

F A N G S

Screenplay

by

John Carpenter

Based on the

story

by

Patricia Arrigoni

Property of:

The Whitman Group
and
William S. Gilmore

SECOND DRAFT

FANGS

FADE IN:

1 EXT. NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

OPEN ON a dark, stormy vista: a brooding, overcast sky hangs above the northern California countryside. Huge bloated-black clouds scudding in over the ocean pour rain down the narrow, winding coastal road. Lightning flashes from the clouds in the distance as a small custom delivery truck weaves along the slick highway.

SUPERIMPOSE: OCTOBER, 1965

2 INT. DELIVERY TRUCK

The windshield wipers monotonously flick back and forth, erasing sheets of rain as the DRIVER, a greasy, crew-cut kid in his early twenties, strains to see the road ahead of him. He carefully negotiates the sharp turns and slippery pavement, a cigarette dangling from his mouth.

DRIVER

(nasally sings to
himself)

She got no mind...

She got no taste...

But she looks fine...

Oh what a waste...

CAMERA MOVES FROM the Driver up TO a small glass divider behind his head that separates the cab from the rear interior of the truck. Through the glass we SEE:

3 INT. REAR OF TRUCK

A large glass crate, like an oversized aquarium, is loosely braced off against the sides of the truck and rocks gently with the turns. The CAMERA MOVES IN on the case.

"DANGER -- HANDLE WITH CARE
PROPERTY OF STEINHART AQUARIUM, SAN FRANCISCO"

is stencilled on the side of the case.

4 EXT. ANGLE ON FRONT TIRES

Under the truck we SEE the two front tires spinning along the wet road surface. Suddenly, one of the tires hits a bad pothole and blows out. BANG.

5 ANGLE ON TRUCK

The truck starts to swerve dangerously all over the road.

6 ANGLE ON DRIVER

He reacts quickly, cranking the steering wheel in the opposite direction of the skid. He clenches down hard on the cigarette in his mouth.

DRIVER

Come on, baby... Hold on!

7 EXT. ANGLE ON TRUCK

The truck careens sideways out of control. It spins around wildly and then slams into a tree beside the road.

For several moments we HOLD on the smashed, smoking truck lying half off the road in the rain. The front end is totally demolished. One of the tires lies on the asphalt.

SUPERIMPOSE FIRST MAIN TITLE

8 INT. CAB

The cab is a wreck. The Driver is pinned under the steering wheel which has locked down across his midsection. He still has the cigarette in his mouth but the rain pelting in the shattered windshield on his face has put it out.

DRIVER

Shit.

CAMERA MOVES FROM the Driver up TO the shattered remains of the glass divider behind the seat.

9 INT. REAR OF TRUCK

The rear of the truck is in a shambles. The large glass crate is smashed wide open.

10 EXTREME CLOSE SHOT - CASE

It is quiet. Rain pours in. We SEE water droplets on the broken glass of the case. Then we SEE something else: a diamond-shaped pattern is reflected in the shards of glass. Slowly the diamond shape starts to move. Then the TINKLING SOUND of BROKEN GLASS is HEARD.

11 INT. CAB

The Driver hears it. He cranes his neck around and looks behind him, a look of complete, utter horror on his face. Then he desperately squirms and twists, trying to pull himself free.

12 DRIVER'S POV - GLASS DIVIDER

The RUSTLE of movement is LOUDER.

13 ANGLE ON DRIVER

Terrorized, he flails wildly, straining and pulling. Again he glances at the glass divider as his cigarette finally falls from his lips.

14 DRIVER'S POV - GLASS DIVIDER.

Gliding slowly, smoothly, liquidly through the shards of glass is a giant Eastern Diamondback rattlesnake. It is a thing out of nightmares, an enormous, slithering monstrosity with dark blotchy hexagons along its swollen body. Impossibly huge, it just keeps sliding out of the divider, foot after foot of it, coiling on the top of the seat.

15 SNAKE'S POV - LOW ANGLE UP ON DRIVER

The Driver stares AT CAMERA, his mouth open, paralyzed with fear. We begin to HEAR a LOW, RATTLING SOUND. Slowly, the entire SCREEN starts to desaturate and turn red. The Driver's figure takes on a negative image, covered by a layer of reddish haze.

16 DRIVER'S POV - SNAKE

The giant snake raises its tail, emitting a sickening sibilant buzz. The hypnotic staring eyes are fiery red. The black flesh-colored serpent tongue darts in and out in frenzied warning. Then the snake's triangular head strikes RIGHT AT CAMERA.

17 EXTREME CLOSEUP - SLOW MOTION

The head moves with incredible ferocity. The jaws unhinge, opening wide. The two long dagger-like fangs spring forth from the roof of its cavernous mouth into strike position. They glint like two sword blades, FILLING THE SCREEN.

We HEAR a horrifying SCREAM. FREEZE FRAME the snake in mid-strike.

ZOOM TITLE UP TO FULL SCREEN!

FANGS

18 WIDE ANGLE ON TRUCK

After HOLDING for A BEAT, the CAMERA SLOWLY MOVES TOWARD the wrecked truck as we CONTINUE the MAIN TITLES.

Only the SOUND of DRIPPING WATER can be HEARD as we SLOWLY MOVE UP TO the window and INTO the cab. We MOVE CLOSE ON the Driver, who lies very still. Even though the rain drizzles in on his face, his eyes are open and sightlessly staring. A brilliant flash of lightning strikes, illuminating his death mask. On the left side of his neck, now a blue-blackish color, are two obvious puncture marks.

19 SNAKE'S POV - SNORKEL LENS

The SUBJECTIVE CAMERA GLIDES SLOWLY ACROSS the seat, UP AND OUT the open passenger window, DOWN TO the pavement and WEAVES its way ALONG the rain-soaked highway.

(NOTE: EVERY TIME THIS SUBJECTIVE LENS IS USED IN THE FILM, IT WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY ITS OWN DISTINCT MUSICAL THEME -- A MELODIC SIGNATURE.)

20 EXT. ROAD BESIDE TRUCK

We PAN WITH the monstrous snake as it slithers off the road, and into the trees, slowly disappearing from VIEW. The CAMERA finally STOPS on a small weathered road sign:

WELCOME TO SAN VINCENTE
POP. 6,000

Nothing can be heard but the WIND blowing through the trees and the monotonous RAIN beating down as we...

END MAIN TITLES

DISSOLVE TO:

21 EXT. SAN VINCENTE - THE PRESENT - DAY

The SOUND of typical SMALL TOWN ACTIVITY is HEARD in the background as we SHOOT PAST a large white and blue sign that now, fifteen years later, reads:

WELCOME TO SAN VINCENTE
POP. 30,000

The sign is in the same location as seen previously, but now is in front of a lumber yard and across the street from a Dairy Queen. In the b.g. we SEE a panorama of San Vincente under a blistering hot, northern California sun. The picturesque town is surrounded by hills, forest and park lands. Hillside are filled with modern subdivision view homes nestled among the redwoods and firs.

22 ANOTHER ANGLE - SAN VINCENTE HILLSIDE SUBDIVISION

We MOVE IN toward one particular house, a new ranch-style dwelling on a newly developed hillside.

23 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - DAY

An air conditioner, going full blast, FILLS FRAME. CAMERA PULLS BACK and SLOWLY TRAVELS through the rooms of the house. There are boxes and suitcases in the hallway yet unpacked. As the SHOT CONTINUES, we HEAR:

MANDY (V.O.)

... and I want to close the deal too, Mr. Nichols, but I have to talk to Mr. Kruger first... I know Sunday's open house, but...

CAMERA MOVES PAST stacks of books lined against walls to a framed picture on a night stand of an attractive girl in her early twenties, dressed in the traditional graduation cap and gown.

EDNA (V.O.)

Mandy, it's now twelve twenty-eight.

Also on the night table is a telephone and we FOLLOW the cord up to the receiver in MANDY STRATFORD's hands. Slightly older now than in the picture, she is strong and self-willed without being hard. Despite her cool authority there is a vulnerability to her. She is wearing a bathrobe.

MANDY

That's right, first thing tomorrow, I promise. Thank you, Mr. Nichols.

EDNA (V.O.)

Mandy, it's now twelve-thirty!

Mandy hangs up and glances toward the other room.

MANDY

And I am now off the phone and on my way.

As she heads toward the bathroom, she stops at a doorway and sticks her head into the living room.

24 INT. MANDY'S LIVING ROOM

MANDY

You make a dynamite alarm clock, Edna.

(CONTINUED)

EDNA CONRAD sits on a couch amid a confusion of boxes and furniture. As Mandy ducks back out of the room, we MOVE IN ON Edna. She is a thin, wiry woman in her late sixties, who smiles cheerfully as she whittles on a stick with a large buckknife. The shavings fall into a paper bag at her feet.

EDNA

The rest of the city council
wouldn't agree. To a man, they
tell me I have terrible timing.

(chuckles to herself)

Probably because, to a man, they're
all men.

Mandy suddenly reappears at the doorway. She wears a bright attractive dress and combs out her long, dark brown hair.

MANDY

Y'know, I was wrong about you. I
figured you being an old friend of
the family -- I could trust you.

(shakes her comb
at Edna)

No way! You talked about the peace
and quiet of small town life. You
did not talk about twenty-four hour
work days, plus a speech at the
town picnic, all in the first week!

EDNA

I warned you. You've just got a
bad memory.

MANDY

Oh, yeah? I remember the last
speech I gave in the twelfth
grade... I threw up for three
days beforehand.

Mandy picks up her purse and drops her brush into it.

MANDY

All set.

Edna tosses the stick into the paper bag and starts to sheave the buckknife. Mandy stares at the knife.

MANDY

This may be a dumb question, but
is that yours?

25 CLOSEUP - EDNA

EDNA

(smiles)

I'm the one and only councilwoman
and I like to have the edge.

26 EXT. STONE CREEK CANYON ROAD - DAY

Mandy's station wagon, with the Kruger Development logo plainly VISIBLE on the sides of both front doors, whizzes down Stone Creek Canyon Road, through the deserted subdivision, toward San Vincente.

27 EXT. SAN VINCENTE - MAIN STREET - DAY

The station wagon cruises through the deserted center of San Vincente. Banners and flags fly from the fronts of the supermarket, antique shop, art gallery and the small movie theater. A sign above an auto repair shop reads:

CONGRATULATIONS, SAN VINCENTE
30 YEARS OLD!

MANDY (V.O.)

It's older than that, isn't it?

28 INT. STATION WAGON - TWO SHOT

EDNA

Thirty years? That's when the town was incorporated. Some of us call the time since then 'the Kruger years.'

MANDY

It's hard to tell when the town ends and he begins.

Edna gives Mandy a long, thoughtful glance.

EDNA

About half of the people in this town would agree with that statement -- and the other half would be pissed off by it. Be careful what you say in San Vincente about Max Kruger.

MANDY

Which half are you in?

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

Edna just smiles and points.

EDNA
Take the next left.

29 EXT. PARK - DAY

The station wagon moves down a tree-lined drive toward the parking lot under a stand of redwood trees. In the distance we SEE hundreds of people mingling about. Shouting children race about followed by barking dogs. It is a good, old-fashioned, town picnic.

30 EXT. PICNIC AREA - DAY

Mandy and Edna walk into the picnic area.

MANDY
The names'll kill me.

EDNA
What do you mean?

MANDY
At work I can remember anything:
names, dates, figures. But
socially, I never remember
anybody's name. Sometimes I'm
not so sure about my own.

Before Mandy can say anything further, Edna moves toward a group of MEN standing next to a small creek a few yards from the picnic area.

EDNA
(to group)
I see all the dignitaries are
out today.

The men smile warmly and say their hellos to Edna. It is obvious from the way they greet her that she is a favorite. - Edna then turns back to Mandy.

EDNA
Boys, meet our newest arrival in
town, my good friend, Mandy
Stratford.

Edna proceeds to introduce them one by one.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

EDNA

Mandy, this is Ed Landis, our
Fire Chief.

A short powerful man in his late fifties steps forward
and takes her hand.

LANDIS

Welcome to San Vincente!

EDNA

... And one of his assistants,
James Bradley...

A young, good-looking black fireman steps forward.

JAMES

Hi.

MANDY

Hello.

EDNA

... Dan Ryant, President of the
Merchant's Association...

They exchange greetings.

EDNA

... And last, but not least, City
Councilman Mark Purley.

PURLEY

(warmly)

Hello, Mandy. We've heard a lot
about you.

MANDY

(smiling)

Bad news travels fast.

As they continue to chat, CAMERA PANS AWAY TO TOMMY
WALLACE, a five-year-old with bright blue eyes, skipping
in and out of the redwoods. He frolics mindlessly, by
himself, his attention drawn first to a butterfly, then to
a brightly-colored bird. He finally disappears in the
trees and shrubs.

RYANT (V.O.)

We're city refugees, all of us, but
always ready to welcome a new
recruit.

MANDY (V.O.)

The only thing wrong so far is
the weather.

31 BACK TO GROUP

LANDIS

I know. Too hot and too dry.
And that makes me a little tense.

EDNA

You've never been tense in your
life, Ed.

(to Mandy)

Ed is our rock. Knowing he's
there lets us sleep nights.

A lanky twelve-year-old BOY comes running up.

KIRK (BOY)

Excuse me, Chief... Miss Conrad.
My dad says we should start now.

EDNA

Thank you, Kirk.

(to group)

We'd better get to the paper plates
and chicken.

Kirk bounds off. Edna nods after him.

EDNA

Mayor's son, Kirk Waterford.
Helluva pitcher in the little
league.

LANDIS

C'mon, James. We'd better call
in.

(to group)

See you later. Glad to have you
with us, Mandy.

Landis and Bradley stride away as the rest of the group
turns and heads for the picnic tables.

EDNA

I think you've made a friend,
Mandy. The Chief's a good one to
have.

MANDY

What was his name again?

Edna gives her a sidelong glance. Mandy grins as they
walk toward the buffet tables of food.

32 EXT. PARK - THICK WOODS

Tommy Wallace, the five-year-old seen earlier, has wandered away from the main picnic area. He darts around the redwood trees, playing happily. He is in his own little world.

33 EXT. PICNIC TABLES - PLATFORM - DAY

It is much later and the meal is over. The kids are out playing and the adults are seated at the tables listening to MAYOR WILL WATERFORD deliver a speech. Standing on a small platform facing the crowd, Waterford, a handsome, grey-haired man, speaks with smooth, fluid tones:

WATERFORD

... growth, prosperity and individuality. We are free from the big cities and the big industries. As Mayor, I am proud to say that San Vincente is a place where people can live in harmony with nature without the bureaucracy so indigenous to the urban way of life.

34 ANGLE ON MANDY

There is a light smattering of APPLAUSE. Seated next to Edna, Mandy glances around the crowd.

35 MANDY'S POV

At the end of the next table, seated next to Mark Purley, is VIC RONDELLI. He is a striking well-built man in his early thirties with a rugged, tanned face. He seems just a little out of place among the dignitaries and city council members. As the Mayor's speech drones on, Vic half-listens while he sketches on a pad in front of him.

36 ANGLE ON MANDY

Mandy watches him, intrigued by his apparent disinterest. She leans forward slightly, trying to see his sketch.

37 MANDY'S POV - VIC

Vic looks up and notices Mandy watching. He smiles and holds up the sketch pad. He has drawn a grotesque caricature of Will Waterford making his speech.

38 ANGLE ON MANDY

She smiles back, trying not to laugh out loud. Edna notices the interaction and leans over to Mandy.

EDNA

(whispers)

That's Vic Rondelli... A native
... about thirty-two... single...
A great skier...

MANDY

Just keep whittling, Edna.

39 EXT. PARK - THICK WOODS

Tommy stops by some bushes. He hears something. A LOW BUZZING SOUND. Maybe a hummingbird or a nest of bees?

His child's curiosity aroused, Tommy slowly moves toward the source of the buzzing sound.

40 EXT. PICNIC - ANGLE ON WATERFORD

WATERFORD

... One of the concerns we've had is the need for more recreational areas. With so many new people moving in, planning is essential if we're to keep San Vincente as attractive as it is right now. So today I have a big surprise for you. Max Kruger can tell you about it.

Waterford steps aside and MAX KRUGER strides up to the microphone to a polite APPLAUSE. Kruger is a ruggedly handsome, dark-haired man in his early fifties. There is a single-minded strength to him. As the APPLAUSE SUBSIDES, he leans in to the microphone.

KRUGER

Ah... I'm glad to be here today.

(pause)

Ah... Most of you know that we've now completed the lower Stone Creek Canyon subdivision and ah ... we begin grading on the development on the upper South Hola slope next week.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

KRUGER (CONT'D)

(he pauses for
emphasis)

Now, what you might not know is
that the Kruger Development Company
is setting aside five acres of open
land at the bottom of the canyon
for use by the city of San Vincente
as a neighborhood park.

His words are received with GASPS and then APPLAUSE.
Within a couple of seconds the crowd is on their feet
giving Kruger a standing ovation.

41 ANGLE ON MANDY

She stands and claps with everyone else, then glances
back in Vic's direction.

42 ANGLE ON VIC

He is the last to stand up. He claps politely but unen-
thusiastically. Then he looks over at Mandy and smiles.
A YOUNG WOMAN hurries up to Vic's side and whispers in
his ear. He confers with her a second, then turns and
leaves the table.

43 ANGLE ON MANDY

She watches curiously as Vic and the Woman leave. Then she
turns her attention back to the proceedings.

44 EXT. PARK - THICK WOODS

Tommy stops by a large oak tree. He listens intently and
looks around curiously as he stands by a long, thick root
of the tree. The BUZZING GROWS LOUDER. Tommy can't locate
the sound.

Then he sees it.

A few feet away there is an ENORMOUS RATTLE quivering and
BUZZING in the tall grass.

45 CLOSE ON TOMMY

He stares in fascination, not quite sure of what it is.
There is a SOFT RUSTLING at his feet. He looks down.

46 TOMMY'S POV - HIS FEET

The long, thick root MOVES! It isn't a root, but PART OF THE SNAKE!

47 ANGLE ON TOMMY

He stands very still. Slowly, he starts to follow the length of the snake with his eyes around the tree.

