

THREE BILLBOARDS OUTSIDE EBBING MISSOURI

--Dixon & Mildred decide along the way--

Written by

Joel van der Lee

P: (403) 919-4820
E: vanderleejoel@gmail.com

EXT. CAR PARKED ON A BACK ROAD - DAY

DIXON and MILDRED lean against the side of the car, DIXON against the trunk, MILDRED against the hood. DIXON vacantly swings his shotgun back and forth.

DIXON

You decided yet?

MILDRED

Nah. You?

DIXON

Nah.

MILDRED stares into the trees and shuffles her feet.

DIXON (CONT'D)

Better decide on somethin', though.

MILDRED

Can't rush this.

DIXON

Can't rush this? Damn, Mildred. I'd say we're, give or take, about ten steps from God right now and we gotta decide in the next few minutes if he's goin' be happy to see us.

MILDRED

Oh please, you think God'd be happy to see you?

DIXON smirks.

They stand in silence. MILDRED shuffles her feet some more.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

Guess you're right, we can't be standing here all day.

MILDRED glances at DIXON, and DIXON glances at the trunk. Other than this, neither of them moves a muscle.

Another stretch of silence.

DIXON

You thinkin' bout her?

MILDRED

You serious?

DIXON

Yea I'm serious! Your head's gotta be clear as a church bell for this.

MILDRED

Well I wouldn't be down here yappin' with Officer Freddy Krueger if I weren't thinkin' bout her, now would I?

DIXON winces and gingerly touches his face. His fingertips brush the puffy, cracked, burnt left side that hasn't yet started to heal.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

Shit... Sorry.

DIXON

Nah.

MILDRED

No, really. Weren't enough I put it there, now I gotta scratch at it? Christ, Dixon...

A long pause. They listen to the rustling of the wind through the trees.

DIXON

My momma, this one time--

MILDRED

We ain't got time to talk about your momma-issues, Dixon.

DIXON

Whoa now! You owe me after that last lovely comment. How bout you let me speak, and we'll call ourselves a coupla odds that found ourselves even. Deal?

MILDRED

(pause)
Alright then.

DIXON

Alright then. So. My momma, this one time. I come home from work and she's watchin' TV. Now, I'd done somethin' that day. Somethin' that I weren't supposed to, and the whole town was in the middle of findin' out about it.

MILDRED

The 'Persons-of-color torturing'?

DIXON

This my story or yours?

MILDRED raises an apologetic hand and gestures to continue.

DIXON (CONT'D)

So, she sees me walk through the door and right away knows somethin's up. I ask her to shut off the TV, she does. I ask her to sit with me, she does. I tell her she can't turn on the news for awhile and, you gotta understand that my momma sees her TV more than she sees me, so it meant somethin' when she promised she'd do that too. Now, I'm not ashamed to say that I was hurtin' from what I did that day. But... I'm also not ashamed of doin' it.

DIXON chuckles.

DIXON (CONT'D)

Ouch! Put away them daggers you're starin', Mildred, I ain't finished yet. So, momma, she must see somethin' in my eyes, the way mommas do. She don't ask what happened. She just asks, "Dixon, you done somethin' wrong?" I nod. Then she asks, "He at least deserve it?" I nod. And then, for the first time I can remember... she holds me. She holds me and says, "Son, whatever done happened, I raised you tough and I raised you good. So you quit bellyachin' under my goddamn roof! Get out there and, if you gotta do somethin' bad, just make sure you're doin' it to do more good."

(chuckling)

Now, my momma has the disposition of a rusty nail, but I guess... I guess she taught me, Mildred, that sometimes doin' the wrong thing, and doin' the right thing... are the same thing.

A long pause as MILDRED absorbs DIXON's story.

MILDRED

He really deserve it, that black
guy? What you did?

DIXON

Let's just say... if you and I were
doin' this back then? Coulda easily
been him in this here trunk.

DIXON and MILDRED both glance at the trunk, then back at each other. There's a calm, mutual understanding between them.

MILDRED moves over to DIXON by the trunk and they POP it open. Inside is the CROP-HAIRED GUY, bound and gagged.

DIXON CRACKS him in the face with the butt of his shotgun, then roughly pulls him out of the trunk and pushes him towards the trees.

MILDRED closes the trunk, then retrieves a pair of shovels from the backseat.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

They lead the GUY a little ways into the forest before stopping.

DIXON

On your knees, fella.

The GUY falls to his knees and starts to plead through his gag.

DIXON (CONT'D)

None of that. You put yourself here
and you know how, so you better
face your destiny like a man.

DIXON raises his shotgun to the GUY's head. The GUY whimpers.

MILDRED

Wait! Wait... I think... I think
I'd like to do it.

A final pause. DIXON hands MILDRED the shotgun and steps back. MILDRED levels the shotgun and looks the GUY in the eyes.

Slow and steady, she exhales...

CUT TO BLACK