

FADE IN

EXT. PICKERING, SOUTH CAROLINA - DAY

A small rural town. A wide river runs through the woods nearby. Dirt roads lead in to its paved streets. A town square surrounds a small park. The shops fronting the empty streets are decorated for fall/Thanksgiving.

A church congregation singing can be heard in the street.

CONGREGATION (O.S.)
(singing)
"All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small."

Posted on fences, walls and telegraph poles are election posters, some for Carver Lee running for state attorney general as a reformer, some for the incumbent, Percy Mills. Many of Mills' posters are stuck over Carver's.

CONGREGATION (O.S.)
"All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all."

At one end of the square stands the town hall, blanketed with worn election posters for Mills.

OUTSIDE THE NEWSPAPER OFFICE

A glass case is mounted on the wall. Inside is a copy of today's Pickering Press, the front page visible. The date is for Sunday, November 22, 1925.

The headline reads: Recount Complete: Victory for Lee!

Below the headline is a picture of a smiling man waving his hat to a crowd.

The caption reads: Carver Lee greets supporters in Charlestown.

CONGREGATION (O.S.)
"The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,"

Posters for Mills cover all the other available surfaces of the building.

OUTSIDE PICKERING BAPTIST CHURCH

In the grass fronting the building are election signs promoting Mills.

CONGREGATION (O.S.)

"The ripe fruits in the garden,"

INT. PICKERING BAPTIST CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The church is filled, standing room only. Everyone in the church is singing.

CONGREGATION

"God made them every one."

A preacher stands in the pulpit, leading the singing.

In the front row sits KING "TIGER" CLEMSON (50), a man of medium height with a military bearing. There is space around him, kept open by a couple of large men sitting a few feet either side of King.

CONGREGATION

"All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small."

In the middle of the congregation, on a pew empty save for themselves despite the crowded condition of the church, sit CARVER LEE (35), his wife LEIGH (29) and 12 year-old son STANFORTH (aka STAN), all dressed in their Sunday best.

As he sings, Stan looks around at all the people. Anyone whose eye he catches looks away immediately, some shuffle even further from the family.

EXT. A DIRT ROAD IN THE WOODS - DAY

Three black cars speed down the road, dust plumes rising in their wake.

CONGREGATION (V.O.)

"All things wise and wonderful,"

INSIDE THE LEAD CAR

The rear view mirrors show the chase cars splitting to either side to try and avoid the worst of the dust being thrown up.

CONGREGATION (V.O.)

"The Lord God made them all."

In the passenger seat a man checks the load on a pistol with a shotgun across his lap, its breech open exposing shells in both barrels.

EXT. WOODS - SOUTH CAROLINA - SAME

BEAUREGARD JOLLOP (aka BEAU), an 11 year-old African-American boy, collects acorns under the shade of the live oak trees.

CONGREGATION (V.O.)
 "God gave us eyes to see them,
 And lips that we might tell"

Through a break in the trees behind him is a clearing.

IN THE CLEARING

A still releases steam into the sky as clear liquid runs down its pipes and into a six gallon carboy. A mostly empty carboy and several other smaller empty jugs sit on a makeshift table together with a copper funnel.

Two vehicles sit in the clearing. One, an old pickup truck, its bed half-full of firewood, is parked with its rear towards the still and its nose facing toward the path back to the road.

CONGREGATION (V.O.)
 "How great is God Almighty,
 Who has made all things well."

The second, a souped-up jalopy, sits with trunk and hood open near the work table.

JUNIOR, a 31 year-old Caucasian man, packs full gallon and two gallon jugs into the jalopy, while HENRY JOLLOP (28), Beau's father, works on the engine.

UNDER THE HOOD

The engine gleams, with obviously new parts in contrast to the car's beaten and dirty exterior.

CONGREGATION (V.O.)
 "All things bright and beautiful,"

Henry tightens a bolt, gives an approving nod and then slams the hood.

IN THE CLEARING

Junior closes the jalopy's trunk as the roar of engines sounds from down the path.

