

THE STAND

by

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based on the novel by Stephen King

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FIRST DRAFT (to Studio)
(Single Film Version)

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"Nearly all men can stand adversity,
but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."

-- Abraham Lincoln

"The West is the best.
Get here, and we'll do the rest."

-- Jim Morrison, "The End"

FADE IN:

EXT. SONORAN DESERT -- DAY

A lone figure walks the vast sun-blasted flats of the Sonoran Desert. He carries no pack and wears no shade in the heat of the afternoon. His hair hangs loose to his shoulders. There is no trail; he just walks out among the dust devils, in a denim jacket and rattlesnake boots. And he is smiling -- always smiling -- his face at once handsome and horrible. This is RANDALL FLAGG (40s).

CUT TO:

HILLIER COUNTRY

In hillier country, he tops a scrub-covered slope and sees, in the distance, the long low skyline of Las Vegas. He stops to take it in, his eyes finding the Strip with its menagerie of false monuments wavering in the heat.

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - DAY

Flagg comes down the Strip, moving through the crowds of tourists like someone not of their world. Every now and then, when someone brushes up against him, he closes his eyes and takes in the sensation of human contact.

He passes all the scaled-down, faux cityscapes -- New York, Paris, Rome -- and walks toward his destination with his unhurried, even royal pace: the black pyramid of the Luxor.

INT. LUXOR CASINO - CARD HALL - DAY

He comes through the slot machines into Luxor's grand Card Hall, where blackjack tables are lined in rows. The room is huge, high-ceilinged, its pillars painted gold. It is alive with people winning and losing fortunes.

Flagg walks through the room, a procession of one, looking from person to person until finally he sees: An empty blackjack table on a kind of dais in back of the room.

The dealer (30s) nods professionally as Flagg approaches. His name tag reads LLOYD. Flagg settles onto a seat.

FLAGG

I'm here, Lloyd. Took a while,
but here I am.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LLOYD HENREID
Good morning, sir.

Flagg pulls out of his pocket a hundred dollar bill and
lays it on the table. It's old, but in mint condition.

Lloyd looks it over. It has the Federal reserve seal
"K."

LLOYD HENREID
'63. You don't see these every
day. You sure you want to give me
this? Must be collectable --

Flagg grins at the man, never breaking eye contact.

FLAGG
It's okay. I collect other
things.

So Lloyd counts out the chips, and slides them to Flagg,
who simply slides them all back into betting position.

LLOYD HENREID
Very good, sir.

FLAGG
How long you been out here?

LLOYD HENREID
A year and change.

Lloyd deals and turns over his up card. Jack of Spades.
Flagg doesn't look at his cards, but signals for a third.

FLAGG
Plan to die here?

LLOYD HENREID
I plan to *retire* here, which I
hope comes first. You never know.

FLAGG
I do --

Lloyd looks at him, not sure he's understood him right.

LLOYD HENREID
Do we know each other?

FLAGG
Not in the sense you mean.

LLOYD HENREID
What other sense is there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLAGG

You're not a nice guy, Lloyd. You
have a past.

Lloyd looks around to see if anyone else is hearing this.

LLOYD HENREID

Past is past. I'm clean. I have
a dealer's license now. It's
legit.

(acidly)

You know my old man or something?

Flagg grins again. He turns over his cards, one after
another. All three are blank. Lloyd looks at them, then
at Flagg, whose eyes buzz with bright energy.

LLOYD HENREID

What did you do with the cards I
gave you, sir?

FLAGG

I like this room.

Lloyd looks again and sees Flagg's cards now have a kind
of Rorschach image of an eye on each one.

FLAGG

Something's coming, Lloyd.
Something's gonna ride the wind.
Maybe you feel it.

Lloyd seems mesmerized by the cards. He can't look away.

FLAGG

Most will be blown away, but some
of us -- we're gonna be reborn.
Made pure. Put right. Believe me
now.

(beat)

I'm Randall Flagg, Lloyd.

LLOYD HENREID

Yes, Mr. Flagg. Yes, sir.

FLAGG

And I'm about to offer you a job.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARNETTE BAR MILL - ROLLING MILL - DAY

Workers are spilling out of the gates of an East Texas steel mill and heading to the parking lot, hard hats and lunch pails in their hands. A few guys running in late for the next shift are catcalled by the ones coming out.

STU REDMAN (40) emerges from the group, pulling on his jacket. He moves with the guys, but he's got the energy of a loner -- "old-time tough" as the saying goes.

VIC PALFREY (40) catches up to him.

VIC PALFREY

Hey, Stu, you goin' to Hap's -- ?

STU

Why not. I'm off tomorrow.

VIC PALFREY

Same here. Cutting our hours right to the end, huh? Assholes. Working on your place?

Stu reaches his beat-up Ford truck, an empty gun rack and a sticker in the cab -- a Calvin pissing on the Mazda logo.

STU

Gotta get the roof planked. Weather's coming in.

VIC PALFREY

You been thinking much about after? -- I heard Nucor in Jewett's gonna have a few spots opening up in the rebar plant.

Stu throws his stuff in the back.

STU

Heard that too. I think I'll give the guys with kids a head start.

VIC PALFREY

Man, half those guys are gonna sit back and suck off of Uncle Sam for a while. You watch.

STU

That's not the half I'm thinking about. See you over there.

Vic waves him off. Stu climbs in and cranks up his truck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OPENING CREDITS BEGIN.

EXT. DOWNTOWN (ARNETTE, TX) - DAY

Stu drives through downtown Arnette.

It's a small town with a quarter of its population just coming off the second shift. Stu switches on his RADIO, and scans stations:

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
'... a tropical destination to be
revealed on the Adzillatron'; 'gun
given to the 5-year-old as a
birthday gift'; 'too big to fail';
'no no no'; 'yours from Bank of
America. You're welcome.'

Finally the OPENING CHORDS of Cream's "White Room" sound. He cranks it.

Main Street is as busy as it gets with people getting errands run before the businesses close. Most stores have Christmas decorations up, but they hang like bad news in the windows.

OPENING CREDITS END.

CUT TO:

EXT. HAPSCOMB'S TEXACO (ARNETTE, TX) - DUSK

The sun has gone down. At a two-pump gas station half a mile outside Arnette, a big yellow Texaco sign is turned on. Stu's truck pulls in.

INT. HAPSCOMB'S TEXACO (ARNETTE, TX) - DUSK

Inside, four men sit drinking around a metal desk that serves as the checkout counter for the place. BILL "HAP" HAPSCOMB (50), in greasy coveralls, presides.

BILL HAPSCOMB
They'll sell it again. Mills that
big don't go under.

VIC PALFREY
All I'm saying is last time they
were painting, cleaning up. None
of that's going on now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORM BRUETT (40), the only one in a button-down shirt,
finishes his Shiner and gets two more from the cold case.

He tosses one to Vic, who is using a coin to scratch off
instant lottery tickets.

Stu is only half-listening. The bigger part of his brain
is enjoying the majestic evening coming on.

NORM BRUETT

We gotta attract some company to
put its HQ here.

VIC PALFREY

Nobody's coming to East Texas to
do business. Not until we get a
mayor who understands something
other than running for mayor.

Stu takes a swig off his beer and looks out at the
darkening rangeland. The only thing out there is Route
93, and in a moment, a pair of headlights appears on the
horizon.

BILL HAPSCOM

You mean our honorable Mr. Hollis
J. Two-Counts-of-Misuse-of-Funds?
That idiot's a big turd in a
little bowl if ever there was one.

Stu watches the car. When the headlights slide onto the
shoulder then jerk back to the road, he sits up a bit.

VIC PALFREY

He's up again next year. Shit,
Hap, you should run.

BILL HAPSCOM

Naw. None of your union guys'd
come out for me. They don't know
me. It's Stu should run.

NORM BRUETT

I'd rather be king than mayor.

STU

I'd rather be hunting whitetail,
actually.

They all chuckle, except Stu. The car is a dusty Chevy
wagon that's been driven hard. It reaches town and aims
itself at the Texaco.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU

You better turn off the pumps,
Hap.

*

The car jumps the curb into the lot and doesn't stop.

*

They see the driver's head roll loosely and hit the
windshield, shattering the glass.

*

*

NORM BRUETT

Holy Christ!

Just as it plows through the pumps, Stu reaches past Hap
and hits the cut-off switches.

*

*

The pumps shatter through the front windows into the
little store. The car's undercarriage gets hung up on
the pump island in a burst of sparks and jerks to a stop.
Its motor REVS once, then cuts out.

*

VIC PALFREY

Is it gonna blow -- ?!

*

*

BILL HAPSCOM

It would've already -- Jesus, the
fella must be shit-the-bed drunk!

*

*

*

STU

Look at the windows.

*

*

There's blood on the inside of the car. A lot of it.

*

EXT. HAPSCOM'S TEXACO (ARNETTE, TX) - DUSK

Stu hustles out to the wreck. The driver door squeals
open and CHARLES CAMPION (24) spills out, a bloody mess.

*

*

VICTOR PALFREY

Whoa!

STU

Call an ambulance.

Vic runs back into the station. Stu approaches the man.

*

There's something wrong with his eyes. They're swelled
out like his brain's swelling. His nose is leaking
bloody snot. He reaches out blindly. Stu takes his arm.

*

*

*

CAMPION

The clock went red. They're all
D-E-A-D down there.

*

*

*

STU

You're okay, buddy. We got you.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAMPION

My girls --

Stu looks up into the station wagon, but he can't see.
He gestures for Norm and Hap to look.

STU

Take her easy. We're checking
now.

Norm opens the passenger door to look inside and GAGS.

A woman is crumpled in the passenger seat, a toddler in
her arms. They're dead, covered in snot and blood and
vomit. The woman's face is turned away, but the
toddler's eyes are popped open wide like a doll's.

STU

Check the back.

NORM BRUETT

Aw, Stu--

STU

Check the back. I don't know how
many he means.

CAMPION

Redman --

Stu turns to Campion, in disbelief at what he's just
heard. Beside them, the wagon's cooling ENGINE TICKS.

CAMPION

It's you, isn't it? I made it.
She said you'd know what to do --

STU

Just take it easy. Lay back.

Norm opens the wagon's gate. Nothing. When he closes it
again, he sees: California plates and a parking pass for
Ft. Irwin Army Base.

Hap comes over and crouches beside Stu, gaping at Campion
who starts raving, his speech beginning to slur.

CAMPION

*If the gates are closed, I'm gonna
crash through -- !*

BILL HAPSCOM

You feel the heat off him -- His
brains must be frying in his head!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAMPION

Baby can be a'sleepin' in the car --

In the distance, they HEAR a SIREN coming.

CAMPION

Horse-ride?!

But Stu is watching Campion's eyes. They've started to actually sweat blood. Then Campion starts seizing so violently Stu can barely hold onto him.

CUT TO:

EXT. STU REDMAN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Stu comes up a long twin-rut drive that ends at a small house, more of a cabin. He's in the process of fixing it up. Part of the roof is being redone, its skeletal ribs are covered with blue tarps, CRINKLING in the wind.

He shuts off his truck and sits in the cab, thinking all of this through. Inside, his DOG -- a blue heeler -- begins to BARK. Stu gets out and goes toward his dark door.

STU

Get down, boy. It's just me.

CUT TO:

EXT. FT. IRWIN ARMY BASE - APPROACH ROAD - NIGHT

A white SUV comes down an access road ending at the gates of Ft. Irwin Army Base. Two news vans are parked in front. REPORTERS see the SUV and jump out, cameras coming on.

INT. UNMARKED SUV - BACK - NIGHT

COL. STARKEY (50) rides in back, alone. As the base gates are being opened, Reporters swarm the SUV.

REPORTER #1

Can you tell us why the base was locked down today?

REPORTER #2

What is your name and rank?

But in two seconds, the SUV is through. The gate closes behind it. Only then does Starkey pull out of satchel beside him a full-face gas mask. He puts it on.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ON VIDEO

Live security cameras show the rooms and corridors of a large underground lab complex. Everyone inside is dead. Nothing moves except a single centrifuge, which spins and spins with no one left alive to turn it off.

INT. FT. IRWIN ARMY BASE - SECURITY HUB - NIGHT

Starkey watches it spin. He's standing at a monitor in the base's security hub with LT. COL. CREIGHTON (40s).

COL. STARKEY

How many?

LT. COL. CREIGHTON

112 total. The accident happened at 02:37. Everyone's accounted for except Charles Campion. Private. He got out with his wife and kid before the base was sealed. We're praying we find them first.

COL. STARKEY

Praying?

LT. COL. CREIGHTON

Yes, sir -- that we find them out of gas and dead in their car. With the windows rolled up.

He hands Col. Starkey a blow-up of Campion's military ID.

LT. COL. CREIGHTON

Elevator guard Project Blue detail. No clearance. There was an alarm glitch. Nothing mag-locked. We realized he slipped through at 0900. He doesn't know what he's got, just that it's contagious.

COL. STARKEY

No chance they made it out clean?

LT. COL. CREIGHTON

Communicability's 99.4% with latency under an hour --

There is ONE KNOCK and LT. COL. HAMMER (35) comes in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LT. COL. HAMMER

Sirs. Private Campion just
surfaced.
DOA at a community hospital ER in
Leon County, Texas.

LT. COL. CREIGHTON

Texas -- ?!

Starkey's look is one of epic regret as he quickly begins
to calculate the coming apocalypse.

LT. COL. HAMMER

He crashed his car in a town
called Arnette. His wife and kid
were dead in the vehicle.

Lt. Col. Creighton wipes his face, furious. Lt. Col.
Hammer looks queasy. Only Col. Starkey remains composed.

COL. STARKEY

He didn't get to Texas on the gas
that was in his car. It's out.

(beat)

He's crossed people's paths.
We've got to assume at least some
of 'em were on their way to an
airport, or a train station. A
bus depot.

LT. COL. CREIGHTON

Jesus --

COL. STARKEY

It's the holidays.

He shakes his head at the titanic bad luck of this.

COL. STARKEY

I'm calling it. We're in 'Shroud
Protocol' now, gentlemen. Repeat
it back.

LT. COL. HAMMER

'Shroud,' sir.

COL. STARKEY

That's a command under my
authority. You know what comes
next. You know. God bless you,
son.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lt. Col. Hammer looks back at him, tearing up. He salutes.

CUT TO:

DREAM SEQUENCE - EXT. THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - FLATIRONS - DAY

A mountain peak rises up from garlands of Western Pine, a rough pyramid of sandstone. It's an iconic Rocky Mountain image. An old woman's voice says:

MOTHER ABIGAIL (V.O.)

Stuart --

CUT TO:

INT. STU REDMAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM/KITCHEN - DAWN
(REALITY)

Stu wakes from this dream to his PHONE RINGING. It STOPS, then STARTS AGAIN. He gets up and goes to the kitchen to get it. He's built for sport, but he's not in shape, with a little beer gut even. But he's comfortable in his skin.

STU

Yeah --

He starts a gas burner for coffee, lighting the kitchen match off a strip of sandpaper nailed to the wall there.

BILL HAPSCOM (V.O.)

Stu, it's Hap. I'm up in Braintree. At the hospital.

A beat. If Stu wasn't quite awake before, he is now.

BILL HAPSCOM (V.O.)

I brought Vic and Lila in about an hour ago. Neither one could drive they were so sick. My wife's watching their kids.

(beat)

-- That deal last night, maybe.

STU

I'm feeling fine. What about Norm?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BILL HAPSCOM (V.O.)

(lowering his voice)

*I got it, Stu, whatever the hell
it is. I'm sneezing. I got a
headache so bad it feels like my
head is coming apart.*

*
*
*
*
*

STU

Then you're where you should be.
Tell them about last night, Hap.
The doctors need to know, okay --

BILL HAPSCOM (V.O.)

*I can't find Norm. He's not
answering at home or down at the
shop -- I mean, Christ on a pony,
we were just trying to help that
son of a bitch!*

*

STU

Tell them. I'm on my way.

*

He hangs up and realizes something. He looks around.

*

STU

Jack -- ?

*
*

He steps into the living room door and sees: The dog is
lying by the front door, dead, his snout foaming.

*
*

INT. STU'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAWN

Stu is in the shower, the hot water turned up high. A
Marines tattoo is visible on his shoulder. He's
scrubbing every inch of skin, under his nails, even his
tongue.

*
*

*

EXT. BRUETT ELECTRONICS (ARNETTE, TX) - DAY

Stu drives through downtown Arnette and parks in front of
Bruett Electronics. The radios and TVs are on inside,
but the door's locked. Stu knocks. No one comes.

*

INT. BRUETT RADIO - BACK HALLWAY/OFFICE - DAY

Stu finds the back alley door unlocked and steps inside.

*

The NOISE of the display models up front, all set to
DIFFERENT STATIONS, is an eerie jumble. He's about to
call again when he sees blood on the floor in the office
door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He goes and finds Norm face-down beside his desk,
coughing up blood and mucus. He turns his head to try to
look up at Stu, like a hog in a slaughter pen.

CUT TO:

INT. BRAINTREE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL - EXAM ROOM - DAY

Stu is in a hospital gown now, sitting on an exam table
when DR. DENNINGER (35) comes in.

Out in the corridor, Stu can see one of the LOCAL DOCTORS
(60) being given an N95 respirator. The man looks
scared. Then Denninger shuts the door, blocking out the
image.

DR. DENNINGER
I'm Jon Denninger, Mr. Redman.
I'm with the CDC, not the
hospital.

STU
Federal?

Dr. Denninger nods.

STU
I'd like to know what's going on
with my buddies.

DR. DENNINGER
I'm actually here to talk about
what's going on with you.

A beat. Dr. Denninger looks at him carefully.

DR. DENNINGER
At the moment, your participation
is voluntary. I'm here to try to --

STU
Participation in what?

DR. DENNINGER
Your blood work shows the same
bacteria that made your friends
ill, but you've got no symptoms,
even after ten times the
incubation period. We need to
know why that is.

Stu nods once, unsure if this is good news or just news.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU	*
That mean you know <i>what</i> it is?	*
DR. DENNINGER	*
There are aspects I can't discuss,	*
but I can tell you we need to move	*
urgently.	*
STU	
What do you need me to do?	
DR. DENNINGER	
We have a facility out on Long	*
Island, the best lab for this sort	*
of thing. We've got a jet holding	*
for you out at the airstrip.	*
(beat)	*
You have family in the area?	*
STU	*
Parents died three years ago.	*
House fire. No siblings.	*
DR. DENNINGER	*
Children?	*
Stu shakes his head.	*
DR. DENNINGER	*
Were you in close contact with	*
anyone outside of this list after	*
you had contact with patient zero?	*
He hands Stu a sheet. It has a list of names on it.	*
STU	
No. Look, I saw what happened to	*
Mr. Campion. I'm not going	*
anywhere until I can see my	*
friends. They're all here in this	*
building: Bill Hapscom, Vic	*
Palfrey, Norm Bruett, Vic's wife --	*
DR. DENNINGER	
Your friends are dead, Mr. Redman.	
A beat. Stu is floored. He gets slowly to his feet.	*
DR. DENNINGER	
And just since we've been talking,	
more cases are coming in. More	*
people you know, I'm sure.	*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU
 (re: his friends)
 All of them?

DR. DENNINGER
 I read you served in the armed
 forces, so I know you care about
 the welfare of your country. This
 is that big. We need a lucky
 break, Mr. Redman, and we need it
 very quickly.
 (beat)
 All it takes is one.

EXT. BRAINTREE AIRSTRIP - TARMAC - DAWN

Stu, now in a full biohazard suit, is escorted by guards
 out to a small CDC jet. The sun is almost up.

INT. CDC JET - DAWN

Everyone has taken seats away from one another. The SEAT
 BELT ALARM CHIMES. Stu looks out the window.

STU'S POV

As the plane taxis, he can see a few military trucks
 parked beyond the fence along the airport road.

As they take off and climb, however, he sees it's not
 just a few vehicles, but dozens, some with gun platforms.
 They are starting to make a perimeter around his town.

BACK TO SCENE

He yells over to the guard closest to him.

STU
 WHAT IS THIS?

The guard looks at him, but doesn't answer.

STU
 WHAT ARE YOU MOBILIZING FOR?!

The officer just looks away. Stu sits back in his seat,
 truly terrified now.

CUT TO:

"THIS IS THE END" MONTAGE

Across the country, people gather at SHOPPING MALLS, WORSHIP SERVICES, ARENA FOOTBALL GAMES, SCHOOL PAGEANTS, HAPPY HOURS, HOLIDAY PARTIES, BONFIRES, etc., charting a typical American Saturday night. It's a LOUD country: CAR HORNS, MUZAK, CHEERING CROWDS, and HOLY SINGING dominate.

It is also a country in transit. As Col. Starkey anticipated, crowds also surge through AIRPORTS, TRAIN STATIONS and BUS DEPOTS, as holiday trips begin ramping up.

The fact that no one understands this is the end of the party -- the last weekend before mass die-offs begin -- gives these images grace and pathos.

CUT TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT - FIRST CLASS - DAY

ON A LAPTOP SCREEN: A man sits on the "American Idol" stage playing guitar in a shaft of gold light. As a camera circles around him, he smiles into it and croons. The man is LARRY UNDERWOOD (35).

LARRY UNDERWOOD in the flesh is just waking from a nap in first class, badly hungover. He yawns, wincing, and sees the YOUNG WOMAN (25) beside him is watching this performance on her laptop. She sees she's been caught.

YOUNG WOMAN

Sorry! I thought it was you.
First an upgrade and now this.

Larry gives her his best sleepy smile. He's got a rakish, square-jawed charm, and it is always on.

LARRY

Following the show, huh?

YOUNG WOMAN

Well, yeah. I'm rooting for that little girl, actually.

