

Driving in Circles

A one-act play

By Laura King

Laura King
754 Scott Circle
Decatur, GA 30033
(770) 584-9105
lauraleeking1017@gmail.com
laurakingplaywright.com

It's the run of their lives, but will it be their last?

SYNOPSIS

In the mountains of Northeast Georgia in August 1941, two young moonshiners aim to race their way out of poverty by winning the 1941 National Stock Car Championship, but first they have one more rum run to make. Roy (Rapid Roy) Hall and Lloyd (Lightning Lloyd) Seay plan to drive their souped-up Ford V8 full of moonshine to the Blue Lantern in Atlanta, unload, and get back home so they can race at Lakewood Speedway the next day. On most nights, this is business as usual, but tonight is different. If they get caught tonight, they are headed for the Old Dawson County Jail, and it will be a black flag on their aim to drive in the National Stock Car Championship. As Lloyd and Roy make their delivery run, they are challenged by car issues, tax revenuers, and their own demons.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

LLOYD SEAY, 21 years old, good-looking, easy-going, choir boy type

ROY HALL, 20 years old, handsome, cocky, bad boy type

SETTING

The Georgia mountains. A payphone. A souped-up Ford V8 (anything from the suggestion of a car to an actual car).

PRODUCTION NOTE

This is an imagined night between two real people.

BIO

Laura King holds an MFA in play writing (with a concentration in dramaturgy) from the Playwrights Lab at Hollins University and an MA in English from Northwestern University. Her plays have been published by Dramatic Publishing, Stage Rights, Pioneer Drama Service, YouthPLAYS, Smith & Kraus, and Applause Books. For more information see, laurakingplaywright.com.

Harben Service Station, Highway 9,
Dawsonville, Georgia, August 31, 1941. The
only suggestion of the service station is an
outside payphone. An instrumental version of
the folksong The Moonshiner plays. Lights up
dim on a Ford V8. ROY stands beside the car
admiring it and smoking a cigarette. Music fades.
As Roy speaks, he caresses the car.

ROY

(to audience)

Look at her shine. Best damn car ever made. Flathead engine, single-piece cast crankcase, cylinder banks. Averaged about 80 miles per hour. Could hit 100 if you really pushed her. And we pushed her, boy. I set the race record speed at Daytona in one of these babies. Lloyd won his first race in one of these. She never let us down. Other people did, but never her.

Roy takes a swig from a pocket flask.

LLOYD

(offstage)

Roy!

ROY

We kept her here at the Harben Service Station. Had to have her ready when we got a call.

The payphone rings. Roy crosses to it and
answers.

ROY

(into phone)

This is Roy. / Yeah, we got your apples ready. / How many bushels ya want? / On the way.

Roy hangs up the phone.

ROY

(to audience)

Dawsonville, Georgia - Moonshine Capital of the World. Prohibition was repealed, but the taste for shine lingered in the Georgia mountains.

We was running shine well past the '30s, and our favorite car was this Ford V8. We could take her on a rum run at night, and she'd still be ready to race the next day. Just like us. Always ready to race.

Roy lights a cigarette with a Zippo lighter.

LLOYD
(offstage)

Roy, start her up!

ROY
(to audience)

We had a pact. Whatever it took to win, we'd do it.

LLOYD

Roy, we gotta go!

Roy crosses to the car and gets in the driver's side.

ROY
(to audience)

But we'd always have each other's backs. Come hell or high water.

LLOYD

Roy, you better have her running.

ROY
(to audience)

We just didn't know how high the water would get.

Roy starts the car. LLOYD runs in. Lights up full.

LLOYD

We gotta hit it!

Lloyd jumps into the driver side of the car, pushing Roy into the passenger side.

ROY
What's the rush?

LLOYD
Woodrow's fit to be tied.

ROY
Woodrow's always fit to be tied.

LLOYD
Said I put some sugar on his bill for the shine.

ROY
Did ya?

LLOYD
Well, yeah, but he'll get his money back.

ROY
Where you gonna get a dollar?

LLOYD
I'm gonna win it. Now, come on. Let's go.

ROY
Aw, Woodrow'll simmer down.

Sound of a gunshot off stage.

LLOYD
Shit.

ROY
We gotta go.

Lloyd pulls the car out.

LLOYD
Do you see him?

Roy looks out the back of the car.

ROY
Yeah, he's by the gas pump.

LLOYD
What's he doing?

ROY
Waving a 32-caliber around like the drunk son-of-a-bitch he is.

LLOYD
Goddamnit.

ROY
You better floor it.

Lloyd floors the accelerator as Roy continues to look out the back.

ROY
I think we're clear.

LLOYD
Thank the Lord.

ROY
I warned you we shouldn't go into business with him.

LLOYD
He's family.

ROY
Family or no. He's a mean bastard. Nearly beat Old Man Watkins to death for letting his cows wander into his yard.

LLOYD
Even shot his own dog once.

ROY
Damn.

LLOYD
Damn.

They drive in silence for a moment.

LLOYD

This was the last thing I needed today.

ROY

Your nerves twitching cuz of the race tomorrow?

LLOYD

I ain't twitching! You?

ROY

Rapid Roy Hall don't got a nervous bone in his body.

LLOYD

You mean Reckless Roy.

ROY

Only the wet smacks call me that.

LLOYD

They ain't wrong.

ROY

You gotta be a little reckless if you want to win.

LLOYD

If you say so.

ROY

I do. Plus, ain't you a little reckless putting sugar on Woodrow's bill?

LLOYD

Fair enough.

ROY

Pull over here. I gotta check the load.

LLOYD

What load?

ROY

We got a run to the Blue Lantern tonight.

LLOYD

The hell we do.

Lloyd stops the car.

ROY

What's eating you?

LLOYD

I told you no more runs the day before races.

Roy gets out of the car and inspects the contents of the trunk.

ROY

I didn't think you were serious.

LLOYD

Do I look like I'm laughing?

ROY

Hell, Lloyd. This ain't no desk job. When the customer wants shine, we bring 'em shine. That's how it works.

LLOYD

They can wait 'til tomorrow night.

ROY

Don't think they can.

