

Evan Skolnick
Walking Dead Writing Sample

*NOTE: This is a sequence based on a hypothetical Walking Dead series in which **Daryl Dixon** is the main character. The scene takes place several weeks before we first see Daryl or his brother Merle in the TV series, during the period that they're traveling as a twosome from their home in north Georgia toward Atlanta.*

DIR: Daryl Dixon (playable character) and his older brother Merle are walking side-by-side down a forested street in northern Georgia, early evening, approaching dusk. Daryl is armed with his crossbow, while Merle has his sniper rifle casually slung over his shoulders.

MERLE: - and I'm tellin' you, little brother, it wasn't me.

DARYL: Well, I sure wasn't the last man to touch that oil pan. I never leave the plug so loose.

MERLE [motioning around]: So you're blamin' me for this mess?

DARYL: I'm blamin' you for the truck dyin', yeah.

MERLE [challenging]: And how 'bout the rest of this shit-show? I suppose that's my fault, too?

CHOICES:

- 1. It's nobody's fault.**
- 2. I don't know who to blame.**
- 3. Let's change the subject.**
- 4. Silence**

1. It's nobody's fault.

DARYL: It ain't nobody's fault. Shit just happens.

MERLE [softening slightly]: Nah, this kind of shit don't just happen. This kind of fuck-up... it's the government kind.

DARYL: How do you know?

MERLE: Son, I seen how the military operates, firsthand. This shit's got their stink all over it.

DARYL [admitting]: Well, something fuckin' stinks, that's for sure.

[TO MAIN PATH]

2. I don't know who to blame.

DARYL: Look, I don't know whose fault it is.

MERLE [softening slightly]: Yeah, probably some pansy-ass government scientist messin' with shit he shouldn't've been.

DARYL: Maybe. Does it even matter?

MERLE: Course it does, son. Payback.

DARYL: If it was a pansy-ass scientist, I bet he already got his.

MERLE: Mm. Hope it was slow.

[TO MAIN PATH]

3. Let's change the subject.

DARYL: Look, the truck's dead. No point cryin' over it anymore.

MERLE: I ain't cryin' over dick. And don't tell me what to do.

DARYL: Relax, Merle. Jesus.

MERLE: Didn't I just tell you to stop orderin' me around? I'll relax if and when, got it?

DARYL: Fine, whatever. [To himself, *sotto voce*] Asshole.

MERLE: What'd you say, boy?!

DARYL [resigned]: Nothing.

MERLE [satisfied]: Uh-huh. That's what I thought.

[TO MAIN PATH]

4. Silence.

MERLE [satisfied]: Yeah. I thought so.

[TO MAIN PATH]

[MAIN PATH]

DIR: The brothers approach a bend in the road, around which are two other abandoned vehicles – a sedan and an SUV. They look dirty and a bit banged-up, but otherwise intact. Both men draw their weapons as they approach the vehicles, and make sure there are no walkers in, under or around them. Once they have:

MERLE: Clear.

DARYL: Same.

Merle and Daryl cautiously sling their weapons and start taking a closer look at the vehicles.

DARYL: Wonder if we could get one of these running.

MERLE: Probably more'n we can hope for, but worth a shot. Pop this one's hood.

DIR: The brothers open both vehicles' hoods and start evaluating each one's condition. As they talk in hushed tones just out of our earshot, we observe them from a hidden spot in the woods, not far off the road. The handheld camera, first-person POV indicates that someone is watching them from cover. We cut back to a camera closer to the two brothers.

DARYL: I'm thinkin' if we pull the distributor cap off this one, we could maybe—

DIR: A twig is heard snapping nearby in the woods, causing both men to draw weapons and aim them at the unseen source. About 20 feet off the road, behind a large fallen log in the woods, is the silhouette of someone watching them.

DARYL: What is it? One of them walkers?

MERLE: If it is, it ain't walkin'. [To the stranger] Come on out, now!

DIR: Seen from over Daryl's shoulder, a small figure starts to emerge from behind the log. It looks like it might be a small boy. But whoever it is changes his mind and stops, standing stock still.

MERLE: Fuck this, I'm takin' the shot.

DIR: Merle lines up his shot...

CHOICES:

- 1. Do it.**
- 2. Wait!**
- 3. [Shove Merle]**
- 4. [Do nothing]**

1. Do it.

DARYL: Yeah, better safe than sorry. Waste him.

MERLE: Like the way you think, baby brother...

DIR: Merle takes the shot, but just misses because the target ducked at the last second. The bullet violently splits a branch near the target's head. A young boy's panicked yell is heard from the stranger.

DARYL: That wasn't no walker.

DIR: The stranger emerges from cover and the silhouette resolves to that of a young boy with his hands up.

DARYL: Aw, shit, it's just a kid!

[TO MAIN PATH]

2. Wait!

DARYL: Wait a minute, man!

MERLE: Why the hell should I?