48 TOMMY'S POV - SNAKE

We PAN ALONG the length of the snake, catching quick glimpses of the dark shape hidden in the tall grass, behind bushes, and under leaves.

49 HIGH DOWN SHOT

As Tommy turns slowly around, we SEE that the snake is actually WRAPPED AROUND HIM IN A HUGE CIRCLE.

50 SNAKE'S POV - LOW ANGLE UP TO TOMMY

He is frightened and bewildered. Slowly the SCREEN desaturates and starts to turn red.

51 EXT. SPEAKER STAND - KRUGER

KRUGER

Ah... now, to tell you more about it, I would like to introduce my new assistant, a fresh face, and a very pretty one at that, from Los Angeles, Mandy Stratford.

52 ANGLE ON MANDY

As the APPLAUSE starts, she leans over to Edna.

MANDY

(whispers)

Hope I don't lose my lunch.

Smiling, Mandy walks up to the platform. The Mayor shakes her hand. Hesitantly, Mandy steps up to the microphone as the APPLAUSE DIES down.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

MANDY

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen...
When I was asked to give a short
speech today, it reminded me of
the shortest speech ever given.
A lady gynecologist was asked to
give a speech and the subject was
sex.

(pause)

She just stood up and said, 'Thank
you, ladies and gentlemen, it
gives me great pleasure!'... And
sat down.

After a momentary pause, the crowd roars with LAUGHTER.
She has broken the ice.

53 EXT. PICNIC TABLES - DAY

It is an hour or so later and all the festivities are over.
People are starting to head for the parking lot. Mandy,
Edna and Kruger stand around chatting with the Mayor,
various council members and some townspeople. Suddenly
Vic Rondelli strides forward from the b.g., jumps up onto
the speaker's platform and grabs the microphone. The
woman who summoned him earlier follows behind him, her
face full of apprehension.

VIC

Attention, please. I have an
announcement to make before we
break up. Attention, please.

The remaining crowd quiets down.

VIC

We may have a lost child. Has
anyone seen Tommy Wallace? Tommy
Wallace. Five years old, blond
hair, wearing jeans and a red
sweater?

Silence. The boy's mother is fighting back the tears.

VIC

It's going to be dark soon. Anyone
who wants to help, please meet over
in the parking lot and we'll
organize a search party.

(CONTINUED)

53

CONTINUED:

Vic jumps off the platform and heads in the direction of the parking lot. He is joined by most of the remaining crowd.

MANDY

That's nice. The whole town joins in the search?

WATERFORD

We like to do things ourselves, our own way.

KRUGER

You'll get used to it, but don't let us take all the 'big city' out of you.

MANDY

Oh, I won't. Every time I drive by a bus, I'll roll down my window and inhale.

54

EXT. PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

A group including Mandy, Kruger and Edna walk through the park chatting and half-searching.

KRUGER

... It makes sense to donate the park. Not just from an economic standpoint, of course...

EDNA

Max, you're full of bull. The park conforms to the town's new planning ordinance. You know you wouldn't have got a go-ahead without it.

KRUGER

No kidding?

Max laughs loudly in a conspiratorial way.

Mandy leaves the group and walks by herself toward the small creek. She stops and stares down a moment into the bubbling water. After a beat, a RUSTLING SOUND is heard on the other side of the brook.

55 MANDY'S POV

17.

Through the trees, Vic Rondelli trudges along searching.

56 ANGLE ON MANDY

She smiles to herself, quickly makes up her mind and starts across the creek using several large boulders as stepping stones.

57 FULL SHOT

Vic moves along through the woods, intent on his search. Mandy emerges from the underbrush. Vic is surprised by her sudden appearance.

MANDY

Hi!

VIC

You startled me.

MANDY

I startle everybody. It runs in my family. I come from a long line of startlers.

(beat)

Any luck?

VIC

Nope.

MANDY

Mind some company?

VIC

Not at all.

They begin walking, CAMERA TRACKING WITH them.

MANDY

Do you usually scowl like that?

VIC

Like what?

MANDY

That.

VIC

Yeah, I guess so.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

MANDY

Are you scowling because I'm walking along with you asking dumb questions?

VIC

No, I come from a long line of scowlers.

They both smile.

MANDY

Well, it's not every day I find myself walking through the woods with a scowling sketch artist.

VIC

I'm the fire captain.

MANDY

But I met the fire captain. I can't remember his name...

VIC

Ed Landis.

MANDY

Right.

VIC

He's the Fire Chief. He's my boss.

MANDY

Oh!

They reach an arched bridge. Below, a dozen men edge their way along the creek bank. Vic shouts down to them.

VIC

Work your way west and I'll double back from the pavilion.

One of the men waves back. Vic and Mandy walk on in silence for a few moments. All of a sudden a terrifying SCREAM is HEARD from behind them, down creek. Vic and Mandy freeze. They turn and react to the cry with a mixture of apprehension and terror.

58 EXT. CREEK - THEIR POV

A man, about a hundred feet away, comes running out of the underbrush.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

He is hysterical, shouting unintelligible phrases.

59 FULL SHOT - CREEK

Vic and Mandy race back downstream and across the bridge. Vic and the other men run toward the underbrush. SHOUTS ring all around. Excited voices yell to one another:

VOICES

Found him!... Where?... Over here!

Mandy stands on the bridge a moment. Then, unable to remain still, she rushes down the bank and picks her way along the loose rocks and slippery wet grass. The VOICES ahead GROW LOUDER. A man swears and there are SOUNDS of SOBBING.

Vic emerges from the bushes carrying the limp body of Tommy Wallace. Half a dozen men follow.

Mandy stops dead in her tracks and stares in horror. Tommy's face is a blue-blackish color and he is very dead. Vic starts to walk past her but she stops him.

MANDY

Wait...

Mandy moves close to Tommy's face. She takes a deep breath and touches the child's cheek.

MANDY

Fangs...

Vic looks at her, surprised that she recognizes the marks. Mandy reaches for Tommy's limp wrist. His arm is swollen to nearly double its regular size.

MANDY

It was a snake?

VIC

A rattlesnake.

For a moment they look at each other, then Vic steps past her down the creek. The other men follow leaving Mandy standing all alone.

60 CLOSEUP - MANDY

She is visibly shaking as, all of a sudden, she feels very, very cold.

61 EXT. PICNIC AREA - DUSK

The area is almost deserted. Seven or eight people stand around silently. The DISTANT WAIL of an AMBULANCE recedes in the distance. Mandy walks slowly, quietly out of the woods toward the parking lot. Vic stands waiting for her.

VIC

Edna left with Max Kruger. She asked me to tell you she didn't need a ride home.

MANDY

Thanks.

VIC

But I do.

62 INT. STATION WAGON - DUSK

Mandy drives and Vic sits in silence. The setting sun flickers across their drawn faces. A two-way RADIO, mounted under the dashboard, spews out monotonous STATIC. After a moment, Vic says:

VIC

Turn that thing off, will ya please?

MANDY

(embarrassed)

I can't. Max has all his vehicles wired twenty-four hours a day. I'm sorry.

More silence.

MANDY

What was his name?

VIC

Tommy Wallace. His father owns the drugstore on Las Palmas. We played baseball in high school...
(pause)

Shit!

Vic stares blankly out the window.

VIC

God, it's going to be some time before I'll be able to forget that kid's face. It really tore me up!

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

He looks over at Mandy and sees tears starting to flow down her cheeks.

VIC

I'm sorry.

Silence.

VIC

How did you know it was snake bite?

MANDY

Personal experience. I'll tell you about it sometime. I didn't know it was a rattlesnake, though.

VIC

It's like a signature. The color of his face, the swelling in his neck and arms... But it wasn't normal. He died too quickly. He wasn't that far away. Why couldn't he have run back to the picnic area?
(shakes his head)

Nobody's every been killed by a rattlesnake here... in this town...
(after a beat)

Well, once, fifteen years ago.

MANDY..

Really?

VIC

I was sixteen then. I'll never forget it. This guy was delivering a snake to the Portland Aquarium in Oregon. He had an accident and I was with them when they found him. He was dead with two fang marks in his neck and the snake was gone.

MANDY

What kind was it?

VIC

Eastern Diamondback.

63 EXT. VIC'S HOUSE - DUSK

The station wagon pulls up in front of a small bungalow home, not as fancy as the view homes, but perched on a quiet hill.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

The sun is nothing but a dull glow on the horizon. Vic gets out, walks around to the driver's side and leans down to the window.

VIC

Thanks for the ride, Mandy. Good luck in your new job with Daddy Warbucks!

MANDY

Oh, now the scowling makes sense, I take it you're not a fan of Mr. Kruger.

VIC

Nope! I hope you don't turn out to be like him.

MANDY

Why? What do you mean?

VIC

If Kruger had his way, this town would be nothing but new housing developments and shopping centers. Profit... That's all he cares about, even if it's at the expense of the charm and life-style of small-town living.

MANDY

Well, Mr. Fire Captain, I guess the lines are drawn.

VIC

I guess they are.

MANDY

You're not even going to give me a chance?

VIC

(smiles)

I will, if you want. Good night.

Vic abruptly turns and walks toward his house. Mandy watches him go.

MANDY

(quietly to herself)

I wish you would.

Then she puts the station wagon in gear and drives off.

64 CLOSEUP - PUPPY - DAY

A six-week-old puppy frolics around in the FRAME with two other pups.

65 CLOSE ON MANDY - THROUGH GLASS

CAMERA PULLS BACK and we are in the front window of Edna's Pet Shop, SHOOTING TOWARD the street.

Mandy has her nose to the window as she is talking to the puppies in an animated fashion. We cannot hear what she is saying, but we can HEAR the following:

KRUGER (V.O.)

Come on, Edna. My martini is waiting.

EDNA (V.O.)

Don't get your knickers in an uproar, young fella. I gotta lock up, ya know.

66 EXT. EDNA'S PET SHOP - DAY

Max exits the shop first, followed by Edna. He joins Mandy at the front window.

MANDY

I'd love to have one of those puppies.

KRUGER

Only until the housebreaking routine starts.

They both laugh.

67 EXT. EDNA'S PET SHOP - FRONT DOOR

Edna flips the "OPEN" sign over, locks the door and EXITS FRAME. CAMERA MOVES IN ON sign: OUT TO LUNCH.

68 EXT. SAN VINCENTE STREET - DOLLY SHOT - MAX, EDNA AND MANDY

They walk down the pleasant tree-lined street. Mandy looks up O.S. at something that catches her attention.

MANDY

What is that?

69 THEIR POV - LOOKOUT POINT

On a point that juts out from the hill overlooking the Town Square, there is a large statue next to a bench.

EDNA (V.O.)

Oh. That's Lookout Point. There's a great view of the town from up there.

70 BACK TO DOLLY SHOT

MANDY

What's with the statue?

KRUGER

It's Francisco Santos, the man who is responsible for settling this whole area in the eighteen hundreds.
(looks at Edna)

Of course, he didn't have to deal with a city council.

Edna ignores this remark.

EDNA

How's the construction coming along, Max?

KRUGER

Fine, Edna. The grading on the upper slope is proceeding right on schedule.

EDNA

Today, San Vincente. Tomorrow, the world! Eh, Max?

He laughs and looks with pride at Mandy, who doesn't know what to say.

71 EXT. THE VINEYARD CAFE - DAY

Max, Mandy and Edna are being shown by the hostess to a corner table in an old outdoor patio behind the restaurant. Bright sunlight filters through the vine-covered slats of wood laid across the heavy overhead beams. Dozens of hanging plants throughout give a pleasing garden atmosphere to the most popular restaurant in San Vincente.

MANDY

What a charming place!

KRUGER

It used to be a small winery years ago.

— (CONTINUED) —

71 CONTINUED:

They sit down and start to look at the menus.

EDNA

Y'know, the whole town is pretty shook up about yesterday's tragedy. I must have had five or six calls at the shop this morning about snake bite kits. Has it been confirmed it was a rattlesnake?

MANDY

Vic Rondelli says it was.

EDNA

That's good enough for me.

KRUGER

Look, Rondelli's just a fireman... He's no snake expert.

MANDY

You make 'fireman' sound like a dirty word, Max.

Kruger grins defensively.

KRUGER

Hey, I've got nothing against Rondelli personally. In fact, he's probably a pretty good guy. He's just had it a little too easy, that's all.

MANDY

In what way?

KRUGER

You know, a civil servant... on one day... off the next... polish the equipment... play pinochle... collect your salary every two weeks and wait for your pension.

Mandy exchanges a skeptical look with Edna. This is a new side of her boss she is not familiar with or ready for.

MANDY

I think you may be a little harsh on the subject, Max.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: (2)

KRUGER

Probably. I'm more in tune with people who do it on their own. From the time I was a kid, starting out with nothing, no one ever gave me a God damn thing.

As Max finishes speaking, he looks off and sees:

72 MAX'S POV

The Mayor, along with several other men, enters the restaurant.

KRUGER (V.O.)

There's the Mayor now... Excuse me for a moment, will you?

73 BACK TO TABLE

KRUGER

I'll have a vodka martini on the rocks... with a twist.

Max gets up and walks away. Mandy turns to Edna.

MANDY

I'm glad he's not overly opinionated.

Edna laughs.

EDNA

I'll tell you one thing about Max Kruger, there is nothing hypocritical about him.

MANDY

That's for sure.

(beat)

Well, Edna, what do you think of Vic Rondelli?

EDNA

I think he's cute. He can put his shoes under my bed any time.

Mandy laughs.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

MANDY

No, c'mon seriously...

EDNA

Vic is a tarrific young man...
 Known him since he was a kid...
 A real winner... Unfortunately,
 he is very cautious as far as
 women are concerned.

MANDY

Why?

EDNA

Why is he a winner?

MANDY

No, cautious?

EDNA

He had a lousy first marriage.

Mandy raises her glass in a toast gesture.

MANDY

Welcome to the club.

They both smile knowingly as the waitress approaches to
 take their order.

74 EXT. GATE TO THE SOUTH HOLA SLOPE - LATE AFTERNOON

We SEE a bright red Bronco station wagon, with Max Kruger
 at the wheel, drive through the open gate onto a dirt road
 leading up the hill.

75 EXT. GRADING SITE - LATE AFTERNOON

Max's Bronco drives up and stops near the giant earth moving
 equipment. Max gets out and walks over to his foreman, HAL,
 who stands nearby.

76 SNAKE'S POV - SNORKEL LENS SHOT - LATE AFTERNOON

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA is MOVING SLOWLY through very tall grass.
 We do not know where we are. Suddenly we break out of the
 foliage and we SEE we are on top of a huge rock with blue
 sky above. As the CAMERA GLIDES along the top of the rock
 approaching the far edge, a VIEW of the valley below COMES
 INTO FRAME.

(CONTINUED)

The CAMERA PAUSES BRIEFLY to take in the spectacular panorama and we SEE far below the tiny figures and machines at the grading site. The CAMERA then SLIDES FORWARD off the rock, heading DOWN THE HILL.

77 EXT. HILL ABOVE SAN VINCENTE - EARLY EVENING

We PICK UP Mandy as she walks along a well-traveled path overlooking the city. The wind gently whips her skirt as she strolls by. It has been a big week in the life of Mandy Stratford and she just wants to reflect on the past and contemplate the future. She arrives at Lookout Point and stops next to the statue.

78 CLOSE ON MANDY

Contentedly, she looks out at the city.

79 MANDY'S POV

The blanket of lights jump out at us on this clear, beautiful night.

80 CLOSE ON MANDY

As she stands there deep in thought, the CAMERA SLOWLY MOVES DOWN her body to the ground, then PANS OVER to a small pile of leaves in front of the bench nearby. The leaves appear to move in the bright moonlight. Is it the wind or...?

81 BACK TO MANDY

After a beat, she turns and walks directly toward the leaves.

82 LOW ANGLE

With leaves in f.g., we SEE Mandy's legs approach. She walks right through the leaves. Nothing happens.

It must have been our imagination.

83 EXT. HOLDEN BACKYARD - MORNING

Little BILLY HOLDEN, a precocious seven-year-old, bursts through the back door of his home and skips down the steps two at a time.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED:

BILLY

Here, Pepper! Here, boy! C'mon
boy!

A second later Pepper, his fuzzy black and grey German shepherd, streaks around the corner of the house. Billy drops his books and hugs the dog, trying his best to avoid the long, wet tongue.

BILLY

Good dog! Good Pepper!

Billy reaches into his pocket and takes out an old tennis ball. Pepper barks and jumps around in circles, wild with excitement. Billy winds up and throws the tennis ball as far as he can.

84 ANGLE ON HOUSE NEXT DOOR

The tennis ball sails across the yard toward the house under construction next door. The new structure is in the framing stage and consists of the cement foundation, the rough wooden floor and exposed wood studs, standing erect on top. Pepper tears after the ball.

BILLY (V.O.)

Go get it, boy! Bring it back.

85 EXTREME LOW ANGLE FROM THE FOUNDATION - BACK TOWARD HOLDEN BACKYARD

As the dog rushes up to the foundation searching wildly for the ball, a LOW RATTLING SOUND is HEARD. The dog freezes, then turns slowly and moves cautiously TOWARD CAMERA. The SCREEN desaturates and starts to turn red.

86 FULL SHOT

The tennis ball lies right in an opening in the foundation. And there, inches from the ball, is a rattlesnake curled in a strike position, rattling furiously.

Peppers snarls, baring his teeth, and inches toward the snake.

87 ANGLE ON BILLY

Billy stands staring at the commotion.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

Compulsively he rushes across the yard toward the foundation.

Billy moves up close to Pepper, then sees the snake and stops just a few feet away.

88 CLOSEUP - BILLY

He is apprehensive as he really doesn't understand what is going on.

89 FULL SHOT

Pepper starts to dance frantically around the rattlesnake, barking and snapping viciously. Suddenly the rattlesnake moves for Billy, rising up to strike. With the snake turning its attention on Billy, it's all the opening the dog needs. Pepper dives for the snake, grabs the back of its head and clamps down with his jaws. The rattlesnake twists and writhes, rattling loudly. Pepper shakes the snake wildly, slamming it against the cement foundation again and again.

