

# True Detective

Chapter Two: "Seeing Things"

by

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TRUE DETECTIVE  
Chapter Two: 'Seeing Things'

TITLE CREDITS.

BLACK.

COHLE (V.O.)  
Back then, not sleeping. I'd lay in  
the dark. I'd think about women. My  
wife. My daughter.

FADE IN:

INT. COHLE FAMILY APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY

A YOUNG COUPLE on a bed, with a year-old BABY between them. Light diffuses through thin curtains over a large window as the young parents delight in the child, playing with her. Rustin Cohle, 26, with his WIFE and daughter--

COHLE (V.O.)  
Who knows why we choose the ones we  
do? Some just have your name on  
them. Like a bullet. Or a nail in  
the road.

Off the happiness of the parents and their baby--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

The established interview room- old table, bulletin board, institutional walls. RUSTIN COHLE, 51, sits before us, three BEERS into his six pack, cigarettes beside a mug. The flame-and-dice TATTOO visible on his forearm, he speaks into the camera, drinks, smokes--

COHLE  
...Sorry. I drift when I have a  
few. S'why I like to drink alone.

He finishes the can--

COHLE (CONT'D)  
Still won't tell me about the new  
one..? Alright. None of my  
business, you guys don't want to  
fill me in.

He waits a beat, watching his questioner, pops open a new beer--

COHLE (CONT'D)

None of my business, you tell me  
you lost most of our old files in a  
basement flood...

I/E. CID CAR, MOVING - DAY

ON a black, unmarked CID car cruising through the Ozark foothills. Rust Cohle, 31, rides passenger as MARTIN HART, 36, drives them into a frosty, rural landscape, pine-covered hills marked with dirt driveways, trailer parks and ramshackle homes, dense woods and hazed mountains in the distance. Dollops of SNOW spotting the edges of things--

HART (V.O.)

We dug up the victim's mother after  
talking to her ex in Pine Bluff.  
Piece of work, that guy.

EXT. LEWIS HOME, OZARKS - DAY

A dilapidated CINDERBLOCK BUNGALOW with corrugated metal roof, its small yard a tangle of knee-high weeds and debris. Cardboard covers one of the front windows. Cohle and Hart step out their car in the high grass, move toward the house--

EXT. LEWIS HOME, FRONT DOOR - DAY

A WOMAN, 60s, opens a plywood front door for the detectives. She's thick, stone-faced with her thin gray hair pulled into a greasy pony-tail, a tent-like house dress making a solid mound of her. From the darkened doorway she squints upward at the detectives, into the daylight--

INT. LEWIS HOME, OZARKS - DAY

Rust, Martin, and the WOMAN (ELLEN LEWIS), sit on ancient furniture in a cramped LIVING ROOM. Ellen is weeping, wiping her eyes as Rust and Martin exchange a glance--

They look around the house, NOTICE a very old TV in one corner, and in another, a VOTIVE KNEELER before a STATUE of the Virgin Mary, the statue framed by flea-market PORTRAITS of Christ and the Madonna. Cast iron STOVE, makeshift chimney with ash gathered beneath it in a pile. On a shelf, a few family PHOTOGRAPHS--

HART

Far as helping us find out what  
happened, Mrs. Lewis. Maybe you  
could remember the last time you  
saw your daughter?

Ellen dabs at her eyes with a rag--

ELLEN

It'd be... maybe a month, I think.  
Last time. She brought me some  
supper.

COHLE

She call since then?

ELLEN

I- I don't have a phone.

Ellen turns to the kneeler, the portraits above it--

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Bright Lady! What else do you  
want?!

She breaks down again, gathers herself. Meanwhile Hart looks  
uncomfortably at Cohle, but Rust's eyes are tracking details  
of the house--

Soot-stains on the low ceiling, dirt, dust, old newspapers.  
ON the row of PHOTOS on the shelf-- a young girl that must be  
DORA LANGE, wearing an inscrutable expression. In one photo,  
she's about twelve, and a MAN stands behind her, shadowed--

COHLE

Mrs. Lewis... how about her father?  
Did they have a relationship?

ELLEN

Him? Why? What did she say?

HART

No, Mrs. Lewis, we're asking if  
he's around, if they were close.

ELLEN

Why wouldn't a father bathe his  
child?

Glances between the partners and Ellen--

COHLE

...Is your husband here? Can we  
talk to him?

She becomes solemn, shakes her head, sets her jaw proudly--

ELLEN

Died on the road. Drove a  
Peterbilt, rolled over when he took  
an exit too fast. Outside of Rowan,  
Oklahoma. May 11th, 1984.

COHLE

What about the last time you saw Dora? What was she like-- how'd she seem, I mean?

ELLEN

...She's had a little trouble. But I thought there'd be time yet, for her. I waited. She said she'd started going to church. Said she'd been talking to a priest--

She chokes. Detectives exchange looks, Hart re-taking lead--

HART

She have any specific reason for seeing you, last time she came around?

ELLEN

...No. No, she said she just hadn't been by in awhile. Brought me spaghetti... She knows I don't have any money, if that's what you mean.

HART

How about her ex-husband, Charlie Lange?

ELLEN

Him? He's in prison.

HART

You get along with him?

ELLEN

...They both grew up together... They always want more, you know, kids... How do you keep them from wanting what's bad for them?.. Why'd the Lord make people this way? That we can only want what hurts us?

They give her some space with her desperation, then--

HART

...She seem to be doing alright, last time you saw her?

ELLEN

She seemed alright. Yes. A little happier. More positive. I was glad she'd been talking to a priest.

At once, Ellen clutches her head, grimaces as if in the throws of a terrible migraine. She groans. Hart moves to her side--

HART  
Mrs. Lewis?

ELLEN  
...My headaches. I get storms...

NOTICE Rust continues watching her interaction with Hart impassively, almost coldly. Gradually, she pushes out of the pain--

ELLEN (CONT'D)  
Worked at a dry-cleaners twenty years. Now I get headaches. I had to handle all these chemicals for such a long time. That's what's wrong with my nails--

She holds out her hands, shows her NAILS; they're yellow and gnarled, fungal, and the ends are soft and rotted off--

Creepsville. Off Cohle and Hart's look to one another--

INT. CID CAR, MOVING - DAY

ON the detectives' car as it travels southward on Highway 71, through the wintry geography of the Ozark foothills. Hart drives, Rust sits back, staring ahead, thinking to himself--

Hart clocks Rust in thought, and as if the silence bothers him--

HART  
Piece of work, right? My mother, Donna Reed type. Hot meals. Lunches packed.

Rust doesn't respond--

HART (CONT'D)  
...Your mom still alive?

COHLE  
...I guess so.

The answer jabs Hart, Cohle's indifference taken as an inchoate stab against family values. Cohle doesn't engage him further, keeps thinking to himself. Visibly annoyed, Hart turns back to the road--

HART (V.O.)  
My parents?

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

MARTIN HART, 56, suited, robust, speaks to his interviewers--

HART  
My father, you know, I had about  
six inches on him, and even when he  
got old, I'd still say he could  
take me... Cobbler. Sold shoes.  
Made shoes. Navy in World War Two.  
Swam to North Africa when his PT  
Boat went down...

There is a kind of boyish pride in Hart's tale, informed by a  
matrix of private inflations--

HART (CONT'D)  
He was tough. But fair. You always  
knew where you stood with him...  
Cancer. '95. Mom passed a couple  
months after him. Married forty-two  
years.

A conservative idealization of marriage and parenting is  
discernible in Hart's recollection. He watches the camera as  
though being asked a question--

HART (CONT'D)  
No. Rust's mom lived somewhere out  
West, and he didn't talk about his  
Dad... To me, looking back, the  
family stuff... I think part of  
Rust's problem was that he needed  
things he wouldn't admit to.

