

"Road to Nowhere"

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Inspired by true events.

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BLACKNESS

"THE END" by The Doors UNDERSCORES various sounds:

MURMURING VOICES, SHUFFLING FEET, AND CLANKING:

FATHER DANIELS (O.S.)  
In your final hour, you will be  
made aware. You will see the demons  
that tempted you in life.

CHAINS RATTLE as shackles are bound on the ankles and wrists  
of ...

FADE IN:

INT. DEATH ROW - NIGHT

... HAYDEN WELLS (22) stands in the middle of the cell. He is  
a healthy thin, but not toned. There is something charming  
about him, a twinkle in his eye. Hayden smiles as a  
CORRECTIONS OFFICER binds him with shackles.

The Officer escorts Hayden out of the cell and down the hall.

DEATH ROW TIER

Single bulbs hang low in the hall. Shadows partially obscure  
the demons who glare at the passing procession.

PRISONERS, sharing this terminal address, grope Hayden as he  
passes. Is there flesh on those probing arms?

FATHER DANIELS  
There is nothing covered up that  
will not be revealed, and hidden  
that will not be known.

One DEMONIC SKELETON drags a tin cup back and forth across  
the bars of his cell -- CLINK CLANK -- providing RHYTHMIC  
BACKUP to the Doors.

A giant, black door GRINDS on the cement floor as it opens at  
the end of the hall.

The procession passes into the:

DEATH CHAMBER

The room is dark.

FATHER DANIELS (V.O.)  
Accordingly, whatever you have said  
in the dark...

Bright light suddenly illuminates the cross shaped table.  
Made of wood, it's rotten and old.

FATHER DANIELS (V.O.)  
 ... will be heard in the light, and  
 what you have whispered in the  
 inner rooms will be proclaimed upon  
 the housetops.

The gallery is full of DEMONS who watch with anticipation.

Only one human face is recognizable, JARED CLARK (20s). He wears an ACE'S PIZZA uniform. Half of his face is obscured by a bloodless wound. The other half is stark white.

Hayden is unshackled and forced onto the table. Snakes slither around his wrists and ankles locking the condemned in place.

FATHER DANIELS (V.O.)  
 I say to you, my friends, do not be  
 afraid of those who kill the body.  
 After that they have no more that  
 they can do.

Jared nods to the EXECUTIONER -- a sort of Grim Reaper. A bony finger extends from under the robe.

FATHER DANIELS (V.O.)  
 But I will warn you whom to fear:  
 fear the One who, after He has  
 killed, has authority to cast into  
 hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him!

The bony fingernail scratches a thin line on the inside of Hayden's elbow. A trickle of blood appears.

FATHER DANIELS (V.O.)  
 Do not worry about how or what you  
 are to speak in your defense. The  
 Holy Spirit will teach you in that  
 very hour what you ought to say.

Hayden's chest heaves as he lets out a LOUD WAIL.

CLOSE ON HAYDEN'S FACE

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. PADDED ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON TEENAGE HAYDEN (15) as he bolts up in bed. He is drenched in sweat.

The padded room is small and stark white. There is a small window at the top of one wall.

Teenage Hayden lays back and looks out the window. He drifts back to sleep.

INT. DR. FREDRICK'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: Athens, Georgia; Summer 1985

Teenage Hayden sits across from DR. FREDRICK (50s).

FREDRICK  
What's bothering you?

TEENAGE HAYDEN  
The old woman in a rocking chair is  
back.

FREDRICK  
That bothers you?

TEENAGE HAYDEN  
No. The fact that she looks more  
like the letter 'W'. That bothers  
me.

FREDRICK  
You don't see a woman?

TEENAGE HAYDEN  
Those ancients sure had vivid  
imagination.

FREDRICK  
Should be a new issue of Astronomy  
soon. I'll bring it in.

TEENAGE HAYDEN  
Thanks, Doc.

FREDRICK  
Last time, you were telling me  
about being alone at home.

TEENAGE HAYDEN  
I wonder why I never had a brother.  
Or a sister.

FREDRICK  
You said you liked being alone.

TEENAGE HAYDEN  
It was better when Mom and Dad were  
gone.

INT. WELLS LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

YOUNG HAYDEN (8) sits on the floor in front of the  
television.

ANGLE ON THE TELEVISION - WARNER BROTHERS CARTOON

Yosemite Sam leaps over a rock with his six shooters blazing.  
He's jumping a gold claim. He drives away the miner, and  
trades his guns for a pickaxe as he begins to work the hill  
for gold.