IN THE WOODS

Beau turns toward the clearing at the noise.

CONGREGATION (V.O.)
 "All creatures great and small."

IN THE CLEARING

The three black cars pull in and spread out, leaving a wide berth around the still.

CONGREGATION (V.O.)
 "All things wise and wonderful,
 The Lord God made them all."

Dust clouds from the vehicles wash forward and envelop Junior and Henry. When they clear, standing front and center, pistol in holster and shotgun dangling in one hand, is LO CALLUM, (39) the local sheriff. Five other men stand near their vehicles, pistols and shotguns held casually.

JUNIOR
 What brings you out here, Lo?

Henry moves slowly towards the jalopy's driver's side door. Seeing the movement, Lo lifts the end of the shotgun and supports it in two hands, aiming it at Henry who freezes.

LO
 Just a bit of business, Junior.

JUNIOR
 For King or County?

A gun cocks and a sixth man, DUKE CLEMSON, a man in his early 20s, steps out from behind Lo. He holds a pistol low in his hand, thumb on the hammer and finger on the trigger. His otherwise attractive face is twisted in a snarl of anger.

As Duke steps forward, Lo swings his shotgun out to bar his progress. Henry sneaks forward again as the shotgun points away from him.

LO
 What's the difference? By the way,
 have you met his nephew Duke?
 (MORE)

LO (CONT'D)

Bit too serious of a boy to my
mind, but we can't help how we're
made, now can we.

As Henry reaches the open driver's door, the shotgun swings
back in his direction. Henry freezes and Lo shoots a brief
smile at him.

LO

Speaking of boys, where's that boy
of yours, Henry?

AT THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING

Beau crouches down and peers out around a tree, bag of acorns
forgotten on the ground.

LO (O.C.)

I know he's never that far from
your side.

IN THE CLEARING

Henry glances towards the woods behind Junior.

HENRY

Uh -

As Lo follows Henry's gaze, Junior takes a step forward.
Multiple guns cock and aim. Junior stops dead still, raising
his hands.

LO

Easy boys.

JUNIOR

He's home with his ma. He was a bit
poorly today.

Lo nods.

LO

Probably for the best.

Lo reaches back and pulls handcuffs from his belt as he steps
towards Henry.

LO

Now as for business -

DUKE

Fuck this!

Lo turns to Duke, swinging the shotgun away from Henry.

LO

Duke!

DUKE

No! These bastards are taking money
from our pockets and I'm not gonna
stand for it!

Duke aims at Junior. Lo knocks his gun hand to the side while Junior ducks and Henry jumps into the car. The gun fires a bullet into the still. Raw alcohol pours through the bullet hole onto the fire below. Flames climb up the stream unto the tank and...

SFX: Kaboom!

The still explodes, sending metal fragments everywhere. As men dive for cover, a piece of scalding hot metal embeds itself into Duke's face.

AT THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING

Beau starts at the sight and sound of the explosion. A pressure gauge slams into his tree and lands near his feet.

BEAU

Shit.

IN THE CLEARING

Duke writhes on the ground, clutching his face and screaming in agony and anger. Lo crawls over to him, pulling a handkerchief from his pocket.

LO

Oh, for Christ's sake, Duke!

Henry starts the jalopy's engine.

HENRY

(leaning out of the car)
Junior! C'mon!

Junior struggles to his feet and limp-runs to the car, hand squeezing his right ass cheek, blood soaking through the denim and oozing between his fingers.

Lo presses his handkerchief to the wound on Duke's face.

LO
Hold still, Duke.

Lo glances up at the fleeing men.

LO
Henry! Junior! Don't y'all try
anything stupid now!

Junior falls into the car and Henry hits the gas. The tires spew dirt into the air as the modified engine roars, propelling the car forward.

As the jalopy flies toward the road, prone men roll out of the way and others open fire.

IN THE WOODS

Beau watches the jalopy break for the road. Lo jumps up and runs for the lead car.

LO
Hold your goddamned firing!

Beau turns into the woods and runs between the trees.

