

Screenplay #1:  
BADLANDS  
by  
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Current Revisions by  
Clayton Emmer, September 17

Beginning Screenwriting  
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Metro State University  
Fall 2001  
Tuesday, September 18, 2001

BADLANDS  
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EXT. DESERT - DAWN

A July morning in the South Dakota Badlands. On the tip of a bluff pocked with small brush and tumbleweed, JEREMY BREWER, 19, wearing jeans and leather jacket, lies asleep on his side facing south at the bluff's edge. A bunched-up plaid shirt serves as his pillow.

In the distance, one hears an occasional car passing south of the bluff on Interstate 90. The only other sound is the HUM from a nearby power transformer.

The sun appears suddenly from behind a hill to the east, flooding Jeremy's resting place with light. He twitches with the sun in his face, turning over to avoid the brightness. Restless, he rolls over again, this time over the bluff's edge. He tumbles down the bluff six or seven feet. An avalanche of sand and a beer bottle follow him down.

Jeremy sits up, brushes sand from his hair and surveys his surroundings. A breeze out of the north carries tumbleweed over the bluff. He jumps to his feet, startled.

He picks up the beer bottle and launches it off to toward the west in a tantrum reflex and shouts.

JEREMY

Damn you, Brenda!

Climbing to the top of the bluff, he removes his leather jacket, shakes the sand off of his crumpled shirt and puts it on. Shivering, he covers himself with his jacket and walks toward the highway.

EXT. WAYSIDE REST STOP - DAWN

Jeremy approaches map in front of wayside rest building. To one side of the map is the door leading inside to rest rooms. On the other side, BUTCH, 69, outspoken, a retired truck driver wearing overalls, sits at a bench. Jeremy traces his finger along the map.

BUTCH

We're between exit 10 and exit 2. 'Bout 5 miles west of Spearfish.

JEREMY

Thanks.

Jeremy turns around, enters the building, then returns a few moments later through the same door, scanning the parking lot.

BUTCH

(smiling)

Hike through the Badlands often?

JEREMY

Only when my girlfriend gets pissed off. It wasn't even her bike!

BUTCH

Piss off your girlfriend often?

JEREMY

(annoyed)

About as often as I floss.

Jeremy crosses his arms. Butch raises himself from the bench and lights a cigarette.

BUTCH

So either you're crappy at hygiene or crappy at relationships. Which is it?

JEREMY

We got in a fight over dinner back in Deadwood. Listen, do you know where I can find a pay phone?

BUTCH

Not here. Probably have a chance of finding one up at exit 2. Would you like a ride?

JEREMY

That'd be great.

(extending his hand to Butch)

I'm Jeremy, by the way.

BUTCH

(shaking his hand)

Howdee damn do, Jeremy. The name's Butch.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Butch's rusty blue '78 Ford pickup races down Interstate 90 toward the Wyoming border with Jeremy in passenger seat.

INT. CABIN OF BUTCH'S PICKUP - DAY

JEREMY

I'm just calling Sheridan to see if Brenda's sister has heard from her. Then I'm thumbing it back to Sioux Falls. I've had enough of this.

BUTCH

Giving up so easy?

JEREMY

So easy? I don't know why we've dated this long.

BUTCH

How old are you?

JEREMY

Nineteen.

BUTCH

Those long weeks of commitment must be getting you down.

JEREMY

Weeks?! It's been years - almost. I'm so tired of visiting Brenda's sister. All the two of them want to do is gossip, watch soaps and shop at garage sales for Beanie Babies.

And Gloria can't stop talking about her dream of becoming a veterinarian, but she never does anything about it. She's still working at Wal-Mart in the photo department.

BUTCH

And what kind of career are you planning?

JEREMY

Don't know. Got laid off from Menard's last week. Just after Brenda started working for a law firm in town.

BUTCH

A bit jealous?

JEREMY

'Course not. Never wanted to be a legal secretary.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Butch's truck pulls up to gas pump. Jeremy hops out of the truck and shuts the door. He speaks to Butch through the open window.

JEREMY

Thanks for the ride, Butch.

BUTCH

Sure you're not game for continuing on? I'll be passing through Sheridan.

JEREMY

Postive. Thanks, though.

BUTCH

Suit yourself. I used to do the same thing: burn the bridges when the water's low.

JEREMY

Listen, can you wait a minute?

BUTCH

Sure.

Butch turns off the engine.

EXT. PAY PHONE AT GAS STATION ENTRANCE - DAY

Jeremy talks on the phone.

JEREMY

Gloria, it's Jeremy. Hi. Is Brenda there?

Yeah.

(pause)

Can I talk to her?

EXT. CABIN OF BUTCH'S PICKUP - DAY

Jeremy opens the passenger door, steps in and slams the door shut. He stares at the dashboard and lets out a big sigh.

BUTCH

Did you talk to her?

JEREMY

Yeah.

BUTCH

So we're off to Sheridan?

JEREMY

If you're willing.

BUTCH

Sure, I could use the company.

(chuckles)

'Atta boy.

Butch starts the engine.

FADE OUT