LLOYD

You're determined to get us locked up.

ROY

Won't be the first time, and probably not the last.

LLOYD

Man, don't say that. You'll jinx us.

ROY

We was born jinxed.

LLOYD

Well, you don't need to give the universe any help.

ROY

Relax. We get caught, we'll pay the fine.

LLOYD

Isn't there an arrest warrant out on you?

ROY

Hell, there's always an arrest warrant out on me.

LLOYD

Goddamnit, how do I let you get me into these things?

ROY

We're family.

LLOYD

Family's who you got to watch out for the most.

ROY

Especially our family.

Roy and Lloyd laugh. Lloyd gets out of the car to inspect the contents of the trunk.

LLOYD

What are we carrying anyway? Flash speed or hoss eyes?

ROY

Hoss eyes, boy. They want the good stuff.

LLOYD

A hundred and sixty proof. Nothing but the best for those Cracker City speakeasies.

ROY

You know it.

LLOYD

Put out that damn cigarette. You drop that thing you'll blow us sky high.

ROY

What's life without a little danger?

LLOYD

A *little* danger? Hell, Roy, you never do anything little.

ROY

When it's time to go, I'll go. Until then, I got nothing to lose.

LLOYD

Well, I got plenty to lose. I plan on winning at Lakewood tomorrow.

ROY

You'll have to get by me.

LLOYD

You'll be watching my tail lights if you don't get us into trouble tonight.

ROY

They ain't made a reneuer yet who can catch Roy Hall.

LLOYD

Let's keep it that way. Come on.

Lloyd turns away from Roy. Roy stubs out his cigarette, takes a drink from his flask, and crosses to the driver's side of the car. Lloyd stops him.

LLOYD

Hold on there, Roy. I'm driving tonight.

ROY

You don't even want to be here.

LLOYD

But I am, so I'm driving.

ROY

And why's that?

LLOYD

Because I know Highway 9 like the back of my hand.

ROY

And I don't?

LLOYD

I know where to hide from the law.

ROY

And I know how to outrun 'em.

LLOYD

Tonight we're playing it safe.

ROY

No such thing as playing it safe when you're running shine.

LLOYD

Then we're playing it as safe as we can.

ROY

(muttering)

Gonna be a long night.

LLOYD

Stop grousing. You know I'm right.

ROY

I know you're stubborn.

LLOYD

So, you know I'm driving.

ROY

Just cuz you're a year older, don't make you the boss.

LLOYD

I'm the boss cuz I got the most sense. Now come on and get in. We're wasting time.

ROY

Fine.

Roy gets in the passenger seat of the car. Lloyd starts the car.

LLOYD

Two hours to Atlanta, one hour to unload, and two hours back. We should be home by midnight.

Lloyd pulls the car out.

ROY

I want a little time to do the town.

LLOYD

No time.

ROY

Blind Willie McTell's playing at the Blue Lantern. I want to hear him wail on that twelve-string of his.

LLOYD

You wanted to drink whiskey and pick up women.

ROY

That too.

LLOYD

No time for women and booze. Don't get distracted.

ROY

Hell, women and booze don't distract me, they inspire me.

LLOYD

Women and booze will kill you.

But what a way to go!

ROY

They hit a bump.

LLOYD

Damnit.

ROY

Whoa, easy, Lloyd.

LLOYD

What'd I hit?

ROY

Just a pothole.

LLOYD

You pack that shine in tin cans?

ROY

Sure did.

LLOYD

Good. Don't want no broken glass.

ROY

This ain't my first time running shine, you know.

LLOYD

I know.

ROY

We've been right here together on every run.

LLOYD

Not every run. That trip I made with Mrs. Anderson and Clyde.

ROY

You can't blame me for that. I was sick as a dog.

LLOYD

You were drunk as a skunk.

ROY

True enough.

LLOYD

Only time I got sent to jail.

ROY

You can blame Mrs. Annie Anderson for that.

LLOYD

I never heard a woman curse that loud in my life.

ROY

And at a tax man no less. Commissioner Pinkerton had to throw the book at you.

LLOYD

That fifty-five gallons of whiskey in the car probably didn't help neither.

Lloyd and Roy laugh.

ROY

Don't worry. If we get caught tonight, I'll take the fall.

LLOYD

Nobody's getting caught tonight. We can't.

ROY

Why you wound so tight about racing tomorrow?

LLOYD

Did you hear the size of the purse? Four hundred fifty dollars.

ROY

Not sure what I'll do with all that cash.

LLOYD

You don't have to worry about that because it's gonna be all mine.

ROY

What would you do with four hundred fifty dollars?

I got some plans.

LLOYD

Oh, really. Care to share?

ROY

Nope.

LLOYD

Suit yourself.

ROY

They drive in silence for a while.

Man, this is a nice night.

LLOYD

Whiskey Trail - best road in the world.

ROY

Except for the patrolmen.

LLOYD

That's what makes it fun.

ROY

I'd rather have my fun on the track. Outrunning Flock and Sosebee instead of the Georgia law.

LLOYD

We don't gotta worry about Flock and Sosebee.

ROY

Big Bill France?

LLOYD

Hell, they'll all be eating our dust.

ROY

Roy and Lloyd laugh.

LLOYD

Won't be as much dust this time. I heard they put forty thousand pounds of road salt on the track to kill the dust.

ROY

Soon it won't even be like racing. Might as well drive around in circles on a paved road.

They hit another bump.

LLOYD

Wouldn't mind if they paved this road. I'm starting to know every pothole on it.

ROY

Then try avoiding 'em, would you? It's like you're aiming for 'em.

LLOYD

I'm avoiding the big ones.

ROY

Just keep your eyes peeled. Don't want those cans to pop.

LLOYD

Hell, I could drive this road blindfolded.

ROY

If you say so.

LLOYD

You know I could.

ROY

You think so?

LLOYD

Hell, yes.

ROY

Then let's try it.

LLOYD

Yeah, right.

Roy takes a large handkerchief from his pocket
and waves it at Roy.

ROY

I dare you.

LLOYD

Get lost.

ROY

I knew you didn't have the guts.

