

FishRock
(Excerpt)

By

Anthony Wood

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tony@smokingmonkey.com

EXT. SNOWY CITY STREET - DAY.

A grey, rusted 1983 Chevy Camaro with a dented, primer red door is stuck in the snow on the side of the road. It's passenger side rear wheel is deeply entrenched in the snow bank. It is the cold, hard part of winter. Late January.

DOUG SCHMEERBACH, a scruffy looking man in his mid-forties sits behind the wheel of the car, gunning the engine. The wheels just slip and slide. Doug wears a maroon nylon jacket, scarf, knit hat and jeans. He has long, greasy hair and a handle bar mustache.

DOUG

Come on, you mother fucker! Come on! Fuckin' piece of shit!

BOBBY PETROKA is also in his mid-forties. He is pushing the car from behind, rocking it as it slides back and forth. Bobby wears a jean jacket with a hooded sweatshirt beneath, a sheepskin ear-flap hat, gloves, jeans and boots. His greying hair is long and he sports a salt and pepper goatee.

BOBBY

Whoa! Whoa, hold up!

Bobby breathes heavily. He holds up his hand.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Just hold up a sec.

TEDDY WHITLIFF stands off to the side with his hands in his pockets. In his late-thirties, Teddy is shorter than Bobby and Doug. He wears a parka, jeans, a scarf and a multi-colored knit hat pulled down close to his eyes. His long, curly red hair juts out from underneath.

TEDDY

You're going too fast. You can't gun it or you'll keep sliding. Just tap it a little.

Doug gets out of the car.

DOUG

I'll tap your fuckin' head, dip-stick. Son of a bitch...Winter sucks, man!

CUT TO:

A black and white high school yearbook photo of Doug. His hair is greasy and feathered and he wears just a hint of his mustache. The title under the photo reads:

DOUG SCHMEERBACH - SOUTH MILWAUKEE HIGH SCHOOL. CLASS OF 1984. CLUBS: NONE. ACTIVITIES: NONE. MOTTO: "SEX, DRUGS AND ROCK & ROLL. NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER."

CUT TO:

The men and their stuck Camaro. Bobby looks closely at the rear wheel. He kicks at it.

BOBBY
Maybe we should use Kitty Litter.

CUT TO:

A black and white high school yearbook photo of Bobby. His dark hair is slicked back and he is clean shaven. The title under the photo reads:

ROBERT PETROKA - SOUTH MILWAUKEE HIGH SCHOOL. CLASS OF 1984. CLUBS: NONE. ACTIVITIES: NONE. MOTTO: "GO GONZO! GET HIGH ON LIFE."

CUT TO:

The car is still stuck. Doug looks incredulously at Bobby.

DOUG
What the fuck...?!

BOBBY
You're supposed to keep a bag in your trunk... for emergencies. I read that once.

DOUG
Oh yeah, you never know when you'll run into a stray cat that needs to take a shit!

Teddy laughs.

TEDDY
Hey, idea!

Teddy takes a floor mat from the car.

TEDDY
Let's jam this under the tire. You know, for more gription.

BOBBY
(Shrugging.)
Couldn't hurt.

TEDDY
 (Singing.)
What goes up. Must come down...

Teddy jams the mat under the wheel then backs away near the front of the car. Bobby hunkers down to push as Doug gets in and puts the car in gear.

BOBBY
 All right! Hit it!

Doug revs the car. It rocks back and forth. He guns the engine harder. Bobby goes to the front of the car.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 Try reverse.

Doug switches gears and revs the car in reverse. Bobby pushes with all of his might. The floor mat flies out from under the wheel and hurtles at Teddy like a warped Frisbee. It strikes Teddy square in the face and sends him back into the snow.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 Whoa!

Bobby runs over to Teddy. Doug gets out of the car. Teddy sits up. His nose is broken and bleeding. He laughs.

TEDDY
 Holy shit!