INT. DR. FREDRICK'S OFFICE - DAY

FREDRICK  
Where were your parents?

TEENAGE HAYDEN  
I don't remember. Out of town?

FREDRICK  
They left you home alone while they were out of town?

TEENAGE HAYDEN  
I don't know. I guess maybe they were home.

FREDRICK  
So they were home?

TEENAGE HAYDEN  
Out of town. Out to dinner. Who knows. It was the same for me either way.

FREDRICK  
What did you mean when you said it was better?

TEENAGE HAYDEN  
Dad wasn't telling me all the things I did wrong. Who knows, maybe I could've even done something right.

FREDRICK  
Is that what you wanted? To do something right.

TEENAGE HAYDEN  
I guess so.

FREDRICK  
Then why did you keep causing problems?

TEENAGE HAYDEN  
I didn't cause them. I just somehow always got caught up in them.

INT. PADDED ROOM - NIGHT

Teenage Hayden is asleep.

ANGLE OUTSIDE THE WINDOW

The stars speed by in time lapse. One constellation gives way to another as the seasons slip away.

INT. DR. FREDRICK'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: Summer 1988

Dr. Fredrick sits across from JOHN and LINDA WELLS (both mid 40s). Their grooming and clothes suggest wealth, but with restraint. There is nothing gaudy or flashy. They sit upright and stiff. Everything about them suggests a need to appear "proper" and refined.

JOHN

I'm not sure why we're here,  
Doctor.

FREDRICK

Hayden turns eighteen this week. We  
need his consent, or a court order  
to continue.

JOHN

We'll get a court order then.

FREDRICK

He doesn't belong here.

JOHN

He's sick. You diagnosed him  
yourself with ASPD.

FREDRICK

Anti-social personality disorder is  
not a disease. Nor is it reason for  
commitment.

JOHN

His school counsellor thought it  
was.

FREDRICK

For some people, it's easier to  
pass the buck.

JOHN

Some people!?

LINDA

John.

JOHN

No. What does he mean? What do you  
mean by some people?

FREDRICK

Hayden has difficulty controlling  
his impulses. In a school  
environment, that can be very  
disruptive.

JOHN

Hayden is disruptive no matter  
where he is. Which is why he  
belongs here.

FREDRICK  
If you go to court, I'll be  
testifying on Hayden's behalf.

JOHN  
After all the money we spent here?

LINDA  
What can we do?

FREDRICK  
He's an adult now. Treat him like  
one. He needs a job. When he's  
ready, an apartment of his own.

INT. BENTLEY - EVENING

John and Linda Wells sit in the front. Hayden is reclining in  
the back.

JOHN  
The nerve of that guy. Some people.  
He was talking about us.

LINDA  
Let's discuss it later, John.

The car pushes down the road, the silence growing more  
uncomfortable.

HAYDEN  
I'm really happy...

LINDA  
Good.

HAYDEN  
... To be coming home, I mean. To  
be a family again.

John stares down the open road, ignoring his son.

LINDA  
We're happy too. Isn't that right,  
John?

JOHN  
Dr. Fredrick suggested you get a  
job.

HAYDEN  
I just got out.

LINDA  
Your father didn't mean right this  
minute.

JOHN  
It's never too soon to start.

HAYDEN  
So, can I work in one of your stores?

LINDA  
We thought you might want to go work with Mr. Winston.

HAYDEN  
At the dry cleaners? That sucks.

JOHN  
I think you should give it a chance.

HAYDEN  
Do I have any choice?

LINDA  
Of course you do.

HAYDEN  
Isn't it dangerous in a dry cleaners? With the chemicals and such?

JOHN  
Don't be ridiculous.

HAYDEN  
So you don't care if I grow a third nipple, or become sterile?

JOHN  
Enough wisecracks. Before you decide you don't want the job, talk to Mr. Winston. He's doing me a favor offering you this job.

HAYDEN  
It's all about you again.

JOHN  
If you like, you can find a job yourself.

HAYDEN  
I don't need your help.

JOHN  
Good. While you're at it, you can find an apartment.

HAYDEN  
You wanna throw me out before I even get home?

LINDA  
Absolutely not. We only want what's best for you.

HAYDEN  
We?



LINDA  
Will you please just talk to Mr.  
Winston? For me.

HAYDEN  
All right, Mom. I'll check it out.

EXT. WELLS MANSION - EVENING

A large gate opens automatically as the Bentley pulls into the driveway. The gate closes behind the car. The car pulls into the garage.

INT. SPIFFY DRY CLEAN - DAY

Hayden stands behind the counter with BO WINSTON (40s) learning the finer points of running a dry cleaners.