On that succinct analysis--

EXT. GAS STATION / CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

ESTABLISHING-- a rural GAS STATION surrounded by desolate  
fields and dark forest, snow-dappled. Tires, car parts,  
junkyard effluvium. NOTICE the black CID CAR parked at the  
entrance--

INT. GAS STATION / CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

FOLLOW along the store counter, its pornography and tobacco  
and cheap impulse buys, to the end, where Cohle and Hart  
stand over a store ATTENDANT, CARLA EUSTICE--

She's large, corn-fed and plain, wearing a work vest and sitting in a chair at the end of the counter, crying as the detectives look down. Though on duty, she drinks from a fresh 40 OZ. of malt liquor--

CARLA

--And the worst is that I had a feeling. Like maybe something was wrong with Dora and I should call her--

Carla looks to Cohle and Hart for assurance. A ribbon of TATTOOED STARS winds out of her collar and halfway up her neck--

COHLE

You remember the last time you talked to her, Carla? Last time you saw her?

CARLA

She came by my place. She needed somewheres to crash, and I let her spend the night... Charlie needed some cash. I told him she wouldn't be able to help, but I gave her the message. Told her to call him.

COHLE

She was homeless?

CARLA

No, not the way she said it. She seemed, it don't matter now, but I guess she'd gotten into the christy again. Or something. She said it was just for the night. I hadn't seen her in a long time, and I could tell things were hard on her. I shoulda helped out more. I had a feeling...

HART

You clean, Carla?

Carla's eyes dart. She shrugs, almost ashamed, drinks--

COHLE

Don't worry about that. What'd she say to you? How was she?

CARLA

Thin. Loopy, like I'm saying. On something...

(MORE)

CARLA (CONT'D)

Oh- like this nursery rhyme? I woke up in the night cause I heard her. She's curled on the couch. Blanket pulled up. And she was repeating this rhyme... I think I'd heard it before. Something like, 'I met a man on the stairs, but he wasn't there or anywheres.' I don't know. Weird. I went back to bed.

COHLE

...'Yesterday upon the stair, I met a man who wasn't there... He wasn't there again today.'

CARLA

That's it.

COHLE

...'I wish, I wish he'd go away.'

She looks between the two detectives, Hart watching Cohle for explanation--

COHLE (CONT'D)

It's a poem. Antigoneish.

Hart slightly baffled, back to Carla--

HART

You have any idea where she might've been staying? Landlord at her last address said she moved out about a year ago.

CARLA

Yeah. No, she moved out of there. She might've had a fella for awhile? There's this, like, women's shelter? It's outside Fayetteville, um, up near the highway before Springdale. I know she went there sometimes. Where the Wal-Mart is.

HART

How far back you and Dora go, as friends?

CARLA

Since junior high.

HART

You knew her father?

Carla drinks--

CARLA

...You gonna ask about the baths?

Cohle and Hart show no reaction. A beat as Carla hits her 40--

CARLA (CONT'D)

...I can sense things sometimes...  
Do you- do you think I knew this  
was going to happen to Dora..?

She looks between the two cops, pleading for acquittal--

Cohle just shrugs--

INT. CID CAR, MOVING - DAY

Late afternoon. Hart drives as Cohle watches out the window, always observing the icy landscape. FROST covers the glass, and light ripples and bounces off the ice--

Cohle's POV FX: a small BIRD appears within the frost, flickering, its wings rising to the light, flapping once before it evaporates to runny ice on the glass--

Almost a trick of the light--

ON COHLE, shutting his eyes hard, as if fighting the vision--

COHLE

...We're doing this wrong.

HART

Your expert opinion.

COHLE

We're trying to learn more about her. We should be trying to learn more about him.

HART

There's nothing to go on with him.

COHLE

Hits up prosts. Self-hating.  
Artistic. Possibly trained in  
taxidermy. Religiously inclined.

HART

Every person within a thousand  
miles is religiously inclined.

COHLE  
 (to self)  
 ...Unless... was he mocking?

Hart watches Cohle sort through his own thoughts--

HART  
 Listen, I can appreciate a kind of academic model you're adding here--

COHLE  
 She sounds sad, Marty. A tired, ripped-up person on her last legs. Made her a good target for our man, but it wasn't personal. Prost yards would be his hunting grounds. We should be on that, put Demma and Lutz on victim background.

HART  
 Ninety-five percent of murders are committed by someone the victim knows.

COHLE  
 And in what percentage of those murders does the DB have wings soldered to their back?

Hart scowls, doesn't retort, acknowledging the point--

COHLE (CONT'D)  
 I'm telling you, there's a scope to this. A vision. She was just chum in the water. We should be working on methodology.

The car passes out of frame, but the camera lingers on the ice-laced hills under a deep gray sky, as though they watched us back--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Martin Hart, 56, speaks to the camera--

HART  
 ...Well, you're looking for a narrative. That's the job. You're just trying to find the story that fits. Crime scene protocols. Interrogate potential witnesses. Parcel evidence. Talk to people. Talk to everybody. Establish a timeline. Build a story... Days.  
 (MORE)

HART (CONT'D)

Weeks. That's still how it's done,  
yeah..? You talk to people.

Off his point--

INT. PLATINUM CABARET, SPRINGDALE - DAY

Inside an empty STRIP CLUB where a homely woman gyrates lethargically on a pole for no audience. A MANAGER (40s) speaks to Cohle and Hart near the bar. The Manager holds a PHOTOCOPY of Dora Lange's mug shot--

MANAGER

Gave her a couple day shifts. She only showed up for one. Wasn't good-looking enough to put up with that kind of shit.

ON Cohle, scrutinizing the man's face as he hands back the mug shot--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Rustin Cohle, 51, semi-relaxed with his beer--

COHLE

You fill in blanks. Try to account for the state of things using objective correlatives... Like historians, writing a secret history. ...That's why you're talking to me, yeah?

On the slightest sense that he knows something his interviewers don't--

EXT. WOMEN'S SHELTER, ARKANSAS - DAY

Day shading toward evening. A small brick BUILDING in a rundown patch of county between Fayetteville and Springdale, Arkansas. Cohle and Hart stand at the front door, looking up at a sign which reads 'ST. JOHN'S HOUSE OF WOMEN' - 'Love and Shelter abide Within'--

COHLE

Next on our tour of female tragedy...

INT. WOMEN'S SHELTER, KITCHEN - DAY

Inside the home's KITCHEN, Cohle and Hart stand before a casually-dressed NUN (60s) and FOUR WOMEN, aged 25-40, who share TWO PHOTOCOPIES of Dora Lange's mug shot between them.

Dishes and food suggest that the Nun was directing the women in preparing dinner prior to the detectives' entrance. The WOMEN seem reticent in the company of the police--

NUN

Yes. She's been here. Hasn't been around of late--

WOMAN 1

Maybe two weeks? Think that's the last time I saw her.

WOMAN 2

She just come for dinner a few times. I don't think she stayed here.

NUN

No. She didn't stay here.

HART

You all maybe know where she did stay?

The women look between each other, shake their heads--

NUN

A lot of the women come through here, they don't have permanent places.

The Nun puts down the photocopy and returns to preparing dinner--

WOMAN 3

...I talked to Dori before.

WOMAN 1

Me too.

HART

Anybody know if she had a boyfriend, a man?

The woman glance at one another--

WOMAN 3

...She had a husband in jail. Pine Bluff, I think.

NUN

...She asked me before, about taking vows.

(MORE)

NUN (CONT'D)  
 She once asked me what it meant,  
 being a bride of Christ. I remember  
 that...

The Nun moves to put a dish in the oven--

NUN (CONT'D)  
 Not a serious inquiry, you  
 understand... Something's happened  
 to her, yes?

She and the other women face the detectives--

NUN (CONT'D)  
 Happens now and then. Men of your  
 vocation come see us. Ask  
 questions.

She makes the sign of the cross--

NUN (CONT'D)  
 (to girls)  
 We'll hold a mass for her, Sunday.