CUT TO:

A black and white high school yearbook photo of Teddy. His hair is short and he wears a corduroy suit coat and tie. The title under the photo reads:

THEODORE WHITLIFF - MARSHALL HIGH SCHOOL. CLASS OF 1987.
 CLUBS: PHOTOGRAPHY, DEBATE. ACTIVITIES: DANCE COMMITTEE.
 MOTTO: "YOU NEVER KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING TILL YOU GET THERE."

CUT TO:

Teddy sits bleeding and laughing in the snow. Bobby looks down and smiles. He turns and looks at Doug. They both nod and shrug.

BOBBY
 I think we need a tow truck.

DOUG
Winter sucks, man.

CUT TO:

INT TEDDY'S DINING ROOM - THAT EVENING.

The dining room table is set for poker; chips, cards, ash trays and empty beer bottles.

Bobby and Doug sit at the table along with EARL, a thin, pasty-faced man with thick glasses and a blank stare.

DOUG
(Calling.)
Teddy, come on! I gotta win some
back here!

Teddy enters the room carrying some fresh beers. He has tape across his nose. Bobby shuffles and deals the cards.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Fuckin' four handed poker. Fuckin'
retarded.

Bobby looks around the room as he deals.

BOBBY
Hey Teddy, what's with the
woodwork?

TEDDY
(Passing out beer.)
Oh, I'm refinishing it.

DOUG
What the hell for?

TEDDY
(Sitting.)
I don't know ...make it look
better. (He tosses in some chips.)
Roll 'em on up, boys.

The men look at their cards. They all ante up except for Earl, who studies his hand with a confused stare.

DOUG
You want to ante up, Einstein?

Earl looks confused.

TEDDY

Hey Bobby, you goin' to Danny's on Friday?

DOUG

(Staring at Earl.)
Why is he even here?

BOBBY

Cause if he's not, we play three handed. How retarded is that?

(To Earl.)

You gotta ante up, Earl.

(To Teddy.)

I doubt I'm goin'.

Earl tosses in his ante.

TEDDY

(Tossing down two cards.)
Two for me. How come?

DOUG

(Staring at Earl.)
It's like he's fucking brain dead.

TEDDY

You don't like Danny?

BOBBY

(Giving Teddy his cards.)
No, he's all right.

DOUG

Three for me.
(To Earl.)
You want cards, shit for brains?

EARL

(Studying the cards, hard.)
Uhhhhh...

DOUG

Jesus Christ...

EARL

Uh...one...no, no...none. Yeah,
none.

BOBBY

Dealer takes two. His dog creeps me out.

TEDDY

What, Tuffy?
 (Tosses in a chip.)
 I bet five.

BOBBY

Fuckin' chihuahua's got an erection
 every time I see him.
 (Tosses in a couple more
 chips.)
 I'll see you. Raise five.

DOUG

Maybe he likes you.

TEDDY

The thing's huge, too. It's twice
 as long as his leg. Looks like a
 glowing red light saber.

Teddy waves his stiff arm around making light saber noises

BOBBY

The fucker jumps up on my lap with
 his big, glossy knob staring at me.
 Danny's like, "Go ahead, you can
 pet him." The dog bounces around
 the room like he's on a pogo stick.

DOUG

You know when I got worried? I was
 at his Christmas party and Tuffy
 came out of the bedroom without a
 boner. I could just see him humpin'
 the pile of coats on the bed.

Teddy humps in his chair and hums "La Cucaracha." They all
 laugh, except for Earl.

TEDDY

A little hand lotion, Mrs. Jones?

They laugh again.

DOUG

(To Earl, angrily.)
 It's your fuckin' bet, Diamond Jim!

EARL

Uhhh...Now, is...wait ...is a Royal
 Flush all the same color?

They other men throw down their cards.

BOBBY
I'm out.

TEDDY
I'm out.

DOUG
Fuck me with a fork, I'm done.

Earl smiles and collects the chips.

BOBBY
Well, I gotta call it a night. I
got an early day tomorrow.

TEDDY
Me, too.

DOUG
Me, too.

Bobby looks at Doug.

BOBBY
What do you gotta do?

DOUG
Shut up.