LLOYD

I ain't chicken, but I also ain't stupid.

ROY

Just a little fun. You drive. I'll guide.

LLOYD

Damn, Roy, if Woodrow don't kill me, you will.

ROY

Don't you trust me?

LLOYD

No.

ROY

I like that! After all this time.

LLOYD

And you get more reckless with each year.

ROY

Come on, it'll be good practice for driving Lakewood tomorrow.

LLOYD

How's that?

ROY

It'll help you trust your instincts. I heard Lucky Teter did it in Ashland.

LLOYD

Lucky Teter and His Hell Drivers. Bunch of damn gimmick drivers.

ROY

Gimmick or no, Lucky can drive. Did you see him stunt driving in that newsreel for the Jimmy Stewart picture?

LLOYD

Speed?

ROY

That's the one.

LLOYD

Yeah, I saw it. But it's one thing doing it on a movie set. It's another doing it in real life. I'm a real driver.

ROY

Still, it takes a lot of nerve to flip your car on purpose.

LLOYD

Or a lot of stupidity.

ROY

And to bicycle it.

LLOYD

I've been on two wheels.

ROY

Not on purpose.

LLOYD

I've still done it.

ROY

I'm just saying Lucky's a damn good driver. Might even be better than you.

LLOYD

Nobody's better than me.

Roy holds up the handkerchief.

ROY

Prove it.

LLOYD

I ain't gotta prove nothing to you.

ROY

Nope. But I'm betting you want to provide it to yourself.

LLOYD

Shit.

Lloyd pulls the car over.

LLOYD

One mile. If I do it for one mile will that shut you up?

ROY

Hell, no. If you do it for one mile, I'll tell every one in town that Lightning Lloyd Seay is the best damn driver in the South.

LLOYD

Better than you?

ROY

Better than anybody.

LLOYD

Well, if we're wagering, what if I want something else?

ROY

Like what?

LLOYD

I want you to swear something to me.

ROY

You make it a mile, and I'll swear all you want.

LLOYD

I want you to swear you'll start taking it a little easier.

ROY

Says the man about to drive blindfolded.

LLOYD

I mean it. No more speeding and doing donuts on Main Street. No more drinking 'til you pass out. No more looking for trouble.

ROY

If you promise no more stealing from cousin Woodrow.

LLOYD

I didn't steal shit. We're in business together. He told me to put it on his tab.

ROY

But I'm sure he wants to be paid back.

LLOYD

I'm paying him back as soon as I win Lakewood. It was a business deal. Not like I went looking for trouble like some people.

ROY

I don't look for it. It looks for me.

LLOYD

Well, stop being so damn easy to find.

ROY

You want me to go soft? That how you plan on beating me at Lakewood?

LLOYD

I'm talking about off the track. One day you're going to get in some trouble that you can't get out of.

ROY

You can always get out of trouble. Sometimes it just takes a little longer.

LLOYD

I don't want you getting locked up for good.

ROY

You worry too much.

LLOYD

One day I might not be here to help you out.

ROY

You plan on going somewhere? Come on, Lloyd.

LLOYD

Is it a deal or not?

ROY

I'll take it down a notch. That's the best I can do.

LLOYD

You promise?

Roy smiles and crosses his fingers.

ROY

Scout's honor.

LLOYD

You ain't no damn Boy Scout! And don't cross your fingers when you're making a promise. Just promise me.

ROY

Fine. I promise.

LLOYD

That's better. Now give me that thing.

Lloyd grabs the handkerchief and ties it around his eyes.

ROY

Now we're having fun.

LLOYD
(muttering)

Damn fool.

ROY

I know.

LLOYD

Not you. Me.

Roy laughs.

ROY

Okay, pull out and go slow. Don't want to end up in the Chattahoochee River.

Lloyd pulls the car back onto the road as Roy
takes a swig from his flask.

LLOYD

The road clear?

ROY

Clear as moonshine in a Mason jar.

LLOYD

We're coming up on Coal Mountain, ain't we?

ROY

How'd you know?

LLOYD

I can smell it.

ROY

You don't smell nothing. There's no coal in Coal Mountain.

LLOYD

Sweet corn. That's what I smell.

ROY

All I smell is horse shit.

LLOYD

And I hear that old barn owl we always hear.

ROY

What? Now that you're blind, your other senses kicking in? You think *you're* Blind Willie McTell or something?

LLOYD

You gotta be aware of everything when you're driving. Not just what you can see.

ROY

Cause usually you can't see shit.

LLOYD

Dust, dirt, and sweat in your eyes.

ROY

Red clay up your nose.

LLOYD

Exhaust smoke in your lungs.

ROY

Best feeling in the world.

Roy takes another swig from his flask.

LLOYD

None better.

ROY

Easy now, we're coming up on Gainesville. Sharp turn.

LLOYD

I've done my mile. I'm taking this thing off.

Lloyd goes to remove his blindfold but Roy stops him.

ROY

I dare you to wear it to Cumming.

LLOYD
That's two more miles!

ROY
You make it to Cumming and I promise to take it down two notches.

LLOYD
No more speeding down Main Street?

ROY
Promise.

LLOYD
I'm gonna hold you to that.

ROY
I'm a man of my word.

LLOYD
Since when?

ROY
I'm turning over a new leaf right now.

LLOYD
You better be. How much farther?

ROY
Only about a mile.

LLOYD
We close to Canton?

ROY
Almost there. Keep going straight.

They hit a bump.

LLOYD
Damn, those potholes.

ROY

We're coming into Cumming.

LLOYD

Good. Then I'm done.

Lloyd again goes to remove his blindfold but Roy stops him.

ROY

Double dare you to get to Sugar Hill.

Lloyd yanks off the blindfold and swerves off the road.

ROY

Shit! What are you doing? Watch out!

The car coughs to a stop.

ROY

You trying to kill us?

LLOYD

You trying to kill *me*?

ROY

Just having a little fun.

LLOYD

Maybe I'm tired of your kind of fun.

ROY

What's up with you? We've been doing this shit since we was tall enough to touch the accelerator.

LLOYD

But now we've got seventy-five gallons of moonshine in the trunk and lawmen waiting for us in the woods.

