

MOONSHINE CHAPEL

WRITTEN BY

MAND PASKUSKI

EST. MAGGIE VALLEY NORTH CAROLINA - DAY

CHYRON: NORTH CAROLINA, 1903.

A BANJO PICKS PITCHY STRINGS in a happy tune.

INT. BARN - DAY

EMMITT CLOCK (10), makes a daring JUMP from a high beam into a mound of HAY. Overalls. Mud and dirt-covered. Cute as heck.

His little brother, DUNCAN CLOCK (9), JUMPS next. Less sure, less brave - though he'd never admit it. Flat cap. Toothbpick chewer as well as his nails. Also smattered in mud.

Emmitt yelps.

EMMITT (O.C.)
You clipped m'arm, Dunk!

INT. INSIDE HAY MOUND - CONTINUOUS

Surrounded by hay, they blink back at one another.

DUNCAN
Sawry Emmitt.

Beneath them is a TRAP DOOR with a large METAL LOOP HANDLE. Emmitt tugs but it's HEAVY. Duncan helps. Door won't budge.

A MECHANICAL RHYTHM chugs along underneath. Odd instruments drumming out a repetitious beat congruent with the banjo.

EMMITT
Hush... listen...

They boys lay their ears down ovetop the trap door.

CAMERA TRAVELS THROUGH THE WOOD FLOOR INTO...

INT. CELLAR - DAY

The muffled rhythm of "instruments" becomes clear and loud. TWO JUGS TOOT like a bass guitar's strings - vamping between two notes: BEE-BOOP, BEE-BOOP.

A NOZZLE ZIZZES like a high har: TSS'T'T, TSS'T'T, TSS'T'T.

WATER BOILS: B-DUDDLE, B-DUDDLE, B-DUDDLE, B-DUDDLE.

STEAM, a crash cymbol: K'SHH, SWOOT! K'SHH, SWOOT!

A ROPE CREAKS, washboard: REEE R'UH, REEE R'UH!

Lastly, SPOUT FLUTES like a harmonica: FWAA--ONG, FWAA--ONG!

INT. BARN - DAY

Emmitt and Duncan poke their heads out of the hay.

DUNCAN

What's he got down there?

EMMITT

I'll be damned if I don't find out.

FWUMP! A BOOT steps down next to them. JOHN "JOHNNY BOY" CLOCK a.k.a. GRAMPUH JOHNNY a.k.a. JBC (60's). A BROWN CIGARETTE hangs from the corner of his mouth. He's handsome despite the wear and tear, towering over the boys.

She smiles at his grandsons. A mischievous rascal.

JBC

Guestomizations?

DUNCAN

Runaways! Round up and strung over by the ankles. Keep bangin' in to one another fixin' to escape!

JBC nods and turns for Emmitt's guess.

EMMITT

You're makin' likker, ain't'cha?

JBC

Son, you ain't old 'nuff to be so serious all the time. Never grow out of guessin', you hear me?

EMMITT

Yes, sir. Grampuh, sir.

JBC

Save that for your daddy. Come on now, or you'll miss his sermon. G'one git.

They move to exit the barn, turning back.

EMMITT

Y'not comin'?

A shared look between the two.

JBC

G'one.

EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

The boys exit. CARS pull up and park. People in their Sunday best arrive for service. In place of a house is CLOCK CHAPEL. Home sweet holy-house. REVEREND JOHN CLOCK II (40's), greets people as they enter. His expression is pleasant until he spots his sons.

He and Emmitt make eye contact. No love lost there. The Reverend's gaze is mean. He scoffs, turning inside.

Emmitt glances back through the barn to where JBC can be seen opening the trap door and descending into the cellar.

Duncan pulls Emmitt by the overall strap.

A glorious, godly, sun-shiny day choc full of fluffy clouds.

TITLE CARD:

M O O N S H I N E C H A P E L**EXT. CLOCK CHAPEL - DAY**

CHYRON: EIGHTEEN YEARS LATER

The year is 1921. EMMITT, now 28, sits in a pew alone. He's staring at his father's OPEN CASKET. A CALLIGRAPHED CARD READS: REVEREND JOHN CLOCK II 1850-1921.

FOOTSTEPS approaching.

DUNCAN, 27, removes his flat-cap and sits. Hands his brother a DUSTY JAR OF MOONSHINE.

DUNCAN

Before the devil knows you're dead.

EMMITT

The devil done died, Dunk.

(beat)

Jesus, that's smooth as metal.

What's that hint I'm tastin'?

DUNCAN

Yumph, don't know. Spicy-sweet and sorta floral. I taste it too.

Emmitt sips 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 emancipotatoed.

DUNCAN

Say it slower.

EMMITT

Disinheritization, goddamnit!

Duncan rubs his chin, aiming to follow.

EMMITT (CONT'D)

Means we get jack shit! Means we're
goddamn broke! It means our holy
father left us with not so much as
a communion cracker to our name.

DUNCAN

Clock Chapel?

EMMITT

Sold it. To the city. Day before.

A moment for Duncan to realize the gravity.

DUNCAN

What's two?

EMMITT

What are you chirpin' bout?

DUNCAN

You said there was two amendments.

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

EMMITT

The second, 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... 'parently our pa didn't wanna take any chances upon his pre-emptive enterin' of the pearly gates.

They drink. Stiff.

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 o'these did'ja find?

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Holding torches, they pry up the trap door.

INT. CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

Torchlight gives sight to CASES OF STACKED MOONSHINE.

EMMITT

I'll be god-damned.

The DISTILLERY is covered in dust. COILS and BARRELS, FUNNELS connected to a STILL. Large SACKS OF BARLEY and FLAKED MAZE.

Duncan finds a SMALL BLUE VELVEY BOX. Opens it. Inside is a GOLD-ENGRAVED POCKET WATCH, A SILVER CIGARETTE CASE and a NOTE that reads: Bless the guessin' kind.

Emmitt takes the pocket watch which we may catch sight is engraved: *TO JOHNNY, WITH LOVE, M.*

EMMITT (CONT'D)

A clock.

Duncan pockets the cigarette case.

DUNCAN

I smoke mor'n you.

EMMITT

One should do it. Save the rest.

INT. CLOCK CHAPEL - NIGHT

The boys crown their father's corpse in JARS OF MOONSHINE. Casket full to the brim.

EXT. CLOCK CHAPEL - NIGHT

CLOCK CHAPEL BURNS as they watch, shoulder to shoulder.

Emmitt's eyes are storms of vengeance. This isn't exactly the retribution he seeks but it'll do.

Duncan laughs, drunk.

INT. BARN - DAY

Emmitt wakes with hay stuck to his face. Duncan's asleep, spooning a PIG.

The SOUND OF A CAR ENGINE outside.

EMMITT

Duncan, psst, Dunk! Wake up. I got a bad feelin'.

INT. BACK OF A COP CAR - DAY

The boys are HANDCUFFED in the backseat. DEPUTY OFFICER HANK (40's), drives. Buck-teeth, scrawny and blasé as they come.

EMMITT

Hank! Goddamnit Hank! You can't arrest us for torchin' our own house!

DUNCAN

That's right, you sonofabitch! It's our property!

(MORE)