stockton)

He killed my Pa and Grandpa.

JOHN

Son, you've got to let go of hate.
If you keep it inside it will eat
you up.

Buddy tightens his grip on the shotgun. He stares at Stockton. Stockton notices Buddy staring at him.

JOHN

You've got to forgive him.

BUDDY

(through his teeth)

Why?

JOHN

Because we forgave you.

Buddy looks at John confused.

JOHN (CONT.)

What happened to the potbelly stove
Buddy?

Buddy drops his head.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY
(regretful)
I sold it... I thought it was junk.

UNCLE JOHN
You bought roller skate.

BUDDY
Hugh?

JOHN
Harry's daddy asked me to thank
you.

Stockton stares at Buddy. He walks towards them.

JOHN
The worse mistake a man can make is
one he can't correct. Stockton
can't correct his mistake. He's
already in hell.

Buddy contemplates what John has said. He puts the shotgun
away. Buddy and John ride off in the wagon.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - PORCH - DUSK - 2 DAYS LATER

Buddy sits on the porch with John L peeling apples. Hanks
sleeps on the porch next to John and the puppies nip at
Buddy's shoes. Buddy holds his long apple chain up for John
to see.

BUDDY
(proudly)
Look, look I did it. It didn't
break.

JOHN
Well, I'll be dog gone... Mable
come look.

Mable enters from the house.

MABLE
What is it John L?

Buddy proudly holds up his apple skin chain.

MABLE
Hm, that's good Buddy. Now you can
help me peel the rest of the apples
and I'll make a pie.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

Okay.

UJOHN

Wait, he's got to read a letter to
read first.

John hands Buddy a letter.

Buddy opens the letter and reads it. His reading is on par
with his age.

BUDDY

(reading)

Dear Buddy, I am so happy you are
having such a good time on the
farm. I hope you are helping and
being good.

(pause)

It's from my mom.

(continuing reading)

Yes, you can stay on the farm, as
long as you keep up your studies
and help out with the chores. I
miss you. Love Mama.

(to John)

It's from my mom! She says I can
stay!

John looks at Mable.

MABLE

Well, we'd better move you to the
attic, so you'll have more room, to
sleep and do your studies.

Mable and John take Buddy to the attic. Buddy carries one of
the puppies.

INT. FARM HOUSE - ATTIC

A large bed made with rustic split rails sits in the middle
of the room. It has a large head and footboard. A beautiful
homemade quilt lies across the bed with matching curtains
over the windows. They're made with the material John bought
for Mable's curtains. Buddy's clothes, old and new ones,
hang from the pegs on the footboard. Buddy stares in
amazement. He walks to the bed and gently caresses the
quilt. He puts the puppy on the bed.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

(amazed)

I never had my own bed and room
before. Thank you Mr. Jones, Mrs.
Jones.

MABLE

It's Aunt Mable, and Uncle John
now.

Mable and John leave Buddy alone in the room. Buddy flops down on the bed as if falling backwards in a pool of delight.

INT. FARM HOUSE - ATTIC - DAY - 7 YEARS LATER (1941)

BUDDY, 18, wakes up from under the homemade quilt. The attic is the same as it was 5 years ago except the clothes hanging from the pegs are larger. The turtle box has been replaced with a large incubator with chicken eggs and baby CHICKS PEEPING. CHUCKY, the puppy now full grown, sleeps on the foot of the bed. Buddy hops out of bed like a man with a mission. He quickly dresses, feeds the chicks, and exits. Chucky follows Buddy out.

FARM - MONTAGE

Buddy milks the cow.

Buddy sits at the table in the kitchen with John L. eating breakfast. Mable piles more pancakes on his plate. Buddy digs in. Mable smiles.

Buddy drives the tractor and plows the field.

EXT. HAZEL'S HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Buddy drives a wagon into the driveway of his mother's house. The house now has grass, a garden, and a porch with concrete steps. An outhouse sits behind the house and a water pump.

INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE - DAY

The house has a few more furnishings than last time. There's a table with 4 chairs in the main room, curtains hang on the windows. A half finished cabinet sits on the floor with a bucket of tools next to it. An older counter with drawers aligns the back wall. We can see a front room with a sofa

(CONTINUED)

and an upholstered chair. Hazel sits in the chair sewing a little girl's dress. Buddy enters carrying a basket of apples and a large sack.

BUDDY

Hey Maw!

Hazel rises to greet Buddy. She walks into the main room and hugs Buddy.

BUDDY

What'cha know good Maw?

HAZEL

Now Buddy that's not the proper way to talk.

BUDDY

That's what we say in the country. It means, "What's new."

HAZEL

Then you should say, "What's new."

Buddy begins to unpack the sack of food from the farm, meats, eggs, fruit, and vegetables. He places them on empty shelves and in an empty icebox.

HAZEL

Buddy, stop bringing in all this food every week. I'm fine.

Hazel gives up. She takes a minute to admire her son's loving care.

Buddy picks up his tools from the bucket and goes to work on the cabinets.

HAZEL

Buddy, come and eat. I've got dinner ready.

Hazel puts a bowl of beans and bread on the table.

BUDDY

I want to finish the cabinets.

Hazel picks up a peach pie sitting on the back stove covered with a towel. She playfully fans the pie in Buddy's direction.

(CONTINUED)

HAZEL

Well, I guess no one's gonna eat
this peach pie, so I'll take it to
work...

Buddy stops working and tries to grab the pie. Hazel
resists. She points to the chair. Buddy sits.

INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE - 30 MINUTES LATER

Buddy finishes the last of the pie. Hazel puts the dishes on
the counter. She grabs a bucket and goes outside.

BUDDY

I'll fetch you some water.

HAZEL

No, I can get it. You do enough
work around here.

Hazel exits with the bucket.

Buddy mounts the cabinet on the wall. He moves items from
the old cabinet into the new one. He opens a drawer and
pulls out the dishtowels and papers. He notices a letter
addressed, to MRS. HAZEL CANNADAY from MR. ELZIE CANNADAY,
121 CARNEGIE AVE. CLEVELAND OHIO. The stamped date is 2
years ago.

Buddy opens it.

ELZIE (V.O.)

Dear Hazel, How are you? I hope you
and Buddy are doing okay. The
courthouse in Cleveland said you
can sign the papers at the
courthouse in Springfield. Just
show them this letter with the
docket number at the bottom. You
don't have to do anything else. I
wish you'd change your mind about
Buddy. But I understand.
Sincerely, Elzie

INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE

Hazel returns with the water. She puts the bucket on the
stove and heats the water.

Buddy stands there holding the letter.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

What is this?

Buddy hands Hazel the letter.

HAZEL

Buddy, I was going to tell you.

BUDDY

All this time, seven years, I thought he was dead...

HAZEL

Buddy...

BUDDY

Why didn't you tell me? Why did you tell me he was dead? He's alive? and living in Cleveland?

HAZEL

Yes. I thought your father was killed that night, we all did. Then your Uncle Bobby wrote us from Cleveland and said Elzie arrived. Said he was helping him get a job and a place to stay. But after he got settled he didn't send for us.

BUDDY

Why not?

HAZEL

Because he didn't want to be a father any more, or a husband.

BUDDY

Does he know I've been living on the farm?

HAZEL

I don't think so... Buddy you've got a good life now.

BUDDY

But why didn't he send for us? Why didn't he come back?

HAZEL

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

I'm going to see him.

HAZEL

Buddy, I don't want you to get hurt.

BUDDY

I'm not a baby any more.

HAZEL

You're right. You're a grown man now. Maybe it's time you know more about your father.

She hands him back the letter.

EXT. CLEVELAND - TRAIN STATION - 10:00PM

A train sits idling on the tracks. Woods are around. A road leads to the station, which sits in front of the train on a small platform. A few PASSENGERS get off. Buddy gets off. He wears a big farm hat and a blazer that's a bit too big.

EXT. UNCLE BOBBY'S HOUSE - 10 MINUTES LATER

Buddy gets out of the car. He tips his hat and thanks the driver. He checks the address on the letter again before walking up to the house. He rings the bell. A MAN answers the door. He notices Buddy's "Quaker-type look."

MAN

Look, I don't want no pamphlets.
Get off my porch.

BUDDY

Hugh? I'm looking for Elzie
Cannaday.

MAN

He don't live here no more.

BUDDY

Do you know where I can find him?

MAN

Everybody knows to find him at
Julia's, the after hours place on
Cedar.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND - JULIA'S PLACE - LATE NIGHT

A car stops in front of an apartment house on a busy street. Buddy gets out of the car carrying his satchel. He tips his hat to the DRIVER. The car takes off.

Several PARTY PEOPLE dressed in everything from the latest fashions to factory work shirts enter the apartment. A long Cadillac pulls up and parks on the curb. BLACKJACK, a short stocky man, early 50's in a brightly colored pinned striped suit, gets out of the car with his 2 LOVELY LADIES, (late 20's) dressed in furs. The Lady #2 LAUGHS at Buddy's appearance. He looks out of place.

Buddy adjusts his jacket. Blackjack and the Ladies go inside the apartment building. Buddy follows.

INT. JULIA'S PLACE - NIGHT

The apartment is dimly lit. Table lamps are covered with colorful cloth. THELONIUS MONK plays a JAZZ TUNE on the piano surrounded by several PATRONS enjoying his music. A bar is setup directly across from the front door, a high table with stools. It's an after hours place. A door in the back leads to the kitchen. Blackjack and his Ladies sit at a small table near the piano. JULIA, 30's, pretty, the proprietor and bartender, stands behind the bar.

Buddy looks around, clearly this is his first time in a place like this. He takes a seat at the bar.

JULIA
(sternly)
All we've got is whiskey and the
moonshine's coming.

BUDDY
Whiskey, please.

Julia is taken back by Buddy's politeness. She pours him a drink.

TONI (O.S.)
(husky commanding voice)
What's your name?

We see TONI, (late 30's), heavy makeup, a colorful dress and gaudy jewelry, a real cougar, seated next to Buddy at the bar.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY
(nervous)
Buddy.

TONI
(sexy)
Hi Buddy, I'm Toni. Buy me a drink?

BUDDY
(confused, intimidated)
Ah, ah, okay.

Buddy motions to the Bartender who pours him another drink.
Buddy pays.

TONI
I've never seen you in here before.

Buddy tries to look past her and search the crowd.

GLORIA, another cougar with the same gaudy fashion sense as Toni, comes to the bar.