The women nod to one another grimly--

I/E. WOMEN'S SHELTER, ARKANSAS - DAY

FOLLOW the Nun as she leads the detectives out. Cohle and Hart clock the features of the home as they walk-- everything old but immaculately clean, shelves full of books, many of them more progressive than one might expect, WOMEN appearing and shrinking back into doorways at their presence--

NUN  
 Usually ten to fifteen here at one  
 time. No room for more than that.  
 Get more for the meals. I'll pass  
 Dora's picture around.

HART  
 And you got our cards. Anybody  
 remembers anything, ring us up.  
 Totally anonymous.

COHLE  
 Anything at all. No matter how  
 irrelevant it seems.

She opens the door and the two detectives step outside--

NUN

A lot of the women here have problems trusting men... I'll do what I can.

COHLE

They can trust us.

The Nun looks over Cohle and seems flatly unimpressed. She just steps back, watching him as though she glimpsed a threat, shutting the door--

Cohle and Hart walk back to their car--

HART

You got a way with folks, Rust. They warm up around you.

COHLE

I make friends and influence people.

They climb in the car--

INT. ARKANSAS STATE CID - NIGHT

Back in the HOMICIDE DIVISION of the State Police. DETECTIVES milling about (DEMMA, LUTZ, GERACI, FAVRE). LT. QUESADA talking on the phone--

HART (V.O.)

See what the other boys had before we called it a day.

Hart and Cohle enter the squad room, acknowledged by the RECEPTIONIST. They walk through the division toward the BIG BOARD established for the Dora Lange Case--

Demma and Geraci approach Hart--

DEMMA

Landlord said she moved out a year ago. Lost the deposit. Never heard from her. Neighbors check out. Only ones remembered her said she used to come home in the mornings. A lot.

Demma's eyes are a little glazed, and he and Geraci display the barest physical signs of inebriation--

HART

Thanks.

COHLE

(sniffs)

You two canvas the bars pretty heavy?

GERACI

Up your ass, Cohle. Do your own legwork, you rat fuck.

COHLE

What'd you call me?

GERACI

S'what's going on here, right?  
(re Cohle)  
Company Man here's working CID for the Feds.

Cohle puts his finger in Geraci's face--

COHLE

One time. Say it again rummy.

Geraci lunges at Cohle, who side-steps and bitch-slaps the back of his head. Then Hart and LT. QUESADA are between the two, shoving them apart--

QUESADA

What the hell is this?!

HART

(to Geraci)

Goddamnit, Jerry. Go home.

Geraci backs down, straightens his tie--

GERACI

Nothing, Loo. Breaking balls.

Hart looks at Cohle, who's eye-fucking Geraci. NOTICE that no one likes matching stares with Cohle for very long. Geraci and Demma walk out the squad room, snide--

GERACI (CONT'D)

New kid likes talkin out the side of his mouth.

Quesada stays with Hart and Cohle, awaiting explanation. But LUTZ and FAVRE approach, Lutz reading from his notepad--

LUTZ

Got a couple hits from working girls. Nothing special.

(MORE)

LUTZ (CONT'D)

Nobody close to her. Few names  
recognized her as an occasional.

FAVRE

Like she tricked only now and then.  
Show up at a couple truck stops  
when she needed the cash. Got the  
names of which ones.

HART

Right.

QUESADA

(to Cohle and Hart)

What about you two? You get  
anything today?

Cohle and Hart look at one another, mutually acknowledging  
failure--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Martin Hart, 56, speaking to the camera--

HART

Few days like that. We ask around,  
talk to other working girls. Talk  
to her former employers...

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

A large grocery store where the MANAGER (40s) speaks to the  
two detectives--

MANAGER

Had her on checkout. She quit after  
a few months. No notice.

He shrugs, returns to stocking cans on a shelf--

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Hart and Cohle sit at a booth with ANNE (30s), whose  
appearance suggests a cut-rate streetwalker--

ANNE

She told me about where she came  
from. Her dad... But I never knew  
her that close. Sorry to hear what  
happened.

Cohle rubs his eyes as though he has a headache--

## INT. COHLE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Early morning, cold, windows frosted. Rust Cohle rises to start his day. His bed is a mattress on the floor, surrounded by books. No furnishings. A crucifix on the wall. FOLLOW him to a narrow bathroom, it's mirror as he stares at himself: sleep-deprived, hollow-cheeked--

COHLE (V.O.)

Days of nothing. That's what it's like, yeah? You work cases...

## INT. HART HOME, BEDROOM - DAY

Early morning. In his big bed with his WIFE, MAGGIE, Hart is happily woken by his TWO DAUGHTERS running into the room, bouncing on the bed. Embraces, tickling--

COHLE (V.O.)

You talk, you listen, look for something to break. Days of searching. Like lost dogs...

On the groggy, familial joy of Hart's morning wake-up--

## INT. TAXIDERMIST - DAY

A MAN (50s) stands behind the counter inside a Taxidermist's, stuffed, mounted ANIMALS clogging the walls all around, game animals- deer, duck, quail, a bear's head. Cohle and Hart stand on the other side, asking the MAN a question, dialogue only voice-over--

COHLE (V.O.)

Talked to something like ten taxidermists. Nobody had ever done a turkey vulture, much less sold one.

The Taxidermist shakes his head to answer their question--

## INT. CID CAR, MOVING - DAY

Hart drives while Cohle looks over the NOTES that fill the big legal tablet he uses. Hart watches him peripherally, the portfolio spread across his lap--

HART

Hey. Other night, you were over for dinner... Why didn't you go home, when I had Chris call for you?

COHLE

...I don't know. I guess I'd sobered up. And it wasn't as bad as I thought, meeting your family. I liked talking to them.

HART

'Bad'? Why'd you think it'd be bad?

COHLE

I didn't. Look--

He closes his portfolio, sighs--

COHLE (CONT'D)

I was married, Marty. Three years. We had a baby girl. She died, two years old. Car accident. Marriage couldn't handle it.

HART

Shit, man. I'm sorry. Sorry to hear that. I didn't--

COHLE

S'alright. It was just me, not you guys. I was worried... being around that kind of thing...

After a beat, Rust goes back to looking at his notes, and Martin glances at him from the corner of his eyes, a new sympathy in his appraisal--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

51, Rust Cohle smokes, listens to his interviewer. Perhaps slightly buzzed, he speaks a little discursively when he answers--

COHLE

Yeah. Just married once. Came close another time. That was later on. Marty introduced us. She broke it off. For the best. I gave her cause... I can be hard on people.

He puts his cigarette out, thinks, sips his beer. In an oddly confessional outpouring--

COHLE (CONT'D)

I can pick people apart. I don't mean to. But I can be critical. I have problems getting angry...

(MORE)

COHLE (CONT'D)

I've had the thought before that I'm not good for other people. Like it's no good for them to be around me long. I wear them down. They become unhappy. I don't mean for that. But life works its way through you... I can't say the job made me this way. More like, me being this way made me right for the job. I don't know. I used to think about it a lot. Not so much now. You reach an age and you understand who you are...

A beat as he stares into the camera, unable to fully hide the pathos in his eyes--

COHLE (CONT'D)

It's better now. I live in a little room out in the country. Tend bar four nights a week. In between I drink, and there's nobody around to make me stop. Which is good. I understand who I am. After all these years... There's a victory in that.

Cohle's flat gaze carries no sense of achievement--

INT. ARKANSAS STATE CID - NIGHT

The HOMICIDE SQUAD ROOM, fairly empty. NOTICE the BIG BOARD, and how little evidence has been added to the Dora Lange case. At their desk, Cohle is typing up the Daily Log--

ACROSS THE ROOM Hart speaks softly into the phone, trying not to be heard--

HART

(into phone)

No, babe. I understand. Of course I want to be there... It's just the case got moving, I needa follow something up tonight... Listen, you tell her Daddy's proud, and I'll see it next time... Alright, sorry. I love you.

