

WIDOW'S CREEK WEEKEND

An Original Screenplay
by
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Property of Matt Burch
WGAE Registered

FADE IN:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS, VA - MORNING

A LOG CABIN tucked neatly within the undulating folds of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, now covered in a light blanket of snow. A RIBBON OF SMOKE rises politely from the chimney top. A HOLLOW WIND WAILS through the trees.

INT. CABIN - BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS, VA - MORNING

A FIRE

Burning in the hearth. The SOUND OF ITS CRACKLING is THE ONLY SOUND WE HEAR.

DUSTY RUNYON

His 40-year-old face is haggard, worn. A relief map of heartache and disappointment. He stares directly at us holding a SINGLE-BARREL MOSSBERG PUMP.

HIS POV: The muzzle of a DOUBLE-BARREL SHOTGUN stares back at him.

THE FIRE

Building steadily. Glowing orange from within.

DUSTY

His brow wrinkles in concern. He swallows hard, not taking his eyes away for a second.

HIS POV: The double-barrel muzzle hovers there, waiting.

THE FIRE -- one log glows red hot. DUSTY'S EYES -- two dark spheres alive and focused. THE DOUBLE-BARREL'S EYES -- two hollow circles dead, unconcerned.

THE RED HOT LOG -- it CRACKS! and falls.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS, VA - MORNING

TWO GUNSHOTS ECHO out from the cabin into the surrounding mountains.

INT. BEDROOM - RUNYON HOUSEHOLD - EARLY MORNING

Dusty Runyon bolts upright in bed, lightly beaded in sweat. He takes in his surroundings: bed, dresser, WIFE asleep at his side, the FAMILY CAT staring blankly at him from the foot of the bed.

Dusty's expression remains unchanged, haggard and worn. You get the feeling he hasn't smiled in quite some time.

Suddenly, an alarm clock BEEPS WILDLY.

TITLE CARD: "MONDAY"

Dusty flips the clock to radio mode. His wife stirs groggily, returns to sleep. Dusty stares dead ahead as the DJ's overzealous southern twang pitches into high gear.

DJ (V.O.)
Hey y'all, it's 6 in the AM on a--
brrrrrr-- chilly February day. How
'bout I start'cha off with a little
gem from way back to ease ya into
the working week. Here's that '70s
super group Kansas with their hit
"Dust in the Wind"...

Dusty stares sullenly ahead as a MELANCHOLY 70's TUNE begins to play. After a moment, he slowly, methodically begins to pull himself out of bed.

OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE

MUSIC and TITLES over a rough assemblage of faded 8mm home movie footage. TWO YOUNG BOYS IN COWBOY HATS playfully chase each other with toy rifles outside a mountain cabin. Smiling, laughing, having the time of their lives.

Their game of hide and seek continues through the credits until they take each other by surprise at the cabin corner. Out of breath and smiling, the two boys square off, rifles at the ready.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - PIPE MANUFACTURING PLANT - MORNING

A manufacturing plant devoted to the fabrication of all things pipe-related -- steel pipe, PVC pipe, flanges, fittings, tubes of all dimensions. The HIGH-PITCHED SQUEAL of machinery fills the air.

PLANT WORKERS in protective helmets and goggles man machines bending, beveling, and boring pipe.

Dusty Runyon works at a cutting lathe across from HENRY NORTHROP, a fellow pipe cutter with bifocals and bad hearing. Henry lifts off his goggles and calls over to Dusty above the INDUSTRIAL DIN.

HENRY
Hey, Dust!

Dusty continues working, not hearing him.

HENRY (CONT'D)
HEY, DUST!!

Dusty looks up from the lathe.

DUSTY
You say sumthin', Henry?

HENRY
Yeah. I said, "Hey, Dust!"

DUSTY
Oh. What?

HENRY
What are you doin' for the big 4-0 tonight?

DUSTY
What?

HENRY
I say, "What are you doin' for your birthday!"

DUSTY
Annalise and the kids are taking me to the Surf and Turf.

HENRY
Say again?!

DUSTY
The Surf and Turf. All you can eat.

HENRY
Sounds real nice. They got fried catfish up there?