ROY

That's what makes it fun!

LLOYD

Don't you ever get tired of it?

ROY

Hell, no. Why? Do you?

LLOYD

I don't know.

ROY

You're just all tensed up because of Lakewood tomorrow.

LLOYD

Maybe.

ROY

What do you say we double down? Floor it 'til we hit Fulton County. No looking back. I dare you.

LLOYD

What's with all the dares?

ROY

Hell, we've been daring each other since I was seven and you were eight.

LLOYD

Sneaking a drink of corn liquor. Stealing candy from McClure's. This feels different.

ROY

Don't go getting paranoid. You know I'd never put you in real danger.

LLOYD

Do I?

Roy and Lloyd stare at each other for a moment.
Then Lloyd gets out of the car.

LLOYD

I better check her out. I hit that ditch pretty hard.

Roy gets out of the car.

ROY

You sure as damn well did.

LLOYD

Check under the hood. See if we've gotta cool her off.

ROY

Yes, sir, Boss.

Roy opens the hood of the car and Lloyd inspects the tires.

LLOYD

How's the engine look?

Roy fans the engine with his hands.

ROY

Just needs to breathe a minute.

LLOYD

She's not leaking oil, is she?

Roy looks under the car.

ROY

Clean as a whistle.

LLOYD

Back tires look okay. Raymond keeps those in good shape.

ROY

Wants to make sure his star drivers don't spin out on a midnight run.

LLOYD

Don't say that! You'll jinx us! Next thing I know you'll be eating peanuts in the pit.

ROY

You and those old racing superstitions.

LLOYD

I don't go messing around with that stuff. You heard what happened to Gaston Chevrolet. Killed at Beverly Hills Speedway while driving a green car.

ROY

I think that had more to do with his Frontenac crashing into Eddie O'Donnell and going over the embankment. Didn't much matter that his car was green.

LLOYD

What about Doc Mackenzie? Shaved off his lucky goatee and died in a crash at the Wisconsin State Fairgrounds.

ROY

I don't want to speak ill of the dead, but ain't he the one who skidded off the track in Daytona and went straight into the Atlantic Ocean?

LLOYD

Still. Better safe than sorry.

ROY

So, no shaving and no green cars.

LLOYD

And no peanuts.

ROY

Got it.

LLOYD

Why tempt fate?

ROY

Don't you think we have enough real things to worry about? Tire wear and tear. Suspension problems. Leaky radiator. Drivers losing their nerve.

LLOYD

What do you mean by that?

ROY

Nothing.

LLOYD
Then why'd you say it?

ROY
Is it true?

LLOYD
You been telling people I've gone soft?

ROY
No. ... Just Raymond.

LLOYD
What?

ROY
Told him he should put all his backing into me.

LLOYD
You did not.

Lloyd kicks the front tires of the car as Roy continues to fan the radiator with his hands.

ROY
Told him I saw the signs after you flipped your car twice at Daytona.

LLOYD
And I kicked your ass the next time. Led all 50 laps. And yesterday I whooped you again at High Point.

ROY
Then why you driving these backwoods you was raised in like a little girl?

LLOYD
Because tomorrow's my chance to be a champion, and I'm not letting you or anyone else stop me from racing!

ROY
Hell, I don't want to stop you! We got a pact.

LLOYD
What?

ROY

Don't pretend you don't remember. We swore to always have each other's backs.

LLOYD

Then why you trying to kill me on these backroads?

ROY

You're the one who drove off the road!

LLOYD

You're the one who gave me a blindfold!

ROY

I'm trying to save you not kill you! If you lose your nerve, you're done for on the track.

LLOYD

Is that's what's up with all these dares?

ROY

I had to make sure you still had it. The fire.

LLOYD

Yeah, I still got it.

ROY

Don't sound like it.

Lloyd is quiet for a moment.

LLOYD

I know.

ROY

What's the deal?

LLOYD

Roy, have you ever...

ROY

What?

LLOYD

Nothing. Forget it.

ROY

I knew it. I knew something was eating at you.

LLOYD

I haven't lost my nerve! Just my sense apparently, letting you talk me into driving with a blindfold.

ROY

You'll thank me tomorrow when the dirt hits your eyes. You'll remember today and say, "This is what Roy was trying to teach me! Praise be to Roy Hall, the guardian angel of the dirt track."

LLOYD

Nobody's ever mistaking you for an angel.

ROY

That's right. You're the angel-faced one of the family.

LLOYD

We can't all be blessed with good looks.

ROY

Or animal magnetism.

Lloyd kicks the back tire.

LLOYD

Damn, this tire's flat.

ROY

You're kidding. I thought Raymond had new ones put on.

LLOYD

So did I.

ROY

You got a patch?

LLOYD

In the back.

Roy retrieves a tire patch from the back of the car and hands it to Lloyd.

ROY

Here you go.

LLOYD

Give me your lighter.

Roy tosses Lloyd his Zippo lighter. Lloyd strikes it and holds it up to the tire, sealing the patch.

ROY

You making a patch?

LLOYD

Trying to.

ROY

Maybe if we win tomorrow, Raymond will pony up for some new Firestones.

LLOYD

Parks is a good man. If we tell him we need 'em, he'll likely get 'em. But for tonight we gotta make do.

ROY

Think it'll hold?

LLOYD

It'll have to.

ROY

All right then. Let's get going.

Roy moves to the driver's side and opens the door.

LLOYD

What do you think you're doing?

I'm driving.

ROY

Lloyd crosses to Roy.

Over my dead body.

LLOYD

It's my turn.

ROY

We've been through this. We're playing it safe tonight.

LLOYD

You always play it safe, Parker.

ROY

Don't call me that.

LLOYD

All the fellas call you that. Parking along the logging road with your lights off 'til the law is gone.

ROY

You call that yellow. I call it smart.

LLOYD

Whatever you call it, we don't have time tonight. It's getting late and we gotta make up some time. I'm the best man for the job.

ROY

You're the best man to screw up the job.

LLOYD

What did you say to me?

ROY

I said move.

LLOYD

Lloyd tries to get past Roy, but Roy shoves him away.