Marty hangs up. Walks across the room to where Cohle is typing--

HART (CONT'D)

You alright doing the DL? I got somewhere to be.

COHLE  
Boy's night at Glory Holec?

HART  
Nice. Audrey's piano recital.

COHLE  
Sure. Go on.

HART  
Thanks.

Hart grabs his jacket and makes for the exit while Cohle regards him with a slight suspicion--

INT. SCARLET O'S TAVERN - NIGHT

A mid-scale bar, dim, mostly attended by adults or the middle-aged. Hart stands at the bar with Demma and Lutz, all three drinking boilermakers--

HART  
10 to 1 we never get this guy.

LUTZ  
You're giving yourself too much credit.

HART  
Don't let Cohle hear you say that.

DEMMA  
Fuck Cohle. He called my man Geraci incompetent.

LUTZ  
Steve is incompetent.

DEMMA  
You know he's ex-DEA or something? S'why Willey forced him on our division. The feds are running something.

HART  
No, no. See, that's you all starting shit, Chris. Bullshit rumor. Quesada already talked to him about it.

DEMMA  
What a relief.

The BARTENDER delivers three whiskey shots to the men, who all toast and throw them back. Hart starts moving away--

LUTZ  
Where you going?

HART  
Make a call.

INT. SCARLET O'S TAVERN - NIGHT

In a dark hallway, Hart leans against the wall, using the PAY PHONE--

HART  
(into phone)  
Alright if I drop by..? Scarlet  
O's... No I'm not. I barely had  
anything to drink... Leave the door  
unlocked?

He hangs up the phone, straightens his jacket. FOLLOW as he walks back to the bar, the barest hint of conflict in his features--

HART (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I did. I enjoyed being married.

When Cohle rejoins his buddies, he quickly fakes a grin--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Hart, 56, speaking to his interrogators--

HART  
I mean, sure, you miss some things,  
being a cop. And yeah, I probably  
could have worked it better than I  
did. But you know how it is. Things  
you see... You gotta decompress  
before you go being the family man.  
I mean, what's in your head, you  
can't have the kids around it...

A beat--

HART (CONT'D)  
I'm saying, sometimes you're not in  
a position to listen to twenty kids  
trying to play 'chopsticks.' This  
for my wife, too. She doesn't want  
to be around me when I'm this way,  
juiced on a case.  
(MORE)

HART (CONT'D)

So sometimes you go have a drink  
instead of going home... A tiny  
lie, as those things go. The kind  
that keeps the peace.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX, SPRINGDALE, AR - NIGHT

ESTABLISHING- a set of manufactured CONDOS in a suburban area  
north of Fayetteville. Hart's CAR parks at the curb. He  
climbs out, starts walking to a door--

HART (V.O.)

I mean the first lesson of  
adulthood is compromise, right?

EXT. LISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hart has just knocked on a door, and it opens onto LISA  
TRAGNETTI, 26, dark-haired and sexy in shorts and a loose T-  
shirt. She smiles at Marty, who holds up a bottle of RUM.  
Lisa rolls her eyes as she steps aside for him to enter--

INT. LISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

ON a STENOGRAPH MACHINE, parked in one corner outside the  
living room at a desk with a stack of paper (this telling us  
Lisa is a court reporter). MOVING into the living room,  
fairly tasteful, relatively cheap furnishings. A COFFEE TABLE  
where the bottle of RUM stands--

A TELEVISION shows continuing coverage of the Exxon Valdez  
oil spill--

Martin sits back on the couch as Lisa enters from the kitchen  
with two glasses of ice and a liter of Coke--

She starts to make the drinks, bending over in front of  
Marty, who reaches out and slides his hand up her shorts--

HART (V.O.)

...That was part of Rust's problem,  
like I's saying. A man needs a  
family.

She turns around and they start kissing, Martin yanking her  
shorts down--

TIME CUT:

INT. LISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The drinks sit untouched on the coffee table, ice melted.  
Lisa lies on the couch with Marty, wearing only her T-shirt.

Hart's in his boxers and undershirt, running fingers through her hair--

HART  
...What'd you do last night? I called up here late.

LISA  
What were you doing?

HART  
Working. Thought about dropping by. Where were you?

LISA  
Out with girlfriends.

Marty stops fondling her hair--

HART  
...I don't like that.

LISA  
What? You're jealous?

HART  
Don't be stupid. I mean... there's crazy people out there. A man killing young women.

LISA  
...Are you talking about that girl in Benton county again? In the paper?

HART  
(lying)  
...Not just her. There's more.

LISA  
More? Really?

HART  
We're not saying. Keeping it out of the press. But we're thinking he's been doing it awhile. Still doing it.

LISA  
Oh. Wow. Jeez.

HART  
There's no need to be going out. Have a drink at home.

LISA

I can't meet a nice man at home.

HART

That hurts me, see, when you say that. When you speak to me in a passive-aggressive way. I always talk straight with you.

LISA

Oh, excuse me. I meant, since you're married, I need to be considering my options as a young woman. I want things Marty. This is okay. But it won't last on.

HART

I want things, too.

Lisa shakes her head, leans away, reaching for her drink--

LISA

You just want your cake and to eat it, too.

Marty moves to her--

HART

What the hell good is cake if you can't eat it?

He buries his face in her ass. She gasps, sets down the drink and closes her eyes--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Rust Cohle, now on his last beer, telling his story--

COHLE

Me? I told you. I didn't sleep. Most nights I'd read manuals. Study. Go over case stuff...

He drinks--

COHLE (CONT'D)

Other times I'd just lie in the dark. Think about women.

INT. LUCY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A cheap, cramped STUDIO apartment by the railtracks, the single room cluttered with loose clothing, fast food bags.

A BED takes up most of the space, festooned with STUFFED TOYS, plush animals for which the WOMAN on the bed is much too old--

LUCY (20s, the prostitute Cohle met in ep. 1), sits cross-legged on the bed, a few baggies of PILLS in front of her, prescription bottles without labels. Rust Cohle, 31, stands at her window, exhausted, looking out at a streetlight in an alley--

LUCY  
You wanted blues?

COHLE  
Qualludes. The dopey stuff.

He turns to watch her rifle through the pills--

COHLE (CONT'D)  
What's it run?

LUCY  
Um... I'm thinking. I seen the blue go for three a pill.

COHLE  
We'll say two-hundred for all of them.

Lucy blinks back disbelief: the cop's not going to rip her off. Cohle hands her the money, which she takes wide-eyed, cautiously--

Cohle examines the bottle of about sixty pills while Lucy watches, relaxing a little for the first time--

LUCY  
Thought you might just take them.  
Or that you wanted something else... Some kind of something else.

She reclines on her bed, legs stretching under a denim skirt, bruises on her knees. An invitation--

COHLE  
No.

LUCY  
...Then I thought, you're a good-lookin man. You wouldn't need a shakedown to get some.

Lucy continues to watch Cohle as puts the cap back on the pills, stuffs them in his blazer pocket. During their interaction, Cohle remains civil but cold, unresponsive to her gestures. The light from the window is dowdy and orange, dramatizing his edge--

LUCY (CONT'D)  
 ...What's your deal?

SFX: SOUND of a BOTTLE BREAKING outside the window--

Cohle moves to the window, sees down below a PERSON run into SHADOWS across the street, disappearing--

COHLE  
 I don't have a deal.

LUCY  
 I mean, what you do. You're not like cops I know. Even the bad ones.

COHLE  
 Who're the bad ones?

LUCY  
 ...Nevermind... I thought you was gonna bust me last week.

COHLE  
 Not interested.

LUCY  
 Yeah. I know. You're kind of strange... Like you might be dangerous.

COHLE  
 Of course I'm dangerous. I'm police. I can do terrible things to people with impunity.