90 REVERSE ANGLE

Pepper is battling the snake in the f.g. with Billy watching in the b.g. CAMERA MOVES INTO a BIG CLOSEUP OF Billy as he watches the furious struggle. He is mesmerized.

Finally, he turns and rushes back toward his house.

BILLY

Mommy! Mommy, help!

91 ANGLE ON HOLDEN BACKYARD

Billy runs across the backyard as LAURA HOLDEN rushes out the back door.

LAURA

Billy? What is it?

BILLY

A snake, Mommy! A snake, Pepper's got it!

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED:

Laura's pleasant features freeze in fear.

92 ANGLE ON PEPPER

The dog bounds up to them, carrying the rattlesnake in his mouth. He stops right in front of them and drops the snake, very much dead, on the lawn. Pepper wags his tail proudly.

93 ANGLE ON BILLY - LAURA

Instinctively Laura grabs her son and yanks him to her.

BILLY

Pepper killed it, Mommy!

LAURA

Where was the snake, Billy?

He points toward the foundation.

94 THEIR POV - OPENING IN FOUNDATION

BILLY (V.O.)

Over there.

Starting in the bright sunlight, CAMERA SLOWLY MOVES IN ON the sinister dark opening until, BLACK ENGULFS THE SCREEN. We HOLD for a moment until the sharp ring of a TELEPHONE is HEARD OVER.

95 CLOSEUP - TELEPHONE

A hand reaches in and picks up the receiver. We FOLLOW it up to Max Kruger's face.

KRUGER

Hello. Yes, this is Max Kruger.

The expression on his face becomes more serious as he listens. The CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL Mandy sitting across the desk from him in Kruger's office.

KRUGER

(smoothly)

Now, calm down, Mrs. Holden...
Everything is going to be okay.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

KRUGER (CONT'D)

(beat)

Have you called anyone else about this?... Good... Now just relax, Mrs. Holden... Don't worry about a thing... I'm on my way!

He hangs up.

KRUGER

We've got a problem... a rattlesnake.

Mandy stares at him.

MANDY

Two in three days?

(beat)

Where?

KRUGER

Under the foundation of one of our new houses.

He turns to his SECRETARY who has just walked in.

KRUGER

Linda, get Hal on the two-way... tell him to meet us at the Holden house right away.

Mandy grabs her purse from the desk and follows him out of the office.

96 EXT. HOLDEN HOUSE - DAY

Kruger's Bronco pulls up in front. Kruger and Mandy get out and walk up the driveway to a shaken Laura Holden, standing with her arms protectively wrapped around little Billy. Their dog, Pepper, is lying on the lawn nearby.

KRUGER

Mrs. Holden? I'm Max Kruger and this is my assistant, Mandy Stratford.

LAURA

Hello.

Max bends down to the boy with his most charming smile.

KRUGER

And who is this?

BILLY

(giggles)

Billy.

KRUGER

(pats him on
the head)

Hi, young man! How ya doin'?

(stands up)

Look, I know this has been an
unpleasant experience for you
and your son, but I just have
to ask a couple of questions.
Are you sure the snake is dead?

LAURA/BILLY

Yes.

BILLY

(excited)

Pepper killed it. Boy, you
shoulda seen it. He killed the
heck out of it.

LAURA

Billy, honey, let Mommy talk
to the nice people.

KRUGER

Where is it?

LAURA

In back.

(to Billy)

Billy, you take Pepper and go in
the house now like a good boy.

98 CLOSEUP - MUTILATED RATTLESNAKE

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO SEE the three of them looking at
the badly chewed-up snake in the backyard.

MANDY

Billy wasn't kidding. That's
quite a dog you have.

KRUGER

Are you sure the snake was under
the foundation?

(CONTINUED)

98

CONTINUED:

LAURA

Well...

KRUGER

Could the dog have found the
snake up on the hill?

(points)

Up there?

LAURA

No... Billy said Pepper...

Kruger looks off and sees Hal, his construction foreman,
appear at the back corner of the house.

KRUGER

(interrupting)

Excuse me, Mrs. Holden. I want
my foreman to check out that house
next door... Just in case!

He quickly breaks away from the two women.

99

EXT. CORNER OF HOUSE - DAY

Max meets Hal and motions for him to walk with him.

HAL

What's up, Mr. Kruger?

KRUGER

Hal, their dog just killed a
rattler over by this new house.

They arrive at the opening in the foundation.

KRUGER

Check it out under there for any
more snakes, will you?

Hal looks over at the black hole and then back to Kruger.
It is obvious he is not thrilled with the assignment.

100

EXT. HOLDEN BACK DOOR - DAY

Mandy stands talking to Laura.

MANDY

... Did you hear any other sounds?
Rattling, buzzing...?

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED:

LAURA

No. There's no way I'd go near
that foundation.

MANDY

I don't blame you.

(thinks a second)

Could I use your phone for a
second, please?

101 INT. AREA UNDER THE HOUSE - DAY

It is almost pitch black. Since the house is built on a hill, the height under the floor varies from three to eight feet. We PICK UP Hal on his hands and knees as he crawls up TO CAMERA and stops. He points his flashlight around the immediate area.

102 HAL'S POV

You can hear a pin drop it is so quiet. The beam of light pans over the dirt area, which is strewn with scraps of every conceivable type of building material. The light reveals nothing out of the ordinary.

103 CLOSEUP - HAL

He is starting to perspire now, partly due to the closeness of the space under the house, and, more probably, because it is a little spooky down there. He moves deeper under the house.

104 FULL SHOT - HAL

He reaches a section where he can barely stand, so he gets to his feet and moves on cautiously.

Approaching a corner, he flicks the light slowly back and forth in front of him. As he turns the corner, suddenly something flies up and hits him in the face.

HAL

Aaagh!!

He falls backward and lands on his ass. Quickly he shines the light in front of him to see his attacker -- a long piece of curved plastic hose. He had inadvertently stepped on one end of it.

105 CLOSEUP - HAL

36.

An embarrassed smile comes to his face as he realizes how foolish he must have looked being attacked by a piece of hose. He picks himself up and starts forward again.

106 EXT. HOLDEN DRIVEWAY - DAY

Kruger comes around the back corner of the house carrying a garbage pail lid like a busboy carrying a tray. As he gets closer to CAMERA we SEE chewed up remains of the snake on top. He dumps it in the back of Hal's truck and covers it with an old piece of canvas.

107 INT. AREA UNDER THE HOUSE - DOLLY SHOT

Moving faster now, Hal heads for the lowest part of the lot, where the height of the floor above him is well over six feet. Then he hears it for the first time. The BUZZING stops him dead in his tracks.

108 CLOSEUP - HAL

He is sweating profusely now. Make no mistake about it -- he is scared. The BUZZING is coming from his right and he immediately shines the light in that direction.

109 HAL'S POV - CORNER

Unfortunately, we can't see much because there is a pile of wood and drywall obstructing the view of the corner.

110 BACK TO HAL

He reaches down and picks up a block of wood and heaves it into the corner. We HEAR an EXPLOSION of BUZZING and RATTLING. He is surprised by the intensity of rattling.

HAL

Jesus!

There are obviously quite a few snakes down there. He wastes no time in getting the hell out of there.

111 EXT. HOLDEN DRIVEWAY - KRUGER - DAY

Max sees Hal emerge from underneath the foundation. He walks over to where Hal, looking pale and shaken, is dusting himself off.

HAL

There's a whole shicload of rattlers under there, Mr. Kruger. I couldn't see 'em but I sure as hell could hear 'em.

Kruger reacts with controlled alarm.

KRUGER

How do we get rid of them?

HAL

Fumigate, I guess.

KRUGER

(thinks a second)

Okay. Call the fumigators. But for God sakes, keep it quiet. You know what I mean?

Their eyes lock for a moment.

HAL

Yes, sir.

112 EXT. FRONT OF HOLDEN HOUSE

The door opens and Mandy and Laura walk down the front steps. We PAN them across to the driveway where Hal is getting into his truck and a smiling Kruger approaches them. He speaks with total bravado and sincerity as Hal drives away in the b.g.

KRUGER

Well, just as I suspected. We checked it out thoroughly and there are no more snakes under there. But just to make absolutely certain, Mrs. Holden, we are going to fumigate under the entire foundation. While we're at it, we might as well fumigate your house as well.

(sincerely)

You can never be too sure, you know?

(CONTINUED)

LAURA
(relieved)
Thank you, Mr. Kruger.

At that moment a fire department car turns into the driveway.

113 CLOSE THREE SHOT - KRUGER, MANDY AND LAURA

Kruger's eyes narrow as he struggles to conceal his anger.

KRUGER
Who called them?

MANDY
(hesitantly)
I did.

He quickly changes emotional gears and a smile crosses his face.

KRUGER
Good!

114 FULL SHOT - DRIVEWAY

Vic and James Bradley walk up to the group.

KRUGER
Hi, fellas... looks like a false alarm.

VIC
Oh? Where is the dead snake?

KRUGER
My foreman just carted it off in his truck.
(apologetically)
Hey, I hope I haven't done anything wrong?

Vic is thrown off guard.

VIC
What... no... ah...

KRUGER
Good.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED:

Kruger turns smoothly and puts his arm around Mrs. Holden's shoulder and purposely walks her away from the group.

KRUGER

Now, Laura... may I call you
Laura?

She nods.

KRUGER

I don't want you to worry about
a thing. While we are doing the
fumigating, you and your family
will be my guest at the San
Vincente Inn...

115 TWO SHOT - VIC AND MANDY

They exchange inquisitive looks. What is that all about?

116 SNAKE'S POV - SNORKEL LENS SHOT - DAY

The SUBJECTIVE CAMERA MOVES in a weaving pattern through high weeds, huge mounds of earth and rocks. Suddenly the caterpillar tractors appear in FRAME, looking impossibly huge from such a low angle. We are obviously passing the grading site, heading further DOWN THE HILL.

117 CLOSE ON SIGN - KELLY FUMIGATION SERVICE - DAY

We HEAR the SOUND of a MOTOR STARTING UP as the CAMERA PULLS BACK TO SHOW the sign is on the side of a compressor parked in the Holden driveway. A long hose stretches from the compressor to the opening in the foundation, which has now been boarded up.

JACK KELLY, the owner and operator of the rig, is standing next to the building while an assistant hovers over the compressor. They are obviously pumping poison gas into the area under the house.

118 INT. KRUGER OUTER OFFICES - DUSK

The office is about to close for the day. Mandy is absorbed in some last minute paperwork at her desk when her INTERCOM BUZZES. She picks up the phone.

MANDY

Yes?

(CONTINUED)

LINDA (V.O.)

Mandy, this call is for Mr. Kruger, but he's on his private line and the man says he can give the message to you.

MANDY

All right.

(presses right
button)

Hello?

KELLY (V.O.)

Hi, is this Mr. Kruger's assistant?

MANDY

Yes.

KELLY (V.O.)

This is Jack Kelly calling, the fumigator? Tell Mr. Kruger that the job at the Holden house is done. There were seven dead rattlers under that foundation next door and one of those suckers was a real whopper, over six feet long.

119 EXTREME CLOSEUP - MANDY

She is stunned -- absolutely speechless.

120 EXTREME CLOSEUP - KRUGER

KRUGER

What else would you suggest I do that I haven't already done?

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO SHOW Kruger sitting calmly in his chair as Mandy faces him across the desk.

MANDY

But if there were seven snakes under one foundation --

She breaks off as if she doesn't want to say what she's thinking.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED:

KRUGER

Hey... All we can do is deal with the problems as they come up. We had a problem and we handled it. We can't start worrying about assumptions.

MANDY

(sarcastically)

No, of course not. The Holden's dog will defend the whole neighborhood.

He lets her remark pass and leans forward.

KRUGER

(earnestly)

Look, Mandy... After what happened to the Wallace boy, followed by this incident, it wouldn't take much else to start a full fledged "snake panic." Now, that's the last thing we need in the real estate business.

MANDY

(with more sarcasm)

Sure... we'll just tell everyone in Stone Creek Canyon that we're providing them with our yearly fumigation service, free of charge. Just don't mention what we're fumigating for.

Kruger looks seriously at Mandy for a second, then breaks into a big smile.

KRUGER

Hey, that's a great idea!

MANDY

(almost pleading)

Oh Max... That's not the real problem. We can kill the ones that are there, but shouldn't we try to find out where they are coming from?

KRUGER

(sincerely)

Absolutely!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED: (2)

120

KRUGER (CONT'D)

We have to make sure that none of 'our families' are jeopardized. I'll tell you what... We'll fumigate first... then we'll look for where those bastards are coming from! Okay?

121 CLOSEUP - MANDY

121

Something really bothers her about this, but she doesn't have a better solution. After a long beat, she appears to come to some inner decision. She walks out of Kruger's office with only a terse comment.

MANDY

Okay, Max.

122 CLOSEUP - MAX

122

His smile of sincerity slowly gives way to a look of genuine concern.

123 CLOSEUP - VIC - NIGHT

123

VIC

(incredulous)

Seven?

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO SHOW we are in Vic's office at the Fire Department. Mandy paces back and forth on the other side of the desk as if to exhaust her nervous energy.

VIC

Christ, that's more than half a dozen in less than seventy-two hours... and we've had five or six other calls since the picnic. I don't like what I'm thinking.

MANDY

Neither do I.

(beat)

Why would Max intentionally cover up the fact there were more snakes under there?

(CONTINUED)

VIC

Come on, Mandy... Don't be naive. He's a capitalist first, last, and always. He's just protecting his investment. The thing is that I don't know if this is just a coincidence or the start of some kind of invasion.

MANDY

Where in God's name are they coming from?

VIC

I don't know.

MANDY

Has anyone been bitten?

VIC

No... not yet... till you came in here with Kelly's report, I thought the people calling were overreacting because of the picnic.

MANDY

Where have the calls been coming from?

VIC

All over... there's no real pattern.

MANDY

Strange.

(after a beat)

Aren't rattlesnakes usually found in dens up in rocky areas of the mountains?

Vic nods, but it is obvious that he is in deep thought on the subject. She stops pacing next to the window and looks out.

MANDY

This whole town is surrounded by hills.

(she turns back
to Vic)

There must be some rocky areas up there?

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED: (2)

VIC

Sure. Those hills are full of rocks. When we were kids we used to climb over the fence and hike around up there. It's all private property. A lot of it belongs to your boss.

MANDY

(resolutely)

So, we might as well start there.

Vic looks at her in surprise. He did not expect her to take the initiative.

VIC

You're volunteering to go looking for rattlesnake dens?

MANDY

If it would help?

Vic can't resist the opportunity to needle her a bit.

VIC

Pretty tough for a city girl!

MANDY

City girl my foot! I love to hike, camp and backpack.

VIC

On Max Kruger's land?

MANDY

(smiling)

I'll even borrow the key. Wouldn't want you to get caught trespassing.

Vic is intrigued by her challenge.

VIC

Okay, I get off at noon tomorrow. I'll pick you up at your place around one?

MANDY

Great. In the meantime, I'll see if I can't do a little research on our slimy little invaders.

The thought of the snakes makes her shudder squeamishly.

124 EXT. SAN VINCENTE PUBLIC LIBRARY - NIGHT

We SEE Mandy exit the old vine-covered building and walk down the front steps, carrying several large books under her arm.

125 SNAKE'S POV - SNORKEL LENS - DAY

The CAMERA now MOVES THROUGH some high brown weeds and around an occasional boulder before breaking into a clear area. The fence and gate to the South Hola Slope is directly ahead. The SUBJECTIVE CAMERA PASSES DIRECTLY UNDER the gate as it continues its inevitable slide DOWN THE HILL.

126 EXT. SAN VINCENTE PLAZA - DAY

A Fire Department pickup truck, with Vic driving and Mandy in the passenger seat, drives by the Plaza and turns left toward the South Hola Slope.

MANDY (V.O.)

I'm wearing the heaviest boots I could find, thermal underwear, three pair of socks, two pair of pants, and two pair of gloves. I feel like I've just gained fifteen pounds.

127 INT. TRUCK - VIC AND MANDY

VIC

(smiling)

On you it looks good!

MANDY

If you really want to know, I am absolutely terrified.

VIC

It's not too late to change your mind.

There is silence for the moment, then by way of changing the subject, she opens a large library book on her lap and starts to read out loud.

MANDY

'Their common name is the Western or Pacific Rattler.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MANDY (CONT'D)

Generally speaking, they are found up to five feet long, although the average size is closer to four feet. The Western Rattler starts to come out of hibernation on the twentieth to twenty-fifth of March.'

(to Vic)

It doesn't make any sense. It's too early for them now.

(reading)

'They remain around their dens for another four weeks as this is their mating season. They begin to leave in April for summer feeding grounds which are usually the meadows and creeks nearby.'

(to Vic)

Sounds like some men I've dated.

128 EXT. SOUTH HOLA SLOPE GATE - DAY

Mandy's VOICE carries over as we SEE the pickup drive up and park by the high chain-link fence that seals off the South Hola Slope. Beyond the fence is a series of tree-covered hills rising up toward the afternoon sky. Mandy gets out and unlocks the gate. Vic takes a muslin bag, a noose and a snake bite kit from the back of the truck. They pass through the gate and start up the hill.

MANDY (V.O.)

'Rattlesnake dens are usually found in rocky areas high up on the southern exposure of canyons. Rattlesnakes have a vent or pit below their eyes so they are known as vipers. The pit viper catches its prey by poison. The pit is an air-filled cavity covered by a thin membrane with nerve endings one hundred thousand times more sensitive than those found in the human skin.'

(to Vic)

Wow.

(reading)

'These nerve endings are so sensitive that the snake can detect whether the body heat of another animal is prey or enemy.'

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED:

MANDY (CONT'D)

If it is an enemy, their breathing increases making them excited or hot.'

(to Vic)

Hot snakes?

(reading)

'The rims of the pit act as screens as they cast shadows which inform the snake which direction the heat is coming from.'

(to Vic)

Hey, that's radar!

(reading)

'Almost all rattlers will retreat when they sense an enemy except the Eastern Diamondback, which will stand its ground and fight.'