GLORIA
(to Toni)
Hey Girl!

Toni stands up and they exchange a flamboyant hug.

GLORIA (CONT.)
(sexy)
Who's your friend. He's cute.

TONI
This is Buddy.

GLORIA
Please to meet you Buddy. I'm
Gloria. Can you buy me a drink?

INT. JULIA'S PLACE - MINUTES LATER

Buddy sits at a table surrounded by Toni, Gloria and a few more WOMEN. The women laugh and drink. Buddy sits quietly watching the door. He's gotten in over his head, but on the outside looks to be unphased.

A WELL DRESSED MAN enters, wears a fancy suit; he's clean in a cool slick sort of way. He carries a case of moonshine and gives it to Julia. She gives him money.

His gait is cool and confident as he walks towards Blackjack with 2 glasses and a jar of moonshine.

Buddy watches him and notices something familiar.

BLACKJACK'S TABLE

The Man takes a seat at Blackjack's table. They slap hands. He smooths his hair back with his hand and we see his pinkie ring. They drink.

BUDDY'S TABLE

Buddy continues to stare at the Man.

BLACKJACK'S TABLE

The Man gets up and walks towards the kitchen. His walk is like Elzie's.

BUDDY'S TABLE

Buddy gets up.

BUDDY
Excuse me ladies?

TONI
Hm? With all this beauty over here.
Where ya go'in?

Buddy goes to the kitchen.

INT. JULIA'S PLACE - KITCHEN

Buddy enters. The kitchen is empty except for a COOK who prepares food at the counter. A small table with chairs sits in the middle. Stacks of paper plates and plastic utensils line the counter. The Cook fills the plates with food. A back door leads to the fire escape.

EXT. JULIA'S PLACE - FIRE ESCAPE

It's dark. Buddy steps out on the small balcony. He doesn't see anyone. Suddenly someone grabs him from behind. A hand holds a razor against his throat.

MAN
(threatening)
Why have you been spying me. Who
are you?

(CONTINUED)

Buddy can barely speak.

BUDDY

I, I wasn't spying on you.

MAN

Then why did you follow me out here.

Toni steps onto the fire escape.

TONI

(calling, shocked)

Buddy... We need more drinks... Oh!

Toni sees that the Man is Elzie holding Buddy with a razor to his throat.

TONI (CONT.)

What's going on? Elzie let Buddy go. That's my friend.

Elzie releases Buddy. Buddy examines his neck but there is no damage. They both stare at each other for what seems like eternity. Elzie takes a step back. He looks Buddy up and down.

ELZIE

(amazed)

Buddy?... Well, I'll be damn.

Buddy holds his gaze, straightens up and just stares at his father with a vengeance.

Elzie grabs Buddy and gives him an exuberant hug.

ELZIE (CONT.)

Ha ha; Hey this is my son!... Toni, this is my son, Buddy!

Buddy is taken back by his father's reaction, he doesn't know what to say. His body is a bit stiff when Elzie hugs him.

ELZIE (CONT.)

What are you, 14, 15 now?

BUDDY

Eighteen.

ELZIE (CONT.)

What'cha doing in Cleveland? Is your mama here too?

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY
(confused)
No just me.

ELZIE
How did you get here?

BUDDY
Hitchhiked.

ELIZE
Well, I'll be damn... Come on
inside, let's get some food.

Elzie takes Buddy by the shoulder and leads him back to the kitchen. Toni follows.

INT. JULIA'S PLACE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Buddy sits at the table eating one of the dinners. Elzie stands next to the sink sipping a drink.

BUDDY
I'm living on a farm now in Urbana.

ELZIE
A farm?

BUDDY
Yeah, Uncle John's farm, I mean Mr.
Jones, he's related to the Fishers.
I can plow, milk cows, build
fences, I even built a chimney.

ELZIE
That's good. I bet you get plenty
of food on a farm, right?

BUDDY
Oh yeah, we do alright.

Buddy finishes his sandwich. Wipes his mouth.

ELZIE
Come on, I'll drive you back.

BUDDY
I thought I'd visit for a while.

ELZIE
No, let's go.

Elzie heads for the door. Buddy remains seated.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

Maw told me you were dead.

ELZIE

What else did she tell you.

BUDDY

Not much... I wouldn't have known you were alive if I hadn't found your letter. What happened? Why did you leave?

ELZIE

Buddy it's a long story. We'll talk later...

BUDDY

It's been 7 years, don't you think that's been enough time for later?...

ELZIE

No, it's time to go. I'll take you back...

BUDDY

They killed Grandpa! Because of you! They killed Grandpa!

Elzie yanks Buddy by the collar. Elzie looks at his son with a vengeance, as if he's going to punch him, he balls his fists, and then restrains himself. He pushes Buddy away.

BUDDY

If you hadn't been messing with Stockton's daughter, Grandpa would still be alive.

ELZIE

I wasn't "messing" with anybody, who are you to talk to me like that?

BUDDY

I saw you climb out of her window...

ELZIE

You didn't see anything...

BUDDY

I saw you running down the alley. I was there. I was there! You killed Grandpa!

(CONTINUED)

ELZIE

You ain't' putting that on me.

BUDDY

They killed him, on the train tracks; the paper said it was an accident, but everybody knows it wasn't. What happened?

Elzie walks back to the table. He slams his fist on the table. He looks past Buddy as if seeing something that's not there. Elzie sits.

ELZIE

Grandpa drove me to the train station. I was getting on when all of a sudden Stocton and 3 other men grabbed me and pulled me off... I told Grandpa to run... Nobody was around and they started beating me.

(pause)

Grandpa came back with his gun; I told him to run,... but they saw him... They shot him... He was gone... Just laid there.

(pause)

They told me to get out of town or they were going to shot me too. I ran, I ran for the train.

Elzie stands up. He straightens his clothes, composes himself.

ELZIE

Now, let's go.

Elzie heads towards the door.

BUDDY

(sternly)

You said you were going to send for us. That's what you told me the day you left.

Buddy picks up his hat.

BUDDY (CONT.)

I don't need you to take me back, I got here on my own, I can leave on my own.

Buddy walks past Elzie towards the door. Suddenly, Elzie grabs Buddy and spins him around.

(CONTINUED)

ELZIE

I may have done a lot of things
that you don't understand... I
DIDN'T KILL GRANDPA. You hear me?
Do you hear me boy? Do you hear me
son?

BUDDY

(stern, with a new found
maturity)

Yeah, Pop, I hear you.

Elzie releases Buddy's arms. Buddy looks him in the eyes,
man to man.

INT. JULIA'S PLACE

Buddy leaves the kitchen and makes his way through the crowd
and out the front door. Toni grabs her coat from the table
and follows him.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - STAIRS

Buddy bolts down the stairs.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND - JULIA'S PLACE

Buddy walks out of the building. He doesn't know where to
go. He walks down the sidewalk. Toni runs out of the
apartment after him.

TONI

(calling)

Buddy, Buddy wait!

BUDDY

Leave me alone.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND

Buddy walks down the sidewalk past several businesses.

BUDDY

(to himself)

I hate you. I don't even know why I
came.. I don't need you... I'll
take care of my mother my damn
self!

(CONTINUED)

Buddy walks through several neighborhoods. He doesn't pay attention to where he is or the police car that's been following him.

The police car pulls up to Buddy and stops. A second police car pulls up and blocks Buddy's path at the corner. Buddy stops. The COPS get out of their cars and approach Buddy.

COP #1
(calling) Where
'ya going Boy?

BUDDY
Ah, nowhere. I was, I was just walking.

COP #1
What'cha doing in this
neighborhood?

BUDDY
Nothing...I was just walking.

COP #1
Assume the position.

BUDDY
What position?

The Cops draws their guns and point at Buddy.

COP #1
(ordering)
Assume the position!

Buddy just stands there. He doesn't know what they're talking about.

Cop #1 grabs Buddy, spins him around to face the car and slams him against the hood. Buddy WINCES from the pain.

Cop #1 goes through Buddy's pockets and pulls out his wallet. He takes out \$12.

COP #1
Looks like you stole some money.

BUDDY
I got paid today.

COP #1
Doing what?

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY
I'm a brick mason.

The Cops LAUGH.

COP #1
(laughing)
I ain't seen no colored brick
masons before.

Buddy still leans against the car with his face on the hood.

COP #1
Where do you live.

BUDDY
Urbana.

COP #1
Where?

BUDDY
Urbana, near Springfield.

The cops look at each other and look Buddy over. They notice his farm boy shoes.

Cop #2 stands Buddy up. Cop #1 returns \$2 to Buddy's wallet and pockets the rest. He tosses the wallet to Buddy.

COP #1
Keep walking, and go back where you
belong.

The Cops get in their police cars and drive off. Buddy straightens his shirt and notices a rip.

EXT. CLEVELAND - STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Buddy walks down the sidewalk. A car pulls over. We see it's Toni.

TONI
(calling)
Buddy.

Buddy keeps walking.

TONI
Get in the car. Come on.

Buddy gets in the car. They drives off.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - HALLWAY - 3:00AM

Toni uses a key and opens the door. Buddy follows her inside.

TONI
(whispering)
This is my sister's place. You can
stay on the couch.

They quietly walk into the living room. Toni disappears down the hall.

The room is dimly lit by two elegant but worn table lamps on either side of the sofa. The sofa is decorated with elaborate doilies. There's a Bible on the coffee table and a picture of Jesus hangs on the wall.

Toni returns with sheets and a blanket and spreads them on the couch.

TONI
Bathroom's down the hall.

BUDDY
Thank you.

Toni leaves. Buddy removes his shoes and pulls out a \$10 bill tucked inside. He examines the rip in his shirt and hangs it over a chair. He lays on the couch in an undershirt and pants and falls asleep.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Buddy sleeps on the couch. He opens his eyes.

BUDDY'S POV

The face of a LORRINE (3), cut little girl stares at him. She holds a piece of toast very close to his mouth. Buddy bites it. She smiles and runs away.

BACK TO SCENE

Buddy sits up. We can hear VOICES coming from the kitchen. He grabs his shirt. The rip has been repaired, the stitching is almost seamless.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - KITCHEN ROOM

Toni's sister JOSEPHINE (30's) sits at the table with her husband GEORGE (40's) eating breakfast. Their daughter Lorraine sits in a small chair eating a piece of toast. Toni no longer looks like a woman but a man. He wears pants and a shirt without a wig and makeup. Buddy enters wearing his repaired shirt.

