

# STRANDED

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WGAw REGISTERED

FADE IN:

EXT. A DESOLATE ROAD - NIGHT

An SUV is parked on the shoulder of a dark, lonely road, its yellow flashers struggling to make a dent in the misty fog. Both tires on the driver's side have been blown out.

INT. THE SUV - NIGHT, SAME

A WOMAN sits in the driver's seat. Her SON, 10 or 11, sits next to her in the passenger seat, while her daughter, 8 or 9, is in the back. A second SON, 3 or 4, sits sleeping in a CAR SEAT in the backseat next to his sister.

\*

\*

GIRL  
(whining slightly)  
Why can't you call daddy?

The woman looks at the "NO SIGNAL" warning on her CELL PHONE screen.

WOMAN  
I can't get a signal, baby.

GIRL  
Try again. Try again.

Her brother cocks his gaze toward her.

BOY  
Shut up!

WOMAN  
Matt, please. That's not helping.

GIRL  
(whining)  
I wanna go home! Why can't we go home?

\*

\*

\*

\*

She looks back at her daughter.

WOMAN  
Help's coming. Be here any minute.  
I promise.

As if on cue, a pair of headlights burn through the windshield, growing brighter as another vehicle approaches. The woman turns from the backseat toward them, looking past a sign that reads, "NEXT GAS 55 MILES."

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN  
 (happily)  
 See, I told you.

*She turns back to the front. The just arrived vehicle, a TOW TRUCK it looks like, has parked directly in front of her SUV, maybe twenty feet away. Its headlights are strong to the point of being blinding, forcing the woman to raise a hand to shield her eyes.*

A NEW ANGLE - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

*The truck's drivers side door opens and a LARGE FIGURE emerges . . .*

ON THE FIGURE - FROM THE REAR

*. . . approaching the stranded SUV through the spill of the truck's headlights.*

INSIDE THE SUV

*Both kids are clapping.*

GIRL  
 Yay!

OUTSIDE

*The figure's heavy shoes crunch over the gravel and stones on the road's shoulder, closing on the SUV.*

*The driver's side window slides downward, revealing the relieved expression on the woman's face as she peers out at the approaching figure.*

WOMAN  
 Thank God.

*Her expression tightens, narrows.*

ANOTHER ANGLE

*From the other side of the road, the figure stands ominously against the car, its bulk almost obliterating the window.*

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DESOLATE ROAD - NIGHT, JUST AFTER

*Horrible screams pierce the silence of the night, echoing through the stillness.*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE SAME ROAD - ANOTHER NIGHT

A MERCEDES 500 sedan down the same road through a driving rain storm.

INT. THE CAR - NIGHT, SAME

Behind the wheel of the Mercedes, KATE ROSS struggles to drive and light a cigarette at the same time. Her hand trembles as she raises a fresh match and it goes out before she gets it there. Kate strikes another, her face illuminated in the match's glow.

She's very attractive, despite longish hair that's dried frizzy after being drenched by the rain. She looks 25 but could be a few years older.

As Kate lights her cigarette, the sweep of the windshield wipers can be seen as shadows dancing across her face.

A NEW ANGLE

As Kate blows out the match, we can see VERTICAL SCARS on her wrist, tell-tale sign of an attempted suicide.

KATE'S POV - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

The wipers continue to battle the storm, a strange blue light sharpening in the distance.

ON KATE

Her gaze sharpens, tenses.

KATE'S POV - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

The blue light is that of a sheriff deputy's SQUAD CAR, which has pulled over a minivan.

(CONTINUED)

ON KATE

She quick backs off the gas. The speedometer needle swings downward.

Kate sweeps a hand across the passenger seat, maneuvering an old leather jacket over FIVE LARGE WADS OF CASH--hundred dollar bills. Two of the wads are splattered with BLOOD.

Kate's riding the brake as she draws even with the squad car and then the minivan where a DEPUTY, dressed in a dark rain coat, is handing the DRIVER a ticket.

A NEW ANGLE

The deputy turns Kate's way as she drives past him. Their eyes meet. The deputy's gaze is strangely cold, something all wrong about it and him.

He turns his head to follow Kate. She's still breathing hard as . . .

A NEW ANGLE

. . . the deputy shrinks away in the rearview mirror.

Kate keeps checking the mirror, half-expecting to see revolving lights coming up on her fast. Doesn't relax when the lights fail to appear. Just drives, passing a road sign that reads, "**NEXT GAS 35 MILES.**"

EXT. THE ROAD - NIGHT, SAME

The car continues on, not another vehicle in sight in either direction.

INT. THE **MERCEDES** - NIGHT, LATER

\*

Kate starts to light a fresh cigarette then abandons the effort and reaches a hand toward her cheap faux leather HANDBAG. She dips her hand in the bag and emerges with a CELL PHONE.

Cheating her eyes off the road, she flips the phone open, ready to make a call when she notices the "NO SERVICE" message.

(CONTINUED)

KATE

Shit.

She continues to hold the phone before her, trying to use the glow off the dashboard to light the dark screen, hoping to see bars climbing on the left side. Her attention drifts more and more from the road to the phone. She shakes it, as if that might help, then tosses it back to the passenger seat in frustration.

Kate turns back to the road, passes a sign that reads **HAUNTED MINE** in spooky letters followed in smaller letters by **ADMISSION ONLY \$5** and then **NEXT RIGHT**. But "CLOSED" has been scrawled scratchily by hand over the sign--faded enough to indicate the haunted mine attraction has been shut down for years.

Suddenly a huge POP! sounds, like a gunshot.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ROAD - NIGHT, SAME

The car is out of control, weaving wildly back and forth before leaving the road altogether and careening down a steep hill.

CUT TO:

INT. THE **MERCEDES** - NIGHT, SAME

\*

Kate's screaming as she fights to work the wheel. The windshield shatters, and she throws up her arms out of reflex.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ROAD - NIGHT, SAME

The car continues to plummet downward, shredded by rocks, tree limbs and branches.

CUT TO:

INT. THE **MERCEDES** - NIGHT, SAME

\*

Kate has given up on the wheel, the branches and tree limbs looking like huge hands raking at her through the night, her screams intercut with . . .

(CONTINUED)

OUTSIDE

. . . the wrenching sounds of the car being mangled.  
Finally, the car jerks to a sudden halt . . .

INSIDE

. . . jolting Kate forward, restrained only by the seatbelt assembly.

A long moment passes, the hiss of the stalled engine the only sound besides Kate's labored breathing.

She settles herself, at ease with just being alive. She moves gingerly and pain tenses her features as she looks about.

The car has come to a halt pitched sharply downward, a virtual forty-five degree angle that leaves Kate pressed up against the bonds of her shoulder strap.

A NEW ANGLE

The wads of hundred dollar bills have slipped off the front seat onto the passenger side floor. Kate tries to extend a hand toward them, anguish spreading across her face. She doesn't even come close. Looks up toward the VISOR instead.

KATE'S POV

A red BUTTON marked with a black W is almost directly above her, definitely within reach. Looks exactly like an ON-STAR button, only different color and labeling.

Kate starts to reach for the button, then pulls her hand back and reaches for the DOOR LATCH instead. Yanks the latch toward her but nothing happens, the door jammed.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE **MERCEDES** - NIGHT, SAME

\*

The entire side of the Mercedes is caved in.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - NIGHT, SAME \*

Kate gives up trying to work the door open. Moves her hand to the seat belt release instead.

Nothing happens. It's wedged in place. She presses and presses to no avail.

KATE  
Fucking piece of German shit!

She tries tearing the buckle assembly free, but only causes herself more pain before abandoning the effort.

Tries the door latch again. Still nothing. Gazes up at the red button marked with the **W** once more, then looks toward the passenger seat.

Her CELL PHONE is lying right near the edge, precariously close to slipping to the passenger side floor with the cash.

A NEW ANGLE

Kate strains to reach it when . . .

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MERCEDES - NIGHT, SAME \*

. . . the car jerks forward on the downward slope . . .

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - NIGHT SAME \*

. . . pushing Kate further against the bonds of her seatbelt.

KATE  
(fearfully)  
What . . .

Another jolt pushes the car further down the hill, until Kate jams on the brake. She glances down at the console, sees the car is still in DRIVE and shifts it into PARK.

Kate's gaze locks on the red button. She stretches a hand upward, hesitates briefly, but then presses it.

Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

KATE  
Come on! Come on!

As she presses the button again and again.

KATE  
Please!

Finally, a reassuring MALE VOICE fills the car.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Wingman. How can I help you?

KATE  
I've had an accident!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
I'm right here, ma'am. Stay calm  
and speak slowly.

KATE  
I said I've had an accident!

Silence.

KATE  
Are you there? Where are you?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Just checking your position, ma'am.  
Are you injured?

Kate looks at herself again, tries moving.

KATE  
Not seriously, I don't think. But  
I'm stuck in the car. I can't get  
out.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
I understand, ma'am. We have you on  
Route 91 west.

KATE  
No! There was a detour! I'm below  
91 on the road that runs parallel to  
it!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
What's the name of that road, ma'am?

KATE  
I, I don't know. . . .

(CONTINUED)

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
That's all right, ma'am. When you  
turned onto the road, was there a  
sign, anything?

Kate concentrates, thinks back.

DISSOLVE TO:

*EXT. THE ROAD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)*

*Kate turns off an access road onto this one, sees a sign that  
reads **OLD MINE ROAD**.*

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE **MERCEDES** - NIGHT (THE PRESENT)

\*

Kate brightens slightly.

KATE  
Old Mime Road!

Silence.

KATE (CONT'D)  
Did you hear me? Are you still  
there?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Just checking my map, ma'am. Could  
that be Old *Mine* Road?

KATE  
I don't know. I guess, sure. Yes.  
(A BEAT) Hello? Are you there?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
I'm here, ma'am. Just trying to  
isolate your position. Please be  
advised that I am contacting the  
local authorities. Just give me a  
moment.

KATE  
Don't hang up!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
I won't, ma'am. If you hear  
silence, it's because I'm dialing  
out on another line.

(CONTINUED)

Kate takes some deep breaths to steady herself, looks about her tomb-like confines. The shattered glass makes the storm seem even more scary and ominous.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Ma'am?

Kate starts to jerk forward against the safety harness's restraint, stops when the pain makes her wince.

KATE

Right here.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Ma'am, local authorities report their nearest available response vehicle is currently over an hour from your position.

Kate's eyes widen.

KATE

*An hour?*

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

But they are en route. In the meantime--

KATE

No, that's not right! Look . . .

CUT TO:

*EXT. THE ROAD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)*

*The DEPUTY giving the driver a ticket turns toward Kate as she passes by him in the Mercedes.*

CUT TO:

*INT. THE MERCEDES - NIGHT, SAME*

Kate forces herself forward, not caring about the pain.

KATE (CONT'D)

. . . I passed a cop a few miles back. He couldn't be that far away now.

(CONTINUED)

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Ma'am, I'm only reporting what the  
local authorities told me.

KATE  
Call them back! Tell them there's  
an officer in the vicinity!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
One moment please, ma'am.

KATE  
But you'll call them. Tell me  
you'll call them!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Dialing out on the other line now.  
In the meantime, I'm having trouble  
getting a fix on your exact  
position. Can you see anything, any  
landmarks?

Kate squints through the shattered and rain-splattered glass.

KATE  
It's too dark. And this storm . . .

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
What about the headlights?

Kate reaches up toward the light knob on the lever extending  
out from the steering wheel. Flips it back and forth with no  
results.

KATE  
Nothing.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Okay, they must have broken from  
impact. Do you have a flashlight?

KATE  
I don't know!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
You don't . . .

KATE  
This isn't, isn't my car.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Can you reach the glove compartment?

(CONTINUED)

KATE

I'll try.

And she starts to strain against the bonds of the harness, stretching her hand across the console toward the GLOVE COMPARTMENT.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

That's good, ma'am. You're doing great. I've got the local authorities on the line again now. Just give me a moment.

Kate shifts her leg, trying to better her angle.

Her fingers still come up just short of the spring latch for the glove compartment.

Kate shifts her position further, grimacing now in all-out agony, biting her lip against the pain. Just manages to pop the glove compartment open.

A NEW ANGLE

The lid plops downward, revealing a PISTOL in the front and, further back, a FLASHLIGHT.

Kate strains against the harness, feet positioned to take up every bit of slack. Her fingers scrape past and over the gun, touching the flashlight and trying to roll it into her grasp with her fingertips.

She screams in agony as she extends her hand the last bit of the way and closes it around the flashlight, lifting it from the glove compartment and bringing it toward her.

KATE

I've got it, I've got the flashlight!

She turns her gaze back toward the Wingman button.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

(grimly)

Ma'am, I have the local authorities on the line now. They're telling me they have no officer in your vicinity.

(CONTINUED)

## CLOSE ON KATE

Terror now mixed with befuddlement on her features.

KATE  
No, I just saw him!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
On 91.

KATE  
No, Old Mine Road. He was giving  
someone a ticket. I saw his  
cruiser.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Ma'am, both the state and local  
authorities insist--

KATE  
Stop calling me that. Stop calling  
me ma'am. My name's Kate.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
I'm Ronald, Kate, and I'm going to  
get you through this. Authorities  
are responding. You just need to  
hold on. Describe your the nature  
of your injuries to me.

Again Kate tries moving all her limbs, cataloguing the  
results.

KATE  
My left shoulder feels . . .  
strange.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Are you bleeding anywhere?

KATE  
A few cuts. Nothing serious.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Good. Now what you to turn the  
flashlight on. Aim it outside the  
windows and tell me what you see.

Kate manages to get the flashlight on, sees only darkness and  
brush on both sides of the car.

(CONTINUED)

KATE  
Nothing to either side.

RONALD (O.S.)  
What about the front?

Kate shines the flashlight through the remnants of the windshield. She's actually aiming it downhill, following the slope on which the car is perched.