129 EXT. SOUTH HOLA SLOPE - LONG SHOT - DAY

Having passed the grading site, Mandy and Vic walk through an open area of high grass.

MANDY (V.O.)

(reading)

'The largest Western Rattlesnake ever found was in Texas...'

(to Vic)

Ready for this?

(reading)

'It measured seven feet, four inches and weighed twenty-four pounds!'

(to Vic)

They always did grow 'em bigger in Texas!

130 EXT. WOODS - HIGH SHOT - DAY

Still climbing, Mandy and Vic walk through a woodsy area. The grass is still high but now there are some rocky outcroppings.

MANDY (V.O.)

(reading)

'The largest rattler in the history of the United States was an Eastern Diamondback killed in West Palm Beach, Florida, in 1908. It was recorded at eleven feet, eight inches long.'

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED:

MANDY (CONT'D)

(to Vic)

How'd you like to find that baby
on your back lawn?

131 EXT. ROCKY OUTCROPPINGS - DAY

They continue to climb toward the top, when suddenly Mandy stops dead, frozen like a statue. Vic continues walking for several feet, then turns and looks back at her.

VIC

Something wrong?

MANDY

(whispers)

There's one about eight or nine
inches from my foot!

Cautiously Vic moves back to her. Within a foot from Mandy lies a six-foot RATTLER. It is coiled up asleep in the sun on a clump of grass.

VIC

Step back slowly.

She does. The snake instantly changes position into a "U" shape. Its head stretches forward, its forked black tongue flicking in and out, its rattles whirring ominously. Vic edges forward and quickly swings the noose. It lands around the snake's neck. He pulls the noose tight, the snake thrashing wildly, buzzing and twisting.

MANDY

Oh, careful, Vic!

Mandy stands breathless. Vic holds up the noose and smoothly grabs the snake behind the head. He opens the muslin bag with one hand and carefully guides the snake into the bag with the other. He twirls the top of the bag closed and ties it carefully.

VIC

(jubilantly)

What do ya know. We got one.

Mandy exhales. Her hands are shaking. She closes her eyes.

MANDY

Excuse me, but... OH SHIT!

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED:

VIC
You all right?

MANDY
Yeah, great. Is it possible to
helicopter me out of here?

132 EXTREME LOW ANGLE FROM BEHIND HER

Mandy takes a couple of steps backward TOWARD CAMERA. As she attempts to sit down on a rock next to CAMERA the SCREEN starts to desaturate and turn the now familiar shade of red.

133 ANGLE FROM SIDE

Inches from her boot, a RATTLESNAKE is poised in strike position. In a flash it STRIKES HER BOOT.

Mandy screams and stumbles away from the rock. Vic moves forward.

VIC
Don't move!

They both freeze as they stare at the snake, which slithers under the edge of a rock.

Vic rushes forward and helps her up. He quickly bends down to her foot. There are two puncture marks in the leather. Vic quickly removes her boot and inspects her skin.

VIC
You were lucky. It didn't
penetrate your skin.

Mandy is relieved, to say the least.

MANDY
What a way to die -- in the middle
of the woods with a fire captain
feeling my foot.

He stands up and they exchange a serious look. Then the mixture of tension, fear and apprehension well up in her and she starts to cry. Vic puts his arm around her and she leans on his shoulder crying softly.

VIC
(softly)
Go ahead.

134 HIGH LONG SHOT

We SEE the two small figures all alone in the vast wilderness.

135 EXT. WOODS - DUSK

They are on their way down the hill with Vic dragging his sack behind him, making sure to keep it well away from his body. They are about half-way down the slope by now and it is much darker (almost day for night). They walk quickly TOWARD the CAMERA when suddenly they hear it -- a LOW BUZZING SOUND in the high grass off to their immediate right. Obviously it stops them dead in their tracks. They are both perspiring.

136 VIC AND MANDY'S POV - CLUMP OF GRASS

It is deathly quiet. They can see no apparent movement, just the grass swaying gently in the evening breeze.

137 BACK TO TWO SHOT - VIC AND MANDY

Vic motions her to follow him in a direction away from the BUZZING SOUND. They start moving slowly. After ten feet a NEW BUZZING stops them again, this time coming from their left.

VIC

Jesus! They're everywhere!

They are frightened. They look around apprehensively.

138 THEIR POV - THE MOUNTAIN

CAMERA PANS SLOWLY AROUND the rugged countryside and we see nothing out of the ordinary. It is quiet except for the SOUND of their labored breathing and pounding hearts.

139 BACK TO VIC AND MANDY

They start forward cautiously between the two sounds. The BUZZING RESUMES immediately upon their movement. As they appear to pass the two points of danger, they increase their tempo to a very fast walk. The two separate RATTLING SOUNDS seem to be joined by OTHER BUZZING NOISES. They break into a run.

140 DOLLY SHOT - CLOSE TWO SHOT

Scared shitless, they race through the grass as a veritable SYMPHONY OF BUZZING resounds in their ears (is it possible some of that sound could be imagined?).

141 EXTREME LOW ANGLE UP THROUGH GRASS

We are now totally familiar with this angle. We SEE two pairs of legs racing TOWARD CAMERA. The POUNDING feet pass by very close to CAMERA. NO COLOR CHANGE.

142 BACK TO DOLLY SHOT

Their faces strain as they race along past trees, rocks and tall grass. They are in a state of pure panic.

143 HELICOPTER SHOT - DUSK

CAMERA SHOOTING DOWN ON their full figures, leading them as they charge down the hill. CAMERA PULLS UP AND AWAY SHOWING the two small ants moving through the monstrous landscape.

144 EXT. SOUTH SLOPE GATE - SIDE ANGLE (DAY FOR NIGHT)

Our two sprinters, now laughing hysterically, come shooting through the gate and use the side of the pickup to brake their stop. As they try to get their wind back, they continue to laugh, half out of relief and half out of their own embarrassment. After all, two adults shouldn't be acting like ten-year-old kids.

145 CLOSEUP - VIC

He looks at his "running mate."

146 CLOSEUP - MANDY

Even though she is perspiring and out of breath, the color in her cheeks and the sparkle in her eyes make her look very attractive and extremely sensual. She is totally alive.

147 CLOSE TWO SHOT - VIC AND MANDY

It is an electric moment as their eyes meet.

(CONTINUED)

147 CONTINUED:

They are compelled into each other's arms and they kiss violently. All their pent-up emotions surge out to one another. HOLD for a moment, then:

148 CLOSE SHOT - MUSLIN BAG

The bag with the snake in it is next to their legs. IT MOVES.

149 TWO SHOT

Vic and Mandy leap out of their clinch as they feel the movement against their pant legs. They laugh at their total preoccupation with each other.

VIC
(swings bag into
pickup)

Come on, Mandy, let's take our
friend here over to the aquarium.
We need some answers... fast.

150 EXT. STEINHART AQUARIUM, SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT

Vic's truck pulls up in front of the massive square structure built on heavy pilings out over the water.

151 INT. STEINHART AQUARIUM - NIGHT

Vic and Mandy stand in a brightly lit laboratory surrounded by dozens of glass aquariums, each housing a different species of reptile. In the center of the room facing them is DR. WHITMAN, a surprisingly young man wearing a long, white-sleeved jacket. He has a short, well-trimmed beard and speaks in a soft, shy manner.

DR. WHITMAN
... Is this snake you caught still
alive?

VIC
Yes. It's outside in my truck.

DR. WHITMAN
Good. Let's take a look at him.

Vic follows Dr. Whitman out the side door, leaving Mandy all alone in the room full of snakes.

(CONTINUED)

151 CONTINUED:

She tries hard to concentrate on the small skylight above, but her eyes are irresistibly drawn to the glass cases along the walls. She edges her way forward to one particular case, having been drawn by the small sign on the glass, "EASTERN DIAMONDBACK."

152 CLOSEUP - MANDY

She is overcome with a feeling of revulsion and yet, as if hypnotized, she cannot take her eyes off the huge, deadly snake. Then, unexpectedly, she notices something else.

153 MANDY'S POV - THE GLASS CASE

With the snake coiled behind the glass, her reflection is clearly SEEN in the side of the case.

154 EXTREME CLOSEUP - MANDY

Seeing her own image, she instinctively becomes self-conscious.

155 MANDY'S POV - THE REFLECTION

The day's activities have taken their toll. Her face is drawn, her hair needs combing, and her overdressed figure appears totally shapeless.

Suddenly the snake lunges across the case, causing its shadow to slash across the throat of Mandy's reflection.

156 SIDE ANGLE - MANDY AND GLASS CASE

She jumps back and cries out, her hand going reflexively to her throat. She is badly shaken.

157 INT. AQUARIUM - SIDE DOOR - NIGHT

Dr. Whitman opens the door and holds it for Vic, who enters carrying the muslin sack.

DR. WHITMAN

(pointing)

Put it in that empty case over there.

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED:

Vic carefully lowers the sack into the glass aquarium. Dr. Whitman steps up to the case and reaches into open the top of the bag.

DR. WHITMAN

Easy does it.

Mandy is standing as far away as possible.

158 CLOSEUP - SACK

It falls open and the rattler flashes up and strikes the glass, RATTLING furiously.

159 FULL SHOT

Mandy and Vic are both startled. Looking at the snake, Dr. Whitman's eyes widen in fascination. His voice is excited when he finally speaks.

DR. WHITMAN

He's big... too big... This snake is... is... I've never seen one like this before.

He looks up at Vic and Mandy.

DR. WHITMAN

I don't know what to tell you. He's a very strange color. I'm overwhelmed by his size considering the number of rattles he has.

VIC

What should we do?

160 CLOSEUP - RATTLESNAKE

It is extremely aggressive and highly agitated. During their dialogue, the snake continues is threatening BUZZING, its tongue darting in and out faster than our eyes can follow.

DR. WHITMAN (O.S.)

If I knew what in the devil he was, I might be able to tell you what to do about him.

The rattler makes several strikes against the glass, smashing his hypodermically-sharp fangs against the glass in an apparent rage.

161 FULL SHOT

DR. WHITMAN

Give me a few hours with this guy
and maybe I can figure out who he
is and where he comes from. I'll
call you later tonight.

Vic and Mandy exchange apprehensive looks. Vic turns
back to Dr. Whitman.

VIC

This is too important, Doctor.
We'll come back in a couple hours.

DR. WHITMAN

Okay... around ten. I should have
some answers by then.

Dr. Whitman moves closer to the case and stares intently
at the snake.

DR. WHITMAN

You may have a very serious
situation on your hands.

Vic and Mandy just look at one another.

162 INT. FISHERMAN'S WHARF RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Vic and Mandy are seated in the corner of a small
unpretentious cafe. They have just finished their meal
and are sipping the last of their glasses of wine.

MANDY

Isn't it nice being surrounded by
tall buildings and plenty of
concrete? God, why did I ever
leave the big city?

VIC

Yeah, you'd only have to worry
about getting mugged or raped.

Mandy laughs.

MANDY

Touche!

Pause.

VIC

I understand that Edna is responsible
for your coming to San Vincente?

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED:

MANDY

Yes. She recommended me to Max
and I was hired without an
interview.

VIC

That's quite a compliment.

MANDY

More to Edna than me. Max has
great respect for her even though
she's made his life miserable over
the years with her ecology-oriented
approach to everything. She's a
feisty old gal, but Max admires a
worthy adversary.

VIC

They don't call her 'Ecology Edna'
for nothing.

MANDY

She told me you share some of her
views on conservation.

(beat)

She also told me you were divorced.

VIC

Yes.

MANDY ..

Well, that's one thing we have in
common -- an unsuccessful marriage.

Vic smiles.

VIC

Actually, we have two things in
common -- don't forget our slimy
mutual friend at the aquarium.

Mandy grimaces.

MANDY

I'd like to forget him and all
snakes everywhere -- I hate them.

VIC

Really?

MANDY

Well, I had a bad experience in
camp when I was a kid of ten or
eleven.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED: (2)

MANDY (CONT'D)

I was washing my hair in the shower when all of a sudden something wrapped around my ankle, something cold and crawly. I looked down and could see it was a snake. I tried to shake it off, but it bit me. I screamed and screamed for help. They found me unconscious on the shower floor. It was a milk snake, white with red blotches, not poisonous. But I thought it was, and I thought I was dying.

Vic looks at her.

VIC

And you went up the slope today looking for rattlesnake dens? Why?

MANDY

I must be crazy, I guess.

Vic smiles warmly.

VIC

I already know that, but...

Now he presses for the answer he wants to hear.

VIC

... There must be a better reason than that why a city girl like you would go up there with me?

Mandy is silent for a moment.

MANDY

In the beginning I just wanted to help, but then...

She pauses a moment searching for the right way to say it, then leans forward and looks him right in the eye.

MANDY

You know damn well why I went up there!

He smiles contentedly and hails a passing waiter.

VIC

Check, please.

163 INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

We are in a HIGH WIDE SHOT of the same laboratory as before, but it looks much different this time. The room is in almost total darkness except one spotlight effect shining down on the glass case holding the captured snake. Whitman, looking a little like the mad doctor, stands in front of the case looking in. Vic and Mandy stand behind him in the center of the room, looking around warily at the darkened cases.

DR. WHITMAN

Well, I've discovered some fascinating things. The snake you brought in has many of the characteristics of the Western rattlesnake species, but the coloration is way off. And its venom is four to five times higher in toxicity than the Western snake.

Dr. Whitman turns to them for emphasis.

DR. WHITMAN

Four to five times stronger.

164 TWO SHOT - VIC AND MANDY

They are shocked.

VIC

Jesus, are you sure?

DR. WHITMAN (O.S.)

Absolutely! I've measured it three times.

MANDY

(almost to herself)

No wonder little Tommy couldn't make it back to the picnic...!

165 FULL SHOT

DR. WHITMAN

That is the same level of toxicity found in the deadliest rattler in this country, the Eastern Diamondback.

Vic and Mandy exchange a quick, inquisitive look.

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED:

VIC
(incredulous)
Could it possibly be?... I wonder...?

DR. WHITMAN
What?

VIC
Doctor Whitman, did you know that,
after an accident in 1965, an
Eastern Diamondback escaped into
the woods near San Vincente and
was never seen again?

DR. WHITMAN
No.

VIC
Is it conceivable that the Eastern
Diamondback has interbred with
Western rattlers?

MANDY
A hybrid?

DR. WHITMAN
Possibly, but in my total education
and experience, I have never known
one species to interbreed with
another except under artificial
conditions like at the San Diego
Zoo. They always tend to preserve
their separate identities and
genetic integrity.
(turns back to case)
Of course, there are always
exceptions.

166 CLOSEUP - RATTLESNAKE

He lies coiled ready to strike, his eyes glaring in the
bright light and his rattles BUZZING furiously.

DR. WHITMAN (O.S.)
In fact, you may have just brought
me evidence that a whole new
sub-species may be breeding in your
area.

VIC (O.S.)
Are you sure it's a new sub-species?

167 SNAKE'S POV

Dr. Whitman bends down and puts his face right up to the glass. As he does, the SCREEN slowly desaturates and TURNS RED.

DR. WHITMAN

Well, not one hundred percent.
After all, I've only examined one
snake. But this snake certainly
appears to have the aggressive
characteristics of an Eastern
Diamondback.

All of a sudden the CAMERA ZOOMS incredibly FAST AT his face. WHANG. As the strike hits the glass, Dr. Whitman never moves -- he just keeps staring.

168 CLOSEUP - RATTLESNAKE

His tongue darts in and out.

DR. WHITMAN (O.S.)

All I can tell you is that he is
an extremely deadly rattler.

Almost as if on cue, it strikes at the glass case again
in an obvious rage.

169 THREE SHOT - VIC, MANDY AND DR. WHITMAN

MANDY

Why are they showing up so early
this year?

DR. WHITMAN

Hard to say. The long drought,
the hot weather recently, possibly
an earth tremor or vibrations.

MANDY

(under her breath)

Oh, my God -- the grading!

DR. WHITMAN

I would strongly suggest an
immediate all-out search for their
dens before they disperse for the
summer. And you'd better move
quickly or the whole area will be
inundated with them.

(CONTINUED)

169 CONTINUED:

Vic and Mandy stand there in stunned silence. Finally Vic turns to her.

VIC

We better get some professional help. I think we're in big trouble.

170 B O O M

A tremendous EXPLOSION is SEEN on the tree-lined South Hola Slope. It is a clear, bright morning. Suddenly there is another big EXPLOSION and the slope erupts like a volcano.

171 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE

Men with hard hats crouch behind heavy equipment spread around the construction site. Kruger's foreman, Hal, talks into a walkie-talkie.

HAL

Fire in the hole... Fire!

Another EXPLOSION rips out of the slope, sending a huge dust cloud into the air.

172 INT. MANDY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

We are CLOSE ON Mandy's face, still peacefully asleep. We HEAR another DISTANT EXPLOSION that gently rocks the house. Suddenly Mandy's eyes pop open and it dawns on her what is happening. She sits up INTO CAMERA and screams.

MANDY

No!

173 INT. VIC'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Vic is hurriedly dressing. The PHONE RINGS and he walks over to the nightstand and picks it up.

VIC

Yeah, I hear it!

174 INT. MANDY'S KITCHEN - MORNING

MANDY
(into telephone)
We've got to stop them. I'll talk
to Kruger and you try the Mayor.
If we have to ring every damn
doorbell in this town -- we've got
to open some eyes.

175 INT. KRUGER OFFICES - DAY

Mandy bursts through the door and heads for Max's office.
Linda looks up from her desk.

LINDA
He's not here.

MANDY
(stopping)
Where is he?

LINDA
Up on the slope with the blasting.
Mandy turns and heads for the door.

MANDY
Thanks.

176 EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

Vic walks up the steps and enters the building.

177 INT. CITY HALL - HALLWAY - DAY

We DOLLY AHEAD of Vic as he walks swiftly down the hall
and enters the Mayor's office.

178 INT. MAYOR'S OUTER OFFICE

Vic approaches the SECRETARY sitting in the reception
room.

VIC
I'm Vic Rondelli from the Fire
Department. I must see the Mayor
right away. It's an emergency.