BUDDY

Good morning.

TONI

Buddy, you're up. I was getting ready to wake you. This is my sister and her husband, Josephine and George Askew.

JOSEPHINE AND GEORGE (UNISON)

Good morning.

Buddy sits at the table.

TONI

...And their daughter Lorraine.

Lorraine offers Buddy a bite of her toast again.

BUDDY

No thank you...Ah where's Toni.

Josephine and George look at each other.

TONI

(using his falsetto voice)

What's your name? Buy me a drink?

Buddy is shocked. He doesn't know what to say.

BUDDY

Toni?

Toni nods.

JOSEPHINE

I told you you're confusing people... You want some breakfast Buddy?

BUDDY

(startled)

Ah, excuse me?

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPHINE

Would you like some eggs? Coffee?

BUDDY

Yes Mame...So, ah, ah, are you a man, or a woman?

TONI

I'm a man, just a different kind of man that's all.

GEORGE

You need to stop wearing your sister's clothes. Somebody's gonna lock you up.

TONI

It's a free country.

JOSEPHINE

George stop.

Josephine hands Buddy a plate of food. Buddy eats but cant' take his eyes off of Toni. Toni LAUGHS, he enjoys the attention. George rolls his eyes.

BUDDY

Thank you Mrs. Askew for mending my shirt.

JOSEPHINE

Oh I didn't do that. My niece Eleanor did.

ELEANOR comes into the kitchen, (17), gorgeous, serious minded but fun. There's a slight twinkle in her eye.

Buddy turns and sees Eleanor. He does a double take.

ELEANOR

Good morning.

BUDDY

Good morning Eleanor.

Everyone is quiet and trying not to notice how Buddy and Eleanor exchange a moment except Toni.

TONI

I met Buddy last night at Julia's.

Eleanor, unphased, stuffs dirty dishtowels into a laundry bag.

(CONTINUED)

ELEANOR
I'll be back later with the
laundry.

Eleanor leaves. Buddy jumps up and follows her out.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Eleanor strips the couch and puts the sheets into the
laundry bag. Buddy helps her.

BUDDY
Thank you for stitching my shirt.

ELEANOR
(coolly)
You're welcome.

Eleanor fluffs up the pillows, she arranges the magazines on
the coffee table. Buddy just stands there admiring her.

ELEANOR
Cat got your tongue?

BUDDY
I was just admiring the view.

ELEANOR
Maybe you should visit Julia's
place again. I'm sure there's
plenty for you to "view" there.

BUDDY
Why did you fix my shirt?

ELEANOR
Because people should take better
care of their clothes.

A cat comes into the living room and jumps on Eleanor's lap.
Buddy comes over and pets the cat.

BUDDY
Did you hear the one about the
farmer with the sick cat?

ELEANOR
No.

Buddy sits next to Eleanor and assumes the position of a
great storyteller.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

This farmer had a sick cat so he called the vet. The vet told him to give the cat 2 quarts of Castor oil.

(pause)

After a few days the vet stopped by the farmer's place to see how the animal was doing... He said, "How's your sick calf?" The farmer replied, "Sick 'calf?' I didn't have a sick 'calf.' I said I had a sick 'cat.'"

(pause)

The vet was surprised. He realized he'd made a mistake. So he asked him, "Well, where's the cat now?" The farmer said, "Oh he's out back with 6 other cats." The vet said, "6 other cats? Why?" The farmer said,

(pause)

"Well 2 are digging holes, 2 are covering up, and 2 more are looking for new territory." Ha ha.

Buddy cracks up. Eleanor doesn't laugh.

BUDDY (CONT.)

(laughing)

Don't you get it...

ELEANOR

No.

BUDDY

Well, you know how cats, you know, use the bathroom.

ELEANOR

Excuse me?

Toni enters.

TONI

Time to go Buddy.

BUDDY

Miss Eleanor, can I write you?

ELEANOR

It's a free country, but I can't promise I'll read it.

EXT. ASKEW HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Elzie stands next to a nice car talking to George.

GEORGE
You and Anna coming over to play
cards tonight right?

ELZIE
You mean to teach you and Josephine
how to play cards, ha ha.

Buddy comes from the back of the house. His walk is strong,
confident. He sees Elzie and stops.

GEORGE
Buddy, I didn't know Elzie was your
father? We've been friends a long
time.

BUDDY
What are you doing here?

George notices Buddy's disrespectful tone towards his
father.

GEORGE
Hey is that how you talk to your
father?

ELZIE
It's alright George. Buddy and I
got some catching up to do.

Buddy shakes George's hand.

BUDDY
Thank you Mr. Askew. I appreciate
you letting me stay.

GEORGE
My pleasure.

Buddy walks away towards the road. Elzie calls after him.

ELZIE
Buddy. Let me drive you back?

Buddy keeps walking.

ELZIE (CONT.)
We can talk.

(CONTINUED)

Buddy hesitates and then gets into the passenger side. Elzie gets behind the wheel. George leans into the car to say goodbye.

GEORGE

It was nice meeting you Buddy.

(pause)

Elzie I'll see you and Buddy's mama
at 8pm.

INT. ELZIE'S CAR

Buddy searches Elzie's face for an answer.

BUDDY

My mama? Who is he talking about?

Elzie pulls the car away from the curb.

INT. CAR - HIGHWAY

BUDDY

Who is he talking about?

Elzie doesn't answer, which tells Buddy what he needs to know. Buddy shakes his head in disbelief, in the realization of a terrible rumor being true.

ELZIE

(nervous but trying to sound
stern)

That George, he's always clowning
around. I don't know, he's got me
confused with ah,...

BUDDY

I don't want to hear it.

ELZIE

Buddy it just isn't a good time
right now. Once I get a bigger
place you can come and visit.

BUDDY

Sure.

Buddy turns on the RADIO and MUSIC plays drowning out the silence. Elzie stops talking and focuses on the road. Buddy tips his hat over his eyes and pretends to go to sleep.

EXT. HIGHWAY - URBANA - 3 HOURS LATER

The car passes a sign that reads URBANA 1 MILE, SPRINGFIELD
3 MILES.

INT. CAR - HIGHWAY - URBANA - NIGHT

Elzie smokes a cigarette. Several butts lie in the ashtray. Buddy is sleeping. A pickup truck approaches them from behind. Several white men ride in the truck. As the truck passes Elzie's car he deliberately looks away from the truck so his face isn't seen. He fumbles with the RADIO. Then men in the truck look at Elzie as they pass by. Elzie slows down and puts more distance between them.

ELZIE
(urgency)
Buddy, Buddy wake up, which road is
it?

BUDDY
(startled)
Hugh, what?

ELZIE
Which road is it, to the farm?

Buddy yawns, looks around.

BUDDY
Rural route 4, just up ahead, on
the right.

EXT. FARM HOUSE

The car stops on the road just below the driveway leading to the farm.

INT. CAR

Elzie and Buddy sit in the car. Elzie keeps his eyes on the road, looking around. Buddy breaks the silence.

BUDDY
Aren't you coming inside?

ELZIE
No, no, but tell John L. thank you
for letting you stay here.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

You can tell him yourself.

ELZIE

I've got to get the car back.

Buddy gets out of the car and slams the door shut. He walks up the driveway.

Elzie watches Buddy walk away. He then drives down the road. Buddy looks up and watches the car disappear. He kicks a rock with his foot, and then he goes wild kicking rocks in the direction of the car. He picks up several rocks and launches them toward the path of the car.

EXT. FARM LAND - FENCE - DAY

It's cold, the beginning of the winter season. Uncle John and Buddy fix panels of a broken fence. They are on the edge of the farm property. There is nothing around except for woods on the other side of the fence and crops and grazing fields on the inside of the fence.

UNCLE JOHN

I noticed you haven't said anything about your trip to Cleveland... Did you see your father?

BUDDY

(sarcastically)

Yeah, I saw him, he even gave me a ride back.... What's wrong with my father? He doesn't care anything about us. He wouldn't even come inside to meet you, to get to know the people I'm living with.

Buddy stops working. John continues to work on the fence while he talks.

UNCLE JOHN

Well, not everyone is made out to be a parent. Can't explain why. Last year we had a pig ... gave birth to 6 piglets one night. The next morning 2 of them were dead. She had laid on them. We had to take away the rest of them before she fell asleep on them too... People and animals aren't too much different... maybe it's not their fault, maybe they don't know no any

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

UNCLE JOHN (cont'd)
better, haven't been taught
anything different.

BUDDY
Well, that's not the kind of father
I'm gonna be.

UNCLE JOHN
Well you'll need a wife first.

BUDDY
I think I found one. Her name is
Eleanor.

UNCLE JOHN
Oh?

BUDDY
Uncle John, oh she's the prettiest
girl I've ever seen, smart too.

UNCLE JOHN
That's good. Is she a hard worker?

BUDDY
Why?

UNCLE JOHN
You want to be a father some day,
so you need a strong woman, a woman
who can have a mess of kids for
you.

BUDDY
(laughing)
Oh I think Eleanor can handle just
about anything.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD CONSTRUCTION SITE - NEXT DAY

Buddy's Uncle Bink instructs several BRICK MASONS in building a large retainer wall in a memorial park. A statue of a woman and child signifying the county's rise over the great depression stands in the center. Buddy, in work overalls, walks on the job and talks to Uncle Bink. Bink looks at him for a minute and then hugs him. He's happy to see him.

Bink walks Buddy over to the other Bricklayers and introduces him. They shake Buddy's hand.

EXT. HAZEL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DUSK

Buddy, in work clothes, is bent over a small desk writing a letter. He crosses out several words and writes again.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Buddy works on the scaffold laying brick.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - KITCHEN

Eleanor reads Buddy's letter.

INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE - NEW KITCHEN - DAY

Buddy walks his mother into the house. She has her hands over her eyes. He guides her through the old kitchen and into the new edition.

BUDDY

Okay, you can look now.

Hazel removes her hands from her eyes. She is amazed at what she sees. There is a stove and sink against the wall, a full size icebox. Buddy runs over to the sink and turns on the faucet.

BUDDY

See, no more going outside and using the pump.

Hazel is taken back with emotion. Buddy is like a little kid running around the kitchen showing her the new gadgets and storage areas.

BUDDY

And look at this.

Buddy guides his mother, who seems to be frozen in one spot, into the next room, revealing a bathroom with a tub, toilet, and sink.

HAZEL

Oh, Buddy, oh my goodness.

