

Pure Bismar

Director: Roger Donaldson
Producers: Joseph M. Singer
Ilona Herzberg
Co-Producer: Marliese Schneider
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DANTE'S PEAK

rough draft-in-progress

revisions by

Lewis Colick

Contact: Joseph M. Singer Entertainment
818.777.9675

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EXT. RESEARCH ENCAMPMENT, GALERAS. DAY.

A dark, sooty rain is falling. A rain not of water but of volcanic debris and ash known as Tephra. There is a CONSTANT DEEP BASS RUMBLE, there are SPORADIC EXPLOSIONS. There is just a glimmer of what would normally be the noonday sun, barely visible through the darkness caused by all the RAINING ASH.

The handful of PEOPLE who have remained at the encampment are fleeing hither and thither. Among them....

CHARLIE DALTON and his fiance MARIANNE, race towards their TRUCK, into which other PEOPLE are cramming.

The ground shakes again, VIOLENTLY. A VOLCANIC BOMB detonates in the background as they run.

Just as they reach the truck another BOMB explodes close to them, throwing up a pile of earth like a mortar explosion, SLAMMING them forward into the truck.

The mountain RUMBLES as Charlie slams the truck into gear and heads down the hillside.

INT. TRUCK. DAY.

Branches whip at the windshield as the truck heads down the overgrown track. Charlie has to fight to keep the truck on the road. The Passengers in the back hold on tight as they are slammed from side to side.

EXT. TRACK FROM ENCAMPMENT. DAY.

As the truck speeds TOWARDS CAMERA, a volcanic bomb crashes into the ground in front of it. The TRUCK SWERVES, rights itself. Then ANOTHER BOMB slams directly onto the front fender, buckling it and causing SMOKE TO BILLOW as metal and tire come into contact.

INT. TRUCK. DAY.

Charlie is hunched over the wheel as he drives.

Marianne, her face curiously elated by the adrenalin she feels and the power of nature enveloping them, turns round to look back.

The truck races CRAZILY, SLAMMING and BOUNCING down the rough road.

MARIANNE
Oh, Charlie...it
looks.....incredible!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is awe in her voice as well as fear.

And then a small VOLCANIC BOMB, no bigger than a grapefruit, SMASHES into the cab, TEARING THROUGH THE WINDOW BESIDE MARIANNE....

Charlie jerks the wheel, righting the truck and turns to see the damage....

The others in the truck have bent forward to tend to Marianne who is slumped in the seat. BLOOD IS SEEPING from the back of her head.

Charlie still driving away as fast as he can, clutches her lifeless body to him.

CHARLIE

No, Marianne! No no no no.....

His CRIES of defiance become a litany of SOUND, as the truck is swallowed by the dense fog of eruption.

And the SCREEN FADES TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. CASCADES VANCOUVER OBSERVATORY - DAY

OV TITLE: UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, CASCADES VOLCANO OBSERVATORY WASHINGTON. FIVE YEARS LATER.

A squat, unimposing two story building. Looks like an apartment complex. The brain center of the largest organization in the world devoted to the study of volcanoes and the prediction of their eruption. The front door opens and out walks Charlie Dalton. He has aged since we saw him last. Something detached, a little distant has come into his eyes. He's about to head off toward the parking lot when he notices a group of people gathered around, watching something on the lawn. A technician passes Charlie on his way into the building.

CHARLIE

What's going on?

TECHNICIAN

Terry and his girlfriend are at it again.

ANGLE- TERRY FURLONG, a big guy with a penchant for loud Hawaiian shirts, exclaims happily:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TERRY

Beatrice, you're beautiful, baby,
give your daddy a kiss.

Now we see BEATRICE, as she heads toward Terry. She's a three foot square walking tethered robotic spider. She has two frames, each of which has four legs. The upper frame is set at right angles over the lower frame. The frames are separated by a track which, along with the frames, may slide. The legs have suction cups at the "ankles". The "feet" extend for four inches past the cups. The robot "walks" by the sliding of the frames along their tracks, first the upper, then the lower.

Terry gives Beatrice a kiss as the amused USGS personnel look on. Charlie shows up.

CHARLIE

That is one hot lady.

TERRY

(sees Charlie, winks)
According to NASA, she can take
it all the way up to 1200 degrees
celsius.

Charlie notices the small black box on the robot's back.

CHARLIE

What's that for?

Terry makes a slight adjustment at the controls and we can see Beatrice respond, turning.

TERRY

Oh, that's ELF. NASA just sent
it over for testing.

CHARLIE

Elf?

TERRY

It's some kind of a transmitter
supposed to transmit extra low
frequency sound waves to get some
idea of the internal structure
of Mars. That's if and when they
ever get around to shooting
Beatrice up there.

CHARLIE

Well, I'll see you both in two
weeks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TERRY

Hey, I forgot. You're going on vacation.

CHARLIE

This time tomorrow I'll be drifting through the Keys without a care in the world.

Terry's smiling, but he really means this:

TERRY

You have yourself some fun for a change, okay?

Then everybody starts to laugh. Charley and Terry turn to see that Beatrice is stuck and flailing.

CHARLEY

Something she ate maybe?

TERRY

Maybe.

Terry heads over.

INT. OBSERVATORY ROOM - DAY

The young woman adjusts the image on her monitor and turns to the bearded guy next to her.

YOUNG WOMAN

Woa. Something going on here.

BEARDED MAN

(looks over her shoulder, breathing down her neck)

Seismic shift?

YOUNG WOMAN

(pointed)

Either that or it's objecting to the garlic and onions the mountain next to it just ate.

BEARDED MAN

(moving back)

Sorry.

YOUNG WOMAN

I think Dreyfus oughtta see this.

EXT. OUTSIDE MOBILE STATION- DAY

Terry futilely makes adjusts the still flailing robot. Charley steps in.

CHARLEY

Allow me...

Charley gives the robot a well placed kick in the rear end. Beatrice starts to move again. Terry smiles, the gathering applauds.

Charley heads off, once again, toward the parking lot. He's about to get into a Jeep with a USGS logo on the door when he hears:

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, Charley! Wait up!

Charley turns around. It's the big bearded guy from the observation room.

BEARDED GUY

Dreyfus wants to see you.

Charley's features darken considerably.

INT. OBSERVATORY - DAY

Charley's knocking on an office door.

DREYFUS (O.S.)

Come in.

INT. DREYFUS'S OFFICE - CONT.

PAUL DREYFUS, rugged, late fifties, sits at his desk looking at some graphs on a piece of paper.

DREYFUS

Sit down.

The antipathy between these two men is immediately evident. We'll find out why they hate each other later. Charley takes a seat, making it clear that he doesn't want to be here. Dreyfus keeps him waiting while he looks over the paper in his hand. Finally:

DREYFUS

You ever hiked the Eastern
Cascades?

CHARLEY

What...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DREYFUS
It would be helpful if you had.

CHARLEY
Helpful to what?

DREYFUS
We're picking up some activity
around Dante's Peak and I need
somebody to-

CHARLEY
(surprised)
This is a joke, right? Dante's
Peak?

He tries to hand Charley the paper with the satellite images.

DREYFUS
See for yourself.

CHARLIE
I don't want to see for myself.
You know I don't do field work
anymore.

There's a note of contempt in Dreyfus's voice as he says:

DREYFUS
Yes. I do know.

There is silence for a beat. Then:

DREYFUS
Relax. The chances of the chances
of Dante's Peak going off are a
million to one.

CHARLIE
(pissed)
But you're sending me anyway...

DREYFUS
Somebody's got to check it out
and you're the only available man.

He thrusts the paper at Charlie, who takes it and looks it over.
He's unimpressed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLEY

This could mean any one of a
thousand things...
(throws paper down)
You're fucking with me, aren't
you, Paul?

DREYFUS

Pardon me?

CHARLIE

I haven't had a vacation in three
years and you goddamned well know
it.

Charlie tosses the paper down on the desk.

CHARLIE

This isn't about some dead
volcano. This is about you
wasting my time and pissing me
off.

DREYFUS

If that's how you feel about it,
you know what you can do.

Dreyfus is daring Charlie.

CHARLIE

I'm not going to leave the service
and you know it.

DREYFUS

(smug)
Yeah. I know it.

CHARLIE

Fuck with me all you want to,
Paul...but it's not going to bring
her back.

Dreyfus turns red. Charlie turns around and walks out the door.

INT. OBSERVATORY (OUTSIDE DREYFUS'S OFFICE) - DAY

Charlie walks out and slams the door to Dreyfus's office. He
storms off, passing a technician, who stops him:

TECHNICIAN

You lucky dog. Going to the Keys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

Fuck you.

Charlie pushes past the confused man and heads off.

EXT. DANTE'S PEAK - DAY

The mountain is snow-capped, pristine, peaceful. The town of Dante's Peak, population 7,437, is nestled at the foot of the mountain. This is a jewel of a small town, cut in half by a meandering creek. There is some sort of fair in progress. We can see some PORTABLE AMUSEMENT PARK RIDES. We can hear an OOMPAH BAND.

CHARLEY'S SUBURBAN drives slowly down the street. This vehicle's got OFF-ROAD TIRES, IMPACT BARS, a RAISED TAIL PIPE and SNORKEL into the engine air intake for going through deep water. It comes to a stop in front of a motel named "Cluster's Last Stand". Charley gets out. He looks around at the town, the festivities in progress, the mountain. He's not happy to be here. He goes inside the office.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE - DAY

Motel owner JACK CLUSTER stands by as Charley fills out a registration card.

CHARLEY

(referring to music
outside)

Why the party, Mr. Cluster?

CLUSTER

"Money Magazine's" just named
Dante's Peak, the second most
desirable place to live in the
United States, population under
20,000.

CHARLEY

What was number one?

CLUSTER

(bitterly)

Oh, some piece of crap town out
in Montana somewheres. Who cares
anyway?

(hands him a key)

Room 108. Have a nice stay.

Charley starts for the door. Then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLEY

Can you tell me where I might find
Mayor Wando?

CLUSTER

The mayor ought to be right around
the corner accepting the award.

INT. RACHEL WANDO'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - DAY

Mayor RACHEL WANDO races to get ready, looking frantically for the jacket to her suit. Rachel is early thirties, unaware of just how pretty she is. She'd be much more comfortable in jeans and a flannel shirt. She mutters to herself, practicing a speech as she moves through her cluttered den/office.

RACHEL

Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like
to thank Karen from "Money
Magazine" for...- shit - is it
Karen or Kathy?

Rachel's ten-year-old daughter, LAUREN, looks up from the written text she is following to coach her mother.

LAUREN

Karen.

RACHEL

Have you seen my good jacket?

Lauren is relieved to be let off the hook.

LAUREN

You don't have a good jacket.

RACHEL

The blue one.

Lauren points to the jacket hanging over the chair. Rachel throws it on. Then she bangs on a bedroom door.

RACHEL

Graham, it's time to go.

No response from inside. Rachel flings open the door opens to this typical teenager's room. Pictures of Kurt Cobain on the wall, etc. The room is empty.

RACHEL

(to Lauren)

Where's your brother?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAUREN
(clearly lying)
I don't know.

RACHEL
That little rat's going to miss
my speech.

LAUREN
If you don't get going, you're
going to miss your speech.

Lauren grabs her mother's hand and pulls her out of the apartment.

EXT. CHELAN STREET - DAY

Charley's hanging around by the stage, waiting impatiently like everybody else, KAREN from "Money Magazine," holds a plaque and smokes, obviously annoyed. Then local business leader LES WORRELL gives a relieved SIGH.

LES
It's about time...

Charley sees Rachel and her daughter hurrying over the bridge that divides the town. Clearly, Rachel isn't what he was expecting. Charley rushes toward her. Les signals the band. They finish their song.

ANGLE - RACHEL AND LAUREN

As they rush toward the main activity area, Rachel practices her speech.

RACHEL
Thank you, Karen. This award means
a lot to us...A few years ago,
we were on the verge of becoming
a ghost town.

Charley rushes over, falls in beside her.

CHARLEY
Mayor Wando, I'm Charlie Dalton
with the USGS, and-

RACHEL
Mr. Dreyfus called, I'm supposed
to show you around the mountain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLEY
That's right so-

The mountain was logged out, the
mill closing down, the mine
closed.

LAUREN
Sounds like a Bruce Springsteen
song.

RACHEL
Thanks, alot...

ON THE STAGE

Les moves to the microphone.

LES
Today is a very special day in
Dante's Peak and to kick off the
proceedings, I'd like to introduce
to you Karen Narlington from Money
Magazine.

The young woman with the PLAQUE steps up to the podium.

KAREN
Thank you very much, Les.

Rachel skitters onto the podium.

KAREN
Mayor Wando, it gives me great
pride to present to you a Money
Magazine award. Dante's Peak,
the second most desirable place
to live in the United States,
population under 20,000.

Applause. From everybody but Charley, that is, who is getting
restless. Rachel moves to the microphone. She's lost the sheet
of paper with her speech. She improvises.

RACHEL
Thank you, Ka....
(she makes a noise like
"ren/thy to cover both
options, then clears
her throat)

Lauren winces in embarrassment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL

This award means a lot to us.
A few years ago, the mountain was
logged out, the mill was closing
and the mine was shut. Like a
regular Bruce Springsteen song.
But now with the fish hatchery
thriving, the bottling plant going
full speed and, most importantly,
the prospect of a major factory
investment by Malbar
Industries...The future of Dante's
Peak never looked brighter.

TWO BUSINESS TYPES, ANTHONY MALACHI and JEFFERY BARNICK stand
to acknowledge the town's APPLAUSE. Les beams at them. Charlie
not listening.

EXT. TWONSET HOT SPRINGS - DAY

Bubbling water and steam rise into the cool evening air. There
is snow on the ground. The springs are posted. "NO BATHING".
Even as we watch, a T-shirt is draped across this sign. There
are more clothes piled all around.

An AGING HIPPIE COUPLE is about to break the rules. The man
steps, naked into the hot water. A beat later the woman joins
him.