ROY

Hell, no.

LLOYD

Have you been drinking?

ROY

I've always been drinking.

LLOYD

And you think I'm gonna let you drive?

ROY

I'm getting sick of this. What gives you the right to decide who drives?

LLOYD

Commonsense. Commonsense gives me the right! I haven't lost it all yet.

ROY

We don't need commonsense! We need guts!

LLOYD

Oh, I got guts. Now move!

Lloyd pushes Roy out of his way and to the ground. Roy jumps up and grabs Lloyd, tackling him to the ground. Roy and Lloyd scuffle, each trying to get to the driver's seat of the car.

ROY

Get the hell off me!

LLOYD

You're not driving this car!

ROY

The hell I'm not.

LLOYD

Goddamnit, Roy! You're a short-sighted, bullheaded son of a bitch who can't see trouble when it smacks him in the face.

ROY

And you're a wishy-washy choir boy who's so afraid of becoming his daddy that he won't do what needs to be done.

LLOYD

You'll kill us before we get to race tomorrow.

ROY

I'm gonna kill you right now.

Roy rushes at Lloyd and tackles him. They fight.

LLOYD

Get off me you son-of-a-bitch!

ROY

I'm gonna knock some sense into you!

LLOYD

You wouldn't know sense if it bit you in the ass!

ROY

I've got enough sense to know we got a job to do.

LLOYD

I don't wanna do this job. I've never wanted to do this job.

ROY

Well, it's the only job we got, so get in the damn car. And I'm driving!

Roy tries to drag Lloyd to the passenger side of the car, but Lloyd turns around and shoves Roy hard. Roy rears back into the car, hits his head, and falls to the ground.

LLOYD

Shit.

Roy rubs his head.

ROY

Damn.

Lloyd crosses to Roy.

LLOYD

You okay?

ROY

You 'bout knocked my head off.

LLOYD

I guess I did.

ROY

We have scraped like that in years.

LLOYD

You should have just let me drive.

ROY

I guess so.

Roy rubs his head.

LLOYD

Sorry about that.

ROY

Good thing I got a hard head.

LLOYD

The hardest.

ROY

You gonna help me up?

Lloyd offers his hand to Roy. Roy takes it and pulls Lloyd to the ground beside him. Lloyd laughs.

LLOYD

What the hell am I gonna do with you?

ROY

You don't got to do nothing with me. You ain't my mama.

LLOYD

Thank God.

ROY

And you ain't your daddy. I'm sorry I said that. It was a low blow.

LLOYD

You weren't wrong.

ROY

You're nothing like him.

LLOYD

Yet.

ROY

You'll never be like him.

LLOYD

You think? Sometimes I feel like I drive so fast because I'm trying to escape him. Escape all of this.

ROY

I know I'll never get out.

LLOYD

Don't say that.

ROY

I just do what I can to make it better. Make a little more money. Have a little more fun.

LLOYD

Guess you were cut out for this life.

ROY

Only life I know, so that's a good thing.

LLOYD

Only life I know too, but I'm not sure that's good.

ROY

So, I'm right? You really are running scared?

LLOYD

That's what you told Parks.

ROY

Hell, you know I didn't tell him that. You know I wouldn't do you like that.

LLOYD

Not even to win Lakewood?

ROY

I want you to do good tomorrow.

LLOYD

Just not better than you.

ROY

How 'bout we make another pact? We come in first and second. We'll leave who's first and who's second up to the Lord.

LLOYD

You got a deal.

Lloyd spits in his hand and offers it to Roy.
Roy spits in his own hand and shakes Lloyd's
hand.

ROY

Deal.

They laugh.

LLOYD

That'd be something, wouldn't it? Lightning Lloyd and Rapid Roy - first and second at Lakewood. 1941 national stock car champions.

ROY

We deserve it.

LLOYD

Don't know about deserve, but we've worked hard for it.

ROY

Hell, we've been working hard since the day we were born.

LLOYD

Never had a choice. Had to help the family.

ROY

My Daddy told me I had to pull my weight or hit the road.

LLOYD

So you learned to drive. Too bad all roads lead back to Dawsonville.

ROY

Land of moonshine and racing.

LLOYD

And too many kids and not enough money.

ROY

I'm not having a family. Not if I can help it.

LLOYD

You could help it by keeping things zipped up.

ROY

That I can't help.

LLOYD

If I did have a family, I'd do it better than my daddy.

ROY

Course, you would.

LLOYD

I'd win my races and then bring home the purse. Buy me a little house by Amicalola Falls and go fishing whenever I was home.

ROY

And we could have a still at the base of the falls.

LLOYD

No liquor.

ROY

Bite your tongue.

LLOYD

Liquor always brings trouble.

ROY

I don't know what's gotten into you.

LLOYD

Don't start that chicken talk again. I'm just looking to the future.

ROY

The future? This is your future. It's both our futures. Shine and cars.

LLOYD

You ever think there could be something else.

ROY

Like what?

LLOYD

We could work at the Harben Service Station. Hell, we spend most of our time there anyway.

ROY

I think the Harben boys got that covered.

LLOYD

We could open a garage together.

ROY

With what money?

LLOYD

Maybe Raymond would stake us.

ROY

Parks has staked us all he can. He wants us driving cars not fixing 'em.

LLOYD

I can't run shine forever.

ROY

Women, moonshine, and racing. What else is there?

LLOYD

Damned if I know, but maybe I'd like to find out.

ROY

It's not a bad life.

LLOYD

Running from the law so we can run on the track? Don't you ever want to stop running?

ROY

I think if I stopped running I'd die.

LLOYD

I think if I keep running I'll die.

The men are quiet for a moment.

ROY

Well, ain't we as happy as a dog with two tails.

Lloyd smiles.

LLOYD

I'm just thinking there's got to be more to the world than the backwoods of Georgia.

ROY

Sure, there is. That's why we're going to Atlanta.

LLOYD

And then driving back home.

ROY

I think you've got the wanderlust, boy.

LLOYD

Maybe I do.

ROY

Well, if you really want out of Dawsonville, driving's the key.

LLOYD

How you figure?

