

THE HIGHWAYMEN

*(The year is 1934. Frank Hammer, an experienced but slightly over the hill lawman who is on the hunt for the infamous killers, & bank robbers Bonnie and Clyde. Frank was, or is the best at what he does. He enters Henry Barrow's gas station/convenience store. **Harry Barrow** is the **Father** of the notorious killer **Clyde**. Frank sees no one around grabs a newspaper, places a nickel on counter. He about to leave when....)*

HENRY

(Hidden from view) Thank you sir. *(Appears)* They tell me you're from the Highway Department, but I know who you really are. I know a killer when I see one.

FRANK

I'm sure you would, Mr. Barrow.

HENRY

Look Mister. I now y'all are gonna have to kill my boy. It ain't your fault. He's gone past the point of redemption. But, there's something I want to say. *(Henry picks up photo of Clyde when he was a little boy)* Here. He wasn't born that way. He wasn't born with no dark soul. My little Huck Finn. That's what me and my wife called him. He loved bicycles. What he really wanted to be was a musician. I mean, sure, he liked to dress fine and get the girls and all that, but he wasn't a bad boy. I had high hopes.

FRANK

People don't always know who they are, until it's too late.

HENRY

Oh, you mean the one turn on the trail huh? That's what you mean? He stole a chicken. He stole a goddamn chicken, Mister, and the law took him for a bad seed. From that day forward he was dogged by the law.

FRANK

Dogged him?

HENRY

Yes, sir!

FRANK

Dogged him, or watched him?

HENRY

I guess it's all the same to you. You're a cop.

FRANK

Yes, I am. (*Long Pause*) Me, growing up all over. All I ever wanted to be was a preacher.

HENRY

A preacher? You expect me to believe that?

FRANK

I was saving up for the seminary. Working for a share cropper. Word got out that I was pretty good with a pistol. The owner, McSwain, called me up to the porch one day and wanted to know if I wanted to make \$150. I laughed and said "Who do I have to kill?". And he kept staring at me. That's when I knew....he wasn't talking about killing a coyote or a polecat. He was talking about his business partner. He wanted him dead. I told him I was gonna tell his business partner.

HENRY

That wasn't too smart.

FRANK

Well, I was 16! Like I said, I was saving up for the seminary. A couple of weeks later, he asked me to put some groceries in his house. Before I could go in, he pulled out a scattergun. Shot me in my head. My back. And my leg. For whatever reason, and I still don't know he stepped right over me and went inside. Maybe to reload. I don't know, but I scrambled away and hid in an irrigation ditch. I would have died there, except that black field hand came along, and found me. Carried me home. My Momma took care of me all summer. Come Fall, I packed up for the seminary. At least that's what I told them. And on my way out of town, I rode over to McSwain's. Rang the yard bell. He came out. And I shot the son of a bitch right there on the same porch. And there went my calling. Turned out, McSwain was a wanted man himself....and I became the law.

HENRY

The one turn on the trail.

FRANK

Yes, Sir. One turn.

HENRY

How come you're telling me all this?

FRANK

You ever think maybe there was something in Clyde that made him steal that chicken in the first place?

HENRY

Maybe he was hungry. Maybe we were all hungry.

FRANK

I won't argue that.

HENRY

He ain't gonna surrender. He'd rather be killed.

FRANK

You know, your boy may not have been born with a dark sole, but he has one now.

END