DARYL: Because, we don't know... I mean, come on, bro...

MERLE: You goin' soft, boy.

DIR: The stranger emerges from cover and the silhouette resolves to that of a young boy with his hands up.

DARYL: See? It's just a damn kid.

UI: Merle will remember you tried to stop him.

[TO MAIN PATH]

3. [Shove Merle]

DIR: The player character shoves Merle, throwing off his aim as the rifle goes off. The bullet violently splits a branch near the target's head. A young boy's panicked yell is heard from the stranger's location.

MERLE: What in the hell are you doin'?!

DARYL: For Chrissake, Merle, didn't you hear that? It's just a damn kid!

DIR: The stranger emerges from cover and the silhouette resolves to that of a young boy with his hands up.

UI: Merle will remember you tried to stop him.

[TO MAIN PATH]

4. [Do nothing]

DIR: Merle takes the shot, but just misses because the target ducked at the last second. The bullet violently splits a branch near the target's head. A young boy's panicked yell is heard from the stranger. He emerges from cover and the silhouette resolves to that of a young boy with his hands up.

DARYL: Aw, shit, it's just a kid!

[TO MAIN PATH]

[MAIN PATH]

DIR: Daryl lowers his crossbow and assumes a less threatening stance, but Merle keeps his weapon trained.

DARYL [more gently]: It's all right, kid, come on out. We didn't mean to scare you.

DIR: The stranger, half-concealed but clearly a young boy, hesitates, seeing Merle's weapon still trained on him. Daryl reaches over and gently pushes the muzzle of Merle's gun down.

DARYL: C'mon, man. Kid's probably scared enough.

DIR: Merle grudgingly acquiesces, letting his gun barrel drop. After a moment, the boy emerges fully from the woods, slowly lowering his hands as he walks forward and stops in a patch of fading sunlight. He is Michael, an 8-year-old African-American boy.

MERLE [disparagingly]: Aw, Christ, look at what we got here...

DIR: His weapon now slung, Daryl slowly approaches Michael, who looks scared.

CHOICES:

- 1. What's your name?**
- 2. Are you alone out here?**
- 3. Where are your parents?**
- 4. Silence**

1. What's your name?

DARYL: What's your name?

DIR: The boy only stares blankly at Daryl.

[TO MAIN PATH]

2. Are you alone out here?

DARYL: You all alone out here?

DIR: The boy only stares blankly at Daryl.

[TO MAIN PATH]

3. Where are your parents?

DARYL: Where're your folks?

DIR: The boy only stares blankly at Daryl.

[TO MAIN PATH]

4. Silence

DIR: The boy only stares blankly at Daryl.

[TO MAIN PATH]

[MAIN PATH]

DIR: Merle scoffs while we notice Michael now staring at some dried jerky Daryl has hanging from his belt. The boy licks his lips.

MERLE: Just great, a mute on top of it. C'mon, let's get goin'.

DIR: Daryl notices what Michael is looking at; looks down at the jerky.

DARYL: You hungry, kid?

DIR: Daryl pulls a strip of jerky free and holds it out toward Michael, who almost immediately darts forward, grabs it and starts hungrily biting off a chewy mouthful.

MERLE: What the hell you doin', dummy? This ain't no orphanage we're runnin' here! Now stop messin' with "Little Coon Lost" here, and let's get one of these vehicles movin' before dark.

CHOICES:

- 1. Don't call him that.**
- 2. Don't be a dick.**
- 3. We need to help him.**
- 4. Silence**

1. Don't call him that.

DARYL: C'mon, bro, you don't need to call him that.

MERLE: Aw, Mr. Sensitive here. I'll call him what I like, dipshit.

[TO MAIN PATH]

2. Don't be a dick.

DARYL: Don't be such a dick, Merle.

MERLE: You watch that lip, little brother, or I'll go ahead and split it for ya.

UI: Merle will remember you called him that.

[TO MAIN PATH]

3. We need to help him.

DARYL: Kid needs help, Merle. He's all alone.

MERLE: Not our problem.

[TO MAIN PATH]

4. Silence

DIR: Merle nods in satisfaction, as if he's won the argument.

[TO MAIN PATH]

[MAIN PATH]

MERLE: And that jerky you gave him is comin' outta your rations, boy. Now let's get this shit fixed. We're losin' the light.

DARYL: Suppose we are.

DIR: While Michael continues to chew away at the tough jerky, Merle and Daryl get to work on the SUV's engine. Around the bend, a late-model car rolls up very slowly, with several occupants shining flashlights out the front and back windows, into the woods, on both sides of the road. They're silently waving them back and forth, even though it's not dark yet. Daryl notices the car first, and instinctively reaches for his crossbow.

DARYL: Company.

DIR: Merle looks up, and also gets his weapon out. But Michael sees the car, smiles, and immediately starts running toward it.

DARYL: Whoa, kid! Kid! Hold up!

MERLE: Let him go!