KATE  
Nothing. Darkness and rain. It's  
like . . .

Kate again looks down through the windshield.

KATE (CONT'D)  
It's like there's nothing there.

RONALD (O.S.)  
The sun will be coming up soon.

Kate looks out through the windshield, and then to the sides.

KATE  
I think the sky's brightening a  
little.

RONALD (O.S.)  
See, things are already looking up.

A flicker of light catches Kate's eye, reflected in the rearview mirror. Again, she strains to shift about in the confines of the safety harness, trying look out through the REAR WINDOW.

The slight motion is enough to jerk the car downward again, steepening the angle further.

KATE  
Oh God . . .

RONALD (O.S.)  
Kate, are you all right?

The car jolts downward again and . . .

A NEW ANGLE

. . . outside we can see its tires grab just enough dirt and gravel to hold it in place, sinking partially into the ground.

(CONTINUED)

INSIDE

Kate's more terrified than ever, as she jams on the brake again.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Kate, can you hear me?

KATE  
Why's the car still moving? I put  
it in park?

RONALD (O.S.)  
Sometimes a serious accident can  
strip the transmission.

KATE  
I've got my foot on the brake!

RONALD (O.S.)  
That's good, Kate. Keep it there.  
Now, can you reach the emergency  
brake?

Kate looks to the console and sees the HANDLE, then nods toward the Wingman button as if Ronald can see her.

KATE  
Yes.

RONALD (O.S.)  
I want you to engage it very slowly.

Stiffly, Kate grabs the handle in her right hand and brings it upward. It engages with a slight grinding sound. Kate breathes instantly easier.

KATE  
Got it.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Good work. That should help hold  
the car in place. You can take your  
foot off the brake now.

Kate does.

The LIGHT flickers in the rearview mirror again.

Kate turns her head tentatively toward the rear, careful not to twist her entire body.

(CONTINUED)

KATE

I think there's someone up on the road. Could be the cop I saw back on the road.

She looks toward the steering wheel, the HORN, reaches out and hits it.

Nothing happens. No sound.

KATE

Shit!

RONALD (O.S.)

Can you see who it is? Are they coming?

KATE

Not yet. I tried the horn but it didn't work.

RONALD (O.S.)

Shorted out probably. Happens a lot.

Kate turns her gaze upward again, looking and screaming through the rear window.

KATE

*Help! I'm down here! I'M DOWN  
HERE!*

A FLASHLIGHT BEAM, thin and barely noticeable, just skirts the car's rear.

KATE

He can't see me. . . .

RONALD (O.S.)

Try to get his attention!

KATE

What should I do?

RONALD (O.S.)

Yell louder.

KATE

*HEEEEEEEYYYYYYYYYYYYY! HELLLLLLLLP ME!*

She stops. The light vanishes.

(CONTINUED)

KATE  
 (downtrodden)  
 He couldn't hear me. . . .

Through the storm, Kate can hear the brief rev of an engine.

A NEW ANGLE - HER POV UP THE HILL

What look like headlights flash briefly, then disappear.

KATE  
 I think he's gone.

She gazes up at the Wingman button, the way you do when you want the phone to ring.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Is there someone I can call for you,  
 Kate?

KATE  
 No. No one.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Because I can patch you through  
 directly. A friend, husband, boy  
 friend . . .

KATE  
 I said there's no one.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 According to the VIN, vehicle  
 identification number, I show this  
 car as being registered to an  
 Anthony Rapoza. Is your last name  
 Rapoza?

KATE  
 (evasively)  
 No. He's . . . a friend. Let me  
 borrow the car.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 I have his number on record. If you  
 want I could--

KATE  
 No, I don't want to bother him.  
 (She thinks quickly.)  
 Until I'm safe. You understand.

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
Of course.

Kate starts to light another cigarette, abandons the effort when she can't find her matches. Begins to sniff the air.

KATE  
I think I smell gasoline.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Was the smell there before?

KATE  
I don't think so. No, I'm sure it wasn't.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Kate, I want you to check to make sure the engine is off.

KATE  
It's not running.

RONALD (O.S.)  
I mean the key is turned off. So there can't be a spark.

KATE  
(nervously)  
Won't I lose you?

RONALD (O.S.)  
No. Wingman is powered by a separate battery good for six hours on its own.

Kate reaches out toward the ignition switch and turns the key to the off position.

KATE  
Okay, I did it.

Kate sniffs the air again, wrinkles her nose and brow.

KATE  
The smell's really strong.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Just a leak in the tank. Nothing to worry about, Kate. (A BEAT) We're not supposed to call clients by their first names.

(CONTINUED)

KATE  
You have my permission. This is all  
being taped, right?

RONALD (O.S.)  
Yes.

KATE  
(louder)  
Then you hear that? Ronald has my  
permission to call me by my first  
name.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Kate, I have Mr. Raposa's medical  
history on file, but not yours. It  
would help if you could answer a few  
questions so I can forward the  
information on to the responding  
authorities.

KATE  
You can do that?

RONALD (O.S.)  
So long as they're on line with us.

KATE  
(tensely)  
What do you need to know?

RONALD (O.S.)  
Any allergies, preexisting medical  
conditions.

KATE  
None. Nothing.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Have you been hospitalized in the  
past year?

Kate hesitates.

KATE  
(uneasily)  
No. I haven't been hospitalized in  
the past year.

She looks out the window, the sky brightening by the second.  
And the storm seems to be letting up.

(CONTINUED)

KATE  
Light's starting to come up.  
Ronald?

RONALD (O.S.)  
Er, Kate, the local authorities are  
responding to another accident.

KATE  
What? What's that mean?

RONALD (O.S.)  
There's gonna be a little bit more  
of a delay in getting to you. The  
other scene involves fatalities.

Kate's more pissed off now than anything.

KATE  
So they're fucking dead! I'm  
fucking *alive*! All the more reason  
to come here instead of--

The car jolts downward again.

KATE  
Stop! You hear me! *Stop!*

RONALD (O.S.)  
Stop what?

KATE  
Not you, the car. The fucking car!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MERCEDES - NIGHT, SAME

The tires grind forward, stopping when the rear ones sink deeper into a hole, buried a third of the way. In the brightening light we can see that the front driver's side tire is BLOWN OUT.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - NIGHT (DAWN), SAME

Kate's pressed back and frozen against the driver's seat.

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
Can you see anything? Is it bright  
enough for you to describe where you  
are?

Kate peers as best she can through the shattered windshield,  
searching for a still whole portion of glass that won't  
obscure her view.

KATE  
No, not yet. Almost.

RONALD (O.S.)  
You'll have a quite a story to tell  
your kids when this over. Do you  
have kids, Kate?

KATE  
You don't have to do this.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Do what?

KATE  
Make small talk.

RONALD (O.S.)  
They tell us to stay on the line.  
Do anything we can to keep the  
client come. \$16.95 a month, we  
want you to get what you pay for.

KATE  
It's not my car.

RONALD (O.S.)  
But you're driving it.

KATE  
Not anymore.

She tightens her gaze forward.

KATE  
Wait a minute, I think I see  
something. . . .

She hunches lower in the seat, trying to position herself to  
gaze through a whole section of glass in the lower middle  
section of the windshield.

(CONTINUED)

A NEW ANGLE

We see Kate's face from outside THROUGH THE GLASS. Her eyes widen. Her expression fills with fear. She sits up, trembling hand against her mouth.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Kate, what is it? What do you see?  
 . . . Kate?

She remains speechless, virtually in shock.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Kate? Talk to me.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MERCEDES - DAWN, SAME

We see Kate inside, then PULL SLOWLY AWAY to reveal the battered car is perched on a RIDGE formed of rocks, gravel, and thick brush.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAWN, SAME

Kate, frozen breathless, is staring straight ahead.

HER POV

There's nothing but emptiness and air before her in the rising sun.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MERCEDES - DAWN, SAME

The front end of the car is ten feet away from a cliff-like edge.

PULL AWAY

The desperate scene filling out, the car centered amidst the landscape.

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Kate? . . . Kate? . . .

A NEW POV

The same scene from a greater distance THROUGH BINOCULARS, the sound muted.

EXT. A HILL ABOVE - DAWN, SAME

The figure of a very large MAN, visible from the head up, holds his binoculars tilted down toward the ridge on which the car is perched.

A NEW ANGLE

The man is kneeling in plain view. He's wearing a SHERIFF DEPUTY'S uniform.

He pulls the binoculars away from his eyes and we recognize the face as that of the COP Kate passed on the road just before the accident. Looking at the car with apparently no intention of doing anything about it.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Talk to me, Kate?

The cop looks down at a SCANNER/RADIO resting on the ground at his feet.

KATE (O.S.)  
 Oh God . . . I'm on, I'm near--it looks like the edge of a cliff or something.

Letting the binoculars dangle by his chest, the cop removes a hand-sized device from his pocket.

CLOSE ON THE DEVICE

It's labeled SIGNAL TRIANGULATOR.

The cop switches it on and a green glow lights up an LCD screen that's sliced into tiny rectangular grids. An arrow sweeps across the grids, flashing over a single BLIP--Kate's car.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Kate?

(CONTINUED)

The cop places the TRIANGULATOR within easy view and brings the binoculars back to his eyes.

EXT. THE ROAD, ANOTHER AREA - DAWN, JUST AFTER

The MINIVAN with the two blown tires we remember from the opening sits on the shoulder of the road. The near lane has been blocked off with cones and a POLICE CAR parked with its light flashing. CRIME SCENE TAPE, unable to withstand the elements, flaps like confetti in the stiff dusty breeze.

DEPUTY BARNES hands SHERIFF BEN WARRINGTON a cup of black coffee. Warrington, balding and plain in appearance, looks like a man who's been up all night and isn't happy about it.

BARNES  
Sheriff?

Warrington looks up from his coffee at him.

BARNES  
(grim - uneasily)  
I heard about . . . If there's  
anything I can do . . .

Warrington nods, spared a response when he sees a DARK SEDAN slowing as it nears them.

WARRINGTON  
It's about fucking time.

The sedan pulls onto the shoulder of the road just behind the minivan. Coffee in hand, Warrington limps stiff-legged toward it. He's clearly in pain.

The driver's door opens and a WOMAN steps out. Looks about 40, casually dressed and a bit disheveled as if she's been on the road for a long time. But she's clearly in shape and moves like an athlete.

Warrington stops well before, seems disappointed.

WARRINGTON  
(sternly)  
This is a crime scene, ma'am. I'm  
afraid I'm going to have to ask you  
to move on.

The woman flashes a badge and ID.

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN

Detective Samantha Franklin,  
Sheriff. Highway Patrol.

Warrington continues toward her, takes Franklin's ID in hand but doesn't look at it.

WARRINGTON

I was expecting "Sam" Franklin.  
Highway Patrol office said you were  
en route twelve hours ago.

FRANKLIN

*California* Highway Patrol. Check  
the ID.

Warrington finally does.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Sorry for the confusion.

Franklin takes her ID back from Warrington and continues on toward the minivan.

WARRINGTON

You're a ways out of your  
jurisdiction, Detective.

As, limping, he tries to stay in step with her, grimacing.

A NEW ANGLE

Franklin crouches near the front blown tire, sifts through the gravel with her fingers.

WARRINGTON

My crime scene unit's already been  
over that.

FRANKLIN

This is the third killing.  
(She gazes up at  
Warrington.)  
All in the past three weeks.

WARRINGTON

Two weeks between the first two,  
just one week before . . . this.

FRANKLIN

Acceleration.

(CONTINUED)

WARRINGTON

Spoken like someone who knows more than she's saying.

Franklin still looks disinterested in Warrington, merely tolerating him.

FRANKLIN

He's repeating the same pattern.

She bounces back to her feet and moves to the minivan's blown rear tire, repeating the process of sifting through the gravel beneath and around it.

Again Warrington struggles to follow.

WARRINGTON

Pattern?

Franklin doesn't look up as she responds.

FRANKLIN

In Illinois, Alabama, Maine, Texas and, most recently, California. And, assuming he does here what he's done before, you're going to have another victim within a day or so, if you don't already.

Warrington, surprised and unsettled, tries to crouch down beside Franklin but can't manage it.

FRANKLIN

Something wrong with your leg?

WARRINGTON

Yeah. Doctors cut it off. Bone cancer.

FRANKLIN

Sorry.

WARRINGTON

So's my golf game.

He leans over gingerly, hands on his knees.

WARRINGTON

Are you telling me that our killer's done the same thing in all those other states?

Franklin finally looks at him.

(CONTINUED)

FRANKLIN

The ones that we're sure of. Thirty-one known victims.

She glances back at the minivan.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Thirty-five now. But in the past ten years, there've been nearly 200 killings across the country that fit the same pattern.

Warrington's eyes widen.

WARRINGTON

Did you say two *hundred*?

He shakes his head, unable to believe it.

Franklin takes a MINI-FLASHLIGHT from her pocket and uses to inspect the inside of the minivan.

FRANKLIN

The Freeway Killer operates under the radar, never staying in the same place long enough to establish a pattern local types--

WARRINGTON

--Like me.

Franklin turns around and meets Warrington's gaze with a condescending one of her own.

FRANKLIN

--like you would ordinarily take notice of. And by the time you do, he's gone.

Warrington considers Franklin's words, looks past her toward the minivan.

WARRINGTON

This Freeway Killer preys on stranded motorists. That's what you're saying.

FRANKLIN

Not exactly, no.

A NEW ANGLE - FROM INSIDE THE MINIVAN

Both of them are now gazing through the window.

(CONTINUED)

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)  
He strands them first.