WOMAN

Ow! It's really hot.

MAN

Hence the name Twonset hot
springs.

She splashes him. He splashes her.

WOMAN

This water smells like you just
ate a can of beans.

MAN

Sulphur's always better out than
in.

Another SPLASH! He reaches over to a pile of snow to make a
snowball. There's a RUSTLE in the bushes. A beat. Some gravel
falls. They're both quiet for a moment.

MAN

It's OK. Some animal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But he doesn't sound quite sure of that... He tries to take things back to normal with a smile.

MAN

Come here, gorgeous.

A beat. She starts across the bubbling pool towards him.

A LOUD CRACKING SOUND. The ground around them gives a shake. The woman looks at the man, frightened.

WOMAN

Jerry...

Just then, a FLOCK OF BIRDS takes NOISY FLIGHT from out of the bushes. The man and woman turn to look at the birds. More gravel falls... The ground SHAKES HARDER... AND THEN THE WOMAN SCREAMS!

At her feet, the rocks at the bottom of the hot springs have shifted. There is a GLOW OF SOMETHING VERY HOT FROM BENEATH THESE ROCKS. Now, BUBBLES rise around the woman and STEAM FILLS THE SCREEN.

WOMAN

Jesus! GOD!

She SCREAMS and the scream carries over to --

EXT. THE TOWN - DAY

Charley waits impatiently as Rachel, holding the plaque, chats amiably with businessmen, Barnick and Malachi.

RACHEL

I guess once the plant's up and running, we won't be seeing a whole lot of you.

BARNICK

(smiling)

Oh, we'll drop by around bonus time.

RACHEL

Well, gentlemen, all I can say is-

Charley wants to get going. He butts in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

Um...excuse me, Mayor Wando,
gentlemen...It's getting kind of
late and-

MALACHI

And you are?

CHARLIE

I'm Charlie Dalton from-

RACHEL

(quickly)
From Portland. Good old Portland.
(to businessmen)
Bye, now.

Rachel takes Charlie's arm and drags him off. Charlie's amused.

CHARLEY

Were you afraid to tell them why
I'm here?

RACHEL

Well-

CHARLEY

I hope that Mr. Dreyfus assured
you that there's very little going
on here to be nervous about.

RACHEL

Hey, those guys are investing
millions in this town. "Very
little's" bad enough.

EXT./INT. RACHEL'S DODGE RAM - DAY

Rachel's driving out of town with Lauren and Charley.

RACHEL

I have to make a stop along the
way.

LAUREN

(to Charley)

My brother Graham's in a lot of
trouble.

CHARLEY

I see.

EXT. ABANDONED MINE, DANTE'S PEAK. DAY.

A complex of abandoned old gold mines stands at the rear of the town. Behind the mine entrance, flanked by a copse of trees, the gantry of the mine's old work shaft can be seen, its huge iron wheel once used to haul the basket up and down is still in place. The metalwork is rusted now and there is a fence around it with warning and Keep Out signs.

At ground-level the entrance shaft is similarly fenced off, but the fencing is flattened and the access way is open. The tunnel entrance is boarded over, but half the boards have been displaced.

Rachel pulls up in front of the mine. She leans on the horn. HONK! They wait. Lauren says to Charlie:

LAUREN
Do you have any kids?

CHARLEY
Uh, no, I don't.

LAUREN
You're lucky. Right, mom?

RACHEL
(smiling)
Some days you kids can be just great.

Rachel waits. Still no movement from the mine. The smile leaves Rachel's face. She gets out of the truck.

RACHEL
Just some days.

She climbs over a few fallen boards to stand by the entrance to the mine. She SHOUTS inside.

RACHEL
Graham! Graham!

After a long beat, there is the SOUND of falling rocks from inside and then, from out of the mine come three FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD BOYS, GRAHAM and two of his buddies. TOM and MARK. They're all covered in dirt. Rachel looks furious.

RACHEL
You two go home. You - get in the truck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The two boys run off. Graham stands for a moment. At fourteen, Graham is half man and half boy and not comfortable being either. Rachel pushes him towards the truck. He moves without looking at her. He shoots one glance at Charlie... "who the hell are you?"

RACHEL

How many times have I told you
not to go in there? How many
times?

Graham gets into the truck.

GRAHAM

Can we do this some other time?

RACHEL

The mine is dangerous. That's
why it's off limits. Mothers are
supposed to stop their children
from getting hurt. God knows why.

Graham looks at Charlie, embarrassed by his mother. Charlie gives him a grin of complicity which seems to help. Rachel climbs in and they drive off.

EXT./INT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - RACHEL'S TRUCK - DAY

Rachel drives them up the mountain. Charlie sits beside her. In the small back seat, Graham and Lauren. Nobody talking. Graham is looking out the window and digging in his pocket at the same time. He takes out a QUARTZ CRYSTAL he must have found in the mine. Graham holds the crystal up to the window. The sun light refracts into the colors of the rainbow.

CHARLIE

Can I have a look at that?

Graham passes it up for Charlie to see.

CHARLIE

This is a verticulated quartz
crystal. You can see the silica's
taken in some gas, given it that
rosy look. You find this kind
of quartz where you find gold.
It's a primary indicator.

Charlie passes the crystal back.

GRAHAM

We go looking for gold down there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL
Not anymore you don't.

CHARLIE
It's probably been mined out.

GRAHAM
How do you know about this stuff?

RACHEL
Mr. Dalton is a geologist.

CHARLIE
Volcanologist, actually.

LAUREN
You mean like Dr. Spock?

CHARLIE
Um-

GRAHAM
Hey, mom, can you drop us off at
Grandma's?

LAUREN
(excited)
Yeah!

RACHEL
(sharply)
No.
(then)
We've kept Mr. Dalton waiting long
enough.

LAUREN
Please?

RACHEL
Your suits are in the back. You
can take a dip in the springs
while I'm showing Mr. Dalton
around the-

GRAHAM
Who cares about the stupid hot
springs? We want to hang out with
grandma.

Before Rachel can respond, Charley says:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLEY

(to Rachel)

If you'd like to drop them off
at your mother's place I really
don't-

The kids snicker. Rachel burns.

RACHEL

She's not my mother, she's my
mother-in-law. Make that
ex-mother-in-law.

(to the kids)

And the answer is no.

EXT. MIRROR LAKE. DAY.

Rachel's truck pulls off the road, heads down a DIRT DRIVEWAY
and comes out on MIRROR LAKE, a pristine HIGH MOUNTAIN body of
water shimmering in the afternoon sun.

By its shore is a beautiful old building, THE AMERICAN BEAUTY
LODGE. All wood, built before the turn of the century. The
woods around the lodge crowd down to the shore of the lake.

Dante's Peak (the mountain) slopes gently down to the shore.
The snow on the mountain reflects in the water. A gentle stream
feeds into the lake from the snow-melt above.

The lodge may be turn-of-the-century, but its sign is pure
1960's. "AMERICAN BEAUTY LODGE" in psychedelic lettering and
an American Beauty rose, carved after the album cover design
of the Grateful Dead's "American Beauty".

Across the lake is a forest, cut by ravines and fire-breaks.

Charlie, Rachel and the kids get out of the truck. Rachel
clearly doesn't want to be here. Charlie takes in the lodge.

CHARLIE

Wow...

LAUREN

Grandma's like totally into The
Dead.

CHARLIE

Pardon?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAHAM

The Grateful Dead. But we love
her anyway.

(calls out)

Hey, Grandma!

Then the SOUND OF GRAVEL FLYING makes Charlie turn.

The mangiest dog on the planet is CHARGING DOWN THE HILL! Equal
parts Coyote, Pit-bull and Hound of the Baskervilles. A
dangerous stray. Probably rabid. He heads straight for
Charlie.

CHARLIE

Jesus Christ!

Graham steps between Charlie and the dog. The dog drops and
rolls over, exposing his belly. Graham wrestles with him.

GRAHAM

Hey, Roughy. Where's Grandma?

An attractive middle-aged woman in a Grateful Dead T-shirt
appears from behind the lodge. This is RUTH, Rachel's former
mother-in-law.

RUTH

Well, look who's here.

Graham runs to her immediately and she hugs her grandson.
Lauren comes over too. Both obviously crazy about their
grandma. Rachel and Ruth look at each other. No love lost here.

RACHEL

Hello, Ruth.

Ruth nods ever so slightly.

LAUREN

Grandma, Graham went in the mine
again.

RUTH

His mamma worries about him too
much.

Rachel overhears and says sarcastically:

RACHEL

You did such a bang up job of
raising Brian. Leave these two
to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Before this can escalate, Charlie steps in.

CHARLIE
Hi, I'm Charlie Dalton.

RUTH
You Rachel's new boyfriend?

CHARLIE
No such luck..

RACHEL
(embarrassed)
Mr. Dalton's with the USGS. Their
satellites picked up some...stuff.

RUTH
(to Charlie)
What kind of stuff?

CHARLIE
Temperature changes, mostly. You
know, fifteen thousand feet below
the crust the earth is still
boiling away at over 3000 degrees
centigrade.

GRAHAM
Wow...

RUTH
I had some of you people up here
right after Mount St. Helens went
nuts. They poked around and they
poked around and finally they
officially declared that we were
a stable system which is what I
could have told them before they
started poking around.

CHARLIE
(smiling)
What made you so sure?

RUTH
I've lived here all my life. I
know this mountain, like I know
these kids. It's not gonna hurt
anybody. Not in my lifetime.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

No, ma'am. Fact is, if there was even the slightest possibility of an eruption, they'd have sent someone else.

RACHEL

I'm gonna take Mr. Dalton around the mountain. Is it okay if the kids stay here?

RUTH

Why don't we all go?

RACHEL

They don't want to. They-

RUTH

(excited to the kids)

We can go swimming and mess around in the springs. How about it?

LAUREN AND GRAHAM

(excited)

Yeah!

The kids and Ruth head off toward the truck. Rachel just stands there pissed that the kids listen to Ruth. Charley smiles.

CHARLEY

Shall we?

Rachel storms off toward the truck. Charley follows.

EXT. THE CRATER LAKE - DAY

The crater lake sits in the caldera formed near the top of the mountain by an ancient eruption. Much smaller than the lake by the lodge and with a deep almost unnaturally blue tint to the water, the result of the gases fed into the lake from the volcanic bed below.

Rachel stops the truck and they all get out. Rachel watches as the kids, Ruth and Roughy the dog scramble happily up a small hill and Charlie walks alone to the edge of the lake.

Charlie is completely focused now as he takes out a small knife and digs it into the trunk of a pine tree. Then he steps back and looks at the immediate area. The pine trees on the edge of the lake are all healthy except for a handful which have toppled over, their branches stripped of growth. He calls out to Rachel, still standing near the truck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

Those trees that died - any idea
how long ago that happened?

Rachel is distracted, who's still watching the kids, laughing
and messing around with Ruth.

RACHEL

I'm sorry?

CHARLIE

I asked about-

RACHEL

(re: Ruth)

You know why they're so crazy
about her? Because she's a bigger
kid than they are. Totally
irresponsible and totally selfish.
Just like...

She stops herself. Charlie asks:

CHARLIE

Your ex-husband, Brian?

RACHEL

What did you ask me? Something
about the trees?

Charlie gets that she wants to change to subject. It's fine with
him. He points to the dead trees.

CHARLIE

Any idea how long ago that
happened?

Rachel looks at the trees, noticing them for the first time and
shrugs. Across the lake, the outside of the caldera cuts steeply
down the mountain. The trees there look healthy.

RACHEL

Could have been the winter storms.
We had some winds last January.

UP ON THE HILLOCK

Roughy sniffs the air and SNARLS. The kids wonder what's going
on. He doesn't like it up here. Ruth bends to see what's wrong
with him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH

Easy boy. What's the matter?

BY CRATER LAKE.

Charlie kneels to take samples. He does not explain what he's doing. Rachel watches him a few moments.

RACHEL

What do the dead trees mean?

CHARLIE

I'd say carbon dioxide emissions.

RACHEL

Is that bad?

CHARLIE

The trees don't like it.

RACHEL

What are you doing now?

CHARLIE

Right now I'm checking your lake for pH levels.

RACHEL

Like a pool man?

CHARLIE

(wearily)

Exactly like a pool man.

RACHEL

(smiles)

I guess, you'd rather be someplace else, huh?

CHARLIE

Rachel, can I call you that?

(she nods)

Rachel, I was this close to being on my way to some nice hot weather and a lot of fish.

(holds up the samples)

They'll check the readings on this against samples they took fifteen years ago.

RACHEL

From here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

No. From Mount St. Helens.

He puts litmus paper into his lake water sample and takes it out. The paper has turned a deep, dark red. Charlie conceals his concern.

CHARLIE

Well, that's that...

Charlie spills a bit of his sample onto his finger. It burns.

CHARLIE

OW! Damn!

RACHEL

You okay?

He spits on his finger to dilute the acid.

CHARLIE

Acid.

RACHEL

Ouch.

Rachel takes his finger. Looks at it. He smiles at her. She smiles back.

RACHEL

You'll survive.

The kids, the dog, and Ruth come running down the hill.

LAUREN

(to Charley)

Are you almost through here, we want to go to the springs.

EXT. THE MOUNTAIN - DAY

The truck pulls in and everyone tumbles out, dog first. Up ahead, a path leads to the hot springs.

Charlie walks with Rachel and Ruth as the kids change into their bathing suits behind the bushes and run to catch up.

RUTH

I found Roughy near here, six years ago. He'd had a fight with a porcupine. Saddest sight I've ever seen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

You'd never know it to look at
him now. Handsome devil.

Charlie pets the hideous dog and this simple gesture, wins
Ruth's heart. The kids go racing by them, dressed in their
trunks. SCREAMING, LAUGHING. Rachel calls out:

RACHEL

Be careful!

RUTH

They'll be fine. Hey, wait up!

Ruth takes off after the kids, heading towards the Hot Springs -
out of sight around the corner.