Hazel begins to cry. She's never seen such a beautiful bathroom before. There are magazines by the toilet, and picture of a little boy and girl hanging on the wall. There is a mirror on the wall and a small dressing table in front with a tiny stool.

(CONTINUED)

Hazel grabs Buddy and holds him tightly, she breaks down crying and thanks God at the same time.

HAZEL

When we lost the house, I just thought, things were going to be worse, you know. But you never cease to amaze me Buddy. I love you son.

BUDDY

I know... Now stop getting your face all wet. We're going out to dinner.

HAZEL

Oh no. I'm making you dinner, in my new kitchen.

Hazel takes off her coat and puts on her apron.

HAZEL (CONT.)

There's a letter for you, by the door.

Buddy gets the letter. It's from MISS ELEANOR ASKEW, CLEVELAND, OHIO. Buddy opens the letter. He unfolds it and sees that it's his letter he wrote to her with correction marks.

BUDDY

What the?

INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE - NEW KITCHEN

Buddy comes in waving the letter. Hazel cooks at the stove.

BUDDY

(angry)

Maw, she corrected my letter. She sent me back my own letter.

HAZEL

Who did Buddy?

BUDDY

That chippie, I told you about.

HAZEL

You mean "young lady?"

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY
Yeah, Eleanor.

Hazel takes a look at the letter.

BUDDY (CONT.)
(muttering)
She's got some nerve, I know how to
write a letter.

HAZEL
She's good. I think I like her.

Buddy takes the letter and storms out of the kitchen.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Masons and Assistants and Uncle Bink sit and eat lunch.
Buddy sits under a tree writing and rewriting a letter.

INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM

Buddy repairs the wooden floor. Hazel stands next to him
and hands him a letter with corrections. Buddy looks at it.

BUDDY
(disappointed)
Ah Maw; I've got to rewrite the
whole letter.

HAZEL
Yes, unless you want Eleanor to do
it.

Buddy takes out another sheet of paper and starts to write.

INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE - NEW KITCHEN - EVENING

Buddy enters, dressed in work clothes, sits his lunch box on
the table and picks up the mail. He sees a letter from
Eleanor and opens it. This time there are no marks and the
letter is from Eleanor.

BUDDY
(reading)
Dear Buddy, I enjoyed reading your
letter, and this time I could
actually read it. I'm interested in
discussing more with you on the
science of mixing cement. You make
it sound fascinating....

(CONTINUED)

Buddy sits back and feels triumphant, that he passed Eleanor's "literacy" test.

Buddy writes a letter to Eleanor.

CLEVELAND AND FARM EVENING - MONTAGE

Eleanor sits on a stool reading Buddy's letter and laughing.

Buddy checks his watch and lights a cigarette.

Eleanor checks the kitchen clock, takes off her apron and goes to the back porch.

There is a small stool next to an ashtray. Eleanor opens a box filled with letters from Buddy, a pack of cigarettes and matches. She checks her watch. She takes out a cigarette and lights it.

Buddy smokes and looks up at the moon.

Eleanor smokes and looks at the moon too. She laughs softly to herself.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - 1 WEEK LATER

Eleanor and Buddy are sitting on the couch.

BUDDY

But we'd be living on the base. It would be just like living here, with other Northerners. Besides, the Army Air Corp doesn't put up with that kind of nonsense.

ELEANOR

Buddy I don't know.

BUDDY

Eleanor, I won't let anything happen to you. They're sending me down there, and I don't want to go without you.... The pay is good... I'll be making more money. With the war rations and all, people have stopped building, the construction business is at a stand still here.

ELEANOR

I don't have any relatives in Tuskegee.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY
Yes you will... you'll have a
husband.

Eleanor and Buddy hug, he kisses her.

INT. ASKEW'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

George, Josephine, Elzie, and Elzie's girlfriend Anna sit at the table and play cards.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Buddy and Eleanor come in the front door. They both are brimming with joy. Josephine enters from the kitchen. She sees the joy in their faces.

BUDDY
She said "Yes!"

Josephine rushes over and hugs them.

JOSEPHINE
How, my goodness... Ellie! Buddy!

George comes out of the kitchen and shakes Buddy's hand. Elzie and Anna come out too.

ELZIE
Congratulations Buddy.

Elzie and Buddy awkwardly shake hands.

ANNA
Congratulations Buddy.

Buddy ignores Anna.

ELEANOR
Thank you Miss Anna.

INT. AUNT MATTIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - WEEK LATER

A wedding reception is taking place. Eleanor, the blushing bride in a beautiful but inexpensive wedding gown, greets her friends and family. Buddy greets them too. Buddy goes to the table for punch. Elzie approaches him.

(CONTINUED)

ELZIE
Congratulations son.

BUDDY
Thank you.

ELZIE
I spoke to the people at White's
Motor Company. They say you can
work there.

BUDDY
That's okay Pop. I told you I'm
going to the Army Air Corp.

ELZIE
Why you want to fight for... Why?
So you can wash the toilets? All
Uncle Sam is gonna let Negroes do is
wash the latrine.

BUDDY
It's not like that. This is
something thing different. An all
Colored squad of pilots and
mechanics.

ELZIE
Uncle Sam gonna let Negroes fly his
planes? I don't think so.

BUDDY
Well, you're wrong. And the pay is
good and steady.

ELZIE
You're fooling yourself son if you
think Uncle Sam is gonna give a
damn about some colored pilots.
Listen to me...

BUDDY
Why, so I can be like you, and
leave my family?

INT. AUNT MATTIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Eleanor talks with MRS. MCKINNLEY and other GUESTS. She sees
Buddy getting heated with his father.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. MCKINNLEY
We're so proud of Buddy being
selected for the Tuskegee
Experiment. We know he'll make us
proud.

ELEANOR
I'll let you tell him yourself.
(calling to Buddy)
Buddy, Buddy.

Eleanor leads Mrs. McKinnley to Buddy and Elzie.

ELEANOR
This is Mrs. McKinnley, Rev.
McKinnley's wife. This is Elzie,
Buddy's father.

MRS. MCKINNLEY
We're so very proud of your son
being selected for the Tuskegee
Experiment. I'm sure this a joyous
day for your family, bitter sweet I
presume.

ELZIE
I'm happy to be getting a
daughter-in-law.

MRS. MCKINNLEY
Oh, Eleanor is such a special young
lady. She's taught our Sunday
school class every Sunday...

Buddy takes Eleanor's hand and leads her towards the
kitchen. Leaving Elzie and Mrs. McKinnley alone in their
conversation.

EXT. AUNT MATTIE'S HOUSE - BACK PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Buddy and Eleanor burst out of the back door. They hold
hands laughing, and run through the back yard, as if they're
two school kids playing hide and seek and looking for a good
hiding spot.

They run through the back yard and into the adjoining back
yard of a small house. They race up the steps, Eleanor
almost trips over her dress laughing, Buddy catches her. He
lifts her up and carries her inside.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - KITCHEN

Buddy enters carrying Eleanor. He stumbles a bit and puts her down before they fall. Laughing and barely catching their breath, Buddy takes her into his arms and they kiss.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - BATHROOM - HALF HOUR LATER

Eleanor stands looking at herself in the mirror. She wears a beautiful long white lace nightgown with matching jacket. A wedding dress carefully hangs from a hanger on the door. We can see an enormous bra with wide straps under her gown. The gown is sexy but the bra makes it look frumpy. There's a KNOCK at the DOOR.

AUNT JOSEPHINE

Eleanor, you all right in there?

Eleanor opens the door. She looks like a deer caught in the headlights. Josephine steps into the bathroom and closes the door. Eleanor tries to smile but is too nervous. Josephine looks her up and down.

ELEANOR

Should I take my bra off?

MRS. ASKEW

(laughs)

Well it's gonna come off anyway.

ELEANOR

(anguish)

Oh, I don't know what to do... what if, what if I mess up, if he doesn't like,... it, I mean what if he doesn't like me?

AUNT JOSEPHINE

Nonsense girl. Oh he likes you alright, or wouldn't have married you... Buddy is a good man, a gentle man. You'll be fine. He's your husband now. Well, you might be a little sore.

ELEANOR

Oh no...

AUNT JOSEPHINE

But it passes, and it gets better with practice, I mean the more times the easier it gets, and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AUNT JOSEPHINE (cont'd)
the more you relax, the nicer it
is, ha ha, oh, and it can be really
nice.

Eleanor looks scared. Josephine hugs her.

AUNT JOSEPHINE
Every thing's going to be fine. Now
don't keep that man waiting any
longer.

Aunt Josephine leaves. Eleanor looks again in the mirror.
She removes her bra.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - HALLWAY

Eleanor walks quietly down the hallway to her and Buddy's
room. She wears the gown and jacket flows gently beside her
as she walks.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - BEDROOM

The light on bed table is on. A bouquet and vase rest on the
dresser in the corner. Eleanor quietly enters and closes the
door. Buddy, still dressed in his suit is asleep on top of
the bed.

Eleanor tip toes into the room.

Buddy SNORES.

Eleanor quietly takes off her robe and eases into the bed.
She lies very still on the far end on her side of the bed
creating a wide space between them.

Buddy wakes up. He reaches for Eleanor. She remains stiff
but slowly loosens up and responds.

EXT. HAZEL'S HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Buddy and Eleanor drive up to Hazel's house.

INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE

The table is decorated with party food and a few gifts.
Hazel stands by the door in a simple party dress with a few
FRIENDS and FAMILY, Uncle Bink, John L., Mable, and Harry
(20's). Buddy and Eleanor enter. Everyone CHEERS as they
walk in. They throw rice at the happy couple.

Hazel gives Eleanor a big hug. Buddy introduces her to John L. and the others.

EXT. TUSKEGEE AIR FORCE BASE - QUARTERS - 4 WEEKS LATER
(1942)

A neighborhood made up of several small one-story houses sits quietly in the hot sun surrounded by new construction of other small houses. Red clay dirt is piled up. An Army Air Corp base sits in the distance.

INT. BUS - TUSKEGEE ALABAMA - EARLY MORNING

Buddy, in An Army Air Corp mechanic's uniform, sits on a bus near the rear. He's surrounded by other Black men, some in the same uniform, and others in various work clothing from maids to laborers. We see Whites, males and females, sitting in the front seats dressed in regular clothing, work uniforms, and business suits. It's the morning commute on a segregated bus.