INT. A BATHROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

*Kate opens a MEDICINE CABINET and removes a prescription bottle of pills. She closes the cabinet and studies her reflection, clearly not liking what she sees.*

*Still staring at herself in the mirror, as she pops the cap off the prescription bottle. Looks at it long enough to dump the entire contents of pills into her palm.*

A NEW ANGLE

*We can see the SCARS we glimpsed on her wrist before, as a few of the pills scatter, clacking to the floor. Kate piles the rest into her mouth, swallows them down with a hefty gulp of water, hardly taking her eyes off her reflection until she turns from the mirror toward the full BATHTUB.*

ANOTHER ANGLE

*Kate climbs into the tub, clothes and all. Lets herself slide down the wall, all but her face disappearing under the water. Looks resigned to her decision. Eyelids fluttering. Drifting off. Sinking below the surface.*

*A door slams. We hear footsteps.*

JASON (O.S.)  
Kate! Hey, babe, where are you?

*His voice growing louder as he draws closer to the bathroom.*

JASON (O.S.)  
Kate, you in there?

*We see the face of JASON, Kate's boy friend, in the mirror as he opens the door. Mid-20s, good looking with longish hair and a few days worth of beard stubble coating his face. Call it the grunge rock star look.*

*His eyes fall on the bathtub.*

JASON  
Oh shit, oh shit!

*He drops down and sinks his arms into the water beneath which Kate is barely visible.*

(CONTINUED)

JASON

Not again.

*He lifts her from the bathtub, dragging floods of water with her which follow Kate when he lowers her to the floor, trying to rouse her.*

JASON

*Come on, Kate, come on!*

*Jason's about to start CPR when she comes to, coughing and retching.*

CUT TO:

INT. AN AMBULANCE - NIGHT, LATER

*Kate lies semi-conscious in a gurney as PARAMEDICS attend to her, checking her vitals, stringing an IV line, advising the hospital of her condition. It's all a blur, the world unfolding in stops and starts.*

PARAMEDIC

*(into radio)*

*We have a woman, age twenty-five.*

*He checks the PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE Kate removed from the medicine cabinet.*

PARAMEDIC (CONT'D)

*Believed to have ingested large quantity of sleeping pills, as many as thirty in the hundred milligram dosage. . . .*

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ROAD - NIGHT, SAME

*The ambulance speeds on.*

CUT TO:

INT. THE HOSPITAL - NIGHT, LATER

*Double-doors burst open and a flock of personnel wheel Kate through.*

CUT TO:

INT. A HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT, JUST AFTER

*Kate, still woozy and out of it, is center stage as MEDICAL PERSONNEL go through the harrowing ordeal of pumping her stomach. She fights the tube going down her throat, seeming to choke, as a RESIDENT lowers the other end into a large glass tube.*

*She can't breathe. Panic bulges in her eyes. She flails with her hands.*

DOCTOR  
Hold her still!

*Kate tries to speak, to plead that she can't breathe, but no one seems to care as the contents of her stomach begin to filter into the tube accompanied by tar-black charcoal.*

DOCTOR  
Stay with me, miss, stay . . .

RONALD (O.S.)  
. . . with me, Kate!

CUT TO:

INT. KATE'S CAR - MORNING

*Kate snaps awake, body lurching forward against the stuck shoulder harness again, enough to . . .*

OUTSIDE

*. . . rock the car another foot toward the edge.*

A FULL SHOT

*It's that much closer to a final plunge over the edge into the ravine below.*

INSIDE

*Kate freezes.*

KATE'S POV

*She's staring straight down into the ravine 500 feet below.*

(CONTINUED)

Kate glances up at the red Wingman button, anything to stop looking down into the promised death of the ravine.

KATE  
I, I must have passed out.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Tell me about the car. Has it moved  
any more?

KATE  
Get me out of here! Please!

RONALD (O.S.)  
I'm trying, Kate. Tell me if the  
car has moved any more.

KATE  
A little, yes.

RONALD (O.S.)  
And how are you from the edge?

KATE  
I don't know. It's hard to tell.  
(She tries to check.)  
Ten feet maybe.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Listen to me. Don't move. Stay as  
still as you can!

Kate stares at the Wingman button as if Ronald were perched behind it.

KATE  
How far away is help now?

RONALD (O.S.)  
(after A BEAT)  
Little less than an hour out.

KATE  
Oh God, I'll never make it.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Yes, you will, Kate. Yes, you will.

KATE  
It's the car. I can't stop it from  
moving.

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
Don't give up.

KATE  
Already tried that. Three times.

RONALD (O.S.)  
(befuddled)  
Kate?

Kate looks at the scars across her wrists.

KATE  
Once with a razor blade. Twice with pills. Any of those times I'd've loved to be here, in this position.

RONALD (O.S.)  
What about now?

KATE  
I just wanna get out. I don't want to die.

RONALD (O.S.)  
You're not going to die. I promise. Now look around you again. Is there any way out of the car?

KATE  
The door's jammed. The seatbelt's stuck.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Let's start with the seatbelt. Have you tried the red release button?

Kate lowers her hand to the button again. Presses.

KATE  
It won't give.

She tries to pull the belt free of the buckle assembly to no avail.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Do you have a knife?

KATE  
No.

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
Anything you can use to cut through  
the fabric.

Kate swallows hard, looks over toward the POCKETBOOK resting  
on the passenger seat.

KATE  
In my pocketbook maybe.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Can you reach it?

KATE  
I--I think so.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Be careful. No sudden motions.

Kate starts to stretch her right arm gingerly sideways,  
moving ever so cautiously.

KATE  
Please tell me you've been through  
this before.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Want me to lie?

Kate almost smiles, as her hand comes up just short of  
snaring her pocketbook.

KATE  
Yes. Please.

RONALD (O.S.)  
A bunch of times.

Kate grabs hold of the pocketbook, starts sliding it toward  
her.

RONALD (O.S.)  
I've only been on the job six  
months. A few accidents, a deer  
strike. Did have a pregnant woman  
in labor.

Kate drags the pocketbook over the console. The strap  
catches on the EMERGENCY BRAKE HANDLE and she carefully peels  
it off.

KATE  
She name the kid after you?

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
False labor thankfully. What do you do, Kate?

KATE  
Bank teller. Until yesterday.

Her gaze falls on the WADS OF CASH piled on the passenger side floor.

RONALD (O.S.)  
You quit?

KATE  
I suppose you could say that.

She gets the pocketbook into her lap and props it open, feeling about the inside.

KATE  
I don't have a knife.

RONALD (O.S.)  
What about a nail clipper, maybe a nail file?

KATE  
Wait, my keys!

RONALD (O.S.)  
Careful removing them from the ignition, Kate.

KATE  
No, they're in my bag. The bank gave out key chains with pen knives on the end.

Ronald's tone changes a little, sounds a bit suspicious, leery.

RONALD (O.S.)  
That's right. This isn't your car. How do you know Anthony Raposa, Kate?

Kate fishes her keys from the bag, yanks open the small blade attached to the chain labeled "NATIONAL BANK."

KATE  
Doesn't matter now. I've got the knife open. I should cut through the strap, right?

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
The one across your lap.

Kate works the two-inch blade under the fabric and begins to cut, using the knife like a miniature saw cutting through polyester instead of wood.

The fabric starts to give, peeling away in tatters a little bit at a time.

KATE  
It's working! It's working!

There's hope in her voice for the first time.

ANGLE ON KATE'S LAP

She's halfway through the strap, making slow but steady progress.

BACK ON KATE

RONALD (O.S.)  
You've got a great voice. You  
should work on radio.

KATE  
Funny, I was thinking the same thing  
about you.

She keeps cutting, the blade three-quarters of the way through the strap now when . . .

A NEW ANGLE - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

A PRAIRIE DOG jumps onto the car's roof. Rises to its hind legs, nibbling at its paws.

Kate's eyes bulge.

KATE  
Oh . . . shit . . .

The car lurches further downward in a terrifying jolt.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE - DAY, SAME

The prairie dog leaps off, as the car slides forward, the edge coming up fast, rear tires grinding to a halt in rocks just five feet away.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

Kate plunges the knife blade into her upper thigh.

EXT. THE ROAD, ANOTHER AREA - MORNING, SAME

Sheriff Warrington's staring at Detective Samantha Franklin incredulously.

WARRINGTON

Did you say he *strands* them?

Franklin heads back to the front of the minivan.

Warrington takes a sudden step to follow her, drawing an even more pained grimace from him.

This time Franklin waits patiently for him to draw even before she crouches in almost the identical spot near the front tire. Her hand rests against the bumper for balance.

WARRINGTON

We got two blown tires. No nails, no spikes, no evidence of anything other than road debris whatsoever.

Franklin works some of the shredded pieces of tire around, turning them inside out to reveal THICK BUBBLING. She makes sure Warrington can see them.

FRANKLIN

Ever seen road debris that could melt rubber?

Warrington narrows his gaze on that part of the tire, his silence answering her question.

FRANKLIN

Have your lab test the rubber for butane.

(CONTINUED)

WARRINGTON

Butane as in the stuff you put in lighters?

Franklin stands up.

FRANKLIN

He did the same thing in California.

. . .

As Franklin continues, we . . .

DISSOLVE TO:

*EXT. A TRUCK STOP DINER - NIGHT*

*A typical truck stop parking lot crammed with eighteen wheelers and semis. The diner portion features an ancient marquee with "DAN'S DINER" in faded letters.*

*Look close enough and we can see KATE rising from a booth while a HUSKY MAN wearing an apron looks on.*

*A NEW ANGLE*

*A dark SHAPE, visible only from behind, crouches by the tire of a black Mercedes--the car Kate was driving!*

*CLOSE ON THE SHAPE*

*He's got a thin flexible tube running from the STEM VALVE to a can marked "BUTANE."*

*FRANKLIN (O.S.)*

*He injects butane into the tire, a highly combustible liquid. . . .*

*CUT TO:*

*EXT. THE ROAD - NIGHT, LATER*

*The Mercedes speeds along in the moments before Kate's accident, passing the sign that reads **HAUNTED MINE** in spooky letters followed in smaller letters by **ADMISSION ONLY \$5** and then **NEXT RIGHT**. "CLOSED" marked across it.*

(CONTINUED)

*CLOSE ON THE FRONT DRIVER'S SIDE TIRE*

*Spinning in perfect rhythm.*

*FRANKLIN (O.S.)  
Once the tire heats up, the butane  
ignites, blowing the tire up . . .*

*BACK ON THE TIRE*

*It explodes, shedding pieces of itself all over the road as  
the car veers out of control and plummets down hill.*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE ROAD, ANOTHER AREA - DAY

Franklin finishes, still facing Warrington with a piece of  
the BUBBLED RUBBER in her hand.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)  
. . . from the inside out

Sheriff Warrington shakes his head. Half of him doesn't  
believe what Franklin's saying; the other half doesn't want  
to. The pain stretched over his expression rising from that  
now too.

WARRINGTON  
You're saying butane is how he does  
it, strands his victims.

FRANKLIN  
That's right. Only in California he  
didn't leave one of his victims  
alive, like he did here.

That unsettles Warrington even more. His gaze falls back on  
the MINIVAN, eyes suddenly a bit watery.

WARRINGTON  
He didn't leave these alive.

Franklin runs a hand along the sill of the open driver's  
window, leaves her palm against the door even with the lock.

(CONTINUED)

INSIDE

We can see dark, splotchy patches of dried blood on the upholstery and on the CAR SEAT which has been half torn from the straps holding it in place.

CUT TO:

*EXT. THE ROAD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)*

*A SHERIFF'S DEPUTY approaches the minivan which is awash in the spill of his cruiser's revolving lights. The deputy's hand drops to his gun as he nears the minivan.*

*WARRINGTON (O.S.)  
Deputy who found the minivan's been  
home ever since. You don't get over  
a sight like that too fast.*

*The deputy reaches the driver's side window, looks inside.*

*Terror widens his eyes, buckles his knees. He staggers backwards, breathless.*

CUT TO:

*EXT. THE ROAD - MORNING (THE PRESENT)*

Franklin lifts her hand from the window.

*FRANKLIN  
Was this open when he found the  
victims?*

*WARRINGTON  
My people didn't mess with anything.*

Franklin considers the scenario.

*FRANKLIN  
Someone she had no reason to be  
afraid of approached the van,  
someone she thought was there to  
help. A tow truck driver. (A BEAT)  
Maybe a cop.*

*WARRINGTON  
(defensively)  
You implying something, Detective?*

(CONTINUED)

FRANKLIN

Thirty-five victims, Sheriff, thirty-five that we know of. Probably more, maybe hundreds more. That's all I'm implying.

As the other deputies on scene continue to watch, Franklin slides closer to Warrington who stands there bearing her and his pain.

FRANKLIN

Now, I don't want to get in a pissing contest with you. All I--

WARRINGTON

(strangely calm, intense)  
Truth is I'd probably lose that contest. Cancer that took my leg's spread up there and lots of other places too. So if you think you're gonna drive up and impress me with your fancy talk, forget it. I'm long past being impressed.

FRANKLIN

The victim who survived here might be the only person who can tell us what the Freeway Killer looks like.

WARRINGTON

Only she hasn't said a word since he left her for dead in her boy friend's truck.

FRANKLIN

So bring her here.

Almost nonchalantly, she walks away from the minivan.

Warrington follows, every step laborious and agonizing.

WARRINGTON

What that son of a bitch did to her  
. . .

FRANKLIN

He'll do it again, Sheriff, unless we stop him.

Warrington shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

WARRINGTON

I can't ask her parents, I just  
can't.

Franklin's expression, and attitude, remain unchanged.

FRANKLIN

You'll be able to tell that to the  
parents of the next victim tomorrow,  
the day after maybe.

She continues on back toward her car, leaving Warrington in  
his tracks.

A NEW ANGLE

Franklin's back is still to him when Warrington stoops low  
enough to press a shiny translucent STRIP OF PAPER against  
the minivan door even with the lock. Then peels it off and  
stands all the way up, wincing.

