

Kestrel

Carrie Connors

Negotiations, Wheeling Pittsburgh Steel and United Steelworkers of America

5 pile into Martinelli's boat of a Cadillac, crank the windows down, turn the radio up. They're set to drive up to Pittsburgh from McMechen for negotiations with management. The company declared Chapter 11 in April of '85 after the union refused to sign a lousy contract, took away grievance rights, so they all walked out. 60 days in and the press is talking, even the big papers and Sully knows there might be a photo op. He's a sharp dresser, sporting a tight paisley polyester button-down, so bright your eyes water. It's the kind of early summer day that makes you notice your own breath, skin, really look at other people. Martinelli's lit up one of his cigarillos with the dashboard lighter, tapping ashes out the window. *Sonofabitch, you lit me on fire!* The sleeve of Sully's shirt going up faster than a dried out Christmas tree. Big Sam smacks out Sully's arm before he's burned or shirtless. Everyone howls. Later, in front of the photographer for one of the Pittsburgh papers, Sully hides his disintegrated sleeve behind Big Sam. They're all grinning into the camera from the beauty of the weather, Sully's faux anger, the thrill of fighting for each other, and this time they won the day.