DUSTY

What?!

HENRY

I say, "They got the fried catfish?"

DUSTY

I think they do.

HENRY

Yeah. Doctor says I can't eat the stuff anymore. Plays hell with my arteries.

DUSTY

Oh. That's too bad.

HENRY

What?!

DUSTY

I said, "That's too bad." Maybe you should try the baked scrod or the halibut.

HENRY

What?!!

DUSTY

Maybe you should try the hal-i-but!!

HENRY

That's what I told the Doc. "The hell with it!" But you know those doctors. My way or the highway.

DUSTY

What?!

HENRY

MY WAY OR THE HIGHWAY!!!

DUSTY

Yeah, it's just off the highway. Over past Route 17.

Henry looks at Dusty in a state of utter confusion.

EXT. LOADING DOCK - PIPE MANUFACTURING PLANT - LATE MORNING

As FLATBED RIGS load up with pipe, Dusty shivers in the chilly November air alongside a GROUP OF MIDDLE-AGED CO-WORKERS smoking cigarettes.

There's NED JENNINGS (40s), EMMET HALPERN (20s) and JOE CARVER (30s), all of them furiously puffing away except for Dusty.

NED
It's a goddamn travesty.

EMMET
You said it.

NED
Like we're being pee-nalized or
sumthin'.

EMMET
Yep.

NED
I work here twenty goddamn years of
my life and all the sudden, they're
tellin' me I can't smoke a goddamn
Marlboro Red.

JOE
They're not tellin' ya you can't
smoke a Marlboro Red. They're just
sayin' you can't smoke it on the
cuttin' floor.

NED
Same difference Joe. This is how
it begins. Right now it's "Thank
you for not smoking" indoors.
Pretty soon it's "Thank you for not
smoking" outdoors. Next thing you
know it's "Light that cigarette and
it's ten years to life."

As Ned continues griping, Dusty looks away from the group to the two-lane road across the street. MID-MORNING TRAFFIC whizzes by the roadside diner. Dusty begins turning back to the group...but wait...something catches his eye.

DUSTY'S POV: There's a MAN outside the diner who seems to be staring at him. Early 40s, balding, wearing a brown blazer and amber-tinted sunglasses.

He rolls a toothpick between his lips and continues staring as TRAFFIC WHOOSHES BY from both directions.

Dusty's face tightens in concern. He steps away from his coworkers to get a better look.

DUSTY'S POV (CLOSER IN): TRAFFIC CRISSCROSSES his view. The man's still standing there rolling the toothpick, face devoid of expression. Just then, a GIANT 18-WHEELER barrels past, blocking the line of sight.

Dusty cranes his neck.

DUSTY'S POV: The 18-wheeler finally passes but the man is gone.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - PIPE MANUFACTURING PLANT - AFTERNOON

Dusty walks back toward his lathe, lost in thought. GILLIE TALBERT, a gruff plant manager in his 50s, comes out of his office smoking a fat cigar.

GILLIE

Runyon!

Dusty stops in his tracks.

DUSTY

Yes, sir.

GILLIE

Can I see you a second?

INT. GILLIE'S OFFICE - PIPE MANUFACTURING PLANT - AFTERNOON

Dusty enters the small, cluttered space. Gillie hunts through a stack of papers on his desk, cigar in hand.

GILLIE

Have a seat, Dusty.

Dusty removes his gloves and lowers himself into the seat in front of Gillie's desk.

GILLIE (CONT'D)

Reason I called you in here's I got a look at the schedule this morning.

DUSTY

Yes, sir?

GILLIE

Says you got a week off in March.
Week of March 10th, I believe.

DUSTY

That's right, sir. That's my
vacation time.

Gillie hooks his cigar on the edge of the ashtray for
emphasis.

GILLIE

Now a vacation's all fine and good,
Dusty. But that particular week,
that's just no dice. That's the
week my lap joint supply's due and
I got to have every man here on the
floor. Especially my Lap Joint
supervisor.

DUSTY

(calmly distressed)

But, Mr. Talbert, I took that week
off several months back. That's
the week they offer the FBI
Simulator Camp up at Quantico.
See, I promised my son Marcus I was
gonna take him this year.