A NEW POV - THROUGH BINOCULARS

Warrington moves toward one of his deputies.

The binoculars follow them as he moves, the SOUND MUTED now.

EXT. A RIDGE - MORNING, SAME

The large figure of the COP, the sheriff's deputy we remember  
from the traffic stop and then watching Kate, sits  
camouflaged between a pair of large rocks, binoculars held at  
his eyes, out of view of those on the road below.

The cop lowers the binoculars, checks his SIGNAL TRIANGULATOR  
which still shows an arrow sweeping across a single blip on  
the rectangular grid map.

A NEW ANGLE

No longer wearing a uniform, he pockets the triangulator and  
climbs back to his feet.

INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

*Kate enters her apartment, closes the door behind her, and  
flips on the lights.*

## A NEW ANGLE

*Her boy friend JASON, who saved her life earlier, is sitting blank-faced in the corner against the wall. Kate sees him, obviously concerned.*

KATE

*Jay?*

*He barely regards her.*

JASON

*I fucked up, Kate. Man, did I fuck up.*

*She moves over and crouches in front of him, taking his hands in hers. Jason finally looks up at her.*

JASON

*It was a sure thing. I couldn't lose.*

KATE

*What did you do?*

JASON

*(pointedly)  
I lost.*

KATE

*How much?*

JASON

*Fifty thousand.*

*Kate's eyes widen in disbelief. She plops down on the floor in front of Jason.*

JASON

*Garbage touchdown with thirty seconds to go. Spread was covered until then.*

KATE

*How are you going to pay?*

*Jason's shoulders, his whole body, sags.*

JASON

*I'm not.*

*Their eyes meet, Kate catching Jason's meaning from his gaze.*

(CONTINUED)

JASON

*I'd never ask you if I had a choice,  
if there was anything else I could .  
. .*

*Kate rises, shaking her head.*

JASON

*You're right. Forget it. I'll  
figure something out. I always do.*

*Playing the part of the n'er do well pretty boy now which, as  
always, is enough to make Kate melt. Looking down at Jason,  
she's got no choice but to go along.*

INT. A BANK - ANOTHER DAY

*Kate's working as a BANK TELLER, the line long, the bank  
hectic with activity. A well-dressed BUSINESSMAN Kate  
recognizes steps up to her station.*

KATE

*(smiling)*

*Good afternoon, Mr. Phillips.*

*Phillips smiles back at her, hands her a WITHDRAWAL SLIP.*

CLOSE ON THE SLIP

*The withdrawal's for five hundred dollars.*

BACK ON KATE

*She scrutinizes the slip, features tightening. Forces a  
smile Phillips' way as she pretends to be going about her  
business. Then adds two zeroes, changing the withdrawal  
amount to \$50,000 from \$500!*

*Kate smiles again as she looks up.*

KATE

*I'll just be a minute.*

*She takes the altered slip to a harried HEAD TELLER who  
initials it without looking. Then Kate hands the slip to  
another TELLER working the cash drawer.*

(CONTINUED)

*This teller checks the slip cursorily, then hands her 500 hundred dollar bills in five neat stacks--the stacks we remember from the front seat, and then passenger side floor, of the car (except there's no blood on them)!*

*Kate adds her initials to the slip, then returns to her station where Phillips is waiting. Nervously, she peels five of the hundred dollar bills from one of the stacks and slides them beneath the glass partition to Phillips.*

*ANOTHER ANGLE*

*Checking to make sure no one's watching, Kate slides the remaining bills into her HANDBAG.*

*PHILLIPS*

*Er, excuse me.*

*Kate looks up, shock spreading across her features.*

*PHILLIPS (CONT'D)*

*Could I have that in twenties, please?*

*Kate can only stare at him.*

*INT. KATE'S CAR - MORNING, SAME*

*The same shocked gaze frames Kate's face as she stares at the blade still stuck in her thigh, blood pooling up around the wound.*

*RONALD (O.S.)*

*Kate, what happened?*

*She tries to speak, can't muster the words. Glancing glassy-eyed back at the blood turning her jeans a purplish red, almost to the knee now.*

*RONALD (O.S.)*

*Talk to me.*

*KATE*

*I--I stabbed myself. With the knife.*

*A brief silence.*

*RONALD (O.S.)*

*Where?*

(CONTINUED)

KATE  
In the leg.

RONALD (O.S.)  
How deep?

KATE  
I don't know! The whole blade.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Is it still in your leg?

Kate looks down again, her face ghastly pale.

KATE  
Yes.

RONALD (O.S.)  
You have to take it out.

KATE  
No, I can't.

RONALD (O.S.)  
You can, Kate. I know you can.

KATE  
*I'm telling you I can't!*

RONALD (O.S.)  
Stay calm, just stay calm. Close your eyes. Are your eyes closed, Kate?

She squeezes them shut, nods.

KATE  
Yes.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Okay, feel for the knife, the handle.

Kate's finds it quickly in her trembling right hand.

KATE  
The blood, I can smell the blood. .  
. .

RONALD (O.S.)  
Don't open your eyes. Don't look at it. Now, on the count of three, I want you to pull the knife out.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (CONT'D)

We're going to count together. Come on, Kate, with me. I wanna hear you counting. Ready?

KATE

No!

RONALD (O.S.)

With me, Kate. Ready?

She nods again, steeling herself to the task.

KATE

Okay.

RONALD (O.S.)

Good. With me now. One . . .

KATE

One . . .

RONALD (O.S.)

Two . . .

KATE

Two . . .

RONALD (O.S.) AND KATE

*Three!*

And Kate yanks the knife out in a sudden, swift motion. Eyes open as she discards the knife to the floor and drops both her hands to the wound, the blood instantly staining them. Her expression drifts a little.

KATE

Ronald, I'm getting . . . woozy.

RONALD (O.S.)

Are you wearing a jacket?

KATE

It got hot. I took it off.

RONALD (O.S.)

Where is it?

KATE

On the seat. Next to me.

RONALD (O.S.)

Find it.

Kate starts to fade.

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
 (shouting)  
*Find it, Kate!*

She snaps alert again, grabs the jacket by the sleeve and drags it toward her from the passenger seat.

KATE  
 I've got it.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Good job. Now, thread one of the sleeves under your leg and tie it through the other sleeve directly over the wound.

A NEW ANGLE

Kate's jeans are soaked to the knee and hip now, the blood staining the seat beneath her as well. But she follows Ronald's instructions, wincing from the pain and tightening her features to fight it off, as she finally manages to loop the sleeves together and tie them together.

KATE  
 I feel cold now.

She's shaking, clearly chilled, and just as pale as before.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 It's all right. We're going to try something different.

KATE  
 Just get me out of here.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 That's the idea, Kate. Reach forward for the keys . . .

Kate does.

RONALD (O.S. - CONT'D)  
 . . . and try to turn the car on.

Kate holds her hand on the keys.

KATE  
 You said to leave the engine off.

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Change of plans, like I said. Turn  
 the engine on, but try not to lean  
 forward.

Sitting back in her seat, Kate turns the key. The engine  
 sputters briefly, then roars to life.

KATE  
 Okay, it's on.

ANGLE ON THE WINGMAN BUTTON

Like Kate, we're beginning to associate the voice coming  
 directly out of it, as if the button is alive.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 I can hear it. Now disengage the  
 emergency brake.

Kate does, just as deliberately as she engaged it.

Almost instantly the car rocks further downhill with a jolt.

KATE  
 It's moving again!

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Put your foot on the brake and push  
 down as hard as you can!

Now Kate does look at her bloody leg.

KATE  
 My leg!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE - DAY, SAME

The front grill of the Mercedes is only a yard from the edge!

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

Kate's staring down into the ravine as the car inches further  
 downward.

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
Use your other leg!

A NEW ANGLE

Kate maneuvers her LEFT FOOT into position over the brake and pushes forward as far as the brake will go.

The car stops again.

KATE  
Okay.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Now put the car into reverse.

Kate's eyes bulge in fear.

KATE  
No!

RONALD (O.S.)  
It's a rear-wheel drive car, Kate,  
with lots of horsepower. If the  
back wheels find traction, this  
could get you out of this.

KATE  
And what if it doesn't?  
(Then, before Ronald can  
respond)  
But that doesn't matter because I'm  
going to die anyway and you know it.

RONALD (O.S.)  
I thought you said you were done  
giving up.

KATE  
I am.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Prove it.

Gritting her teeth with fresh resolve, Kate moves her hand to the GEAR SHIFT.

RONALD (O.S. - CONT'D)  
But you're going to have to use your  
other leg on the accelerator, the  
bad one.

(CONTINUED)

Kate's grasp slackens on the gear shift.

KATE  
It hurts.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Can you feel your foot?

KATE  
Yes.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Then you can do it.

KATE  
*Why don't you fucking do it?*

RONALD (O.S.)  
That's it. Get mad, Kate, get *real*  
mad. Mad at me, mad at anything.

Anguish painting her features, Kate . . .

ANOTHER ANGLE

. . . moves her foot toward the ACCELERATOR PEDAL and . . .

KATE  
Shut up!

. . . presses the sole of her boot against it.

RONALD (O.S.)  
No.

KATE  
Fuck you!

RONALD (O.S.)  
Shift the car into reverse, Kate.  
Shift the car into reverse, holding  
the brake down, no pressure on the  
accelerator.

Kate shifts into reverse. The car jerks slightly.

KATE  
*What now?*

RONALD (O.S.)  
When I say, release the brake as you  
accelerate.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (CONT'D)

But don't push the pedal down all at once. You'll just spin out your tires. Use slow, gradual pressure. And get ready to work the brake again if you feel the car move forward. Are you ready? Tell me when you're ready.

Kate stiffens.

KATE

Ready.

RONALD (O.S.)

Okay, start to accelerate slowly, then take your foot off the brake.

Kate nods.

ANGLE ON THE PEDALS

We can hear the engine revving as she applies gradual pressure to the accelerator, then removes her foot from the brake.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE - DAY, SAME

The car lurches downward, the grill barely a foot from the edge now.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

Kate squeezes the steering wheel and . . .

ANGLE ON THE PEDALS

. . . jerks the accelerator pedal halfway to the floor.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE - DAY, SAME

The reartires spin out, spitting debris behind them, sliding further downward before digging home and clawing uphill, making up ground.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

Kate feels the car slip forward and increases the gas, rocking the car backward up the plane of the ridge again. She twists around.

A NEW ANGLE - THROUGH THE REAR WINDOW

A rolling cloud of gravel, dirt and debris blocks all view of the ridge beyond.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE - DAY, SAME

Slow progress in maddening stops and starts.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

Kate looks even more resolved, more confident, biting down the pain in her right leg.

KATE  
It's working! It's working!

RONALD (O.S.)  
Stay with it, Kate! Don't stop!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE - DAY, SAME

The tires chew up more ground, then lock into place, spinning out, starting to slip forward.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

Kate's confidence vanishes.

KATE  
No . . . No! . . . *Stop!*

She jams on the brake but the downward slide continues.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Kate, what's happening?

Kate feels a thump.

A NEW ANGLE - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

The ravine beyond looks ominous and terrifying, the nose of the Mercedes aimed directly for it.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE - DAY, SAME

The front grill of the Mercedes draws even with the edge, then protrudes just over it.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

Kate's squeezing her fingers pale around the steering wheel.

KATE  
I, I can't stop it. . . .

RONALD (O.S.)  
The emergency brake! Pull up on the emergency brake!

Kate grasps the handle and yanks it upward.

The car comes to a halt, rocking ever so slightly.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

We PULL AWAY SLOWLY to reveal the car back on its increasingly precarious perch, the FRONT TIRES kissing the very edge of the void.

EXT. THE ROAD, ANOTHER AREA - DAY, SAME

Having donned LATEX GLOVES, Detective Samantha Franklin continues her careful inspection of the minivan.

Sheriff Warrington approaches from one of the squad cars, stops near her with hands on his hips, clearly annoyed.

WARRINGTON  
Anything you haven't told me,  
Detective?

FRANKLIN  
For instance?

WARRINGTON  
What really brought you here.

FRANKLIN  
A fresh trail.

WARRINGTON  
I was thinking more along the lines  
you might have a suspect in mind.  
Tow truck driver, maybe a cop.

Franklin leans out of the minivan.

FRANKLIN  
What can you tell me about Joe  
Clement?

Warrington's stare hardens.

WARRINGTON  
Damn fine officer. Been with me for  
a little over a year.

FRANKLIN  
What about the fact that his wife  
was the second victim in your  
county?

A snarl spreads across Franklin's expression.

(CONTINUED)

WARRINGTON

If you were a man, that'd be cause  
for more than a "Fuck you."

FRANKLIN

You're more a man than me, Sheriff.  
I'll grant you that much.

Franklin turns away and moves to the back of the minivan.

Warrington storms after her.

WARRINGTON

I'd appreciate you just saying what  
you got on your mind.

FRANKLIN

Deputy Clement was on the state  
police in Alabama when the murders  
occurred there. And on a local PD  
in Illinois during that stretch of  
killings. Dismissed from both jobs  
for being prone to violent behavior.

Warrington looks a bit more defensive.

WARRINGTON

I'm not saying the man ain't got his  
problems.

FRANKLIN

Anything you've noticed since he's  
been on the job here?

WARRINGTON

(evasively)

He was a good cop. He deserved  
another chance. And, no, I haven't  
noticed a thing and there've been no  
complaints against him.

FRANKLIN

Too bad you can't ask his wife.

Warrington's expression tightens even more.

WARRINGTON

Medical examiner says the killer  
poured something inside her . . .