LARRY

What a voice, huh? She's kind of an asshole though. Did I miss breakfast?

He takes a pill out of his pocket and dry swallows it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARRY

Vitamins --

Behind them, someone CHAIN SNEEZES. He drops his voice.

LARRY

To be honest, I'm a little hung
over. Comes with the fifteen
minutes, I guess.

YOUNG WOMAN

Oh, I think you're gonna get more
than fifteen minutes.

She's flirting now. Out the window, the Rockies scroll
by silently underneath them.

YOUNG WOMAN

You can't tell me who wins, can
you?

Larry begins flirting in earnest as well.

LARRY

You'll find out when I do. But
you're not rooting for me anyway.

YOUNG WOMAN

So, change my mind --

INT. DELTA FLIGHT - BATHROOM - DAY

Larry has the Young Woman pinned against the sink in the
tiny first class bathroom and is screwing the hell out of
her. Beside them, the "RETURN TO YOUR SEATS" SIGN PINGS.

INT. DELTA FLIGHT - FIRST CLASS - DAY

They come out of the tiny bathroom and make their way
back to their seats, rumpled and sheepish. But everyone
is trying to see out of the right side of the plane.

They retake their seats and look out the window. Larry
spots another jet to the north.

LARRY'S POV

It's a huge airbus and it's in some kind of hard bank,
arcing through the sky in their direction. It gets
closer and closer, then frighteningly so.

BACK TO SCENE

LARRY

What's it doing?

They watch with mounting alarm as it races toward them. CALL BUTTONS are pushed. Suddenly, their own plane begins to climb, trying to get above it. Larry and the Young Woman scramble to get on their seat belts. Drinks spill. An overhead compartment comes open.

Then there is a chorus of GASPS as the airbus passes just a few hundred feet under them.

LARRY

What the fuck was that?

EXT. DELTA FLIGHT'S AIRSPACE - DAY

The airbus falls in a sickening arc, and crashes into the ground, a hundred miles east of the Rockies. It explodes. From 30,000 feet, it's just a tiny stitch of fire in the patchwork of snowy fields that stretch on to the horizon.

CUT TO:

EXT. ORIENT POINT, NY - DUSK

A trio of CDC vehicles comes through the old Long Island towns of Stovington and Orient, which are as quaintly New England as any up the coast. It has snowed here as well, and people's holiday lights are coming on.

The convoy gets as far out on the point as possible and then pulls up to a private dock where a ferry is waiting.

NEWS BROADCASTER (V.O.)

Contrary to previous flu seasons, the CDC is recommending not seeking vaccinations at this time.

(beat)

'We're dealing with an especially fast contagious strain this year,' says Pat Frato, Chief of the CDC's Influenza Division.

'So our strong advice is to stay at home, with fluids and bed rest, and out of places where already-infected people may be gathering. Traveling over the holidays, in particular, is being discouraged.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEWS BROADCASTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*This year, we're urging people to
consider 'staycations' and to
cancel any unnecessary trips -- '*

After a mile of cold black water there is a small island
with a compound of massive, slit-windowed buildings that
look like some hybrid of hospital and prison.

CUT TO:

INT. LaGUARDIA AIRPORT - A TERMINAL - NIGHT

Larry comes off the jetway to a scene of chaos.
Thousands of people are crammed into the terminal. The
Young Woman deplanes and stands beside him, gawking at
the crowds.

As Larry's flight deplanes, many are sneezing now.
Invisible pathways of communicability open up in all
directions around them. The plague jumps silently from
person to person, zigging up and down lines and through
crowds.

A BUSINESSMAN with a Jersey accent waiting to charge his
cell phone sees Larry's expression at the pandemonium.

BUSINESSMAN

All flights are grounded. They're
letting 'em land but not take off.
Same thing at JFK.

YOUNG WOMAN

Just in New York?

BUSINESSMAN

Everywhere.

LARRY

What's the reason?

Larry watches as a WOMAN (70s) collapses at the next
gate. Some around her step in to help. Others turn
away.

BUSINESSMAN

They haven't given one yet. I
hope you're home, pal. You're
gonna be here a while.

The Young Woman appears at his elbow.

YOUNG WOMAN

I'm in Astoria. We'll share a cab --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Larry, distracted, but also uninterested, starts walking. *

LARRY *

That's okay. Nice to meet you -- *

The Young Woman glares at his back. Then she shouts: *

YOUNG WOMAN *

'Nice meeting you'? Are you
kidding? *Fuck you, asshole* -- I
hope that little girl wipes the
floor with you. *

But Larry doesn't turn back. *

CUT TO: *

INT. STOVINGTON PLAGUE CENTER - QUARANTINE ROOM - NIGHT *

Stu stands in a scrubs, this time in a porcelain-lined
hermetic chamber, promoted to something truly top secret.
There's just a bed, chair, toilet, and an air lock door.
DR. DEITZ (55) comes in along with an orderly, ELDER
(35). A NATIONAL GUARDSMAN (25) waits in an anteroom. *

DR. DEITZ *

Mr. Redman. I'm Richard Deitz. *

Stu doesn't answer. *

DR. DEITZ *

I'm taking you downstairs now for
blood draws and a brain scan.
Then we'll let you get some sleep. *

In the anteroom, Stu sees a hamster cage. The hamster is
inside, running on an exercise wheel. He says, simply:

STU

No.

Elder looks at Deitz, then at the National Guardsman.

DR. DEITZ *

You object to a brain scan?

STU

I object to being locked up --
that door doesn't even have a
handle on this side. I didn't
agree to that. *

DR. DEITZ *

It's for everyone's safety.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU

Tell you what: You want a brain scan, bring me my clothes. Let me walk out of here, and you have my word I'll walk right back in.

DR. DEITZ

What'll that prove?

STU

That I can.

(beat)

I'll wear a mask, biosuit, whatever you want, but given the shape Furball's in next door, I think we both know I'm not catching.

DR. DEITZ

We don't know that for sure.

But Stu stares Deitz down, a standoff. Deitz sighs.

DR. DEITZ

You just flew 1200 miles. You can object all you want, but in the end you're going to help because it's the right thing to do.

STU

Maybe. But let's get one thing straight: I stop listening when people like you start talking about doing the 'right thing.'

Stu stands. Elder takes the smallest step forward.

STU

You've got no right to detain me.

DR. DEITZ

Actually, I do. Given the seriousness of this release --

STU

Release? What did you people do?

DR. DEITZ

-- and in the interest of public safety --

STU

What the *fuck* did you people do?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. DEITZ

-- I *can* compel you to cooperate,
under the terms of the Biosecurity
Protection Act --

STU

Bullshit --

DR. DEITZ

-- which was signed into law in an
emergency session of Congress two
hours ago. Don't make me have to.

Stu gives Deitz a big Texas smile and says:

STU

You know what? Keep my clothes.

He tries to pass them, but Elder steps in his path. Stu
shoves him, but the Guardsman comes in and TASES Stu. He
staggers to his knees, taking the volts.

STU

Stop --

ELDER

Again!

So the Guardsman gives him a second jolt. Stu goes dark.

CUT TO:

INT. FT. IRWIN ARMY BASE - ELEVATOR/LABS - DUSK

Col. Starkey rides an elevator for a long trip down. He
peels off his gloves and gas mask, relieved. The
elevator's intercom CRACKLES TO LIFE.

LT. COL. CREIGHTON

(quietly)

Bill. What the hell are you
doing?

COL. STARKEY

Read the brief on my desk.
London. Hong Kong. Madrid.
Zurich. Bogota.

LT. COL. CREIGHTON

This isn't over. You're still
needed. Up here.

Col. Starkey speaks without a hint of fear or indecision.

COL. STARKEY

If only he hadn't run, Len. Just
a scared kid, running away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LT. COL. CREIGHTON

Bill --

When the door opens, Starkey steps out into the dead lab complex. Two dozen bodies are grouped around the elevator doors. He has to step over them.

It's eerie silent, tomb silent, except for a TINY MOTOR somewhere. He follows the SOUND down a hall, stepping over bodies and overriding the part of his brain screaming at him not to stay, not to breathe.

He goes on until he finds what he's looking for: the spinning centrifuge. He pulls the plug and it slowly winds to a satisfying halt. He glances up at a CCTV camera, which is trained on him now, following his movements.

Then Starkey sneezes, and looks amazed. It's this fast?

He goes and sits down in front of a camera in the corridor, next to a dead scientist with a sign around her neck reading: "IT WORKS. ANY QUESTIONS?"

Then he takes out his service revolver and puts it in his mouth. And fires.

CUT TO:

BLACK

A LONG BEAT OF BLACK. Then MURKY UNDERWATER SOUNDS begin.

FADE IN:

DREAM SEQUENCE - EXT. HOOVER DAM/LAS VEGAS STRIP - DUSK

STU'S POV: Stu surfaces in a large, desert lake. But he can't keep his head above water for long. He's behind the great wall of Hoover Dam with its bleached Deco towers.

FLASH ON: The black pyramid of the Luxor hotel in Vegas.

Sunset light falls on a vast fountain complex drained of water. A man's hand reaches out over it.

FLAGG (V.O.)

Come. Cibola. Seven-in-One.

It is the deep, reassuring voice of a devil or a saint.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLASH ON: A CLOSEUP of Flagg's eye, its pupil slowly and hypnotically dilating until it's almost iris wide.

Then Stu is under water again, being sucked down. He's pulled through dark tunnels, shaken and forced through, but then he is shot out of the epic face of the dam in a breathtaking release. Rather than fall, he ascends.

FLASH ON: With a wave of Flagg's hand, the fountains begin to fill. All the lights of Vegas come on in the dusk including the huge spotlight at the apex of Luxor.

FLAGG (V.O.)

Come.

CUT TO:

INT. CDC PLAGUE CENTER - STU'S ROOM - FIRST LIGHT
(REALITY)

Stu wakes from the intensity of this dream startled and disoriented. He is in rough shape. He's lost twenty or so pounds. His beard's grown in and he has a junkie's worth of needle marks from months of IVs and tests.

He goes to the toilet and reaches into it with a plastic cup. He scoops up a little bit of the water that's still in the very bottom. Overhead, only one of the room's five fluorescent tubes is lit. He drinks.

When he hears a NOISE in the ANTEROOM, he gets up and positions himself next to the room's only chair. The airlock door opens and Elder, the orderly, enters.

There is something off about him as well. His hair looks unwashed, but he has fold marks in his spotless nurse's uniform as if he's just taken it out of its plastic. He squints at Stu. Capillaries in his eyes have already begun bursting. He looks at Stu like every word hurts.

ELDER

Sit down, Redman.

Behind him, Stu can see a bulky cart with long tubes.

STU

I heard shots last night. In the hall. More trouble?

Elder doesn't answer. He just points to the chair.

STU

I need to eat, okay? I need water.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU (CONT'D)

I've been getting half of what I
need, maybe less. I don't see
anyone for days at a time --

A beat. Stu shifts his weight over the balls of his
feet.

STU

That's a blood transfuser. I'm
not wrong, am I?

ELDER

We've got a test now. You can eat
after. Sit down.

STU

Why are we doing a transfusion?
For who?

Elder puts a hand on something in his pocket. Stu sees.

STU

It's not my *blood* that's immune.
(carefully)
If our blood types aren't
compatible, that'll kill us both.
You know that, right?

The orderly loses his facade of calm.

ELDER

You're O Positive. I'm A
Positive. I checked. Now sit the
fuck down!

STU

Look, I'm not a doctor, I'm just
some redneck, but about this I'm
sure -- You're *dreaming* --

ORDERLY #2

Aren't we all?

It's an odd thing to say, but there's no time to ponder
it. Elder steps forward taking the taser from his
pocket.

But Stu is quicker. He brings the chair around in a
vicious arc. He's weak, but he understands the physics
of it. The chair hits Elder so hard a leg breaks off.

Elder falls down yelling, waving the taser.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Stu tries to get past him, but takes a hit to the calf and stumbles. Then Elder is on top of him, trying to put the taser under Stu's chin, ZAPPING it over and over. *

Stu knocks it out of Elder's hand. He reaches for it, but Stu pulls him back and uses the last weapon he's got: He head butts Elder twice, breaking his nose. Elder recoils. *

Stu reaches out for the taser, but it's a foot away. He strains for it, but Elder is on top of him. And then something unexpected happens: The taser slides across the dirty tiles and into Stu's hand as if called. *

Stu only allows himself a split second of what the fuck, then wastes no time using it. He jams it up under Elder's chin and ZAPS it. Then again, because: payback's a bitch. *

INT. CDC PLAGUE CENTER - 3RD FLOOR CORRIDOR - DAY *

Stu comes out into a corridor, unsteady on his feet, but intent on escape. The whole building must be on auxiliary power. The halls are dim, and filthy. Stu hears a GROAN. *

INT. CDC PLAGUE CENTER - 3RD FLOOR NURSES' STATION - DAY *

Stu comes up, taser ready. The second NURSE, a big Latino man, sits slumped against the wall clutching a bottle of saline, twin ropes of bloody snot hanging from his nostrils. He's removed his face plate. He sneezes blood onto his filthy uniform, very weak. *

MALE NURSE

Hey you're not supposed to be out. *

STU

Who else is in here? I need room numbers. You've got healthy people locked up --

MALE NURSE

No one's who's right. Just you. *

Stu is stunned. He sees a ring of keys on the man's belt. *

MALE NURSE

You won the lottery, man. Hey -- There's a fire ax on the wall down to the left. Bring it back here. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU

What for?

MALE NURSE

Use the flat end. Whatever you
did to Elder, do it to me.

*

Instead, Stu snatches loose the keys and continues on.

*

MALE NURSE

It's all right. I did it to Lou -- !

*

INT. CDC PLAGUE CENTER - 3RD/2ND FLOOR STAIRWELL - DAY

*

Stu comes down a stairwell, but it is gated off at the
level below him, revealing only darkness. There's no
keyhole. He takes a side door instead.

*

*

*

INT. CDC PLAGUE CENTER - 2ND FLOOR WARD - DAY

*

He comes into a huge dark ward with rows of beds, a dead
body strapped to each. He heads for the double doors on
the opposite side. Halfway across, one of the bodies
EMPTIES ITS BLADDER onto the floor. Stu starts running.

*

*

*

INT. CDC PLAGUE CENTER - 2ND FLOOR CORRIDOR - DAY

*

Stu bolts down another hall and through a door. He finds
himself at the top of a half flight of stairs bathed in
the red glow of an EXIT sign. The stairs go down to a
fire door, then down another flight into shadows below.

*

*

*

The fire door is locked, but there's a keyhole. Stu
begins going through keys, one after another.

*

The silhouette of a person on all fours detaches from the
shadows at the bottom of the stairs and begins crawling
up to him. Stu sees it and hurries, beginning to panic.

STAIRWELL VOICE (O.S.)

*Come down here and eat some
chicken with me, beautiful --*

Stu gets the door open just as the thing on the stairs
reaches out for his waist. He YELLS and kicks the thing
in the face, sending it tumbling back down into the dark.

EXT. CDC PLAGUE CENTER - SIDE YARD - DAY

*

Stu stumbles outside into fresh air, blinded by the
sunlight. He keeps running.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

When he looks back and sees he's not being chased, he collapses in the overgrown grass.

STU

Thank you thank you thank you --

It is summer now. Half a year has passed. A breeze SHURS the green trees overhead. Other than a few distant GULLS CRYING, it is silent.

CUT TO:

"ESCAPE FROM LONG ISLAND" MONTAGE:

1. Stu has found an aluminum dinghy and is rowing himself back across the strait toward the mainland.
2. He walks the main street of Stovington. Shop windows are smashed and there are signs of crowd damage, but it all seems months old. There's no one around.
3. At a shattered grocery store, he stands in a dim aisle guzzling down the syrup from a can of peaches.
4. He finds a car with its window smashed open. He leans in and honks the horn. It SOUNDS WEAKLY, the battery just about nil. He tries the radio, but there's just dead air.

EXT. STOVINGTON, NY - EDGE OF TOWN - DAY

He comes to a trio of military trucks parked across the road cutting off traffic to town. A dozen cars are lined up behind them, dusty and abandoned. A dead soldier sits in the driver's seat of one of the trucks, almost mummified. More lie dead in back.

The pavement is littered with shell casings and bodies. A few are dead in their cars, shot through windshields, but most are grouped before the guns as if there was a small skirmish.

The bodies have been rotting for some time, their faces and hands bird-picked and tattered. A lone raven hops up onto the chest of one and CAWS at Stu.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONG ISLAND EXPRESSWAY - DAY

Stu has found a moped with good tires. He motors his way down the expressway, which is nearly empty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He passes old wrecks, and bodies lying composting in the road, but most people, it seems, died in their homes.

He passes a sign reading NEW YORK CITY 32. Grey weather is moving in. It begins to rain.

CUT TO:

EXT. ADAMS STREET (BROOKLYN) - DUSK

The moped finally gives out while Stu is riding through a vacant Brooklyn. The sun's about down and a foggy rain is moving through the city. Compounded by smoke from various street fires around the city, visibility is down to about a block. Rats run the curbs like commuters.

He begins up the long, ascending curve of the access ramp for the Brooklyn Bridge. The lanes coming into Brooklyn are empty, but the Manhattan-bound lanes are jammed. He can see silhouettes slumped behind the wheels of cars.

Near the top of the ramp, huge National Guard trucks have blocked off any movement onto the bridge. Before it gets too high to scale, Stu climbs up over the fence and onto the center pedestrian promenade. He passes a machine-gun barrier there. Then he begins across.

He can't see anything of Manhattan yet. The bridge seems to enter the fog and disappear. Towering over him in the mist is the Gothic face of its East Tower, through which the promenade passes like a thread in a needle.

Once he's out on the center span, something begins to form out in the fog to his left, as if in mid-air. Blocky dark shapes. Stu catches it happening out of the corner of his eye and looks.

At first, it is too strange to interpret, but in a moment he realizes he's looking at letters -- huge block letters ten stories over the river. In a moment, he can read the word "MAERSK."

And then he understands what he's seeing: It is the huge, sky-blue prow of a massive container ship. And the thing is moving. Toward him.

Stu starts to jog, then to run. Ahead a quarter mile, he can make out the outlines of the bridge's West Tower.

As the ship drifts through the fog, he can begin to see the shipping containers, like a wall of huge multicolored bricks. He begins to sprint.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The thing is going to hit the center span of the bridge a little to the west of its midpoint. *

Other than the sound of the RIVER LAPPING against the massive hull far below, and Stu's SHOES on the wooden promenade, the event is surreal in its silence. *

He passes the prow of the ship and his perspective flips to the other side of its massive hull. It's too close. He may not make it. He begins to yell himself on. *

He's almost to the West Tower, and he can see the vaguest shapes of some of the buildings of Manhattan. *

STU *

COME ON COME ON COME ON COME ON -- *

But, all at once, he's thrown off his feet and against the platform's fence rail as the ship hits. There is an epic SHATTERING OF MASONRY as the center span is shoved to the side and its massive south cable snaps. Stu is almost decapitated by the massive secondary cables that rip across the walkway just beside him. *

On the ship, the containers jerk forward from the impact and go tumbling off the front like child's blocks. *

Stu gets to his feet and keeps running as best he can, but the whole bridge is swaying. Support girders over the eastbound lanes rip free and chunks of pavement as big as swimming pools begin breaking off into the fog below. *

Then one of the bridge's two center CABLES SNAPS. Stu is a few yards from the West Tower when the whole span tilts 70 then 90 degrees with an ECHOING SERIES OF BOOMS as the roadway shears off south to north at the towers. *

Stu clings to the north guardrail as everything peels off into the fog below, leaving only the north-most cable system hanging intact. *

When the shuddering stops, Stu is able to climb up a tangle of rebar and back onto the solid pavement where the road is ripped off at the West Tower. He breathes, wipes his bloody hands on his jeans, and keeps moving. *

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - WEST RAMP - DUSK *

He comes down into Manhattan and sees a much bigger blockade at this end, a kind of reinforced riot wall 30' high, which blocks his view of Lower Manhattan. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's no way around it, so he starts climbing. When he swings over the top, he's not prepared for what's on the other side:

Tens of thousands of rotted corpses lie in heaps at the bottom of the barricade all down the access lanes and into City Hall Park. At some point, a massive crowd tried to rush this gate and get off Manhattan island. The dead crowd is crawling with an equal number of rats and crows.

He sees, out in the field of corpses, a lone woman moving through them. Before he can stop himself he calls to her.

STU

HELLO --

And the thousands of crows take to the air in a massive gang. The woman doesn't look up. She doesn't even flinch.

Stu hoists himself over and climbs down the wall. He picks his way through the dead masses toward her as the crows find new places to land.

It is only when Stu gets closer that he realizes it is a drag queen, aka THE MONSTER SHOUTER (60), in a filthy sequined gown. The man is mumbling to himself, covered in bird shit. He's picking trinkets off bodies and putting them on -- pearls and diamonds, gold. Stu has to put a gentle hand on the man's shoulder to get him to look up.

STU

Where are they? Where are the people?

But the man merely tells Stu:

MONSTER SHOUTER

Monsters coming.

Stu sees the man's mind is gone. He just nods and smiles, nods and smiles, and moves from corpse to corpse.

MONSTER SHOUTER

Monsters coming now.

So Stu keeps moving. The skyscrapers of Lower Manhattan, their tops lost in the fog, stare down at him impassively, all of them dark. It will be night soon.

CUT TO:

"HIKE UP THROUGH MANHATTAN" MONTAGE

Stu walks through the city as dusk turns to night.
SILENT LIGHTNING lights up the clouds overhead, giving
Stu snapshot visions of the city as he goes.

1. Stu walks through the West Village. Bodies lie in
the streets, some piled along the curbs in health
department bags, others sewn up in homemade shrouds or
just left on the pavement. None is freshly dead. Rats
are everywhere. Cats watch from stoops. New York goes
on four legs now.