Charlie is gazing at a dramatic rock formation. Rachel looks
at him.

RACHEL

A man who stares at a rock either
has a lot on his mind - or
nothing.

CHARLIE

Those rocks give us some idea of
the last time this area was
active.

RACHEL

Which was when?

CHARLEY

About fifty thousand years before
man discovered fire.

RACHEL

As recent as that?

At the same moment, we hear Lauren SCREAMING!

LAUREN (O.S.)

They're dead. They're dead.

Charlie and Rachel run down the path and through the overgrowth
towards the hot springs...

EXT. TWONSET HOT SPRINGS - DAY

Charlie and Rachel emerge into the clearing around the springs. THERE IS SO MUCH STEAM RISING FROM THE SURFACE OF THE SPRINGS that it obscures whatever might be floating in that water...

Lauren hasn't found the dead couple. She and Graham are standing, staring at two DEAD SQUIRRELS. Using a stick, Graham flips one of them over.

LAUREN

Oo. Don't touch it.

It's a pretty gross sight, covered with maggots.

RUTH

Must be some sort of squirrel epidemic. They're dropping like that all over the mountain.

Charlie looks at Ruth, then bends to examine the squirrels more closely. The kids, tired of the sight, turn towards the hot springs themselves.

GRAHAM

Phew! It stinks. I don't know if I want to go in.

LAUREN

It smells like your room. You go into that.

The kids move towards the water. Lauren points to the T-shirt draped across the "NO BATHING" sign.

LAUREN

Look!

Rachel looks round and sees the two sets of clothes. Curious, she moves forward. Starts looking around to see if there's anybody on the premises. She calls out tentatively:

RACHEL

Hello?

RUTH

(to Charlie)

Sometimes couples come sneaking up here for a hot dip and some hot nookie.

RACHEL

Ruth!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH

For Godsakes, Rachel, like you
never did it.

Charlie looks at the kids... then at the hot springs. A horrible
thought crosses his mind.

Graham is right at the water's edge. He's picked up a large
rock and now he throws it into the springs to see how deep they
are. The rock disrupts the water... and the steam rising from
it.

GRAHAM

This is the right spot.

He gets ready to do a canon-ball jump into the water.

Charlie dives for Graham, grabbing him in a flying tackle around
the waist just before the boy can jump into the water. Graham
and Charlie land in a heap at the water's edge.

CHARLIE

(shouting)

STAY BACK FROM THE WATER!

Lauren, startled, steps back. And then as Charlie and Graham
are picking themselves up.....

LAUREN SCREAMS.

The steam has moved off, revealing THE HORRIBLY BURNED BODY OF
THE WOMAN WE SAW DIE UP HERE IN THE HOT SPRINGS.

Rachel runs to her children, both of them staring at the dead
body, their first look at death.

EXT.. MOUNTAIN - DAY

MEN from the local hospital carry out the bodies. There's also a
police car on the scene. Charlie stands with his back to this,
looking out over the lake below and Ruth's lodge... and across
the ravines and forest to the town of Dante's Peak. He is
finishing up a conversation on his cellphone.

CHARLIE

Paul, you have to monitor the
entire area - get the whole
shooting match in here.

(listening)

I don't know, but there's enough
carbon dioxide to have started
killing wildlife and...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGLE - RACHEL AND FAMILY

Ruth's behind the wheel of Rachel's truck. Rachel stands outside hugging her kids.

RACHEL
You guys gonna be okay?
(the kids nod)
I love you.

They hug their mother, then hop into the truck.

RACHEL
(to Ruth)
I shouldn't be too long.

Ruth drives off and Rachel hurries over to Charlie, who hangs up the phone.

RACHEL
Mr. Dalton-

CHARLIE
Charlie.
(re: the bodies)
Any idea who they were?

RACHEL
I've never seen them, so they're probably tourists. Look, Charlie...as the mayor of this town, I have to ask you...exactly how big a problem do you think we have here?

INT. CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - DAY

The room is a small municipal hall. STATE FLAG, PHOTO OF THE GOVERNOR, badly worn VINYL CHAIRS.

Including Rachel, there are four on the council. DR. JANE FOX, an ophthalmologist. MARY KELLY, an insurance salesman. NORMAN GATES - retired CPA, and JACK COLLINS, shopkeeper. Also here are Sheriff Turner, Les Worrell, and a young rumpled-looking man named BILL WILDER, a reporter from the town's weekly newspaper. Charlie's in the hot seat.

LES
Mr. Dalton, you are talking about the evacuation of 7,400 people. Don't you think that's a little extreme?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A loud murmur of agreement.

CHARLIE

Sure it's extreme. If nothing happens.

RACHEL

(to everybody)

But what if something does happen? Look, I don't like this any better than you do, but there are lives at stake here. Our children's lives. Mr. Dalton's right. We have to play it safe.

A murmur of agreement here. But Les isn't finished.

LES

What Mr. Dalton doesn't realize is that jumping the gun here could ruin this town a hell of a lot quicker than any volcano. We evacuate this town and Malbar industries and their eight hundred jobs will keep right on going.

CHARLIE

You ever see a volcano erupt, sir? Have any of you?

There is no response. Charlie speaks very softly in the silence, as if forcing them to lean forward to hear his words

CHARLIE

The force of the eruption on Mt. St. Helens was twenty-seven thousand times more powerful than the bomb that exploded on Hiroshima. With the first eruption came a pyroclastic flow - an explosive killer cloud of pumice, ash and poisonous gases that came roaring down the mountain at one hundred miles an hour, burning everything in it's path, the largest recorded avalanche in history. Tons of ash and rock smothered the countryside. A hot mud flow decimated over two hundred homes. And those who died, died horribly.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE (Cont'd)

(dead silence now)

Most suffocated by inhalation of volcanic ash which plugged their throats and noses. Their hands were mummified, their muscles dried and frayed...The rest were burned to death...Now, I can't tell you for sure if your volcano's going to blow or not, but this much I can tell you. If it does blow, it's going to blow big.

Everybody's sitting there, stunned and shaken. Dr. Fox is the first to speak.

DR FOX

Rachel...all towns are supposed to have emergency evacuation plans. Where the hell are ours?

RACHEL

Norman?

NORMAN

On file someplace. Pretty good plan it was, too....if the Russians invaded.

There is nervous laughter as he approaches one of the filing cabinets along one wall.

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - NIGHT

A helicopter has just landed right on the outskirts of town. Terry, wearing yet another loud Hawaiian shirt and two other members of the team, NANCY MARTIN and HARRY LEE, are unloading a shitload of equipment, including seismographs, monitors and good old Beatrice.

INT. CLUSTER'S MOTEL - NIGHT

Dreyfus is talking to a very anxious Cluster.

DREYFUS

Whoa, slow down. Who said anything about an evacuation?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLUSTER

Mr. Dalton and the Mayor called
a meeting.

(Dreyfus's face darkens)

So how much time have we got? A
day? A week? What?

INT. CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Everybody is gathered around Charlie, going over a map of their
town.

CHARLIE

It's vital that these two main
arteries remain as uncongested
as possible, and we're really
going to have to control the flow
of traffic going over this bridge
because-

VOICE (O.S.)

Charlie!

Everybody looks up to see Dreyfus as he walks in.

CHARLIE

Everybody, this is my boss, Paul
Dreyfus.

Dreyfus has a warm smile for everybody but Charlie.

DREYFUS

A pleasure.

(to Charlie)

There's a rumor going around that
you've taken it upon yourself to
evacuate this town:

CHARLIE

Like I told you on the phone, I
didn't like what I was seeing.

RACHEL

Mr. Dreyfus, I'm Mayor Wando.
Charlie...I mean, Mr. Dalton, has
convinced us that we really don't
have much of a choice.

Dreyfus addresses the group.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DREYFUS

Listen folks, in 1980, I'd have bet you a million bucks that Mammoth was gonna go up, so I evacuated the town and you all know what happened.

LES

Damn town almost went bankrupt. They lost their whole ski season.

DREYFUS

So now I'm a lot more cautious when it comes to calling for evacuations. Now, I'm not gonna stand up here and give you a lesson in geology, but believe me, there are literally dozens of reasons to account for what happened at those hot springs...anything from a mild earthquake to a slight seismic shift and-

CHARLIE

Paul-

DREYFUS

And not one of those reasons...not one of them...means that your volcano is going to erupt next week, next month or next year.

Dreyfus is impressive and persuasive. This is exactly what these people want to hear.

RACHEL

But Mr. Dalton says-

DREYFUS

Since Mr. Dalton hasn't done any actual field work for the past five years, he isn't exactly up on the latest technology.

Everybody reacts. Rachel is completely thrown. She says to Charlie:

RACHEL

You didn't tell me that.

Charlie turns red. He whispers to Dreyfus:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

Don't do this, Paul. Don't make this personal.

DREYFUS

Folks we're gonna be camped out here for as long as it takes with seismometers that can measure every hiccup that mountain makes; we're gonna be bouncing laser beams off it to track changes in size, analyzing gases for sulphur dioxide content...hell, we've even got a robot from NASA that's gonna take a stroll up there and take the darned thing's temperature. If we determine that there's any real danger, which is highly unlikely, you'll still have plenty of time to evacuate. Believe me.

LES

I've heard enough. I say put it to a vote.

Rachel nods, picks up the gavel in front of her.

RACHEL

Do we or do we not call for the evacuation of Dante's Peak?

Dr. Fox nods her head "yes".

RACHEL

Mary?

Mary shakes her head "no".

RACHEL

Norman?

Norman nods "yes". Les looks at Rachel.

LES

That makes you the tie breaker, Rachel.

Rachel takes a beat, looks at Charlie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL

I vote that we hold off on anything until Mr. Dreyfus and his team have had a chance to do their jobs. This meeting is adjourned.

Charlie stands there, staring at her. She approaches.

RACHEL

Charlie-

Charlie turns away. He confronts Dreyfus.

CHARLIE

You just placed the lives of seven thousand people in jeopardy.

DREYFUS

That's your opinion.
(pointed)

And since when did you ever give a good goddamn about placing people's lives in jeopardy?

Charlie lunges for Dreyfus. Sheriff Turner steps between them.

TURNER

Hey, fellas...take it easy.

Charlie turns and storms out of the room. Rachel watches. Then she goes after him.

EXT. OUTSIDE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Charlie is opening the door to his Suburban. Rachel approaches.

RACHEL

Damn it, Charlie, you should have told me.

CHARLIE

I didn't think it was relevant.

RACHEL

Well, I think it's relevant. I think it's plenty relevant.

CHARLIE

Goodbye, Rachel, I hope everything turns out okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Charlie's about to get in his truck.

RACHEL
Wait a minute.

Charlie stops. Looks at her. She doesn't want to fight with him.

RACHEL
Do you like eggplant lasagna?

CHARLIE
What...

RACHEL
I'm inviting you for dinner. As
a way of saying, thank you.

CHARLIE
Thank you for what?

RACHEL
For saving Graham's life today.
And for caring about us.

CHARLIE
I don't-

RACHEL
There's not a decent diner between
here and Portland, and Portland's
three hundred miles away. Come
on, Charlie, what do you say?

INT. KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM, RACHEL'S HOME - NIGHT

Dinner's over. Rachel's doing the dishes. Charlie is showing Graham and Lauren a card trick at the table. Charlie waves an imaginary wand over a deck of cards and turns up four aces - one on the top of each pile. The kids are delighted. Rachel, watching from across the room, smiles at the kids' delight.

INT. RACHEL'S PORCH - NIGHT

The kids are in bed. Rachel and Charlie have coffee outside.

RACHEL
How long have you been with the
USGS?

CHARLIE
Over fifteen years.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL
Why'd you stop working in the
field?

Charlie just looks at her. She's hit a nerve and she knows it.

CHARLIE
I'd...had enough of it.

RACHEL
Something happened...

CHARLIE
(after a beat)
Something happened.
(gets up)
Well, Rachel, thanks for dinner.
I'm going to-

RACHEL
(pressing)
Isn't it possible that you're just
a little bit snakebit?

CHARLIE
What...

RACHEL
Overly careful. Because of this
thing that happened to you.

CHARLEY
Snakebit...

RACHEL
Obviously Mr. Dreyfus thinks
you're jumping to conclusions.

Charlie nods slowly. Then:

CHARLIE
This is about the council
meeting...You're having second
thoughts about the way you voted.

RACHEL
No. Maybe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

Okay, Rachel, I'll admit it. When it comes to volcanoes, you could definitely say that I'm snakebit. That make you feel any better?

RACHEL

(after a beat)

No...

Rachel waits. There seems to be something Charlie wants to get off his chest.

CHARLIE

Five years ago, a volcano erupted in Columbia. Galeras. My fiance was killed.

RACHEL

I'm sorry.

CHARLIE

Paul Dreyfus was Maryanne's father. He's never forgiven me because Maryanne and I...we stayed too long to watch the show.

Now, as Charlie speaks, he seems far away, revisiting some distant place inside himself.

CHARLIE

More than one volcano junkie has lost his life, simply because he stayed too long to behold what is surely the most awe inspiring sight in all of nature. Dreyfus can blame me if he needs to blame someone, but Maryanne wanted to stay.

Rachel can see that Charlie is hurting. She takes his hand.

CHARLIE

Right up to the end, she thought that volcano erupting was the most beautiful sight in the world. But it wasn't. She was.

Rachel is looking into Charlie's eyes. It brings him back to reality.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to...

RACHEL

Charlie...? If the worst does happen, I have a feeling that you're going to do us a whole hell of a lot more good than Mr. Dreyfus and all of his technology put together.

Charlie smiles.

INT. BLUE MOON CAFE - MORNING

Beers and coffees on the table, together with some sandwiches and a mostly-eaten quiche, which is basically all the cafe serves. Rachel's pouring coffee for Charlie, Nancy, Terry and Harry Lee, who asks:

HARRY

What kind of coffee machine d'you use?

RACHEL

Unic, Altima 40.

Harry nods, still unconvinced.

HARRY

Where do you get your beans?