She goes quiet, and Cohle scans the stuffed toys on her bed, their paws and glass eyes an uncomfortable decoration--

COHLE (CONT'D)  
 ...You remember that girl I first asked you about? The blonde?

She nods--

LUCY  
 I still ain't heard nothing.

COHLE  
You know anybody might've?

LUCY  
No. I talked to everybody I know...  
But...

COHLE  
What?

LUCY  
I just thought of this... If she  
was gaming, and she was south side?  
I heard about this place. A kind of  
trailer park. Or campground like.  
Some of the working girls stay  
there. Supposed to, anyway. Kind of  
a, what you call it, co-operative?  
Call it The Ranch.

COHLE  
...Where's this?

LUCY  
South of Fayetteville. Around  
Devil's Den. Supposed to be, way I  
heard it.

COHLE  
...Hill people. Meth cookers.  
Bikers.

LUCY  
Yeah. You know the place?..

Lucy watches Rust's face as he thinks to himself, putting  
something together--

COHLE  
Take care, Lucy. I'll holler.

He exits, shuts the door--

On her bed with the pills, almost unconsciously, Lucy curls  
up with a stuffed bear and closes her eyes--

INT. COHLE'S TRUCK, MOVING - NIGHT

Cohle heads south in his TRUCK, moving down a rural highway  
toward his apartment. DAWN just starting to break, red  
spilling into the horizon's edge, barely lighting an  
ELECTRICAL STATION, an AIR TRAFFIC TOWER, BARBED WIRE fences--

COHLE'S POV FX: a system of TRACER IMAGES flashes from the things he passes, similar to a drugged effect. LINES of ELECTRIC LIGHT flickering in the dark sky around him--

Cohle squints, shakes his head, fighting the hallucination--

COHLE'S POV FX: In his HEADLIGHTS, the faintest images of a WOMAN'S FACE, like a poorly projected film, barely there--

COHLE (V.O.)

...Yeah, my 'vision problems'. I told Marty about them down the line. Like years down the line...

Driving, tracer images fleeting around him, Rust massages his temple--

COHLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Chemical flashbacks. Neural fallout from my time in the HIDTA.

The tracers grow in intensity, the light swallowing him as he drives, FADE TO WHITE--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Cohle, 51--

COHLE

As in High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area. Three years undercover... You know what that means?

A beat as he receives an answer from his interviewer--

COHLE (CONT'D)

That stuff's still sealed, huh? ...Nah. I'll talk about it. I don't care...

A beat as Cohle watches his cigarette burn, sinks into personal recollection--

COHLE (CONT'D)

...Blowout. Car swerved suddenly. She'd just stepped into the road...

He gathers his words a moment, having begun off-track--

COHLE (CONT'D)

Anyways. Afterward, Claire and I sort of turned on each other. All the ways a man and woman can.

(MORE)

COHLE (CONT'D)

Subtle betrayals. Cruelty... We resented each other for being alive, you know? ...I transferred from robbery to Narco, started going 24/7. Street rips, kicking doors.

Cohle pauses, puts out his cigarette--

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

In a darkened ALLEY behind a convenience store, Rust Cohle, 27, braces TWO DEALERS against the wall, gun to their heads, yanking baggies out their pockets and stuffing them in his own--

COHLE (V.O.)

Within a year I was ripping-off dealers and robbing couriers--

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A dim MOTEL ROOM. Rust sits shirtless at a table, doing a line of coke with a burnt glass crack pipe, some bronze scouring pads, and tequila nearby--

COHLE (V.O.)

...Holing up at a Ramada Inn with a couple eight-balls and Don Julio.

He falls back in his chair, his eyes crazed and blinking, lit by the window blinds--

COHLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Somewhere in there Claire left.

INT. TRAILER HOME - NIGHT

POV- looking upward at Cohle in a dim room. 27, dressed as a white trash tweaker, circles under his eyes, Cohle points a S&W NINE MILLIMETER at the camera--

COHLE (V.O.)

Somewhere in there I emptied a nine into a crankhead who'd been injecting his infant daughter with his own blood.

Cohle discharges all fourteen rounds directly at the camera, his face impassive, muzzle flash like a strobe, more blood with every flare. The only sound the voice-over--

COHLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Guy said he was trying to 'purify'  
 her.

INT. ROOM, POLICE STATION, LOUISIANA - NIGHT

Cohle, 27, still dressed like a tweaker, looking rough, sits in a room with FOUR suited POLICE OFFICIALS, listening as they speak sternly to him. One of them slaps a hand on the table, having insulted Cohle--

COHLE  
 (to group)  
 Bein' UC... It's like the persona I  
 maintain. Like, uh, Serpico...

MAN 1  
 Serpico never pissed himself after  
 passing out in court.

MAN 2  
 Serpico never executed an unarmed  
 man.

The men sit back and let Cohle fully digest his situation--

MAN 1  
 I think you better listen very  
 closely to what Special Agent Bokum  
 tells you--

One man, SA BOKUM, starts talking, laying out a course of action, but Cohle's voice-over provides the dialogue--

COHLE (V.O.)  
 State Attorney and IA Commander  
 gave me one shot. Keep your  
 profile, they said. Be our maniac  
 addict...

INT. BIKER GARAGE - NIGHT

A BIKER GANG, heavily armed, has assembled to conduct a deal in a converted garage/headquarters. Merchandise in TWO SUITCASES on a table, money and drugs--

NOTICE Rust Cohle, 27, facilitating the deal, dressed in riding leather and bandanna, no shirtsleeves, his flame and dice TATTOO visible down his forearm--

COHLE (V.O.)

They made me a floater. I became like some kind of trick got passed around to any state department or interagency task force that needed a deep cover narc. Got Special Agent Bokum beaucoup political clout.

ON Cohle, paranoid, suppressing his fear as he watches the BIKERS negotiate the deal...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Rustin Cohle sits behind the table, the beer gone but the ashtray and cigarettes still there. Traumatized eyes--

COHLE

Three years of that and I couldn't get the walls in my apartment to stop whispering. Or the carpet fibers to quit their high-pitched shrieking...

He reaches into a jacket pocket and produces a slim FLASK (unmistakably smartass, as he made his interrogators furnish him with beer)--

COHLE (CONT'D)

...You really don't know this?..

He unscrews the cap on the flask and sips it. Shrugs--

COHLE (CONT'D)

In January of '88 I killed three cartel men at the Port of Houston. Took one in the chest. Spent four months at the Northshore Psychiatric Hospital in Slidell. They offered me a medical pension. Jackpot, right? I said, No. I said, Put me on homicide somewhere... People owed me favors by then. Special Agent Bokum was State Attorney General Bokum, at that point...

EXT. RAINBOW APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Just barely inching toward dawn, the night/morning blue, objects tinged with snow and frost outside the ratty brick APARTMENT BUILDING where Cohle, 31, lives. His TRUCK pulls up, shuts off--

COHLE (V.O.)

For a long time after that, I don't  
really sleep. Nightmares. PTSD.  
Exhausted nerves. Whatever.

Cohle exits his car and approaches his front door. ICICLES  
line the eaves above the door, glittering pink in the new-  
rising sun--

COHLE'S POV FX: an ICICLE shimmers, fractures, and an ICE  
ANGEL manifests, turning once into the brightness, then  
fading back to squiggly light running down an ICICLE. Again,  
almost a trick of the light--

COHLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So back then, at times I'd see  
things. Neural fallout, like I  
said.

Cohle opens his door, pauses. He stands directly under the  
icicle, turns his face up to it, as if daring it to fall into  
his eye--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Cohle, 51, sipping his flask and smoking a cigarette,  
listening to a question--

COHLE

...Why homicide? Something I saw at  
Northshore. This quote from  
Corinthians. 'The body is not one  
member but many. Now are they many,  
but of one body.'

He lets the answer lie, hits his smoke. Let's them ask a  
follow-up question--

COHLE (CONT'D)

...I was just trying to stay part  
of the body.