IN THE CLEARING

Lo grabs a man and pushes him towards Duke, who still lies on the ground.

LO
Get Duke to Doc Miller!

He hops into the lead car.

GEORGE jumps onto the running board of the car as Lo spins it around to give chase. The Henchman opens the passenger-side front door and starts to get in, but as the car makes the hard left onto the roadway he goes tumbling off, rolling into the trees at the side of the road.

IN THE LEAD CAR

Lo spares a quick glance after the tumbling man, shakes his head and shifts gears. He pulls his pistol from its holster and lays it on the seat next to him.

INT. THE JALOPY - CONTINUOUS

The car hits a bump in the road. Junior, clutching his bottom, moans.

JUNIOR
Oh, damn it, Henry!

HENRY
Quit your bitchin'. We'll be in Pickering in a few minutes, and then South to Georgia in an hour. He can't chase us there.

OUTSIDE THE JALOPY

A billboard reads, "Carver Cuts Corruption. Vote Carver Lee for Attorney General."

JUNIOR (V.O.)
He can if he don't care about the law. And since King don't care, Lo don't care.

EXT. PICKERING TOWN SQUARE - SAME

The town hall clock reads 1:00 and people are piling out of the church.

The Lee family walks along the street. As they stroll, people cross the street away from them. Carver nods, waves or doffs his hat to everyone as they go by, even as they ignore him.

OUTSIDE THE PHARMACY

MRS. JACKSON, an elderly lady, sits on a bench, warming herself in the sun, lost in thought.

CARVER (O.C.)
Lovely day, isn't it, Mrs. Jackson?

Mrs. Jackson starts from her reveries and looks at the family. At first pleased at someone speaking to her, as she realizes who it is her expression changes.

MRS. JACKSON
Uh, I... Oh, no you see...

(she rises)
I'm just here getting my prescription filled.

With a puzzled look, Stan crosses to the window, cups his hands against the glass and peers into the pharmacy.

Carver and Leigh watch Mrs. Jackson as she walks to the pharmacy door and grabs the handle.

MRS. JACKSON
Must be getting a move on, you see.

She tries to turn the handle to no avail. Her face becomes determined as she tries again.

MRS. JACKSON
Got things on the stove, you see.
I'm only out for my prescription.

Mrs. Jackson frantically tries the handle again and again. Leigh takes Stan's left hand and pulls him from the glass.

LEIGH
It's closed, Mrs. Jackson. Sunday.

Mrs. Jackson stops working the handle.

MRS. JACKSON
Oh, I -

LEIGH
It's all right. We understand.

Mrs. Jackson walks down the street, nodding and mumbling. The family watches her go.

KING (O.C.)
Congratulations.

Leigh, Stan and Carver all start and turn around to see King standing behind them. His wide smile is belied by his stern-featured face.

A few feet behind King stand RODNEY (48) and SID (22). Rodney is a weedy-looking fellow in an ill-fitting suit that looks like it came from a much bigger man. Sid is a muscular thug-looking man wearing a dark suit.

Carver reaches out to his side with one arm and uses it to guide his family back behind him.

CARVER
Mr. Clemson.

He nods to indicate the men behind King.

CARVER

I see you have the mayor and that young man who was so enthusiastic to keep me from voting for myself the other day with you.

RODNEY

Carver.

CARVER

Rodney.

Sid glares at Carver and grunts.

KING

You'll have to forgive Sid. He's not very articulate, but they both want to congratulate you. Ain't that right, boys?

RODNEY

Oh, absolutely. That's right. A marvelous win -

King holds up a finger and Rodney abruptly stops.

KING

Shame you didn't win here in your hometown, but you certainly swept the state all right.

CARVER

Well, the state knows it needs sweeping, Mr. Clemson.

KING

King, please. "Tiger" to my special friends.

CARVER

We're not any kind of friends, Mr. Clemson. Special or otherwise.

KING

We should be. That's why I think we should talk. Come walk with me. I'm sure your family won't mind.

King smiles like a shark.

Carver looks back and forth between his family and King.