BO WINSTON  
Cleaning is important work.

HAYDEN  
How so?

BO WINSTON  
It's all about trust. When people leave their clothes, they expect to get them back in better condition than they left them.

HAYDEN  
Yeah.

Bo demonstrates as he continues.

BO WINSTON  
When the customer pays, you take the claim check and staple it to the register receipt. And stick the whole thing here.

Bo punches the receipt onto the spike. He nicks his finger on the sharp point.

BO WINSTON (CONT'D)  
Well, like that, only be careful -- this is sharp.

Bo wipes his finger with a hanky.

HAYDEN  
What do they call that thing anyway?

BO WINSTON  
What? The spike?

HAYDEN  
Yeah.

BO WINSTON  
A spike.

HAYDEN  
That's it? A spike? They don't have  
a name for it?

BO WINSTON  
Like what?

HAYDEN  
I don't know. Like a receipt  
receptacle?

BO WINSTON  
That's ridiculous.

HAYDEN  
Well, so is a spike.

BO WINSTON  
Next time you're up at the library,  
look it up.

HAYDEN  
I'll get right on that.

BO WINSTON  
Should I go through this again?

HAYDEN  
I *think* I got it.

EXT. ANDERSON HOME - EVENING

MRS. ANDERSON (40s) weeds the rose garden in front of the  
cracker box house. She's short and a bit stocky, but she  
moves with purpose, seemingly not slowed by her stature.

Hayden pulls up in a rust bucket pickup truck.

MRS. ANDERSON  
Hello Hayden.

HAYDEN  
Hey, Mrs. Anderson. Earl, Junior  
home?

MRS. ANDERSON  
C'mere. Gimme a hand with this.

Hayden stares blankly, not sure what she wants.

MRS. ANDERSON (CONT'D)  
The wheelbarrow.

She pricks herself on a very dead rose bush.

MRS. ANDERSON (CONT'D)  
Damn deer are ruining my garden.  
What are you waiting for? Dump it  
out back.

Hayden steers the wheelbarrow toward the back of the house.

HAYDEN  
Those bushes don't look so bad to  
me.

He disappears around the corner, returning moments later with the empty wheelbarrow.

MRS. ANDERSON  
Earl's inside.

EXT. WOODS, BEHIND ANDERSON HOME - NIGHT

Hayden and EARL ANDERSON, JR. (17) trod through the woods. Earl is a vibrant, if not slightly odd looking kid. He bounces with each step, walking on his toes.

Every few yards they stop, as one or the other points out a target tree. They quickly throw knives, which often hit, but rarely stick in the intended target.

EARL  
Man, is it good to have you back.

HAYDEN  
It's good to be back.

Hayden tosses his knife. It misses the tree and is buried in a pile of leaves.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)  
Shit.

They rummage around looking for the blade.

EARL  
How was it? The hospital.

HAYDEN  
It was all ice cream and lollipops.  
We even had a video arcade.

EARL  
Really?

Hayden finds his knife and starts off in search of another target.

HAYDEN  
More like straight jackets, needles  
and whole lot of "How do you feel,"  
questions.

Earl points at a tree. The knives fly.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)  
It was better than being at home  
though.

EARL  
How'd you figure?

HAYDEN  
They never blamed me for anything.  
And they never pretended I didn't  
exist. You know how many times my  
Dad came to visit?

EARL  
No.

HAYDEN  
Three times.

Hayden points out a tree. This time, he fires his knife with  
anger. The knife is buried deep in the bark.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)  
He had to. Once a year for a  
progress report.

Hayden struggles with the blade.

EARL  
Never did like your dad. And I know  
he hated me.

HAYDEN  
Welcome to the family.

Hayden gives up on the blade. From his hip pocket, he  
produces a pint of whiskey. They sit and drink.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)  
You know, I learned a lot inside.

EARL  
Yeah. Like what?

HAYDEN  
There.

Hayden points up at the night sky.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)  
That's Cassiopeia. The old woman in  
a rocking chair.

EARL  
Where?

HAYDEN  
Those stars there. But if you ask  
me, it looks more like the letter  
'W'.

EARL  
So you learned astrology?

HAYDEN  
Astronomy.

EARL  
What'd I say?

HAYDEN  
Astrology. Voodoo. See that? Taurus  
the bull.

EARL  
Taurus. That's a sign of the  
Zodiac. Isn't that astrology?

HAYDEN  
Astrology and astronomy share the  
stars.

EARL  
So is it astronomy or astrology  
that determines who you're gonna be  
based on when you were born?