EXT. TUSKEGEE AIR FORCE BASE

The bus stops at the entrance of the Air force Base. Buddy and other Mechanics get off and enter the Base.

INT. TUSKEGEE AIR FORCE BASE - HANGER

Buddy enters in the hanger. There are several broken down plane parts and very few new parts. Several old engines lie on worktables.

BUDDY

How are we gonna keep our planes in
the air with this junk.

MECHANIC #1

In the air? These planes aren't
going anywhere, not beyond the
"friendly" skies of Alabama.

BUDDY

Did you get your check?

MECHANIC #1

Naw man.

(CONTINUED)

MECHANIC #2

Mine didn't come either.

BUDDY

I've been here 4 weeks, and no pay.

MECHANIC #1

Shit, that ain't nothing. I've been here 6 weeks.

INT. TUSKEGEE AIR FORCE BASE - OFFICE

Buddy marches to the front office. He wraps on the door. A RECEPTIONIST, 30's, greets him.

RECEPTIONIST

Yes, may I help you?

BUDDY

My check didn't come.

RECEPTIONIST

Well, it'll probably be here next week.

BUDDY

That's what you said last week.

RECEPTIONIST

Then maybe it'll be another week.

She goes back to her desk. Buddy steps into the office.

BUDDY

Look, I've got to pay my rent.

RECEPTIONIST

Aren't you living on base?

BUDDY

No, I'm on contract. My wife and I live off base, and my landlord isn't going to understand me saying again, I can't pay you.

RECEPTIONIST

Well, the checks aren't here. There's nothing else I can do.

The COMMANDING OFFICER (40's) white male, rushes in.

(CONTINUED)

COMMANDING OFFICER

We need all mechanics outside.

BUDDY

Sir, my check isn't here. I've been here 4 weeks now, and I haven't gotten my pay.

COMMANDING OFFICER

Take it up with the office.

(to the Receptionist)

Setup the PA.

BUDDY

I've done that, and she said she can't help me.

RECEPTIONIST

I told him the checks will probably be here next week.

COMMANDING OFFICER

(making announcement)

ALL MECHANICS REPORT TO THE LANDING. BRING ENGINE RETRIEVAL GEAR. MEDIC TEAM A REPORT TO THE LANDING.

RECEPTIONIST

What happened?

COMMANDING OFFICER

We lost a plane. Crashed into the field.

BUDDY

Who was flying?

COMMANDING OFFICER

Ross.

EXT. TUSKEGEE - CRASH SITE

Buddy and several mechanics ride in a military jeep. They stop at the foot of a grassy hill. A wrecked plane sits spewed apart at the base of the hill and throughout the field.

Another jeep arrives with army personnel. They get out and carry a stretcher and bags to the crash site. Buddy and his crew sit in the jeep and wait.

(CONTINUED)

The Personnel return carrying something in a bag. A body lies covered by a tarp on the stretcher. They load it in the jeep and take off.

LEAD MECHANIC

We need to retrieve the engine and any reusable parts. Let's move it.

Buddy and the men get out carrying ropes, shovels, and various tools. They approach the crash site, they look through the wreckage.

INT. TUSKEGEE HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is dark. Buddy enters a dark empty living room. He quietly walks towards the back bedroom. A door opens. MRS. LIVINGSTON, wrapped in a robe, comes out of the room.

MRS. LIVINGSTON

Is that you, Buddy?

She turns on a light. Buddy is startled.

BUDDY

Evening Mrs. Livingston. I'm sorry if I woke you up.

MRS. LIVINGSTON

Mr. Livingston was waiting for you to collect the rent. Eleanor said you were getting paid today.

BUDDY

Our checks didn't come.

MRS. LIVINGSTON

Buddy, we like you and Eleanor, but we've got to pay our rent too. You're 3 weeks behind. You're working aren't you, at the Base?

BUDDY

Oh yeah, every day. But Washington is dragging their feet when it comes to paying us. I'll speak to Mr. Livingston in the morning.

Mrs. Livingston goes back to her room.

INT. TUSKEGEE HOUSE - BUDDY'S & ELEANOR'S BEDROOM

Buddy enters. The room is small with a twin size bed, small dresser and chair in the corner. Eleanor sits up in the bed and turns on the bed stand light.

Buddy drops down on the side of the bed and takes off his shoes. Eleanor senses his heavy mood.

ELEANOR

I heard you talking to Mrs. Livingston... Did you speak with them in the office. Do they know you haven't been paid in 4 weeks?

BUDDY

Of course I did. I even spoke to my Commanding officer. You think I ain't' trying?

ELEANOR

I didn't say that Buddy. It's just that being here all day with the Livingston's asking me about the rent... I just want something to tell them, that's all.

BUDDY

Well, I'm handling it, okay?

Buddy stands up and begins to undress.

BUDDY (CONT.)

We lost a pilot today, he crashed into the field.

Eleanor is shocked. Buddy continues talking as if he's taken back to the site.

BUDDY

It was Ross.

ELEANOR

From Dayton, Ohio?

BUDDY

Yeah... We had to go up there and retrieve the engine...

Eleanor consoles Buddy. His heart is heavy and Eleanor rests her head on his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

Are you sorry I brought you here?

ELEANOR

(sternly, convincingly)

No! I married you for better or worse. As long as we're together, I don't care where we are.

TUSKEGEE - MONTAGE

Buddy fixes the broken wood on the porch steps.

Buddy installs shelves on the kitchen wall.

Eleanor hangs hand-made curtains on the windows.

Buddy stands at the desk of the Receptionist. She shakes her head no.

EXT. TUSKEGEE HOUSE - A FEW DAYS LATER

A taxi sits in front of the house. The porch and steps have been repaired. Curtains hang in the windows.

Buddy and Eleanor carry several suitcases out to the taxi. Mrs. Livingston stands on the porch and waves goodbye. Buddy and Eleanor drive off in the taxi.

INT. CLEVELAND UNION OFFICE - 6 MONTHS LATER

Buddy stands at the teller window. He holds a letter in his hand as he argues with the CLERK behind the window.

BUDDY

But I have 2 years experience. The minimum requirement is 6 months.

CLERK

Was the experience gained in Cleveland?

BUDDY

No, in Springfield.

CLERK

Did you join the union in Springfield?

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

No.

CLERK

Well you should have joined the union in Springfield. Only work done in Cleveland can count towards your union card. I'm sorry sir.

BUDDY

Look, I'll join as a laborer then.

CLERK

Same rules apply. You must have experience here.

BUDDY

I don't believe this.

Another Clerk comes to the counter.

CLERK2

Is there a problem?

Clerk2 stares straight at Buddy suggesting he'll not take any more hassling from Buddy.

CLERK

You'll have to work at least 6 months on a union job to be eligible.

BUDDY

As a day laborer.

Buddy grabs his paper and tosses it in the trash as he leaves.

EXT. CLEVELAND CONSTRUCTION SITE1 - DAY

Buddy stands inside a trailer parked at the construction site. A sign hangs in the window that reads HIRING. The FOREMAN, white male 40's, sits at a desk and doesn't look up at Buddy as he shakes his head no.

EXT. CLEVELAND CONSTRUCTION SITE2 - DAY

Buddy follows behind a LARGE FOREMAN, white male 50's, as he walks through the construction site telling several MASONS, white males, what to do. There is one black worker who is hauling trash.

(CONTINUED)

LARGE FOREMAN

No, no, we don't need any more laborers.

BUDDY

But I can do brick work, but all you'd have to pay me is the laborer rate, heck, I'll take day laborer pay.

The Large Foreman brushes him off and talks to the other workers. Buddy leaves.

A YOUNG MAN, white, 20's, walks up to the Foreman carrying an application. The Foreman takes his paper and then escorts him onto the work site.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - 3 YEARS LATER

Buddy enters dressed in jumper with the words "WHITE MOTOR CARS" on the back. Eleanor holds LEE, 2 years old, on her hip as she follows Buddy into the living room.

BUDDY

I told you I don't want you to work.

ELEANOR

It would be during the day, while you're at work.

BUDDY

And who's going to watch the kids?

ELEANOR

Elzie said he and Anna...

BUDDY

No, I don't want that woman watching our children, and I don't want no wife of mine working.

JANNIE, 3 years old, runs around the house half dressed. Aunt Josephine chases after her with her clothes. Jannie runs and jumps on her father's foot.

JANNIE

Horse Daddy, let's do horsey.

Aunt Josephine comes and gets Jannie.

(CONTINUED)

AUNT MATTIE

Come on Baby, your daddy has to go
to work, and me too.

Buddy and Eleanor go into the kitchen.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - KITCHEN

Eleanor sits Lee in a high chair. She takes out his baby
food.

ELEANOR

Buddy, the money would help.

BUDDY

I don't need my wife working.
That's my job.

ELEANOR

But Buddy...

BUDDY

No Eleanor.

Buddy grabs his lunch pail and leaves.

EXT. WHITE MOTOR CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY

Rows of new and used cars fill the lot in front of the WHITE
MOTOR CARS building. There's a huge glass window showing
cars on display inside. On the side of the building Buddy
and several other YOUNG MEN, all in jumpers with WHITE MOTOR
CARS printed on the back, wash cars. Buddy is a fast worker.
He hustles from one car to the next polishing the details.

A new car pulls up and stops. The driver, Elzie wears a
shirt and tie with a nametag, gets out of the car. The
washing crew immediately goes to work cleaning the car.

Elzie comes over and slaps Buddy on the back.

ELZIE

Congratulation Buddy. It took me
3-years to become head washer. You
did it in one.

BUDDY

I need to make some extra money.

Elzie looks seriously at Buddy.

EXT. WHITE MOTOR CAR DEALERSHIP - NIGHT

Buddy stands outside of the dealership. It's cold and he paces to stay warm. Elzie pulls up in a car. Buddy gets in.

ELZIE
All you've got to do is make the deliveries. Do you have a razor?

BUDDY
No. Do I need one?

Elzie pulls open the glove box revealing a several razors.

ELZIE (CONT.)
Make the deliveries and then come back here to return the car.

EXT. CLEVELAND - JULIA'S PLACE

Buddy pulls up in front of the apartment for Julia's place. He gets out and carries a case of moonshine into the apartment.

INT. JULIA'S PLACE

Buddy carries the case of liquor to the bar. Julia takes it from him.

TONI (O.S.)
Buddy! Buddy!

We see Toni dressed as a woman, sitting at a table with a YOUNG MAN and several of her friends. Several glasses cover the table. The Young Man looks concerned. Buddy comes over.