2. In Washington Square, there are campfire rings, but
the ashes are cold. Littered all over are open packs of
military-style MREs from a row of FEMA aid stations.

3. Past the Flatiron Building, two dead men hang by
their necks from a street lamp, the word "THIEF" written
across their bare chests. Stu looks up at the many
floors of windows above him, as if suddenly feeling
watched.

EXT. MANHATTAN - UNION SQUARE - NIGHT

In Union Square, Stu finds the remains of a massive vigil
with thousands of rain-filled candles beside ruined
pictures. He walks among them like a cosmonaut.

He catches movement at the other end of the park, but he
can't see anyone. He runs toward it, anyway.

STU

COME BACK -- PLEASE COME BACK!

But no one does. He's left staring at a faded sign for
tourists reading: "WHILE IN NEW YORK, WHY NOT SEE A
SHOW?"

CUT TO:

"A NIGHT AT THE MET" MONTAGE

In the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Stu roams from gallery
to gallery with a camp lantern. He stops at David's *The*
Death of Socrates, Leutze's *Washington Crossing the*
Delaware, Bosch's *Christ's Descent Into Hell*.

Finally, he stands before Buoninsegna's *Madonna and*
Child. The child caresses its mother's face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Stu reaches out and touches the spot, the canvas, 700
years of history.

CUT TO:

DREAM SEQUENCE - EXT. COLORADO HOMESTEAD - DAY

Sunflowers sway in the sun. Stu walks through a tall
field of them. He follows the sound of a WOMAN HUMMING
to a yard with a small house with a porch up on
jacklifters.

A very old woman sits on the glider there, MOTHER ABIGAIL
FREEMANTLE (black, 108).

STU

Help me.

She HUMS on, but her voice also addresses Stu directly:

MOTHER ABIGAIL (V.O.)

What help do you need, Stuart?

STU

How do I get out of this?

MOTHER ABIGAIL (V.O.)

*Out of it? You can't. No one
can. All you can do is choose
where to stand. With him, or with
me.*

(beat)

*He hasn't called you yet? He
will.*

STU (V.O.)

He doesn't know my name. Not like
you.

MOTHER ABIGAIL (V.O.)

*That's good. He doesn't know
you're there yet. But he will.
He will find you out, and tempt
you. And it'll be a road of
trials for you when he does.*

FLASH ON: A mountain peak rises up from garlands of
Western Pine, a rough pyramid of sandstone.

MOTHER ABIGAIL (V.O.)

*He'll promise you dominion. But
it's not his country to remake.
You come find me, Stuart. You'll
have to stop him.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As she says this, a cloud moves over the sun, dimming the light. A breeze begins to gather.

STU (V.O.)

This doesn't make any sense --

MOTHER ABIGAIL (V.O.)

*Look for me on the Lincoln
Highway. I'll see you on the Old
Lincoln Highway.*

(beat)

Can't you feel what's coming?

Stu looks to the west and sees a massive end-of-days line of thunderheads building over the Rockies, whipping up wind and turning the light weird.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MET - TEMPLE OF DENDUR - NIGHT (REALITY)

Stu comes awake with a yell, cowering. He's sleeping under an emergency blanket at the museum's 15 B.C. Temple of Dendur. The skylights overhead are deep blue with the coming of morning. It takes him a moment to realize the dream is done.

STU

What the fuck is happening?

He puts a hand to his eyes, losing it. He weeps, unable to see what a desperate, hunted look he has.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK RITZ-CARLTON CENTRAL PARK - ROOF - DAY

Stu comes out of the access door to the top of the roof of one of Central Park South's tallest buildings. It's a clear morning. He has a six-pack of beer and a little American flag he's found somewhere tucked into his pocket.

He looks out at the view. A massive fire to the north is razing Harlem and Morningside Heights, undaunted by the rain. It's three long city blocks wide and blocking off access to the George Washington Bridge.

Stu's face registers his growing realization that the world as he knew it really is over. Possibly everywhere.

Finally, down in the Park, he sees a small group of deer moving in loose formation. It's enough to convince him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He climbs up onto the hip-high cornice and stands just at the edge. He finishes a can of beer and pitches it out into the void.

He watches it fall down down down into the street thirty-six floors below. It would be the easiest thing to follow it, to let himself fall and be done. He closes his eyes.

IN HIS HEAD

Sunflowers. Fields of them. And then the image of the Flatiron Peak, rising up majestically.

BACK TO SCENE

He opens his eyes and the image clears. But when he closes them again it is there still, somehow in his head. He begins to cry. For his lost friends, his lost country.

STU

I can't be the one -- Not me.

This would be the moment to jump, and part of him wants to, but he finally finds he cannot. He tosses the rest of the six-pack and the little flag and watches them fall. Then he steps back down off the precipice.

Out in Harlem, a series of explosions bloom into the sky as new buildings are consumed. It's time to go.

CUT TO:

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY

Stu comes into Times Square. He's got on a small backpack loaded with supplies. He's also found a Remington 798 rifle with a scope, which he's slung over one shoulder. He's got a book open in his hand, following it like a map.

With its help, he finds at the intersection of Broadway and 42nd Street a plaque embedded in the pavement. It's a red, white, and blue square with the letter "L." Bronze letters beneath it read: "Eastern Terminus of the Historic Lincoln Highway."

STU

This is crazy.

He looks around, embarrassed. But he starts walking.

EXT. 7TH AVENUE - DAY

He comes down 7th Avenue. He's almost out of Times Square when he hears, echoing off the buildings:

MONSTER SHOUTER (O.S.)
MONSTERS! MONSTERS COMING!

He gets to the corner of 7th and 40th and sees, half a block over on Broadway: The Monster Shouter is walking along the center line, shouting himself hoarse. He's in a slip, having taken off his dress in the hot sun. Stu can see he is painfully thin.

So he drops his pack and takes out some of the food and water. He starts walking over to the man, but he freezes:

A TEENAGER in a track jacket (13) jogs silently up behind him and slits his throat with a tac knife. The Monster Shouter dies mid-shout, blood streaming down his chest.

This is happening one short block from where Stu is standing, exposed, in the middle of the next intersection.

TEENAGER
 Driving me crazy, dude.

Two more people come up chuckling, a kid who could be the teen's TWIN and a fit OLDER MAN (60). These are not gang-bangers. They look like they might have met at a prep school.

If any of them looks in Stu's direction, he will be seen instantly. Stu checks his options, and starts slowly walking himself backward, increasing the distance.

TWIN
 (to his brother)
 He was right, though.

And that's when the Teenager looks over and sees Stu. His laughter fades, but his smile does not. He yells out:

TEENAGER
 Hey, guy -- That's a nice piece.

Stu says nothing. He keeps backing away. He watches as the Older Man glances down 7th out of view, and gestures to someone Stu can't see. The kid starts walking over.

STU
 Walk the other way, kid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But the kid doesn't. Stu flips the rifle into his hands expertly, a soldier's muscle memory.

TEENAGER

Kid? Hey, man, fuck you. I got a hundred grand I'll trade you for it. No kidding --

The kid doesn't stop. The other two start walking over. Stu curses under his breath. He cannot shoot a boy.

TEENAGER

You didn't *steal* that thing off somebody, did you -- ?

That's all Stu needs to hear. He aims past the Teenager, shoots the older man in the leg, then turns and bolts. He grabs his pack as he passes it. The two boys run after.

EXT. 40TH STREET - DAY

Stu's backpack bounces on his shoulders. He can see signs for the entrance to the Lincoln Tunnel two blocks ahead. As he runs across the intersection with 8th Ave., two more MEN dart in from the south to cut him off, knives out.

Without knowing how, Stu -- who is thirty feet away -- puts out a hand and knocks the knives out of the men's hands, sending them skittering on the pavement. Stu runs on.

EXT. LINCOLN TUNNEL - ACCESS LANE - DAY

Stu darts across the maze of lane lines directing traffic to the Lincoln Tunnel's access ramp. The entrance looms ahead, a black hole in the city. Behind him, the two boys are catching up. Stu pumps his arms and runs even faster.

Stu sees: On the street above the tunnel, a city bus has crashed into the guardrail and is hanging over the opening. Stu feels the opportunity more than calculates it.

EXT. STREET ABOVE LINCOLN TUNNEL - DAY

Stu comes down the access lane, weaving between all the jammed cars. The fastest boys are just ten yards behind. Above the entrance, the bus CREAKS the slightest bit.

CUT TO:

EXT. McCARRAN AIRPORT (LAS VEGAS) - RUNWAY - DAY

In Las Vegas, a work detail is carting bodies on trucks out the tarmac of McCarran Airport where they are burning them in giant piles. Lloyd Henreid is managing them.

Flagg observes the proceedings from where he sits on the hood of a convertible Hummer parked nearby. The black pyramid of the Luxor can be seen behind him on the Strip.

Something catches Flagg's attention, some little blip on his mental radar that wasn't there a moment ago.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. STREET ABOVE LINCOLN TUNNEL - DAY

The wreck CREAKS a little more, visibly moving an inch as Stu runs up to the entrance beneath it.

EXT. LINCOLN TUNNEL - ACCESS LANE - DAY

And as Stu comes the final few yards and crosses right under the bus and into the darkness of the tunnel, the wreck shifts another inch, then three more, which is all it needs to begin to slide forward.

All at once, the fraction of its weight Stu tipped causes the guardrail to give way and the whole thing falls smashing down onto cars in the tunnel's entrance, right in the boys' faces. They back up, spooked by the whole thing.

INT. LINCOLN TUNNEL - EAST END - DAY

Inside the tunnel, Stu catches his breath while he digs through his pack for a flashlight. He turns it on to see what fresh hell he's now in.

TWIN (O.S.)

He made it. We going in after him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Stu doesn't wait to see. He climbs onto the raised walkway that runs along one side of the tunnel and goes on.

CUT TO:

EXT. McCARRAN AIRPORT (LAS VEGAS) - TARMAC - DAY

Lloyd comes up to the Hummer and climbs behind the driver's seat, talking as he does.

LLOYD HENREID

We can do the last load tomorrow --

But he notices Flagg is not moving. He is thinking what to do next when Flagg's eyes open again and he jumps off the hood and vaults into the passenger seat.

LLOYD HENREID

Everything all right?

FLAGG

Spring has sprung, the grass has
riz-- It's pippin' time, Lloyd!

Then, without Lloyd's touching it, the engine TURNS OVER and the car begins driving back to Luxor. Flagg is doing it with his mind.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LINCOLN TUNNEL - DAY

Stu's far enough in the tunnel now that it's pitch dark except for his flashlight. He sweeps it over the frozen traffic below and sees grotesque faces staring out from behind windshields. He pins it to the walkway and keeps walking.

Up ahead something blocks his path: A dead man in a business suit, his face turned in Stu's direction. His eyes have rotted pale, but seem to be watching Stu. Nervous, Stu begins to SING the first song that comes to mind.

STU

*I'll wait in the place where the
sun never shines --*

When he gets to the dead man, he steps over him without breaking his stride. Then, further ahead, he can see another two bodies blocking the walkway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU
*Wait in this place where the
 shadows run from themselves --*
 (to himself)
 Fuck that --

He literally changes his tune.

STU
I'm dreaming of a white Christmas --

He tries to step over the next bodies as automatically as he did the first, but his boot catches on something. He steadies himself and keeps moving. He sings louder.

STU
*-- with every Christmas card I
 write.*

Up ahead are more bodies, a pile of them, as if some kind of massacre took place here. It is too high to step over. Without stopping, Stu climbs it like a pile of tires. His light catches glimpses of the rotting expressions of the people he's stepping on.

STU
*May your days be merry and bright,
 and all your Christmases be white --*

And he almost makes it. But he puts his weight on someone's arm, hears the dead bone SNAP, and pitches forward. He falls to the walkway with a yell. The flashlight tumbles over the edge, smashes on a car hood, and goes out.

The last thing he sees before everything goes black is a WOMAN'S BODY just ahead. Her skin still has color and the blood on her still fresh. She's been shot in the heart. Recently. Then he's back in the dark.

He frantically searches his pockets and comes up with a lighter. He flicks it on. He can only see a few feet in any direction now. He crawls around the dead woman. She's got the gun in her own hand, only a day or two dead. What scared her badly enough to turn the gun on herself?

He gets to his feet and inches forward. But then he hears it: a SCRAPING SOUND behind him, and below, on the road.

He has to choose -- the lighter or the rifle. He picks the rifle. He slides it off his shoulder and aims it into the blackness. There is only his BREATHING in the dark.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then the SOUND comes again. It ECHOES briefly. It's a
CAR DOOR HANDLE being pulled on.

STU
STAY BACK --

But the SOUND comes again, this time rising to a frantic
YANKING, as if something is trying to get out, Stu starts
FIRING OFF ROUNDS, part warning, part panic.

TILES disintegrate. GLASS SHATTERS. And someone is
SCREAMING inside of all the noise. A man. Stu stops
shooting. The SCREAMING turns to SOBBING. Frightened
sobbing.

Stu tries, but he can't make himself leave whoever it is.
Not this time. He calls out, against his better
judgment:

STU
WHERE ARE YOU -- ?

He listens for a direction and then flicks on the lighter
to track down the right car. He climbs down to the
roadway and starts moving amongst the black shapes on
flat tires.

The person starts BANGING AGAIN on the door and windows.
One shatters. Stu runs to it. He gets to a Porsche with
rental plates and inside finds:

LARRY UNDERWOOD in the passenger seat, out-of-his-mind
high on something. His arm is caught in the seatbelt.

Stu unlocks and opens the door. The dome light goes on,
emitting a weak glow. Littering the seat beside Larry
are empty prescription bottles and stray pills, the
aftermath of some kind of end-of-the-world binge. Larry
sees Stu looming over him and screams. Stu tries to get
him up and out, but Larry hammers him with his fists.

STU
Hey, come on! Don't fight me.
Are you hurt?

Larry is freaking out, tripping the dark fantastic. He's
wide-eyed, sweating.

LARRY
Don't look here, man. I ain't no
nice guy -- Eat somebody else!
Not me not me --

STU
I'm not going to eat you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Larry starts making BUZZING sounds. He kicks at Stu. *

STU *

You want me to leave you, pal? *

This sinks in. Larry tries to get out of the car so fast, he decks his head. *

LARRY *

Don't leave don't leave don't -- *

CUT TO: *

STU *

has got one of Larry's arms around his shoulders and is half carrying, half dragging him out of the tunnel. He's looking back, making sure they're not being followed. *

LARRY *

You were singing, man -- *

They come to where they can see the tunnel's end. A pair of military trucks blocks the exit, in front of which is the now-familiar piles of gunned-down civilians. *

EXT. LINCOLN TUNNEL - WEST END - DAY *

They come out on the Jersey side to find dead cars lined up as far as they can see. *

STU *

Maybe you should start telling me what you took, so I can figure out how to sober you up -- *

LARRY *

(weeping)
Promise me you won't sing.
Please. Anymore. 'Kay? That's all over. No more, okay? *

STU *

Sure, pal. No more. *

Stu looks behind him one last time, and then steers Larry toward the Port Authority Building above the highway. *

CUT TO: *

DREAM - EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - DAY

A crow is flying, a snake in its claws. It climbs the sky, passing the Vegas Stratosphere tower.

FLASH ON: Two plush red seats at one end of a conference table, the only seats there. They suggest power, exclusivity, equality -- a kind of double throne.

FLASH ON: A nude woman, seen from behind, stands in front of the Luxor. Her hands are above her head, worshipfully.

FLAGG (V.O.)
*You're better than the life you've
lived.*

The crow drops the snake, no longer burdened.

FLAGG (V.O.)
*Better than company you've kept.
There's a place here for you, Stu.
A right place.*

Stu stands on the Strip, looking up at the black pyramid.

FLAGG (V.O.)
*You will want for nothing. All is
possible. All permitted.*

FLASH ON: Several naked women are pulling Stu into a bed. One has the white tail of a doe strapped around her waist and shows it off, laughing silently.

Stu and Flagg walk down the Strip. People lying on the pavement everywhere start getting up. They are rising by the hundreds, smiling.

But Stu says:

STU (V.O.)
No.
(beat)
I'm not with you.

FLASH ON: The snake falls writhing down through the air.

Flagg slowly turns to him, now wearing a posh black carnival crow mask.

FLAGG (V.O.)
(calmly, certain)
Then you will die.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

In a painting, the Monster Shouter sits in place of
 Buoninsegna's Madonna. He has Stu's severed head in his
 lap.

CUT TO:

INT. PORT AUTHORITY BUILDING - UPSTAIRS OFFICE - NIGHT

Stu jerks awake from this dream. It takes him a moment
 to remember where he is. A lantern-lit office cubicle.

He has gotten Larry into a sleeping bag and is sitting
 watch beside him. He's dozed off while reading. He
 picks back up his book. It's titled *DOWN THE LINCOLN
 HIGHWAY*.

CLOSE ON BOOK

He flips through pictures of the patriotic "L" logo on
 the sides of roadside diners and barns, on mile markers
 and concrete posts, on water towers.

Larry comes awake, squinting at the lamp, then at Stu.

Stu puts down the book and hands him a jug of Gatorade
 he's found. Larry looks unsure, but takes it.

STU

The electrolytes in there might be
 worth something still.

LARRY

Thanks.

STU

I'm Stu. Redman. I'm not
 dangerous.

Larry isn't in much of a position to doubt him. He nods.

LARRY

Larry. What time is it?

STU

Almost sunup, I guess.

Larry winces down a few swallows of the warm Gatorade.

STU

You okay?

LARRY

Just confused how I'm not dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU

I got you to throw up a few times.
Looks like I got you in time.

(beat)

I hope you're not sorry I did. I
guess I could leave you to it, if
you're determined.

Larry looks past him, humiliated, all of it coming back.

LARRY

It's not like that.

Stu waits for him to continue. Finally, he sits up a
bit.

LARRY

Summer in the city. Just a big
fucking oven with a million and a
half dead people in it. I was
with a lady.

STU

I saw her.

LARRY

I didn't know her. Well. We were
just getting out. But she got
halfway through and froze up, down
in the dark. She was already scared
to shit, but down there she --

(shaking his head)

So I thought: What's waiting on
the other side anyway? A whole
dead country, probably.

STU

For now.

Larry drinks again, then he surprises Stu by saying:

LARRY

She's convinced you, then.

STU

Who?

LARRY

The old lady. From the dreams.
Mother Abigail.

Stu is so floored the look on his face makes Larry smile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARRY

What -- ? Did you think you were
the only one having them?

EXT. WEEHAWKEN, NJ - 495 - DAWN

The sun is coming up behind them as they walk. Larry is
a little shaky on his feet.

LARRY

It heard it called everything from
'Superflu' to 'A-Prime' to 'Tube
Neck.' But we knew it on the East
Coast as 'Captain Trips.'

(beat)

They were burying people anywhere
they could: construction holes,
underground lots. Then the curve
shot up and they just left them in
beds and nailed up the doors.

(beat)

That's when the dreams started. I
don't know if one led to the other
but that's when I began to see
killings too -- anyone who looked
sick. They were shooting people,
setting them on fire in the
streets. It seemed like it
couldn't get worse. Then the
power went. No one was ready for
that kind of dark.

STU

Sounds like some people were.

LARRY

Yeah. You had to start being a
different kind of careful.

STU

What about -- Could anyone do
other thing? Out of the ordinary
I mean?

LARRY

Like what?

Stu reconsiders asking. He shrugs and Larry buys it.

LARRY

I went a month thinking I was the
only one having 'em. But everyone
was. Rita was, but she wouldn't
admit it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARRY (CONT'D)

I couldn't get my head around it.
Still can't, really.

(beat)

But that mountain, in the old lady
dreams. It's real. I looked it
up. It's in the Flatirons, in the
Rockies. Right outside Boulder.

Stu smiles an odd smile.

STU

Boulder. Right off the Lincoln
Highway.

LARRY

The what?

CUT TO:

STU

has taken out the book and laid out a fold-out map of the
entire route across the hood of a wrecked mail truck.

From Manhattan to San Francisco it winds across America,
cutting just north of Boulder.

STU

That's how we're supposed to go.

LARRY

Boulder's two days by highway.
This route goes through all these
little towns and back roads --

STU

It's longer, I know, but it's how
we're supposed to get there.
I don't know why. But that's the
invitation.

Larry looks at him, then the map, deciding. He nods,
then gives Stu a sly look.

LARRY

We're gonna need rides.

STU

It's a take-what-you-need economy
now. You got something in mind?

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY (PENNSYLVANIA) - DAY

Stu and Larry come down the Pennsylvania portion of the Lincoln Highway on the backs of brand new Indian Chief Vintages, all chrome and leather fringe. They've packed the saddlebags with camping gear. Larry is grinning like a dog; this is clearly some life-long ambition of his.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN (POWTANVILLE, OH) - DAY

Through an empty downtown, Donald Merwin Elbert, aka "The TRASHCAN MAN," or TRASH (30), wanders. He has a big stick of jerky in one hand and some fiber cord in the other. He goes from car to car, checking gas caps.

An African-American kid in a Bulls Jersey, DARRELL (18), ducks out of one of the stores carrying out a case of bottled water. He and Trash see each other and freeze.

EXT. TRACT HOUSE (POWTANVILLE, OH) - DAY

Darrell leads Trash to a house where an SUV is parked, half-packed. He shoves the bottled water inside.

DARRELL

Mrs. Yates, we got company!

In a moment, MRS. YATES (50s, white) comes hurrying out a side door, all 300 pounds. But her excitement drains away when she sees Trash.

MRS. YATES

Of all the God damned people --

TRASHCAN MAN

Afternoon, Mrs. Yates.