(CONTINUED)

178 CONTINUED:

SECRETARY

I'm sorry, Mr. Rondelli, but the Mayor isn't in yet. Please have a seat. I expect him any moment.

Vic's face registers total frustration.

179 EXT. SOUTH HOLA SLOPE - BLASTING SITE

Mandy's car is parked alongside Kruger's Bronco. They stand to the side of the activity, with the men and machines at work behind them. They are in the middle of a spirited conversation.

KRUGER

I don't care what your snake doctor or that asshole fireman says, I'm not going to stop construction for a few goddamn snakes or for any other stupid reason.

A loud EXPLOSION ERUPTS in the background, as if to punctuate Kruger's sentence.

MANDY

(pleading)

But, Max, if you don't stop, the vibrations from the blasting could set loose more snakes and send them right down the slope into San Vincente.

KRUGER

If?... If my aunt had balls, she'd be my uncle.

(beat)

Look, I have two and a half million dollars invested in this project and I'm not going to stand around and let it go down the drain.

MANDY

Max, I was up on that slope. I saw them with my own eyes.

KRUGER

(sincerely)

Mandy, I've done everything I can to prevent any harm coming to anyone in Stone Creek Canyon.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

179 CONTINUED:

KRUGER (CONT'D)

The fumigators will be done tomorrow and I'm convinced that the danger has been aborted.

A huge EXPLOSION BOOMS in the background.

MANDY

(raising her voice
angrily)

You don't know that for sure.
This town could be going down
the tubes right now.

Kruger's expression changes into a sarcastic smile.

KRUGER

I do know that I don't care to
have my employees shout at me.

(pause)

Look, why don't you talk to the
Mayor and see if he can get some
professional help in here?

Mandy looks at him hopelessly. She is talking to a
brick wall.

180 SNORKEL LENS - DAY

Again we don't know where we are. We are MOVING DOWN a hill through weeds, rocks, and mounds of dirt. Distant EXPLOSIONS make the CAMERA VIBRATE as the ground shakes. Suddenly we break out onto an asphalt driveway. Straight ahead is a garage, attached to the side of a new home in the lower Stone Creek Canyon. We PASS a tricycle and a dog's toy bone as we GLIDE TOWARD the garage door. The CAMERA MOVES UP TO and UNDER garage door, fading the SCREEN TO BLACK.

181 INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The Mayor sits behind his big desk talking to Vic, who sits in a pull-up chair facing him.

WATERFORD

It's not that simple, Vic.

VIC

Why not?

(CONTINUED)

181 CONTINUED:

WATERFORD

I have to consider all the aspects first.

VIC

What does that mean?

WATERFORD

The tragedy in the park the other day -- do you have absolute proof that the boy was bitten by one of your exotic new rattlesnakes?

VIC

No, not yet, but Doctor Whitman says --

WATERFORD

(cuts him off)

Facts, Vic. I've got to have facts before I can do something. Besides, the fumigation in Stone Creek Canyon is underway and I think we owe a lot to Max Kruger for taking such quick, decisive action.

VIC

Maybe -- but I don't buy it... not all of it. Kruger's looking out for his money. We've got to look out for the people in this town.

WATERFORD

Don't you think I know that?

VIC

Yes, but we've got to find out where these snakes are coming from and fast. We need professional help.

WATERFORD

'Professional' means money. Who's going to pay for it?

VIC

I don't know.

(beat)

But in the meantime, we must warn everyone in town to...

(CONTINUED)

181 CONTINUED: (2)

WATERFORD

To what?

VIC

The possibility...

WATERFORD

(cuts him off again)

Possibilities?

(angrily)

Before I scare the hell out of
thirty thousand people, I need
more than possibilities!

There is silence for a moment. A stalemate. Waterford
gets up and starts to pace up and down the room.

182 FULL FIGURE - WATERFORD

We FOLLOW him as he tries to reason with Vic.

WATERFORD

Listen, Vic, I was at the picnic
the other day and I sure as hell
don't want something like that to
happen again. But I also don't
want to end up with a fullscale
panic on my hands over a few
snakes slithering around someone's
back yard. Don't you see?

183 CLOSEUP - VIC

VIC

No. If we don't act fast and
find those dens before the rattlers
disperse for the summer...

His voice trails off. Stalemate again.

184 TWO SHOT - VIC AND MAYOR

WATERFORD

Look, if it'll make you happier,
I'll put this problem on the
docket of tonight's council
meeting. That's all I'm
prepared to do until I have more
conclusive evidence.

(CONTINUED)

184 CONTINUED:

Vic is extremely frustrated.

VIC
(to himself -- but
loud enough to hear)
Typical politician!

The Mayor stops pacing and turns to him.

WATERFORD
What did you say?

Vic stands up and faces him.

VIC
(challenging)
You heard me.

They glare at each other. After a moment the Mayor turns and starts to pace once again.

WATERFORD
(calmly)
Tell me, why didn't you go through proper channels with this problem? Why didn't you go to the Chief first?
(wheels on him)
I'll tell you why. You're out for the Chief's job -- you've made this grandstand play to make yourself look good, that's why.

185 EXTREME CLOSEUP - VIC

VIC
(explodes)
Bullshit!

186 PROFILE TWO SHOT - VIC AND MAYOR WATERFORD

They stand nose to nose, glaring at each other. It is obvious they have polarized beyond all reasoning.

VIC
(facetiously)
My apologies, Mr. Mayor, for bugging you with something as unimportant as the safety of this town.

Vic turns and heads for the door.

187 EXT. MAYOR'S OUTER OFFICE

The door opens and Vic comes storming out with the Mayor hot on his heels. The Secretary and two others look up.

WATERFORD

... the hell out of here, Rondelli.
I've had it with you.

Vic stops in the outer office, turns and points at the Mayor.

VIC

You are going to regret this, Mr.
Politician -- this problem is real
and PEOPLE ARE GOING TO DIE!

188 INT. LOCAL MARKET - CHECKOUT STAND - DAY

ANITA YOUNG, an attractive young housewife, dressed in shorts and a halter top, is paying for her groceries.

GIRL CHECKER

Hey, how's the fumigating going
on up on your block?

ANITA

Fine. They're doing our house
this afternoon. The kids are at
their grandmother's, I'm getting
my hair done, and Bob and I...

She shakes her hips in an exaggerated dance step.

ANITA

... are going to boogie a little
tonight.

The Checker enjoys the image.

GIRL CHECKER

All riight!

189 EXT. SAN VINCENTE TOWN PLAZA

Anita's 1975 Ford station wagon travels through the downtown area and turns left up toward Stone Creek Canyon.

190 INT. ANITA'S STATION WAGON - ANITA - DAY

She drives leisurely along Stone Creek Canyon Road.

(CONTINUED)

190 CONTINUED:

Reaching the end of the street, she turns left. After a beat she reaches for the garage door opener clipped onto her overhead visor.

191 EXT. ANITA YOUNG'S HOUSE - DAY

It is the same home as seen in the Snorkel Lens Shot (Sc. 180). A fumigation truck is across the street. Anita's station wagon pulls into the driveway of the California ranch-style house as the garage door starts to raise simultaneously.

192 POV THROUGH WINDSHIELD - GARAGE

The garage door slowly lifts up. Contrasted against the bright sunlight, the interior of the garage appears to be quite dark.

193 INT. GARAGE

Anita drives slowly into the garage. As she rolls to a stop there are several bumps under the tires. Anita turns off the engine and presses the door device. The garage door automatically closes behind her.

She slips the strap of her purse over her shoulder, grabs her sack of groceries and starts to open the door.

194 ANGLE ON CAR DOOR

As the door swings open, we SEE Anita's bare legs step out into a WRITHING MASS OF RATTLESNAKES on the floor of the garage. The SOUND of the RATTLING TAILS RISES to a CRESCENDO.

195 CLOSEUP - ANITA

She screams and drops the groceries.

196 ANGLE ON GARAGE FLOOR

The groceries spill out across the floor. A rattler instantly strikes, hitting her left ankle.

197 CLOSEUP - ANITA

She cries out in pain and terror. Quickly she leaps back in the car, turns the key in the ignition and slams the station wagon into reverse.

198 CLOSEUP - ACCELERATOR

Her foot slams down on the pedal.

199 EXT. ANITA YOUNG'S HOUSE

The station wagon shoots straight back, blasting right through the wooden garage door. It accelerates backwards down the sloping driveway, completely out of control. Her horrifying SCREAMS are HEARD OVER as the car careens wildly across the street and slams into the fumigation truck.

200 CLOSE ON ANITA

She is draped up over the steering wheel, unconscious.

201 INT. FIRE STATION - DAY

Vic strides briskly into the fire station and walks past the shining engines toward the offices in the back. James Bradley is standing in front of the coffee machine.

VIC

Any more calls this morning?

JAMES

Yeah, several... no casualties, though.

Vic walks down a short hallway to a door marked "Chief." He knocks lightly and enters.

202 INT. CHIEF LANDIS' OFFICE - DAY

The Chief is behind his desk, as usual, but across from him sits Mandy. They are both sipping coffee.

LANDIS

What the hell did you say to the Mayor?

VIC

Why?..

(CONTINUED)

202 CONTINUED:

LANDIS

He just called up and told me to fire you.

(beat)

I refused... so he fired me, too!

VIC

What! He can't do that, can he?

LANDIS

(smiles)

No. It takes the whole city council.

VIC

Chief, I'm sorry.

LANDIS

Forget it. You didn't start these damn snakes coming in. Mandy's brought me up to date on your detective work.

VIC

Well, I sure struck out with the Mayor. He just didn't want to know.

(to Mandy)

What did Kruger say?

MANDY

It was like talking to a brick wall. He wouldn't stop the blasting for the Third World War.

LANDIS

Obviously... Max has everything he owns invested in that project. He can't afford to believe you.

The PHONE RINGS sharply and the Chief picks it up.

LANDIS

Hello?... Yes.

Landis looks at Vic questioningly.

LANDIS

For you... A Doctor Whitman... says it's important.

(CONTINUED)

202 CONTINUED: (2)

VIC

Good. Put him on the speaker phone, Chief. We can all hear him.

Landis makes the necessary adjustment with the phone and he motions for Vic to talk.

VIC

Hello, Doctor Whitman? Mandy and Chief Landis are here with me. Go ahead.

DR. WHITMAN (V.O.)

(excitedly)

Well, I am positive now that the hybrid is a cross between the Western Rattler and the Eastern Diamondback. This sub-species must have been fathered by the Eastern you told me about.

They all react to this news accordingly.

VIC

Well, if so, how many snakes of this new sub-species would you guess there might be by now?

203 EXT. STREET - DAY

An ambulance streaks down the main street of San Vincente, lights flashing. We HEAR Dr. Whitman's VOICE OVER:

DR. WHITMAN (V.O.)

Of course, this is merely speculation, you understand, but by my calculation...

204 INT. AMBULANCE

An ambulance attendant works feverishly over Anita Young. Tubes and needles protrude from her skin. Her face is pale but she is still alive.

DR. WHITMAN (V.O.)

Assuming they started multiplying in 1965, there could be somewhere between twelve to fifteen thousand by now.

205 INT. CHIEF LANDIS' OFFICE - DAY

Vic, Mandy and Chief Landis are stunned. There is total silence in the office for a couple of moments. Suddenly, the FIRE ALARM GOES OFF in the building. The Chief jumps up and races out of the office. Vic reaches for the receiver to combat the noise of the alarm.

VIC

Sorry about the noise, Doctor...
Is there anything else?

DR. WHITMAN (V.O.)

No, that's all. I'm just glad
it's not my problem.

As they say their goodbyes and hang up, the Chief bursts back through the door.

LANDIS

The police just called. A young housewife, who lives in Stone Creek Canyon, was bitten as she stepped out of her car in her own garage. She's in a coma and the garage is full of rattlesnakes.

VIC

Jesus... Here they come.

MANDY

Now they are even inside the buildings.

Chief Landis grabs his hat and heads for the door.

LANDIS

It's time for some action. We'll go over the Mayor's head, direct to the council.

VIC

God, that will really stir up a hornet's nest.

Landis stops at the doorway and looks back at them.

LANDIS

What have we got to lose?

VIC

Your job!

206 EXT. SNORKEL LENS - DAY

We are SLIDING ALONG the ground APPROACHING a chain link fence which separates the hill from a new home in Stone Creek Canyon. The CAMERA TRAVELS RIGHT THROUGH the fence, PAST a new half-dug pool being built in the back yard, and WEAVES its way ONTO the covered back patio. The SUBJECTIVE CAMERA COMES TO REST UNDERNEATH a large portable barbecue set.

207 INT. EDNA'S PET SHOP - DAY

Edna sits on a stool behind the counter whittling on a stick of wood. Her shop is deserted. Mandy, Vic and Chief Landis stand on the other side of the counter.

EDNA

I'd have to know a lot more before
I'd vote to destroy the dens.

MANDY

Find the dens, Edna. That's the
first step.

EDNA

You understand, Mandy, that snakes
help to maintain a balance in
nature.

Edna gouges a huge chunk of wood that plops into a sack
at her feet.

EDNA

They eat mice. Did you know that
a meadow mouse can produce
seventeen litters of from five to
thirteen babies every season?

LANDIS

Edna, all we want is for the entire
city council to be fully briefed
on the situation prior to the meeting
tonight.

VIC

We are faced with a deadly new
sub-species of snake that is
threatening the whole town.

EDNA

A new species! Huh?
(smiles)
How fascinating!

(CONTINUED)

207 CONTINUED:

Edna thinks for a moment, then sets aside the buck knife and stick.

EDNA

Okay, I'll talk to the members of the council for you, but how are you going to warn everyone in town about this?

There is silence for a moment.

MANDY

Hey, I've got a way!
(turns to Vic)
Want to be a star?

He has a puzzled look on his face.

208 EXT. SAN VINCENTE - DUSK

SLOW PANNING SHOT of San Vincente. The Stone Creek Canyon subdivision and the hills are bathed in a cooling dusk light. CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL the shot is being shown on a large TV set.

TV ANNOUNCER

KOWW six o'clock Newswatch, all the news for the northland, with Arthur Blum reporting.

209 INT. WATERFORD'S FAMILY ROOM - DUSK

Will Waterford sits on the couch watching the TV. MRS. WATERFORD sits on a chair opposite reading the newspaper.

BLUM

(on TV)

The top story in the news tonight is from San Vincente, California.

Both Waterford and his wife stare at the TV set.

BLUM

(on TV)

Rattlesnakes have suddenly appeared during the past week in the town of San Vincente, north of San Francisco, causing the death of a boy and the hospitalization of a woman.

Waterford's face turns pale.

BLUM

(on TV)

Fire Captain Vic Rondelli captured a live sample yesterday and delivered it to the Steinhart Aquarium in San Francisco.

210 ANGLE ON MRS. WATERFORD

As she watches the newscast, the CAMERA MOVES PAST her TO the sliding glass door behind her. Sliding out of the grass onto the patio are two large rattlesnakes. Unseen by either TV watcher, they disappear under a rattan couch.

211 EXT. PATIO - SECOND SUBURBAN HOME - DUSK

SHOOTING FROM the edge of the patio BACK TOWARD the house, we SEE a family THROUGH the sliding screen door watching the newscast. On the screen Vic is talking to Blum in a filmed interview.

VIC

(on TV)

The important thing is that people realize how exceptionally dangerous these snakes are. Everyone should be aware...

The MOTHER gets up and walks toward the kitchen.

MOTHER

I hate snakes.

As she walks toward the kitchen, two rattlers ENTER the FRAME from UNDER the CAMERA and take refuge under several pieces of outdoor furniture in the f.g.

212 INT. KITCHEN - THIRD SUBURBAN HOUSE - DUSK

A YOUNG WOMAN in her twenties is scraping dishes in the sink, which faces the back yard. She is watching the newscast on a small portable TV set on the counter to her right.

BLUM

(on TV)

A call to Doctor Matthew Whitman at the Steinhart Aquarium confirmed that a whole new sub-species, much deadlier than the Western Rattler, is probably breeding in the San Vincente area.

Noticing some movement out of the corner of her eye, she looks out of the window directly in front of her.

213 HER POV

On the waist-high counter just outside the pass-through window, a huge rattlesnake slides along, not more than two feet away from her.

214 CLOSEUP - YOUNG WOMAN

She stares in horror for a moment, and then lets out a piercing, bloodcurdling scream.

215 INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

It is packed and crowd noise fills the room. Members of the City Council sit behind a long curved desk on a stage in front. Each has a microphone, a glass of water and a pile of papers in front of him. Mandy, Vic and Landis sit up near the front. Waterford pounds his gavel.

WATERFORD

Quiet down, please. Let's just take it easy here.

216 CLOSEUP - DR. WHITMAN

is standing near the back of the room behind a microphone. He waits until the roar has settled down.

DR. WHITMAN

There are two large groups of poisonous snakes in the world. One group contains the cobra, the other the rattlesnake. When cobras bite, their venom attacks the nervous system. Rattlesnake venom attacks the blood system.

WATERFORD (O.S.)

What is your point, Doctor Whitman?

DR. WHITMAN

The problem here is that you have a hybrid rattlesnake, whose venom has elements of both poisons, the rattler and the cobra. That makes them one of the most dangerous snakes in the world.

216A FULL SHOT - TOWN HALL

The crowd buzzes excitedly in reaction to his statement. Finally, Waterford gavels the room to silence.

WATERFORD

What do you suggest we do, Doctor?

DR. WHITMAN

First, you've got to locate the dens and then eradicate them.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

216A CONTINUED:

DR. WHITMAN (CONT'D)

I suggest you paint whatever loose snakes you can capture with a radioactive material. These snakes could then be released and when they return to the dens, they can be followed by Geiger counter.

MARK PURLEY, a councilman, leans forward to his microphone.

PURLEY

Radioactive snakes crawling around loose?

The room comes alive again. Waterford gavels for silence. Edna leans to her microphone.

EDNA

I'm not afraid of snakes, but I am afraid of upsetting the balance of nature.

A GROAN goes up from the audience. "Ecology" Edna is at it again.

217 CLOSE TWO SHOT - VIC AND MANDY

They listen intently.