RACHEL

Dr. Espresso.

HARRY

(impressed)

From Berkeley?

RACHEL

Best roaster in the country.

HARRY

You keep them in the freezer?

RACHEL

Never put coffee in the freezer.
The beans lose all their oils.

It was a test. She passed. Harry smiles and turns to Charlie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY
This town might just be worth
saving.

The door opens. It's Dreyfus.

DREYFUS
Okay, people, let's go to work.
(to Charlie)
I want to talk to you.

EXT. CHELON STREET - DAY

Charlie walks alongside Dreyfus, heading toward the motel.

DREYFUS
I think we oughtta get something
straight here, Charlie. Whether
or not that mountain blows is
beside the point. As long as
we're a presence in this town,
the people who live here are going
to be tense. I won't have one of
my men scaring the shit out of
everybody with guesswork and
hunches. If you don't like it,
you can quit.

CHARLIE
From now on, you call the shots.
I understand.

EXT. THE MOUNTAIN - DAY

Terry is just about finished digging a four foot deep hole on
the side of the mountain.

Charlie is bent over a TILT METER, getting it properly
calibrated. It is a small rectangular device used to measure
any changes in "tilt", a bulging in the earth that can be caused
by rising magma.

TERRY
Dreyfus needs to get over himself.
Life goes on.
(Charlie says nothing)
Nice looking woman, Rachel. Best
looking mayor I ever saw.

CHARLIE
What's your point?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Terry having finished now moves to help Charlie lift the tilt meter and set it in the hole.

TERRY
Like I said, life goes on.

CHARLIE
(looking at the meter)
It's level.

The SOUND of a helicopter approaching. Charlie looks up at it. Terry signals Charlie to go ahead as the chopper lands nearby.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

A COSPEC attached to the side of the chopper takes gas readings. Charley and Terry monitor the readings. The PILOT looks like a VET. Charley gives the pilot some directions.

CHARLEY
Okay, let's fly down that gorge there.

PILOT
What if it gets weird down there?
Maybe we should talk about hazard pay.

TERRY
Say, pal? Right now the only hazard you have to worry about is my fist in your face. Now do what the man says.

The chopper banks.

DANTE'S PEAK, NEAR SUMMIT

The chopper flies down into the gorge. As the CAMERA FOLLOWS IT, we see a formation of rock IN FOREGROUND. The terrain TREMBLES and the ROCK BEGINS TO SPLIT. But nobody in the helicopter up in the sky can hope to see or hear this.

INT. HELICOPTER

Terry and Charlie are scanning the ground below.

TERRY
Well, you're the man with the instincts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE
I guess, it looks okay.

The copter flies off.

EXT. MOTEL. DAY.

Rachel gets out of her truck, balancing a tray of various coffees in paper cups. She goes inside.

INT. TEMPORARY OBSERVATORY (MOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM) - DAY

The team has set up a war room in the motel's conference facility. There is a view of the mountain out the window. COMPUTERS collect and process the information being telemetered back by the measuring devices that have been placed around the mountain. There is a VIDEO MONITOR devoted entirely to WEATHER SATELLITE information. There are the SATELLITE IMAGES of seismic activity, and there are DETAILED TERRAIN MAPS of the area taped to the walls.

Rachel is moving through the room handing out coffees from her tray.

RACHEL
Decaf espresso, double cappuccino,
filter no milk, double per cent
latte, single espresso....

As she glances at the equipment, Terry explains.

TERRY
These are LANDSAT images from a
satellite. Pretty bitchin', huh?

He thinks so. He smiles enthusiastically. He loves his toys.

Charlie is standing over by a seismograph, carefully watching. Rachel walks over.

RACHEL
How's it going?

CHARLEY
(pointing)
We've been recording between 25
to 75 earthquakes per day.

RACHEL
(panics)
Oh, my God!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She almost drops the coffee tray. Charley laughs and steadies her.

CHARLEY

Relax. They're micro-earthquakes.
And relatively shallow.

RACHEL

(huh?)

Oh, well, thank God for that.

WE CUT TO:

EXT. BY CRATER LAKE

Pine needles fall from a tree. Brown and dead, they drift in the breeze. The group of trees which yesterday seemed healthy.....are dying.

EXT. CLUSTERS' MOTEL - DAY

Morning. Terry and Charlie are outside, removing Beatrice from the back of the USGS truck.

INT. TEMPORARY OBSERVATORY - DAY

Dreyfus and Charlie watch as Terry removes ELF, the small transmitter, from Beatrice's back.

DREYFUS

Just don't forget to put the
damned thing back on before NASA
finds out.

Terry nods and puts the transmitter in a box under a table.

TERRY

(to Beatrice)

What do you say, sweetness? You
ready to go to work?

EXT. THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN - DAY

Beatrice crawls along the steep side of the caldera.

ON THE RIM OF THE CALDERA - UP ABOVE

Charlie and Terry stand, watching.

TERRY

Man oh, man...look at her go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE
(into cellular)
You getting this?

INTERCUT - OBSERVATORY

Dreyfus, Harry and Nancy, huddled over monitors, looking at pictures being beamed back by Beatrice. Dreyfus on phone.

DREYFUS
Tell Terry to give Beatrice a kiss
for me. They're crystal clear.

ON THE MOUNTAIN

Charley hangs up. He and Terry watch as-

DOWN BELOW

Beatrice craps out again. The same thing we saw before, upper frame extended. Legs flailing.

TERRY
Shit...

Terry reaches for a gas mask and starts to move towards the edge of cliff. He says to Charlie:

TERRY
That kick in the butt you gave
her, was that her right butt or
her left butt? Never mind...

INTERCUT OBSERVATORY

Dreyfus and Nancy shake their heads as they watch the monitor.

DREYFUS
Good old Beatrice...

ANGLE - SEISMOGRAPH NEEDLE

It's jumping around. Increasing activity. Nobody's watching.

EXT. THE STEEP SIDE OF THE CALDERA - DAY

Charlie stands watching as Terry descends to the spot where Beatrice has crapped out. He's wearing the GAS MASK with a microphone and transmitter. The bank is steep and there is a sharp over-hang of rock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Terry reaches Beatrice. She is right at the edge of the caldera. He gives her a swift kick. Beatrice starts to walk. Terry throws his hands in the air, triumphantly. Charlie smiles. Then, Beatrice stops again.

TERRY (ON MIKE)
I guess, I don't have your magic touch.

He starts towards Beatrice and the lake.

CHARLEY
Be careful down there, Terry...
don't be a cowboy.

INTERCUT - OBSERVATORY

Dreyfus and Harry watch the monitors. But Nancy has glanced over at the seismograph.

NANCY
Paul?

Dreyfus takes a look at the seismograph needle jumping around.

DREYFUS
(to Harry)
What do you think?

Harry just shrugs. He doesn't know.

DREYFUS
I'm gonna tell them to call it a day.

BACK TO THE MOUNTAIN

Charley still watching Terry as he moves under an outcropping of rock and bends towards Beatrice...

Charley's telephone rings.

CHARLEY
Yeah? Speak up, Paul, I can't hear you.

Then-

... A SMALL EARTHQUAKE SHAKES THE CALDERA

It's just big enough to dislodge the outcropping of rocks and snow over his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Terry just has time to look up as it collapses and he disappears beneath the rubble.

UP TOP

Charlie SCREAMS into his radio.

CHARLIE
Terry... Terry...

INTCUT - OBSERVATORY

Dreyfus, Nancy and Harry watching with horror.

DREYFUS
Jesus...

BACK TO CHARLIE

Screaming into telephone.

CHARLIE
Get that chopper up here. Now!

THE OBSERVATORY

Dreyfus shouts into the phone.

DREYFUS
Charlie, there could be a big one
coming. Get the hell out of there.

ON THE MOUNTAIN

Just then the ground gives another small SHAKE. Charlie goes flying. So does the phone.

OBSERVATORY

DREYFUS
Charlie? Charlie, goddamn it!
(slams the phone down)

HARRY
(hangs up other phone)
The chopper's on it's way.

NANCY
Look!

Dreyfus can't believe it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE APPEARS ON THE MONITOR

Charlie is climbing down to where Terry is trapped. He has a radio with him and a rope over his shoulders.

HARRY
Crazy sonavabitch is gonna get
himself killed...

DREYFUS
Where the hell's that chopper!

EXT. MOUNTAIN

The rock is steep and as Charlie moves gingerly to Terry, another small trembler sends A CASCADE OF ROCK AND RUBBLE bouncing down. Now Charley has to dodge huge boulders as he makes his way.

As the dust from this clears we can see Charlie just above the rubble - and he can see a bit of Hawaiian shirt in between the snow and rock. Terry's gas mask lies beside him.

Charlie makes it down to Terry, then starts to clear away the debris. A beat, then Terry's eyes open.

TERRY
I didn't tear the shirt, did I?

CHARLIE
Unfortunately not.

Terry's leg is at an impossible angle.

OBSERVATORY

Dreyfus and the team. ecstatic.

HARRY
He's alive! He's alive!

Dreyfus's watches the monitor. He sighs deeply.

ON THE MOUNTAIN

As Charlie clears the remaining debris off Terry, the SOUND of the HELICOPTER APPROACHING can be heard.

The helicopter hovers high overhead. A safety harness dangles on the end of a rope which is being lowered to them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE
Hang on, Terry. Almost home...

He flicks on his microphone.

CHARLIE
(on mike)
Lower...lower... another four feet.

PILOT
(on radio)
This is as close as I get.

CHARLIE
(on mike)
Lower godammit!!

INT. THE HELICOPTER

PILOT
(on mike)
For what you're paying this is as close as I get.

CHARLIE
(on radio)
Get down here, you sonavabitch!
Or I swear to God, I will personally fucking kill you.

The Pilot mutters to himself and drops the extra few feet.

Charlie jerks the harness, wrestling it around Terry's body. Then before locking it, he disengages his rope from his shoulders and loops it into the harness.

OBSERVATORY

All eyes glued to the screen. Dreyfus murmurs.

DREYFUS
Come on, you can do it...

ON THE MOUNTAIN

The pilot is not doing a good job of keeping the harness steady and Terry is being dragged. Charlie screams into mike:

CHARLIE
HOLD IT STEADY FOR CHRISSAKES!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Simultaneous with these words, a FUMAROL (A WHITE HOT EJECTION OF GAS) shoots up out of the ground at the edge of the dome (about eight feet away from them).

TERRY
Pretty cool, huh?

The harness is not yet fully secured and Charlie is still looping the rope around his own waist and arms.

CHARLIE
(into mike)
DOWN! GOD DAMN IT! DOWN!

STEAM spews up into the sky from the fumarol.

PILOT
FUCK NO! YOU CAN COME UP HERE
AND KICK ASS ALL YOU WANT TO BUT
THERE IS NO WAY I'M GOING ANYWHERE
NEAR THAT.

AT THE OBSERVATORY

Everybody looking at the monitors.

ON THE MOUNTAIN

Charlie tightens the loops on his rope and then lunges towards Terry. Just as-

ANOTHER FUMAROL, the biggest one yet, shoots up into the sky.

OBSERVATORY

The monitors completely obscured by the steam from the fumarols. Nobody can see a goddamned thing. Dreyfus puts an arm around Nancy, who's got tears rolling down her cheeks. Then through the billowing steam-

CHARLIE AND TERRY APPEAR ON THE MONITOR

Being whisked off by the helicopter. Terry's dangling by the harness and Charlie from the rope below.

Dreyfus, Nancy and Harry, can't believe their eyes. They smile. Dreyfus chuckles:

DREYFUS
Sonavabitch...he did it...

Harry takes a look at the gauges and meters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY

Paul, look...that gas discharge
in the caldera must have vented
the pressure.

NANCY

(points to seismograph)
And look at this. Steady as a
rock. So much for a big one.

EXT. OUTSIDE HOSPITAL - DAY

Word has gotten around and a crowd, including Rachel, has gathered to meet the helicopter. Terry is on a gurney and is being wheeled away from the chopper, Charlie by his side. People pat his back, congratulate him, etc. As two emergency room workers load Terry into the ambulance, he says to Charlie:

TERRY

Tell the truth, Charlie...you
kinda got a buzz off of that too,
didn't you?

Terry laughs. Charlie doesn't reply as the ambulance doors close and it pulls away. Rachel appears at his side.

RACHEL

Are you okay?

Charlie looks at her. It's clear she's been crying. He smiles.

CHARLIE

Yeah, Rachel...I'm okay.

She smiles. But the moment is soon broken by a voice that calls:

VOICE (O.S.)

Charlie!

Charlie turns around to see Dreyfus standing there.

CHARLIE

(to Rachel)

Excuse me.

Charlie walks over to Dreyfus.

DREYFUS

Soon as you got off of there the
mountain settled down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

That so?

DREYFUS

Seem it just relieved a little pressure, rolled over and went back to sleep.

They're both trying, but as usual, there's tension between them. Then:

DREYFUS

You look like you could use a drink.

INT. LOCAL BAR - EVENING

The place is packed. Everybody's in a good mood. Music playing, some dancing. Investors Jeffrey Barnick and Malachi are at a table with a happy Les Worrell. Charlie and Dreyfus are shooting pool and drinking beers.

DREYFUS

Look, Charlie...I wish things could be the way they used to be with you and me. Hell, we sure did have some times...But I still miss her, Charlie. I miss her so much it hurts. And I guess, I'm always gonna blame you for that.

CHARLIE

Is that why you wanted to buy me a drink? To tell me that?

DREYFUS

No. I wanted to tell you that what you did up there today...getting Terry out of there, that took a lot of guts.

CHARLIE

He'd have done it for me. Look, Paul...I still think you should consider keeping the team here for a few more days.

DREYFUS

Charlie...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

Just to be on the safe side.

DREYFUS

Charlie, the dramatic drop-off
in seismic activity we saw this
afternoon can only mean one thing.

(smiles)

That mountain's done all it's
going to do. It's finished. Kaput.

CHARLIE

I'm not so sure.