CUT TO:

*INT. A CAR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)*

*A terrified WOMAN, Clement's wife, sits duct-taped to the driver's seat, squirming as a HUGE FIGURE looms over the console.*

*A NEW ANGLE*

*As the figure pulls away, we see's she's got a clear PLASTIC TUBE down her throat. As she gags and retches, a CLEAR LIQUID begins flowing through the tube he's holding over her.*

*ANGLE ON THE WOMAN*

*Her eyes bulging, face a mask of terror.*

CUT TO:

*EXT. THE ROAD, ANOTHER AREA - DAY*

*Warrington and Franklin are still facing each other.*

WARRINGTON

We weren't able to identify it.

FRANKLIN

Kerosene. He did the same thing to a victim in Texas four years ago. .

. .

CUT TO:

*INT. THE CAR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)*

FRANKLIN (O.S.)

*Then he lit her on fire. . . .*

*We see a GLOVED HAND ease the edge of a LIT MATCH to the open end of the tube.*

*A thin line of BLUE FLAME instantly shoots through the tube, disappearing inside the woman's mouth.*

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ROAD, ANOTHER AREA - DAY

Warrington's expression is suddenly distant.

WARRINGTON  
When I saw the inside of that car .  
. .

Franklin moves to the far side of the minivan. Warrington trails after her.

WARRINGTON  
Think a man could do that to his wife?

FRANKLIN  
I think the Freeway Killer could.

WARRINGTON  
You so cock sure about this, why haven't you been able to place Clement anywhere else, like Texas?

Franklin turns to look at him again.

FRANKLIN  
Because before Alabama, he didn't exist.

Warrington raises his eyebrows.

WARRINGTON  
Say what?

FRANKLIN  
No employment records, no residence, no bank accounts. Met his wife and married her while he was on the job in Mobile.

WARRINGTON  
So you're saying maybe she got wise to him here and he killed her for it.

FRANKLIN  
Report I read said her car was found packed with belongings, like she planned on being away awhile.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

(CONTINUED)

WARRINGTON

She was running out on him. I'm not saying they didn't have their problems.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

FRANKLIN

Big, strong man like Clement with a record of violent behavior. Makes you wonder how he might deal with those problems.

\*  
\*  
\*

Warrington gnashes his teeth, not liking at Franklin's getting at.

\*  
\*

WARRINGTON

He worked the overnight. Probably home in bed by now.

Franklin's gaze past him down the dusty road into the sun-lit horizon.

FRANKLIN

Looks like I've got someone else to talk to first.

A NEW ANGLE

From the distance, a POLICE CAR approaches with its lights flashing, carrying the Freeway Killer's surviving victim.

EXT. THE ROAD, ANOTHER AREA - DAY, JUST AFTER

Franklin and Warrington stand by the side of the road waiting, as the cruiser slows toward them.

A NEW POV - FROM INSIDE THE CRUISER

The cruiser slides slightly past them, Warrington and Franklin visible only from the necks down.

BACK ON FRANKLIN AND WARRINGTON

Warrington's expression is even more dour than usual.

WARRINGTON

She nearly bled to death. Rescue boys got there just in time.

(His voice sinks.)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WARRINGTON (CONT'D)

Didn't do her much of a favor, you  
ask me.

Franklin glances at him briefly, then advances toward the now  
parked cruiser, flashing lights off.

A NEW ANGLE

Franklin reaches the cruiser's rear passenger side door, her  
own reflection the only thing she can see in the glass.

The window slides down, sweeping her reflection away and  
revealing TAMMY MANNING, her head entirely swathed in  
BANDAGES, except for a single eye.

Franklin leans slightly forward, hands on her knees, trying  
not to show any reaction.

FRANKLIN

I'm Detective Sam Franklin of the  
California Highway Patrol, Tammy. I  
wanna thank you for helping us.

Tammy's shoulders seem to shrink together.

Franklin turns sideways so the minivan is in plain view of  
Tammy, revealing WARRINGTON hovering slightly back.

FRANKLIN

Two nights ago, a woman and her  
three children were murdered in that  
van. The same man that did this to  
you killed them. You'd like to see  
us catch him, wouldn't you, Tammy?

Tammy's eyes drift past Franklin toward the dust sweeping  
over the minivan.

FRANKLIN

You saw the man who did this to you.  
You got a good look at him. You're  
the first person who can tell us  
what he looks like.

Tammy's eyes find Franklin again, no reaction evident in her  
gaze. Just more shifting and twitching.

Franklin leans over into the car, stretching a hand for  
Tammy's shoulder. Tammy shrinks away but the hand finds her  
shoulder, the gesture one of compassion and reassurance.  
Franklin lets it linger there.

(CONTINUED)

FRANKLIN

I know he killed your boy friend. I know you watched him do it. I know the last thing you want to do is relive any of that, to feel that kind of fear again.

Tammy looks at Franklin's hand grasping her shoulder, expression unchanged until suddenly she looks up to meet Franklin's gaze with her single exposed eye.

TAMMY

We were taking off.

Franklin's expression narrows.

A NEW ANGLE

That clearly gets Warrington's attention. He cocks his gaze back toward the minivan.

BACK ON TAMMY

She resumes, her voice slightly muffled and slurred by all the gauze and her injuries.

TAMMY (CONT'D)

It was my idea. My dad told me I couldn't see him any more.

Franklin's resolve hardens.

FRANKLIN

Do you remember what the man who did this to you looks like, Tammy?

Tammy turns her single eye away. Nods fearfully.

Franklin reaches into her jacket pocket.

FRANKLIN

I'd like to show you a picture. You don't have to say a word.

Franklin's free hand emerges from her pocket with a PIECE OF PAPER folded in fours. Leaving her other hand on Tammy's shoulder, she flaps it open.

(CONTINUED)

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Just nod if this is the man who did  
this to you and killed your boy  
friend.

A NEW ANGLE

Tammy's eyes start to blink rapidly. Her breathing becomes rapid.

Franklin extends the now unfolded piece of paper through the window.

CLOSE ON THE PAPER

It's a picture of the cop we recognize from the traffic stop and later from the ridge above. Below the picture is the name "JOSEPH CLEMENT."

CUT TO:

At the minivan, Warrington jerks open the rear hatch to review BOXES and SUITCASES. A STUFFED ANIMAL drops out to the ground and he stoops laboriously to retrieve it.

CLOSE ON THE STUFFED ANIMAL

It's made up to look like a FRY COOK with "I ate at Dan's" embroidered on the tiny apron.

CUT TO:

Back at the cruiser, fear covers Tammy's face, dropping her mouth and bulging her eyes. She pulls out from under Franklin's grasp and recoils against the other side of the car. Seems to be trying to scream, but no sound emerges.

Franklin pulls the picture away, out of Tammy's view. Leans back inside the car but doesn't try to touch her again.

FRANKLIN

You're a brave girl, Tammy. Thank  
you, thank you very much.

Franklin backs away. The window slides back up, her reflection returning to the glass with Sheriff Warrington closing the rear hatch of the minivan.

(CONTINUED)

A NEW ANGLE

Franklin meets Warrington at the minivan, extending the picture of Joe Clement toward him.

FRANKLIN

Well?

Warrington's clearly distracted, something else on his mind.

WARRINGTON

That girl's state of mind, she would've had the same reaction to Mickey Mouse.

FRANKLIN

Where's Clement live, Sheriff?

WARRINGTON

About ten miles from here.

FRANKLIN

Then why don't we go see what it does prove?

Warrington's eyes are on the minivan again.

WARRINGTON

Just give me a minute.

With that, he moves aside and takes out his cell phone. Dials a number.

WARRINGTON

Yeah, lemme speak to Dan.

EXT. THE ROAD, ANOTHER AREA - DAY, JUST AFTER

Two cruisers and Franklin's sedan speed away from the scene, the cruisers with their lights flashing.

EXT. THE RIDGE - DAY, SAME

The Mercedes remains perched with its front grill over the edge and front tires right on it.

INT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

Kate sits stiffly, back pressed against the driver's seat, afraid to breathe. Her eyes seek out the red Wingman button desperately.

KATE  
How much longer, Ronald?

RONALD (O.S.)  
All I the State Police will tell me is that they're en route. Local sheriff's department is still unavailable.

KATE  
What about a tow truck, good old Triple A?

RONALD (O.S.)  
One was dispatched forty-five minutes ago.

KATE  
So where is it?

Silence.

KATE  
Ronald?

RONALD (O.S.)  
It went west instead of east on 91. Still forty minutes out.

At first Kate doesn't know how to respond. Then she just chuckles, close to breaking into outright laughter when she cuts the sound off, afraid of jarring the Mercedes further downward.

KATE  
Somebody really should lose their job over this.

RONALD (O.S.)  
You should file a complaint.

KATE  
You never asked me what I'm doing out here, driving someone else's car.

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
Doesn't come with the job  
description.

KATE  
But I want you to know. It's  
important that somebody knows.

*INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - DAY, LATER (FLASHBACK)*

*Jason looks at the neat stack of bills Kate stole from the bank on the table before him, incredibly grateful. He takes Kate in his arms and hugs her tightly.*

JASON  
*I'll make this up to you, babe. I  
promise I will.*

*They separate and Kate smiles, nodding as if she believes even though inside she knows he never will.*

*ANOTHER ANGLE*

*Jason stuffs the five WADS of hundred dollar bills into his backpack and moves for the door. Opens it, but stops short of leaving, turning back toward Kate instead. He looks like he's about to say something, then just nods almost sheepishly and closes the door behind him.*

*Kate hesitates briefly, then moves to a DRAWER, opens it and pulls out the PISTOL we remember glimpsing inside the Mercedes' glove compartment earlier.*

*EXT. AN ALLEY - DAY, LATER (FLASHBACK)*

*Jason shakes hand and gives a half hug to ANTHONY RAPOSA, his black MERCEDES, centered behind them.*

*Raposa's got "drug dealer" written all over him in a big time way, right down to the clothes and jewelry. Playing the role to perfection. Jason lays his backpack down on the car's hood and unzips the compartment in which he stuffed the cash.*

RAPOSA  
*Hey, watch the paint, man.*

*Jason tenses, slows. Raposa slaps his shoulder playfully.*

(CONTINUED)

RAPOSA

*I'm just playing with you, man. You do this deal right, you'll be able to buy yourself one of these.*

*And he pulls a CLEAR BAG OF WHITE POWDER from his pocket as Jason takes the cash from his backpack.*

ANOTHER ANGLE

*Peering around a corner of the alley, Kate is watching the whole deal go down.*

ON JASON AND RAPOSA

*Jason hands Raposa the money in exchange for the powder. Raposa flips through the packets, fanning the cash.*

RAPOSA

*You and me, we're gonna be doing a lot of business together.*

*He clamps a hand around Jason's shoulder.*

RAPOSA

*Yup, I definitely see a future for--*

*He stops, eyes bulging. Lurches away from Jason going for his gun. A cannon-sized pistol appearing in his hand.*

RAPOSA

*What the fuck?*

A NEW ANGLE

*Jason turns to see KATE approaching, PISTOL pressed against her own temple.*

KATE

*(strangely calm - to Jason)*

*Is this what you want? Is this why you saved my life . . .*

*Raposa doesn't know what to do, who to aim his gun at.*

KATE

*. . . so you could kill me later?*

(CONTINUED)

RAPOSA  
*Crazy bitch!*

*Jason looks at Kate, looks at Raposa, back to Kate, hands held forward in a conciliatory, calming gesture.*

JASON  
*Take it easy, babe. Put it down.*

KATE  
*No, you did this to me. I want you to see me do it.*

JASON  
*Kate--*

KATE  
*Say you lied to me. Say it!*

*She gestures toward the money Raposa's holding.*

KATE (CONT'D)  
*Is that why you stayed with me?  
 Were you playing me all along.*

*Jason holds his hands out toward her in a pleading gesture.*

JASON  
*No, no, I swear! It wasn't like that.*

*He takes a step toward Kate, leaving Raposa even more perplexed, gun steady on Jason now.*

RAPOSA  
*I ain't falling for this shit, man!  
 You think I was born yesterday, you fucking asshole? Make her drop the gun, you hear me? Make her drop the gun or I'll fucking shoot both of you.*

JASON  
*You heard him, Kate! This isn't a game!*

*The pistol doesn't budge from Kate's temple.*

KATE  
 (to Raposa)  
*Go ahead.*

(CONTINUED)

JASON  
*Kate, drop the gun!*

KATE  
*No.*

*Kate keeps coming, pulls the pistol's hammer back.*

CUT TO:

*Raposa, a portrait in abject confusion, rotates his gaze between her and Jason.*

CUT TO:

*Jason lurches out toward Kate.*

CUT TO:

*Raposa flinches, fires, shoots Jason.*

CUT TO:

*Jason crumpling, eyes already going glassy, midsection awash with blood.*

CUT TO:

*Raposa, honestly sorry he did it, looking toward Kate. Doesn't shoot her even though she's lowering the gun from her head.*

RAPOSA  
*Let it go, bitch.*

*Kate shoots him. Once. Twice. Three times.*

*Raposa drops the money to the alley's washed-out surface. Then drops after it.*

*Kate looks at the gun in her hand, still smoking, perhaps thinking about turning it on herself again. Glances at Jason, at Raposa, something changing on her expression.*

*She drops the gun and crouches over Jason, reaching down for him when she sees his eyes are locked open and sightless. Rises slowly back to her feet, holding her gaze on him briefly, her expression a mix of shock and resignation.*

## A NEW ANGLE

*Kate retrieves the pistol, then snatches the WADS OF CASH from the street. Clutching them tightly, she moves toward Raposa's Mercedes.*

INT. RAPOSA'S MERCEDES - DAY, JUST AFTER

*Inside the Mercedes, Kate tucks the gun inside the GLOVE COMPARTMENT and drops the cash on the passenger seat. Starts the engine and guns it.*

EXT. THE ALLEY AND STREET - DAY, JUST AFTER

*Tires screeching, Kate tears down the alley and whips out onto the street, nearly causing an accident.*

INT. THE CAR - DAY

Having finished her story, Kate takes a deep breath, eyes lingering on the red Wingman button.