DIR: Daryl starts chasing after Michael, while Merle takes cover behind an SUV door and draws a bead on the slowly approaching car. Cutting to inside the car, we see the scene from over the shoulders of the driver and passenger (as if we're in the back seat): Michael is running toward us, jerky still in hand, while crossbow-carrying Daryl seems to be chasing him.

CORY (the driver): Holy shit, that guy's after him!

DIR: Back to previous camera shot, outside the vehicle. The car speeds forward, then skids to a stop in the middle of the road. The occupants open the doors and use them as cover as they train guns on Daryl. They are: Cory (African-American male, 38), Ana (Hispanic female, 32), Luis (Hispanic male, 28) and Peter (bespectacled Caucasian male, 26).

CORY [yelling]: Leave him alone or we'll shoot!

DIR: Daryl slows up, raising his hands as Michael continues running toward the newcomers.

CHOICES (NOTE: extra-short timer on this choice):

1. What do you want with him?

2. Take it easy.

3. I meant no harm.

4. Silence

1. What do you want with him?

DARYL: What do you want with him?

[TO MAIN PATH]

2. Take it easy.

DARYL: Take it easy, bud.

[TO MAIN PATH]

3. I meant no harm.

DARYL: I ain't gonna hurt him.

[TO MAIN PATH]

4. Silence

[TO MAIN PATH]

[MAIN PATH]

DIR: Michael runs into Cory's arms, who pulls him into cover and then hugs him from a kneeling position. The others keep their weapons trained on Daryl.

MERLE [calling]: You assholes drop the hardware or I'll put every one of you down!

DARYL: Merle, take it easy.

DIR: Cory and Michael begin frantically, happily signing (using sign language) to each other. On seeing this, Daryl's expression indicates that a few things suddenly make a lot more sense to him.

ANA [to Daryl, accusingly]: Why were you chasing after him?

CHOICES:

- 1. I thought he might get hurt.**
- 2. You were acting suspiciously.**
- 3. I don't need to answer to you.**
- 4. Silence**

1. I thought he might get hurt.

DARYL: Thought he might get hurt. Run over.

CORY: So you're claiming you were protecting him?

DARYL: That's right. So who are you?

[TO MAIN PATH]**2. You were acting suspiciously.**

DARYL: Thought you were acting a bit suspicious.

CORY: You trying to tell us you were protecting him?

DARYL: Something like that. Now what's your story?

3. I don't need to answer to you.

DARYL: I ain't here to answer to you.

CORY: You chase my boy with a crossbow and you don't think I deserve an explanation?

DARYL: I was trying to keep him safe till his folks showed up. [beat] Looks like that worked out.

4. Silence

DIR: Cory looks at Daryl suspiciously.

[TO MAIN PATH]**[MAIN PATH]**

DIR: Cory looks back at Michael, giving him a thorough once-over to make sure he's not injured or bitten. He notices the jerky that Michael is now determinedly chewing on once again. Then Cory looks over at Daryl and sees more of the same jerky hanging from Daryl's belt. Cory puts two and two together, and his expression softens.

CORY: Guns down.

ANA: What?! Cory—

CORY: Just do it.

DIR: The other three reluctantly lower their weapons as Cory emerges from cover and holsters his own pistol. He walks toward Daryl, Michael alongside him. Daryl cautiously lowers his hands.

CORY: Name's Cory. Guess I owe you—

DIR: Cory cuts himself off and freezes in place as he suddenly realizes that Merle still has his sniper rifle aimed at him (or possibly even Michael)! Seeing Cory's expression, Daryl looks over his shoulder to see the same thing.

DARYL: Merle! I'm okay! Ease off!

DIR: After a moment, Merle reluctantly complies, pointing his rifle upward but staying in cover.

MERLE [to himself]: Shit.

CORY [indicating Merle]: And who is that guy?

CHOICES:

1. My big brother.

2. Just some asshole.

3. Don't worry about him.

4. Silence

1. My big brother.

DARYL: He's my big brother.

CORY: Lucky you.

DARYL: Yeah, well... he can take some warming up to.

[TO MAIN PATH]

2. Just some asshole.

DARYL: Just some asshole I ran into.

UI: Cory will remember you said that about Merle.

CORY: Interesting choice of friends.

DARYL [with slight irony]: Choice, huh. Yeah.

[TO MAIN PATH]

3. Don't worry about him.

DARYL: Don't worry about him. Bark's worse'n his bite.

CORY: You sure about that?

DARYL: Most of the time.

[TO MAIN PATH]

4. Silence

CORY: All right, keep your secrets.

[TO MAIN PATH]

[MAIN PATH]

CORY: In any case, thanks for watching over my boy. It's bad enough out here for any of us, but he can't even hear those damn things coming.

DARYL: And no point callin' his name...

CORY: Right. We figured maybe he'd notice the flashlights.

DARYL: Makes sense.

CORY: Well... as much sense as anything makes these days.

END