DREYFUS

I've got seismograph readings,
tiltometer readings, correlation
spectrometer readings...what the
hell have you got that makes you
"not so sure?"

CHARLIE

A very bad feeling in the pit of
my stomach.

DREYFUS

Well, that's just not enough for
me to risk another Mammoth. This
town would never recover.

Dreyfus nods toward money-men Malachi and Barnick at a table
with Les Worrell.

DREYFUS

Hell, we're placing their economy
in jeopardy just by being here.

CHARLIE

Paul-

DREYFUS

I can't make a mistake here,
Charlie. I've got to call this
one right.

Charley can see for the first time, the stress that this is
placing on Dreyfus.

DREYFUS

Besides...it's not like we're
completely closing up shop.
(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DREYFUS (Cont'd)
 We've still got that mountain
 wired, we'll just be watching it
 from Vancouver instead of from...
 (sees something)
 Shit...

Les Worrell is approaching with money-men Barnick and Malachi.

LES
 (to Dreyfus)
 I was just reassuring these
 gentlemen that if there was
 anything real to worry about here,
 you USGS guys would not be pulling
 out.

MALACHI
 Since we're about to sink eighteen
 million dollars into Happyville
 here, if there's a chance this
 is the last days of fucking
 Pompeii, then we need to know.

Charlie is surprised as Dreyfus turns to him.

DREYFUS
 What about it, Charlie? Can you
 give these gentlemen one single
 sound, incontrovertible,
 scientific reason why we should
 stick around?
 (he means this)
 Because if you can, we will.

Dreyfus is waiting. Charley can only shake his head. Dreyfus
 smiles. Says to Les and the others:

DREYFUS
 Let me buy you fellas a drink.

As they start off with Dreyfus, Dreyfus says to Charlie:

DREYFUS
 Take an Alka Seltzer, Charlie.
 Settle that stomach of yours.

EXT. CRATER LAKE - NIGHT

Huge BUBBLES rise slowly to the surface of water. Then the lake
 is calm again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Until IN FOREGROUND something silvery RISES. A fish. A DEAD FISH. And as the CAMERA PANS over the surface of the water, we realize there are DOZENS of dead fish....

EXT. THE BAR - NIGHT

Charlie watching everybody enjoying themselves, wishing he could. Then Rachel appears beside him.

RACHEL
Want to take a walk?

EXT. CHELON STREET - NIGHT

It's a beautiful moonlit night. Rachel and Charlie stroll along. The music and laughter from the bar, pour out into the street.

RACHEL
(smiling)
It's just possible that you're wrong, you know.

CHARLIE
(smiling)
Look, this is my last night in town. What do you people do for fun around here?

RACHEL
Fun, what's that? Oh, wait, I remember...fun's what you have when you don't have two kids and a business to run.

CHARLIE
You're a beautiful girl, Rachel.
- You ought to...enjoy yourself a little more.

She's looking into Charlie's eyes.

RACHEL
Maybe both of us should.

They kiss. It's long and sweet. Dante's Peak looms over them. Then Rachel breaks it off. She takes Charlie's hand. They walk.

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door opens. Rachel and Charlie enter. She turns on a light. Signals Charlie to be quiet. She closes the door, being careful not to make a sound. Charlie kisses her. Then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL

Charlie...I haven't been with anybody since...since Brian took off. I'm afraid...

Charlie smiles and strokes her hair.

CHARLIE

Afraid you've forgotten how?
(she smiles and nods)
Well, I'm kind of out of practice myself, but I hear it's kind of like riding a bicycle, you never forget how.

RACHEL

Hmmm...riding a bicycle...I like that.

They kiss. It grows more passionate. Then:

LAUREN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Mommy? Mommy, is that you?

RACHEL

Darn...

(calling out)

Coming, Lauren...

Charlie smiles as Rachel rushes to the bedroom door. Opens it.

INT. LAUREN'S ROOM

The little girl's in bed.

LAUREN

I'm thirsty.

RACHEL

Okay, sweetheart...

Rachel closes the door, heads for the sink. Whispers to Charlie:

RACHEL

I think she'll fall right back to sleep...

Rachel picks up a glass and turns on the water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL

Oh, dear God in heaven, please,
let her fall right back to
sleep...

(then)

Yech...

CHARLIE

What is it?

Rachel shows him the glass of water. The water is light brown
and murky.

RACHEL

Must be a broken pipe or-

Charlie grabs it out of her hand. He smells it.

CHARLIE

Jesus Christ...

RACHEL

What is it?

CHARLIE

Where's the town's water supply
come from?

RACHEL

About twenty-five miles away in-

CHARLIE

We have to get over there.

RACHEL

It's three thirty in the morning.

CHARLIE

Rachel-

RACHEL

Okay. Okay...

INT. GRAHAM'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Rachel, has woken Graham to tell him she's going out. He sits
up in bed, half asleep, as Rachel exits.

RACHEL

Keep an eye on Lauren. I won't
be long.

Graham looks at her. Nods. She rushes out. Graham collapses back
into sleep.

EXT. SPRING WATER HEAD. NIGHT.

Their flashlights stab the dark as Rachel leads Charlie between the tall concrete walls which enclose the spring water system.

EXT/INT. WELL HEAD. NIGHT.

Illuminated by their flashlights, THE WATER IS MUDDY AND DARKLY POLLUTED. The interior where the water enters is echoing and damp. Charlie's expression is grim.

RACHEL

What's that smell?

CHARLIE

Sulphur Dioxide. This is just what I was afraid of. As magma forces its way up into the sub-strata, mud works it's way into the water table. We saw the same thing at Mount Pinatubu in the Philippines.

RACHEL

What does it mean?

CHARLIE

It means that this mountain is a bomb, Rachel. And its fuse is getting shorter.

INT. DREYFUS'S MOTEL ROOM - DAWN

Dreyfus is sound asleep. The door is flung open by Charley.

CHARLEY

Wake up, Paul. I've got that scientific proof you wanted.

DREYFUS

What the hell...

Charley rushes to the tiny sink. He turns on the water. It's dark and muddy. Dreyfus reacts.

DREYFUS

We'd better check out the town's water supply and-

CHARLEY

I just came back from the town's water supply.

INT. OBSERVATORY - MORNING

Dreyfus is on the phone. Charley, Nancy and Terry in a leg cast are checking the seismographs, the tiltometer readings, etc. What they see is extremely alarming.

CHARLIE

Seismograph's going crazy!

NANCY

I'm picking up a harmonic tremor!

TERRY

Look at these carbon dioxide readings.

Suddenly Harry bursts in, his face and hands, muddy.

HARRY

Anybody try taking a shower this morning?

They all stare at him.

HARRY

What?

DREYFUS

(into phone)

Thank you, Governor, goodbye.

(hangs up phone)

He's declaring a state of emergency. The National Guard should be arriving by noon and-

CHARLIE

(alarmed)

That's more than five hours.

DREYFUS

That's the best they can do.

CHARLIE

It's not good enough.

DREYFUS

(points to mountain)

That mountain may not do a damned thing for 12 hours, 24 hours or-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE
(shouting)
Or it could blow us all to hell
in the next ten minutes. Maybe
I haven't been in the field for
the past five years, but I know
what goes on with the hot ones.
I've seen them all. Mt. St.
Helens, Pinatubo, Galeras...

He stops at Galeras. Dreyfus is glaring. Then:

CHARLIE
We have to evacuate this town
before it's too late.

All eyes are on Dreyfus. Finally:

DREYFUS
If we try to evacuate on our
own...without the guard, there'll
be panic in the streets. Lives
will be lost.

CHARLIE
Paul-

DREYFUS
Waiting another five hours isn't
going to kill us.

CHARLIE
That's your opinion...

And with that, Charlie turns and walks off.

DREYFUS
Where are you going? Charlie!

But he's gone.

INT. RACHEL'S LIVING ROOM

Graham and Lauren are watching Rachel shouting into the
telephone.

RACHEL
Damn it, Ruth, your precious
mountain is about to blow up so
stop giving me shit. Goodbye,
Ruth...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She hangs up. Graham is worried.

GRAHAM
Is grandma coming?

RACHEL
(firmly)
Listen to me...If grandma wants
to stay up there, there's nothing
we can do. Chances are...she'll
be just fine.

GRAHAM
No, she won't.

There's a knock at the door. Rachel opens it.

RACHEL
Did Dreyfus call the Governor?
What...

Charlie pulls her outside.

INT. OBSERVATORY - DAY

Dreyfus and the team, still nervously monitoring the situation.
The telephone rings. Dreyfus grabs it up.

DREYFUS
Dreyfus. What? Calm down, ma'am.
(a beat)
Who said anything about an
evacuation?

As Dreyfus listens his features darken. Then:

DREYFUS
Sorry, ma'am, I have to go.

He slams the phone down. Storms over to the t.v. set. Turns it
on, starts flipping channels. The phones start ringing off the
hook. He barks to his team:

DREYFUS
Let them ring.
(then)
Sonavabitch...

RACHEL ON THE T.V.

Standing in front of the Blue Moon Cafe, doing a live spot.
Charlie is standing beside her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL

To repeat...in response to the strong possibility of a volcanic threat to Dante's Peak, The United States Geological Service is calling for the complete evacuation of Dante's Peak. A town meeting will be held in the school auditorium at seven A.M. to discuss the evacuation in detail.

Dreyfus is furious. He shuts the t.v. off. Looks at the clock. It's a almost seven.

DREYFUS

(shouting)

Son of a bitch...

The team exchange looks. They've never seen Dreyfus this mad.

DREYFUS

Not only am I going to fire his ass, I just goddamned well might have him arrested.

Dreyfus storms toward the door. He's on his way out, then:

NANCY

Oh,, my God! Paul!

He stops, turns around. He can see the fear in her eyes as she points to something going on at the seismograph.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

The auditorium is crowded with people from the town. Rachel is onstage with a microphone. Charlie is at her side.

RACHEL

The Governor has assured us that The National Guard will be here in a few hours, but we don't want to wait. I know it's tough to think about...because this is our home... but no matter what happens, we can always come back again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IN THE CROWD

Barnick and Malachi get up and leave. Dr. Fox turns to Les Worrell who is watching them go.

DR. FOX

There goes your pension, Les.

Les is obviously pretty frightened. He gets up too.

LES

If I live long enough to collect it.

He follows Barnick and Malachi out of the auditorium.

RACHEL

Now, I'd like to turn this meeting over to Mr. Dalton.

Charlie steps up to the podium.

INTERCUT - THE OBSERVATORY

The team is huddled around the seismograph. Something is going to happen. Dreyfus dares to glance through the window. At the mountain. He murmurs:

DREYFUS

What have I done...

BACK TO THE MEETING

CHARLIE

I want to make it clear that these are just precautionary measures. We don't want to start a panic.

BOOM! A HEALTHY QUAKE rocks the building. A little plaster falls. Even as the crowd is reacting to that quake, A MUCH BIGGER JOLT SHAKES THE VERY FOUNDATIONS OF THE BUILDING.

Rachel looks towards Charlie. The crowd is badly rattled. There is one of those moments of awful, frightened silence.

CHARLIE

People, please...if we don't panic, then we'll be okay. Now, starting with the first row, let's-

The building SHAKES again. The citizens of Dante's Peak are out of their seats and starting for the exits.

EXT. THE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

As the crowd pours out of the auditorium, they all see it: A HUGE CLOUD OF STEAM AND ASH rising from the top of the mountain.

The hasty exit from the auditorium now turns into a full-scale panic as people run for their cars or, if they came on foot, for their homes!

As Charlie and Rachel come around the corner, a building partially collapses. They make it to the suburban and take off for Rachel's place.

EXT. THE MOUNTAIN - DAY

You can see the ASH CLOUD forming above the mountain. Ice is beginning to melt and steam rises along with the ash.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD OF THE SUBURBAN

The wipers sweep away the fine "rain" of pumice and ash that has begun to fall, darkening the day into early night. Through the dirty windshield we can see traffic jamming the street, moving for the bridge. People have their headlights on.

Sheriff Turner is there, trying to make some sort of order out of all this chaos.

People have their shirts pulled up over their mouths to keep from inhaling all the ash in the air.

Earthquakes are swarming now... one right after another.

A sign on a building CRASHES TO THE GROUND just missing the car in front of them as Charlie drives his Suburban along the street packed with all these panicking evacuees.

Traffic on the bridge is all moving one way... out of town.

RACHEL

(terrified)

Jesus Christ, Charlie, my kids...

CHARLIE

We'll make it...

Up ahead, a panicked TRUCK DRIVER tries to take his U-Haul around the traffic... to get across the bridge first.

Another DRIVER, careening down a side street, SLAMS into the truck.

The Suburban, horn honking, makes it across the bridge.

INT. RACHEL'S - DAY

Charlie follows Rachel into the Cafe. It's dark and empty.

RACHEL
Graham... Lauren... let's go.

She races up the stairs. Charlie starts gathering up some things. Then he hears Rachel scream.

RACHEL (O.S.)
Oh, my God! No!

Charlie races up the stairs.

INT. RACHEL'S - UPSTAIRS - DAY

Charlie bursts in to find, Rachel frantic. She's holding a note.

RACHEL
They've gone up the mountain to
get their grandma.

EXT./INT. ROAD TO RUTH'S LODGE - THE DODGE RAM - DAY

Graham peers through the windshield. The falling ash makes it difficult to see.

LAUREN
Maybe you ought to turn the wipers
on?

GRAHAM
(a beat)
I don't know how they work.

LAUREN
I thought you said, grandma taught
you how to drive?

GRAHAM
I'm a great driver. I just don't
know where the wipers are.

Then, he hits the right button and gets them going.

There's a JOLT and Graham tries to steer... to keep them on the road... BUT THE ROAD IS MOVING... the earth shaking like a wet dog.

Somehow... blind luck or Ruth's good driving lessons, Graham manages to keep the truck on the road while moving around the boulders.