KATE

Maybe I'm getting what I deserve.

RONALD (O.S.)

Clear case of self-defense.

KATE

I got my boy friend killed.

RONALD (O.S.)

Your boy friend was an asshole.

Kate doesn't argue.

KATE

I really can pick 'em, can't I?

RONALD (O.S.)

Well, you picked me.

KATE

Luck of the draw.

The atmosphere inside the car grows almost relaxed, the bond between Kate and the man behind the red Wingman button growing indescribably strong.

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
 You shouldn't have run, Kate.  
 Running never solves anything.

\*  
 \*  
 \*

KATE  
 I didn't have a choice.

\*  
 \*

The Mercedes slides a little more downward. Stops. Then slips further.

\*

KATE  
 Er, Ronald . . .

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

The front tires lose the last of their grasp on the ridge and crest over the edge, the nose of the Mercedes starting to tip precariously lower.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

Kate is jolted forward as the car's undercarriage hits with a resounding THUD.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Is the emergency brake engaged?

Kate looks at it.

KATE  
 (to the Wingman button)  
 Yes, yes!

A BEAT

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Kate, you've got to get into the backseat!

KATE  
 (in disbelief)  
 What?

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Weight distribution. There's too  
 much in the front seat. It's  
 forcing the car over!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE - DAY, SAME

And, true to his word, the undercarriage grinds against the  
 edge, slipping while . . .

A NEW ANGLE

. . . the locked-up rear tires drag across the surface.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

Kate glances down at her bloodied leg still tied tight with  
 her jacket.

KATE  
 My leg!

The car mounts a stiffer jolt downward.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 You have to do it!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

The Mercedes is moving closer and closer to tumbling over the  
 side, the downward slope increasing, frame creaking as the  
 undercarriage continues to grind forward against the edge.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

Kate twists painfully around, staring up at the rear window.  
 She has to reach down with her hands to move her bloody leg,  
 like a dead weight, into position.

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
Kate! Kate!

She screams in pain, squeezing her body *uphill* over the console and between the front seats. Clawing, manages to wrench her upper body into the backseat, still pulling to make her lower half follow.

A NEW ANGLE

The car jolts downward again, stealing some of her progress, leaving her groping for something to hold onto.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

The Mercedes is even closer to toppling over the edge, barely half of it still on the ridge.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The ROCKER PANEL scraping against a rock, shedding sparks which flicker into the damp dark pool of GASOLINE.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

Kate continues to flail desperately for something to latch onto.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Kate, talk to me! What's happening?

Kate latches onto a rear SEATBELT ASSEMBLY. Uses it to hold her ground and then starts to pull, dragging her waist and then her hips over the console and into the backseat.

A NEW ANGLE

She twists onto her back, works her left leg through and then lowers both her hands to help the injured right one follow.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

The car holds its ground, the angle downward into the ravine approaching ninety degrees.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

Kate screams in anguish, as she continues pulling her bloody leg through the opening between the seats. Past the thigh now.

RONALD (O.S.)

Kate!

KATE

(grimacing)

Shut up, Ronald. Shut . . .

Past the knee.

KATE (CONT'D)

. . . the . . .

Past the ankle.

KATE (CONT'D)

. . . fuck . . .

To the foot.

KATE (CONT'D)

. . . up.

And the foot joins the rest of her in the sharply angled backseat, leaving Kate's hands and much of her shirt bloodied. She's breathing hard, trying to steady herself.

KATE

Okay, Ronald, you can talk again.

RONALD (O.S.)

You're in the backseat.

Kate looks around as if to make sure, then retracts her gaze on the Wingman button.

KATE

Yeah, I am.

(CONTINUED)

Her eyes start to close, flutter, close again.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Try the doors, Kate. Now try the  
doors.

Kate reaches over and tries the passenger side latch.

KATE  
Jammed.

Spoken as if Ronald can see her. Then, groggily, she slides across the seat to the driver's side. Works the latch.

KATE  
Jammed too. Ronald . . .

Her head slumps to the side toward the center. She's out.

A NEW ANGLE

Kate looks like she's sleeping peacefully, as a few wisps of smoke begin to climb past the rear driver's side window of the Mercedes.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Kate? I can't hear you. . . .

EXT. JOE CLEMENT'S HOUSE - DAY, JUST AFTER

The two cruisers and Franklin's sedan pull into the driveway. Franklin climbs out slightly behind Warrington and Deputy Barnes, but catches up with them as they head up the walk of a simple house in a quiet neighborhood surrounded by wilderness and foothills.

FRANKLIN  
How you wanna play this, Sheriff?

He watches her start to draw a nine-millimeter pistol from a holster in her belt and lowers a hand to hold her wrist in place.

Warrington speaks through an expression taut with pain.

WARRINGTON  
I was thinking we knock on the door.

Franklin keeps her hand on her pistol.

(CONTINUED)

FRANKLIN

This man's killed over a hundred people.

WARRINGTON

(calmly)

Keep your gun in its holster, Detective. And stay back.

Warrington moves ahead of her up the steps of a porch to the front door and rings the bell. Rings it again when there's no response. Still nothing.

Warrington glances back at Franklin, then raps on the door hard with his fist.

WARRINGTON

Joe, it's Sheriff Warrington. You in there, Joe?

Franklin slides past Warrington and, gun still drawn, kicks in the door.

Warrington just shakes his head as he follows her inside.

WARRINGTON

That the way they do things in California, Detective?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Deputy Barnes gets a call on his walkie-talkie and remains on the porch.

INT. CLEMENT'S HOUSE - DAY, SAME

Leading with her gun, Franklin moves about the simply furnished, well-kept house. She steps through the small foyer toward an OPEN DOOR as . . .

ANOTHER ANGLE

. . . the deputy catches up with Sheriff Warrington and speaks to him in a hushed tone.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAY, SAME

The blinds are drawn, giving the room an eerie, smoke-like look.

(CONTINUED)

Franklin finds a light switch, flips it on.

HER POV

The walls are plastered with PRESS CLIPPINGS about the Freeway Killer. All newly printed, many pulled off the Internet.

A NEW ANGLE

Warrington reaches the doorway, gun still in his holster, looking almost nonchalant.

WARRINGTON

I should arrest you for breaking and entering.

Franklin doesn't look perturbed.

FRANKLIN

Go ahead. After you arrest Clement.

WARRINGTON

Plan to fight us on jurisdiction?

Franklin continues looking about the room, not paying attention.

WARRINGTON (CONT'D)

I didn't think so, considering you're not a cop.

Franklin stops, turns his way.

Warrington's holding the PLASTIC STRIP he pressed against the minivan door earlier.

WARRINGTON

I ran a set of your fingerprints through AFIS. Hope you don't mind.

Franklin stands there stone-faced, holding her gun barrel down.

WARRINGTON (CONT'D)

Turns out your real name is Angela Hart. Ex-Texas Ranger, currently a professional bounty hunter with six collars for using excessive force.

(CONTINUED)

FRANKLIN/HART

No convictions. And they deserved it. Real criminals--something you never had to deal with . . .

She gazes around the spookily papered room.

HART (CONT'D)

. . . until now.

WARRINGTON

Yeah, I was just getting to that. Hey, Joe.

He looks to the foyer. Heavy footsteps clack toward the doorway just before JOE Clement appears in full uniform. We recognize him as the deputy on the side of the road Kate passed while it was still dark. Who later watched her helpless on the ledge, studying his triangulator and listening to her conversation with Wingman.

WARRINGTON

Joe, this is Angela Hart who wants to bring you in for the million dollar reward on the capture of the Freeway Killer.

The hulking Clement takes a single menacing step forward.

CLEMENT

Take your best shot.

WARRINGTON

(to Hart)

Now's the time I say it'd be a good time to hand over your gun.

Hart stands there steaming in rage and frustration.

HART

You don't know what you're doing, you fucking back country hick. I've been on his trail for nine months!

WARRINGTON

Yeah. Now's the time I explain that the reason you couldn't find record of Joe prior to his job in Illinois is that his last name kept getting spelled wrong. Real law enforcement type mighta figured that out.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WARRINGTON (CONT'D)

Saved herself the bother of  
impersonating an officer to get in  
my good graces. The gun, please.

Hart holsters the pistol, unclasps it from her belt.

WARRINGTON

Now a real cop might be interested  
to know that all three of the  
stranded vehicles here stopped at a  
diner called Dan's 'fore the  
occupants were killed. They were  
all running away from something--Joe  
Clement's wife, that girl whose face  
he sliced up.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Hart wordlessly extends her holstered gun toward him. A  
surge of pain hits Warrington as he takes the holster, but he  
fights it down.

\*

WARRINGTON (CONT'D)

Now I might be a back country hick,  
but seems like we got an actual line  
on your Freeway Killer. Wish you  
could stick around and watch us nail  
him, but you're gonna be on the next  
plane out going wherever it's  
headed. We got an airport fifty  
miles from here.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Warrington glances at Clement.

WARRINGTON (CONT'D)

I don't think Joe would mind driving  
you.

Hart steps out to Warrington, ignoring Clement.

HART

The girl identified him. He killed  
his wife because she caught on to  
**what he was doing**. And if you let  
him go, he'll disappear and start  
all over again somewhere else.

\*  
\*

Now it's Warrington who takes a step forward.

WARRINGTON

Nobody wants to find this son of a  
bitch more than Joe. You were a  
man, I'd punch your lights out for  
saying what you did.

(CONTINUED)

HART

You were a man, you'd try it.

Warrington just shakes his head and grins.

WARRINGTON

Joe, get this piece of shit out of our jurisdiction.

Clement steps in between them, towering over Hart.

Hart glares angrily at Warrington.

HART

He'll disappear, Sheriff, just like he did the other times.

Clement takes her by the arm and steers her for the door.

HART (CONT'D)

He'll disappear and the killings will start again, somewhere else!

The door slams behind them.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Warrington doubles over in pain, lowering a HAND to a dusty table to support himself and spilling a pile of unopened MAIL to the floor. His eyes stray to the top ENVELOPE.

CLOSE ON THE ENVELOPE

Looks like a bill with the now familiar red **WINGMAN LOGO** printed on the front.

BACK ON WARRINGTON

He manages to grasp the envelope and struggles upright again. His eyes narrow, something occurring to him.

*INT. A TRUCK STOP - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)*

*Kate sits in a booth by herself, smoking a cigarette. Drinking coffee. Not touching her food. Gazing straight ahead, her expression empty.*

## A NEW ANGLE - THROUGH THE WINDOW

We can see Raposa's Mercedes parked amidst the semis and eighteen wheelers, Kate paying no attention to it. A reflection in the glass shows a brightly lit marquee, the letters backwards by readable: DAN'S DINER.

We remember this place from before, from a different flashback of the DARK SHAPE injecting butane into the car's front tire!

MAN (O.S.)

Something wrong with the food?

Shaken alert, Kate swings her gaze toward big MAN wearing an apron and a nametag identifying him as DAN.

KATE

No. Just not very hungry, I guess.

DAN

Can I bring you something else?

KATE

Just some more coffee. Please.

Dan holds his eyes on her in obvious concern. Behind him . . .

## A NEW ANGLE

A DRUNK stirs at the counter. Raking thick fingers through his beard as he wonders where he is.

## BACK ON THE BOOTH

Dan's still standing there.

DAN

You need a place to stay, there's a motel a few miles back. I could call ahead, get you a room.

KATE

No, thanks. I'll be fine.

She watches the drunk stagger toward the door, a messy mountain of a man with a face like shoe leather and boozy bloodshot eyes.

(CONTINUED)

*Dan watches the drunk leave to the sound of the door's entry bells clanging.*

*DAN*  
*About a month ago, he said the same thing. Hasn't left since.*

*KATE*  
*I'll be leaving. Promise.*

*DAN*  
*I meant having a place to go.*

*KATE*  
*It show that much?*

*Dan shrugs.*

*DAN*  
*It's a truck stop. The world passes through here on a regular basis, and not for the food. Difference being you look like you oughtta have a place to go.*

*Kate rises and reaches for her jacket.*

*KATE*  
*I'm working on it.*

*DAN*  
*Where you came from an option?*

*KATE*  
*Not at the present time.*

*DAN*  
*'Least you know what's waiting there. Something to be said for that.*

*Kate forces a smile his way, then heads for an alcove marked "RESTROOMS."*

*INT. THE DINER - NIGHT, JUST AFTER*

*Kate emerges from the alcove and heads to the cash register where Dan's standing. Hands him her check and starts to reach into her pocketbook.*

*DAN*  
*Your money's no good here.*

(CONTINUED)

*Kate doesn't bother arguing.*

*KATE*

*Thanks.*

*DAN*

*Feel free to stop in on your way home.*

*She looks at him one last time before heading through the door, jangling bells trailing her into the night.*

*EXT. THE PARKING LOT - NIGHT, JUST AFTER*

*Kate pulls Raposa's Mercedes to the road, wheels aimed straight ahead.*

*INT. THE CAR - NIGHT, SAME*

*Kate looks left--home. Looks right--the way she was headed.*

*EXT. THE PARKING LOT - NIGHT, JUST AFTER*

*The Mercedes swings right, alone on the road watched . . .*

*A NEW POV - IN THE DINER*

*. . . by DAN sadly through the plate glass window inside the diner.*

*INT. THE CAR - DAY*

*Kate wakes up coughing slightly. Looks around, disoriented.*

*A NEW ANGLE*

*Smoke is rising from outside the car, some of it filtering into the Mercedes through the shattered windshield and twisted metal.*

*KATE*

*Ronald! The gas! I think the car's on fire!*

*She coughs again, pushes herself across the backseat toward the driver's side from where the smoke is rising.*

(CONTINUED)

A NEW ANGLE - THROUGH THE WINDOW

A jagged line of small FLAMES runs the length of the car's rocker panel.