TONI (CONT.)
Join us Buddy. This is Theodore.

Theodore doesn't say anything. He stares at Toni.

THEODORE
I knew it I knew it. You ain't no woman. You're a freak.

TONI
Sticks and stone, you little shit.

THEODORE
Why, you...

Theodore slaps Toni.

(CONTINUED)

TONI
(screams)
Ah!

BUDDY
Hey.

Buddy gets between Toni and Theodore. Theodore pulls out a razor.

BUDDY
What is it with the razors around here. Everybody has a razor.

Toni hands her razor to Buddy, he refuses it. Buddy puts up his fist to box.

BUDDY
Can you fight like a man?

Theodore puts the razor down. He stands ready to box with Buddy. The men fist fight. The CROWD eggs them on. Buddy is pretty good, but both men take a beating.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Buddy staggers in the house. Eleanor enters.

ELEANOR
Buddy is that you?

She turns on a light. We can see Buddy face is bruised. His clothes are torn and he holds an ice bag on his hand.

ELEANOR (CONT.)
(concerned)
What happened to you?

BUDDY
I got into a fight at Julia's place.

ELEANOR
What were you doing there?

She looks at his hand.

BUDDY
(in pain)
Oh... trying to make some extra money with Elzie... I don't know what to do.

(CONTINUED)

Buddy drops down on the sofa, his head in his hands. Eleanor sits next to him.

ELEANOR

What do you want to do Buddy?

BUDDY

I want to build a house big enough for you and the kids... You have to be in the Cleveland Union to get a construction job worth anything. But they're not letting Blacks in.

ELEANOR

Can you get in the Union in Springfield?

BUDDY

I guess so, Uncle Bink is Union, and Uncle Royal.

Buddy looks at Eleanor. He contemplates the idea.

BUDDY

We'd have to live in Springfield, it might take 2 years. Mama's little place is too small for all of us.

ELEANOR

Or the kids and me could stay here, and you go.

BUDDY

I'm not leaving you for 2 years. Woman are you crazy, some old boyfriend would show up, I'm sure.

ELEANOR

Okay, maybe you could come home on the weekends or something.

BUDDY

You would let me do this? What about help with the kids.

ELEANOR

Don't worry about me and the kids. We'll manage. You just make plans to build our house, that's if you want another baby.

EXT. WHITE MOTOR CAR DEALERSHIP - NEXT DAY

Buddy walks out of the building. He shakes hands with a few co-workers and walks off the lot. Elzie comes out of the building and runs after Buddy. He catches up to him.

ELZIE

What the hell are you doing? They just told me you quit.

BUDDY

I'm going to Springfield to join the Brick Mason union.

ELZIE

Oh, so you're leaving Eleanor and the kids.

Buddy spins around.

BUDDY

No. I'm gonna join the Springfield Mason's Union and then get into the Cleveland Union.

ELZIE

And you think they're gonna just let you join their union, any union. You're fooling yourself, just like when you went to Tuskegee.

BUDDY

Pop, I don't expect you to understand.

ELZIE

I just don't want you to get your hopes up, I don't want you to waste your time doing all of this and get nothing in the end. I can get you more delivery jobs. You proved you can handle yourself. Theo was messed up.

BUDDY

No Pop. I'll be fine.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Eleanor and kids kiss Buddy good-bye as he boards the train.

Buddy works with Uncle Bink and other masons and construction workers.

Buddy sits at the table sketching and writing out plans for construction. Hazel enters and places a cup of coffee on the table.

Buddy works on the scaffolding wall laying brick to build a wall.

INT. CLEVELAND TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Eleanor waits on the platform as the train pulls in. Buddy gets off and they embrace.

BUDDY

Where are the kids?

ELEANOR

Oh, at home, with Aunt Mattie.

They give each other a mischievous grin and leave arm in arm.

INT. CLEVELAND RESTAURANT

Buddy and Eleanor sit in a booth drinking a soda from the same straw. A waitress brings their food.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

The brick house is complete. Buddy works on building a serpentine wall along the driveway leading up to the house. It's quite fancy. Uncle Bink and Royal look on with pride.

INT. BUDDY'S AND ELEANOR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Lee and Jannie, 2 years older, work on school papers at the table. Buddy sneaks in.

BUDDY

Who wants a horsey ride?

The kids jump up with excitement and run to their father.

(CONTINUED)

JANNIE & LEE (UNISON)
Daddy's home! Daddy's home!

Eleanor and Aunt Mattie come out of the kitchen, snatching off their aprons.

Buddy hugs Eleanor and Aunt Mattie with an armful of kids.

ELEANOR
Why didn't you tell us. I would have met you at the station.

BUDDY
Because it's a surprise.

Buddy pulls out his wallet and shows them his Union Card.

BUDDY
Ta Da! I'm a union man now!

Everyone is excited.

ELZIE (O.S)
Congratulations Buddy.

Buddy looks up and sees Elzie and Anna standing in the doorway. He looks at Eleanor like, "what the hell are they doing here?"

ELEANOR
Yes, it's congratulations time.
Let's all eat. Kids go wash up for dinner.

The kids exit.

BUDDY
Hello Pop, Anna.

Buddy leaves the room. Eleanor follows.

EXT. HALLWAY

BUDDY
What's he doing here? And did he have to bring her?

ELEANOR
Buddy, Anna's been helping Aunt Mattie with the laundry. They were dropping it off.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

Well they can leave now.

ELEANOR

But I just invited them to stay for dinner.

BUDDY

Well uninvited them.

ELEANOR

How long Buddy?

BUDDY

How long what?

ELEANOR

How long are you gonna hate your father? A body can't hold hate and love. If you fill yourself up with hate, there's less room for love.

EXT. CLEVELAND CONSTRUCTION SITE1 - NEXT DAY

Buddy approaches the Foreman. Buddy hands him his union card. The Foreman does a double take, then reluctantly walks Buddy to the work area.

EXT. CLEVELAND CONSTRUCTION SITE1 - SCAFFOLD

Several white workers, masons work on a large scaffold building a brick wall on a large commercial building. Buddy climbs the scaffold and gets himself in position to lay brick.

The men stop working and stare at Buddy and then the Foreman. One by one the workers come off of the scaffold.

WHITE MASON1

I ain't working with him.

Only Buddy is left on the scaffold. Buddy continues to lay brick. He tries to ignore the scowls from the other workers.

FOREMAN

Break! 10 minutes! 10 minutes!

The white workers stand off to the side, some smoke. Buddy comes down. The Foreman approaches him.

(CONTINUED)

FOREMAN

Come with me.

The Foreman leads Buddy inside the building.

INT. CLEVELAND CONSTRUCTION SITE - STAIRWELL

The foreman leads Buddy to an unfinished stairwell.

FOREMAN

(ordering)

Finish the stairwell with a
45-degree running bond. Can you do
a 45-degree running bond?

Buddy is furious, but he hides his temper.

BUDDY

(steaming)

Yeah.

The Foreman leaves Buddy alone in the stairwell.

FOREMAN (O.S.)

Breaks over! Back to work!

EXT. CLEVELAND CONSTRUCTION SITE1 - SCAFFOLD

The white workers get back on the scaffold.

INT. CLEVELAND CONSTRUCTION SITE - STAIRWELL

Buddy watches the other men go back to work on the scaffold.
He looks at the dark stairwell, the unfinished walls.

Buddy slaps the mortar down and haphazardly places the
bricks. He sees a Black laborer looking at him. He comes
over to Buddy.

BLACK LABORER

Man, you in the Union?

BUDDY

Yeah.

The Laborer extends his hand.

BLACK LABORER

I never met a colored union man
before.

(CONTINUED)

Buddy shakes his hand.

BLACK LABORER

You need some more bricks, or something? Just let me know. My names Rosco, Rosco John.

BUDDY

Elza, but friends call me Bud, Bud Cannaday.... ah, yeah, I need more bricks, and some fresh mortar.

Rosco smiles at Buddy and rushes off to get the supplies.

INT. CLEVELAND CONSTRUCTION SITE - STAIRWELL - 1 HOUR LATER

The stairwell has taken shape. The walls are laid with very precise brickwork. There is a special detail at the top and bottom of the wall. Rosco pours more concrete in Buddy's trail. Buddy works with rhythm and precision that makes Rosco stop and watch.

The Foreman comes over. He too stands and watches Buddy work. After a while he can't stand watching any longer.

FOREMAN

Cannaday! Come on out of that stairwell.

Buddy and Rosco look at each other wondering what's up. Buddy grabs his tools. The Foreman leads Buddy to the scaffold.

EXT. CLEVELAND CONSTRUCTION SITE1 - SCAFFOLD

The Foreman walks back to the scaffold area. The white workers are still working.

FOREMAN

Listen up! I'm putting this man on the scaffold and anyone who doesn't like it,... can go home.

A few of the workers leave. The Foreman motion for Buddy to get on the scaffold. Buddy is surprised, and quickly gets on the scaffold.

Some of the white workers get off and watch. WALLACE LAIRD remains working on the wall. Buddy joins him on the opposite side.

(CONTINUED)

The men work on both side and meet in the middle of the wall as they each lay a layer of brick. When they reach the middle Wallace lays a brick on Buddy's side. On the next layer Buddy works a little faster and lays a brick on Wallace's side. On the next layer Wallace lays 2 bricks on Buddy's side.

The men work in competition with each other. The other workers look on and start taking bets. Rosco puts money down on Buddy.

Buddy kicks it into high gear. His work is done with precision and rhythm, similar to the way his uncles lay brick. Buddy lays 4 bricks on Wallace's side.

Wallace is sweating, he can't keep up. On the next layer Buddy continues laying brick. Wallace stops. He takes out a cigarette and offers one to Buddy.

WALLACE

Smoke?

Buddy stops working. He takes the cigarette from Wallace. Wallace lights both cigarettes.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Eleanor, very pregnant, washes dishes in the sink. She splashes a little water on the floor. Eleanor grabs a towel to wipe up the water, then suddenly she notices water dripping down her inner legs.

ELEANOR

Oh, oh.

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - KITCHEN - 15 MINUTES LATER

Eleanor wears a coat and is being escorted out by Elzie. Anna stands in the doorway holding Lee and Jannie stands near by.

ANNA

Yes, I'll tell Buddy as soon as he gets home, now you just relax, go, go.