MRS. YATES

Don't 'afternoon' me, Devil.

(to Darrell)

You went to the market and brought back bruised fruit, Darrell. My son Carl went to school with this piece of shit.

TRASHCAN MAN

You all going somewhere?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. YATES

Don't you tell him! That's the last thing we need. You don't know who this is?

*

Darrell shakes his head. Mrs. Yates says to Trash:

MRS. YATES

I saw Joanne Fabrics was on fire last night, but I never dreamed it was you.

(off Trash's look)

Look at him grin. I thought you was locked up in Michigan City.

*

*

TRASHCAN MAN

They let us out on account of everybody gettin' sick.

*

MRS. YATES

Isn't that nice of them. Giving you back to the world. Didn't they see your record?

(to Darrell)

He's a *pry-o-maniac*. Burned down the Methodist Church when he was still in school. Burned up Old Lady Semple's pension checks. Mailboxes. Trashcans. Whatever he could get his hands on. *Cats*. What is it they called you?

*

TRASHCAN MAN

Mrs. Yates, come on. Don't --

*

*

MRS. YATES

'Trashcan Man'!

Trash looks visibly injured by this nickname.

MRS. YATES

'Trashcan Man'! 'Trashie'! That's what Carley used to say. 'Hide your cash, here comes Trash!' Carl was a good boy. A good man. Not like you, Trashie.

Trash just gives her a little fuck-you bow and walks away. Darrell sees him out. Mrs. Yates yells after them.

MRS. YATES

Darrell, don't tell that man anything! He's the Trashcan Man!

*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. YATES (CONT'D)

(to Trash)

That was her *pension money*,
asshole!

With that, Mrs. Yates hauls herself back into the house.

TRASHCAN MAN

I'm heading west anyway. To Gary.

DARRELL

I came down from Chicago and I can
tell you: There's nothing in
Gary.

TRASHCAN MAN

Yes there is.

Trash goes to the SUV and opens the fuel door. He takes
out one of his fiber cords and slips it into the tank.
He lights it and keeps walking, saying to the coming
fire:

TRASHCAN MAN

I love you.

Darrell, wide-eyed, runs for cover. The SUV EXPLODES,
shattering the windows on the house. Mrs. Yates appears
in one, cut up and screaming. Trash just smiles, happy.

CUT TO:

"LINCOLN HIGHWAY, PA" MONTAGE

Signs along the Lincoln Highway evoke the crazy jumble of
U.S. history: Shawnee Petroglyph Site, Gettysburg
Battlefield, the Flight 93 Memorial, etc.

The route takes them up main streets, through state parks
and down back roads, over covered bridges, showing off
parts of America invisible from the interstates. "L"
markers guide them.

Though the landscape is mostly empty, they pass evidence
of the plague's devastation. Old accident sites,
blackened house frames, and always bodies in the road.

EXT. THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY (OHIO) - DAY

When they cross the Ohio border, they come to a big barn
with a sign painted across its roof in big white letters.
By the road, in the shade, are the paint cans.
"BOULDER'S WHERE IT'S AT. 30 WEST TO COLORADO 25 SOUTH."
It's signed HAROLD LAUDNER and FRAN GOLDSMITH.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARRY

Spreading the good word. Someone
really hung his ass out for those
last couple of letters.

STU

Brought the paint cans down, too,
so they wouldn't explode up in the
heat. Smart, whoever they are.

Larry goes to take a leak on the side of the road.

LARRY

Maybe we'll catch up to them.

Stu waits on his bike. Down the road a quarter mile, he
sees where a moving truck once collided with an Amish
buggy. The skeletons of the horses are bleaching in the
sun, the loose harnesses still on them.

FLASH ON: The black pyramid of the Luxor.

Stu blinks away the image and, for a moment, sees that
the dead horses are trying to get to their feet. It is a
horrifying vision, but then they are back to still again,
the dark illusion passed. Stu breathes.

Larry comes back, zipping his pants. He's looking toward
the woods beside the fields.

LARRY

Do you hear that?

Then Stu does. It's a DOG BARKING. Then a big Irish
Setter races out of the woods, its tail wagging. It
comes over and leaps up on Stu, ecstatic. Stu ruffles
its ears.

GLEN (O.S.)

Kojak! Get down off that fella
before you get bit.

They look up and see GLEN BATEMAN (55) coming into the
field wearing a bush hat, hand raised. Stu raises his in
return. Glen is a bear of a man, but with a kind face.

GLEN

He heard your bikes. He's a
sweetheart, but I'll warn you the
second things get aggressive, so
does he. You'd have to shoot us
both.

STU

You've got nothing to worry about.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kojak circles Glen, but then heads back over to Stu,
working hard to keep himself from jumping again.

GLEN

Good. I believe you. Apparently,
so does he.

(beat)

I haven't seen anyone new in over
a week. I was starting to worry.

LARRY

You seen a lot of people?

GLEN

They're around. Last month, I saw
two dozen. Holed up in a hotel in
Scranton. They were scared.
Waiting for someone to come along
and tell them what to do. And
someone will. It just wasn't me.

He gestures to their packed bikes.

GLEN

Where you boys headed anyhow?
Heaven or Las Vegas?

Larry hesitates, but Stu says it plainly.

STU

We're going to Boulder.

GLEN

Good. We were hoping you'd say
that.

We? He turns back toward the woods and gives a wave. In
a moment, a dark-haired woman, NADINE (40), comes out of
the trees holding hands with a squinting child, JOE (8).
The kid is in a dirty T-shirt and bare feet, with wild
hair.

GLEN

That's Nadine, and Joe. We don't
know his name, actually. He won't
tell. Ran into them in Philly.

CUT TO:

EXT. INDIANA 469 HIGHWAY EXCHANGE - SUNSET

HAROLD LAUDNER (17) is up on the maintenance scaffold of
a large billboard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He's pocked with acne and a little on the chubby side,
but he must have once been much heavier. His clothes look
like holdovers from heavier days.

He's painting another message. This time on the
billboard where the Lincoln Highway runs under I-496 near
Ft. Wayne. All the lanes of the highway will be able to
see it.

FRANNIE (O.S.)
You're gonna need another can,
Harold.

FRANCIS "FRANNIE" GOLDSMITH (22) climbs up the ladder to
him, hauling up a can of paint.

HAROLD
Stay down. If someone comes
through here --

But she gets to the catwalk and hands up the paint.
Harold helps her the rest of the way. Frannie has a
sober and intelligent beauty, all the more so because she
is seven or so months pregnant.

She pries open paint with a screwdriver and starts mixing
it with one of the brushes.

HAROLD
Watch those fumes, Frannie. I
told you I don't know if that's
good for the baby.

FRANNIE
I'm holding my breath.

HAROLD
You can't talk and hold your
breath at the same time.

To prove she is, she looks up at him and says nothing,
her cheeks puffed out. She keeps stirring. Harold
watches her crouched there in her summer cutoffs.

HAROLD
Frannie. Let's get married.

Frannie caps the paint and breathes again.

FRANNIE
Oh, Hell.

HAROLD
What does that mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANNIE

Are you kidding, Harold? I can't tell.

HAROLD

No I'm not kidding. Damn, Frannie. What an answer.

Frannie stands up and gives him her full attention, full of sympathy, but with a clear boundary.

FRANNIE

I don't want to marry you, Harold.

HAROLD

Why not? Fran--

FRANNIE

I have to think of my reasons why not. I'm not going to let you draw me into a discussion about it when you just sprang that on me.

HAROLD

You don't love me.

FRANNIE

In most cases, love and marriage are mutually exclusive. Pick another choice.

HAROLD

No. You just want to score points off me. You always have, you and my sister and the rest of them.

FRANNIE

I'm sorry. I deserve that.

HAROLD

I'm sure you wish you were on this trip with someone you liked.

FRANNIE

I like you fine, Harold. In fact, I'd say you're my favorite person in the world right now.

HAROLD

Big joke.

FRANNIE

No joke. Don't be angry.

He doesn't say anything, just paints.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANNIE

Can't we talk -- ?

HAROLD

We were talking. You had your
 chance and you said 'Oh, Hell.'

FRANNIE

I wasn't even going to marry Jess!
 And he offered. I'm not going to
 because someone's trying to do the
 right thing.

HAROLD

That's not what I'm trying to do.
 (furious at himself)
 It *is*. Damn it -- you know what I
 mean.

FRANNIE

When we get to Boulder, Harold,
 when this baby comes, I'm going to
 need a lot of help. It would be
 easy to say yes now just for that
 reason, but I can't make myself
 feel something I don't.

All it would take is for Frannie to step up and just
 touch him, hold his hand, as some kind of tenderness in
 this moment. But she can't. Harold tells her flatly:

HAROLD

Don't worry. I'm not gonna run
 out on you.

In the distance, they begin to hear MOTORCYCLES. Harold
 looks at Frannie, nervous, then up at the half-finished
 sign. But there's no time to climb down and hide.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOOSTER JUNIOR HIGH - BASKETBALL COURT - SUNSET

Stu and the others are setting up camp on the basketball
 court in a brick YMCA building. Larry lays out sleeping
 bags. Joe and Nadine are playing on a pommel horse. Stu
 and Glen put together dinner, talking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GLEN

Hell, this is End of Days. It's gonna turn half of whoever's left into wide-eyed acolytes, ready to be told what the hell to do to get God or Allah or Kukulcan to turn off this big cosmic high colonic.

STU

(amused)
You've got a dim view of humanity.

GLEN

It's played out that way so many times throughout civilization --
(beat)

Look: With one person, you get a saint. Two fall in love. Three make a society. And four build the temple to put it in. Then things take a turn.

(beat)
Five bring majority rule. Six design a flag. And seven get you your first succession. And then what do you have?

STU

War.

GLEN

Yes. But you know who wins this time? Not the barbarians. It's the techies. People who can get it all up and running again.

(tapping his head)
Brainpower's the new gold.

STU

What were you before all this? A sociology professor?

GLEN

Physics. Though things have gotten a little complicated on that subject as well.

At the other end of the gym, Larry finishes with the sleeping bags and goes over to where Nadine and Joe are playing with a deflated basketball they've found.

Nadine is beautiful, going prematurely grey. He takes a long, unnoticed look as he walks up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARRY

You want to try to fund a pump,
Joe?

But Joe gives him a frosty stare and heads off with
Kojak. Nadine smiles, but there's little warmth in it.

LARRY

He okay?

NADINE

(with a shrug)

I've known him six weeks and he's
said as many words to me. It took
him one of them just to let me sit
next to him. Two before I could
clean him up a little. He still
won't let me cut his hair.

Larry's charm comes on. He can't help it. She's pretty.

LARRY

So cut mine. I'm due. We can
show him how easy it is.

Nadine gives him a sad smile, without any encouragement,
and heads after Joe. Larry silently curses himself.

GLEN (V.O.)

Science accepts that two particles
can interact with one another over
big distances. Why not two *minds*?

CUT TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE

They sit in the center circle with dinner, Joe off to the
side, watching them while he eats. Kojak is beside Stu.

LARRY

Or two million. Who knows how
many people are receiving these
dreams.

GLEN

In quantum physics, you'd call it
spooky action at a distance.
Entanglement.

STU

We do seem to be sharing some kind
of authentic psychic experience.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GLEN

Maybe we always were, but there
were so many of us camped on the
planet it was just noise. With
the occasional *deja vu* or lucky
hunch slipping through --

(beat)

Now that most people are gone,
maybe those of us who are left are
just hearing each other better.

NADINE

Or maybe we didn't catch this
'brain flu' because we don't have
normal brains.

GLEN

We'll probably never know.

LARRY

It's like having a CB in your
head, but you can only receive.

GLEN

Actually, how do we know that?
Maybe we can transmit too. Maybe
we already are --

CUT TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE

Glen comes back into the gym with some dusty legal pads
and markers. He passes them around.

GLEN

Nadine, draw something. Specific,
but still basic. Let's not blow
our circuits right out the gate.

She thinks, then sketches something only she can see.

GLEN

Now try to get it into our heads.
Show us what to draw --

A long beat as she tries, then each man draws a picture.

GLEN

Okay. Show us.

Nadine turns her pad and it's a simple crucifix. Larry
turns his and it's a wedding dress.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Glen's missed it completely with a bouquet, perhaps from interference by Larry's thinking. But Stu has drawn a scarecrow.

GLEN

Whoa, Stu.

LARRY

(getting into it)

Okay. Now me.

They repeat the process. Larry draws first. When he turns it over, it's a roller skate. Glen's drawn a moon, Nadine a weird sort of sock puppet. But Stu shocks them again: He's drawn a roller skate. It's even tilted the same way.

GLEN

Holy Moses.

LARRY

I think I even felt you in my head, man.

NADINE

My CB must be busted --

But Larry reaches out and turns Nadine's drawing upside down. Suddenly, it becomes a loose sort of roller skate.

GLEN

It's the new Internet.

Stu half-smiles. He's right.

STU

My turn --

CUT TO:

EXT. ARKANSAS RURAL ROUTE 139 - SUNSET

NICK ANDROS (23) is cycling through Arkansas wheat country, a small pack on his back. He's making good time, in a rhythm. He's a wiry kid with intense focus.

He passes a sign reading "WELCOME TO MISSOURI! The Show-Me State" and comes up on the site of an old crash. As he slaloms around it, he sees: It's a satellite. It lays in pieces along the road -- black foil drums, charred solar panels, and part of a long blackened antenna. Any flag on its side has burned away. He pedals on.

EXT. MAIN STREET (PALMYRA, MO) - SUNSET

Nick bikes into the town of Palmyra, MO. On Main Street, a dead man lies on the center line. Nick is just gliding past it when it sits up.

Startled, Nick loses control of the bike and crashes to the pavement. The man scampers over.

TOM

You okay? You took a spill!

Nick finds himself looking up into the guileless face of TOM CULLEN (30s). The man has the familiar eyes and thick speech of a person with Down Syndrome.

Nick hurries out his note pad and holds up a pre-written "I'M GLAD TO MEET YOU, I'M NICK ANDROS" note. Tom looks at it, then gives it back.

TOM

I got through school, but not with that.

Nick looks at him, confused. Tom points to the paper.

TOM

M-O-O-N, that spells 'can't read.'

Nick watches Tom's lips, trying to understand. Once he does, he sits back on the road in disbelief.

TOM

You're bleeding, mister.

Tom looks at his scraped hands, then around for a drug store. He spots one and heads to it. Nick follows along.

TOM

That open sign's a liar. Mr. Norton's gone. Hey, why don't you wanna talk?

Nick puts a hand over his mouth, shakes his head. Tom doesn't get it.

The store's locked, so Nick takes a trash can from the curb and smashes the glass. Tom's aghast.

TOM

You can't do that! If it's locked, you can't go in. It's illegal!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But Nick reaches in, unlocks it, and goes inside.

TOM

Didn't you hear me? What are you,
deaf?

He's just using a common phrase, but Tom's expression
blanks for a moment as he figures it out.

TOM

Hey, mister -- You are! Can't
hear! Can't speak! I figured it
out!

But then his face blanks again and he calls to Nick:

TOM

Then how are we supposed to talk?!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY (INDIANA) - DAY

Stu's group buzzes along through more farmland. They've
found a couple of Honda Scooters for Nadine and Glen and
they've jury-rigged a kid trailer for Kojak. The dog's
tongue is out and his snout in the wind, happy as can be.

STU

Fedora. And Glen's thinking of a
swimming pool.

GLEN

I am! How do you do that?

STU

Think of another one, and try to
keep me out like Nadine's doing.
I can't feel her at all.

GLEN

(to Nadine)
How are you doing it?

But Larry begins slowing down. Ahead of them, up on a
billboard, is Harold and Frannie's half-finished message.
"GET TO BOULDER. USE 30 WEST TO -- " Then it just ends.

They look around, but there's no one. Stu climbs up to
touch the paint. It's dry, which isn't encouraging. And
the paint cans are still up on the ledge in full sun.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN BAND SHELL (PALMYRA, MO) - DAY

Nick has brought his bike and gear over to the town's band shell. He sits on the stage watching Tom play with about a hundred Matchbox cars in the fading light.

TOM

Mom and Mrs. Blakely, Jesus took.
I think most of the others went up
to St. Louis maybe. Everybody's
always talking about what a little
town this is --

Nick looks at all the town's dark windows, pulled shades.

TOM

But everybody likes Tom Cullen.
Everybody. At the library, the
movie theater, the car wash place --

Nick can't help but smile at Tom's unguarded enthusiasm.
But Tom's expression grows troubled.

TOM

So if they all went to St. Louis,
why didn't they take me?

He looks at Nick as if he might really know.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY (INDIANA) - DAY

Stu's group rides to a place the Lincoln Highway should be, but instead they find a huge body of water across it with every kind of debris, as if a tsunami has pushed inland. It's so large they can't see across it. The road just disappears into it.

STU

What is this?

GLEN

Everyone, meet Lake Michigan.

LARRY

We're ten miles from Lake
Michigan!

GLEN

Not anymore. I was wondering if
we'd see this. Up in Chicago, the
city river originally flowed into
Lake Michigan, not out.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GLEN (CONT'D)

Pumps reversed it. It was called
a miracle of engineering. Without
'em, this is what you get.

They stand looking at the heaps of flotsam, whole
neighborhoods worth of human belongings carried here.

CUT TO:

EXT. EDGE OF LAKE MICHIGAN - DAY

They follow the edge, going around. There are so many
bodies washed up with the debris that they ride in
silence. It's one long shoreline of the dead and all
their things, speared by planks and pieces of rotting
drywall. Lawn gnomes, mannequins, chandeliers, cribs,
and ten thousand other objects of the old world.

Larry sees something and stops. He gets off his bike and
goes out a few yards into the pile-up.

NADINE

Larry, that can't be safe --

He pulls on something, prying it loose. He finally gets
it free and holds it up like a prize. It's a guitar
case.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN BAND SHELL (PALMYRA, MO) - DUSK

Nick has nodded off. He comes awake in the dusk to see
bats wheeling about over the park. Lightning bugs flare
here and there. Tom is gone, but has put no less than a
dozen blankets over Nick while he's slept.

Nick takes out a road atlas from his pannier. He looks
at all the roads between here and the Lincoln Highway,
which he's highlighted in yellow. There's still a lot of
ground to cover. Then he looks at all of Tom's little
cars and sighs at the choice he has to make.

CUT TO:

EXT. INDIANA DRIVE-IN - DUSK

Stu's group has gotten tents and camped in the cinder lot
of a drive-in theater.

Larry has the guitar. It's a simple learning guitar, but
its strings are intact.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They shine in the campfire light as he tunes it up.
Nadine is trimming cob corn with a box cutter and handing
it to Glen who's pan roasting it. Joe sits on a swingset
beneath the movie screen a few yards away, watching
Larry.

When he starts to play, it's Canned Heat's "On the Road
Again."

LARRY

*Well I'm so tired of cryin' but
I'm out on the road again. I
ain't got no lady to call my
special friend --*

Suddenly Joe is standing right at Larry's elbow, nodding
along. He gives Larry a thumbs-up. Larry keeps playing --

LARRY

Thank you.

JOE

Weckome.

Larry beams and keeps singing. Nadine watches them,
astonished. She at Larry, amazed and moved. His voice
is golden. But then Joe looks past Larry and says:

JOE

Feller --

LARRY

What's that, Joe?

JOE

Feller --

He says again, and points. They look where he's pointing
and see: Trashcan Man is standing out on the tall grass,
looking in at their campfire.

Kojak BARKS, and gets in front of Stu. Stu and Larry
exchange a look. Larry puts down the guitar so as to
pull Stu's rifle near to his side. Nadine takes the box
cutter in hand and moves to Joe. Stu steps forward,
quieting the dog with a hand.

TRASHCAN MAN

*I smelled your cookin'. I'm
camped back there beside the golf
course. I can trade you for it.
It's been a while since I ate hot.*

STU

We can spare a little, sure

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Trash comes forward. Glen hands him the plate he's preparing, ready for whatever strange conversation is about to begin. But Trash just smiles, mumbles a thanks, and heads back across the lot.

Everyone looks at one another. Kojak barks once and Stu gives him a good belly rub.

GLEN

I think that's your dog now, Stu.

NADINE

He was sort of the quiet type, no?

LARRY

I don't like him knowing where we are. You get any impression, Stu -- ?

STU

He liked the fire. That's all I got. He wasn't thinking about Flagg or Vegas, or Boulder either. I don't think he'll bother us. I was planning on watches tonight anyway. That settles it.

NADINE

I can't shoot a gun, but I can stay up with one of you and keep you company.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE

Everyone is sleeping except for Larry and Nadine, who sit close to one another. They've let the fire die, but there is a huge, bright moon. The movie screen above them glows white. Joe is asleep in the closest tent. Somewhere nearby, GLEN SNORES.

NADINE

It's hard to want to go to sleep when you know what's waiting for you.

LARRY

He's a spooky dude, huh?

NADINE

I don't mind those dreams. I grew up in Vegas. It doesn't scare me. I don't get those much, actually. I dream about before --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARRY

Before?

NADINE

I thought I was living the wrong
 life. I never married, never had
 kids. I was a teacher, but only
 because I couldn't think what it
 was I was supposed to be doing.
 And every day just seemed like a
 little more false momentum,
 waiting for something, some
 crucial moment that never came.

She tears up a little.

NADINE

That seems so minor-league now,
 thank God. In a weird way, I like
 this much better. Sorry.
 (sincerely)
 You know what I mean at all?

Larry just shakes his head.

LARRY

I miss porn and nachos too much.

She laughs the sweetest, most vulnerable laugh. So he
 leans in and kisses her, deeply. She stays with him for
 a beat, but then pulls away. He moves to her neck and
 she lets him. But when she stands, she is crying.