ROY

We keep winning races, and we'll see the world.

LLOYD

You think?

ROY

Hell, we'll hit every track there is. Martinsville, Langhorne, Indianapolis.

LLOYD

Wouldn't that be something?

ROY

It's be something all right.

LLOYD

You think we can do it?

ROY

We can do anything.

LLOYD

If we stay focused. Focused on driving. Just driving.

ROY

Easier said than done.

LLOYD

You gotta put all the other stuff out of your mind.

ROY

That's just it. I'm not sure I can.

LLOYD

It's the only way.

ROY

I don't know how to explain it, Lloyd. There's something inside me. Something like the devil. He just keeps spurring me on.

LLOYD

That's why you're a good driver.

ROY

But I can't turn it off when I leave the track like you do. I've always got to go faster, try harder, take the risks.

LLOYD

Reckless Roy.

ROY

He's inside me. I can't shake him.

LLOYD

Do you ever get scared?

ROY

Don't have enough sense to be scared.

LLOYD

Maybe that's a blessing.

The men are quiet for a moment.

LLOYD

It won't work, you know.

ROY
What won't?

LLOYD
Driving won't get us out of here.

ROY
Sure it will.

LLOYD
Have you ever seen it happen?

ROY
Lucky Teter got the whole way to Hollywood.

LLOYD
I mean real racers.

ROY
We'll be the first.

LLOYD
Things like that don't happen to guys like us.

ROY
Maybe they could.

LLOYD
If we stay here we're gonna end up just like Woodrow. Making shine in the mountains and raising hell in town.

ROY
What's going on, Lloyd?

LLOYD
It's like how you said there's something inside you that you can't shake.

ROY
Yeah.

LLOYD
Well, there's something inside me too. I feel like a jack rabbit running from a fox. You keep running 'til you get caught.

ROY

We're not getting caught.

LLOYD

Jack rabbits always get caught eventually.

ROY

So, that's it? You're afraid of getting caught?

LLOYD

That's part of it.

ROY

What's the rest?

LLOYD

I can't tell you.

ROY

You can tell me anything.

LLOYD

Not this.

ROY

Damn, Lloyd. You're too young to be dying, so spit it out.

LLOYD

I'm not dying.

ROY

Then what?

LLOYD

I'm ... Nothing.

Lloyd stands as if to leave. Roy stands.

ROY

Goddamnit, Lloyd. You've been hemming and hawing all day. If you've got something to say, just say it or else get in the damn car. We've got a job to do.

Roy moves toward the car.

I'm quitting.

LLOYD

Roy turns around and faces Lloyd.

Quitting what?

ROY

The shine game.

LLOYD

Roy stares at Lloyd for a minute.

Yeah, right. Get in the car.

ROY

Roy continues to the car.

I mean it.

LLOYD

Roy turns back to Lloyd.

What are you gonna do for money?

ROY

Anything but this.

LLOYD

Roy crosses to Lloyd.

So, you really have lost your nerve.

ROY

Actually, I think I'm just finding it.

LLOYD

So, you're done? Just like that. Quitting the family business.

ROY

LLOYD

I've done my time.

ROY

What am I supposed to do? I can't run this game without you.

LLOYD

Sure, you can. These mountains are full of men who can work with you.

ROY

None of them can drive like you.

LLOYD

Well, that's true enough.

ROY

If you cut out I'll either be in jail or dead.

LLOYD

Don't put that on me.

ROY

We're family, Lloyd. You can't desert your family.

LLOYD

I know! I've been trying for twenty years!

ROY

This is who you are, who we are. Whiskey trippers.

LLOYD

But we don't have to be.

ROY

How you plan on eating?

LLOYD

I'm gonna look for some honest work.

ROY

You can't read or write. Whatcha plan on doing?

LLOYD

I don't know, okay? I don't know!

ROY

Lloyd, this is the best guys like us can do. No schooling, no family money. We run shine and we race cars. That's who we are.

LLOYD

I can't do it anymore.

ROY

Why? What's changed?

LLOYD

If we get caught this time, I won't get bond. That thing in Decatur with Annie and Clyde put me on the radar. They'll lock me up for sure and then I'll never get out of here.

ROY

But we have a pact.

LLOYD

We made that pact when we were kids. You're gonna hold me to that?

ROY

Hell, yeah. What do you think a pact is?

LLOYD

You don't need me. You can do this run in your sleep.

ROY

I do need you. I told you what it's like for me. If you aren't here, I'm not safe.

LLOYD

I can't look out for you forever.

ROY

Why not?

LLOYD

Jesus, Roy, you told me I'm not your mama, and you're sure as shit not a kid anymore. Let me go! Just leave me here. Finish the run yourself. I'll hitch back to Dawsonville.

Lloyd closes his eyes and puts his head in his hands. Roy watches him.

ROY

Lloyd -

LLOYD

Don't.

They are quiet again.

ROY

Please.

LLOYD

Roy.

ROY

I know.

LLOYD

I can't.

ROY

Just one more.

LLOYD

It's always just one more. One more run. One more lap. I want it all to lead to something.

ROY

It will.

LLOYD

When?

ROY

You do this run with me and I'll let you go. Scout's honor.

Roy crosses his fingers.

LLOYD

Don't cross your damn fingers when you're making a promise.

Roy uncrosses his fingers.

ROY

Would I do that?

Lloyd shakes his head but a slow grin appears on his face. Another moment of quiet, then Roy puts his hand on Lloyd's shoulder. There is an understanding. Lloyd shakes off Roy's hand and stands.

LLOYD

All right. I'll finish the run, but then I'm done.

ROY

Whatever you say.

LLOYD

I mean it, Roy.

ROY

I got two good ears.

LLOYD

And nothing in between 'em.

ROY

Let's hit the road.

Roy happily moves toward the car.

ROY

I'd say we're about 40 minutes away if you keep it at a hundred. Half hour to unload and then an hour back to Dawsonville. A good night's sleep and then tomorrow we race at Lakewood.

LLOYD

Tomorrow we win at Lakewood.

ROY

First and second.

LLOYD

May the best man win.

ROY

Oh, hell, we already know you're the best man, but I'm gonna win.

