

MOONSHINE CHAPEL

WRITTEN BY

MAND PASKUSKI

COLD OPEN:

EST. MAGGIE VALLEY NORTH CAROLINA - DAY

The YEAR is: 1903.

SOUND: A BANJO PICKS PITCHY STRINGS in a happy tune.

INT. BARN - DAY

EMMITT CLOCK (10), JUMPS from a high beam into a mound of HAY.

DUNCAN CLOCK (9), JUMPS next. Emmitt wails.

EMMITT (O.C.)
(from inside hay)
You clipped m'arm, you fool!

INT. INSIDE HAY MOUND - SECONDS LATER

DUNCAN
Sawry Emmitt.

Emmitt looks down. A strange OBJECT is underneath his butt.

EMMITT
What the...?

A TRAP DOOR with a large METAL LOOP HANDLE. Emmitt tugs but it's HEAVY. Duncan helps but still the door won't budge.

SOUND: A mechanical rhythm, odd instruments land on a repetitious beat congruent with the banjo.

EMMITT (CONT'D)
Shh...listen...

The boys lay their ears down overtop the trap door: A mellifluous cacophony of a rhythm and beat erupts to their and our delight.

INT. CELLAR - DAY

TWO JUGS TOOT like bass guitar strings that vamp between two notes. It keeps a steady rhythm: BEE-BOOP, BEE-BOOP, BEE-BOOP, BEE-BOOP.

A NOZZLE ZIZZES like a high hat: TSS'T-T, TSS'T-T, TSS'T-T.
WATER BOILS: B-BUDDLE-D-DUDDLE, B-BUDDLE-D-DUDDLE. STEAM like
CRASH CYMBOLS: K'SHH! SWOO'T. K'SHH! SWOO'T.

A ROPE CREAKS like a washboard: REEE-R-RUH, REEE-R-RUH, REE-R-RUH! A SPOUT FLUTES like a harmonica: FWAA---ONG, FWAA---ONG.

INT. BARN - DAY

Emmitt and Duncan poke their heads out of the hay.

DUNCAN

What'dya think he keeps down there?

EMMITT

I don't know but I'm fixed to find out.

A BOOT steps forcefully down next to them. It's attached to a holey-jeaned leg. The leg belongs to: JOHNNY BOY CLOCK a.k.a GRAMPUH JOHNNY a.k.a JBC (60's). A BROWN CIGARETTE climp in his lips. He's handsome despite the wear and tear. He towers over the boys, and at first we're scared until..he smiles and it's the sweetest goddamn smile you ever saw in your days. He squats down to meet their eye level.

JOHNNY BOY

Guestomizations?

DUNCAN

Hobos! Round up and strung over by the ankles! Keep bangin in to one another tryin to 'scape!

JBC nods and looks to Emmitt for his guess.

EMMITT

Mudpie Trolls! They came to life by magic last night and now they've formed a travelin band! They're down there now practicin for the show.

JBC gives us that awesome smile again and in it you can see who his favorite is.

JOHNNY BOY

Go on, now. Or you'll miss your Daddy's sermon. G'one git.

The boys stand and walk towards the barn door.

EMMITT

Y'not comin?

A shared look between the two. Instead of no, he says:

JOHNNY BOY

G'one.

EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

The boys exit the barn. CARS pull up and park. People in their Sunday best hop out. In place of a house is CLOCK CHAPEL. Home sweet Holy-House. REVEREND JOHN CLOCK II (40's) stands and greets people as they enter. His expression is pleasant and happy until he spots Emmitt.

He and Emmitt make eye contact. The Reverend's gaze is mean and hateful. He scoffs and turns away into the chapel, a man concerned more with his own business than his spawn.

Emmitt looks back through a crack in the barn door. A peek of JBC as he opens the trap door and descends into the Cellar.

Duncan pulls Emmitt by an OVERALL STRAP into the chapel.

FADE TO TITLE CARD:

M O O N S H I N E C H A P E L .

EXT. CLOCK CHAPEL - DAY

EIGHTEEN YEARS LATER. YEAR: 1921.