LARRY

What is it?!

NADINE

Didn't you just hear what I said?

She says this sincerely. She wipes her face and crawls
 in beside Joe. He whimpers in his sleep. She zips the
 tent.

Larry stands, confused as shit. He looks around, as if
 for someone to corroborate how puzzling this just was and
 that's when he sees:

LARRY'S POV

Someone is cutting across the far end of the moonlit lot.
 It's Trashcan Man. He disappears out the entrance of the
 drive-in.

BACK TO SCENE

Larry moves to Stu's tent. He wakes him.

EXT. INDIANA ROUTE 912 - NIGHT

Larry comes out of the drive-in and follows the road up the wooded hill beyond. When he gets to the top, he sees he's standing at the edge of a field of twenty or thirty big white chemical storage tanks, each one three stories high, pale in the moonlight.

It takes him a moment to see Trash climbing over the main entrance fence, which has been closed and padlocked. He disappears amongst the giants.

EXT. CHEERY PETROLEUM - TANK #1 STAIRS - NIGHT

Larry climbs the fence and heads to the first tank. He begins up the little stairs that wind around to the top.

EXT. CHEERY PETROLEUM - TANK #1 - DAY

At the top, he sees Trash crouched down at some exposed pipes in the center of the tank. He's got matches out and is looking very carefully at something. Larry is about to call to him when he distinctly hears Trash say:

TRASHCAN MAN

I love you.

And then he gets up to run. He sees Larry standing there, and just zooms past him. It takes Larry a moment to see that Trash has jammed some kind of thick fuse into a vent pipe and lit it. The running spark disappears into it.

LARRY

Holy --

Larry starts running.

EXT. CHEERY PETROLEUM - TANK #1 STAIRS - DAY

Larry comes down the stairs three at a time. He trips and tumbles down the last dozen, but keeps running. He climbs the fence, drops over, and sprints for his life.

EXT. INDIANA ROUTE 912 - DAY

Larry's about eight hundred yards away when Tank #1 blows with a huge KA-WHAP! and lights up the night.

The blast wind racing through the trees along the road and when it hits, Larry's knocked forward. The whole sky swirls orange and black. He gets up and keeps running.

Tanks #2 and #3 blow. Then the rest go in an epic chain.

EXT. INDIANA DRIVE-IN - NIGHT

Kojak is BARKING his head off. Stu watches as the hill north of the drive-in blooms in huge columns of fire. The EXPLOSIONS ECHO over the countryside.

Glen appears just beside him when the wind hits blows by them. Nadine and Joe appear in the opening of their tent.

Then Stu feels, more than senses what's next. There is a movement through the trees in the woods as the first tiny bits of shrapnel begin falling.

Without thinking, Stu yanks Glen down into the doorway of Nadine's tent where he pulls everyone together as pieces of blackened metal begin shredding the giant movie screen and piercing the ground all around them.

INT. NADINE'S TENT - NIGHT

He keeps his face down, but lifts one hand to the sky.

Nadine is SCREAMING, clutching Joe to her, both of them under Stu. Parts of the tent roof glow silver. They can't see outside, but they all hear the chaos raining down.

When it tapers off, Stu brings down his hand and the silver immediately disappears.

EXT. INDIANA DRIVE-IN - NIGHT

They come out and see, in the massive light of the fires: metal bits and pieces have piled up around the tent, leaving a perfect circle five yards wide around the spot they were just crouching in.

The dog runs up and licks Stu's hand as if there's some aftertaste there. Glen looks at what Stu's done, then at Stu, in amazement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NADINE

Stu, where's Larry -- ?!

But Larry runs up, scraped up from his slide on pavement.

LARRY

He set them to blow.

Little fires have caught in the tattered movie screen and in some of the trees. But Larry keeps moving, heading in the direction of Trash's camp. Stu and Kojak follow.

INT. TRASHCAN'S TENT - NIGHT

The dog finds the tent fifty yards into the woods. It's still empty. Larry ducks into it behind Kojak.

STU (O.S.)

Lar-- we've got to go.

He finds a duffle bag and opens it up. He stares at its contents: FUSECORD, TIMING DEVICES, and other tools of the trade. And GRENADES. A dozen of them. Larry zips it up and takes it.

LARRY

You just lost your toy privileges,
asshole.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS (OUTSIDE GARY) - NIGHT

Trashcan Man is watching the blaze he's created from a railroad bridge nearby. Massive roiling columns of flame boil to the heavens. Then he realizes it is speaking to him. A god-size face assembles and disassembles itself up in the flames, never clear, but always there.

FLAGG (V.O.)

*Live by the torch, die by the
torch. I see what you've done and
I am pleased.*

FLASH ON: The black pyramid of the Luxor hotel in Vegas.

FLAGG (V.O.)

*I will set you high in my
artillery, Donald. You're needed
here.*

Trash hops up and down, he's so excited, so moved.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRASHCAN MAN
My name. You know my name!

*
*

FADE TO BLACK.

*

FADE IN:

*

EXT. TOWN BAND SHELL (PALMYRA, MO) - DAWN

*

The morning is bird-filled and dewy. Tom comes walking up across the wet grass of the park, two big jars of peanut butter in hand. He gets to the band shell and sees:

*
*
*
*

Nick is gone. All his stuff, too, as well as Tom's cars. All that's left is a pile of folded blankets.

Tom's face goes blank for a moment. Then an expression of real sadness comes over him. But then a BIKE HORN BEGINS HONKING over in the town square.

*

EXT. MAIN INTERSECTION (PALMYRA, MO) - DAY

*

Nick is walking two bikes, his own and a mountain bike he's fixed up with a horn, headlight, and panniers. He sees Tom running toward him, relief plain on his face.

Nick puts the kickstands down and makes a pedalling motion. Then he points way into the distance. Tom thinks.

*
*
*
*

TOM

You want me to go with you?

Nick nods.

TOM

Can I take my cars, mister?

Nick crouches over a pannier and opens it, revealing all of Tom's matchbox cars. Tom shouts with joy:

TOM

TOM CULLEN'S GOING!!!

EXT. MISSOURI RURAL ROUTE 81 - DAY

*

Tom is faster than Nick expected. He pedals furiously, all concentration. They get to a sign reading "IOWA STATE LINE." Tom slows to a stop and waits for Nick.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
Is this still Ralls County,
mister?

*

Nick shakes his head. This gives Tom pause. He looks out at the vast countryside ahead of them, scared now.

TOM
Is it the world?

It takes Nick a second to realize what Tom is asking. He nods. Tom looks behind them, and ahead. Then he gathers his courage, and says:

*

TOM
Okay. Okay, let's go.

He starts pedalling. Nick follows, full of admiration.

CUT TO:

EXT. LINCOLN HIGHWAY (ILLINOIS/IOWA) - DAY

*

On a steel trestle bridge over the Mississippi River, an old flag hangs in tatters. Its stars are dirty, but still visible.

*

*

*

Stu's group rides out onto the bridge and slows to a stop halfway across. They get off to stretch their legs. Kojak jumps out of his little trailer, tail wagging.

*

*

*

STU
Five minutes.

*

*

Stu goes to the edge and looks out at the wooded riverbanks. It is a beautiful summer afternoon. Golden eagles fly along the banks where they've nested.

*

*

*

Glen and Joe come up to look with him. Joe starts to drop pretzels in the river. Catfish come up to investigate. A lot of them.

*

*

*

GLEN
The irony of this is that, mixed in with the rest, I've never seen so many pretty places in my life.

*

*

*

*

STU
I'm starting to think that's why Mother put us on this road instead of the highways. So we could see all this. Fall back in love with it.

*

*

*

*

*

*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU (CONT'D)

(beat)
Before we have to defend it.

Glen looks at Stu, and nods.

Over by the bikes, Tom looks at Nadine and sees something
on her neck that catches his interest.

TOM

M-O-O-N. That spells 'hickey.'

It takes Nadine a beat to realize he's talking about her.
She puts a hand to her neck and looks over at Joe, but
he's barely paying attention. Larry can't help but grin
a little. Nadine looks at him, astonished, and walks
off.

Larry trades a look with Stu. Glen raises his eyebrows.

LARRY

How about we take the lead.

STU

We'll give you a head start.

CUT TO:

LARRY

rides up on his bike and slows beside her.

NADINE

You could have told me.

LARRY

I didn't see it -- !

Larry's good humor makes her even more angry. He cuts
her off and says:

LARRY

Get on.

(beat)
I've got your stuff. Stu's got
Joe. It's time to talk.

She looks at him. Then she climbs on behind him.

EXT. THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY (IOWA) - DAY

Larry drives slow so they can hear each other. The road
moves from woods to fields and back into woods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARRY

I'm sorry I did that. I shouldn't
have come at you like that.

*
*

NADINE

I worried it might happen.

*

LARRY

You didn't seem so worried at
first.

*
*

NADINE

Larry, I just --

*

He comes into a wide curve in the road and leans a little
into it.

*
*

LARRY

Before you tell me whatever it is
you're gonna tell me, let me say
something first.

*
*
*
*

(beat)

*

I don't want anything from you,
you don't want to give. I'm not
gonna try to talk you into
anything, or steamroll you. I'll
be honest: I didn't used to be,
but I can tell you, Nadine, I am
really a nice --

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

But Larry has to hit the brakes. There is a vinyl-sided
house trailer blocking the road. Then they see: A dozen
or so people stand around it in little groups.

*

Larry barely keeps from skidding out. A sandy-bearded
man in aviator sunglasses, GARVEY (40), calls out:

*
*

GARVEY

OKAY --

He stands in the middle of a loose line across the road
with three other men -- VIRGE, RONNIE, AL (30s) -- all
armed. Behind them are eight very stoned-looking women,
Frannie included. Harold is standing with them, unarmed.

*
*
*

NADINE

(quietly, to Larry)
None of the women have guns.

*
*

GARVEY

Now DISMOUNT. Slow slow slow.

LARRY

We don't want anything here.
We'll just back on up --

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARVEY

Get off the bike. And step away
from each other.

*
*
*

In the near distance behind them, they all hear ENGINES.

*

NADINE

Joe --

*
*

And that's enough for Larry. He arches his back a little
so that the rifle comes into reach. Then he goes for it.

*
*

LARRY

GET DOWN!

*

Garvey sights Larry, but just as he pulls the trigger,
Frannie suddenly comes alive and screams:

*
*

FRANNIE

NOW!

*

Her yell causes Garvey to flinch. The bullet meant for
Larry misses by an inch as Larry pulls Nadine behind his
bike. Several more of the women rush Garvey's gang,
disrupting their first shots.

*
*
*

Harold ducks behind the trailer and yells for Frannie.

*

The men struggle with the women, who are clawing and
kicking. Virge gets off a shot and the face of the woman
attacking him explodes. Frannie can hear the woman's
blood RAIN DOWN on the pavement. But his rifle bucks and
goes clattering across the road. Frannie runs right
after it.

*
*
*
*
*
*

Stu and Glen ride INTO VIEW. Stu hears the GUNFIRE as he
sees it. He gets both scooters off the road as bullets
shred the trees around them. Joe screams. The kid
trailer tips over and Kojak rolls out.

*
*
*
*

Glen's last glimpse before Stu pushes him and Joe
downslope of the road is Al receiving a perfect head shot
from Larry, pinwheeling back against the trailer.

*
*
*

Stu grabs his rifle and starts running toward the mayhem,
looking for a shot, but the men are in the middle of so
many women now he can't risk it.

*
*
*

Garvey keeps shooting at Larry while Ronnie fires into
the women, screaming:

*
*

RONNIE

Yaah! BITCHES! YAAH! You
bitches!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Three women drop, bloody and flopping, on the pavement. But Frannie has picked up Virge's rifle. Instead of shooting Ronnie, she brains him with the butt of it. He drops on his stomach and she hammers his head.

Stu aims at Garvey and fires, taking off the man's ear. Garvey bellows, and duck-runs behind the trailer.

Virge, without a gun, sends one of the women to the ground with a nasty punch, then he shoves his way through to get behind the trailer as well. Harold, hiding with a chunk of asphalt from the road, slams him in the face.

Virge doesn't fall, but stumbles along SCREAMING. He puts his hand on the trailer to brace himself and Harold smashes it, breaking fingers.

They hear an ENGINE STARTING on the other side of the trailer, so Stu leaps up, runs after. Passing Larry and Nadine, still on the ground behind their bike.

NADINE

Oh my God. Oh my God.

Stu yells to her as he passes:

STU

Joe's all right --

Stu gets to the trailer and sees: there's a station wagon and a cop car hidden behind it. Garvey is backing the cop car away like a missile. Virge is hanging half out of the window, trying to crawl in. Stu runs after, aiming at the tires, but he's out of ammo. He drops his rifle.

Garvey squeals into a braked turn, then he peels out and floors it. Stu concentrates on the back tires -- trying to blow them with his mind.

But behind the trailer, a WOMAN begins SCREAMING and his attention is pulled in that direction. Frannie runs up, her hands bloody. He sees how pregnant she is.

STU

Are you shot?!

FRANNIE

I'm okay -- It's your friend --

Stu starts running back to the bikes.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMP RIVERDOG - DRIVEWAY - DUSK

The station wagon comes down a long gravel road followed by the bikes. The road cuts through a windbreak and ends at a camp meeting hall. The wagon aims its headlights at the hall and parks. Everyone jumps out.

*
*
*

STU
(to Harold)
Go back to the road and make sure
nobody can see us down here. Be
sure --

*
*

Harold goes. Stu says to Glen and Nadine:

*

STU
Help me bring him inside --

*
*

In the light of the headlights, they carry Larry into the hall. He's covered in blood. Frannie helps get the two other women inside as well.

*
*
*

INT. CAMP RIVERDOG MEETING HALL - MESS - NIGHT

They bring Larry in and lay him on a long dining table. He's conscious, but fading, grunting with pain.

*
*

GLEN
We've got to do something for him.

*

Frannie appears with a second lantern. Stu removes a pullover tied over Larry's wound. He's taken a shot to the chest that's left a ragged hole. It's WHISTLING.

*
*
*

GLEN
That's his lung --

*
*

Stu rips off some tape from the med kit they have and makes a rough flutter valve to fix over it.

*
*

STU
We should have kept driving, found
a clinic. Something. They'd have
pain meds. Sterile tools --

NADINE
He's losing blood. He's cold,
Stu.

*

Larry looks up at them, pale and shivering and very weak. Harold runs back in.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAROLD

No one can see down here unless
they're coming through the woods
on foot. If you don't need the
headlights anymore --

STU

Shut 'em off.

(beat)

Is anyone here more qualified to
do this than me? Is anyone a
doctor? A vet? Anything?

One of the women stands up.

SHIRLEY

I'm a midwife.

Stu looks to see who's said this. The woman seems to be
in a deep haze. He asks Frannie, who is at his elbow.

STU

What's going on with her?

FRANNIE

They were forcing tranquilizers on
us. They had a mason jar full of
them. The orange ones worked, but
the pink ones must have been too
old. That's how some of us fooled
them.

Shirley looks at Larry, at the blood. She says, vaguely:

SHIRLEY

He won't make it.

Dayna sits Shirley back down. Stu turns to Frannie.

STU

I'm going to try something.

Larry moans. Frannie mops the cold sweat off his face
with her shirt.

STU

(to Glen)

Get his other shoulder and hold
him down. I don't know if this is
going to hurt --

GLEN

What about the blood?

Glen takes up a position opposite Stu.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU
 (to Harold)
 Take his leg -- He might kick.

FRANNIE
 What are you going to do?

Harold takes hold of his calf while Glen holds him down at the hips.

Before he can second guess himself, Stu puts his hands directly onto Larry's wound. Larry yells and bucks at the pain, but in a second, there is the faintest silver light under Stu's fingers.

Larry begins panting, and then breathing normally. It seems to be causing Stu some great effort. But when Stu removes his hand, the wound is raw looking, but closed. He puts his hands back over it once more and when he removes them again, it looks better.

STU
 (intently)
 Breathe, Larry. Tell me if it hurts --

Larry, a little dazed from this, does. He takes a good, full, deep breath. Frannie and Harold look on, in disbelief. All of them do.

LARRY
 Actually, it kind of tickles.

Larry raises his arm as if to show them. Stu tears up.

LARRY
 Right through here. It *tickles*.

He laughs.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE IOWA LANDSCAPE - NIGHT

The moon has come up, a big bloody moon above the woods and fields. But it is slowly becoming Flagg's eye, which combs over landscape slowly, feeling Stu and his powers, and seeking him out. Horses in the fields feel Flagg's gaze upon them. They shudder and shy.

As well:

1. In a small roadside camp, Garvey and Virge are tending to their wounds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Garvey's taping his shot ear and Virge is wrapping up his broken hand. Suddenly they turn to the moon, as if called.

2. On the roof of a gas station elsewhere in the county, TWO MEN are camped. They come awake in the moonlight and all look up, one and then the next.

3. On the highway, another MAN camping in a canvas-cover Army truck gets out to see at the moon.

His hand slides off the door handle and drops to his side. A voice speaks to him. It is Flagg's voice.

FLAGG (V.O.)

Bring him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMP RIVERDOG MEETING HALL - PORCH - NIGHT

Stu washes the blood off his hands at an old enamel pump sink out on the porch. Then he goes and sits on the rail, spent. In a moment, the screen door opens. Frannie comes out and comes over to him. He asks her:

STU

Those men -- ?

She understands and saves him from saying it out loud.

FRANNIE

The other girls, yeah. Not me.
Not yet. Harold, they were
testing. Teasing. I'm not sure
which. He was faking it well
enough, but he wouldn't have
lasted much longer if they'd made
him do anything really ugly.

(beat)

You and your friend saved us both.

Stu nods, but there's no pride in it.

FRANNIE

You okay?

STU

We can't stay here long. Not
after that.

FRANNIE

In a minute. I'm asking about you
right now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks at her. She doesn't seem intimidated by him at all. And there's an attraction on both sides that's beautifully apparent, a strong one. *

So Stu answers her question candidly, surprising himself. *

STU

I'm not sure I'm cut out for this.

FRANNIE

I was thinking the opposite. You were a hell of a shot back there. Not to mention whatever the hell you did back on that table. *

STU

I don't know what that was. I'm still figuring it out. It's a big set of question marks. *

(vaguely) *

Army of One. Taking lives, saving lives. *

She crouches beside him and puts a hand on his shoulder. *

FRANNIE

You're way up on the saving part. *

He nods, grateful. *

INT. CAMP RIVERDOG MEETING HALL - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

In the dining hall, Larry is letting Nadine look him over, Glen and Joe at his side. Harold sits by the cold fireplace with the women, but he's watching Frannie and Stu through the front windows, waiting to see what happens next. *

FLASH ON: A snake is falling, falling through the sky. *

EXT. CAMP RIVERDOG MEETING HALL - PORCH - NIGHT *

Stu looks at the fullness of her belly. *

STU *

What about you? You ready for what you've got coming? *

FRANNIE *

No. But I've got three weeks or so to get ready. Boulder means a lot to me for a place I've never seen. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her whole energy shifts a little.

FRANNIE

We haven't seen anyone yet who's
got family alive. I don't know
about genetics, but that can't be
good.

STU

(remembering)

I saw twins --

She looks at him, not sure if she'll let herself believe
him. He looks at her, nodding.

STU

In New York. Twin brothers.
Teenagers. Both were fine.

She smiles a little, about to reply, but then they hear a
sound out in the dark. A CHUFFING sound. They both
look.

A horse comes out of the dark and stands about 50' from
the porch. Another joins it, as if drawn by their
voices. Both are beautiful. Neither has a saddle. One
is pulling up on a front hoof.

FRANNIE

He's hurt, Stu --

But Stu gets Frannie up and walks her toward the door,
not buying this completely.

STU

Tell the others we're leaving.
And bring out my rifle --

FRANNIE

Stu, what's going on -- ?

But as they get to the door, a third horse darts out of
the darkness beyond railing behind them and swings its
head at Stu, hard, knocking him down the stairs into the
yard. The other horses rush forward.

Frannie screams and tries to go down after him, but the
first horse snaps at her.

INT./EXT. CAMP RIVERDOG MEETING HALL - NIGHT

Harold and the others hear Frannie SCREAMING and move.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Glen and Larry grab guns. Harold follows them out to the porch in time to see:

The first two horses have Stu between them -- one gripping him by the belt and the other by the back of his shirt. They gallop off with him up the driveway into the dark.

Glen shoots at the horse nearest the porch, driving it off into the dark, while Larry runs after Stu. Harold takes Frannie's arm and pulls her inside.

EXT. CAMP RIVERDOG - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Larry races after Stu and sees where the driveway meets the road: there is a pickup waiting. The horses dump Stu into the bed where two men are waiting and then run off. One man punches Stu unconscious. The other aims his shotgun at Larry and fires. Then the truck PEEELS OUT and speeds off.

Larry runs back to the camp, yelling to Glen.

LARRY

Use the gas in the scooters -- top
the motorcycles off --

CUT TO:

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

The shooters handcuff Stu. In a mile, they meet up with police car and the Army truck. They transfer him to the back of the truck.

Stu groans and comes to enough to see Garvey crouching in front of him, with his taped bloody ear, and a mason jar full of pills in his hand. Stu tries to get up, but Garvey shoves him back.

He shakes out two pills -- both orange -- and forces them into Stu's mouth. Then he holds Stu's jaw and nose shut. Stu starts to buck and kick, but finally swallows.

GARVEY

You can sleep all the way there,
Redman.

Then he sucker punches him for good measure. Stu is out.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMP RIVERDOG MEETING HALL - PORCH - NIGHT

Larry tries to operate as calmly as Stu would. He scans the map as everyone starts loading into the wagon. Glen and Harold come up.

GLEN

Bikes are ready.