EXT./INT. CHELAN STREET - CHARLIE'S SUBURBAN - DAY

Charlie and Rachel, in his Suburban... but now they're trying to move AGAINST the flow of traffic.

As the cars come off the bridge and the road widens, they take off, pedals to the metal as they race out of town.

CHARLIE HAS TO DRIVE ON THE SIDEWALK TO AVOID A HEAD-ON COLLISION!

Rachel is on Charlie's cellphone, trying to call the lodge. She gets a "We're sorry - all circuits in the area are in use - please try again later..." message.

RACHEL

Damn it.

She tries again. She gets the same message.

Somehow, Charlie has gotten them back to the bridge... but there is no way they're getting across! The bridge is jammed with traffic... all going in the opposite direction.

Rachel looks at Charlie. What are they going to do?

Looking behind him and seeing an opening, Charlie throws it into reverse! He backs quickly then puts the truck into 4 wheel drive and takes them ROCKETING DOWN THE STEEP BANK AND INTO THE RIVER.

The Suburban moves into the current, the water rises up to the hood.

ON THE FAR SHORE

A DRIVER heading for the bridge sees the Suburban. If they can do it, so can he. He pulls down the bank and heads for the water. Another car follows.

These cars are not equipped to ford a river. They are quickly carried away by the strong current!

WITH THE SUBURBAN

They're moving into even deeper water. It's HALF-WAY UP TO THE WINDOWS. The engine snorkel feeds air to the motor. Rachel looks at Charlie.

RACHEL

Are you out of your head??!!

SLAM! They're hit by one of the cars that's tried to cross from the other side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The collision knocks them into even deeper water. Too deep!
The Suburban floats.

There's nothing Charlie can do.

CHARLIE

Hang on...

They're carried, like so much driftwood, down the river...

A beat... A bump...

The river bottom has flattened out a little. The truck gets some traction and pulls them out of the water and onto the far bank of the river.

As they come up out of the water, Charlie reaches for the radio.

CHARLIE

(into the radio)

Paul... are you still there?

Paul?

INT. TEMPORARY OBSERVATORY - DAY

Dreyfus and the team are watching an enhanced COMPUTER GRAPHIC showing the red dots (earthquakes) under the mountain... and then there's a 3-D, ANIMATED DEPICTION OF THE RISING MAGMA CONE inside the mountain.

DREYFUS

(picks up mike)

Charlie, where are you?

INT. SUBURBAN - DAY

On the far side of the river now, Rachel points Charlie onto a side street so that they can avoid traffic on their way back up the mountain.

CHARLIE

(on mike)

Rachel's kids are headed up the mountain. We're going to get them. What are we looking at up there?

INT. TEMPORARY OBSERVATORY - NIGHT

Dreyfus and the team exchange grave looks as they look at the computer screen, showing the animated magma rising.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DREYFUS (ON MIKE)
Charlie, listen, you may not have
enough time. You were dead right,
Charlie. This thing looks like
it's building up to something
enorm.....OH SHIT.

Dreyfus has seen something out the window.

OUT THE WINDOW - HIS P.O.V.

A CROWD gathered around. A helicopter landing in the parking
lot opposite. People take cover from the dust and grit thrown
up by the wind from the rotors. As soon as they can open the
doors and dive in....

DREYFUS
(on mike)
Looks like our ass-hole pilot
plans on flying people out of
here!

INT. SUBURBAN. DAY

CHARLIE
If he sucks any of this ash into
his engine, he's fucked. You've
got to stop him.

INT. THE CHOPPER. NIGHT.

The helicopter is over-crowded with PEOPLE.

Barnick is in the front seat peeling off bills for the pilot
from a thick wad. Les Worrell hands over a fistful of cash from
the back seat. Malachi is beside him.

EXT. CLUSTER'S MOTEL. DAY

Dreyfus runs out of the motel and across the road. He's still
holding the radio, but he's forgotten all about it.

The helicopter winds up for take-off. One MAN, hurrying away
from the parking lot, passes Dreyfus.

MAN
He's getting fifteen thousand a
pop. Cash only.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DREYFUS
(waving frantically to
the pilot)
STOP! Stop!!

His voice is lost in the noise of the chopper taking off. He stands, his hair blasted back by the downdraft. He throws his hands up in the air.

INT. THE SUBURBAN - DAY

Charley and Rachel hear the bad news over the mike.

DREYFUS (ON MIKE)
He's taken off.

Charlie cradles the radio.

EXT. THE SKY - DAY

The pilot moves the helicopter up through the ash-laden sky, banking away from the mountain. It is crowded with ANXIOUS passengers. FUMES COMING IN FROM THE GASES IN THE AIR MAKE THEM COUGH.

BARNICK
This as fast as you can go?

PILOT
We've got six people in here.
We're heavy... you don't want
to... OH DEAR JESUS!

The TAIL OF THAT HUGE PLUME OF ASH is whipping up off the mountain. They're going to fly right through it.

BARNICK
What. What is it?

PILOT
Shut the fuck up! I can't think!

He jams at every control in front of him...

But the blades SPATTER and die as the ash is ingested into the engine!

EXT. SKY OVER DANTE'S PEAK. DAY

The helicopter floats for an endless beat.

You can still hear the SCREAMS as it falls out of the sky.

INT./EXT. THE SUBURBAN - CHELAN STREET - DAY

Charlie is just turning the Suburban back onto Chelan street. He's on the outskirts of town. A couple of WAREHOUSES and a small TRAILER PARK before the road starts its steep climb up the mountain.

THE HELICOPTER COMES CRASHING DOWN RIGHT OVER THEM!

Charlie hits the brakes!

The chopper SLAMS into a WAREHOUSE right in front of them, bursting into flames on impact.

The warehouse too starts to burn.

No one in the chopper could have possibly survived.

IN THE SUBURBAN. RACHEL LOOKS AT CHARLIE.

RACHEL

Oh my God.

The flames reflect off Charlie's face.

CHARLIE

(on radio)

Paul, the chopper's gone down!
It hit a building. Get the fire
services up here!

Then, he steps on the accelerator, taking them past the wreckage and up towards the mountain.

EXT. AMERICAN BEAUTY LODGE - DAY

As the Dodge Ram pulls sloppily up in front of Ruth's Lodge. The headlights barely cut through the ashy sky.

RUTH is around back, hosing down her roof. She hears the horn, sets down her hose, and comes around. Sees the kids getting out.

RUTH

What are you guys doing here?

LAUREN

Grandma, we came to get you out.

Ruth is rattled. She knows she's in danger and she's not going to endanger her grandchildren... and that means leaving her lodge.

RUTH

I have to get Roughy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She starts back for the lodge. Graham has gotten out of the truck.

GRAHAM
I'll get him, Grandma. You get
in the truck. You can drive!

He hurries to the door of the lodge and opens it. Roughy comes out. Graham shuts the lodge door and the two of them start for the truck. Then:

A TREMOR hits... AND ROUGHY BOLTS! Right past Graham and OFF INTO THE WOODS.

RUTH
ROUGHY! NO!

She starts after her dog. The kids follow.

GRAHAM
It's all right, we'll find him.

Ruth looks back at the mountain and the lake. There is a deep worry on her face.

EXT. ROAD APPROACHING THE LODGE - DAY

Charlie races the Suburban up the mountain road.

THE GROUND BUCKLES IN FRONT OF THEM!

SLAM! A rock slide dislodges a tree. It comes CRASHING across the road. OTHER BOULDERS CRASH down onto the road ahead of them!

Charlie reacts quickly, pulling them up on the shoulder and around it.

BEHIND THEM

A huge piece of the mountain comes SLAMMING DOWN, closing the road. There is no way back down the mountain.

Rachel looks back, sees the landslide, knows that they're trapped. She turns to Charlie.

EXT. THE WOODS - DAY

Ruth, panicked, is calling desperately for her dog. Branches scratch at her face as she races through the trees. She doesn't notice. She wants to find her dog.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lauren tries to keep up with her grandmother. She's CALLING too. A SOUND. She stops...seeing something.

LAUREN
Grandma, look...

A purple cloud of methane gas wafts up from the ground at their feet.

RUTH
We've got to get back. Now...

LAUREN
But we can't leave-

RUTH
(firmly)
I said, now!

They turn back. Another methane cloud wafts up.

EXT. THE ROAD UP THE MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

Charlie and Rachel are approaching the dirt road that leads to the lake. Rachel shouts, pointing out the turn:

RACHEL
There!

Charlie pulls them off down the dirt road towards the lake and the lodge.

BY THE LODGE

The truck SKIDS to a halt. Charlie stuffs the radio in his pocket as he and Rachel jump out.

They run past Rachel's truck....

RACHEL
Graham! Lauren!

Only silence. Rachel's heart sinks. Then:

Ruth and the children emerge from the woods. Charlie smiles. Tears of joy stream down Rachel's face as she runs to embrace her children.

The ground SHAKES again. THERE IS A HUGE SHAKE AND RUMBLE...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The dirt road is destroyed as the tremor brings the entire cliff down onto the road, burying Charlie's truck and blocking their route back.

Rachel's truck is pushed off the road. It rolls end over end like a toy down the slope from the lodge and into the lake.

EXT. TOWN. NIGHT

A CNN STRINGER is doing a live spot, framed so that there is maximum panic in the background.

STRINGER
...there's panic, chaos,
devastation everywhere. Several
casualties have already
occurred...

There is MASSIVE SHAKE and DEEP, TEARING SOUND....

THE BUILDING diagonally across from the MOTEL PARTIALLY COLLAPSES, crushing several CARS as it falls in A CLOUD OF DUST, ASH and masonry.

On the Main Street, PANIC in FULL SWING. The street is a fucking parking lot! No one's moving. People LEAN ON THEIR HORNS!

Some people carry umbrellas to ward off the ash. Most have their shirts up over faces like bandannas.

INT. TEMPORARY OBSERVATORY - NIGHT

Dreyfus and the team, bent over the computers. Everyone looking frayed around the edges.

HARRY
It's vented in a dozen places.
Maybe we're over the hump.

NANCY
Get real, Beavis. She's just
clearing her throat. She hasn't
even started to sing yet.

DREYFUS
What do you think, Terry?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TERRY

I think that if we stick around here we might as well put jam in our pockets... 'cause we're going to be toast.

Charlie's voice comes over the radio.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Paul, it's Charlie. Anybody there?

Dreyfus grabs it up.

DREYFUS

Charlie, where are you?

INT. THE LODGE - NIGHT

Charlie is on the radio. Ruth and Rachel are throwing some belongings into a suitcase and a plastic bag as they prepare for immediate departure. The power is out and the room is lit by LANTERNS.

CHARLIE

(on radio)

...the road's blocked. But we're all okay.

LAUREN

(calls out)

Roughy isn't!

DREYFUS

(on radio)

I'll send a chopper in the moment the wind blows that ash cloud off.

CHARLIE

(on radio)

Get the hell out of there, Paul. Before it's too late.

Silence from the radio. Dreyfus turns to the team, who are just standing there, watching him, waiting.

DREYFUS

I'm gonna stick around as long as I can. The rest of you should leave - now.

He looks at the others. Harry shakes his head: no. Terry shakes his head: no. Nancy hesitates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

And miss all the fun? Nah.

They're all in.

INT. THE LODGE - NIGHT

Charlie is studying a rusted 10 h.p. outboard engine which he has propped against a corner wall.

Lauren is hunched on the floor, scared, trying not to cry.

Charlie sees this and nods at Graham, gesturing towards Lauren. Graham gets it and walks over and kneels by his sister.

GRAHAM

Hey. If you're scared, I've got something that'll keep you safe.

She looks up at him through teary eyes. He reaches in his pocket and offers her his quartz crystal. The one from the mine. Lauren can't believe it.

LAUREN

I can have it?

He pulls it away from her.

GRAHAM

When we get to the bottom.

Lauren makes a face. Then Graham laughs as he presses the crystal into her hand.

Rachel and Ruth are silently throwing things together.

RUTH

I know what you're thinking. This is all my fault.

Rachel doesn't say anything. She doesn't have to.

RUTH

Rachel, I still believe in my heart of hearts...that this mountain will never hurt us.

Rachel is exasperated. She throws down the bag she'd been packing. Glares at Ruth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL

I swear to God, Ruth, if anything happens to my children because of your stupid, irresponsible attitude, I'll-

Charley gets in the middle of this.

CHARLIE

It's time we got moving. Is there a hiking trail or a fire lane or-

RACHEL

There's a fire-lane through the forest. But it's on the other side of the lake.

Charlie nods toward the old outboard.

CHARLIE

(to Ruth)

That thing work?

RUTH

If did last summer.

Charley walks to the engine. Examines it again. Says to Ruth:

CHARLIE

Have you got any motor oil?

Ruth nods. Heads toward a closet. Then:

A HUGE ROAR COMES FROM UP THE MOUNTAIN! Charley picks up his radio.

CHARLIE

(on mike)

Paul... talk to me. Nancy... Terry.

No answer. He puts the radio down.

CHARLIE

The battery's dead.

He looks out the window.

THE MOUNTAIN - HIS P.O.V. enveloped in an impenetrable darkness formed by that cloud of ash. Charlie can't see anything but his own reflection in the window.

EXT. THE LAKE - NIGHT

Dark. The water inky and still with a thin coat of ash. The CAMERA PANS to the crater where we can see that the acid lake HAS BREACHED and is running down into Mirror Lake.

INT. TEMPORARY OBSERVATORY - NIGHT

Dreyfus and Nancy stare at their monitors.

DREYFUS

Major slide just below the rim
of the caldera. That acid lake
is spilling into Mirror lake.
Can we get Charlie on the radio?

Terry tries. Nothing.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SLOPE. NIGHT.

A SMALL RIVER OF LAVA moves UTTERLY SILENTLY through the trees, setting the forest alight as it moves.

INT. LODGE - NIGHT

The roar of the outboard engine as it catches....and runs! A brief check that it's working and Charlie kills it.

Which is when they hear a sound outside. A sound that becomes clearer. It is AN ANIMAL HOWLING. Right outside the window.