Off the complexity of this nihilist's answer--

INT. ARKANSAS STATE CID, LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Cohle, 31, is in the locker room washing his hands when Hart  
enters. Both men looked tired. Cohle dries his hands and  
watches as Hart goes to his LOCKER and starts pulling out a  
new shirt and tie--

Cohle walks over to him, talking while Hart re-dresses  
himself, taking off yesterday's shirt and tie and replacing  
them--

COHLE  
Got something might be good. Some  
Prost co-op to the south, 'round  
Devil's Den.

HART  
Thought we were looking at the  
husband's old running buddies  
today?

COHLE  
Try this first.

Hart continues getting dressed, shrugs in acquiescence. He notices Rustin still standing by him, watching him--

HART  
...What?

COHLE  
Nothing, man...  
(sniffs)  
Wash up, you got some pussy on you.

Cohle turns away, moves to grab his jacket from his own LOCKER--

HART  
...Spontaneity. Key to a healthy  
marriage.

Cohle doesn't turn to him, gathering up his own gun and jacket from his locker--

COHLE  
...Yeah? That's Maggie, huh?

Hart's eyes widen in fury before Cohle can even realize the implication of what he said--

HART  
Hey, what's with you and your  
fucking nose?

Hart marches toward him--

COHLE  
What..? Nothing. Forget it.

Hart braces him, slams him into the lockers--

HART

I get a connotation of something being implied here. About my wife? About 'Maggie'?

COHLE

You saying that's wife, that high-tide you're walking in with?

HART

You got some opinion 'bout how my wife's pussy's supposed to smell?!

They struggle, but Hart pins him against the locker--

COHLE

...I meant you wearing the same clothes as yesterday, too. Coupled with. I didn't mean to imply anything about any... particularity, to the scent...

HART

You don't say fuck-all about my wife. Don't say her name.

The men stare at each other with inches between them, Hart's fists bunched at Cohle's collar, raising him up--

COHLE

(re Hart's hands)

You got some self-loathing this morning, fine. Not worth losing your hands over.

Hart chuckles at the threat, Cohle considerably outsized by the older man--

HART

How'd that work, exactly?

COHLE

I break both your wrists. You're a cop... You think I'm lying?

Hart studies his face, something cold in Cohle repulsing him. He lets go and storms toward the exit, snatching his jacket on the way--

Cohle watches him depart, let's out a long sigh and leans against the locker, calmly takes the pulse in his neck, as if idly curious about his heart rate--

INT. CID CAR, MOVING - DAY

Hart and Cohle drive south on 71 through the foothills of the Boston Mountains, deep hollers and hilly woods, layers of shaded obfuscation and cave systems--

Silence, tension--

Cohle thinks to himself, staring outside the window. Hart glances at him now and then, still fuming (his anger based in self-loathing, as Cohle guessed)--

Ahead a GREEN HIGHWAY SIGN reads 'DEVIL'S DEN STATE PARK 21 mi.'--

HART

You got a specific location for this place? Or we just going to wander around till we find it?

Cohle keeps staring outside the window--

COHLE

Gonna have to get directions.

HART

...Maybe you can just follow the smell.

A few beats pass, then Cohle starts laughing. Hart grins, chuckles with him--

EXT. HIGHWAY 71 - DAY

Both men laugh as the CID car exits the highway into steep hill country, descending into a labyrinth of cold shadows and icy, skeletal trees--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Martin Hart, 56, speaks--

HART

No. Except for what happened in 2002, we never fought. He was a pretty even-keel guy, Rust. Strange, but we got along.

EXT. DEFUNCT AUTO GARAGE - DAY

The CID car pulls into a small, junkyard-style SERVICE STATION, blocks of exposed concrete foundation where its fuel pumps used to be. The detectives exit the car, begin walking toward the open-air garage portion through high weeds--

INT. DEFUNCT AUTO GARAGE - DAY

Inside, TWO MEN on stools are fiddling with something on a work table as Cohle and Hart approach. We only hear Hart's voice-over for dialogue----

HART (V.O.)

...And he had some moves. Turned out he had a few CIs down this way from his time undercover. Told him some names to maybe talk to.

Both MEN are skinny tweakers with wiry, greasy hair, bundled in raggedy jackets against the cold. They appear to be working--

COP'S POV-- as the detectives get close, see that the two men have dismantled an old hi-fi SOUND SYSTEM, scattering the electronic guts over the work table--

Cohle asks these men something--

HART (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Tell you this, too. He had as good a bullshit detector as anybody...

The two men both shake their heads in adamant ignorance at Cohle's question--

EXT. DEFUNCT AUTO GARAGE - DAY

Cohle and Hart walk out of the garage, back to the car, dejected, having learned nothing. Hart climbs in, but Cohle pauses at his door--

HART (V.O.)

...And Rust had the keenest eye for human weakness I've ever seen.

Cohle doesn't get in the car, thinks, tells Hart to 'hold on' and starts walking back to the garage--

INT. DEFUNCT AUTO GARAGE - DAY

The two tweakers look up from their work table to see Cohle storming toward them--

COHLE

Sorry. I realized we got off on the wrong foot--

Cohle kicks over their stools--

COHLE (CONT'D)

--So I wanted to come back and put  
the right foot up your ass.

With a wild roundhouse swing he smashes a half-dismantled  
TURNTABLE over the head of one tweaker, grabs the other by  
his jugular, slams his face on the table--

INT. CID CAR - DAY

Car running, heater on, Hart waits with a measure of boredom.  
Casually, he sniffs his fingers... Then COHLE appears from  
the garage, walks back. Cohle opens the door and gets inside--

COHLE

We want to go south on 220. There's  
a loop off the shoulder before it  
hits 74... Gotta go down a dirt  
fishing road toward Lee Creek.

Hart is both surprised and slightly unnerved--

HART

...'Kay.

Hart puts it in reverse, backs out as the tweakers stagger to  
the garage entrance, one massaging his throat, the other his  
head--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Martin Hart, 56, continues talking--

HART

...Yeah. I mean, I didn't know  
then, but he told me later. All  
that undercover stuff... Looking  
back, I just think he hadn't quite  
transitioned yet, you know? Like  
soldiers rotating back into the  
world. He had some issues he had to  
work through. But he did. He got  
over it... He was a straight arrow  
for a long time.

A beat, as he listens to a question. Answers--

HART (CONT'D)

No. You want to know about that  
stuff, you need to ask Rust.

Off the dim sense that Hart is in some way covering for his  
ex-partner--

EXT. DEVIL'S DEN - DAY

ESTABLISHING- a forest of limestone cliffs and mostly bare trees, some verdant foliage, bucolic, steep declivities of rock and clay, creek SOUNDS in the near distance--

ON a DIRT ROAD cutting through the brush as the CID CAR enters the forest, bumping along the uneven path, taking tight turns--

EXT. THE RANCH - DAY

ESTABLISHING- a series of TRAILER HOMES- old, decrepit but restored -sit arranged in semi-circle, like a wagon train, an improvised, interdependent shelter nestled in an overhang of trees and forest. LAUNDRY hangs between trailers, all female items, an abundance of antennas on the roofs of the trailers--

The yard around is unusually clean, and only two CARS are nearby, both beaters--

A WOMAN (JAN) exits one trailer and crosses the yard to another, freezing to look up the rise as the CID CAR starts trundling toward her--

INT. TRAILER HOME, THE RANCH - DAY

Inside one trailer, somewhat messy with a scattering of magazines and dirty plates. TWO WOMEN lounge on a couch, watching a soap on TV. They look up as ANOTHER WOMAN (JAN, 40s) leads Cohle and Hart inside--

FOLLOW them down a thin hallway with three small bedrooms, each with a MATTRESS on the floor--

As though conducting a brief tour, Jan leads them back toward the kitchenette--

JAN

I'm usually here, 'cause the lease is in my name. Lots of girls come through, though...