LLOYD

We'll see.

ROY

Damn right we will.

LLOYD

Wanna toss a coin to see who drives?

ROY

You drive.

LLOYD

Really?

ROY

Really.

LLOYD

Let's hope that tire holds.

Lloyd and Roy get into the car. Lloyd starts the car and they pull out.

ROY

All right, now. Just hold her steady. We'll get through tonight.

LLOYD

Hold her steady? Who said that?

ROY

Very funny.

LLOYD

You sure you didn't shake something lose when you hit your head.

ROY

I'm trying to keep my promise. Taking it down a notch.

LLOYD

There's a first time for everything.

ROY

Look out now. We're coming to the county line.

LLOYD

You think the Fulton County law will be out?

ROY

That sheriff's had his eye on me since he caught me collecting for my numbers game.

LLOYD

You need to stay away from the bug. It'll only get you in trouble.

ROY

(smiling)

Yeah, I better play it safe and just keep whiskey tripping.

LLOYD

(nodding in front of him)

You see that?

ROY

Kill the lights.

Lloyd turns off the car's lights and both men hunch down but keep driving.

LLOYD

If they pull us over I'll pay the fine. Hell, I'll pay it twice so we can get back home.

ROY

Might work. Or they might stack on a charge of bribing an officer.

LLOYD

Take a look behind us.

Roy looks out the back.

ROY

I don't see nothing. You sure you saw someone?

Sound of a siren.

LLOYD

Pretty damn sure.

ROY

Hit it! You can outrun 'em.

LLOYD

Hold on!

Lloyd hits the gas. Siren sound continues. As Lloyd drives, Roy continues to check the rear view.

ROY

Step on it.

LLOYD

What's he driving?

ROY

Looks like a Chevy Special Deluxe.

LLOYD

The V8 can take him.

ROY

I know the V8 can. It's the driver I'm worried about.

LLOYD

Where's your faith, cousin?

ROY

Damn, I wish I was behind the wheel.

LLOYD

You'd kill us both.

ROY

And you're gonna get us locked up if you don't do something quick.

LLOYD

I guess you know what that means.

LLOYD AND ROY

Bootlegger's turn!

Lloyd puts the car in second gear and quickly turns the wheel in the direction of the opposite lane. The car skids, enters the opposite lane, turns completely around, and stops.

ROY

Damn.

LLOYD

You okay?

ROY

Now that's what I call a real power slide.

LLOYD

Did we lose him?

Roy looks in front of them.

ROY

Don't know what hit him.

LLOYD

Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.

ROY

And we'll all stay free!

Siren sounds gets softer. Lloyd sits up.

LLOYD

I could have done without that tonight.

ROY

It's what makes the job exciting. Ain't you gonna miss it?

LLOYD

Hell no.

ROY

Come on, let's get back on the road.

LLOYD

You sure we lost them?

ROY

They're probably in Hickory Flat by now. Did you see how fast they were going? If they had a better car, they might do well on the track.

LLOYD

Don't give 'em any ideas. We've got enough competition.

ROY

(feeling cocky)

No one can compete with Roy Hall and Lloyd Seay. They're the best of the best.

LLOYD

(joining in Roy's cockiness)

The top of the heap.

ROY

The cream of the crop.

Roy starts to sing the folksong The Moonshiner.

ROY

(singing)

I've been a moonshiner for many a year
 And I've spent all my money on whiskey and beer
 I'll go to some hollow and I'll set up my still
 And I'll make you a gallon for a ten shilling bill

Lloyd joins in.

LLOYD AND ROY

(singing)

I'm a rambler, I'm a gambler,
 I'm a long way from home
 And if you don't like me
 You can leave me alone
 I'll eat when I'm hungry
 And I'll drink when I'm dry
 And if moonshine don't kill me
 I'll live till I die

Lloyd and Roy hoot and holler. Suddenly Lloyd
 screeches the car to a stop.

ROY

What? We were just getting to the good part.

LLOYD

Look.

Lloyd nods in front of them. Roy looks. They
 both are silent for a moment.

ROY

How many you think there are?

LLOYD

Eight, no, nine, ten.

ROY

What do you want to do?

Go back in time.

LLOYD

Not an option.

ROY

Well, we got two choices: turn back or give chase.

LLOYD

Even if we turn back, they still might see us.

ROY

So, we got one choice.

LLOYD

Better than none.

ROY

Ready?

LLOYD

I was born ready.

ROY

Lloyd places his hands at the 4 and 8 o'clock positions on the steering wheel. He focuses on the road ahead.

LLOYD

As I'll ever be.

ROY leans forward with a wicked grin.

ROY

Hit it.

LLOYD floors the gas pedal. They pull ahead.

LLOYD

Here we go. Hold tight.

Cut through there. ROY

I got it. LLOYD

Come on, Parker. Hit the logging road and we'll lay low. ROY

Too far into the city. LLOYD

Then find an alley. Anything. ROY

I'm looking. LLOYD

Sound of sirens.

Damn. They spotted us. ROY

How many? LLOYD

Hell, I don't know. All of them? ROY

Hold on. LLOYD

Lloyd turns the car.

Don't spill the hooch! ROY

Watch the tires! LLOYD

Roy leans out the window to look at the tires.

They're holding.

ROY

Hang tight.

LLOYD

Lloyd takes the car out of the spin. The men are quiet for a moment.

ROY

That was some damn good driving.

LLOYD

I thought I might lose that tire.

ROY

I think we're good.

LLOYD

Are they still on my tail?

Roy looks behind them.

ROY

You lost two of them.

LLOYD

Damn. Why are there so many?

ROY

It's like they knew we were coming.

LLOYD

They always know we're coming.

ROY

We've never had to outrun this many before. Turn here.

LLOYD

Got it.

Lloyd turns the car the other way.

ROY

Somebody must have ratted us out.

LLOYD

Someone could have seen me buying all that sugar.

ROY

Or it could have been Woodrow.

LLOYD

That'd be pretty low, even for him.

ROY

What's that up ahead?

LLOYD

I can't tell.

ROY

Is it...

LLOYD

Shit.