218 FULL SHOT - COUNCIL

EDNA

My suggestion to the council is to import some of the rattlesnake's natural enemies. King snakes and racers both eat rattlesnakes. They are immune to the venom and are harmless to man.

WATERFORD

Your solution to the snake problem is to bring in more snakes?

The crowd reacts restlessly.

Edna is annoyed.

EDNA

They are absolutely harmless. I'll prove it to you.

219 ANGLE FROM BEHIND EDNA TOWARD AUDIENCE

From behind the desk, she pulls up a large green cotton bag. It seems to be moving. A GASP goes up from the audience.

Edna places the bag on the desk in front of her, pulls open the drawstring and casually lifts out a five-foot-long blackish-brown snake with yellow rings. The snake twists crazily in her hands.

EDNA

Now this snake is absolutely...

220 FULL SHOT - AUDIENCE

A woman screams, then another, and another. Suddenly everyone is yelling. People jump up and start to push and shove to get out of the room.

TOTAL PANDEMONIUM.

221 FULL SHOT - TOWN HALL

As the room goes crazy, Landis jumps up and rushes to the stage. He seizes the snake from Edna and quickly stuffs it back in the bag.

LANDIS

(angrily)

Edna, for Christ's sake!

222 CLOSEUP - EDNA

She has a puzzled look on her face that says, "What did I do?"

DISSOLVE TO:

223 INT. TOWN HALL

Thirty minutes have passed and the meeting is back to order. Edna sits looking very solemn, pouting.

WATERFORD

In view of the City Attorney's opinion that the city would have to assume full liability in the matter of releasing radioactive snakes, I feel we must dismiss Doctor Whitman's plan...

(CONTINUED)

223 CONTINUED:

Vic rises to his feet and hurries back to the microphone.

VIC

I don't believe this. We've got a little boy dead. A woman in a coma. And killer snakes crawling all over our town and we're debating about liability?

WATERFORD

(angrily)

Captain Rondelli, you are out of order!

VIC

(heatedly)

Out of order, my ass! The people in this town need help -- NOW!

The room is in an uproar. Dan Ryant shuffles up to the microphone next to Vic.

RYANT

Mr. Mayor, may I have the floor?

WATERFORD

The chair recognizes Dan Ryant, President of the Merchants' Association.

Vic steps aside to let Ryant speak.

RYANT

Mr. Rondelli, everyone is terribly concerned about this critical situation. Therefore, the Merchants' Association has agreed to offer ten dollars for each set of rattles cut off from a dead snake.

The crowd buzzes over this announcement. After a few seconds, Waterford leans forward.

WATERFORD

Dan, that is a very dangerous proposal. It could turn this town into a real circus. We can't afford to have a horde of scavengers running all over San Vincente.

(CONTINUED)

223 CONTINUED: (2)

VIC
(leans into mike)
But a horde of snakes is okay,
huh?

The room goes crazy again. Suddenly Max Kruger walks into the room and up to the microphone. The room slowly becomes quiet.

KRUGER
If you'll excuse me, Dan, Mayor Waterford, may I be recognized?

WATERFORD
The chair recognizes Max Kruger.

KRUGER
I believe in two things, accepting responsibility and handling a problem myself. I'm here to do both.

This causes a mild reaction from the crowd. Vic looks inquisitively at Mandy. She shrugs her shoulders as if to say "I don't know."

224 CLOSEUP - KRUGER

KRUGER
First, the responsibility. I did a little research this afternoon by checking some old Spanish maps and documents. The word 'culebra,' in Spanish, means 'snake.' On one of the maps I found an area called 'Casa de Culebras,' house of snakes. Casa de Culebras is the old Spanish name for the South Hula Slope.

Everyone in the room starts TALKING at once. After a pause for the room to settle, he continues.

KRUGER
My blasting and bulldozing have apparently uncovered the house of snakes, and for that, I take full responsibility.

225 FULL SHOT - TOWN HALL

The room is now deathly quiet.

(CONTINUED)

225 CONTINUED:

KRUGER

Second, handling the problem. I made a long-distance call this afternoon to a Mr. John 'Buck' Hamilton in Rio Bravo, Texas. At my expense, he is flying to San Francisco tonight and will be in San Vincente by nine a.m. tomorrow. Mr. Hamilton is a professional snake hunter and he assures me, based on the facts I have given him, that he will rid San Vincente of all the snakes within three days.

The room goes wild again, but this time with applause and cheers.

226 CLOSEUP - VIC

He looks across the room at Mandy.

227 CLOSEUP - MANDY

She looks at Vic with the same reaction. They both want to believe him.

228 EXT. SOUTH SLOPE FENCE - DAY

Several cars along with various police and fire department vehicles are parked by the chain-link fence. Ten policemen and firemen, carrying rifles, pistols and axes, mill about. Vic stands by the gate and sees Mandy's station wagon drive up the dirt road and park by the other vehicles. Vic walks over to her.

VIC

You're early. He's not here yet.

MANDY

I'll wait. I've always loved celebrities.

(pause)

Anything new?

VIC

We've had fifty calls this morning. After last night's broadcast, people are seeing snakes in their sleep.

(CONTINUED)

228 CONTINUED:

MANDY

Congratulations, Mr. Rondelli.
You're a full-fledged TV hero.

Max's Bronco rolls up the dirt road. Max gets out along with a huge man wearing cowboy boots, thick leather pants and a Stetson. BUCK HAMILTON is 100% Texan -- a weathered, mountain of a man with a grey moustache. He wears a .45 in a tooled holster strapped to his hips.

MANDY

That's got to be him. He
certainly dresses the part.

VIC

I'll call you later. Maybe we
can have dinner.

MANDY

(smiles)

I'd like that.

Vic walks over to Buck and extends his hand.

VIC

Vic Rondelli, Fire Captain.

Buck grabs his hand solemnly.

BUCK

Howdy, Cap'n. Mr. Kruger tole
me all about it onna way up
heah. C'mon, let's get to it.

229 EXT. SNORKEL LENS - DAY

CAMERA is SLIDING SLOWLY through the grass beside a Little League baseball diamond. We MOVE along the fence along the third base line toward the old, deserted ramshackle Bleachers. The field is deserted as we MOVE UP TO the opening in the low wood railing on the side of the stands. The CAMERA SETTLES under the stands in the tall weeds.

230 EXT. SOUTH HOLA SLOPE - GRADING AREA - DAY

Led by Vic, Kruger and Buck, the firemen and policemen march up the slope past the idle construction equipment. They look like a small army on the move, armed with guns, loops, rakes, and clubs.

(CONTINUED)

230 CONTINUED:

BUCK

Most'a the big dens I ever seen
faced south.

VIC

What do they look like?

BUCK

They usually run from six'ta
thirty feet deep. They'll be
full'a crevices and big holes
with lots'a loose rock lying
around. Best thing to use on
'em is calcium cyanide. If
ya can't use that, burn the
suckers.

231 INT. WATERFORD'S HOUSE - DAY

Kirk bounds down the stairs to find his mother and father
waiting at the front door. He is in his Little League
uniform. The Mayor has a matching shirt and cap to the
one worn by Kirk.

WATERFORD

C'mon, Kirk. We're going to be
late for the game...

KIRK

Just a minute. I've got to get
my glove.

Kirk runs through the family room and opens the sliding
glass door to the back patio.

232 EXT. BACK PATIO - DAY

Kirk bounds onto the patio and heads toward the rattan
couch, where his glove is SEEN lying on the seat.

233 EXTREME LOW ANGLE UNDER COUCH - TOWARD KIRK

The CAMERA is right ON the cement deck. We SEE Kirk
approach hurriedly and reach for his glove ABOVE CAMERA.
NO COLOR CHANGE. Having grabbed the glove, he races
back inside.

What was there to worry about?

234 EXT. WOODS - DAY

The procession continues along through a wooded area.

Vic, Kruger and Buck walk ahead of the hunters.

BUCK

Yessir, I don' mind telling ya.
I come from real 'snake country'
-- Rio Bravo, Texas. I got into
this here business on accounta
them snake hunts we useta have.

(yells to a
fireman across
from him)

Keep ya head down, boy! Eyes
onna ground!

(to Vic and
Kruger)

An old boy could make lotsa
money on them hunts. We useta
git anywhere from five hundred
of them critters on up. All-
time record was in fifty-four
when we got 1,576.

VIC

Ever get bit?

BUCK

(chuckles)

Hell yes. I got the 'Order of
the White Fang' four times.

235 EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - DAY

The game is in progress. Two hundred fans fill the
U-shaped stands. Coffee, lemonade and hot dogs are
being sold by little kids. It is a hot, clear day.
Families are out enjoying the game and the sunshine.

Will Waterford, the coach of Kirk's team, is standing
in the third base coach's box, rooting the boys on.
Mrs. Waterford is in the third base bleachers behind
Kirk's bench. Kirk's team is up to bat and the batter
swings and misses. Strike three. It is the last out
and Kirk's team starts to take the field.

236 ANGLE ON KIRK

He is the pitcher and he trots onto the field. As he
approaches the mound, he practically jumps out of his
uniform.

KIRK

Aaagh!

237 KIRK'S POV - PITCHER'S MOUND

There is a snake coiled alongside the rubber.

238 CLOSEUP - KIRK

As he stares at the snake with fear and apprehension, GUFFAWS and LAUGHTER are HEARD coming from the opposing bench. He looks over.

239 EXT. OPPOSING TEAM BENCH

The whole team is breaking up.

240 FULL SHOT - DIAMOND

Kirk bends over and picks up the now-obvious rubber snake, walks over to the opposing bench and hurls it at the opposing pitcher, who is doubled up with laughter. The rubber snake bounces harmlessly off the screen and Kirk stomps back to the mound, infuriated at the embarrassment.

241 EXT. OLD BARBED WIRE FENCE - DAY

Vic, Kruger and Buck, their small army spread out behind them, arrive at a rusted gate with a faded sign on it:
"DANGER -- KEEP OUT."

BUCK

What's this?

KRUGER

An old gold mine.

BUCK

Could be what we're looking for.

They pull on the gate and it falls apart in their hands. They walk through and head up the hill. The vegetation has thinned completely here and it is very bare. Nothing but dirt, rocks and an occasional tree.

242 EXT. KNOLL NEAR GOLD MINE - DAY

They walk up a small knoll near the old abandoned gold mine. Buck holds up his hand and everyone stops.

There is a faint HISSING SOUND coming from just on top of the knoll.

(CONTINUED)

242 CONTINUED:

BUCK
 "I think we got 'em.
 (turns)
 Mr. Kruger, Cap'n, c'mon... resta
 y'all stay put."

The three of them climb toward the top. They stop between two trees and peer over the knoll.

243 ANGLE ON PIT

In front of them is a large pit, at least thirty feet deep, twenty yards wide, and forty yards long. It is full of junk, rusted mine equipment, an old wagon, tin plates and an old broken bathtub. And THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF WRIGGLING, CRAWLING, TWISTING, WRITHING, BUZZING RATTLESNAKES among the debris. Many are wrapped together in massive balls and others are crawling up the side of the pit.

It is an incredible scene, like an image out of "DANTE'S INFERNO."

244 ANGLE ON TRIO

Kruger, Buck and Vic stare in horror at the pit. There is an expression of disbelief on Kruger's face.

KRUGER
 Jesus!

VIC
 Holy Mother of Christ!

BUCK
 Doorway to hell...
 (looks at Vic
 and Kruger)
 All my life I never seen nothin'
 like this! Mr. Kruger, you said
 a few snakes. There're fifteen
 thousand down 'ere, at least!

VIC
 Can you handle them?

Buck leans against the tree trunk.

BUCK
 "Sonny, what you need is the U.S.
Army.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

244 CONTINUED:

BUCK (CONT'D)

(beat)

With what I got, it'd be like
trying't sink a battleship with
a six-shooter. This 'ere's
the biggest I ever...

Suddenly a rattlesnake drops down hissing from a tree
limb and strikes Buck on his arm just above the wrist.
Buck yells, pulls out his .45 and quickly BLASTS the
snake in two. Then he grabs the snake's head and yanks
it out of his arm. Kruger and Vic grab Buck and Vic
shouts back down the knoll.

VIC

Bring the anti-venom!

BUCK

Can't...

As Kruger holds Buck in his arms, Vic rips the sleeve off
the wound. Two angry red marks are on the inside of his
arm four inches from the wrist. An area the size of a
dime surrounding the bite turns white and starts to swell.

VIC

Can't what?

BUCK

Can't take it... allergic.

KRUGER

You're allergic to anti-venom?

BUCK

Got bit too many times... I took
it too many times. After awhile,
it started't kill me.

VIC

What are you doing snake hunting?

BUCK

Ain't been bit in fifteen years.
Always thought my luck would
hold out.

Vic pulls out a knife and makes an "x" at each fang mark.

Buck's face twists in pain. Vic quickly starts to suck
out the poison.

(CONTINUED)

244 CONTINUED: (2)

A group of men gather around them. Vic spits out the venom.

VIC

Everybody, back down the slope!
It's off limits to everyone!

As Vic takes charge, the CAMERA makes a SLOW MOVE INTO a big head CLOSEUP of Kruger.

His look tells it all -- what does he do now?

245 ANGLE - CATCHER'S MITT

SMACK! A baseball lands in the pocket of the glove.

246 EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD

Kirk has just thrown a strike. The CAMERA PANS over TO Mayor Waterford, who is pleased.

247 FULL SHOT - LITTLE LEAGUE PARK

Kirk winds again and pitches. The batter swings and hits a high foul pop-up behind Kirk's dugout. The ball soars high into the blue sky, then falls toward the third base stands.

Two Little League fathers reach to catch the ball. It slips right through their hands and rolls between the seats, falling into the space underneath the stands.

Quickly ONE OF THE FATHERS bends over and reaches through the opening between the seats for the ball.

248 ANGLE UNDER STANDS

We SEE the Father's arm dangling down from the stands, his hand stretching for the ball.

CAMERA PANS DOWN TO the ball. All around it are RATTLE-SNAKES, lying in the cool dampness. They are rattling slightly, the sound drowned out by the NOISE from the CROWD above.

The Father's hand is just short of the ball, his fingers flexing and reaching. One of the rattlesnakes coils, hissing at the wriggling fingers.

249 CLOSEUP - FATHER

Suddenly the Father's face reacts to pain. He yanks his hand up out of the bleachers and stares at it.

There are two angry slashes across the top of his hand.

For a moment he is confused. He stares at the wound, then bends down to the bleachers. He presses his face into the opening to get a look.

250 ANGLE UNDER STANDS - UP TOWARD SEATS

The face of the Father appears in the opening. He reacts to what he sees.

FATHER

God Almighty...

Suddenly a snake flashes up from BEHIND CAMERA and strikes him in the throat.

FATHER

Aaagh!

251 ANGLE ON BLEACHERS

The Father lunges backward. He has been hit again. He grabs his throat and his face is paralyzed with fear.

FATHER

(screams)

Snakes! Snakes! Snakes!

Then he collapses in the stands.

There are shouts and screams from the bleachers.

252 ANGLE ON WATERFORD

Standing next to his team's bench, he looks up fearfully through the chain link fence into the stands.

253 ANGLE ON KIRK

From the pitcher's mound he stares up into the stands at the commotion.

254 ANGLE ON BLEACHERS

Suddenly it starts. People leap out of their seats and start to run in all directions, up and down the stands.

(CONTINUED)

254 CONTINUED:

IT IS A PANIC.

More and more people begin running, knocking each other over screaming. We SEE Mrs. Waterford desperately trying to escape the frenzied action around her.

Then suddenly the old bleachers give way in the middle. Forty people, men, women, and children, crash downwards through chunks of torn metal and wood.

Underneath the bleachers are A HUNDRED RATTLESNAKES! As the fans land, the snakes strike, again and again and again, crawling over the thrashing, screaming mass of human bodies.

255 CLOSE ON WATERFORD

He stares in horror.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

256 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Complete pandemonium everywhere. Victims in shock or unconscious. Friends and relatives in near hysteria. Gurneys being pushed in from the emergency entrance. Interns, nurses, residents shoving their way through clusters of terrified refugees from the ball park. The ominous SOUND of AMBULANCES pulling up and disgorging their stricken loads cuts like a dirge as it mingles with the SOUND of emergency aid being given victims.

Vic stands near the door giving orders to his men who are helping the hospital personnel bring in victims.

VIC

Take 'em into the cardiac unit,
the emergency room's filled.

DOCTOR

(to an intern)

Get on the phone to San Francisco
and get more anti-venom over here.
Tell 'em we need all the serum
they have, NOW!

(to VIC)

Captain Rondelli, isn't it? Have
you got a CB radio?

(CONTINUED)

256 CONTINUED:

VIC

Yeah!

DOCTOR

Can you put out an all points
emergency for doctors? Half
these people have broken arms
and legs, besides being bitten.

VIC

Got it!

As Vic heads for the exit and his fire truck, Mandy comes
out a door marked "INTENSIVE CARE."

VIC

(keeps moving)

Be right back... How's Buck?

MANDY

Critical... still unconscious.
They may have to amputate his
arm.

Vic exits and we HOLD on Mandy. She leans against the wall
as she takes in the chaos. Children, mothers, fathers
weeping. Some look like the survivors of Hiroshima may
have looked. Shell shocked... eyes vacant... staring and
not quite seeing... Not comprehending what has happened
to them and their neighbors.

Chief Landis approaches from the b.g.

LANDIS

Where's Vic?

MANDY

Outside. He'll be right back.

As the chaotic scene continues, Mandy and Landis see Mayor
Waterford slumped on a bench against the wall. Tears
stream down his face as Kirk stands silently beside him.
Vic bursts back into the corridor and starts down the
hall toward Landis and Mandy. Waterford looks up and
recognizes Vic.

257 TWO SHOT - VIC AND WATERFORD

Their eyes lock.

WATERFORD

Vic... I don't... Paula... She
fell... Oh God!

(CONTINUED)

257 CONTINUED:

At first, Vic's eyes are hard and unforgiving. But as he stares at the Mayor, he can't help sympathizing with the pain and guilt he reads in the Mayor's face.

VIC

I know.

WATERFORD

I'll resign... immediately.