BOBBY
What... gotta hard day of sleeping
in? A little cold pizza? Meeting
with Rikki Lake at ten thirty,
Oprah at eleven? Then maybe a nap?

DOUG
Shut the fuck up.

BOBBY
No, really, all that Coke drinking
and having to get dressed by noon,
that's gotta take a lot out of you.

Teddy laughs.

DOUG
For your information, butt-wipe, I
got a job interview tomorrow.

BOBBY
What for?

DOUG
I'd rather not say.

TEDDY
Just remember, Doug, the key phrase
to your success is going to be,
"Would you like fries with that?"

Teddy and Bobby laugh. Doug smirks and makes a cranking motion with his left hand. His right middle finger slowly rises as he "cranks them the bird."

CUT TO:

INT. TEMPORARY HELP AGENCY - THE NEXT DAY.

Doug sits near a desk in a dingy office with paneled walls. Behind the desk sits MR. FURSTEIN, a large, slovenly man with a wrinkled suit, loosened tie and a pair of reading glasses that he peers over.

A cigarette with a long ash hangs from his lips. He hands some forms across the desk to Doug.

FURSTEIN
All righty...
(He clears his throat.)
We here at Berkely Temporary
Placement Services guarantee that
we can place you in a position of
employment for a limited time
period that best utilizes your
specific skills.

He peers over at Doug and looks at him warily.

FURSTEIN
Uhhh...What kind of special skills
do you think might you have?

DOUG
Why don't you fuckin' guess?

FURSTEIN
Okay, we can rule out charm school
instructor.

He jots some notes on a piece of paper.

FURSTEIN (CONT'D)
Well, I think we should run you
through a few tests. See what you
might be good at.

DOUG
(Knowing the routine.)
Right.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - THAT DAY.

A yellow pickup truck with an official city emblem on the door pulls up to a stop.

Bobby jumps out of the back with a couple of younger men and a blond woman. They all wear yellow hard hats and bright orange safety vests. Bobby also wears a leather tool belt filled with tools.

They pull a stack of orange cones from the back of the truck. The truck pulls away as Bobby waves to it. He instructs the others to position the cones in a semi-circle near the curb at the corner of the street. He pulls a walkie-talkie from his belt and speaks into it. He then takes a can of spray paint from his belt, shakes it, and starts to spray construction designations on the curb and sidewalk.

CUT TO:

INT. FOUNDRY - THAT DAY.

Teddy is busy at work in a large, smoky foundry. Wearing thick, leather gloves and safety goggles, he looks happy as he hauls glowing hot metal rings from a stamping machine and puts them into a huge iron bin.

A fork lift drives by honking it's horn. Teddy laughs and pats the operator on the back as he drives by. PHIL approaches Teddy. He is Teddy's superior, although he's a couple of years younger. He is clean shaven with a head of neat, dark hair. He wears a dress shirt and tie, dress pants and safety glasses. He shakes Teddy's hand. He says something in Teddy's ear and they both laugh. Phil heads off and waves goodbye as he leaves. Teddy continues to laugh, shaking his head.

CUT TO:

INT. TEMPORARY HELP OFFICE - THAT DAY.

Mr. Furstein is sitting behind his desk jotting some notes on a piece of paper. An egg timer ticks away next to him. It pings. Mr. Furstein looks up.

FURSTEIN

Okay, time's up. Pencils down.

Doug sits at a table with his arms crossed. A blank test and a broken pencil sits in front of him. He scowls. Furstein sighs and shakes his head. He opens a drawer of his desk and pulls out a small paper bag. He gets up, crosses over to Doug and stands above him. He pours out the contents of the bag in front of Doug; a large assortment of nuts, bolts and screws of varying sizes and thicknesses.

FURSTEIN (CONT'D)

Okay ...Let's try the Manual
Dexterity Test.

Doug winces and shakes his head.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - THAT DAY.

Bobby sits on the curb eating a sandwich and sipping coffee from a thermos. The other workers sit around him, digging into their lunches. They laugh and joke with one another as Bobby stares quietly into space.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE BREAK ROOM - THAT DAY.