GILLIE

I'm real sorry about that, Dusty.
But you knew there'd be extra
responsibilities come with the
title of Lap Joint Supervisor.
'Specially on lap joint week.

DUSTY

I know that, sir, but I took that
week off before becoming
supervisor. Ya see, it's kinda
important to my son. He just
turned ten.

GILLIE

How is young Marcus anyway?

DUSTY

Just fine sir. Just started pee-
wee football a couple weeks back.

GILLIE

Ya don't say?

DUSTY

Yeah, he's the kicker, ya know,
being kinda skinny and all--

GILLIE

Look, Dusty, I'm gonna be straight
with you. I just gotta have ya
that week. As far as your FBI
thing, well, I'm real sorry. I
can't control when the boys in
Baltimore send down their
shipments.

DUSTY

I understand that sir but...

Gillie gets out of his seat, grabbing his cigar on the way.

GILLIE

It's all settled then. I'll have
Norma switch you over to the first
week in April. How about that?

Gillie opens up the office door for Dusty. Dusty gets out of
the chair, hesitantly picking up his gloves.

DUSTY

Well I...I guess...

GILLIE

Say, you ought to look into one of
those archery camps for little
Marcus. How old didja say he was
again?

DUSTY

He's ten.

GILLIE

Yeah, my grandson Cody loves the
bows and arrows. Aim's pretty
accurate too. We think his momma
may a had a run in with a tribe of
Apache before he was born, if ya
know what I mean.

Gillie slaps Dusty on the shoulder, laughing.

GILLIE (CONT'D)

Now get on outta here and cut me
some pipe.

EXT. SURF & TURF RESTAURANT - JUST OFF THE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A nondescript one-story building sporting a red neon crab. The roadside marquee reads: "Ask About Our Monday Scallop/Sirloin Special!!"

INT. DINING ROOM - SURF & TURF RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The Runyon Family dines: MARCUS RUNYON, a skinny ten-year old, hollows out the inside of a hushpuppy with his two front teeth. EMILY RUNYON, a pig-tailed eight-year old with glasses, cracks open an Alaskan crab leg. ANNALISE RUNYON, Dusty's very pregnant wife, eats coleslaw, pausing briefly to a feel kick in her stomach. DUSTY JR., the baby, holds a jumbo shrimp in his fist, confused.

And Dusty Runyon, the reluctant patriarch, slumps over an untouched plate, staring into space.

A WAITRESS approaches the table with a pitcher of soda.

WAITRESS
Everything hunky-dory over here?

Dusty looks up from his plate.

HIS POV: A CHEERY WAITRESS with a big fake smile. Her apron features the restaurant's logo -- a cow's head attached to a shrimp's body.

DUSTY
Oh, it's real good, real good.

The waitress pivots and exits. Dusty returns to staring. Annalise wipes Dusty Jr.'s mouth with a paper napkin and turns to Marcus and Emily.

ANNALISE
Kids. Think it's time we give
daddy his present?

Marcus drops his hush puppy on instant. Emily, her crab leg.

MARCUS
Can I go git it, momma?! Can I?!

EMILY
No. I want to go. I want to!

Annalise takes out her car keys. She holds them up for them to fight over.

ANNALISE

Both of you can go. It's in the
back seat, next to the Valvoline.

Marcus grabs the keys and the two scurry off toward the exit.
Annalise sets eyes on her wearied husband.

ANNALISE (CONT'D)

(re: his full plate)

What's the matter, honey? You
don't like the scallops?

DUSTY

No they're fine, fine.

ANNALISE

Then what is it? You haven't
touched a thing.

Dusty puts down his fork and turns to his wife.

DUSTY

Gillie called me into his office
today.

Annalise stops eating. She puts her fork down as well.

ANNALISE

What about?

DUSTY

Said I can't take my vacation in
March. Said it was lap joint week.

Annalise looks relieved. She picks up her fork, continues
eating.

ANNALISE

Well, that's not that bad, honey.
You had me thinkin' for a second
you were fired or sumthin' awful.