EXT. ASKEW HOUSE - STREET

Elzie's car sits parked on the street. Elzie helps Eleanor in the back seat. Elzie jumps in the driver's seat.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Elzie drives swiftly through downtown Cleveland. Eleanor takes a blanket off the floor and covers her legs. She sees several mason jars of moonshine on the floor.

Eleanor moans in pain.

ELZIE

Now, Ellie, just hold on.

ELEANOR

I can't the baby's coming. I gotta push.

ELZIE

No don't push.

ELEANOR

I can't help it, I gotta push!

ELZIE

No, not yet, not yet!... pant like a dog.

Elzie demonstrates. Eleanor tries to copy him. They are both panting like dogs in the car.

A driver in another car looks at them suspiciously.

ELZIE

(panting and talking)

Those are just... the early pains, Buddy's mother... was the same way... We don't want to have the baby in the...car.

Elzie demonstrates panting to Eleanor and blowing. Eleanor watches him and tries to copy.

ELEANOR

(panting, blowing, and talking)

I don't think I'm gonna make it... ahhh.

(CONTINUED)

ELZIE

Hold on Eleanor, hold on!

EXT. MT. SINAI HOSPITAL

Elzie turns the car into the emergency entrance of MT. SINAI HOSPITAL. He jumps out of the car. A police officer approaches him.

OFFICER

You can't park here.

ELZIE

My daughter-in-law's having a baby!

The officer motions for hospital staff to come. Elzie rushes back to the car. He opens Eleanor's door. The hospital staff come with a wheel chair. Eleanor tries to cover the moonshine with the blanket, but the nurses quickly usher her out of the car. She tries to get Elzie's attention.

ELEANOR

(in pain and panting)

Oh, Grandpa Elzie, Grandpa Elzie.

ELZIE

It's okay, they've got you now.

The Officer comes to help the Staff.

ELEANOR

(panting)

No! Elzie, come, here.

Elzie looks at her, she motions with her eyes to the car.

ELEANOR (CONT.)

I left my thing, in the car, the back seat.

OFFICER

I'll get it.

Eleanor makes exaggerated moaning sounds. The Officer and hospital staff rush her inside.

Elzie goes to the back seat of the car and covers the moonshine. He parks the car.

INT. MT. SINAI HOSPITAL

The Staff wheel Eleanor through the busy emergency room lobby to the Maternity Ward.

NURSE
Yes, keep panting. That's good
advice. Is he your father?

ELEANOR
(panting)
Yes!

INT. ASKEW HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - 1 HOUR LATER

Anna sits on the sofa partly sleep. Jannie is asleep lying on her lap. Buddy enters wearing work clothes. He stops and looks at them. He's surprised to see Anna in his house.

BUDDY
(concerned)
Where's Eleanor?

Anna is startled. She didn't hear him come in.

ANNA
Oh, hello Buddy.

Jannie wakes up, sees her daddy and runs to him.

JANNIE
Daddie! Mommie's having the baby!

Buddy looks surprised.

BUDDY
(to Anna)
What hospital?

ANNA
Mt. Sinai.

BUDDY
Jannie, go get your coat.

Jannie runs out of the room.

ANNA
(somewhat defensive)
Nobody was home so Elzie drove her
to the hospital, and I came along
to watch Jannie.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

Ah, thank you Anna, but you can go home now.

ANNA

I can stay longer...

BUDDY

No, thank you.

ANNA

They don't let children in the hospital rooms.

BUDDY

(calling)

Jannie let's go.

(to Anna)

I'll drop her off at a friend's house.

ANNA

Your father just wants to be a part of your life.

BUDDY

It's kind of late for that, don't you think.

Jannie appears with her coat half on. Buddy fixes her coat.

JANNIE

Is Aunt Ann going too?

Buddy looks puzzled for a minute.

ANNA

No Jannie, but I hope to see you again.

Anna exits.

INT. MT. SINAI HOSPITAL - 20 MINUTES LATER

Buddy rushes inside the lobby. He stops at a desk. The STAFF person points to the elevators. Buddy takes off in that direction.

INT. MT. SINAI HOSPITAL - MATERNITY WARD

Elzie sits next to other VISITORS in a row of chairs. Buddy rushes in. He sees Elzie and comes over to him.

BUDDY
How is she?

ELZIE
I don't know.

BUDDY
I should have been at home... Pop,
you don't have to stay, thank you
for bringing Eleanor over.

The doctor enters the waiting room area and approaches Buddy and Elzie.

DOCTOR
Are you Mr. Cannaday?

BUDDY & ELZIE (UNISON)
Yes.

The doctor looks perplexed.

BUDDY
I'm Eleanor's husband.

DOCTOR
Well, congratulations. You have a
healthy baby boy!

Buddy is elated. He shakes the doctor's hand. Elzie pats Buddy on the back.

DOCTOR
And that was some quick thinking,
to have her pant and not push in
the car ride over here. Who's idea
was that?

ELZIE
I learned that from watching my
son's mother give birth to him.

DOCTOR
Well, smart thinking. That saved
her life and the baby's too.

Buddy looks at Elzie with surprise.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

Can I see her?

DOCTOR

Yes, but only for a few minutes.

Elzie picks up his coat and begins to walk away towards the exit elevator.

BUDDY

Pop, let's go see your new grandson.

INT. MT. SINAI HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM

Eleanor lies in the bed holding a tiny baby boy. Buddy and Elzie enter. Eleanor sleepily smiles at Buddy. He kisses her on the head. His heart melts when he sees his new son. Buddy picks him up and cradles him in his arms. Elzie stands in the background admiring Buddy and his family.

Buddy hands the baby to Elzie. Elzie is taken back. He looks at Buddy for assurance. Buddy places the tiny bundle of joy in Elzie's arms. Elzie becomes emotional when he sees the baby. He sits. He cradles the baby.

INT. ABC BANK - DAY

Several teller windows are along the rear wall of the bank. A customer waiting area with chairs are to the right next to a receptionist desk. Several open offices and cubicles are next to the receptionist desk, and a few closed-door offices are down a short hallway nearby.

It's a busy morning in the bank. CUSTOMERS stand in TELLER lines, a male SECURITY GUARD stands near the door. Most of the customers are white, middle age.

Buddy enters wearing work overalls and carries a folder.

A LOAN OFFICER, white male, late 20's, suit, approaches Buddy.

LOAN OFFICER

What can I do for you?

BUDDY

I'm here to apply for a construction loan.

(CONTINUED)

LOAN OFFICER

Come with me.

Buddy follows the Officer to his desk. He takes a seat in front of the desk. The Officer looks at his papers.

LOAN OFFICER

I see the application is in order.
We'll process it and get back to
you.

BUDDY

Alright. Do you have any questions
for me, about my plans?

LOAN OFFICER

If we do we'll call you.

EXT. CLEVELAND PAYPHONE - NEIGHBORHOOD - A FEW DAYS LATER

Elzie dials a number from a payphone. We can see an old building in the background.

INT. BUDDY'S AND ELEANOR'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

The PHONE RINGS. Buddy answers it.

BUDDY

Hello.

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

ELZIE

Buddy, you'd better bring the truck
and get down here.

BUDDY

Why? Where are you calling me from?

ELZIE

I found some doors in an abandoned
apartment on 105th.

BUDDY

Pop I didn't get the construction
loan.

ELZIE

Ah, you don't need no bank loan. We
can build this house without the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ELZIE (cont'd)
bank. The Cannadays and Lees have
always done it this way.

BUDDY
But Pop this isn't Springfield.
There are codes, regulations, and
you need to be license and bonded
to get business.

ELZIE
Ah there are people who can't get
bank loans and just looking for
someone like you to build their
house.

BUDDY
Where? No one's crazy enough to
take a chance on me like that. I'll
let you know if I need anything. By
Pop.

Buddy hangs up the phone and chuckles to himself a bit.
Eleanor enters.

ELEANOR
What's so funny?

BUDDY
That was Elzie on the phone. He
said he found us some doors.

Eleanor looks perplexed.

BUDDY
For our new house.

INT. BUDDY'S AND ELEANOR'S HOUSE - A FEW DAYS LATER

There's a KNOCK at the DOOR. Buddy answers the door. Mr. and
Mrs. Williamson stand outside the door.

MR. HARRY WILLIAMSON
Afternoon Buddy.

BUDDY
Mr. Williamson, Mrs. Williamson,
afternoon.

Mr. Williamson hands Buddy an envelope.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

What's this?

MR. WILLIAMSON

Our deposit.

MRS. WILLIAMSON

For the house you're gonna build
for us.

BUDDY

I can't take your deposit. I didn't
get the construction loan.

MR. WILLIAMSON

Well then take this as an
investment in your construction
company.

BUDDY

My company?

MR. WILLIAMSON

Yes, your father told us about it.
Cannaday and Son, right?

BUDDY

I can't take your money.

MRS. WILLIAMSON

Now, ain't no use in arguing with
us. We've been watching you, what
you've done for Eleanor and the
Askews, well, we'd just as well
take a chance with you, instead of
buying a house on contract from
some cheating Realtor or slum
landlord.

BUDDY

Please, won't you come in.

MR. WILLIAMSON

No no, we've got other errands to
run, besides, you've got more
company.

Buddy looks up and sees Mr. and Mrs. Toes pull up in a car.
They get out of the car and walk up the driveway carrying an
envelope. Joe Clack crosses the street carrying an envelope
and walks to the house. Another couple pulls up in a car.

(CONTINUED)

Eleanor comes to the door followed by Jannie. They all peer out the door looking at the neighbors approaching the house with white envelopes.

BUDDY
(to Eleanor)
You'd better get the receipt book.

INT. ABC BANK - MORNING

The bank is busy with customers as before with Security Guard and Receptionist at their respective posts.

Buddy enters, he wears a modest suit. Eleanor walks with him, smartly dressed for business. She carries Lee and holds Jannie's hand. Behind them enter Mr. and Mrs. Williamson, Mr. and Mrs. Toes, Mr. Clack, Aunt Mattie, Uncle George and Aunt Josephine and Wallace Laird. They all take seats in the customer service waiting area. Bank tellers and other customers, take notice of the group's arrival.

A same LOAN OFFICER approaches Buddy.

LOAN OFFICER
Hello Mr. Cannaday. What can I do for you today?

BUDDY
I'm here to apply for the construction bond loan.

LOAN OFFICER
But Mr. Cannaday, we've been over this before. I told you your application was denied.