VIC

Do that and you'll have blown it twice.

WATERFORD

What?

LANDIS (O.S.)

Vic's right, Will.

258 REVERSE ANGLE - CORRIDOR

Landis and Mandy have moved down to join Vic and the Mayor.

LANDIS

This town's a shambles. Somebody in authority has to take command... Call the governor... ask him to send in the National Guard. This town should be officially declared a disaster area.

VIC

Suck it up, Mr. Mayor. You can't bail out now!

The Mayor looks around at Kirk, then back to the group. He tries to speak, but nothing comes out.

VIC

Look... you screwed up! So, you're human. Now you can make up for it.

WATERFORD

(after a beat)

What should I do?

(CONTINUED)

258 CONTINUED:

LANDIS

Come on. Let's go call the governor. In the meantime, Vic, you take charge of evacuating Stone Creek Canyon. Get the people out of those houses, NOW!

259 EXT. STONE CREEK CANYON SUBDIVISION - DAY

A line of cars clogs Stone Creek Canyon Drive. Vehicle after vehicle pulls out into the unending stream of traffic.

Vic is SEEN, along with other fire department personnel, supervising the evacuation of the remaining families. Police stand at intersections directing traffic. It is a mass exodus away from the rolling hillside subdivision.

260 EXT. MAIN STREET - SAN VINCENTE - DAY

Most of the shops are closed. The street is loaded with cars, all headed for the same destination... OUT OF TOWN!

261 INT. KRUGER REAL ESTATE OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

The office is in a state of utter chaos. PHONES are RINGING relentlessly. Mandy is on the phone at her desk, with Linda talking on another phone in the b.g.

MANDY

... But Edna, you've got to get me out of this zoo...

(pause)

Okay, meet me here at the office at seven... 'Bye!

Mandy punches the next blinking button.

MANDY

Kruger Development... Yes, sir
... Yes, I understand... but
if you'll just contact Mr.
Kruger's lawyer, Len Jacobi...

(CONTINUED)

261 CONTINUED:

She reacts as the caller hangs up on her.

MANDY

(shouts
frustratingly)

Where the hell is he?

A distant SOUND of high-powered MOTORCYCLES GROWS until the RUMBLE actually starts to rattle the windows. Linda looks out the window beside her.

LINDA

My God, you won't believe
this!

Mandy rushes to the window and looks out.

262 EXT. KRUGER REAL ESTATE OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

It is a sight to behold. THE HELL'S ANGELS HAVE ARRIVED.

Led by Kruger's Bronco, fifteen Hell's Angels' motorcycles and a large van with a psychedelic paint job roar into the open space in front of the office. All the bikers wear knee-high black boots with steel-edged soles, thick black pants, and Levi shirts with cut-off sleeves.

Kruger gets out of his Bronco and strides purposely toward the front door.

263 INT. KRUGER OFFICES

Kruger bursts through the door, strides over to the key rack on the wall and grabs the keys to the South Hala Slope gate.

He then whirls and, without saying a word, heads back out the door. Mandy stands there dumbfounded. She looks at Linda, who shrugs. After a beat, Mandy charges out the door after him.

264 EXT. KRUGER REAL ESTATE OFFICE

Mandy races to catch up with him and the CAMERA DOLLIES WITH them.

(CONTINUED)

264 CONTINUED:

MANDY

What are you doing?

KRUGER

What I said I would... Handling the problem. I just went out and got my own army.

MANDY

You've got to be kidding! Them?
(beat)

Have you checked with the police or fire department?

Kruger stops and turns to her.

KRUGER

What for?

MANDY

At least tell them what you're doing?

KRUGER

Four lousy cops and three pinochle playing firemen, aren't going to solve my problem.

By this time, the Angels' LEADER has walked over to them.

LEADER

What are we waitin' for, pops?

KRUGER

Nothin'. Let's go.

Kruger turns and climbs into his Bronco.

As the Leader heads back to his cycle, Mandy has to make a fast decision. Quickly she jumps in Kruger's Bronco and the weird combination of vehicles pulls out of the parking lot.

265 EXT. SOUTH SLOPE FENCE - LATE AFTERNOON

Kruger's Bronco and his motorcycle army arrive at the gate.

Kruger gets out to unlock the gate, but the van that brings up the rear never stops and blasts right through the flimsy wire gate. The Angels whoop it up in an animated display of arrogance as they ease their cycles through the opening.

266 CLOSEUP - KRUGER

For the first time, his face reveals some concern over this outrageous, undisciplined behavior. Maybe this wasn't such a good idea after all.

267 INT. FIRE STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

There is a din of restless conversation as Vic strides through a group of firemen waiting in the main part of the building. He walks down the short hallway and steps into the Chief's office.

268 INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Landis sits behind his desk, drinking coffee.

LANDIS
(holds up cup)
It's hot and black.

Vic grabs a cup next to the pot and pours himself a cup.

VIC
We've cleared the entire subdivision.
Everyone is out.

Landis leans back and speaks philosophically:

LANDIS
Empty houses. Wonder if anyone
will ever come back?

Vic sits down and props his feet up on Landis' desk.

VIC
It's like a curse on the town.
Maybe it's because the land is
being raped...

Vic's VOICE TRAILS OFF.

(CONTINUED)

268 CONTINUED:

LANDIS

I know what you mean. Nature's
way of getting even.

(pause)

Anyway, we've got to be ready
for the National Guard tomorrow
morning. That pit must be
destroyed.

VIC

Us helping Kruger. That's irony
for you.

LANDIS

Who else is going to help him?

269 EXT. SOUTH HOLA SLOPE - SUNSET

Kruger's army ROARS BY CAMERA, silhouetted against the
orange ball of the setting sun.

The bikers are having the time of their lives, laughing
and screwing around as if they were on a Sunday after-
noon outing.

270 INT. KRUGER'S BRONCO - MOVING SHOT - SUNSET

A very worried Mandy sits next to Kruger, whose jaw is
set in a determined manner. Finally she can no longer
contain herself.

MANDY

Max, this is crazy. Who are these
maniacs and why are you involving
them in this?

Kruger looks at her for a second, then back to his driving.

KRUGER

Mandy, it's common knowledge that
they have the largest, privately-
owned arsenal in this country.
Where else could I get the kind
of weapons I need to deal with
this situation?

MANDY

But the police and fire department --

(CONTINUED)

270 CONTINUED:

KRUGER

(cuts her off)

Bullshit! Those freeloading bastards are useless. I'll handle this thing my own way!

271 EXT. AREA AT THE BOTTOM OF THE KNOLL - DUSK

The convoy arrives at the gate that fell apart when Buck came up the first time. Kruger, who is leading the way, stops and leans his head out to talk to the Angels' leader, who has pulled alongside him.

KRUGER

It's just at the top of this rise. Park here and come up on foot with your equipment.

LEADER

Okay, Pops! It's your ten grand!

The Leader turns and barks some orders to his men, who park their cycles and head for the back of the van.

Kruger rolls his window up and guns the Bronco up the hill toward the crest of the knoll.

The back of the van is thrown open and we SEE what looks like a mobile munitions depot. One of the Angels starts to pass out FLAME THROWERS, AUTOMATIC WEAPONS, ETC.

272 EXT. KNOLL NEAR GOLD MINE - DUSK

Kruger's Bronco reaches the top of the knoll and approaches the pit very slowly, stopping about six feet from the edge.

273 INT. BRONCO - KRUGER AND MANDY

Mandy stares down in horrified fascination. Kruger grins at the incredulous look on her face.

274 THEIR POV - PIT

Thousands upon thousands of rattlesnakes writhe among the old junk and discarded debris. Some snakes are trying to crawl up the sides of the pit.

KRUGER (V.O.)

A real bag of snakes, huh?

275 INT. BRONCO - KRUGER AND MANDY

He laughs almost maniacally.

She turns to him and is speechless. Then she compulsively reaches for the two-way radio mounted under the dash.

MANDY

Max. Please let me tell them
what you're doing up here. This
is crazy!

KRUGER

(coldly)

Put that phone down, Mandy... if
you value your job.

Mandy hesitates a moment, then puts the microphone back
in its cradle.

276 EXT. RIM OF PIT - DUSK

The Angels' combat team approaches Kruger's Bronco slowly
and cautiously, their weapons at the ready. With their
long black boots, padded leggings and raised weapons,
they give the definite appearance of a crack SWAT team.

Kruger gets out of the Bronco as the Angels' Leader,
whose eyes are as big as saucers, walks up to him.

LEADER

I don't fuckin' believe this.
Jesus, listen to that buzzing.

KRUGER

(slightly irritated)
C'mon, let's get on with it.

LEADER

(shouts orders)
Spread out around the rim!

Kruger and the men begin to fan out, edging their way
around the rim, kicking snakes into the pit with their
steel-soled boots. It is on Kruger's fifth step that
SUDDENLY THE RIM OF THE PIT MOVES! THE ENTIRE LEDGE
BREAKS LOOSE AND STARTS TO FALL INTO THE PIT.

277 SIDE ANGLE - EDGE OF PIT

Kruger and the men scream as an entire section of the rim
gives way and almost all the men fall shrieking into
the pit.

(CONTINUED)

277 CONTINUED:

Kruger's feet slide out from under him, but he grabs ahold of the remaining edge. The Leader slips downward, scrambling for a hold, failing, falling into the abyss of snakes.

With the buzzing and screaming ringing in his ears, Kruger twists around trying to get ahold of another man's legs, but the man topples forward and both of them fall screaming into the pit of snakes thirty feet below.

278 EXT. BRONCO

The new edge to the pit's rim is midway between the front and back wheels of the Bronco, thereby making it teeter on the edge.

279 INT. BRONCO

We are CLOSE ON Mandy, who is in a total state of panic and terror.

280 BOTTOM OF PIT

The men who survived the fall and are conscious are helplessly and pathetically flailing around, trying to scramble toward the sides of the pit. Their SCREAMS REVERBERATE inside the walls of the pit. The snakes strike again and again and again. One by one the Angels fall and are immediately covered by the slithering, constantly moving mass of reptiles.

281 CLOSE ON KRUGER

He lies on his back, dead. His eyes are open and he has snakes crawling all over him.

282 ANGLE ON BRONCO

The vehicle is perched on the edge, teetering precariously. The door on the passenger's side is further out over the pit than the other side.

CAMERA PUSHES INTO the rolled-up window on the passenger's side. We SEE Mandy sitting there, mesmerized. She slowly gains control of herself and looks around. Realizing that she has a better chance of getting out safely on the driver's side, she starts to slowly slide across the front seat toward the driver's door.

283 CLOSE ON LEFT REAR WHEEL

The tire lifts off the ground an inch or so each time she moves.

284 INT. BRONCO - DRIVER'S SIDE

As Mandy carefully reaches the door, she slowly opens it and looks out.

285 HER POV

The edge is approximately a foot back from the door opening.

286 EXT. BRONCO - DRIVER'S SIDE

She slowly starts to put her leg out toward the edge. Suddenly a rattlesnake head appears from under the car. She screams and lunges back inside the car, slamming the door in a reflex action.

287 WIDE ANGLE - PIT AND BRONCO

The sudden shift of weight takes its toll. Slowly, and ever so agonizingly, the vehicle starts to tip forward. In what seems like an eternity, gravity finally takes over and the car tumbles end over end into the cavernous pit below. Mandy's SCREAMS are HEARD OVER until it reaches its final resting place, right side up, wedged between an old wagon and a rusted-out piece of mining equipment.

Then all is quiet, except for the incessant BUZZING and HISSING of the seemingly endless horde of snakes.

288 INT. CAB OF BRONCO

We are CLOSE ON Mandy, who is unconscious. Although she has a cut on her forehead, it is obvious she is still alive.

CAMERA SLOWLY PANS FROM her face to the front windshield, which is now starting to be covered with twisting, slithering, swarming rattlesnakes.

DISSOLVE TO:

289 INT. KRUGER OFFICES - NIGHT

Linda is there alone, still battling the phones.

(CONTINUED)

289 CONTINUED:

LINDA

... No, I'm sorry, sir, I don't
know where Mr. Kruger is, but...

(pause)

Yes, I'll give him the message.
Goodbye.

She hangs up. Immediately the PHONE RINGS AGAIN. She
looks at it for a second, then smiles.

LINDA

(continuing)

No way, baby. I just punched out.

She gets up, walks over to the coat rack and reaches for
her sweater.

290 INT. BRONCO CAB - BOTTOM OF PIT - NIGHT

Mandy is still unconscious. Slowly she starts to stir
and the CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSE ON her as she returns to
this world. When her eyes finally open and she realizes
where she is, she sits up quickly in a state of fear
and anxiety. In the darkness, it is hard to see, but she
looks out the front windshield.

291 HER POV

A tangle of shapes, constantly on the move.

292 BACK TO MANDY

She reaches up and flips on the overhead light. Slowly
she examines the entire interior of the car to make sure
it is impenetrable. Satisfied that she is apparently
safe, at least for the moment, she reaches for the two-
way radio.

MANDY

Mandy to office, come in please.

(pause)

Mandy to office, come in please.

293 INT. KRUGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

CAMERA HOLDS the radio unit in the f.g. and we can SEE
out the window, where Linda is climbing into her car.
We hear Mandy's voice OVER the RADIO.

(CONTINUED)

293 CONTINUED:

MANDY (V.O.)

Mandy to office... please, Linda,
come in.

(pause)

Oh, my God! Please!

294 EXT. KRUGER'S OFFICES - NIGHT

We HOLD ON Mandy's car, which is parked on the other side of the building with its rear bumper up against the bank of the hill. Mandy's CRIES are clearly AUDIBLE OVER the RADIO in her car.

MANDY (V.O.)

Mayday! Mayday!

(pauses)

Please, someone help!

In the b.g. we SEE Linda's car emerge from behind the building and the CAMERA PANS WITH it as it drives by Mandy's car. As Mandy's CALLS CONTINUE, Linda's tail-lights grow smaller and smaller until they finally disappear completely.

295 INT. BRONCO CAB - NIGHT

Mandy is slowly reaching a state of hysteria.

MANDY

For God's sake, please! Someone
help me! Plea--

Her voice breaks as she can no longer control her frustration and fear. She starts to sob uncontrollably.

296 EXT. REAR OF FIRE STATION - NIGHT

Vic is supervising the loading of several trucks with supplies and equipment. One of the trucks is full of fifty-gallon drums. As James Bradley walks back from the trucks toward the station, he stops next to Vic.

JAMES

We've got enough gas in there to
drive my car for a whole year.

VIC

(smiles)

There's going to be a hot time in
the old town... tomorrow!

(CONTINUED)

296 CONTINUED:

James takes a few more steps, then turns back to Vic.

JAMES

Do you think we'll need any flares,
Vic?

VIC

Who knows. Let's bring everything
we've got. You never know what
might happen.

297 EXT. KRUGER'S OFFICES - MANDY'S CAR - NIGHT

We are SHOOTING THROUGH the driver's WINDOW at the radio.
Mandy's VOICE can still be HEARD, but it is more inter-
mittent and has taken on more of a monotone.

MANDY (V.O.)

Anyone who can hear me, please
come in!

(pause)

Hal? Linda? Anybody?

As she continues her call for help, the CAMERA SLOWLY
DOLLIES ALONG the side of the car and COMES TO REST AT
the rear tailgate door.

Out of the weeds on the hill behind the car, a rattlesnake
smoothly slides into the open rear window of the station
wagon. As the last of the snake disappears into the
darkness of the car interior, headlights can be SEEN
approaching in the b.g.

We PAN WITH the lights and, as the vehicle passes us, we
RECOGNIZE it as Edna's beat-up old Plymouth.

298 EXT. FRONT OF OFFICES - NIGHT

Edna pulls up in front of the offices, gets out and ap-
proaches the front door. She is puzzled by the fact that
the lights are out, although a VOICE can be HEARD ever so
FAINTLY from within. She knocks on the door.

EDNA

Mandy?

(pause)

Max?

She tries the door. It is locked.

EDNA

Well, I'll be damned!

(CONTINUED)

298 CONTINUED:

She slowly walks around to the side of the building facing Mandy's car and looks in the window.

299 HER POV THROUGH WINDOW

It is empty.

300 BACK TO EDNA

She shrugs and starts to walk back toward her car. As she turns the corner, the SOUND from Mandy's CAR-RADIO finally starts to penetrate her consciousness. She stops and turns toward the BARELY AUDIBLE SOUND.

301 EDNA'S POV

Mandy's car is all alone in the parking lot.

302 BACK TO EDNA

She slowly starts to walk toward the car.

303 INT. MANDY'S FRONT SEAT AREA

The CAMERA IS ON the floor SHOOTING UP TOWARD the open driver's window, the two-way radio prominent in the right f.g. As Mandy's calls continue every few seconds, we SEE Edna's face appear at the window. She cocks her head to the side, obviously puzzled. After a beat, she seems to recognize the voice, grabs the door handle, and opens the door. Slowly we SEE her hand reach in TOWARD CAMERA. Her fingers wrap around the microphone and she pulls it to her.

EDNA

Mandy, is that you?

304 INT. BRONCO CAB - MANDY

EDNA (V.O.)

Mandy?

Mandy practically jumps out of her skin. All her feelings spill out at once.

MANDY

Oh, Edna... We fell in... Oh,
God, they're all dead...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

304 CONTINUED:

MANDY (CONT'D)

I'm covered with snakes... You've
got to get Vic...

305 CLOSE ON EDNA

EDNA

Whoa, slow down. Hold your
horses, honey. Where are you?

306 INT. BRONCO - MANDY

She takes a deep breath in order to regain her composure.

MANDY

I'm in the snake pit... inside
Max's Bronco.... I'm safe, I
think...

307 CLOSE ON EDNA

She shudders. The thought of it is so horrifying that
she is speechless for a moment.

MANDY (V.O.)

Where are you? Can you call Vic?

EDNA ..

I'm at your car in the office
parking lot.

MANDY (V.O.)

The car keys are over the visor
... drive over to the station so
I can talk to Vic.

308 FULL SHOT - MANDY'S CAR - NIGHT

Edna jumps into the driver's seat, grabs the keys, and
starts the car. She talks to Mandy with the microphone
in her other hand.