RUTH

Roughy!

Ruth runs to the door to jerk it open. Rachel and the Kids, hearing the dog's name, also move to the door.

ROUGHY bounds into the room. His coat is burned on one side and he limps, but is otherwise fine.

GRAHAM

What happened, boy? Look at you!

Charlie is the only one who sees something ominous about the dog. He bends to examine it quickly.

CHARLIE

Lava burns.

RACHEL

What?

He grabs the outboard motor in one hand and rushes forward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE
Let's move! NOW!

As he speaks the words....

CRASH! SOMETHING IMMENSE smashes into the far wall of the lodge, sending shards of glass exploding inwards. The dog scuttles under a sofa and hides.

Charlie pushes the kids ahead as Ruth pauses a moment, grabs her plastic garbage bag and joins Rachel cramming through the doorway.

EXT. OUTSIDE LODGE. NIGHT.

As they scramble into the open air, they turn to look back at the house and....the front door SLAMS SHUT.

RUTH
Roughy!

Charlie stops her from going inside to save the dog because...

....A RIFT has opened in the ground to the rear of the house. IT IS BELCHING WHITE MOLTEN LAVA. The lava moves at speed ENCIRCLING and then ENVELOPING THE HOUSE....

....WHICH BURSTS INTO FLAMES! THE MASSIVE HEAT IGNITING THE OLD PLACE LIKE A TINDER BOX. In seconds every part of the house is burning.

The lava flow SPITS as it moves.

Driven by the approaching WALL OF HEAT, they turn and run towards the lake.

The lava DIVIDES around the house, cutting off access from either side, literally driving them to their only point of exit - the lake.

They run. And run. The EARTH now GRUMBLING MENACINGLY. The sky is lit by the glow of burning trees.

EXT. THE LAKE - NIGHT

There is now a steady "waterfall" of hot ash off the mountain and the glow reflects off the ashy water of the lake. It is spectacularly beautiful.

EXT. PIER BY LAKE. NIGHT.

HUGE CLOUDS OF STEAM rise up from the lake as the lava flows into the water. At the pier a SMALL ALUMINUM HULLED BOAT sits on the dock.

As they push it into the water - they see HUNDREDS OF DEAD FISH floating.

LAUREN

The fish! They're all dead.

Charlie drops the outboard into its place and twists the screws that hold it. Then he gestures Graham to start the engine.

It doesn't turn over.

Graham gives it another pull. The steam rises off the water around them.

On Graham's third try, the engine CATCHES.

ON THE LAKE

They move quickly away from the shore. They are all very quiet as they look back at the lodge, completely consumed by the fire, its remains crumbling in smoke and ash.

Ruth hangs her head.

Rachel, can't take her eyes off the spectacular hot ash "waterfall". Charlie notices.

CHARLIE

It's called a nuee ardante... a glowing avalanche.

RACHEL

It's like staring into the eyes of God...

Waves lap against the sides of the boat. There is a SIZZLING SOUND. Charlie examines the hull, his heart sinking. He looks up - and can see the open side of the caldera where the contents of the acid lake pour down into this water.

CHARLIE

It's acid.

GRAHAM

Acid eats metal.

CHARLIE

Don't touch the water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The acid vapors sting their eyes. Charlie continues to guide the boat towards the far shore, where they can see the fire lane through the forest.

The aluminum hull begins to react to the acidic water.

A long, silent beat. Charlie looks down. It hasn't burned through yet... but it will soon. Charlie knows he's got to do something or they'll all lose their minds.

CHARLIE

Ever hear of Pelee, the Volcano Goddess? Legend has it that a good tune will put you in good in with the old girl.

RACHEL

So, what do we sing?

CHARLIE

It's got be something that everybody knows...I've got one.

(sings)

"Row, row, row, your boat. Gently down the stream. Merrily. Merrily. Merrily. Merrily. Life is but a dream.

Silence for a beat. Then Lauren sings. Her voice is sweet and clear. And frightened. Then one by one, they all join in, singing rounds of "Row Row Row Your Boat."

FROM ACROSS THE LAKE

The little boat on the big lake with the chorus of eerily plaintive voices SINGING.

A LONG BEAT... AND THEN A VERY BAD SOUND... The motor of the boat makes a high WHINING sound as the rotor spins crazily in the water.

ON THE BOAT

As Graham pulls the motor up to take a look at the propeller. ACID HAS COMPLETELY EATEN AWAY THE BLADES... and they are only three fourths of the way across the lake.

Charlie sees that the hull of the boat has started to burn through. Acid has started to seep through cracks around the weld joints.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

Put your feet up on the benches.

They do. Charlie starts to row frantically. He SINGS LOUDER! Rachel, catching his eye, SINGS TOO.

All of them, looking at each other, SINGING... until the song becomes what it has obviously been all along.

A PRAYER.

For this little boat traveling across this killer sea. It looks like they just might make it. They're maybe fifty yards from the shore.

The boat is starting to sink lower into the water.

The bottom of the boat has all but dissolved!

And finally - tantalizingly - they drift close to the shore. But not close enough for Charlie to leap out.

CHARLIE

Graham - give me your coat! Your coat!

Graham tugs off his jacket. Charlie wraps it round his fist and then plunges this into the water, flailing at it and thus inching the boat towards the shore.

The material of the jacket burns as it dissolves. In seconds Charlie jerks his hand away with a scream of pain as the acid water catches him.

The coat sinks into the lake.

But they have almost reached the ramshackle old pier. Agonizingly close - but not close enough yet.

Charlie leans at full stretch from the bows. His fingers just three tantalizing inches from the wood of the pier.

And then the boat BEGINS TO DRIFT AWAY, backing off from the pier. The SIZZLE of acid a constant reminder that soon it will sink.

RACHEL

No-o-o-o!

Charlie stands up in the bow and prepares to jump.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH
Forget it, Charlie, you won't make
it.

He totters there, knowing she's right.

RUTH
The water isn't deep....

Alerted by this remark, Charlie looks round. Shouts:

CHARLIE
Ruth, no!

Ruth is climbing over the stern of the boat!

Charlie dives towards her. Catches her and tries to haul her
aboard.

CHARLIE
Ruth, for godsakes...

Ruth disengages his grasp by jerking herself away.

Rachel clutches her horrified kids.

Ruth's in the water!!! It's waist deep!

Ruth is silent as she gives the boat a HEAVE and sends it
careening into the pier. Rachel and the kids leap out.

The old pier starts to collapse - wood crumbles, the props
buckle.

Only then, flailing her way after it, does Ruth SCREAM!

CHARLIE
Ruth!

RUTH'S EYES ARE FULL OF TEARS OF PAIN AS THE SCALDING ACID WATER
BURNS HER! She stumbles and splashes her way ashore.

Charlie scrambles from the boat and instantly turns to haul Ruth
out of the acid water. She collapses, her clothes half burned
off. The flesh raw!

Behind them, the boat FALLS APART AS THE HOT ACIDIC WATER EATS
THROUGH.

There is some snow here on the ground. Charlie and Rachel cover
her burned legs with it. The kids, seeing them do this, join
in, piling snow over the raw flesh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAUREN

Don't worry, grandma. You'll be okay.

Rachel kneels by Ruth. Ruth's eyes flicker open. She smiles at the kids packing her lower body with snow.

RUTH

The world's first horizontal snowman!

RACHEL

We'll get you down, Ruth. I promise.

The pain kicks in. Ruth closes his eyes. Charlie looks at Rachel. She has turned away, fighting her tears.

EXT. CHELAN STREET - DAWN

A NATIONAL GUARD UNIT has arrived in the now nearly empty town. GUARDSMEN make their way along the street, checking buildings to see if anyone is left.

EXT. LAKE/MOUNTAIN. DAWN.

The sun struggles to cast its light through the cloud of ash spiralling into the sky.

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

Charlie and company have made a primitive gurney from branches of wood. Ruth lies on this and is carried down the hill by Charlie at one end, Graham and Rachel at the other. Lauren walks alongside, holding her grandmother's hand. Their descent is slow and the CONSTANT SOUNDS of the mountain are a reminder of the peril they are in.

Ruth can no longer suppress a groan of pain and waves a hand weakly to indicate she needs to stop. They lower the gurney onto a mossy bank to take a break.

Rachel bends to tend to her, using a rag to try and wipe the withering flesh of her lower body away.

Lauren tries to slip the quartz crystal into Ruth's hands, but Ruth declines it:

RUTH

Honey, that's so nice. But you keep it for your luck. Okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lauren accepts the crystal back and goes to help Graham who is picking up tiny handfuls of snow from the few patches scattered in the woods. Charley takes Ruth's pulse as Rachel continues trying to make Ruth comfortable.

RACHEL

I'm sorry for what I said to you back there. I-

RUTH

Sssh...You were right what you said. You deserved better than Brian and me. A couple of silly fools.

RACHEL

(crying)

I'm the fool, cause I never even gave you a chance. You saved all our lives. You...

Rachel breaks down. Ruth strokes her hair.

Graham has been gathering snow and now offers his grandma a sip of the melted water from his cupped hands.

GRAHAM

We're pretty close now. Just another two miles.

RUTH

(a faint smile)

Just another two miles...

Ruth gives a deep shudder and closes her eyes for the last time. Charley feels for a pulse. But there is none. Rachel drops her head on Ruth's breast.

LAUREN

Grandma...Grandma...

Charlie moves to hold Graham and Lauren as they look despairingly at death. Then:

CHARLIE

We have to keep moving.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PEAK. DAWN.

The mountain is beginning to erupt. Hot gasses vent with savage violence. A ledge of snow collapses, then melts. Turns into a river. Which grows.

EXT. FOREST FIRE BREAK. DAWN/DAY.

Rachel walks with Lauren. Charlie with Graham. Like a walk in the rain except they are clambering down a steep incline. The rim of the lake is more than five hundred feet behind them now.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE. DAWN/DAY.

That SWIFT SNOW-MELT has started a DEBRIS FLOW down the side of the mountain. The flow grows swiftly as it moves, turning into a great hot, slushy river.

EXT. FOREST FIRE BREAK. DAWN/DAY.

Beneath them as they stumble and slither down, the air is still thick with clouds of ash. But they are close now. The town is within their grasp.

EXT. DEEP FOREST. DAY.

Rachel gestures to their right - away from the firebreak and the ravine. Down below they can see a RANGER STATION with a truck standing abandoned in the compound.

CHARLIE

Maybe we can get that truck going.

In the distance they can HEAR THE ROAR of the LAHAR (a river of hot mud and lava.)

EXT. THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - DAY

There are a few FARM HOUSES along the creek. As the LAHAR tears down from the mountain, it TOTALS THESE PLACES. It picks up FARM EQUIPMENT... A BARN. Jesus! This thing is taking everything in its wake!!!

INT. TEMPORARY OBSERVATORY - DAY

The team continues to monitor the event when A NATIONAL GUARDSMAN bursts into the room.

GUARDSMAN

You people shouldn't still be here. The bridge is going to go!

DREYFUS

We're scientists. We know what we're doing.

GUARDSMAN

Hey, I have a direct order from the governor for you. Get the fuck out. Now. All of you.

EXT. CHELAN STREET - DAY

The team is in a HUMVEE with the Guardsman, it's getting ready to pull out. Dreyfus is staring up at the fire on the mountain.

DREYFUS

It's amazing, isn't it...

TERRY

You always blamed Charley for what happened to Maryanne, but it wasn't his fault.

(Dreyfus whips around)

She wanted to see the show. She was just like her old man.

Dreyfus absorbs this. The humvee starts to move out. Dreyfus gets on the radio, making one last attempt to reach Charlie.

DREYFUS

(on mike)

Charlie... can you hear me...

Charlie...

Up the impossible swollen river, that barn is being carried toward them by the lahar!

The mud is all the way up to the bridge!

DREYFUS

(on mike)

Charlie... The bridge is about to go. Listen... for what it's worth... we got everybody out! We got everybody...

(then softly)

Take great care, Charlie. Take great care...

SLAM!!!

The barn has collided with the bridge! There is now A GEYSER OF MUD pouring down onto the road.

The Humvee, half-way across, skids in the mud, careens up onto two wheels, teetering before it SLAMS back down onto the roadway...

The bridge is coming apart...

As they make it to the far side of the bridge, THE ENTIRE THING GIVES WAY, torn apart by the force of all that mud and backed up debris.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IN THE HUMVEE

Dreyfus, completely covered in mud and ash, turns....takes a last look back at the mountain. He's thinking about Charlie Dalton.

EXT. FIRE-BREAK - DAY

As Charlie and the others reach the bottom of the hill, through the trees, they can see the RANGER STATION.

They approach it from the back. They can see that the station itself is closed and locked... but there is one old PARK SERVICE 4X4 TRUCK parked, abandoned here. They rush towards it. They clamber in - and Charlie discovers there are no keys in it.

Rachel bends across his lap, her head below the dash. She hot-wires the truck, twisting two wires together... the engine KICKS OVER.

CHARLIE

A girl who can hotwire a car and
make great coffee definitely
deserves to be re-elected.

Charlie takes the wheel, and the truck barrels down towards the locked gates of the ranger station and the fire break that will take them to the main road.

The truck CRASHES through the locked gate and races up the fire-break for the road.

INT./EXT. THE FORESTRY SERVICE TRUCK - THE FIREBREAK - DAY

The firebreak winds towards the road. Small pieces of pumice SLAP at the windows like hail. A VOLCANIC BOMB SHATTERS off the truck's hood. Then ANOTHER, BIGGER THAN THE FIRST! A THIRD.

They reach a curve that will take them back to the road. As they take the curve, Charlie sees something. He SLAMS on the brakes!

A LONG LOW LINE OF DARK ORANGE moving like a river. It takes a moment for us to realize what this is.

A river OF MOLTEN LAVA, TWO FEET DEEP, FLOWING STEADILY ACROSS THE ROAD.

RACHEL

Can we drive through that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

One way to find out...