BUDDY
Each of these families have agreed to contract with me to build their house. They will put down a \$200 deposit, that's \$1,000... They represent new bank customers. You will open the door to a whole lot of colored families who will make weekly deposits in this bank, and will have collateral...

LOAN OFFICER
Do any of them own a home now?

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

No.

LOAN OFFICER

(exasperated)

Mr. Cannaday,... like I told you,
our bank manager, Mr. Johnson, will
not approve of a loan without the
proper collateral.

Buddy collects his papers walks down the hallway towards the
offices.

LOAN OFFICER

Ah, you can't go back there.

Buddy keeps walking. He sees the office of MR. JOHNSON, BANK
MANAGER.

INT. ABC BANK - JOHNSON'S OFFICE

MR. JOHNSON, large, conservative white male 40's, sits
behind a large desk covered with papers. Buddy enters.
Johnson is startled.

BUDDY

Mr. Johnson, I'm a hard working
man. I was an A-1 top flight
mechanic in the Air force. I spent
2 years in Springfield getting into
the bricklayers union because the
Cleveland union was closed to
Negros. I took care of my mother
when my father left us during the
depression. I built her a new
addition. I've remodeled homes
around the city.

The Loan Officer and Security Guard rush to the door.

LOAN OFFICER

I'm sorry Mr. Johnson...this is Mr.
Cannaday, I spoke to you about...

Mr. Johnson motions for them to calm down, back away.

BUDDY

I have 5 families sitting out there
in the lobby, who are willing to
hire me, my construction company,
to build their homes, and do
business with this bank.

(CONTINUED)

(pause)

I may not have the kind of collateral you're looking for but, I have a proven track record of dependability, I've been making deposits here every week for 2 years, all I'm asking for is enough money to start this business and build good homes for people who need them.

MRS. JOHNSON (O.S.)

What did you build for your mother?

Buddy turns around and sees for the first time an elderly stately woman, MRS. JOHNSON, 70's, sitting on a leather sofa behind him.

BUDDY

Ah, I built her an addition to her house, and a new bathroom.

MRS. JOHNSON

What was wrong with the old one?

BUDDY

Well, Mame, she didn't have one.

MRS. JOHNSON

Ha ha, Well he sounds like the kind of client our bank needs. Don't you agree son?

Mr. Johnson looks at his mother and then at Buddy.

INT. ABC BANK - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Buddy emerges from the office. He proudly walks past the Guard, Officer, and Receptionist. His family watches nervously. Eleanor stands to meet him. As Buddy gets closer a huge grin appears on his face. The family and friends slowly rise trying to remain dignified but holding back their exuberance. Some of them shake Buddy's hand. They all stand and exit with Buddy. Customers and Tellers look on.

EXT. CANNADAY AND SONS CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY - 1 WEEK LATER

Buddy, George, Wallace, Mr. Toes, Mr. Williamson, Mr. Clack and several young men work on building the first floor and wall frames of the house. The foundation has already been built.

(CONTINUED)

Buddy demonstrates how to place the 2x4's along the frame and hammer them together.

YOUNG MAN (O.S.)

Where do you want the cement?

Several young man carry bags of cement.

BUDDY

Stack them in the rear of the house.

YOUNG MAN

Next to the staircase?

BUDDY

Staircase? What staircase?

YOUNG MAN

The one behind the house.

EXT. CANNADAY AND SON CONSTRUCTION SITE - REAR OF HOUSE

Buddy and the Young Men enter the back of the house. A large staircase leans against the house.

BUDDY

(perplexed)

Well I'll be dog gone. Where did that come from?

EXT. CANNADAY AND SON CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

The construction site is empty. Everyone has gone home for the evening. A truck slowly pulls up to the house. Elzie gets out and unloads several windows from the truck. The windows are painted different colors, some of the glass is broken. Clearly they are from different houses. He carries them behind the house.

EXT. CANNADAY AND SON CONSTRUCTION SITE - REAR OF HOUSE

Elzie stacks the windows behind the house next to the staircase and cement.

EXT. CANNADAY AND SON CONSTRUCTION SITE

Elzie gets more windows from the truck.

BUDDY (O.S)
I knew it was you.

ELZIE
(yells)
Ah!

Elzie turns and sees Buddy standing next to the truck. A car is parked on the road.

ELZIE
Boy, you could have given me a heart attack!

BUDDY
What are you doing out here?

ELZIE
Oh, I just found these, and I thought you might need them. What are you doing out here?

BUDDY
Just checking on my property.

Buddy helps Elzie unload.

EXT. CANNADAY AND SON CONSTRUCTION SITE - REAR OF HOUSE - 10 MINUTES LATER

The men stack the windows against the rear of the unfinished house.

ELZIE
Thank you Son.

BUDDY
No, I should be thanking you.

ELZIE
Thank you for finding me.

Buddy stops what he's doing for a minute and then grabs a tarp and covers the windows.

ELZIE
I didn't realize how much I missed you, how much time had passed.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

I missed you too.

ELZIE

I just wasn't ready to be a father.

(pause)

But I realize now, that, all kids need a father, or someone to look out for them, no matter who they are. And I'm really grateful for what John L. did and your mother's brothers for doing what I couldn't, didn't know how to do.

BUDDY

I didn't care what kind of father you were, I just wanted to be with you, to get to know you. I tried to remember as much as I could about you. I remembered how you looked at me sometimes with a big smile and bright eyes. I remembered that we use to laugh a lot. You taught me how to bait my hook with worms, I just missed you. I missed smelling your pipe at night, hearing you sing in the morning, and how you and mom laughed sometimes after I went to bed. I missed that. I missed the joy that use to be in the house when you were home; going to see you play, and bragging to my friends about your home runs. But, I have a son now, and I'm gonna be the best father to him that I can, and the best husband to Eleanor. I don't know what I'd do if I didn't have them in my life. I don't want no other life than the one I have with them. And building this house for them, is the least I can do.

ELZIE

The Bible says, age doesn't bring wisdom. I guess that explains how a son could be wiser than his old man.

ELZIE

Buddy... I (pause).

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

Let's go home Pop.

ELZIE

I was confused... Anna and I had been in love with each other for a long time. Before I met your mother. We knew it couldn't work, that her family wasn't going to let us be together. But I guess I felt for Anna the way you feel about Eleanor. I just couldn't say no to our love anymore. I don't expect you to ever forgive me, but I'd appreciate it if you didn't hate me, or her for what we've done. I didn't mean to hurt anybody, not your mother, you kids, or Grandpa... Oh God. A man can't choose who takes his heart, but he can choose who he gives his life to and what he does with his life... I'm proud of you.

INT. ELZIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT - HOUR LATER

Elzie enters the bedroom. Anna is sleep in the bed. Elzie eases into the bed. He wraps his arms around Anna. She slowly stirs and turns towards him. He kisses her forehead.

INT. BUDDY'S AND ELEANOR'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Buddy lies next to Eleanor. He holds her in his arms. She sleeps peacefully. Buddy's eyes are open.

The bedroom door opens. Lee wobbles in and stands quietly next to Buddy's side of the bed. Buddy looks over and sees him.

BUDDY

Lee what are you doing out of the bed?

Lee just stands there staring at his father. Buddy looks over at Eleanor. She's still asleep. He picks Lee up and lays him on his chest.

BUDDY

(whispering)

Shh, now be quiet or you'll wake up Mama, and she'll send you back to your bed.

Lee lays his head on his father's chest. Buddy closes his eyes and sleeps.

EXT. CANNADAY AND SON CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

The outer walls and roof are built. Buddy and Wallace stand on the scaffold creating the front brick wall of the house. Several cars pull up. George and other neighbors get out of the cars. They wear work clothes and carry tools. Eleanor and the kids get out of a car. Lee and Jannie run towards their dad.

JANNIE

Daddy! Daddy! Is this our house?

BUDDY

Yes it is. You want to see your room?

INT. CANNADAY AND SON CONSTRUCTION SITE - HOUSE

Buddy takes Jannie and Lee through the house. The inside walls are not finished, only skeletal frames. He shows them empty spaces.

BUDDY

This is your room Lee, and over here is Jannie's room.

The children look around confused.

LEE

Where's my bed?

BUDDY

Oh, you're gonna have a big bed. It will be right there by the window.

Buddy points to a corner. Lee looks confused.

LEE

And where is you and Mommie's room?

BUDDY

Right next to yours, see.

Buddy points to another open space. Lee looks relieved.

JANNIE

Are we gonna pay rent here Daddy?

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

No. We ain't paying rent no more.
We're the "landlords" now.

Lee and Jannie run through the house squealing with laughter.

EXT. CANNADAY AND SON CONSTRUCTION SITE

Eleanor, Aunt Mattie, and other neighbors carry baskets of food from the car to the house.

Elzie's truck pulls up, and he gets out of the driver side. Anna sits in the passenger seat. Elzie unloads doors of different colors from the truck. Clearly they're from different houses. Buddy joins him at the truck. Buddy motions for the young men to help Elzie unload.

ELZIE

Buddy, these are fireproof doors.

BUDDY

(laughing)

Thanks Pop.

Elzie gets back into the truck.

BUDDY

I could use some help with the brick walls today.

Elzie grins.

BUDDY (CONT.)

That's if you remember how...

ELZIE

Like falling off a log.

Elzie jumps out of the truck like a young man.

INT. ELZIE'S TRUCK

Anna sits in the passenger side. Elzie leans inside.

ELZIE

Are you okay driving back alone?
I'll get a ride home.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA
I'll be fine Elzie.

EXT. CANNADAY AND SON CONSTRUCTION SITE

Anna gets out and goes to the driver side. Eleanor and the kids come and stand next to Buddy.

BUDDY
Jannie and Lee, why don't you two
show your bedrooms to Grandpa,...
and, to Aunt Ann.

JANNIE & LEE (UNISON)
Okay!

Jannie and Lee run to the truck, and pull Elzie and Anna along towards the house.

LEE
And I got a big bed too.

JANNIE
No you don't.

LEE
Yes I do. You just can't see it yet.

EXT. CANNADAY AND SON CONSTRUCTION SITE - MOMENTS LATER

Elzie, Buddy, and Wallace are on the scaffold laying brick on the front wall. Each man works with precision. The rhythm of their work is musical, the slapping down of mortar, laying a brick, wiping off the excess and slapping it onto the trawl.

The children play in the background. Anna and Eleanor set out food. Other family and neighbors work on the house. The late afternoon sun glows warmly all around.

FADE OUT.