DUSTY

It's pretty awful when ya think
about it. That's when I was gonna
take Marcus to the FBI camp.

ANNALISE

(patting his hand)

I know, honey. But he'll get over
it. I'll look into some other
camps for him. Archery or
something like that.

DUSTY

But we were supposed to do this together, 'Lise. A father and son sorta thing.

ANNALISE

I know, honey. I know.

DUSTY

I don't know, babe--

ANNALISE

(cautious)

What, Dusty?

DUSTY

(looking for the words)

It's just sometimes...this job... I don't know...and now this.

ANNALISE

That's foolish talk, Dusty. You know we need the money.

DUSTY

I know, I know.

ANNALISE

What with Marcus' orthodonture, Emily's ballet, not to mention the new one on the way...

DUSTY

(terse)

I know.

Annalise backs off. Dusty stewes with frustration.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

I just want him to have some of the things I couldn't have.

Annalise drops the fork once more and takes his hand.

ANNALISE

And he will, honey. One day. Don't worry.

DUSTY

I know. Check's in the mail, right.

Annalise smiles.

ANNALISE

Right.

She returns to her coleslaw as Dusty continues brooding.

DUSTY

There's sumthin' else.

ANNALISE

(mouthful of food)

What's that?

DUSTY

I saw somebody today. Somebody
from the past...

Just then, Marcus and Emily come tearing across the restaurant carrying a big gift-wrapped package.

ANNALISE

Oh, hush, here come the kids.

Marcus and Emily rush to the table fighting over the package.

MARCUS

I want to give it to him!

EMILY

No, I want to!

ANNALISE

(mildly threatening)

The both of you can give it to him.

Marcus and Emily offer the package to their father. Dusty reluctantly takes it from them.

MARCUS & EMILY

Happy birthday, daddy!!

DUSTY

Thank ya, kids.

Dusty opens the package. Marcus and Emily titter excitedly. He rips off the brightly colored paper, opens the box beneath.

DUSTY'S FACE

A snapshot of dread and despair. From inside the box, Dusty pulls a big grey sweatshirt. On the front of the shirt is a government seal bearing the words "Federal Bureau of Investigation." One of those shirts for tourists.

Dusty swallows hard and looks to his Annalise. She smiles apologetically.

MARCUS
(very excited)
See, daddy, just like the real
thing!

Dusty looks to his son and tries unsuccessfully to smile.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - RUNYON HOUSEHOLD - LATE NIGHT

Dusty Runyon is having sex with Annalise from the side, the way they might teach in a Lamaze class. They rock back and forth mechanically, their minds in other places. Finally, Annalise pulls the plug, holding her back in pain.

ANNALISE
Dust? Honey? Stop. Let's stop.
OK?

DUSTY
OK.

Rejected, Dusty turns away from Annalise.

ANNALISE
Oh, honey, I'm sorry. It's just my
back and all.

DUSTY
That's OK. No sweat.

ANNALISE
I know it's hard.

DUSTY
Not so much...not anymore.

ANNALISE
No. I mean me being pregnant
again.

DUSTY
(realizing)
Oh...yeah...well it's not so bad.

ANNALISE
Are you sure?

DUSTY
(his face in the pillow)
Cake and ice cream, Hun. Cake and
ice cream.

Dead silence. Annalise looks up at the ceiling and takes on
an innocently seductive tone.

ANNALISE
You know, I could always do it with
my hands. Or my mouth. But you
might want to pull it out before,
well, you know.

Dead silence. Annalise decides to sweeten the deal.

ANNALISE (CONT'D)
Or maybe you could just leave it
in. After all, it is your
birthday.

Still, Dusty says nothing.

ANNALISE (CONT'D)
What'dya think honey?

BEAT.

DUSTY
No. That's alright. It's been a
long day.

ANNALISE
Are ya sure?

DUSTY
Yeah.

ANNALISE
Alright.

Satisfied, Annalise turns away from Dusty and settles down to
sleep. Another moment of silence. Then...

ANNALISE (CONT'D)
Good-night, Dust. Happy birthday.

Dusty stares up into the darkened ceiling, wide-awake, blue-
balled.

TITLE CARD: "TUESDAY"