Larry shows them on the map.

LARRY

They're taking him to Vegas. The fastest is for them to cut down to Ewing, then here or here to I-70.

(beat)

We'll try to catch them before the split. Be ready; this fucker likes to ambush.

Larry goes to Nadine and Fran who are standing with Joe by the wagon. He talks to them as he goes through Trashcan Man's duffle in back. He pulls out several grenades and clips them to his belt. Frannie's eyes widen.

LARRY

You've got rifles. Keep to our route and look for Mother. We'll get Stu and meet you in Nebraska, past Omaha. A town called Hemingford Home. It's on the map. We'll meet you there as soon as we can. Four shots means it's us.

Frannie nods. Nadine surprises Larry with a hug. Frannie just squeezes Harold's hand. Like a sister. Larry takes one Indian and Harold rides with Glen on the other. The women get into the wagon, Frannie behind the wheel.

EXT. CAMP RIVERDOG DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

At the end of the driveway, the bikes go one way, the wagon the other.

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL IOWA - FIRST LIGHT

Garvey's convoy of military truck, cop car, and pickup barrel through a chain of tiny Iowa farm towns. The early morning skies look low and full of rain.

INT. MILITARY TRUCK - FIRST LIGHT

In the back of the military truck, Stu comes up through his drug haze. Virge has been waiting for this.

He climbs over to Stu with his mason jar. He shakes out two more pills -- a pink one and an orange one -- and shoves them into Stu's mouth.

Foggy, Stu tries to spit them out before Virge can get his jaw shut. One pings off the canvas wall and falls to the bed. Stu can see it's the orange one. As Virge is getting another -- still orange -- Stu knees the jar out of his hand. It shatters on the floor of the truck. Virge decks him in the ribs and Stu cries out.

VIRGE

Fucking dirtyfighter --

Virge grabs two pills off the floor and forces them between Stu's lips. Stu can't see what color they are, but this time Virge gets the upper hand making Stu swallow.

CUT TO:

EXT. IOWA HIGHWAY - FIRST LIGHT

Larry and Glen race on. A sign on the roadside reads EWING 11. Dark thunderheads are gathering south of them.

EXT. EWING (IA) - FIRST LIGHT

When they ride in, they see: Ewing was clearly the site of some kind of "Shroud" Protocol fiasco. It's been practically leveled with mortar fire.

A statue of Chief Black Hawk stands in a small, ruined park at the intersection of two rural routes. A four-lane road heads southwest and a two-lane runs due south.

They slow down and come to a stop in the intersection. Garvey's gang is nowhere to be seen.

HAROLD

We missed them?!

GLEN

It's a coin toss from here. FUCK.

HAROLD

They're in trucks, right. They'd take the bigger road --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But Larry closes his eyes and tries to summon up anything Stu is sending. Suddenly, he can see, in his head:

FLASH ON: The tops of the ruined buildings of Ewing, as seen from the back of the military truck.

Larry gets a little vertigo with the image, but he stays with it, eyes clamped shut.

FLASH ON: But not any street signs or tall landmarks are visible. Just for a moment, however, he sees the profile of a man's statue pass. And then it is gone.

Larry opens his eyes and figures out how the angle could work -- from the south. They went south. He launches off in that direction. Glen follows, Harold barely hanging on.

EXT. SOUTH OF EWING (IA) - DAY

Larry and Glen ride side by side, hugging the road and topping out their speed. The country past Ewing is as rural as it gets -- rolling fields of corn gone wild as far as they can see. The first wand of lightning strikes twenty miles ahead.

Up there, by the strike, Larry spots Garvey's convoy. It begins to sprinkle rain.

INT. MILITARY TRUCK - DAYS

Up a mile with Garvey's gang it is already raining hard. Stu has his eyes nearly closed but he sees the headlights of the police car and pickup truck come on behind them as the sky continues to darken.

Further back, Stu can see the two bikes gaining on them. Neither has on its running headlights so they are less visible in the rain. Stu gets his knees drawn up and pretends to stir in his sleep, drawing Virge's attention to him. Virge leans over him, pulling up his eyelid.

And Stu makes his move. He rolls onto his back, gets his feet on Virge's chest and shoves him backward.

INT. COP CAR - DAY

Garvey has his windshield wipers on full bore. Between sweeps, Virge comes flying out of the back of the military truck, hits the hood, and smashes through the center of his windshield. Garvey almost loses control of the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He steers off the shoulder and then back onto it. Virge is not dead. He's mewling and bleeding, head and shoulders through the glass.

EXT. PICKUP - DAY

Because of Stu's distraction, Larry is able to get close enough to the pickup truck to shoot out its back tire.

It immediately swerves off the wet pavement, clipping the cop car, which swerves the other way to counter. As Larry and Glen race past them both, Larry lobbs a grenade at the pickup. It lands just behind it, and when it blows, it lifts the back of the truck five feet off the ground and shatters the windows and setting it on fire. The men flee the truck, bringing with them a long, tubular weapon.

Garvey stops long enough for them to jump in, and then he takes off after the bikes.

EXT. BIKES - DAY

The light is starting to go weird on them. Yellow storm light. Danger light. It begins to hail, pellets bouncing off Larry's shoulders. They pass a sign reading "PLYMOUTH - 11." Lightning strikes the field behind the sign.

INT. MILITARY TRUCK - DAY

The truck speeds along. Stu uses his power to pop the springs on his handcuffs. He tosses them aside and climbs to the back of the truck. When he gets there, he sees Larry and Glen fifty yards behind, the cop car catching up quickly behind them. But then he looks up and the color drains from his face.

Over them, five thousand feet up, a wide cloud vortex is beginning to rotate.

EXT. BIKES - DAY

Harold sees the terror on Stu's face and looks up.

HAROLD

Oh, Jesus -- !

Behind him, one of Garvey's men climbs out and sits on the windowsill of the cop car. He mounts the tube on his shoulder. And then a wand of smoke races their way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It shoots past Harold and Glen and explodes on contact behind Larry. It knocks him forward and he fishtails, nearly dumping his bike. Harold screams.

A DEEP HUMMING VIBRATION begins everywhere around them.

The wind is picking up fast, blowing rain sideways across the road. The vortex funnels and touches down half a mile to the north. It immediately pulls up dirt, sleeving itself brown.

They come up onto a concrete bridge over the Randolph River. A section of railing a few meters behind Harold explodes. Garvey is almost on them, the man with the rocket launcher already reloading. They are about to be back in rifle range as well.

At the far end of the bridge, Larry sees a semi-cab pulled to the side, blocking one lane. The military truck swerves around it, almost tossing Stu out the back, but he hangs on. Larry screams to Glen:

LARRY
PULL AHEAD OF ME --

So Glen does. Larry feels on his belt for a second grenade.

He slows to 40 mph. The cop car is now about 100 yards behind him. Larry has to time this very, very well.

LARRY
THREE --

When he gets near to the semi-cab he pulls the grenade pin with his teeth.

LARRY
TWO --

He slows to 30 mph, just long enough to toss the grenade into the rig's coupling.

LARRY
ONE --

And then Larry opens the throttle wide. He pops up on one wheel for a second, barely hanging on.

INT. MILITARY TRUCK - DAY

Stu watches as it happens:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Just before the cop car clears the semi, the grenade explodes, jerking the whole cab over enough that the cop car gets pinned as it tries to pass.

Virge's body and the man with the rocket launcher fly out of it, hitting the bridge at better than 60 mph and rolling out of their skins.

Just upriver, the tornado rips through the tree line, scouring it down to the ground. It crosses the river and for a moment the funnel goes black with river water. Then it turns pale brown again and starts hiping out at the side.

The canvas over Stu's head rips along the center seam and splits, opening him up to the sky. Lightning hits just to their right of the road, throwing everything into momentary x-ray.

STU'S POV

The clouds of the upper vortex are forming a face, a horrifying pair of dead eyes, a yawning mouth. It is Flagg, or Stu's vision of Flagg.

BACK TO SCENE

Stu holds onto the awning frame. They have seconds left. The bikes won't stay upright much longer, fighting through the blowing rain. Up ahead, Stu can see two farmhouses -- one on either side of the road.

He'll have to choose. The mile marker ahead of them quivers violently and then goes shooting past Larry like a spear. He closes his eyes and sees in his head:

FLASH ON: Pitch black and the sound of frightened breathing.

Stu looks from one house to the other. There's no time to be wrong. The funnel is moving straight in line to intercept both the truck and bikes, killing everyone.

STU'S POV

Behind the house to the south, he sees a small metal vent pipe sticking out of a mound fifty yards behind the house, the top twirling like a crazy pinwheel.

The RUMBLING VIBRATION is DEAFENING, so Stu points to the house as they pass it -- it's a gesture of command, not a save-yourself plea.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As soon as he sees Larry, and then Glen turns for it, he stills himself, gathers his energy, and then steps off the back of the speeding truck.

EXT. IOWA HIGHWAY - DAY

He hits the pavement, but on a rolling stroke of silver. He tumbles over twice, three times, but is able to get up and keep running. Behind him, the truck is sucked sideways off the road.

Stu cuts across the overgrown lawn and past the house to where Larry and Glen have dropped their bikes next to the storm shelter. They are pulling on the door. It's not opening.

LARRY
IT'S LOCKED!

STU
FROM *INSIDE* --

Stu POUNDS on the door. Across the road, the other house is pulled apart and carried up and up, then the road itself disappears. They are in the base now and debris is getting raked across the yard toward them, shredding the sod.

Stu's hand beginning to glow silver at the handle mechanism, but suddenly the door opens and Nick Andros' sober face appears. He pulls them into the shelter.

INT. STORM SHELTER - DAY

Everyone rushes down into the dark space. There are other people there. Harold has a split second before they are plunged into darkness to see that the couple he's just sat next to is dead, and has been for almost a year.

Stu has a split second to see the house fifty yards from the storm shelter break apart. The whole back deck is catapulted at them.

Then the door shuts with a SHATTERING IMPACT. The whole ungodly, titanic engine of the tornado sweeps over them. Harold is screaming in the dark. Larry too.

But then the sound begins to recede, leaving a BUZZING vacuum in its wake. Everyone breathes. Everyone catches his breath.

After a long moment, Stu opens the door and climbs out.

EXT. STORM SHELTER - DAY

Stu sees the tornado breaking up to the south. Both houses are gone. Larry comes out, followed by Glen and Harold, and then Nick.

STU

My God. The beer's on me, boys.

But then Tom Cullen comes out of the shelter and Stu nearly jumps out of his skin, so surprised is he. Tom is looking at the sky, trying to calm himself down.

TOM

That was just angels bowling up in Heaven, mister. That's all *that* is.

Stu smiles, his brow furrowed. How did he not feel this guy's mind? At all?

Nick writes out a note on wet notepaper and hands it to Larry, who reads it.

GLEN

I'm Nick. He's Tom. Can someone please tell him my name's not 'Mister.'

CUT TO:

EXT. HEMINGFORD HOME (NE) - DAY

A farm truck and two new scooters ride into Hemingford Home and park under the water tower in the center of town. Larry gets out and fires FOUR SHOTS into the air.

In a moment, Nadine and Frannie come out with Joe and the others. There are tears and embraces.

INT. HEMINGFORD HOME POLICE STATION - DAY

Everyone has gathered inside.

STU

He's coming.

FRANNIE

Garvey?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU

He knows we're taking this road.

(beat)

Larry bought us a few hours on that bridge. They're in the middle of nowhere and we slit the tires on every vehicle we passed for 20 miles, but he'll do with something. And he'll have more men with him when he gets here.

FRANNIE

How does he find them?

STU

Flagg does them for him.

GLEN

He's recruiting like a pro, sending us spies and assassins.

Stu looks at him, then at everyone else.

STU

Then so should we.

Every face has a different reaction to this. But everyone is open.

STU

If we could get someone into Vegas, just to look around, we could make a plan. Flagg is not going to stop, and we don't know the first thing about what he's got going on down there.

LARRY

You can't see anything?

STU

No. Maybe he's shown them how to shield themselves. Or he's doing it for them. I don't know.

FRANNIE

I'll go. I'm the last person he'd expect.

HAROLD

Frannie --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU

I don't want you down there. If the baby comes early, you'd be vulnerable, maybe medicated. It's not an option.

Harold sees the look that passes between them. He bites down on his bile.

NADINE

Then I'll do it.

LARRY

Like hell.

NADINE

Larry, I know Vegas. I'll be able to see a hundred things that might be of use to you with one look around. And I can keep him out.

(to Stu)

I kept you out, didn't I? Wasn't I best at that?

Stu nods. But then he looks at Tom. Nick sees. He writes down something and hands it to Stu. Stu reads it.

STU

He wouldn't have to do anything, Nick. Just stay a day or two and then head back with Nadine.

LARRY

If he let them leave.

STU

That's a possibility. I'm not saying it wouldn't be risky.

NADINE

He's building an empire. He needs people now. In the dreams he's inviting people to help. That's what I'll say I'm there for. I can say I ran across Tom on the way.

STU

I'm not sure I can protect you from up here. I'm not even sure I'll be able to read you --

NADINE

If it helps, I want to do it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She looks at Larry. He's the one in the room who knows exactly what she means. But he doesn't look happy about it.

TOM

I don't -- But I will if Nadine is going, too.

STU

Just to look around.

Tom smiles and nods.

TOM

Like a videocam. M-O-O-N that spells 'record.'

Larry is looking at Nadine, pleading with his eyes. She just shakes her head.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY (NEBRASKA) - DAY

The group rides along a rural road that rolls through vast tall-grass prairie. They have the farm truck, scooters, and now they've added a Ford Bronco. Cloud shadows drift.

They come to a stop at the intersection with Route 81. Everyone gets out. Harold and Glen start moving each person's things into the right car. Nadine comes over with a road atlas.

STU

It's clear?

NADINE

81 South almost to Wichita, 54 into New Mexico, 40 to Kingman. Then follow signs to the Hoover Dam.

STU

They'll have the dam locked down and guarded. They'll probably pick you up there and take you into the city.

She nods, more to herself than to Stu. Larry comes over.

Impossibly, a small herd of buffalo is crossing the road ahead. Tom wanders over to look. Nick follows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU

Stop and sleep, okay? You'll
still get there by tomorrow
afternoon.

NADINE

How do we -- reach each other?

STU

Don't try. Just be in whatever's
happening. Look around as much as
you can.
The most important thing is to
avoid Flagg as much as you can.

LARRY

If you see him, go the other way.
That is not negotiable.

STU

If you never see him, even better.
We just need info about how he's
set up the city, how he's running
things.

Down the road a hundred feet, Tom stands stock still next
to Nick, not wanting to startle any of the buffalo. He
whispers, unsure whether to be worried or not:

TOM

Mister, *those ain't cows.*

But Nick is smiling sadly. He looks at Tom, points to
him, then puts his hands together and makes a sign for a
bird flying away.

TOM

When I get to Boulder, can I stay
in your house with you? Right
where you live?

Nick nods and smiles.

By the cars, Larry and Nadine embrace, then Nadine hugs
Joe, who is crying.

NADINE

I'll see you in a few days, Joe.
Tom and I are gonna take a little
side trip. Will you keep Larry
company, and Glen and the others?

Joe nods. He grabs Larry's hand. Tom comes back,
excited.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

Tom Cullen's gonna live with Nick
in Boulder, Colorado. Mile high!

Larry and Nadine just look at one another. Then Nadine
nods, which is somehow more intimate than a kiss. Then
she heads for the Bronco. She taps her head as she
passes Stu. Tom gets in as well.

She pulls away and they watch her head south. Stu looks
back the way they've come.

Larry shakes his head and takes Joe back to the truck.
Glen asks quietly:

GLEN

Will we see them again, Stu? Can
you say?

STU

I can't see what's coming. Only
what is. But neither can he.

Larry slaps the top of the truck.

LARRY

We're running out of road, Stu.

STU

She's up ahead. We'll see her in
an hour.

FRANNIE

You feel her.

Stu nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY (NEBRASKA) - DAY

They come down a rough section of the Lincoln Highway.
Up ahead, they see a pair of parked pickups. The gates
are down and several people are sitting in back.

Stu strains to see, ready for anything.

In the back of one of the trucks, MOTHER ABIGAIL (108)
sits in a lawn chair under a sun umbrella. When she sees
Stu coming, she gets to her feet. So do the others.

They have arrived.

Stu gets off the bike and comes over. Mother is beaming.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOTHER ABIGAIL

I've been hardly waiting to meet
you, Stuart.

Stu can't help but grin, any last doubt lifted from him.

STU

I can't tell you what it means to
me you're real --

MOTHER ABIGAIL

Oh, I'm real. And so is he. It's
time we talked.

Stu looks back the way they've come. The road is empty.

STU

Speaking of which, we're bringing
some trouble with us --

MOTHER ABIGAIL

Walk with me, Stuart.

EXT. FARM TRACK (NEBRASKA) - DAY

Stu and Mother come along a twin rut path that runs along
the Platte River, a red-dirt Gethsemane.

MOTHER ABIGAIL

People have been getting on their
feet, but it's time now to build
that city on the hill.

(beat)

They'll need you to show 'em how.

STU

You're the one we've been dreaming
of --

MOTHER ABIGAIL

But I've been dreaming of you --
What do you think of that?

Stu shakes his head, but can't quite find any words.

MOTHER ABIGAIL

Going on two years now.

(beat)

I sent that man Campion to you.

Stu looks at her, remembering. That seems so long ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOTHER ABIGAIL

Did you think it was chance?

(beat)

When I understood the circle was opening, and what was coming, I knew you were the answer. I just didn't know the question.

(beat)

Now I do.

STU

What's the question?

MOTHER ABIGAIL

It's a war, Stuart. For souls. And you must win it.

STU

But I'm no one. To be honest, I don't believe in the soul.

MOTHER ABIGAIL

Even now?

Stu gives her the slightest shrug. Mother Abigail smiles.

STU

There could be other ways of seeing this. God and all. That's what I believe.

MOTHER ABIGAIL

That doesn't matter. At your Sunday best, or on your ledge on Central Park, he believes in you.

Stu looks ashamed by her mention of his ledge, but she just smiles at him with acceptance and love.

MOTHER ABIGAIL

When we get to Boulder, you'll call them all together. Once they see I'm just an old woman who doesn't glow in the dark or part the sea, it'll be you they'll look to.

(beat)

You're getting strong. You'll pass me. And soon. There is no Boulder without you playing out your part. There's no use questioning it. It's what's meant.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOTHER ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

And some part of you knows it.
Your life's bigger than you
thought it was.

STU

That's what *he* tells me, too.

MOTHER ABIGAIL

And it's true. But the truth can
be turned. I say it not to
flatter you, but to humble you.
But you know the difference.

They walk in silence for a few moments.

STU

I don't want to tell anyone what
to do. Any more than I have to --

MOTHER ABIGAIL

Telling people what to do isn't
hard when you know what the right
thing is --

Stu nods to himself: That phrase again.

MOTHER ABIGAIL

And you must. This man needs to
be stopped. And soon. Or he will
set us all to burn.

Up ahead, they can see their two groups mingling, almost
twenty people between them now.

STU

We can be there in four hours.

MOTHER ABIGAIL (O.S.)

Not yet. We need to rest and
plan. We'll stop tonight. It's
what's meant.

Stu nods, not sure he follows, but deferential to the
greater power he walks beside.

EXT. LINCOLN HIGHWAY (NEBRASKA) - DAY

They are crossing back to where the vehicles are when
they see Larry, Glen, Nick, Frannie, and Harold all have
their rifles pulled. Then they hear the MOTORS coming.

Before he can react, Mother motions him to stay and then
strides purposefully out to the center line of the road,
putting herself deliberately in between.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Glen yells to Stu.

GLEN
WHAT'S SHE DOING?

Stu shakes his head. He watches as the motorcycles begin to slow and Mother walks up to meet them.

Mother puts out her hands and they all come to a stop. All of Garvey's men are looking at her, some unblinking, some behind mirrored sunglasses in which she's reflected.

She calls in a calm voice, but with a great authority:

MOTHER ABIGAIL
You searched for days. But it was for nothing. They slipped through your hands like water.

The men blink at her, expressionless.

MOTHER ABIGAIL
Right through them. *Senseless.*

One by one, the men drop their weapons and get off the bikes. They begin walking. They walk up to Mother, then right past her, shuffling the slightest bit like a pack of sleepwalkers.

They walk up to Stu's group. Harold almost takes a shot at Garvey, but Larry stops him. Frannie shudders as they come up, but they move past, heading west. Their eyes never leave the horizon.

Mother turns and watches them go. Stu walks out to where she stands.

MOTHER ABIGAIL
They'll walk for three days and three nights, then they'll wake back to their senses. They'll be sore, and thirsty, but alive.

STU
They'll go to Vegas with news of us.

She looks at him.

MOTHER ABIGAIL
It will be over by then, Stuart. One way or the other.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET (BIG SPRING, NE) - DUSK

The combined caravan rides into the next town and stops at the first intersection. Stu turns to Harold.

STU

Mother wants to meet and make a plan for Boulder. Can you find a place where we can sit and talk?

A beat. Harold nods, and heads off. Stu looks over at Frannie, and she gives him a little appreciative smile.

EXT. MAIN STREET (BIG SPRING, NE) - DUSK

Harold walks the town. Past the main intersection, there's an historic inn, the "Phelps Hotel." Next to it is a gas station. He goes over to it instead.

INT. GAS STATION (BIG SPRING, NE) - DUSK

Inside the little store of the gas station, he rifles through the shelves until he finds: A spool of bright yellow waxed carpenter's twine. He takes it.

CUT TO:

EXT. PHELPS HOTEL - NIGHT

One of the downstairs rooms is lamplit, people sitting around a table inside.