Teddy makes his way to a table carrying his metal lunch box. He sits next to Phil and some other white shirts who eat hot lunches from trays. Teddy makes a joke as he sits and the others laugh.

CUT TO:

INT. TEMPORARY HELP AGENCY - THAT DAY.

Mr. Furstein munches on a gooey tuna fish sandwich. The bread slides and the tuna fish oozes out around his fingers and mouth. He's a mayonnaise mess. He makes check marks on a list in front of him. Doug sits in a chair by the desk eating a candy bar. Furstein licks his fingers, wipes tuna from the paper and sighs.

FURSTEIN

Well, Mr. Schmeerbach. I think we found the perfect position for you.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD CITY SIDEWALK - LATER THAT DAY.

Doug walks down the sidewalk with a large canvas bag slung over his shoulder. He walks up the porch of a house, takes a rolled up publication from the bag and rubber bands it to the door knob of the front door. He heads back to the sidewalk. He sighs and looks down at the endless rows of houses he has to get to yet. He scowls and takes off the bag.

DOUG

Fuck it.

He throws the bag into a snowbank and walks down the sidewalk.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN RANCH HOUSE - THAT EVENING.

Bobby's white Jeep Cherokee pulls into the driveway of his brown, suburban ranch house.

He gets out and sees his sons TOMMY, a lanky young man of fourteen and TONY a smaller, skinnier version who's ten. Tommy sits on Tony's stomach playing the classic game of child torture "Keep Your Head Up." Tommy slaps Tony's face as his head touches the ground.

TOMMY

Come on. Come on. Keeeeeep it up.
Gotta keeeeep it up.

TONY

Owww! Ahhh! Cut it out you dick!

Tommy slaps some more.

TOMMY

What was that? I didn't here that.

TONY

Ahhhh! Cut it out!

Bobby strolls by them, exhausted.

BOBBY
Hey, fellas.

TOMMY
Hi Dad.

TONY
Hi Dad.

Bobby walks into the house. Tommy goes back to slapping.

CUT TO:

INT ROMAN'S BAR - THAT NIGHT.

Teddy, Bobby and Doug sit at a table in the back of a small neighborhood bar. A few patrons mingle about, play pinball and throw darts. Many empty bottles sit in front of the men on the table.

Doug peels the label off of a bottle as Teddy sings "Whole Lotta Love" by Led Zeppelin. Bobby finishes his beer and belches. He looks over at the bar and sees a young, professional looking MAN in a suit chatting with an attractive WOMAN. He gets up.

BOBBY
Well, time to refill.

Teddy looks over to see the Man and Woman at the bar. He laughs.

TEDDY
Ha!...Sweet.

Bobby walks up to the bar next to the Man.

BOBBY
Shot and a beer, Jimmy.

JIMMY, the bartender, looks at him suspiciously.

JIMMY
Bobby, not tonight, huh?

BOBBY
What? Just get me the fucking drink.

Jimmy does so. Bobby leans and bumps elbows with the Man at the bar. The Man glances at Bobby then turns away.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
(To the Man.)
What?

MAN
Excuse me?

BOBBY
What the fuck?

MAN
What?

BOBBY
What's your fuckin' problem?

MAN
My what?

BOBBY
What's up your craw, man?

MAN
My craw?

Bobby grabs the Man's lapel, roughly.

BOBBY
You a fuckin' smart ass? Huh? You a
smart ass, pussy?

MAN
What--no!

Bobby shakes the Man and slaps his face. The Woman sits
stunned.

BOBBY
You want me to kick your ass? Huh?
Fuckin' faggot? Huh?

MAN
Owww! Hey! Owww!

BOBBY
How about I fuck you in the ass
right now, huh? You like that?
Faggot? Huh?

The Man pulls away.

MAN

Get off, man! What the fuck...?!

Bobby steps closer to him, very threateningly.

BOBBY

You want a piece of me? Huh?

MAN

No...

BOBBY

Huh? You want to take a shot, tough guy?

MAN

No...

BOBBY

Come on... I'll rip you a new asshole and shove your faggot head in it.

MAN

(Panicky.)

