

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK

A dingy trailer at the end of a gravel road. A chain-link fence and a few hundred yards separate the lonely trailer from the mighty Mississippi River.

SUBTITLE FADES IN: HANNIBAL, MISSOURI - 1997

A 1987 Chrysler LeBaron lurches to a stop in the gravel driveway. The tail lights go black as the engine shuts off.

BRENDA, 34, dirty blond, caucasian, a once attractive woman, she appears mid-40's from a wicked combo of late nights and a hard life. She sucks the last wisps of tobacco from her Camel Light. She rams the filter into an overcrowded ashtray.

She steps out of the car cloaked in a battered fur coat that barely covers a tight out-dated cocktail dress. Her cheap high heels stumble on the gravel drive as she heads toward a solitary mailbox on a bent post.

Brenda flings the mailbox open.

The mailbox is empty.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOBILE HOME

A cluttered living room is illuminated only by the vibrant colors of a wrestling match that explode off a 13 inch television. A captivated boy, JESSE, 14, dirty blond, Caucasian, in a blue/grey flannel, sits with his arms folded on his knees watching the bout.

ANNOUNCER

(voice of Jim Ross)

*"Bret Hart has beaten every superstar with this move, how in the hell Austin has not given up, I'll never understand."*

Stone Cold Steve Austin screams through a crimson mask of blood on the small TV, as Bret "Hitman" Hart holds him captive in his patented submission move, the Sharpshooter.

The trailer door opens with a rush of cold air as Brenda fights to remove her keys from the rickety lock.

JESSE

(eyes glued to the TV)

Hey Mom.

Brenda observes what's on TV as she removes her coat.

BRENDA  
Cable back on?

JESSE  
Patrick taped this for me. It's  
Wrestlemania 13, came on last  
Sunday. Bret just beat Stone Cold.

On the TV Bret Hart begins to kick a un-conscious Steve Austin.

ANNOUNCER  
*"Wait a minute, what's Bret doing,  
come on, enough's enough"*

JESSE  
You don't need to kick him, You  
already won Bret!

ANNOUNCER  
*"I'm a Bret Hart fan, but that's  
enough, this is sickening..."*

Brenda shakes her head as she sets her coat down on a chair in the kitchenette that shares the living room.

She looks over the crowded table and sees a stack of mail. She shuffles through the stack with the quick precision of a postman.

BRENDA  
This all the mail?

Jesse is focused on the match. His hero, Bret Hart, continues to attack a defenseless Steve Austin.

Brenda suddenly throws the entire stack down onto the table as dirty dishes and empty beer bottles SHATTER on the floor.

BRENDA (CONT'D)  
(raises her voice)  
I asked you a goddamn question! Is  
this all the mail?

JESSE  
(turns to the commotion)  
Come on Mom, it's almost over!

Brenda looks at the TV as Bret Hart leaves the ring to a chorus of Boos.

Brenda walks towards the TV, passes it and yanks both cords out of the outlet on the wall. The room shrinks further into darkness.

BRENDA

It's over now. You know that garbage is fake anyway, now was there a check in there from your useless father?

Jesse stands up visibly upset.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

(under her breath)

Of course there was no fucking check.

Brenda slumps into a chair and lights a fresh Camel.

JESSE

You shouldn't smoke in the house.

BRENDA

When you pay bills, you can make the rules.

Jesse starts to pick up the mess.

JESSE

(mutters)

Dad pays the bills.

Brenda SHOVES all the remaining bottles, dishes, and knick-knacks off the table in one SWIPE of her arm.

BRENDA

(shrieks)

Your piece of shit father hasn't sent us a check in months.

(louder)

MONTHS!

Jesse throws down the plates he was piling broken glass on.

JESSE

(pleads)

He works offshore Ma, he probably hasn't been back home.

Brenda's eyes glaze over as she sits back down.

BRENDA

Guess all the phones must be broke too down in New Orleans. He sure ain't called you in years.

Jesse drops everything he was picking up.

JESSE  
(slings venom)  
Because he doesn't want to talk to  
you. All you care about are his  
fucking checks.

Brenda exhales a cloud of smoke.

BRENDA  
(eerily calm)  
That's all he's good for.

Jesse looks at his mother with tears in his eyes. He storms  
out the trailer.

EXT. MOBILE HOME

Jesse slams the trailer door and heads down the gravel  
driveway.

ROD, 44, Caucasian, sports a wicked mullet, and holds a six  
pack of Moosehead lager in one hand and a half empty bottle  
in the other. He has just stepped out of his single cab 77  
Chevy Silverado.

ROD  
Damn son.  
(Jesse walks by, Rod  
laughs)  
Where you running off to?

Jesse brushes off Rod as he hits the road towards the river.

ROD (CONT'D)  
(mockingly)  
Mama's boy going cry by the river.  
Shit, ol' girl could use some water  
with this drought we been having.

EXT. RIVER BANK

Jesse wipes his eyes with his sleeve as he sits on a old tree  
trunk and watches a tugboat push a barge slowly down the  
river. The tugboat's flags WHIP in the wind.

He can see a deck hand in the distance fight to open a heavy  
hatch.

The man gets the hatch open and heads inside.

Jesse watches the tug fade into the distance.