EDNA

Hold on, honey! Here I go!

Edna jams it into gear and peels out, laying a little
rubber in the process.

309 INT. STATION WAGON - NIGHT

Edna drives along frantically. She will talk to Mandy
throughout this scene.

310 ANGLE ON BACK SEAT

In the backseat the rattlesnake is coiled up, its tongue flicking through bared fangs.

311 SNAKE'S POV

We are SHOOTING UP AT the back of Edna's head. The screen slowly desaturates and starts to turn the inevitable shade of red.

312 EXT. STREET CORNER

The station wagon SCREECHES around the corner, practically on two wheels.

313 ANGLE ON BACKSEAT

The snake slides off the backseat onto the floor.

314 INT. STATION WAGON - NIGHT

Edna races along talking to Mandy on the two-way.

315 INT. FLOORBOARD OF MANDY'S CAR

The CAMERA is ON the floor SHOOTING BACK UNDER the passenger's seat. The snake is now slowly sliding forward under the seat directly AT CAMERA. As it clears the edge of the seat, it starts to curl up in a striking position in the area in front of the passenger's seat. Slowly its RATTLES start to WHIR.

316 CLOSE ON EDNA

She looks down and sees it.

317 CLOSEUP - BRAKE

Her foot slams down on the pedal.

318 CLOSE ON FRONT SEAT

The snake flies forward and slams into the footrest area under the dashboard.

319 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The station wagon grinds to a smoking stop.

320 ANGLE ON FRONT SEAT

Edna, showing no fear, quickly reaches into her purse beside her and pulls out the huge buckknife.

EDNA

One thing I'm not afraid of is
snakes!

She leans over as someone would lean into an oven. In one quick fluid motion, she raises the buckknife and drives it down hard.

The buckknife slices right through the rattlesnake and into the floor mat. The snake twitches and RATTLES for a moment, then slowly, jerkily, comes to a dead stop.

EDNA

Sorry, no hitchhikers!

321 EXT. KNOLL NEAR GOLD MINE - NIGHT

Darkness. The screen is black. We hear Landis' voice:

LANDIS

Flares!

Suddenly the top of the knoll ignites. Firemen snap magnesium flares, mounted on poles at various spots around the pit, into orange white balls of fire. The knoll is lit up by the weird, flickering half-light.

Vic and Landis stand staring down into the pit.

VIC

Incredible!

322 POV ON PIT

The flares cast an eerie glow on the cavernous pit. In the pulsating light, we appear to SEE a few bodies lying in the debris. The outline of the Bronco is BARELY VISIBLE, its interior light just a dot in a sea of black. Snakes slither everywhere.

LANDIS (V.O.)

What did those poor bastards do
to deserve this?

323 ANGLE ON KNOLL - NIGHT

The firemen are trying to push the snakes on top back into the pit, but are careful not to step too near the crumbling precipice.

A WHIRRING SOUND can be HEARD in the DISTANCE, getting LOUDER and LOUDER.

LANDIS

When you get down there, if there's anyone still alive, we'll try to lower a rope hook.

VIC

It's Mandy I'm concerned about.

LANDIS

Apparently she's okay. See if there's a place we can attach a cable and maybe we can pull the Bronco out of there.

VIC

All right.

Suddenly a helicopter, with a zenon light mounted underneath it and KOWW emblazoned on the side, hovers up in the black sky above them. A rope ladder is slowly lowered down from the underside of the chopper. Vic grabs the end of the rope ladder, nods to Landis, and waves to the chopper with one hand.

The chopper lifts up. Vic swings out over the edge of the pit on the rope ladder.

Slowly the ladder is lowered down into the pit until Vic is just a few feet off the ground. The level of BUZZING RAISES CONSIDERABLY. The chopper inches slowly along, swinging Vic across the floor of the pit.

324 ANGLE ON VIC

He stares down at the debris, snakes and bodies that sweep by below him.

325 OVER VIC ONTO FLOOR OF PIT

Moving along above the pit floor, Vic sees only dead bodies lying amid thousands of rattlesnakes. Many of the men still wear the flame throwers.

326 FULL SHOT - PIT

The chopper continues to slowly make its way across the open cavern with Vic dangling precariously at the end of the ladder. He is approaching the rear of the Bronco.

327 CLOSE ON VIC

He looks down on the vehicle.

328 VIC'S POV

The back of the Bronco is just a few feet below him. A trailer hitch protrudes out from the back bumper.

329 SIDE ANGLE

The chopper raises up slightly and Vic glides over the top of the vehicle until he is dangling just over the hood. He turns on his ladder and looks into the front windshield.

330 VIC'S POV - WINDSHIELD

Although it is covered by twisting, writhing snakes, we can just MAKE OUT Mandy's frightened face, outlined by the small overhead light above the dash.

331 CLOSE ON VIC

He gives her a "thumbs up" sign, more a question than a statement.

332 CLOSE ON MANDY

CAMERA is inside the cabin. She apprehensively gives him the "thumbs up" sign back.

333 CLOSE ON VIC

He grins and signals to the chopper. It starts to lift up out of the pit.

334 FULL SHOT - ON TOP OF THE KNOLL - NIGHT

The chopper sets Vic back down near the edge of the pit. He hops off the ladder and hurries up to Landis as the chopper veers away over the crest of the knoll.

(CONTINUED)

334 CONTINUED:

VIC

All dead! No way we're ever getting them out of there. But Mandy's okay.

LANDIS

What about a place for the cable?

VIC

No problem.

335 EXT. AREA AT BOTTOM OF THE KNOLL - NIGHT

The Angels' van is where we last saw it. However, the open space is now a staging area for the rescue operation. The fire department trucks seen earlier, a couple of police cars, and Mandy's station wagon are parked near a flat area where the chopper is now setting down.

336 INT. MANDY'S CAR - NIGHT

Edna is talking to Mandy on the two-way. In contrast to the highly charged exchange first heard previously, this discussion is almost conversational in tone.

EDNA (V.O.)

Listen, Mandy, everything is going to be fine. They'll have you out of there in no time.

MANDY

God, I hope so. This is the spookiest experience of my life. Now I know what it's like to be in a submarine... except instead of underwater, it's under snakes.

337 CLOSE ON HELICOPTER BLADES

CAMERA PULLS BACK FROM the WHIRRING blades to REVEAL the chopper lifting off from the knoll with Vic hanging from the rope ladder as before. However, he now holds a steel cable about ten feet from the end, which has a shackle device attached. The cable leads to a winch mounted on the back of one of the big fire department trucks now parked part of the way down the knoll. The chopper maneuvers Vic into a position just over the rear of the Bronco and he starts to lower his end of the cable.

338 CLOSE ON TRAILER HITCH

We SEE the shackle device come INTO FRAME and just miss the hitch.

339 CLOSE ON VIC

He is the picture of concentration, the blades WHIRRING away just above him.

340 CLOSE ON LANDIS

He watches anxiously from the rim.

341 CLOSE ON TRAILER HITCH

The shackle device finally slips over the trailer hitch and immediately Vic pulls it tight, locking the shackle around the steel ball.

342 FULL SHOT OF VIC ON LADDER

He drops the cable to the floor of the pit and pinwheels his arms around in a signal to start the winch.

343 INSERT - WINCH

A hand hits the lever and we SEE the drum start to reel in the steel cable.

344 FULL SHOT - BOTTOM OF PIT

As the slack is taken up, the sea of snakes never stop their constant movement or MONOTONOUS BUZZING.

345 CLOSE ON LANDIS

He shouts to the winch operator:

LANDIS
Careful! Easy!

346 FULL SHOT - BRONCO

As the last of the slack is taken out of the cable, the vehicle is given a little tug.

347 CLOSE ON MANDY

She braces herself.

348 CLOSE ON VIC

He shouts instructions:

VIC
Slowly, damn it!

349 FULL SHOT - BRONCO

Slowly, ever so slowly, it starts to move backward through the machinery and equipment on both sides of it. Foot after foot, it is pulled through the sea of reptiles. So far, so good.

Then the car seems to meet some kind of resistance.

350 EXT. DRIVER'S DOOR - BRONCO

UNSEEN BY ANYONE BUT THE AUDIENCE, a piece of iron railing that protrudes out from the bed of snakes has wedged itself into the doorjamb. We can SEE that, inch by inch, the door is being ripped off like a can being opened by a can opener. The door continues to be twisted until, all of a sudden, the window cracks.

Mandy screams!

351 CLOSE ON VIC

VIC
(screams)
Stop! Stop it!

352 INSERT - WINCH

The hand hits the lever and the drum stops.

353 CLOSE ON LANDIS

LANDIS
(screams)
Slack off! Slack off!

354 FULL ON BRONCO

When the tension is taken off, the car lurches forward and part of the window pane falls out.

355 INT. BRONCO

Mandy screams. Her cocoon has been penetrated.

She frantically looks around for something to cover the hole. She sees a clipboard in the backseat, grabs it, and wedges it into the window frame just as a couple of snakes on the wagon next to the window move toward the opening.

356 CLOSE ON LANDIS

He shouts to James Bradley, who stands nearby:

LANDIS
Bring in the chopper.
(then under
his breath)
Back to the goddamn drawing boards.

357 EXT. STAGING AREA AT BOTTOM OF KNOLL - NIGHT

Landis, Vic, and Edna are standing next to Mandy's station wagon as Vic talks to Mandy on the two-way.

VIC
You're sure you're okay?

MANDY (V.O.)
(shakily)
I... I think so.

VIC
Listen, babe. Hang in there with us and we'll get you out of there. I promise.

358 CLOSE ON MANDY

MANDY
Oh, hurry, Vic! I'm scared.
I'm... I'm...

Her voice cracks and she starts to cry.

359 VIC, EDNA, AND LANDIS

Vic just looks at the microphone, then hands it to Edna. He doesn't know how to deal with that. Landis takes Vic by the arm and pulls him away from the car while Edna tries to soothe Mandy on the radio.

360 TWO SHOT - LANDIS AND VIC

They are standing just out of earshot from Edna.

LANDIS

Look, Vic. There's only one way we're gonna get her out of that hell hole alive.

VIC

How?

LANDIS

Someone's going to have to go down in there and get her.

Vic just looks at his boss for a moment, then turns and looks up the hill toward the pit. The CAMERA MOVES IN SLOWLY TO a big head CLOSEUP of Vic as he accepts this inevitability. His look tells us who that someone will be.

361 EXT. PIT - WIDE SHOT - NIGHT

Eerily lit by the magnesium flares, the pit looks extremely ominous. Fifty gallon drums of gasoline are lined up around the pit. We HEAR the chopper BLADES WHIRRING OFF CAMERA.

362 CLOSE ON LANDIS

Standing in front of the chopper, he is looking OFF CAMERA.

LANDIS

You ready?

363 LANDIS' POV - VIC

He stands there dressed in a rubberized asbestos suit, looking every bit like an astronaut. He holds his helmet under his arm and James Bradley is adjusting the harness on a grey metal canister, which is strapped on his back.

VIC

Yeah.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

363 CONTINUED:

VIC (CONT'D)

Somehow I think I would rather
have gone to the moon than take
this trip.

LANDIS (O.S.)

You and Mandy and the pilot got
your act together?

VIC

I hope so.

364 FULL SHOT - RIM

Vic puts on his helmet and walks toward the chopper.
As he passes Landis, the Chief stops him.

LANDIS

And Vic...

Vic looks at him.

LANDIS

(sincerely)

Good luck!

Vic gives him the "thumbs up" sign and heads for the
chopper. Landis turns to the men.

LANDIS

All right men... Stand by...

365 ANGLE ON CHOPPER

It lifts off, with the "astronaut" clinging to the
ladder. Slowly Vic is carried to a spot just behind the
tail door of the Bronco.

366 CLOSE ON VIC

He looks down under him.

367 VIC'S POV

A swirling, squirming, twisting, slithering mass of
rattlesnakes. An enormous bowl of spaghetti, except
those aren't noodles down there.

368 REAR OF BRONCO

Slowly Vic is lowered toward the floor of the pit. He is six feet above the bed of snakes, then five, four, three, two, one...

Finally his boots penetrate the mass of reptiles and he sinks in up to his knees. Since he generates no body heat, the snakes are not unusually agitated. Reluctantly he lets go of the ladder and the chopper lifts up out of range.

He just stands there for a moment looking at the rear roll-up window of the Bronco.

369 VIC'S POV OF WINDOW

Mandy's face can be SEEN pressing against the glass. Her look is a mixture of fear, trepidation and excitement.

370 BACK OF BRONCO

Vic reaches behind him and grabs the nozzle of the hose from the canister on his back. He points the nozzle at his feet and hits the button on the handle. Out comes an ice-fog foam that covers the snakes like a blanket. As the freezing effect of the CO₂ starts to take effect, the snakes' movement slows until they are motionless.

371 CLOSE ON LANDIS

He is holding his breath.

372 CLOSE ON MANDY

She watches intently.

373 BACK OF BRONCO

Vic has thoroughly covered the area round the back roll-up window with frozen foam and it seems to have worked reasonably well.

Now it's time for the moment of truth.

VIC

(yells)

Mandy, can you hear me?

Mandy yells back and we hear it faintly over the ever constant BUZZING.

(CONTINUED)

373 CONTINUED:

MANDY

Yes.

VIC

(yells)

Open the window.

374 CLOSE ON MANDY

She gulps, then reaches for the handle and starts to crank the window down.

375 BACK OF BRONCO

As the window rolls down, the level of BUZZING RAISES SLIGHTLY as the snakes react to the presence of her body heat.

VIC

Okay... NOW!

Mandy gets to her feet and leans her torso out of the window and Vic grabs her. The BUZZING INCREASES as she half-scrambles and Vic half-pushes her up onto the roof of the Bronco.

376 ROOF OF BRONCO

She is all alone on the roof, totally exposed and obviously vulnerable. As Vic tries to climb up on the roof with her in his bulky suit, she looks around apprehensively.

377 HER POV - TOWARD FRONT OF BRONCO

Coming over the front edge of the roof above the slanted windshield are five rattlers. She is horrified.

MANDY (V.O.)

(screams)

Vic!

378 TOP OF BRONCO

Vic is almost up on top when he slips and starts to fall. He catches himself and scrambles onto his knees on the roof just in time to blast the first couple snakes with the freezing foam. They are stopped just two feet from Mandy.

(CONTINUED)

378 CONTINUED:

He scrambles to his feet and points the nozzle at the other snakes that are advancing right behind the first two. He presses the button and a dribble comes out, then nothing. THE CANISTER IS EMPTY.

VIC

Shit!

He rips off the harness and steps between Mandy and the advancing reptiles. More snakes are now advancing on them, drawn by the human body heat they sense coming from Mandy.

VIC

Get up on my back!

She stands there motionless, paralyzed with fear.

VIC

(screams)

MOVE, God damn it!

She jumps up on his back and climbs onto his shoulders. Vic waves his arms at the chopper just as the snakes reach his legs.

379 ANGLE ON CHOPPER

It starts to descend.

380 CLOSE ON MANDY

She looks down.

381 HER POV

Snakes are wrapped around Vic's legs. He is swatting them down with his asbestos gloved hands and kicking at them desperately.

382 BACK TO MANDY

The ladder is getting closer and we SEE her reach for it.

383 CLOSE ON END OF LADDER

We SEE her outstretched hand just inches away from the bottom rung. Just as it looks like they will meet, the ladder sways agonizingly out of reach.

384 CLOSE ON LANDIS

He is sweating blood.

385 TOP OF BRONCO

Mandy finally grabs the ladder and, as the chopper lowers slightly, she is able to scramble up two or three rungs, leaving room for Vic to get a firm hold on the bottom rung. Mandy signals to the pilot, who lifts the chopper slowly straight up. Mandy desperately clings to the ladder while Vic, who is still trying to kick off the snakes wrapped around his legs, holds on for dear life.

386 FULL SHOT OF PIT

The chopper slowly lifts up and out of the pit to the rousing cheers of everyone present. As they pass over the rim, Vic kicks off the last snake, which lands right in the middle of a group of firemen. They scatter like chickens.

387 CLOSE ON LANDIS

He is all smiles.

388 EXT. STAGING AREA

The chopper slowly descends until Vic's feet hit the ground. Mandy lets go and falls into his arms. The chopper pulls up and away.

389 CLOSE TWO SHOT - VIC AND MANDY

Vic takes off his helmet as Mandy stands trembling in his arms. Finally, he pushes her away from him and they look at each other.

VIC

(smiles)

Not bad for a city girl!

She starts to say something, but can't. Instead her response is a kiss, strong and passionate.

390 ANOTHER ANGLE

Edna comes running up, but stops as she sees them in a clinch. She smiles.

391 EXT. TOP OF KNOLL

Chief Landis and his men are now in action. Firemen are just pushing the last of the open barrels of gasoline into the pit.

LANDIS

All right, men... fall back!

Everyone heads down the slope toward the staging area -- on the double.

392 STAGING AREA

As the men come running into the area, Vic, Mandy, and Edna move forward through the retreating firemen looking for Chief Landis. Finally they see him chugging down the hill toward them. When Landis reaches them, he roars:

LANDIS

Where the hell is Bradley?

393 ANOTHER ANGLE

BRADLEY

Right here, sir.

LANDIS

Now, James!

Bradley raises a flare gun and fires. A flash of light is SEEN arching over the crest of the hill. A moment's hesitation, then an incredible EXPLOSION. A sheet of flames shoots skyward.

394 FULL SHOT OF KNOLL

Orange balls of fire and dense black smoke fill the air. Then, when the flame thrower canisters full of Napalm solvent EXPLODE, the knoll lights up again in a blinding flash, turning the entire top of the mountain into a ROARING furnace.

395 EXT. STAGING AREA - DOLLY SHOT

The CAMERA SLOWLY MOVES ALONG the faces as they watch the holocaust -- Chief Landis, James Bradley, Edna, and finally ending on Vic and Mandy. We HOLD ON their two faces for a moment.

396 EXT. TOP OF KNOLL - PIT

Everything is on fire.

It is truly DANTE'S INFERNO!

ROLL CREDITS OVER.

FADE OUT.

THE END