INT. PHELPS HOTEL - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Mother Abigail, Stu, Larry, Nick, and Glen all sit around the big circular table in spindle-back chairs. Another four or five chairs are unoccupied. They're in deep discussion.

GLEN

Anyone can see how living in Vegas is easier. That's his main selling point. But it won't last.

STU

You mean Wild West kinda stuff?

MOTHER ABIGAIL

He means Wild *Earth* kinda stuff.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GLEN

This country's gonna go through changes and I mean big ones. The whole natural order's in flux, everything reverting to what it was before we came along, deserts included. Winters in the Rockies are going to be rough, but without irrigation, the Mojave will be unlivable in another year or two.

LARRY

Jesus. You think he'd try to take Boulder, then?

GLEN

Assuming we make it through our first winter, we'll have done most of the heavy lifting. Everything will be up and running there.

MOTHER ABIGAIL

He won't be happy until he's back in the Garden. For good.

Frannie comes in, worried.

FRANNIE

I can't find Harold. His backpack is gone, and so is a scooter --
(beat)
The faster one.

MOTHER ABIGAIL

That young man has been put upon. He's considered things from both sides.

FRANNIE

He said he hasn't dreamed much.

MOTHER ABIGAIL

He has. And he's torn.

GLEN

Do we go after him?

MOTHER ABIGAIL

People have to choose. That's the world now. He has his part to play like everyone.

FRANNIE

He was so close --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Everyone is looking to Stu. He shakes his head.

STU

Let him go.

Mother Abigail nods when he says this. Only Nick sees it.

And so Frannie comes up to the table and pulls out a chair for herself. It sticks, then comes loose suddenly, as if freed somehow. She looks down:

FRANNIE'S POV

Tied to the center spindle is one end of a length of waxed yellow twine.

BACK TO SCENE

She picks it up. At the other end of it is what looks, at first, like a set of keys. She holds them up just as Stu realizes and looks under the table.

CLOSE ON KEYS

It's a cluster of three or four metal rings and pins. From grenades.

UNDER THE TABLE

Stu sees a row of grenades duct-taped to the underside of the table. Frannie has just pulled the pins.

STU

Everyone out! NOW!

Larry and Nick leap up from the table, a second from dying. But Mother is faster. She half-stands out of her seat and throws open her arms, creating a transparent, grayish globe of energy in front of her, the center of which is the center of the table.

The grenades explode. The portion of the table inside the globe detonates. It heaves upward and disintegrates into a hurricane of fire, wood shards, and metal shrapnel. But the whole thing is contained, like a hellish snow globe.

Mother's energy field knocks Stu, Frannie, Larry, Glen and Nick further away from the table, against the walls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They get up and see the fire storm just inches away
already dying down.

EXT. MAIN STREET (BIG SPRING, NE) - NIGHT

Harold is watching this from a dark hiding spot at the
other end of Main Street. He sees the flash of light
dying down, but none of the first-floor windows blow out.
There is no fire. The men standing guard begin yelling,
but there's no explosion. Something has intervened.

Looking scared now, he climbs up to the road and begins
to run down it, away from the group, pushing the bike.

In a minute he jumps on and starts it up. He heads
south, not west.

INT. PHELPS HOTEL - NIGHT

When the globe collapses, so too does Mother, who's taken
the brunt of the blast, absorbing most of its force.
Frannie cries out. Stu is by her side in an instant.
Glen and Larry rush outside.

Mother is scorched with some kind of ectoplasmic ash,
barely alive. Stu cradles her, but it's painful. He
puts out his hand, which crackles silver, trying to
decide how to begin, but she puts a hand on his, and
stops him, serene in spite of everything.

MOTHER ABIGAIL

No, Stu. I've come far enough.
I'm going home. It's for you to
carry now.

Frannie blurts out a sob.

MOTHER ABIGAIL

Take my other hand. I'm about to
give it over to you, what I have.

Stu looks at her.

MOTHER ABIGAIL

That's why he wants you. He can
take what's yours. Your gift.
But you can take his also. Just
like you can take mine. I'll show
you. Hold my hands.

Stu hesitates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOTHER ABIGAIL

The people in Boulder -- they are
your army now. That's why I
gathered them there. I was the
beacon, but you are the hand that
must wield them. And quickly.
Before he grows so powerful it
won't matter.

(beat)

Now let me help you.

Like a man drowning, Stu takes her other hand. There is
a jolt of power, a spasm of passage, as her magic moves
to Stu. A bright, electric image of the features of her
face pulls to Stu.

The image ripples like flame being pulled by wind.
Something like a smile crosses her face as she releases
and he receives. When it stops, she is just an old woman
again. She says, weakly:

MOTHER ABIGAIL

No one is alone, Stuart.

(beat)

Give them the message. Let them
know.

And then it's over. Mother Abigail is dead. Stu touches
her face, and then his own.

EXT. PHELPS HOTEL - NIGHT

Stu comes outside to find Frannie talking with Nick. He
goes and she comes over to Stu. He is wincing, as if
aching in some profound way.

FRANNIE

Larry and Glen went after Harold,
but he could have gone in any
direction.

STU

He's heading to Vegas. Flagg has
more plans for him, I'm sure. But
Mother was right. He already
regrets what he's done.

FRANNIE

He knows we're going to Boulder.

STU

We won't be there for long.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On all directions, the horizons are dark. Mother Abigail is dead. Frannie begins to weep, for Mother, and for Harold. Stu puts a hand on the back of Frannie's neck and puts their foreheads together. Then he hugs her.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. ROUTE 25 (NEW MEXICO) - FIRST LIGHT

Harold is walking along the side of the highway, pushing the scooter, which is disabled somehow. He looks like he hasn't slept.

He passes a sign for "WAGON MOUND - 2" and "SANTA FE - 112."

But there's a glint of chrome behind him and car comes up on him fast. It's NASCAR: A hot orange Dodge Avenger. He looks around for a place to hide, but it's too late. The car downshifts in a BURST OF BACKFIRES right beside him.

The driver, aka THE KID (40), sits low in the seat, hair cut in a "flow," grinning like some kind of middle-aged Justin Bieber. He takes off his sunglasses and yells over his engines in a thick, Louisiana accent:

THE KID

Hey, boy. You outta gas or juice?

HAROLD

I still have both -- must be the plugs or something.

The Kid pulls ahead and cuts Harold off. The Kid gets out, all 5'5" of him. He's dressed in skinny jeans and a motocross jacket, a pistol in a holster on each thigh. His boots give him an extra three inches.

THE KID

Y'all long, tall, and ugly.
Whatchall say?

Harold says the only thing that comes to mind:

HAROLD

I could use a ride. At least to the next town.

The Kid laughs, then he takes out his pistols and shoots Harold's scooter dead. Harold leaps back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE KID

I got the reflexes. I got the
timing. I got three-fifths of a
second. You believe that?

He doesn't wait for an answer. He heads back to his car.

THE KID

Get a beer outta the back seat.
Y'all are with me now.

INT. THE KID'S CAR - DAY

Harold rides beside The Kid, terrified, grimacing his way
through a warm Coors. The Kid can't be doing less than
90 mph. An African-American mannequin in a see-through
teddy sits posed in the back seat.

THE KID

Coors beer's the *only* beer. I'd
piss Coors if I could. You
believe that happy crappy?

HAROLD

Sure.

THE KID

I like you. What they call you?

HAROLD

Harold.

THE KID

Harold, man, they call me 'The
Kid.' Outta Shreveport,
Looseyanna.

(beat)

Well, I guess you're goin' where
I'm goin'. Las Vegas, Nevada.

HAROLD

Cibola. Seven-in-one.

THE KID

Goin' west and jine up. Get in on
the ground floor of civilizashun.
No Rocky Mountain High for us.

(beat)

You gettin' those dreams, too?
The old lady ones?

Harold doesn't answer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE KID

Some 100-year-old nigger saying
 'Come to supper with Jesus so you
 can freeze your tits come
 Halloween.' No fuckin' way --

HAROLD

I haven't been sleeping that well.

They rocket into the next town and The Kid looks at
 Harold with his greedy, dead eyes.

THE KID

Don't tell me, I'll tell you, ya
 fuckin' bug. Looks like we need
 more Coors and a see-fucking-esta.

CUT TO:

"MOTHER'S PROCESSION" MONTAGE

1. Stu and his group have found a simple coffin in Big
 Springs. It has been loaded into the back of the pickup
 truck and the bed filled with sunflowers cut from fields.
 They lash a sunflower onto every vehicle. The pickup
 begins driving west. The others fall in behind it.

2. They follow Interstate 80 across the state line into
 Colorado. They pass a row of vehicles heading to Boulder
 that have pulled off to the roadside. The people
 gathered there look startled by the procession until they
 see the sunflowers and realize who's inside.

3. Even more vehicles have joined the procession as it
 passes increasing numbers of people heading to Boulder.
 By the time they turn southbound onto Route 87, the
 procession has doubled. They start passing people on
 foot who stop to watch the coffin pass. Hats and
 sunglasses are removed, tears are shed.

4. When the procession enters Boulder, it is thirty
 vehicles long. People on the streets watch it pass in
 shock. It heads through downtown and out to where the
 city meets the lower slopes of the Flatirons. Stu looks
 at them all, every one of them deep in grief. And scared
 now, all of them just beginning to register how scared
 they are.

CUT TO:

EXT. BANDELIER MOTOR COURT - PARKING LOT - DAY *

The Kid's car pulls into the parking lot of a desert motor court. The Kid gets out, well past drunk. *

THE KID *

GOD DAMN. *

He staggers over to one of the rooms and kicks in the door. He calls back to Harold, who is just getting out of the car. *

THE KID *

Bring in Miss Peaches -- *

INT. PARADISE MOTOR COURT - ROOM #5 - DAY *

Harold comes in carrying the mannequin. The room has two beds and The Kid is lying on one, so Harold lays the mannequin on the other. A can of beer lands next to it. *

HAROLD *

We should find some water, maybe -- *

THE KID *

Drink up, boy. *

Harold opens it and sips. The Kid looks at the dark TV. *

THE KID *

No electricity, no TV. Where's my HBO? Where's my *Playboy*? *

He shoots the TV. Startled, Harold drops the beer. *

THE KID *

Don't you waste that. Pound it! I guess y'all are my TV today. *

Harold drinks the beer until it's gone. The Kid throws him another, then points the gun at Harold's head. He drinks. *

THE KID *

Now get outta your pants and fuck Miss Peaches. *

HAROLD *

What? *

THE KID *

There's holes. I drilled 'em myself. Front and rear. Now do it. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Harold hesitates, so The Kid shoots the wall by his head. *

Harold has no choice. He strips down to his boxers and *
gets on the bed with the mannequin. The Kid crouches *
next to him and puts the gun to Harold's temple. Harold *
is trembling. *

THE KID *

Do it like you mean it or y'all's *
brains are gonna be hanging up on *
that wall. *

Harold manages to find a hole and start humping the *
thing. The mannequin's face stares blankly at the *
ceiling. *

THE KID *

Whadda think's gonna happen to us *
once we get to Vegas tonight? *

Harold's circuits are overloading. He manages to say: *

HAROLD *

Meet Mr. Flagg. *

THE KID *

We're gonna meet him, all right, *
and he's gonna meet us. We'll see *
who's the big man after that. *
He's one hard baby, but The Kid's *
handled hard babies before. I *
shut 'em up then I shut 'em down. *
(beat) *
We'll lay low for a while. But *
once I figure the situation, we'll *
send him around the curve. *

Harold doesn't respond. He's tensing up, close to the *
end. *

THE KID *

Gonna take over. Strip his gears *
and leave him way out at the *
Cadillac Ranch. Stick with me, *
Harold. We're gonna eat more *
chicken than any man ever seen. *
You close? *

Harold climaxes. He begins to cry, waiting to be shot, *
but The Kid just goes back to his bed and shuts the *
light. *

THE KID *

Now get some sleep, ya fucking *
bug. We leave in two hours. *

EXT. PARADISE MOTOR COURT - DAY

Harold lets himself quietly out of the room, clothes in hand. The Kid SNORES, passed out inside. Harold dresses and goes to The Kid's car, but the keys aren't in the ignition.

Harold curses under his breath and starts to look around for another way out. And then he sees:

In the parking lot is a grey wolf. Harold can't breathe, he's so scared. But then it trots over and nuzzles up to him. Slowly, Harold raises his hand and strokes its fur.

HAROLD

Cibola. Please help me. That
man's no friend of mine.

The wolf noses Harold's hand, then nudges him back toward the room. It licks his face to show him it's all right. So Harold goes. He nods in humbled thanks and watches the wolf streak off. Then he closes the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHAUTAUQUA PARK - DAY

The 115-year-old campus of Boulder's Chautauqua lies directly beneath the pyramid Flatiron peak. There are stately lecture halls, an auditorium, dozens of cottages: a town unto itself.

Hundreds of people are gathering to pay their last respects to Mother Abigail. They come from every direction to stand in line outside the century-old Community House.

INT. COMMUNITY HOUSE (CHAUTAUQUA) - DAY

Mother's casket is set up on the lower level of a huge open space, circled above by a wrap-around balcony. People file by the closed coffin. Nick watches from upstairs in disbelief.

Below them a DESPERATE WOMAN (60s) tries to open the coffin. Nick runs down.

DESPERATE WOMAN

Just her hand -- Hold her hand --
I dreamt it so long --

Others are trying to pull her away, but she gets the lid open. Mother lies inside, still and serene.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nick reaches the woman and puts a hand on hers, pleading with her with his soulful eyes. He gets her to look at him and starts to breathe with her, calming her down, nodding. She breaks into sobs and lets go. Nick closes the lid, puts an arm around her, and leads her away.

INT. COMMUNITY HOUSE - UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM - DAY

Stu is sitting in one of the upstairs rooms, deep in thought. Frannie comes in and goes over to put a hand on his shoulder. He looks up, as if coming out of a dream.

STU

I was trying to feel Dayna or Tom.

FRANNIE

Are you worried?

A long beat. He looks at her, but doesn't answer the question.

STU

Where are the others?

FRANNIE

Glen's got crews going to the police departments and armories in Boulder. Larry took a couple of trucks up to the base in Fort Collins. He'll be back before ten.

STU

There are some other things we'll need.

FRANNIE

I'll get some people and go.

STU

I can't believe this is happening.

A beat. Frannie puts one hand on her belly, the other on his shoulder.

FRANNIE

Stu, people are acting out. Fights. Yelling. There's a lot of panic. I worry people just arriving will see what's going on and not come in. You'll have to talk to them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks up at her, as if realizing for the first time he has stepped into Mother's role now and there is only him.

CUT TO:

INT. LUXOR - CARD HALL - DAY

In the temple-like card hall of Luxor's casino, all of the slot machines and tables have been removed, creating a large, open space now outfitted with rows and rows of chairs, like a megachurch.

The room is close to full, with five hundred or more people packed in. Flagg is up at the dais, where he first met Lloyd, who sits off to the side, second in command.

Flagg addresses the crowd, his tone shifts in and out of evangelical rhetoric as it suits him.

FLAGG

I've many things to share with you. But first let me say to our new friends: Welcome Home. I've called you, and you've come. And after so many uncertain miles, a home at last.

People CLAP. Out in the audience, Nadine applauds along with everyone else.

FLAGG

You do not have to be afraid anymore. Not of pestilence, for we are well. Not of hunger or cold, for we have stores of power. And not from enemies on the road or among us, because our home is an ordered home.

(beat)

Anything that disorders it shall be cast out. Without delay. And anything that ennobles it will be embraced.

A few rows behind Nadine, Tom Cullen sits clapping also. He even calls out a little CHEER. Flagg smiles.

FLAGG

Let's begin with my personal favorite part of these meetings. Let those who are joining us for the first time stand up and be welcomed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nadine is not prepared for this, but she stands without a trace of hesitation. So, too does Tom. About fifty people in all stand.

FLAGG

Now come forward, so I can meet each of you. Connect. Don't be frightened.

Flagg grins his showman's grin.

Nadine looks around as the new people begin moving toward the center aisle and lining up before Flagg. She looks to the back of the room, for some kind of discreet exit, but men stand at every door.

So she smiles and starts moving toward the line. She ends up behind about ten people.

The first in line goes up and shakes Flagg's outstretched hand. But Flagg doesn't stop there, he puts a hand to the person's head and Nadine can see:

NADINE'S POV

There is a silver glow, a kind of glimmer under his hand, some kind of magic.

BACK TO SCENE

Then the transaction is over and the next person goes up.

As she gets closer, she can see more clearly that at the moment of glimmering, something is not being bestowed on each person Flagg is greeting; something is being taken. It slips silently from each person and into Flagg.

Nadine glances back and sees Tom is about a dozen people behind her. It takes everything she's got not to panic and betray herself. She calms her mind and keeps moving forward, now sixth in line, now fifth, now fourth.

Her lips are moving a little and it becomes clear she is shielding herself by repeating remembered prayer verses over and over. She's also reaching into her pocket where she takes something into her hand.

She looks back again to Tom and sees he is watching her now, watching what she's going to do.

Now third. Now second. Now next.

She moves up to Flagg and he reaches out his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nadine is smiling, sincerely, too. She's completely sure of herself. She has found her moment, all momentum to it suddenly and clearly making sense.

NADINE

Forgive me.

FLAGG

What would you like me to forgive?

She shakes her head, still smiling.

NADINE

I don't mean you.

And with that she sticks Flagg's throat with the box cutter in her fist. His eyes widen in the pure shock of being completely surprised this way.

He's able to reach up a hand in time to keep her from slicing his throat open and gutting his windpipe, but the knife opens up a deep gash across his hand. He stumbles back, but only a step. Lloyd runs to Flagg's side as the room breaks into chaos.

But in an instant, Nadine is off her feet and being forced backward through the air. Flagg clamps one hand over the bleeding hole in this throat and extends the other toward her. He stops her midway over the crowd, about ten feet off the floor.

She hangs in mid-air, eyes popped open wide, unable to breathe. Then Flagg begins to close his free hand slowly into a fist. Nadine SCREAMS in agony, wincing in incredible pain as her brain is squeezed inside her head. She shouts out:

NADINE

HE IS JUST A MAN! NOW'S THE TIME!

(in agony)

HE CAN BE --

But her head is crushed before she can finish, blood shooting out of her eyes and nose and ears. But something has blasted past Flagg and out of the room. He senses it. Nadine's face is crushed, but it is smiling.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY HOUSE - UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM - DAY

Stu suddenly goes to his knees with the force of the message. Frannie crouches next to him, alarmed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANNIE

Stu -- Stu -- What is it?!

STU

'Now's the time. He is mortal.'

Stu slowly comes back to himself and looks at her.

STU

'And he can be killed.'

He gets quickly to his feet and heads for the door,
telling Frannie as he goes --

STU

Open the Auditorium. Let everyone
know. We meet at midnight.

INT. LUXOR HOTEL - CARD ROOM - DAY

Flagg lets Nadine's body drop to the floor. Most people
have backed off a few rows, but almost everyone has
stayed in the room. They look at Flagg for what he does
next.

He holds up his hands, one of which is covered in his own
blood. But when he takes his hand away from his neck, it
is healed.

Lloyd stands beside him, looking from him to Nadine.

FLAGG

Erect a scaffold outside and hang
her from it three days. She will
have company soon. If there is
one spy in our midst, there will
be others. This is a campaign of
terror by Boulder against us, and
it is just beginning.

Tom stares at the body crumpled in a heap on the floor.
He is terrified.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHAUTAUQUA COMMUNITY HOUSE - DUSK

Larry comes with Joe up to the front of the Community
House to find Frannie and Stu waiting for them. Frannie
takes Joe inside while Stu tells Larry what's happened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Larry looks at him in sick understanding. He puts an angry hand to his head.

CUT TO:

EXT. LUXOR - CASINO - DUSK

The Kid comes up to Luxor from the Strip, Harold at his side. Flagg's meeting is breaking up. People are coming out of the front doors by the dozens.

THE KID

You believe this happy crappy?
That hardcase puts out a *signal*.

He calls out to some of the people coming out. One of whom is Tom. Harold doesn't notice him, though they pass within ten feet of one another.

Lloyd comes out, sees Harold, and walks right to him. He looks tired, but he keeps his professionalism intact.

LLOYD

Mr. Laudner, welcome to Las Vegas.
Mr. Flagg's sorry he can't greet
you himself. It's been a night.
But your suite is ready upstairs.
Just ask at the front desk --

Harold nods, reddening at this formal attention. He looks at The Kid, who drops his voice.

THE KID

Don't you fucking walk away.
Y'all are with *me*.

But Harold goes and doesn't look back. Lloyd is joined by another of Flagg's men. The Kid smiles at them.

THE KID

And what am I supposed to do?
Huh? You got a suite for me?

EXT. LUXOR HOTEL - NIGHT

Outside the Luxor, a scaffold has indeed been erected. On it hangs the body of Nadine, for public display. A sack has been put over her head, but it's soaked in blood.

Beside her hangs The Kid, crucified and not quite dead. He hangs in his final pain, murmuring over and over, delirious in the moonlight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE KID

Don't tell me -- I'll tell you --
Ya fucking *bugs*.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. AUDITORIUM (CHAUTAUQUA) - NIGHT

The Flatiron peak above Boulder glows in the same
moonlight. People walk in pairs and small groups toward
the century-old, barn-like Chautauqua Auditorium.

As people come inside, they find it lit by a hundred or
more lanterns, all hung from the lofty rafters and beams.

It is beautiful.

INT. CHAUTAUQUA AUDITORIUM - CONTROL BOOTH - NIGHT

Stu and Frannie sit in the lofty auditorium's control
booth watching it fill. He takes Frannie's hand.

FRANNIE

Nick wants to know about Tom.
He's scared. Still nothing?