EMMITT, now twenty-eight, sits in a PEW. Alone. He looks ahead at an OPEN CASKET and a pulpit with a large sign that reads: REVEREND JOHN CLOCK II 1850 - 1921.

Sound of FOOTSTEPS from behind. DUNCAN, now twenty-seven, removes his HAT. Sits down. Emmitt doesn't turn his gaze from the casket. Duncan pulls out a JAR OF MOONSHINE, unscrews the LID and hands it over.

DUNCAN

Before the Devil knows you're dead.

EMMITT

The Devil done died, Dunk.

(beat to drink)

Jesus, that's smooth as metal. What is that in it?

DUNCAN

Yumph, don't know. Spicy-sweet kinda ain't it?

Emmitt drinks again. A beat to stand on ceremony.

EMMITT

Did you know the bastard made
obdurate amendments to his last
will and testament just b'fore he
croaked? Two to be exact.
Sonofabitch was adamant.

DUNCAN

Adamant?

EMMITT

Made uncompromisin alterations in
the effect of finance. Namely in
relation to his relations.

DUNCAN

Emmitt, spit it out.

EMMITT

Apparently we been emancipotated.

DUNCAN

Wus that mean?

EMMITT

Disinheritization, goddamnit.

DUNCAN

I don't think that's a word,
Emmitt. Dis-in-hair-itized. Dis-in-

EMMITT

Means we get jack shit! Means we're
goddamn broke! Means our Holy
Father left us with not so much as
a communion cracker to our name!
Need I spell it out for yuh, little
brother?

DUNCAN

Clock Chapel?

EMMITT

Sold it. To the City...day before.

A moment for Duncan to realize the gravity.

DUNCAN

What's two?

EMMITT

Two what?

DUNCAN

What's two, you said there was two amendments.

Emmitt belly laughs, a man with a touch of hysterics.

EMMITT

The second amendment dear brother is in regard to burnt or rather boilin blood. The modification is as thus: We, as his only remainin kin, in care of his afterlife flesh and remains are not to burn his body on account that it may confuse our Dear Lord into thinkin he belongs in Hell!...Fire and all that, reads less of cherubs and angels...apparently our paw didn't wanna take any chances upon his pre-emptive enterin of the pearly gates.

They drink.

DUNCAN

Gotta hand it to him, he sure knew how to think like the Devil so that God would listen.

Emmitt's eyes light up.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Oh no. I know that look...what?

Emmitt holds up the jar.

EMMITT

How many of these do we got?

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Duncan and Emmitt enter the barn.

DUNCAN

I found it over here.

They brush away HAY to reveal the trap door. It's rusted shut. With brute force they pry it open. It CRACKS up.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

SHOES clunk down the wooden steps. STRANDS OF HAY fall to the ground.

EMMITT
I'll be God-damned.

Covered in DUST inside is a whole set up of a do-it-yourself DISTILLERY. There are COILS and BARRELS and FUNNELS connected to a STILL. Large SACS OF BARLEY and FLAKED MAIZE. The far wall is stacked to the roof with FLATS OF MASON JARS filled with JOHNNY BOY'S MOONSHINE.

Emmitt picks one up.

DUNCAN (O.C.)
Emmitt, look at this.

In Duncan's hand is a SMALL BLUE VELVET BOX. Emmitt opens it. Inside is a GOLD-ENGRAVED POCKET WATCH, a SILVER CIGARETTE CASE and a NOTE that reads: FOR THE HOBO AND THE TROLL. Emmitt picks up the pocket watch. We may or may not catch sight that it's engraved: TO JOHNNY, WITH LOVE, M.

EMMITT
(aware of the irony)
A Clock.

Duncan pockets the cigarette case.

DUNCAN
I smoke mor'n you, anyhow.

EMMITT
One should do it. Save the rest.

INT. CLOCK CHAPEL - NIGHT

The boys crown their father's body in JARS OF MOONSHINE. The casket is full to the brim.

EXT. CLOCK CHAPEL - NIGHT

CLOCK CHAPEL BURNS as they watch, shoulder to shoulder.

Emmitt's eyes are steel and glass, his dark pupils lick with flames and a bent charred cross while Duncan laughs with questionable sanity.