

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

CARD: "DETROIT, MICHIGAN JULY 27, 1999"

MARY GILLETTE (late-20's) lies in bed with her new-born son in her arms. Her husband, BEN GILLETTE (mid-30's), in a police uniform, holds hands with Mary.

He's on the phone.

The baby lets out a CRY that Ben ignores.

BEN
(into phone)
What!?

Ben drops Mary's hand.

BEN (CONT'D)
What the hell for?

He listens to the voice on the other end of the phone.

BEN (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ!

Mary waits.

BEN (CONT'D)
Yeah. Talk to you later.

He puts the phone back in the cradle. His wife, clutching the baby more tightly, waits for what has to be tragic news.

BEN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Barry quit.

MARY
What?

BEN
Barry Sanders. He quit.

CUT TO BLACK

FADE IN:

EXT. THE PONTIAC SILVERDOME - DAY

The old home of the Detroit Lions. The parking lot is empty.

A boy's VOICE eases into the silence. This is DOC GILLETTE (14 years old).

DOC (V.O.)
Barry Sanders walked away from football just 1400 yards shy of Walter Payton's all-time rushing record. From what I hear, no one saw it coming.

We see a video clip of a heart-stopping Barry Sanders move. A defender is left on the ground, empty-armed, as #20 in silver and Honolulu blue shifts his weight, impossibly, and races through a hole.

It's not just a great play.

It's beautiful.

DOC (V.O.)
The Detroit Lions have never played in a Super Bowl. With Barry, in 1991, they made it all the way to the NFC championship game. Without him, they've never even come close.

We see the move again, in slow motion.

DOC (V.O.)
I came into the world the same day
Barry disappeared.
(a beat)
Let the Detroit curse continue.

The image of Barry Sanders fades.

PRELAP:

We hear the sound of an iPod SHUFFLING through choices and then a faint CLICK.

A soulful male voice begins to sing. It's Ray Charles.

RAY CHARLES (V.O.)
My dear sweetheart, I'm writing you
just a few lines to tell you that
I'm low.

EXT. DETROIT - DAY

A SERIES OF SHOTS

The bleak, disaster-zone city.

RAY CHARLES (V.O.)
Oh, baby. My baby. Funny but I
still love you.

Rosa Parks Boulevard, Vernor Highway, Lillibridge Street.
Stripped cars, burned out houses, piles of trash, empty lots
with thigh-high grass. A few people, mostly African
Americans, sit on porches, gazing lifelessly at whatever
passes by.

DOC (V.O.)
It's not just Barry. People
disappear around here all the time.

We hear the sound of running feet, deep breathing.

DOC (V.O.)
Sometimes I think about
disappearing too. Just to find out
where everybody goes.

The sound of breathing and running feet gets louder and
louder.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOZIER STREET - DAY

Shoddy brick houses, empty lots. Tall grass and unkempt
bushes here and there.

A hooded, skinny kid appears in view, our first image of the
14 YEAR-OLD DOC:

Lean and angular, he jogs down the street with steam coming
from his mouth. His hood is cinched tightly around his face.
iPod earphones hang from his collar.

He follows a BOY (12). Doc quickens his pace and now sprints.
The boy turns to look just as Doc yokes the kid and pulls him
to the ground.

Doc drags him into the tall grass and holds a switchblade to
the boy's throat.

DOC
Let me know if you wanna disappear.

The kid is so scared he doesn't even blink.

Doc reaches into the boy's pockets and starts pulling things