BACK ON KATE

She aims her next words toward the Wingman button.

KATE  
Ronald, can you hear me?

RONALD (O.S.)  
Just keep speaking loudly. We need to see if this car has a pass-through.

KATE  
A what?

RONALD (O.S.)  
A pass-through from the backseat into the trunk.

She starts looking around, not sure what she's looking for.

KATE  
What would it look like?

RONALD (O.S.)  
A small catch, or latch, on the ledge above the rear seats.

Kate starts to feel around, reaching uphill to manage the task.

RONALD (O.S. - CONT'D)  
It might be hidden or camouflaged. I don't have a schematic of this particular model Mercedes, but I think some of them came through with it.

KATE  
Not this one. I can't find a thing.

And all her motion suddenly jerks the car downward again. Kate grabs hold of the HEADREST, as if to keep from falling.

RONALD (O.S.)  
What was that noise?

(CONTINUED)

KATE  
The car moved again! Almost nose  
down now!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

There's only a yard left of ground between the rear tires and  
the edge.

A NEW ANGLE - UP FROM BELOW

We see the car's precarious perch from the ravine's  
perspective.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

Kate's still holding on for dear life.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Take off one of your boots, Kate.

KATE  
My . . .

RONALD (O.S.)  
You're going to try and break the  
window glass with it.

She releases her hold on the headrest stiffly and slowly,  
braces her legs against the back of the driver's seat.

Kate, carefully and painfully, then reaches down and slides  
the boot from her left foot.

KATE  
Okay, I got it off. How do I break  
the glass?

RONALD (O.S.)  
Slam the heel of the boot into the  
window.

Kate tries to better position herself near the window but the  
sharp angle on which the car is perched makes it very hard to  
find leverage.

(CONTINUED)

She does the best she can, careful not to put pressure on her wounded leg. Finally cups the heel of the boot in both hands.

A NEW ANGLE

She brings the boot back and then slams the heel forward, impacting against the glass with no effect.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Did it work?

Kate glances toward the red Wingman button.

KATE  
Nothing.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Try again.

Kate brings the boot back a little further and drives it forward a little harder. The car rocks a little, a slight CRACK appearing in the window.

A NEW ANGLE - FROM OUTSIDE THROUGH THE WINDOW GLASS

Kate seems to have found a rhythm to the motion, bringing the boot back and driving it forward again and again, MULTIPLE CRACKS now widening with each impact.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE - DAY, SAME

The cars rocks slightly with each strike, the flames rising slightly and beginning to crackle.

A NEW ANGLE

Finally it slides further downward, the rear end creeping ever closer to the point of no return, flames stretching to the height of the floorboards now and spreading further under the car's undercarriage.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

Kate stops striking, still holding the boot as she pushes herself as far back in the seat as she can.

Just to the side, we can the glass has spiderwebbed, but not shattered.

KATE

It won't break. It shattered, but it won't break.

RONALD (O.S.)

It will break, Kate. It's safety glass, but if you keep hitting it you'll break through.

She shakes her head vociferously, as if Ronald can see her.

KATE

No, the car will be off the cliff by then!

ANOTHER ANGLE

Smoke is starting to thicken outside both windows on the driver's side and just beginning to rise on the passenger side.

Kate coughs as it starts to invade the cabin.

RONALD (O.S.)

Is it the smoke, Kate?

KATE

Yes. How long . . .  
(She stops and steels herself.)  
How long until it blows?

RONALD (O.S.)

There's still time.

KATE

For the cops to get here?

RONALD (O.S.)

At least for you to get out. Keep trying! You've got to keep trying to break the window!

EXT. THE ROAD, ANOTHER AREA - DAY, SAME

Lights flashing, the cars of Sheriff Warrington and Deputy Barnes screech to a halt behind the minivan, which is in the process of being raised mechanically onto a FLATBED TRUCK.

Warrington hurries out of his car and then limps past the minivan to the truck's driver, MACKIE, who's operating the controls from behind the wheel of his truck.

WARRINGTON

Could you hold up a sec, Mackie?

MACKIE

Thought you told me to--

WARRINGTON

Well, now I'm telling you different.

He lumbers back to the flatbed itself. It takes every bit of strength and resolve he can muster to fight back the pain and climb atop the bed and stick his head through the driver's window of the minivan.

WARRINGTON'S POV

There's a RED WINGMAN BUTTON located in an upper section of controls.

Then, breathing hard and sweating through his shirt, Warrington turns to Deputy Barnes who's standing on the ground even with him.

WARRINGTON

Call the garage. Find out if the vehicle belonging to Terry Manning's boy friend had Wingman installed.

DEPUTY BARNES

I'm on it.

He rushes back to his cruiser while Warrington opens the driver's door of the minivan and climbs inside.

INT. THE MINIVAN - DAY, CONTINUOUS

Warrington steadies his breathing long enough to swallow a PAINKILLER dry. He lowers the visor and finds the KEYS tucked into a plastic bag.

(CONTINUED)

He removes the keys and turns the minivan's engine on. Then reaches up and hits the red Wingman button.

A voice just as reassuring as Ronald's, only FEMALE, answers.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

This is Wingman, Marge speaking.  
How may I help you? Do you have an  
emergency?

WARRINGTON

This is Sheriff Ben Warrington of  
Polk County. Here's my emergency:  
I got a bunch of murders you can  
help me out with.

A NEW ANGLE - OUTSIDE

An out of breath Barnes looks up at Warrington from the ground.

BARNES

Kid's SUV was equipped with Wingman,  
Sheriff.

Warrington suddenly looks a bit more grizzled and determined.

WARRINGTON

We've had stranded motorists and  
their passengers killed in the past  
month on an old highway out here. I  
need to know the times they called  
in for help, who they spoke with.

A BEAT

MARGE (O.S.)

Er, I'm gonna have to let you speak  
to a supervisor, Sheriff.

WARRINGTON

Just make it fast.

EXT. THE ROAD, ANOTHER AREA - DAY, SAME

Joe Clement's cruiser speeds along the freeway.

INT. THE CRUISER - DAY, SAME

Bounty Hunter Angela Hart sits tensely in the caged backseat, staring at the back of Deputy Clement's head.

(CONTINUED)

HART  
 You're not fooling me, Deputy. You  
 may have your yocal of a boss  
 conned, but . . .

HART'S POV - OUT THE WINDOW

They're approaching a sign marked "AIRPORT" with an arrow  
 pointing to the right.

OUTSIDE

The cruiser speeds past the road leading to the airport,  
 leaving . . .

INSIDE

. . . Hart looking back over her shoulder.

HART  
 Asshole! You fucking asshole!

Clement looks totally calm and resolved, as he cocks his gaze  
 back at her.

CLEMENT  
 You got it all wrong. I'm no killer  
 . . . until today.

A NEW ANGLE

In the front seat, Clement reaches over and twists a knob on  
 his radio/scanner.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Help's almost there, Kate. I've  
 just received confirmation.

KATE (O.S.)  
 (through coughs)  
 Maybe too . . . late.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 I won't let you down. I'm your  
 Wingman and I'm going to get you out  
 of this.

Hart leans forward against the cage, realizing.

(CONTINUED)

HART  
Son of a bitch . . . That's how you  
find them . . .

Clement doesn't turn back to look at her, focuses on his TRIANGULATOR instead, the arrow still sweeping through a single flashing blip.

HART  
Where we going?

Clement smacks the triangulator in frustration, then seems to realize something as the arrow continue its fruitless sweep.

CLEMENT  
(eyes widening)  
Oh my God . . .

Hart bangs her hands against the cage and rattles it.

HART  
I'm talking to you, asshole! Where  
are we going?

Clement still doesn't turn.

CLEMENT  
You wanted the Freeway Killer . . .

Hart's gaze focuses on the SHOTGUN locked into brackets in the cruiser's front seat.

Clement's hands squeeze the steering wheel tighter.

CLEMENT (CONT'D)  
. . . didn't you?

And he floors the accelerator.

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY, SAME

The cruiser drives on, picking up speed.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

The car thickening with smoke, Kate continues to pound the glass with the heel of her boot, still not able to crack through the much larger spiderweb pattern.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE - DAY, SAME

The flames continue to climb, smoke rising into the air. The car jolts downward again, the tires catching in a last bit of soft ground before smooth rock takes over. Hit that and it plunges downward into the ravine below.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

Kate drops the boot. Leans back as best she can, coughing and exhausted.

KATE  
 (between coughs)  
 It's no use, Ronald. It's no use. .  
 . .

A BEAT

RONALD (O.S.)  
 Find the knife, Kate!

KATE  
 What?

RONALD (O.S.)  
 The knife you used to cut through  
 the seatbelt! Find it!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ROAD, ANOTHER AREA - DAY, SAME

Sheriff Warrington is still sitting in the minivan when a voice suddenly fills the cab.

(CONTINUED)

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
 Sheriff Worthington, this is Al  
 Lassiter. Wingman shift supervisor.  
 How can I help you?

Warrington finds himself looking up at the red Wingman  
 button, just like Kate. He fights back the light-headedness  
 caused by the painkiller he swallowed.

WARRINGTON  
 That's Warrington, Mr. Lassiter, and  
 you can help me figure out which one  
 of your employees might be a  
 murderer.

LASSITER (O.S.)  
 I don't think I understand.

WARRINGTON  
 We got a killer preying on stranded  
 motorists, all of whom had Wingman  
 installed in their vehicles.

A pause.

LASSITER (O.S.)  
 Sheriff, I have your position as--

WARRINGTON  
 What the fuck's my position got to  
 do with anything?

LASSITER (O.S.)  
 Our dispatch center's located in  
 Lantana, Florida. I don't see how  
 one of my people could've murdered  
 anyone 3,000 miles away.

CLOSE ON WARRINGTON

Taking Lassiter's words in, trying to figure out where to go  
 with this next.

WARRINGTON  
 All right, I wanna give you some  
 dates. See exactly what time our  
 victims called into Wingman for  
 help.

(CONTINUED)

Warrington fishes a MEMO PAD from his pocket and flips it open.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

Bent downhill at an incredibly awkward angle, Kate stretches her hand for the still bloody KNIFE, which has slid under the BRAKE PEDAL.

CUT TO:

INT. CLEMENT'S CRUISER - DAY, SAME

Angela Hart is staring at her pistol, holstered on the passenger seat next to Clement alongside his scanner/radio.

KATE (O.S.)  
I've got the knife!

RONALD (O.S.)  
Find the airbag symbol almost directly over your head now against the passenger side headrest in the backseat. Once you do . . .

Hart's next words drown out Ronald's, as she lowers a hand to her boot.

HART  
Gotta hand it to you, Deputy. You must qualify for the Guinness World Book of Records. What's the count really? A hundred? Two hundred? More?

Clement shows no reaction.

A NEW ANGLE

Hart starts to slide a KNIFE from a sheath hidden in her boot.

HART  
But your own wife; that one must've hurt a little. How'd she find out, Joe? Come on, you can tell me.

She seems him stiffen, starts to bring the knife upward . . .

(CONTINUED)

HART'S POV

. . . intending to stab him in the back of the neck through the cage.

HART (CONT'D)  
 Catch you bringing home a little souvenir, that girl's face maybe, something like that?

Clement stiffens behind the wheel, eyes Hart in the rearview mirror.

CLEMENT  
 I didn't kill my wife. But I'm gonna kill the man who did.

A NEW ANGLE

From inside the cruiser, SMOKE is clearly evident to the right, rising from the steep drop off the shoulder of the road.

THE FRONT SEAT

Clement jerks the steering wheel to the right and the car veers onto the shoulder, nearly clipping ANOTHER CAR that had slowed at the sight of the smoke, before careening off the road.

THE BACK SEAT

The sudden motion jars the knife from Hart's hand. It falls to the floor and she drops to retrieve it.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

The entire car is thick with smoke now, some of the highest flames creeping over the sight line of the windows.

Knife in hand, retching, Kate is shredding a portion of the backseat, high near the headrest.

KATE  
 What exactly am I looking for?

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
Small cylindrical object, maybe two  
inches long. Looks like a large  
bullet. An airbag charge.

Kate keeps slicing through the seat's padding.

KATE  
A *what*?

RONALD (O.S.)  
The device that sets off the side  
curtain airbags. Makes them  
inflate.

A NEW ANGLE

Kate's knife strikes something metallic.

KATE  
I think, I think I found it.

RONALD (O.S.)  
Pry it free! Hurry!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE/LEDGE - DAY, SAME

Amidst the smoke and flames, the car jolts a bit more  
downward.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

Kate pulls the dark, cylindrical object Ronald was describing  
from the car's upholstery.

KATE  
Got it!

RONALD (O.S.)  
Now hold the charge against the  
glass, Kate, and hit it with the  
heel of your boot. As hard as you  
can.

Kate hesitates.

(CONTINUED)

KATE

But my hand . . . When the charge  
goes off . . .

RONALD (O.S.)

It's your only chance, Kate. *Do it!*

The first time he's really raised his voice.

Kate starts the boot heel into motion. Stops.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MINIVAN - DAY, SAME

Sheriff Warrington, utterly befuddled, leans closer to the red Wingman button.

WARRINGTON

Wait a minute. *None* of our accident  
victims called Wingman?

LASSITER (O.S.)

Not from your area in the time frame  
provided.

WARRINGTON

That just don't make any sense.

LASSITER (O.S.)

I'm only telling you what my records  
show, Sheriff.

Warrington leans back, trying to figure out what this means.

WARRINGTON

(to himself)

Or they called and someone else  
answered. . . .

CUT TO:

INT. THE CAR - DAY, SAME

Kate's holding the airbag charge against the window glass in a trembling hand amidst the thickening smoke.

KATE

I can't do it. . . .

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
You've got to!