COHLE

And this is what, like some hillbilly bunny ranch?

JAN

Excuse me? You might want to talk to Sheriff Bilson 'fore you start tossing accusations around.

HART

Relax. It doesn't matter. We're not vice.

COHLE

Something happened to a girl. We need to know if any of you knew her.

Cohle has taken Dora's mugshot from his jacket, hands it to Jan--

JAN

...Yeah... That's Dori. Huh. Something happened?

BETH (O.S.)

Something happened to Dori?

Everyone turns to look at the trailer doorway, where a very young girl (BETH) now stands, looking concerned--

INT. JAN'S TRAILER HOME, THE RANCH - DAY

Inside another of the trailers, this one neater and cleaner, cheaply furnished but well-maintained. Home decor includes a good amount of Precious Moments porcelain figures, other signs of childish romanticism. Beth sits upset, with Cohle and Hart on chairs across from her. Jan stands at the kitchenette counter, smoking a cigarette and listening--

Beth is petite, brunette, very pretty, and looks MAYBE fourteen--

HART

How old are you?

Beth's eyes dart to Jan and back--

BETH

Eighteen.

HART

You got I.D.?

BETH

Somebody stole my wallet. Last week.

Hart looks sternly toward Jan, who smokes with a nonchalant defiance. A hard-weathered woman who's made her peace--

COHLE  
 (back on track)  
 You knew Dora? Dori?

BETH  
 Yeah. I mean, a lot of us did. She  
 was here... a good bit?

JAN  
 For about three months, more or  
 less. Not every night.

BETH  
 Yeah. Stopped seeing her a few  
 weeks ago. She left a bag.

HART  
 You pretty good friends with her,  
 Beth?

She shrugs, sad, teary--

BETH  
 She was nice to me, when I first  
 came around. Gave me tips and  
 stuff.

HART  
 Tips about what?

Beth glances at Jan again--

BETH  
 ...Nothing. You know, just how to  
 be.

We might now NOTICE that something about Hart's gaze is  
 unusually intense when applied to this girl, Beth, a concern  
 that also includes a kind of fascination. His eyes linger too  
 long on her, thought not in a covetous way--

HART  
 You got any idea where she might  
 have been staying, these past few  
 weeks?

Beth thinks, wipes her eyes, glances at Jan--

BETH  
 I don't... Her ex's in prison. I  
 supposed she maybe just got a new  
 place and that's why we didn't see  
 her no more.

(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)

She'd been going to church. I's hoping maybe she just got it together.

HART

Anybody else around here would know?

BETH

I don't know... She talked to me more than anybody, I think.

HART

(to Jan)

We're going to need to question any of the girls might've known her.

JAN

That's a tougher ask than you think. Folks be staying away, they hear y'all are at the ranch.

COHLE

It's the best way to get us to leave quick.

Jan shrugs, puts out her smoke. Hart is still looking at Beth, who demurely shrinks under his gaze--

COHLE (CONT'D)

You said she left a bag?

Beth nods, wipes her nose and glances at Jan--

Jan nods--

TIME CUT:

INT. JAN'S TRAILER - DAY

Beth is gone. The detectives face Jan, who still stands at the counter, now smoking a new cigarette--

HART

That girl ain't eighteen. Sheriff know you got teenagers working here?

JAN

What do you know about where that girl's been? Where she's come from?

Jan displays a cool stridency--

JAN (CONT'D)

What kind of provisions you think the world makes for a woman in these parts? My husband proved out to be a lying piece of dogshit, and the only thing I ever got off him was his daddy owned a little hunting lease. This. You want to know Beth's situation 'fore she ran out on her uncle?

COHLE

Take it easy.

HART

There's other places for her to go.

JAN

Such dick-swinging bullshit from you. It's a woman's body, isn't it? A woman's choice?

HART

Sometimes. Don't make it right. Don't make it healthy. There's diseases.

JAN

Don't people walk around this earth all the time having sex for free? And unprotected? You want to stop disease you should stop people having casual sex... Why is it you add business to the mix, boys like you can't stand the thought? ...It's 'cause suddenly you don't own it like you thought you did.

Some part of this strikes Hart, but before he can respond, Beth enters with a small CANVAS BAG. She clocks the tension in the room, glances at Jan for approval, and hands the bag to Hart. He watches her sit as Cohle immediately begins to dig through the bag--

Hart watches him, observes the bag's contents: bundled CLOTHES, some MAKE-UP, a ratty NOVEL (Peyton Place), a small NOTEBOOK and a number of folded, yellow FLYERS--

Cohle starts reading the notebook--

HART

(to Jan)

How about her customers? Anybody saw her regular, you can point out?

JAN

Now that... that I would not know.

She and Hart lock eyes. She's unbudging--

Cohle stands--

COHLE

Ma'am. You've both been very helpful. Thanks much. You got friends at State CID.

He shakes Jan's hand, then Beth's, slipping her two twenties--

Hart seems briefly torn, like he's not ready to leave, but then stands, his glance repeatedly returning to Beth. She by now is becoming more comfortable with his attention, smiles shyly--

Then the detectives exit--

EXT. THE RANCH - DAY

WOMEN have stepped outside to watch the policemen trudge up the path toward their car. Cohle carries Dora's old bag, flipping through the small notebook. Hart seems perturbed, almost distraught--

COHLE

(reading notebook)

'Closed my eyes and saw St. Michael and his sword on fire over my head...' Marty... this is like her journal...

HART

Believe this shit? A girl that young? And you know the sheriff's got a stake in the place. Fucking Christ.

COHLE

(reading)

'...and his voice was silent but what he said was spelled in flames that came from his mouth...'

Both men climb in the car, slam the doors--

WOMEN'S POV-- they all watch as the black CID car backs up and turns around--

INT. CID CAR, MOVING - DAY

Hart drives as he and Cohle reach the main road, Cohle just finishing flipping through her notebook--

HART  
(re notebook)  
She sounds like a nutjob. Too much  
of whatever she was on, for too  
long.

COHLE  
It's... interesting...

A few beats pass as Hart drives and Cohle pulls the YELLOW FLYERS from Dora's bag--

HART  
...Figure we should maybe stay out  
here today. Check around the bars  
and truck-stops for johns, maybe  
knew her.

COHLE  
Yeah. Okay. Lookit this--

Cohle hands him one of the flyers--

ON the FLYER-- it's a cheap photocopy on yellow paper, a strange amalgam of COLLAGE cut from magazines and magic-marker TEXT. Images include a STONE CHRIST, a GLOBE, FLAMES and drawn, black TENTACLES reaching up into the flames. TWO EYES watching over it all--

PAN down handwritten TEXT that reads 'ARE YOU LOST? DO YOU FEEL THE FLAMES AT YOUR HEELS? JESUS CHRIST CAN SAVE YOU! YOU ARE OUR FAMILY - VISIT YOUR HOME - SPEAK WITH CHRIST - WORSHIP IN FELLOWSHIP - BE RESTORED - IT'S NOT TOO LATE!!!! FRIENDS OF CHRIST THE REDEEMER - 13590 CR 4588 - Northwest Arkansas--

HART  
Huh. Lot of those type places,  
expect the flock to canvas for  
them.

COHLE  
Make some time for it, we're done  
cruising johns.

Hart nods, gives the flyer back, and the car accelerates onto the highway--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Rustin Cohle, 51, listening to his interviewer and smoking. His flask stands on the table beside the ashtray--

COHLE

Nah. Nothing from any johns that time... Late by the time we headed back to Fort Smith...

Rust listens a beat as he receives a questions, smokes--

COHLE (CONT'D)

Think it was eating at Marty a little. That girl at the ranch. Him with two daughters.

