

Appointment on Telegraph Road.

Inspired in part by "The Appointment in Samarra" as retold by W. Somerset Maugham.

THE CAST(OUTS):

Jerome Pearl (JP), petty drug dealer.

Reagan Spenser, known as Ray-gun or Ray.

Johnni P — — —, Jimmy's older brother.

Jimmy P — — —, Johnnie's younger brother.

Act 1. JP's place in Detroit, 1980.

JP was high, Johnni and Jimmy shared a bottle, and Ray's fix was speed. Ray twisted one open, a black and yellow capsule, and dumped it into a glass of water. The powder hit the surface and darted like angry bees. "THAT'S why they're called yellow jackets," Ray said. "You can party all night and drink on it, too. Damn good, eh?"

" 'Eh'? What are you, Canadian, eh?" They all laughed too loud.

"What's that fat ass joint ya smokin, JP?"

"Thai stick. From my Nam boys. It's dipped in hashish. Or opium. Yah, opium.

"I got em to deal. But this one," JP said, waggling his stogie, "I pinched for personal use."

"No wonder your voice is so high," said Johnnie. "What's higher, JP, you or your voice?" They laughed until they cried. "You got em to deal? Hell, you don't sell shit."

"I can sell anything," said JP, offended. "Anything I get my hands on, I can sell. Coke, Tylenol #4, Vicodin, T's and Blues. Anything. Acid. It's all money in my pocket. Don't have to ask mama or daddy for nuthin, like you fairy queens."

Written by K.G. Jones.

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"I dropped acid one time in one eye," Ray said, speed-walking around the room.

"My right eye. Just my right eye."

All four of them paused.

"That's bogus, Ray-gun."

"Tripping in one eye not the other," Ray said, reversing direction of his pacing.

"You sit here, sell that smack," Johnni said to JP. "You gonna get busted."

"Not if you bros got my back. This is our street."

"We need a name," said Ray. "Every hood's got a name. "The Flynn's. The Young Boys."

"We could be the Dog Boyz," JP said. "B-o-y-z, boyz."

"Lame," said Jimmy, eyes closed, slumped on the couch next to JP.

"And a hand dance," Ray said. "We need a hand dance. And a move." He experimented, his hands and his feet hyper, bumping into the coffee table.

"You gonna end up in jail, prison or dead, guaranteed," said Johnnie. "You drivin' on the wrong side of the road."

"Prison or dead," JP repeated. "What the fuck."

"The world's gonna be a cold and lonely place when you admire it from inside a prison wall," Johnnie continued. "They gonna tell you when you can piss, eat, sleep, wash your body. Take a shower, drop the soap, get eight inches up your ass. You gonna be fresh meat. They take turns on you like you wearing stockings and high heels."

"Prison or dead?" JP repeated. "I don't think so." Jimmy stirred on the couch.

“Staring up at that razor wire fence,” Johnnie said. Wishing things could be different. You got money in your pocket now? Mr. Wanna-be so popular. Your lawyer paid by the state, you won’t have shit. You think you somethin special, like you the only one not gonna get busted? You think Ray-gun got your back? Better let him know what color dress to send you, little sister.”

“Prison or dead,” Jimmy repeated, eyes closed. He shuddered.

“Get real,” scoffed Ray, ever pacing. “You don ’t know shit. Want to get real? Let’s get out of here. Right now. I got the Caddy. That’s what’s real. It *hauls*. C’mon.”

“I got Codell coming over,” said JP. Got to wait on him.”

Ray-gun shrugged. “Whatever, man. Prison or dead? Not me. Death’s got nothin on me. Not if I blow this hell-hole.”

Act 2. The Caddy.

Ray’s father’s black Cadillac was a boat, a luxury automobile with a full tank of gas siphoned from Johnnie’s rusted out, hole-in-the-floor, dogshit-brown ‘67 Plymouth Valiant. Ray drove, Johnnie next to Ray. Jimmy sprawled in back, dead drunk.

They took I-94 west, racing, weaving in and out of traffic out of Detroit. Exit at Telegraph Road, speeding south through Taylor. A few more miles and Telegraph narrowed to a two-lane road with a yellow center line, a straight shot past Pennsylvania Road and then Sibley Road. Ray crossed the center line toward oncoming traffic, their headlights blazing closer and bigger until at the last second the oncoming car swerved

off the road and Ray swerved back onto his side. "Woo-ee!" Ray yelled. "Why did the chicken cross the road?!"

Past King Road, the Caddy drifted across the center line, headlights coming at them again, Johnni looking at Ray behind the wheel, Ray's eyes closed, Johnni alarmed: "Ray!" Ray's eyes opened, headlights of a pickup truck so close that they could see the driver in silhouette, the pickup veering onto the shoulder to avoid them, at the same time Ray yanks his steering wheel to the right, the Caddy's weight shifting to the passenger side, lurching off the right shoulder, Ray jerking the wheel to the left, finally regaining control. Jimmy in the back seat, passed out the whole time.

"I did that on purpose," said Ray.

"Like shit," said Johnnie. "You're fucked up."

They came to a ROAD CLOSED sign on Telegraph. "They paved it," said Ray, blasting onto new blacktop.

Ray-gun floored it, throwing their heads back. The Caddy trembled. At West Road, they blew through more ROAD CLOSED signs, the pavement so fresh that the yellow lines had yet to be painted. The road arced to the right but Reagan aimed straight ahead, leaving the rainbow of the road at a hundred miles an hour, crashing through a chain link fence bordering Oak Ridge Cemetery. In an instant far louder than you might imagine, the Cadillac met a tree and exploded in a cloud of debris, the Caddy, Ray-gun, Johnnie and Jimmie transfigured and strewn into pieces.

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