HAYDEN  
Astrology. Supposedly the position  
of the planets, sun, and moon among  
the constellations can predict  
everything about you and what will  
happen to you.

EARL  
What's wrong with that?

HAYDEN  
If that's true, we can't control  
who we are or what we become. One  
little instant in time dictates  
everything we are, and will be.

EARL  
So that's how they figure out your  
horoscope?

HAYDEN  
Yeah. If you buy that shit.

EARL  
So how is astronomy different?

HAYDEN  
It is the scientific study of the  
cosmos. Why the stars appear when  
and where they appear. How far away  
they are.

EARL  
That sounds boring.

HAYDEN  
You know, if you were on a planet  
near Alpha Centauri, you would see  
our sun in Cassiopeia.

EARL  
Alpha what?

HAYDEN  
Alpha Centauri. It is the closest  
star to us. Pair of stars actually.

EARL  
So?

HAYDEN  
When viewed from the right angle,  
we are a part of Cassiopeia.

EARL  
I got that. And why is that  
important?

HAYDEN  
In space, something's location is  
only meaningful based on its  
relationship to the other things  
around it.

EARL  
Right now, all that's meaningful is  
my relationship to that whiskey.

Earl grabs the pint and takes a big gulp.

HAYDEN  
There are hundreds of millions of  
stars in our galaxy alone. Each is  
a sun, possibly with its own  
planets. Some maybe with  
intelligent life.

EARL  
So you were looking for E.T.?

HAYDEN  
You still don't get it. It's all  
about perspective. Who you are is a  
result of what's around you.

EARL  
No wonder they thought you were  
nuts.

Hayden gives him a slap to the back of the head.

HAYDEN  
I had a window that faced the sky.  
So I looked at the stars. They  
we're my family.

EARL  
Shit man, you went in crazy and  
came out some kind of scientist.

HAYDEN  
Just came out alone.

EARL  
You got me now. You ain't alone. We  
can tear this joint up.

HAYDEN  
If I don't die from boredom at the  
dry cleaners.

EARL  
Whatcha doing tomorrow night?

HAYDEN  
Nothing.

EARL  
It's family bowling night. You  
wanna go?

HAYDEN  
That's your idea of tearing it up?

EARL  
It's all I got right now.

HAYDEN  
Family bowling, huh?

EARL  
It'd be great to have you. My  
sister can't bowl for shit.

HAYDEN  
Count me among you.

INT. SPIFFY DRY CLEAN (DREAM) - DAY

Hayden sits behind the counter. The BELL RINGS over the door  
announcing the arrival of a customer.

Hayden looks up to see Yosemite Sam enter the store. He has  
his six guns out.

When Sam speaks, he has a WOMAN'S VOICE.

YOSEMITE SAM  
Excuse me.

Hayden sits in stunned silence.

YOSEMITE SAM (CONT'D)  
This is a hold up.

Yosemite Sam reaches across the counter shaking Hayden by the  
shoulder.

SPIFFY DRY CLEAN (REALITY)

Hayden is sound asleep, with his head on the counter.

Bo shakes Hayden awake.

Where Sam was standing, Hayden sees MRS. BOUDREAUX (50s).

BO WINSTON  
Mrs. Boudreaux needs some  
assistance here.

HAYDEN  
Oh. Sorry. I fell asleep.

When Mrs. Boudreaux speaks, she has the same voice as Yosemite Sam in Hayden's dream.

MRS. BOUDREAUX  
Late night?

HAYDEN  
Yeah, actually.

BO WINSTON  
When you're done helping Mrs. Boudreaux, I'll see you in the office.

Bo disappears into his office.

Mrs. Boudreaux hands Hayden a ticket.

MRS. BOUDREAUX  
Hot today.

Hayden spins the rack seeking her garments.

MRS. BOUDREAUX (CONT'D)  
Lived in this Southern inferno my whole life. Never got used to it.

HAYDEN  
Fall will be here soon.

He hangs her garments next to the register.

MRS. BOUDREAUX  
It's the humidity that gets me. I'm just as sticky as a sweet roll.

HAYDEN  
I couldn't a guessed it. You look as pretty as a sunflower.

MRS. BOUDREAUX  
Well, aren't you the sweetest. How much do I owe you?

HAYDEN  
That's, uh eighteen-fifty, ma'am.

She hands him a twenty.

MRS. BOUDREAUX  
Keep the change. (re: office) Good luck in there.

HAYDEN  
Thank you.

Hayden puts the money in the register, the receipt on the "spike".

Bo appears in the office doorway just in time to see Hayden pocket the change.