Charlie backs the truck for a little added traction, then jams it into gear and FLOORS IT!

They go racing RIGHT INTO THE LAVA RIVER.

The heat from the lava peels the paint off the truck hood.

THE TIRES CATCH FIRE!

POP! POP! POP! POP!

They're driving on the rims!

NOW THE PAINT BY THE GAS TANK STARTS TO BUBBLE! As the gas vaporizes, the engine starts to misfire.

UP AHEAD OF THEM

They can see the road.

They fight their way through... the HOT LAVA SEARS AGAINST THE WINDSHIELD...

... AND THEN INCREDIBLY... THEY ARE THROUGH.

Graham leads the whoops of celebration inside the truck.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

The Forestry Service truck BUMPS its way through the totally evacuated town, riding on its wheel rims. Rachel looks around in shock.

RACHEL

Eight years. You can't imagine the struggles. Fighting for Federal money. For State money. Trying to convince Malbar to build their factory here. And for what...

The place is blanketed in a layer of ash. It looks like gray snow. It's like some landscape on another planet. The truck rolls up to the abandoned motel. Charlie gets out.

CHARLIE

I'll be right back...

EXT/INT. TEMPORARY OBSERVATORY - DAY

Charlie races from the truck into the building. It SHAKES constantly. He tries the phone. Nothing. Looks around the room and finds a radio - but it's been disassembled.

As he does this we can see the COMPUTER GRAPHIC which shows AN INCREDIBLE NUMBER OF RED DOTS! Thousands of swarming quakes.

The building SHAKES and ROLLS. The monitor falls to the floor and BREAKS.

Charlie's about to run for his life when he sees The ELF(transmitter) which Terry took off Beatrice. Charlie rips it out of the box and scrambles from the room. He jumps back into the truck and they drive off.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

The truck approaches the river and the washed out bridge. Rachel looks at the ruins of the bridge. And the torrent of MUD AND LOGS flowing where it used to be.

RACHEL

There's no other way out of town.

CHARLIE

We've got to find shelter.

RACHEL

Where?

Charlie's at a loss. Then ANOTHER MASSIVE SHAKE makes them reel back and...THE QUARTZ CRYSTAL almost falls from Lauren's grasp as she fumbles it back again.

Charlie stares at the crystal.

CHARLIE

The mine!

EXT. BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN - DAY

A RED CROSS RELIEF CENTER has been set up. Dreyfus and the others are just pulling in. There is a lot of activity here. PEOPLE being bandaged and bedded down. CNN and assorted media people are here doing live broadcasts, etc.

Even as Dreyfus climbs out of the truck there is a BIG EARTHQUAKE. And then a ROAR!

Dreyfus turns to look back up at Dante's Peak just as: A HUGE ERUPTION RIPS OPEN THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The earlier eruption and the mud slides have left the side of the mountain fully exposed so that now, this thing REALLY BLOWS! An explosion equivalent to the detonation of 10 million tons of TNT. One cubic mile of mountain is blown off. The cloud rises a good twelve miles into the air!

BOLTS OF STRANGE COLORED LIGHTENING streak the sky. BLUE, GREEN, RED.

Dreyfus and the others exchange "God almighty" glances.

EXT. ABANDONED MINE. DAY.

The truck careens uphill towards the mine entrance.

INT. FIRE TRUCK. DAY.

Charlie looks upwards as he floor the accelerator.

CHARLIE

Hold tight!

He's going to BLOCK THE ENTRANCE with the truck. Like a cork in a giant bottle!

EXT. MINE ENTRANCE - DAY

Something awesome is happening in the distance behind. A HUGE DARK CLOUD STRETCHES FROM HORIZON TO HORIZON. AND THE CLOUD IS RACING DOWN AT THEM OFF THE MOUNTAIN! This is a PYROCLASTIC FLOW -- A killer cloud of pumice and hot gas and ash... MOVING AT A HUNDRED MILES AN HOUR! Absolutely deadly. IT IS ONE OF THE MOST AWE-INSPIRING SIGHTS IN ALL OF NATURE!!!

The PYROCLASTIC CLOUD billows like an immense hand, clutching towards them as it hurtles down, consuming everything in its path.

The truck is travelling at forty miles an hour when it hits the entrance of the mine. TEARING METAL as it hits with a SHATTERING C-R-R-UNCH and comes to a grinding halt, the sides bent inwards.

INT. FIRE TRUCK. DAY.

Charlie has been slammed against the windshield which has smashed into pieces. The others are also bruised and bleeding. But alive.

Charlie fumbles for a moment. The headlights miraculously still work. They cast a bright, eerie light down the length of the tunnel. Charlie kicks out with his feet, breaking the remaining glass of the shattered windshield, and helps them to climb forwards out of the truck and into the tunnel.

EXT. MINE ENTRANCE. DAY.

THE CAMERA RISES ABOVE THE TRUCK, WEDGED IN THE TUNNEL, to the MOUNTAIN. THE PYROCLASTIC FLOW of ash, pumice, and melted snow riding a superheated cushion of gas is sweeping down from the mountain towards the town, destroying everything in its path.

INT. MINE TUNNEL.

First the kids, then Rachel are helped out of the truck by Charlie. She gestures she's okay.

EXT. THE MOUNTAIN. DAY.

As the hurricane force cloud BURNS ITS WAY INTO DANTE'S PEAK. 800 DEGREES CELSIUS.

Here we are UP CLOSE, SEEING THE DEVASTATING POWER OF THIS MONSTER IN ALL ITS HORRIBLE GLORY!

It consumes the motel... the buildings on Chelan street.

The entire town. Destroying everything... LIKE AN ATOMIC BLAST!

There is no way in the world anyone could survive this.

INT. MINE TUNNEL.

As they dust themselves down....

SUDDENLY the truck is BLASTED BY THE ONSLAUGHT OUTSIDE, IT LURCHES a further five feet inside the tunnel, knocking everyone over. Missing Charlie by inches.

GRAHAM

Down here!

As they follow his disappearing figure, Charlie looks back at the tunnel entrance.

EXT. ABANDONED MINE. DAY.

The cloud cascades over the entrance to the mine - burying everything.

EXT. THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN - DAY

Dreyfus and the team are awed, just watching from this distance.

INT. MINE.

Graham has brought them to a small chamber where there is considerable evidence of his having spent time in the past. Cans of soda, neatly piled.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A dart board nailed to one of the uprights.

GRAHAM
Here - flashlights....

He hands out three flashlights while Lauren, using matches he has given her, lights some of the plentiful jars of candles.

GRAHAM
There's crackers and chips and
some coke back here....

CHARLIE
Kind of a little home away from
home, eh, Graham?

Graham can see his mother glaring at him. He just smiles and shrugs sheepishly. Then:

They stiffen as they HEAR the distant SOUND of PARTS OF THE MINE COLLAPSING....echoing along the tunnels. They look at each other in the flickering light. The mine walls SHEDDING DIRT and the pit PROPS shaking as if they're about to buckle.

RACHEL
Is this going to hold?

There is a long silence, broken by Graham:

GRAHAM
We're going to be buried alive.

No one responds as the thought invades them. Then a distant RUMBLE as a part of the tunnel collapses. One of the props near the entrance to the chamber snaps with a report like gunfire. Charlie looks round, a thought dawning.

CHARLIE
Shit - the ELF is still in the
truck.

He starts back towards the tunnel. Rachel starts to follow.

RACHEL
What the hell's an ELF?

CHARLIE
It's a transmitter. If it can send
a signal from Mars it oughtta get
one out from here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAHAM

I'll come with you, you'll never find your way.

RACHEL

No! I'll go. I know the way.

GRAHAM

You, mom?

RACHEL

For godsakes, Graham...I didn't listen to my mother when I was a kid, either.

Graham looks at his mother, smiles and nods.

RACHEL

Take care of your sister.

She starts to go with Charlie. Then:

GRAHAM

Hey, Mom...
(Rachel turns)
I love you.

Rachel smiles. She and Charlie go off down the chamber.

CHARLIE

Won't be long.

Charlie and Rachel start to run back down the tunnel. In moments the BEAM OF their FLASHLIGHTS dwindles and disappears.

All that remains are the DISTANT RUMBLINGS as parts of the mine break down.

Graham and Lauren huddle together to wait. There is a SUDDEN ROAR OF SOUND - another part of the tunnel has collapsed. As the DUST CLEARS.....

The light from Charlie's flashlight has disappeared.

INT. TRUCK, MINE TUNNEL.

Rachel watches as Charlie tries to climb through the windshield, but the opening is jammed now with rubble and debris, Charlie can't fit through.

CHARLIE

Goddamnit...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL

Let me try.

Charlie moves aside. Rachel takes a shot a squeezing through.

INT. THE TRUCK

The ELF sits on the floor of the truck. Rachel falls inside.

RACHEL

Got it, Charlie, what do I do?

CHARLIE'S STANDING OUTSIDE

CHARLIE

Nothing to it. Just flip the switch.

IN THE TRUCK

Rachel flicks the one and only switch on it. But nothing happens. She tries again. Nothing.

RACHEL

(calling out)

Charlie, it isn't working.

At the same moment, THE WHOLE AREA SHAKES wildly. It's going to collapse!

CHARLIE

(screaming)

Rachel get out of there. Now!

Rachel tries one more time with the Elf.

RACHEL

Come on useless piece of shit!

CHARLIE

Rachel, goddamn it, I said, now!

Rachel gives the ELF a final kick and begins to make her way out through the windshield.

Then the whole mine shakes. Charlie grabs Rachel's hand and pulls her out of the truck just as-

A CASCADE of dust and rock starts to RAIN DOWN on the truck, totally flattening what's left of it.

(CONTINUED) --

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

Come on!

CLOSE ON CHARLIE AND RACHEL. Silhouetted by the truck's headlights, they climb over piles of broken rubble. And then a HUGE, SINISTER GROAN....

They're running now as fast as they can. The CAMERA TRACKS WITH THEM. And as they run, the roof of the tunnel behind them COLLAPSES, driving them deeper, further.

THE COLLAPSING TUNNEL moves faster, like a terrible giant, pursuing them into the depths.

Until finally they hurl themselves into the CHAMBER where Lauren and Graham help to haul them clear as the tunnel behind them finally CRASHES DOWN.

The candles are extinguished by the blast of air from the tunnel. But the flashlight beams stab the dust-laden dark.

GRAHAM

You guys okay?

CHARLIE

Oh, just fine.

Charlie puts an arm around Lauren, who is trembling at his side.

GRAHAM

Did the Elf start to signal?

Charlie and Rachel exchange looks. Then:

CHARLIE

It sure did. They'll be sending a rescue team in no time.

In the thin light of the flashlights, they can each be seen, frightened and tense. The chamber gives another LOW RUMBLE.

CHARLIE

So, Graham - did you say there's some sodas around here someplace?

GRAHAM

Yeah...

CHARLIE

Well, I don't know about you, but I'm a little on the thirsty side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAUREN
Me, too, Graham.

RACHEL
(brave smile for
Charlie)
Me three...

Graham starts handing out the sodas.

CHARLIE
Thank you, Graham. After we've
rested awhile, we can get to work,
digging our way out of here.

GRAHAM
Are you crazy, we couldn't dig
our way out of here in a million
years.

LAUREN
I thought you said, the rescue
team was coming?

CHARLIE
I don't know about the rest of
you, but I like to keep busy...

Charlie looks around, grabs up a huge flat rock, begins digging. Rachel smiles at him. Then she does the same at his side. After awhile the kids join in. It's just something to do, when there's nothing to do.

EXT. DANTE'S PEAK. DAY. (HELICOPTER)

Dreyfus's face is a mask as the chopper flies over....
...WHAT USED TO BE DANTE'S PEAK. A scene of utter desolation
and destruction. The forest flattened and stripped of life.
The town a jumble of broken ruins smothered in volcanic residue.
A lesson in the raw power of nature. The landscape is covered
in layers of ash. The pyroclastic cloud has taken everything
from Dante's Peak... even the color. The ash makes everything
look black and white.

INT. CASCADES VOLCANO OBSERVATORY - MONITOR ROOM - DAY

The sunshine of a bright clear northwestern day comes through
the windows. Harry, Nancy, Terry are all going about their jobs,
monitoring the seismic activity in the region.

Dreyfus is staring dejectedly, sitting at his desk. He opens
a drawer, lifts out some files and pulls out a PHOTOGRAPH.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IN THE PHOTO - Charlie and Maryanne and Dreyfus somewhere exotic, in front of a smoldering mountain.

Dreyfus smiles sadly at the picture as he sticks it up on the board.

Dreyfus shakes his head, lost and hurting. The FRAME LOOSENS so that we can see the RECEIVER on the table. A RED LIGHT blinks silently.

Dreyfus begins to move and as he does so, his eyes slowly fall on the receiver and its blinking light.

DREYFUS

Harry, how long has that light been blinking?

HARRY

I don't know - a couple of days? Why?

Slowly, a smile moves across Dreyfus' face.

DREYFUS

God bless NASA.

EXT. MINE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The area is lit by klieg lights.

Rescue trucks, media people from all over the country, a hundred spectators are all on hand to see-

CHARLIE, RACHEL AND THE KIDS

Who have just emerged from the mine, filthy, bloody, but elated. They're talking to the press.

LAUREN

No, I wasn't scared. I always knew we'd make it okay.

Dreyfus emerges from the crowd. He shoves his way over to Charlie.

DREYFUS

Charlie...Charlie, I never got to say-

CHARLIE

Forget it, Paul. It's just the job.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They smile at each other. Then, Charlie sees Rachel standing off by herself.

CHARLIE

Excuse me, Paul.

Dreyfus smiles as he sees Charlie head over to Rachel.

Rachel gazes out at the total devastation of her town.

CHARLIE

Rachel...I'm sorry.

RACHEL

This town will come back, Charlie.
It may take years...but, I'm not
going anywhere.

Charlie puts an arm around her.

CHARLIE

Neither am I.

She takes his hand.

FADE OUT.

THE END