ROY

Those bastards spiked the road.

LLOYD

We already got one weak tire. We can't drive across any nails.

ROY

Can you make it to Peachtree?

LLOYD

I think so.

ROY

Sharp right.

LLOYD

Here we go.

Lloyd makes a sharp turn.

ROY

Yee-haw! That's the ticket. Floor it.

Lloyd floors the accelerator.

LLOYD

Sorry, coppers, but we got business to attend to.

ROY

Go, boy, go!

Lloyd drives as Roy looks out the back of the car.

LLOYD

They still following us?

ROY

I don't see anyone.

LLOYD

Keep looking.

ROY

I'm looking, but I don't see no one. I think you did it, Lloyd. You lost 'em.

Roy turns to face the front and collapses in the seat.

LLOYD

Man, that was too close for comfort.

ROY

At least they didn't get close enough to shoot out the tires.

LLOYD

I'm going to take the back road into Atlanta.

ROY

Kill the lights. Go slow.

Lloyd turns the headlights off and slows the car.

LLOYD

Good Lord willing we can sneak in, unload, and sneak out.

ROY

While the revenuers are driving up and down Highway 9. Take that you goddamned Prohis!

LLOYD

Shut up. They're still out there.

ROY

They're always out there.

LLOYD

And we're always here.

ROY

It's the circle of life, baby.

LLOYD

It's the story of my life.

ROY

But you did it, Lloyd. We're fine and the liquor's fine.

LLOYD

Let's stay focused 'til we get into the city.

ROY

We're almost there. The rest is a piece of cake. Unload and head home. I won't even nag you about staying at the Blue Lantern.

LLOYD

Will wonders never cease?

ROY

I'm keeping my word. Taking it down a notch.

LLOYD

Why am I suddenly suspicious?

ROY

I just thought that maybe if I slowed down, you wouldn't quit on me.

LLOYD

I'm not quitting on you, Roy. I'm just starting on myself.

ROY

Maybe we can talk about it some more tomorrow. After the race.

LLOYD

I'm not gonna change my mind.

ROY

If you say so.

LLOYD

I'm not. I'm getting out.

ROY

And doing what? Going where?

LLOYD

I'll figure that out after I win Lakewood.

ROY

If you win Lakewood.

LLOYD

When I win Lakewood.

ROY

And that four hundred fifty dollar purse.

LLOYD

And then I pay off Woodrow and I'm gone.

ROY

You're gone.

As Lloyd and Roy drive, they hum The Moonshiner. When they get to the last line, Roy steps out of the car and sings the line: "And if the moonshine don't kill me, I'll live till I die." Lloyd keeps driving. Lights shift.

ROY

(to audience)

Lakewood. That's what we were set on. And it was one for the history books. You can still read about it. I had to. Lloyd was ready to race. Nothing was gonna stop him. But something stopped me. Let's just say the heat got a little too hot. Cops were determined to serve that arrest warrant. Lloyd kept talking to me about laying low. I accused him of trying to clear the field so he could win.

LLOYD

You know if you show up at Lakewood, the cops will be waiting. If you don't show up, you stay out of jail.

ROY

He had a point.

LLOYD

They'll be other races.

ROY

But this was a big one. It was hard to walk away, but I knew Lloyd was looking out for me.

LLOYD

We have a pact, you know.

ROY

So, I stayed away. It about killed me but I did it.

LLOYD

Better safe than sorry.

ROY

Lloyd arrived late at Lakewood and missed qualifying. Someone had taken his lucky number seven.

LLOYD

What do you mean number seven is taken? Fine. Give me any damn number you got left.

ROY

He raced under number thirteen. Unluckiest number of them all.

LLOYD

Good thing I didn't shave this morning.

ROY

(to audience)

So, Lloyd had to start in last position, but when that green flag dropped he was off.

Sound of engines. Lloyd is now driving at
Lakewood Speedway.

ROY

(now in the voice of an announcer)

And they're off! Ed Samples and Harley Taylor take an early lead, with Carson Dyer hot on their tail followed by Gober Sosebee. Lloyd Seay, Bob Flock, and Skimp Hersey are bumper to bumper behind them. They're heading toward the first turn. There's trouble on the field. Samples and Taylor have locked up. They're choking up the field. They've pulled off. They've hit the rails. The field is clear! Carson Dyer is now in the lead followed by Red Singleton. Dyer is making a pit stop. Looks like a flat tire. And now Big Bill France is making his move. Looks like he's trying the two-wheel bicycle move. Oh! He's too far right. He's flipped his car. Big Bill is out. Seay is making a move followed closely by Flock. Seay pulls out in front. He's driving carefully. He knows this track well. It's his hometown track. He's pulling away from the others. But wait. Seay seems to be having some engine trouble. His motor is jumping. He's only five laps to the line. Will he make it? Flock is gaining on him. But Seay's holding on. I've never seen a man handle a car better than Seay. It's like they're one and the same. We're coming to the last lap. Seay's still out in front. He's almost at the line. And it's Seay for the win!

Lloyd holds his hands up from the steering wheel in victory and closes his eyes.

LLOYD
(jubilantly)

Seay for the win!

Sound of a gunshot. Lloyd slumps over onto the seat. Lights down on the car and up on only Roy.

ROY
(to audience)

“Winner of the 100-mile Labor Day motor race at Lakewood Park, Atlanta, Georgia, Lloyd Seay, 21, was shot to death as a result of a dispute with his cousin Woodrow Anderson.” That’s what the Atlanta Journal said. Woodrow said it was self-defense. The court said it was murder. Woodrow was locked up. Lloyd was buried in Dawsonville under a 6-foot marble slab engraved with his ‘39 Ford and a picture of him inside the car. When the picture gets worn out, someone replaces it. We tend to our own here - one way or another. I think of our last night running shine together a lot. I think of how he wanted it to be our last. I think of how I wanted it to go on forever. And I think of where we came from and who we became and who we will never be. And then I go back to work.

The payphone rings. Roy crosses to it and answers.

ROY
(into phone)

This is Roy. / Yeah, we got your apples ready. / How many bushels ya want? / On the way.

Lights down.

End of play.