No! Look...just...just take it easy, huh? Just ...Look, how 'bout I buy you a drink huh? On me.

The Man fumbles in his pocket and puts some bills on the bar.

MAN (CONT'D)

C'mon just ...take the drink, c'mon. Let's just... let's just forget it, okay? Let's be cool, huh?

BOBBY

Don't fuckin' tell me to be cool, asswipe!

Bobby slaps him a couple more times.

MAN

No! No, I'm not, just... let's...take the drink, okay? All right?

Bobby steps back and eyes the Man for a moment. He takes the shot from the bar and downs it. He sets down the shot glass and picks up the beer.

BOBBY
You're lucky I'm thirsty, faggot.

Bobby looks and the Woman and smiles and winks at her.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
How're you doin'?

The Woman smiles at Bobby. Bobby turns and walks away as the Man composes himself. Jimmy shakes his head.

MAN
(To Jimmy)
Did you see that lunatic? Fuck! He
could've killed me!

JIMMY
Yeah. Big loss.
(Under his breath.)
Asshole.

Bobby walks back to the table. He makes a face and gives the "thumbs up." Teddy and Doug are snickering as Bobby sits.

TEDDY
Do you ever buy your own beer?

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTY PARK POND - DAY.

Bobby stands on the ice of the pond digging holes with a crank-style ice fishing auger. After he finishes the third hole he walks all the way across the pond to the far shore where Teddy and Doug are sitting in lawn chairs. A large plastic cooler sits next to Doug. An empty chair is next to Teddy.

Bobby sets down the auger and sits in the empty chair. Doug gets three beers from the cooler. He passes them down to Bobby and Teddy. The three men pop their beers and take a long swig. They reach down and pick up fishing poles; casting type set-ups used for warm weather.

DOUG
Gentlemen, start your engines.

The men cast across the ice, trying to get their lures into the freshly dug holes. Since the holes are only about eight inches in diameter, the lures miss and bounce around on the ice. The men reel back in for another try. After a few casts...

TEDDY

I don't think this is the textbook definition of ice fishing.

DOUG

Fuck that. We're not ice fishing, that's for fat ass pollocks. We're in training.

BOBBY

Training...

DOUG

When June rolls around, and we're on Waubasee Lake, out in that boat, we are gonna be sharp as fuckin' tacks, my friends. We'll be pulling in walleyes and bass so fast your head's gonna fuckin' spin.

(pause.)

You think the bait shop's still for sale?

BOBBY

Trip seems like a long ways away.

DOUG

Five months, two weeks, two days and eleven hours.

TEDDY

Shit... It is a long ways away.

After a moment of silent casting.

DOUG

Winter sucks, man.

CUT TO:

TITLE ON BLACK: FIVE MONTHS, TWO WEEKS, TWO DAYS AND ELEVEN HOURS LATER.

CUT TO:

EXT. NORTH WOODS HIGHWAY - SUMMERTIME.

Doug's Camaro is rocketing down County Trunk J in the north woods of Wisconsin. Doug hangs his head out the window, making a whooping noise as he drives. Bobby sits in the passenger seat. The car pulls to a stop in front of a small, deserted, log cabin-style tavern. The sign above the door is

in the shape of an eagle and reads, "Thunderbird Pass." A For Sale sign hangs in the front window.

Doug and Bobby get out of the car. Doug wears a faded Foghat T-shirt, cut-off blue jean shorts, blue sneakers and a red bandana tied as a headband around his forehead. He looks at the tavern with an expression of awe. He steps toward the building as Bobby leans against the hood of the car.

DOUG
There it is.

BOBBY
Yep.

DOUG
God, it's a beaut, isn't it?

BOBBY
Yep.

DOUG
Damn it...damn it, damn it. We should just go for it, shouldn't we? I mean, it's prime, isn't it? Fuckin' prime?

BOBBY
Yep. Prime money, too.

DOUG
Money...We can get money.

BOBBY
What, you got a new paper route?

DOUG
In three months this place would be paying for itself. Bait? Beer? That's life blood up here.