KATE  
*I can't!*

CUT TO:

INT. THE MINIVAN - DAY, SAME

Warrington's features are sharpening, everything becoming clear to him at once.

LASSITER (O.S.)  
What was that, Sheriff? I didn't--

Warrington leans forward again.

WARRINGTON  
Your signal, could it be intercepted?

LASSITER (O.S.)  
What?

WARRINGTON  
Just tell me. If someone had the frequency, if they knew someone was going to hit their red button, could they intercept the signal before it went through?

LASSITER (O.S.)  
Theoretically, I suppose--

His voice cuts out when a jolt shakes the minivan.

A NEW ANGLE

Warrington leans out the door, sees MACKIE, the tow truck driver, unhitching the minivan from the flatbed.

MACKIE  
Sorry, Sheriff. Passerby just reported a car fire off the Old Mine Road. One of your cruisers is already responding.

WARRINGTON  
One of *my* cruisers?

(CONTINUED)

MACKIE  
 Nearly hit the car of the guy called  
 it in tearing ass to the scene.

WARRINGTON  
 (to himself)  
 Clement . . .

Warrington leaps down from the flatbed, landing near Deputy Barnes.

WARRINGTON  
 Let's go!

They rush off.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

Kate brings the boot heel forward, flinching at the last moment which makes her miss badly.

RONALD (O.S.)  
 You can do it, Kate! I'm telling  
 you, you can do it!

She turns away and tries again. Comes a little closer.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE - DAY, SAME

The Mercedes' rear tires grind further downward, the car continuing to tip over the edge.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE/LEDGE - DAY, SAME

The cruiser follows Kate's path down from the night before, only slower and more in control.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CRUISER - DAY, SAME

Clement continues driving like a madman, making it . . .

(CONTINUED)

THE BACKSEAT

. . . impossible for Hart to get hold of her knife, until . . .  
.

OUTSIDE

. . . the cruiser slams into a rock bed, fifty feet away from the flaming Mercedes.

INSIDE

Clement throws open his door and lunges out, followed by Hart's gaze as he charges toward the Mercedes.

HART'S POV

The shape of KATE ROSS is intermittently visible near the rear driver's side window through the smoke.

BACK ON HART

She finally gets the knife, a Special Forces issue, in hand and brings it upward.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

Still coughing horribly, Kate stops just short of slamming her boot into the AIRBAG CHARGE held against the spiderwebbed window glass.

KATE'S POV

She sees Clement rushing toward the car.

KATE  
The police are here! They finally  
made it!

And she raps on the window to make sure Clement can see her through the smoke.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CRUISER - DAY, SAME

Angela Hart is using her knife to slice through the cage's steel as if it were butter. Creating an opening.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ROAD, ANOTHER AREA - DAY, SAME

Another cruiser carrying Sheriff Warrington and Deputy Barnes flies down the road.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

Incredibly relieved, Kate continues rapping on the glass as Clement draws closer. Their eyes meet, as he nears the car.

KATE

Get me out of here!

She glances down the length of the car, into the ravine, the bottom seeming a thousand miles away.

KATE (CONT'D)

*Hurry!*

Clement's gaze holds hers an instant longer before he lurches toward the very back of the car.

Kate twists toward the rear window to follow him.

KATE

No! *What are you doing?*

RONALD (O.S.)

Kate, Kate, what's happening?

CUT TO:

INT. CLEMENT'S CRUISER - DAY, SAME

Hart continues slicing steel away with her knife, pulling it back to widen the opening and bloodying her hands in the process.

She looks out the window.

(CONTINUED)

HART'S POV

Standing amidst the smoke and flames, hands pressed firmly on the trunk, Clement is trying to push the Mercedes the rest of the way off the ledge.

Hart gives up cutting and starts to squeeze herself through the opening already created.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE/LEDGE - DAY, SAME

The Mercedes' rear tires drop into a depression just a yard from the edge.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

Kate's watching Clement push, the exertion showing on his face through the smoke, as the car starts to edge forward again.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE/LEDGE - DAY, SAME

The Mercedes' rear tires rock forward, starting to climb out of the depression.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

Kate's face is a mask of terror and confused panic.

KATE

*Noooooooo! What are you doing?*

RONALD (O.S.)

*Kate, Kate, talk to me!*

KATE

*He's trying to push me over! The cop's trying to push me over!*

(CONTINUED)

She realizes she still has the airbag charge and boot in hand. Pins the charge back against the glass, snaps the boot heel back into position, holding her breath to stop from coughing.

CUT TO:

INT. CLEMENT'S CRUISER - DAY, SAME

Angela Hart drops into the front seat, shimmying her legs through the opening she cut in the cage.

A NEW ANGLE

Her feet clump down awkwardly, as she tears her pistol from its holster.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE/LEDGE - DAY, SAME

The hulking Clement continues to push against the two-ton car, inching it further toward the edge.

ANGLE UP

From below the nose into the car, framing Clement in the shot.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

Kate lets out an angry wail and jams the boot heel forward.

A NEW ANGLE

The heel impacts against the airbag charge and blows the glass outward in a splintery shower.

ON KATE

Blood sprays backward into her face from her now mangled hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE/LEDGE - DAY, SAME

Impact from the blast sends the trunk lid flying open, then bouncing back down, as Clement is thrown backward to the ground.

He stumbles to his feet, lurches toward the car again.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MERCEDES - DAY, SAME

Extending both her good and bloody hand before her, Kate pushes her torso through the jagged opening the charge blew in the window. She outside, all the way to her waist, when her BELT snags on some jagged glass. Feels the car jolt downward again.

Kate turns just as the hulking form of Clement throws himself at the rear of the car again.

KATE

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Trying to shimmy herself out, the mad-eyed Clement about to slam into the car when . . .

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Clement stops, stiffens, staggers sideways, revealing . . .

KATE'S POV

Angela Hart standing in a combat stance, pistol held in both hands.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE - DAY, SAME

Clement turns clumsily toward her, reaching for his own gun, revealing the BLOODY HOLES in his back, when Hart . . .

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

. . . opens fire again, shooting Clement until her nine-millimeter clicks empty, the slide locks opens, and Clement crumples to the ground and rolls down a steep rise into a bed of rocks.

(CONTINUED)

## A NEW ANGLE

Hart hurries toward Kate. Standing amidst the flames, she grabs hold of her with the Mercedes finally on the verge of tipping over once and for all.

Hart doesn't hesitate, jerks Kate free of the car despite the glass tearing through her clothes to her skin on the way out. Then drags her free of the expected blast.

The two of them collapse to their knees on the ground halfway to Clement's cruiser, the Mercedes centered behind them, the TRUNK almost out of frame.

Kate hugs Hart gratefully.

KATE

Thank you! Oh God, thank you!

Hart hugs her back, smooths her hair.

HART

No thanks needed. I got a million bucks to pick up.

Kate doesn't grasp her meaning, doesn't try to.

## A NEW ANGLE - THE CAR STILL CENTERED BEHIND THEM

Hart eases Kate away, looks her over: her leg, her mangled hand.

HART

We better get you to a hospital.

As . . .

## BEHIND THEM

The trunk lifts slightly upward and A HAND emerges. The lid rises higher, unseen by either Kate or Hart as a FIGURE begins to emerge.

## CLOSE ON KATE AND HART

Hart climbs to her feet, reaches down to help Kate climb to hers.

(CONTINUED)

HART

Come on.

ANOTHER ANGLE

A crunching sounds as the Mercedes finally tips over the edge, sailing downward toward the ravine, watched by Kate and Angela Hart as it explodes halfway down, followed by an even larger blast on impact below.

Hart turns to Kate, smiling.

ANGLE ON KATE

She's looking past Hart, clearly terrified, unable to speak. Hart turns.

A NEW ANGLE

Standing before them is a hulking, bearded FIGURE Kate recognizes as the DRUNK she glimpsed in the truck stop diner!

CUT TO:

*INT. THE DINER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)*

*Seated in a booth, Kate looks up at DAN, the owner of the diner.*

*KATE*

*No, thanks. I'll be fine.*

*She watches the drunk stagger toward the door, a messy mountain of a man with a face like shoe leather and boozy bloodshot eyes.*

*Dan watches the drunk leave to the sound of the door's entry bells clanging.*

*DAN*

*About a month ago, he said the same thing. Hasn't left since.*

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DINER PARKING LOT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

*The drunk, aka the Freeway Killer, finds his TOW TRUCK blocked in by a pair eighteen wheelers. Looks back at Kate's Mercedes and then grabs a thick blanket-sized sheet of material (soundproofing to muffle the screams of his victims) from the rear of his truck.*

CUT TO:

A NEW ANGLE - JUST AFTER

*Just as Kate exits the diner, we can see the trunk lid of the Mercedes lowering back into place and sealing with a click.*

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE/LEDGE - DAY

As Kate and Angela Hart watch, the FREEWAY KILLER yanks off a WIRELESS HEADSET and pulls a SCANNER/RADIO (almost identical to the one we saw Clement using) from his belt.

He discards them, then sheds his fake BEARD and WIG, and speaks in the voice of RONALD, the voice from the Wingman button.

FREEWAY KILLER

I'm proud of you, Kate, very proud.

Hart shoves Kate behind her.

HART

(to Kate)

Get out of here! *Run!*

The Freeway Killer starts to advance, utterly ignoring Angela Hart.

FREEWAY KILLER

(to Kate - utterly calm as before)

Trunk lid jammed in the crash.

The Freeway Killer continues to advance.

FREEWAY KILLER

Thanks for triggering that charge.  
You saved both of us.

(CONTINUED)

Kate's too terrified to move.

Hart rouses her with a shake.

HART

Go!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ROAD, ANOTHER AREA - DAY, SAME

The cruiser with Sheriff Warrington and Deputy Barnes inside jets past the **HAUNTED MINE** sign.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIDGE - DAY, SAME

Kate tries to scamper up the hill, losing ground thanks to her wounded leg and hand, as quickly as she gains it.

Angela Hart reaches instinctively for her pistol, only to find it's not there as the Freeway Killer advances toward her almost casually.

She moves to block his path, launching a vicious Karate strike his way.

The Freeway Killer effortlessly deflects it and snaps her neck like a rag doll. As she crumples, he continues on toward . . .

ANOTHER ANGLE

. . . Kate who's now trying to claw her way up the hill. She twists round in time to see the Freeway Killer lifting a large rock from the ground and raising it directly overhead in line with her head.

FREEWAY KILLER (O.S.)

(Ronald's voice)

*It's time to stop running*, Kate.

\*

Kate cowers, closing her eyes as her hands come up to shield her face.

BARNES (O.S.)

Sheriff, down here!

(CONTINUED)

## A NEW ANGLE

Kate peels her eyes open, sees Barnes rushing toward her down the hill well ahead of Sheriff Warrington who's leaning against a rock for support.

She spins around fast, toward the Freeway Killer, Ronald to her.

## KATE'S POV

He's gone, the ROCK swaying back and forth on the ground where he left it.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

Barnes and Warrington reach Kate, her gaze ignoring them in favor of staring straight ahead, into the distance at . . . nothing.

## PULL AWAY

To Warrington reaching Kate while Barnes, gun drawn, advances toward the bodies of Angela Hart and Joe Clement.

## A FULL SHOT

All of them mere specs on the landscape as we see the flaming carcass of the Mercedes in the ravine.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY, LATER

An establishing shot.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION, COFFEE ROOM - DAY, SAME

Kate, still visibly shaken, sits at a table opposite Sheriff Warrington. She's cradling a cup of coffee in her left hand, leaving her now bandaged right hand off to the side on the dull, beaten surface.

Between Kate and Warrington lie the Freeway Killer's SCANNER RADIO and WIRELESS HEADSET assembly, and Clement's TRIANGULATOR.

(CONTINUED)

Warrington leans forward and grabs a PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE. Starts to open it, then smiles and lays it back down on the table.

WARRINGTON

This one's yours.

He picks up his bottle in its place and dry swallows two of his pills, as Kate runs her good hand over the equipment between them, stopping on the triangulator.

WARRINGTON

Clement used that to track the killer down. Must've finally figured out the signal was coming from inside your car.

KATE

That's why he tried to push it over the edge.

Warrington nods, a bit sadly.

WARRINGTON

Wanted the killer for himself. Can't say I blame him, under the circumstances.

Kate touches the killer's wireless headset and scanner as if they might be hot.

WARRINGTON

We found the killer's truck at the rest stop where you had coffee. Near as we can figure, it was blocked in around the time you left. Explains why he climbed into the trunk. Owner of the diner said he started coming around right when the killings started. (A BEAT) That's how he picked out his victims. Waited for the right ones to come along--people like you, on the run from something.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Kate continues to run her hand along the headset.

KATE

(distantly)  
He said his name was Ronald.

\*  
\*

(CONTINUED)

WARRINGTON

*Maybe it is.* No match on the fingerprints yet. My guess is there won't be.

\*

Warrington hesitates, leans forward.

WARRINGTON

Your story about what happened in the city yesterday checks out. Cops there are on their way to hear it for themselves, take you into custody probably.

Kate continues to listen.

WARRINGTON (CONT'D)

You happen to be gone when they arrive, I'm none the wiser.

Kate smiles slightly, *her gaze sharpening.*

\*

KATE

I think maybe it's time I *stopped running,* started facing things.

\*

\*

Warrington nods.

WARRINGTON

Always a good idea.

Kate shakes one of her painkillers from her prescription bottle and swallows it down with her coffee.

KATE

You'll get him, right?

WARRINGTON

(shrugging)

Tell you the truth, I don't expect we will.

CLOSE ON KATE

Her dark eyes filling with fear again as we . . .

FADE TO BLACK.

*. . . to the sound of tires screeching, brakes squealing. The thud of impact.*

A BEAT follows, then . . .

(CONTINUED)

RONALD (O.S.)  
Wingman. How may I help you?

THE END