

Bill

Written by  
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**BLACK**

BILL's (65) baritone voice carries through an old recording.

BILL (V.O.)  
...I remember when I realized that  
God actually exists.

**EXT. BILL'S CHILDHOOD HOME (1966) - DAY**

Bill (10) is on the sun-baked roof of his home, blue eyes fixed on a crooked T.V. antenna. He's lean, has platinum blond hair, the oldest of 7 siblings.

His DAD (30) on the ground below is shouting directions and holding the ladder steady, a cigarette hanging out of his mouth. He has dark brown hair, a smoker's rasp, a permanent sternness in his southern voice.

DAD  
--and just tilt the rod until you  
hear me say stop! I'll holler for ya  
when the signal comes back.

Bill is carefully fumbling with the antenna, it creaks as he moves it. A foot behind him are exposed electrical wires. Dad starts into the house.

DAD (cont'd)  
And the cover on some of those wires  
up 'ere are worn off! Do NOT touch  
'em, or you'll die.

Bill begins tilting the antenna.

DAD (O.S.)  
(shouting)  
Start tilting!  
(pause)  
START TILTING!

Bill tilts more.

DAD (O.S.) (cont'd)  
More!  
(pause)  
There ya go--Wait--TILT IT THE OTHER  
WAY DAMMIT!

Bill adjusts.

DAD (O.S.) (cont'd)  
 RIGHT THERE--HOLD IT!

Bill secures the antenna and wipes the rust on his hands on his denim shorts. The sound of the T.V. inside the house excites him--time to watch the ballgame! He starts to get up, feels something graze the back of his shirt--

CUT TO BLACK

FADE IN:

Bill's P.O.V., seeing the top of the roof from five feet-- maybe more--in the air. FADE TO BLACK.

**BLACK**

BILL (V.O.)  
 I don't remember hitting the ground,  
 because I'm pretty sure I died,  
 because--  
 (pause)  
 ...well, I guess what I'm trying to  
 say is I saw two paths that I  
 could've gone, and--

**EXT. BILL'S CHILDHOOD HOME - MOMENTS LATER**

Bill is lying on the ground, being kicked around the yard by his panicking father.

DAD  
 BILL--Bill, don't you die on me,  
 don't you--

Bill's eyes open and he groans.

BILL (V.O.)  
 --and I chose the harder one.

**EXT. THE HIGHWAY - YEARS LATER**

Bill (14) walks along the highway with his thumb held out, passing the ARKANSAS STATE SIGN that reads "COME BACK SOON."

CROSS FADE TO:

**EXT. THE HIGHWAY**

Bill is walking along the highway in a desert with his thumb held out. The red scenery of Arizona/New Mexico surround him.

**EXT. THE HIGHWAY - UNDER THE CALIFORNIA STATE SIGN - AFTERNOON**

Bill is sitting under the CALIFORNIA STATE SIGN in the shade it provides. His shirt is soaked through with sweat and he is sunburned badly.

A car door closes off screen. Two police officers walk up to him.

POLICE OFFICER #1  
Where ya' from, kid?

Bill looks up and glares.

**INT. BILL'S CHILDHOOD HOME**

Bill (13) and his little brother JOHN (10) are putting wood in the furnace. John tries to light the wood with matches but it won't hold a flame.

JOHN  
This ain't never gon' light.

John walks outside and comes back in the house with a can of gasoline. He pours the gas and, with his other hand, lights a match. It catches on the wood and--FWOOM--

Fire spreads like lightning to the can, and with both boys screaming, John THROWS the gas can away and it EXPLODES. The boys run out of the house--

**EXT. BILL'S CHILDHOOD HOME**

Bill grabs a bucket and starts pumping water from the outside faucet.

John sprints into the distance.

BILL  
Wha-- JOHN, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!

JOHN  
I'm running away! Mom and Dad are going to KILL ME!

Bill runs inside the house with the bucket of water.

**INT. HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON**

A deafening roar echoes through the halls from a motorcycle engine. Bill's (16) friends are holding open the double doors of the school while Bill himself parades his motorcycle through the halls.

Teachers are yelling, students are laughing, rolling their eyes, cheering alike from the doorways of the classrooms. Bill hoots and hollers as he revs his engine--

Bill does a wheelie, shooting down the hallway of the school, and out the door on the other end.

**EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER**

Bill is high-tailing it across the school yards as police sirens draw near the school. Two police cars block the road leading out of the school and into the surrounding small town.

Bill makes a U-turn away from the police--he knows another way out.

The police cars chase him down on the road alongside Bill-- he can get away if he's fast enough--

In the distant parking lot on the opposite end of the school, he spots her--Bill's Mom--HELEN--in her car. Her big curly red hair and the glint off of her glasses are unmistakable.

He's trapped.

It's a split-second decision--Billy looks behind him, at the police cars in tow, and back at Helen. He whips his bike around--

He slams the brakes, jumps off his bike and drops to his knees by the nearest cop car. An officer charges to him.

POLICE OFFICER #2  
Boy, what the HELL do you think  
you're doin'?!

BILL  
Just arrest me before my mom gets  
over here.

**BLACK**

BILL (65) (V.O.)

--And I'm really glad I chose that path, 'cause, y'know, I've lived a pretty unbelievable life--

**EXT. SOMEWHERE IN MEXICO - DAY**

Outside of a shady building in the middle of nowhere, Bill's (25) SEMI-Truck parked in front. Bill is squared up to a Mexican man--a GUARD--holding a gun--they are surrounded by more men with guns.

BILL

I ain't leaving 'til I speak to your boss--he owes me for a load and I can prove it.

GUARD

Naw, man--Nobody "speaks" to our boss and lives to tell the tale.

Bill steps past the guard.

BILL

Then I'll be the first.

CUT TO BLACK

BILL (V.O.)

--And I don't think I'd have done anything differently.