BOBBY
Hmm. Maybe.

DOUG
(Mulling.)
Fuck...

Bobby steps up behind Doug and puts his hand on Doug's shoulder.

BOBBY
Come on. We'll rob a liquor store
after lunch.

Doug and Bobby get back in the car and speed off.

CUT TO:

SECLUDED NORTH WOODS CAMPGROUND - THAT DAY.

A small, clear lake surrounded by a thick forest of tall pine trees. Waves lap upon the sandy shore as sunlight dances off the surface of the water.

Doug walks down a wooded path to the lake. He carries a large, red cooler. He sets down the cooler and opens the lid. He rummages through the ice and pulls out a can of beer. He pops it and takes a long, deep drink, nearly emptying the can. He looks out over the lake and takes a deep breath. Then...

DOUG
FUCKIN-AYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYE!!!

He walks down to the shoreline, unzips his fly and begins urinating as he finishes the beer.

DOUG (CONT'D)
(Low, like an animal.)
Woooo! Oooh! Oooh!

BOBBY stumbles down the path and sees Doug peeing.

BOBBY
(Laughing)
Ha! Christ, I should'a known.
(Calling over his shoulder.)
He's pissing in the lake, I told ya'!

DOUG
(Ala Fiddler On The Roof.)
Tradition ...Tradition!

Doug zips his fly and tosses his empty beer can.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Beer?

BOBBY
It's only eight o'clock.

DOUG
It's noon somewhere.

BOBBY
Fine.

Doug pops two beers and throws one to Bobby. The beer overflows as Bobby catches it.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Whoa! Shit, man!

DOUG
So the pussy brigade finally make it?

BOBBY
Yeah, they're comin'. They parked on the road.

Teddy and Phil, the foundry supervisor, stroll down the path. Teddy wears a dirty white T-shirt, jeans and sneakers. A worn Milwaukee Brewers cap sits backwards over his wild curls.

Phil is almost the Anti-Teddy; calm and laid back. He seems a bit less grungy than the others. Clean shaven, he wears a flannel shirt, khaki shorts, hiking boots, and a tan baseball cap.

TEDDY
(singing))
Smokin'in the boys room! Hey, was King Dick pullin' on his weenie again? Careful, the minnows might mistake it for a worm.

DOUG
What the fuck did you do, Teddy, walk here?

BOBBY
Yeah, geez, we been here a couple of hours.

TEDDY
No way! No fuckin'way! I saw you pullin'in ahead of me. *Take a look ahead!*

DOUG
You might as well push the fuckin' thing here, drivin' a Ford.

TEDDY

Hey, the Probe is a multi-valve,
fuel injected, high performance
automobile. *Come on and take a free
ride! Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!*

DOUG

No, a probe is what they stick up
your ass when you get a check-up.

TEDDY

Well it's better than the Camaro.
The Cum-arrow. What the fuck is
that? Drivin' the arrow filled with
cum. And IROC. What the fuck is
that? IROC stands for "I Ride On
Cock." Stick that up your ass. I'll
take the Ford.

BOBBY

You know what Ford stands for,
don't you? Found On Road Dead.

They all laugh as if that was high comedy.

TEDDY

Fucked Over Rebuilt Dodge.

They laugh again, harder.

DOUG

Fucked Around Really Dick-like.

They all laugh again, except Phil.

PHIL

That's "Fard."

They stop laughing.

BOBBY

What?

PHIL

That would be "Fard", not Ford.
Fucked Around Really Dick-like.
That's an "A", not an "O".

DOUG

What the fuck?... Who the fuck is
this?

PHIL
I'm Phil.

CUT TO:

A black and white high school yearbook photo of Phil. His dark hair is a bit longer and feathered. He wears a military dress uniform. The title under the photo reads:

PHILLIP NEWSOME - ST. JOHN'S MILITARY ACADEMY. CLASS OF 1985. CLUBS: ASTRONOMY, PHOTOGRAPHY. ACTIVITIES: LACROSSE, WRESTLING, GOLF. MOTTO: "THE JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES STARTS WITH A SINGLE STEP."