In Cohle's expression is the barest hint that he is studying his interviewers--

INT. HART HOME, KITCHEN TABLE - NIGHT

Early evening. Dinner simmering on the stove. ON MARGARET HART, 35, sitting at the kitchen table, drink in hand, her face staring into the glass, cold, unhappy--

Martin stands over her--

MAGGIE

Just don't see the point... I mean, why bother?

Hart sits down beside her quickly--

HART

Honey, I'm sorry. It's just the case. I slept it off in the car. You know how I do. We been through this.

MAGGIE

It's like you don't want to be here anymore.

HART

What? Years we been through this. Sweetheart, listen to me. There is nowhere else I want to be.

Maggie looks at him. She is pretty, but not as young or obviously sexy as Lisa Tragnetti. We might notice, though, that Lisa is essentially a younger, fitter version of the same physical type as Maggie--

MAGGIE

I don't think that's true.

Defensive, hair-trigger, Hart stirs up some self-righteousness--

HART

Oh come on. Bad enough the shit I have to wade through on a daily basis. Now you bring me this feel-bad-for-me crap when I been working forty hours straight. I come home to the place, the one place where I know there's peace and love, and this, this--

She doesn't respond, and he re-mounts--

HART (CONT'D)

What do you want me to say? You want me to talk about a woman got killed, had wings melted to her back? You want me to talk about kids getting raped and beheaded? Then you're going to stop the "poor-me" shit?

MAGGIE

...That's what I'm doing, huh?  
Trying to make you feel bad for me?

He calms, touches her hand--

HART

You're my world, babe... But yeah, you know, sometimes I think you might have a penchant for self-pity... And I need you strong. So that I can do my job.

She watches him, her eyes subtly picking him apart. Without acknowledging any belief in him, she wipes her eyes and stands, moves to the stove--

MAGGIE

..Can you tell the girls dinner?

Marty rises, watches her back at the stove for a few beats, feeling that there is some opportunity for him here, a partial healing, if he can just cross the kitchen to her--

But he turns around and walks down the hall--

Dry-eyed, Maggie continues stirring a pot of mashed potatoes--



INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Rustin Cohle, 51, faces us, smokes and drinks--

COHLE

...I think of my daughter now, what she'd been spared. I feel grateful...

Cohle leans forward, as though the point he is making is his most serious--

COHLE (CONT'D)

Docs told us she didn't feel a thing. Went straight into a coma. Then, in that blackness, she just... slipped into another, deeper blackness... Isn't that a nice way to die. Painlessly, as a happy child? ...Problem with dying later is that by the time you grow up, it's too late. All the damage has already been done.

Cohle sits back, hits his cigarette--

COHLE (CONT'D)

...I think now of the hubris it took to yank a soul out the bliss of non-existence into this- this meat. No matter what else, the world hurts. 24/7. To force someone else into that hurt...

He drinks, shakes his head as if the idea is unconscionable--

COHLE (CONT'D)

...So my daughter, she spared me from the sin of being a father.

On Cohle's eyes, the layers within his gaze--

EXT. COUNTY ROAD, NORTHWEST ARKANSAS - DAY

ESTABLISHING-- a RURAL ROAD cutting through barren, rolling hills, dead yellow grass, desolate fields of scrubweed. Occasional stretches are demarcated with barbed-wire fencing, all under a metallic white sky, hazy mountains fringing the distance--

COHLE (V.O.)

That's how I learned to see it.

Cohle and Hart's black CID CAR passes down the county highway, dwarfed by the expanse of snowy countryside--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Martin Hart, 56, slightly irritated, adjusts himself in his seat--

HART

Listen. Can we cut through this a minute? I know what's going on. I got friends. I read... You caught another, didn't you? What was it, in Bastrop..? Wings.

He sits back, pleased with his intelligence, waits a few beats as an answer is given to him--

HART (CONT'D)

Right... And I understand our old files being lost in the flood, but you're taking the long way around... You keep asking about Rust.

He becomes more serious, studies his interviewers--

HART (CONT'D)

You're trying to jam somebody up.

Sit a beat on Hart's stern eyes, then--

INT. CID CAR, MOVING - DAY

Inside the detectives CAR as it continues through the same expanse of hinterland, cruising the desolation. JUNK in the fields, isolated SHACKS--

Hart drives while Cohle consults a MAP spread over his lap, the yellow FLYER for 'FRIENDS OF CHRIST' on top of it--

They pass empty plains, a ruined HOMESTEAD or collapsed BARN here and there--

HART

Doesn't make sense... There's nothing out here.

COHLE

Looking at the map, it's got to be around these few miles.

They drive a few beats, pass a burned out BUILDING with high gables but no roof, outer walls only standing in a field of overgrown sawgrass and scrub--

HART

Maybe it was like one of those tent revival places? Those things move around.

COHLE

...There's no date on the flyer.  
(thinks)  
Wait. Go back. Make a U--

HART

What? Why?

Hart slows and starts turning--

EXT. BURNED CHURCH - DAY

ESTABLISHING- the burnt-down BUILDING they already passed, looks like it might have been a small CHURCH, with its tall gables like steeples. Its front windows are broken out, SOOT STAINS running halfway up the walls, no door, no roof, KUDZU engulfing much of the structure--

The CID CAR pulls up. A field of BLACKBIRDS erupts beside the church to their right--

ON the BLACKBIRDS--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Cohle sits at the table, fiddling with his flask, responding--

COHLE

Wasn't like that. I mean, I could always tell what was real and what wasn't. I knew it wasn't real...So I'd just roll with it...

He pauses, lights a cigarette as his interviewer asks another question--

COHLE (CONT'D)

...No. They tapered off. Stopped all together after I was clean a couple years.

I/EXT. CID CAR / BURNED CHURCH - DAY

COHLE'S POV FX: out the window, he sees the FLOCK OF BLACKBIRDS lift into the sky in a tight cluster, and in a pointillistic abstraction, they seem to suddenly form a WOMAN'S PORTRAIT--

--Then immediately the birds scatter into a looser grouping, the picture gone. The flock keeps swaying over the field like a phantom thumbprint--

HART  
(re building)  
No numbers on the place. Looks like  
the fire was a long time ago...

Cohle looks away from the window, to Hart, then the building. The men open their doors--

EXT. / INT. BURNED CHURCH - DAY

SLOWLY PAN into the demolished CHURCH, following Cohle and Hart's POV as they walk through the TALL GRASS and through the open church entrance--

The church floor is covered in RUBBLE-- broken PEWS, shattered GLASS crunching underfoot, the walls vandalized, ALTAR crushed, strewn with debris, feces--

ONE WINDOW is still intact, a high one above the back wall. It's round, STAINED GLASS depicting the Madonna's Ascension. The LIGHT from the window is kaleidoscopic with stained color. It falls on Cohle and Hart as their feet crunch over the detritus--

HART  
Okay. What? Place been trashed.  
This is old damage. And no kind of  
lead, son.

Cohle stands still and looks over the walls, their graffiti, his eyes sharp and intense--

COHLE (V.O.)  
Back then, the visions... Sometimes  
I was convinced I'd lost it...

Cohle's eyes fall on a particular section of the wall. He starts approaching it--

COHLE (CONT'D)  
Marty...

Hart crosses the trashed space to Cohle, who's studying the wall. Hart likewise turns his attention to the wall--

POV-- on the WALL is a large, crude PAINTING which shows the SILHOUETTE of an unclothed FEMALE ANGEL, kneeling as if in prayer, a BEAM of painted light shining down on her figure. Though her hands are in prayer, her HEAD is laid down, as if resting--

It is unmistakably the exact pose in which Dora Lange's body was left to be found in the woods--

COHLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
...And other times I thought I was  
seeing straight into the true heart  
of things.

Cohle and Hart look at one another, confused as to what this image might mean. Then back to the wall--

BEGIN RISING OVER the detectives, through the open roof, framing the painting on the wall. Off the two men staring at this spectral representation of Dora Lange's body--

FADE TO BLACK.

END CHAPTER TWO.