Stu shakes his head. Glen sticks his head in and says:

GLEN

It's time.

Stu nods and Glen goes.

STU

I've never spoke to more than ten
people at once in my entire life.

Frannie can't help but smile at his sudden shyness.

STU

These people. They think they can
rest now, that they're safe from
it all, from Flagg. How do I tell
them I want to march them right to
his door?

(beat)

People will die. People already
have. How do you ask people to do
that?

Frannie touches the place where she's seen his tattoo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANNIE

Someone asked you once.

She gives him a kiss, their first, which he does not want to let go of. But he does.

INT. CHAUTAUQUA AUDITORIUM - FLOOR - NIGHT

Frannie comes out and joins Larry, Nick, and Glen. They look around at the hundreds of murmuring people crowded into the rows.

LARRY

We should be up there with him.

FRANNIE

He wants to do it alone.

GLEN

Some of these people are ready to fight. And I don't mean Flagg.

INT. CHAUTAUQUA AUDITORIUM - STAGE - NIGHT

Stu comes through the narrow wing and walks onto the stage. No introduction. No fanfare. He just walks out. People slowly quiet.

STU

My name is Stuart Redman. I've met some of you, but to most of you I am a stranger. And I'm about to ask a lot from you for a stranger. But before I do, I want you to remember why you all came here, to this place, this city on the hill. And what you hoped to find when you got here. It wasn't this, I know. I was with Mother Abigail when she died. I think she knew she wouldn't join us here, because she could see the bigger story, and it's a story in which all of us play parts. She told me to give you a message. She said 'No one is alone.' Some of you will think she was talking about God, and maybe she was. But I understood her to mean all of us, together, now.

He has to stop for a moment. When he looks out into the crowd, he sees many, many people are crying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU

We're only just meeting, most of
us, now. We'll be neighbors soon,
and then friends.

Stu finds Frannie and Larry in the audience. Nick, too.
Frannie nods. He is doing well.

STU

That is the dream. And more than
ever, more than before the world
went to hell, we know the line we
draw between dream and reality
isn't as clear cut as we thought.

(beat)

You all made a choice. You came
here because you trusted Mother.
You didn't come here because it
would be easier. Winter's coming
and life will be hard, but we'll
figure that out. I'm sure of it.
But I need to tell you -- in that
bigger picture -- he wants us to
stay, and thrive here, for Him.

A beat. There is murmuring in the crowd.

STU

I'm talking about Flagg. The
Walking Man. The Dark Man.
Whatever you've been calling him.

(beat)

Just as you've chosen to come here
others have chosen Las Vegas. I
don't know how many, or their
reasons, but I can tell you just
as sure as we are here, they are
there. And just as sure as we
will be making plans for getting
through our first winter, they
will be making plans for taking
Boulder come Spring. Mother
foresaw it and asked me to stop
it. Stop him. Stop Flagg now.
With your help.

Now there is open talking in the crowd as the
implications land for people. Someone yells out:

BOULDERITE #1

You're starting a war? With him?

STU

Bringing a fight to him now means
cutting him off at the knees.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU (CONT'D)

If we wait for him to come to us
next year, he'll have more people,
more weapons, better strategy, and
circumstances of his choosing.

BOULDERITE #2

What makes you think he wouldn't
know we were coming?

STU

I think I can shield us. Keep us
off his radar.

BOULDERITE #2

All of us? Hundreds of people?

STU

Mother wasn't the only one with
gifts. She chose me because I can
fight Flagg and win.

BOULDERITE #3

Then go take him out.

STU

I can't do it alone. Those of you
who cannot abide that can stay.
But I can't promise your safety
here alone.

(beat)

I see what you're thinking. That
I'm trying to scare you. I am.
And you should be afraid. Some of
us will die either way. But I
think fewer will if we act now.

Stu looks at them, how unconvinced many of them are. So
he plays his trump card.

STU

In a moment we will vote on what
course to take, but before we do,
I want to show you, so you know,
how Mother Abigail died and why.

(beat)

And also a woman named Nadine.
You will understand when you see
it.

Larry looks up, tears in his eyes. Others look
unprepared for the opportunity, scared even. Can he
really do that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU

And after you've seen, I will ask
one more thing of you. A gift you
can give that will make the
difference.

(beat)

I won't show the children, but if
you want to see, close your eyes.

And most of them do.

EXT. DENVER-BOULDER TURNPIKE (OUTSIDE BOULDER) - DAWN

The sun has come up and a long convoy of vehicles is
parked out on the start of Boulder's intercity turnpike.
Vans and SUVs mostly, as well as some church and school
buses and a few moving trucks.

Frannie is hooking up some solar cells to the roof of one
of the vans, linking them, and running the cord to charge
a 900-amp car battery charger. People are loading gear
into trucks. Food and water, med backpacks, weapons,
ammo.

Larry says goodbye to Joe, who is taken back to Boulder,
CRYING, by some of the women who are staying. Larry
watches him until he's gone. Then he finds Stu.

STU

I'll change vehicles every time we
stop. It'll give me a chance to
be with everyone who want to help
me. How many total?

LARRY

450.

He nods. It's less than he thought.

LARRY

I'd say thirty of those are a
little young, or old, for comfort.

STU

We need everybody. How many
military?

LARRY

About fifty.

STU

Put one in each car. Make squads
of ten. They can teach on the
way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Larry looks keyed up. Stu puts a hand on his shoulder.

STU

This can happen without anyone
dead but him. I'm not saying it
will, but I'm saying that's what
I'm going to try to do.

Larry nods.

CUT TO:

INT. LUXOR HOTEL - PENTHOUSE MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

Flagg stands at the corner of a pale conference table,
zoned out. Trashcan Man sits, watching Flagg in a kind
of awe.

Flagg comes back to his full senses and says to Trash:

FLAGG

He's in Boulder now, with his
army. That means we have only a
little time left. I want this
done tonight. No time to rest.

TRASHCAN MAN

Yes, sir.

FLAGG

Make up a list of what you need
an' bring it to me. Only to me.

TRASHCAN MAN

My life for yours.

FLAGG

I've set you high in my artillery,
Donald. Now do me proud.

INT. LUXOR HOTEL - PENTHOUSE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Lloyd is guarding the door. He can hear some of what is
being said.

CUT TO:

"CONVOY TO ZION" MONTAGE

1. The convoy comes down the turnpike. The Denver
skyline is behind them, hazy in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

2. They cross through the Rockies, the peaks of which are already snowy, but the slopes of which are summer green.

3. The land sweeps down out off the Continental Divide and into the Unita Valley. They cross into Utah and pass signs for ARCHES and CANYONLANDS National Parks.

4. They turn off 70 and onto the smaller 89 South that runs behind the Unita Mountains, out of view. They split into groups and gas up at Junction and Circleville.

5. Stu looks exhausted, but he keeps climbing into new vehicles and talking to everyone he can. When people are willing, he takes their hands and pulls their silver.

6. Finally, they come a back way into Zion National Park, just as the sun is setting and painting the desert red.

EXT. ZION NATIONAL PARK - WATCHMAN CAMPGROUND - DUSK

The convoy has pulled off and is circled around the big Watchman Campground. They've formed a little tent city with campfires blazing here and there. People are making their dinners.

Armed guards with night vision goggles have been posted around the perimeter.

EXT. WATCHMAN CAMPGROUND - STU'S CAMP - DUSK

Stu, Larry, Frannie, Glen, and Nick and a half-dozen Boulderites have gathered around one of the trucks. Stu has spread out a map of Las Vegas and is pointing things out to them, making marks with a Sharpie.

STU

From Nadine, I know: They have two gun turrets on the hills above the city, and one out at Hoover Dam. Howitzers, I think. From the Army base. Probably 155mm.

GLEN

What kind of range?

STU

25 miles with any aim.

(beat)

They're here and here. 'Little Sister Peak' to the north and 'Anthem Radio Tower' to the south. At Hoover Dam, it's here on 'Fortification Hill.'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GLEN

Echoes of history.

STU

I have to get into the city alone
and try to find Flagg. He'll know
you're all out there, but as long
as I don't use my powers, I don't
think he'll be able to find me.
I've felt him trying to scan my
thoughts, all our thoughts, but
I've been keeping him out. As
soon as I flex any power, though,
he'll hone in on me in half a
second. Hopefully too late.

A beat. He's really talking about killing Randall Flagg.

STU

Here's the breakdown: The sun
sets at 7:10 PM. At 7:30, a third
of the group takes Hoover Dam and
shuts it down. I want Vegas to go
dark. Maybe some people will run.
At the very least, it will confuse
them. Flagg will send backup to
the dam and it'll get hot fast,
but we don't need to hold it, just
retreat when they come.

(beat)

When the city goes black, a small
team will take down the howitzer
on Little Sister Peak to make it
safe for the rest of our numbers
to show themselves on route 15.
Flagg will send some of his people
that way, but I'm betting he'll
want to protect the dam with most
of his resources.

Fran shudders at the word "resources."

LARRY

A double diversion.

STU

A double diversion so I can slip
through.

FRANNIE

How will you get in?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU

I'll cross a couple of miles down-
river of the dam and come up from
the south. I can sneak through
the neighborhoods to the
southeast.

FRANNIE

How many people you think he has,
Stu?

STU

More than us. Not by much.

Larry looks over the map.

LARRY

I'll take the dam.

STU

Good. We can convoy around
through Flagstaff. The rest can
go right down 15.

(beat)

Nick, you can take Sister Peak.
We've got two sharpshooters in the
group, one military. You can take
them both with a few more of the
better marksmen.

Nick nods.

STU

Glen can take the main forward
group. People manning the guns
and anyone who's armed and
shooting at us are fair game. But
the goal is surrender. Take as
many prisoners as possible. Send
them and any defectors back to the
rear camp and Fran's team. Shoot
no one who's unarmed. Help anyone
who is willing to drop his or her
weapon and ask for it.

(beat)

They've been told we're a threat,
for the wrong reasons. Give them
a chance to see we're not.

EXT. ZION NATIONAL PARK - WATCHMAN CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Larry is sitting at the largest campfire with a couple
dozen Boulderites, and Stu and Frannie. He has his beat-
up guitar out. People look on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

When Larry starts to play, surprisingly, it's an old spiritual, sad and healing.

LARRY

*By the floods, the floods, of
Babylon, we sat down and wept and
wept for thee Zion. We remember,
we remember, we remember thee
Zion.*

Stu and Frannie get up and go to their tent. Stu puts a hand on Larry's shoulder.

STU

Get some rest. We'll leave at five.

Larry nods and continues playing.

INT. STU'S TENT (ZION NATIONAL PARK) - NIGHT

Larry's PLAYING can be heard inside the tent. The shadows of the camp flickering on the tent walls. Frannie and Stu are together, intertwined. She has her head on his chest.

FRANNIE

Where should I be?

STU

At least five miles back. Keep all doctors, people with medical training.

(beat)

How is she doing?

Frannie smiles.

FRANNIE

It's a she? You can tell?

Stu nods.

FRANNIE

I don't think she knows how scared her mother is about tomorrow.

STU

Good. Maybe she won't have to. For a long time.

She looks Stu right in the eyes and says:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANNIE

Does he know we're here? Now?

He doesn't answer because he honestly doesn't know.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZION NATIONAL PARK - WATCHMAN CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

The sky is blueing up with the coming of dawn. Larry hands a sleeping Joe off to Frannie who is there, wrapped in a blanket. Then he loads up their groups into a third of the vehicles. Stu goes to Frannie.

STU

Lay low until noon. Then head out.

She nods. She's tearing up, but only a little. They don't have to speak. He is in her head. She kisses him and he goes. Larry turns away from this, trying to stay focused. Others who are awake early watch their departure.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Stu and Larry drive off. Stu watches Frannie bathed in the red of their taillights as they drive off. He takes a breath, and lets her go.

LARRY

It's just about too much. Isn't it?

Stu looks at him and nods. Larry looks back, murder in his eyes.

LARRY

That changes today.

CUT TO:

"GOING TO MEET THE MAN" MONTAGE

Stu's caravan makes its way on back roads toward Vegas:

1. They speed through sand dune country near Kanab. Sand has started to cover the road in places, the whole landscape quickly forgetting civilization.

2. They gas up out of spare tanks on the Navajo Bridge over the very most northeast corner of the Grand Canyon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They don't stop to take in the spectacular view. They
move right on.

3. They pass through Williams, and then Kingman, and see
the worst of what America has done to itself. A wind-
bent sign reads "LAS VEGAS 105." It has lines of bullet
holes all through it.

EXT. ARIZONA ROUTE 93 - DAY

Stu's small convoy comes up and pulls off beside a sign
that reads "HOOVER DAM 7."

INT. VAN - DAY

The clock reads 4:00 PM. Stu looks at Larry, shoulders
his pack, and they shake.

STU
Take it. Shut it down. And then
get out of there.
(to Larry)
Let me do the rest. Understood?

Larry nods. Stu touches everyone else in the van and
then jumps out. Without ceremony, he begins following a
dry arroyo west away from the highway and down toward the
Colorado River. The other side is as steep a maze. It's
going to be a long, tough next few miles.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEVADA ROUTE 15 - DUSK

Frannie, Glen, and Nick's convoy pulls off at Moapa Town,
with signs for "Valley of Fire" State Park. Nick's van,
with his two sharpshooters and handful of men -- all in
combat gear with night vision equipment and scoped rifles
-- heads off west down a two-lane side route.

INT. SUV - DUSK

Frannie watches them go, then signals to Glen in the
other van and they continue on.

FRANNIE
Go safe, Nick.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARIZONA ROUTE 93 - DUSK

The sun is red on the horizon now, almost down.

Larry's teams are using the fact that the backside of the slope leading to the gorge where the bypass bridge and Hoover Dam sit is now in shadow. His fifty people jog up 93 in the dim twilight, carrying every kind of firearm -- handguns, pistols, rifles, shotguns. A few carry tasers instead.

When they get to the split in the road, Larry silently breaks off north with fifteen people and heads down toward the dam.

A second group of fifteen heads off south side and up the back of Fortification Hill.

The rest continue straight up the highway toward the top of the slope where the bypass bridge spans the canyon.

CUT TO:

EXT. BIG SISTER PEAK - DOWNSLOPE - DUSK

Nick and his group of six crawl up to the top of Big Sister Peak. They can see, across a quarter-mile saddle, the top of Little Sister Peak, fifty or so feet below their same elevation.

On top of Little Sister is a Jeep road ending at a microwave tower and solar array. An SUV is parked there, a few yards from a Howitzer 155. Four men are manning it.

They can see the lights and neon of Vegas winking on in the dusky desert light in the distance. The massive spotlight on top of the Luxor comes on.

Nick looks down on Route 15. He can see Flagg's road-block, but the road is empty; Glen and the rest of the Boulderites are in hiding, waiting for his signal.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLORADO RIVER - DUSK

Stu climbs down to the last terrace on the bank of the Colorado. The canyon is black with shadows, though the sky above is every shade of sunset orange and purple.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He's not visible from the dam or the bridge due to the twists in the canyon. He looks at the river. It's flat-water here, but it's moving at a good clip.

He calculates where he wants to end up on the other side and then slips into the river, his backpack buoyed with empty soda bottles. He drags it along the surface. He's a strong swimmer, but it's a challenging current.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOOVER DAM ACCESS ROAD - DUSK

Larry's group comes to the edge of their rocky cover. They have a view of both the dam and the west side of the bypass bridge. The dam is guarded at either end, but with no more than a dozen people. It looks like there are more men, and more guns, up on the bypass bridge.

EXT. FORTIFICATION HILL - DUSK

The other fifteen Boulderites make their way up the dark backside of the Fortification Hill. This is not a military group, though there are a few soldiers. These are men and women who are in less than excellent shape and are terrified.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLORADO RIVER - DUSK

In the swift Colorado River, Stu misses his mark and ends up dragged fifty yards further downstream. But he gets a hold and is able to pull himself up out of the water.

CUT TO:

EXT. FORTIFICATION HILL - DUSK

The team gets as far as they can before they must come out of cover. They can HEAR the Las Vegas manning the howitzer talking amiably, but they cannot see them.

The Boulderites' TEAM LEADER FORT HILL makes sure his people are ready, their scared faces all tuned into his every move, then he pulls a signal.

And it all begins.

They swarm the hill.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Las Vegans hear them coming and turn. There are five of them. They fire, dropping two of the Boulderites immediately. But they are outnumbered and outgunned and shot down in seconds.

Team Leader Fort Hill shoots off a flare, which is the signal for:

EXT. ARIZONA ROUTE 93 - DUSK

The team on the highway rushes onto the bypass bridge and are immediately fired on. They quickly shoot down the six guards posted there and then take cover behind the row of parked trucks sealing off the eastern end.

TEAM LEADER BYPASS
LAY DOWN YOUR WEAPONS.

But no one does. All the Las Vegans out on the span are now returning fire. Some of the Boulderites begin to panic, not ready for this kind of terror.

But most of the Boulderites crawl under the trucks and fire. No one has much advantage; as with Boulder's army, most of the Las Vegans are not trained soldiers.

The Boulderites force them back, though, and move down the bridge in increments, taking fire and losing men and women as they go. A few panic and run back. By the time they are halfway across, they are down to half their numbers.

TEAM LEADER BYPASS
GO, GO, GO, GO, GO.

But they keep moving forward, soldiers and civilians alike, until they've reached the other side. They watch as Las Vegans flee to cover past the nearest rock formations and traffic barriers, and then dig in and start returning fire.

But they can no longer target the dam, so one of the Boulderites quickly runs to the rail facing it and shoots off a flare.

EXT. HOOVER DAM - TOP OF DAM - DUSK

When the flare arcs up over the dam, Larry motions his squad to run with him onto its eastern side. They run up poised to shoot, but they see all the Las Vegans on the dam are retreating. They walk right through the eastern barricade and start running across.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But one man is standing right on the center point of the dam. He has his hands up in surrender, no gun visible. Larry and the others run toward him, shouting at him to get down on the ground, but he just stands there grinning.

Larry first sees he has something in his hand. Then he realizes who it is: It's Trashcan Man. Larry skids to a stop, realizing what is about to happen.

Trash looks at Larry. He couldn't be happier. He says, just audibly, to the coming chaos:

TRASHCAN MAN

I love you.

And then hits the detonator in his hand. Larry is just turning to shout to his team to run when the Hoover Dam, packed with dynamite, explodes. Trashcan Man's greatest creation.

The blast itself is immense. It blooms into a heaving cloud of concrete dust and metal shrapnel, concussive and wide. It knocks everyone on the bypass bridge to the pavement as it tears out a thirty-story jagged chunk through the center.

Lake Mead immediately begins to collapse through it, pulling down great shafts more of concrete as it floods through the dam's inner compartments and shreds them. A frenzied wall of water as high as Statue of Liberty begins coursing down the canyon downstream.

Toward Stu.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT BASIN HIGHWAY - PULLOUT - DUSK

Frannie and about three dozen Boulderites are waiting in front of a truck stop just outside the Vegas city limit. She is standing out on the offramp when they hear the EXPLOSION in the far distance. Then she can see a plume of smoke on the horizon in the direction of the dam.

EXT. BIG SISTER PEAK - DUSK

Nick can only see the plume to the east and watch as the city goes dark. Rattled, he motions for his team to get into position. The two sharpshooters take aim, the rest get into a crouch, ready to move.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - DUSK

As the city's electric grid shuts down, people on the streets call to one another, asking what's going on. Some who've heard the explosion, or see the blast cloud, begin running. Someone yells:

LAS VEGAN
It's Boulder -- ! THEY'RE HERE!

CUT TO:

EXT. COLORADO RIVER - DUSK

Stu has climbed halfway up the west side of the Colorado, through a series of gullies. He is looking upstream where he can see the plume scarring the darkening sky. The canyon walls are TREMBLING, scree coming down on him. He can hear a massive ROAR. He half-shuts his eyes to scan for Larry, but catches himself.

STU
Don't --

CUT TO:

INT. LUXOR HOTEL - FLAGG'S SUITE - DUSK

Flagg catches the slightest signal of Stu's power, but then it is gone.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. COLORADO RIVER - DUSK

Stu scrambles as fast as he can grabbing onto weeds and thorns, anything to head up the slope faster.

The flood is fifteen stories high, a deafening chaos of water. But what Stu sees when it reaches him is a tide of blood. First it rushes past him a hundred yards below where he's climbed, painting the canyon walls foamy red, but then it starts rising fast.

When it reaches him, he's torn away from the slope. He fights against it to keep himself from getting pulled under.

He is thrown into an elbow of rock as the canyon turns and he clings to it, gets on the upstream side. He's pinned there, but he's able to start clawing upward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It is only by a stroke of topographic luck that the slope opens forward and he's able to start climbing again, soaked in blood.

Battered, exhausted, and cold, he starts climbing up the rest of the way to the top.

His face is bleeding and his hands torn up. But he didn't use his power.

CUT TO:

INT. LUXOR HOTEL - FLAGG'S SUITE - NIGHT

Flagg is sitting in a low, upholstered chair, which has been placed in front of his slanted floor-to-ceiling windows. He has a complete view of downtown, all dark now.

His eyes are closed, he is scanning, scanning, looking for Stu, heedless of the chaos in the streets.

The glow of a flashlight can be seen under the doors. A knock comes. Lloyd comes in, looking concerned. Flagg opens his eyes, but doesn't turn to face him.

LLOYD HENREID

I'm sorry to -- interrupt.

FLAGG

Are you scared of the dark as well, Lloyd?

LLOYD HENREID

It's just -- people are leaving, sir. They think we're under attack.

FLAGG

(mildly)

We are.

Lloyd blinks at him.

LLOYD HENREID

Boulder.

FLAGG

Yes, Lloyd.

LLOYD HENREID

What should we do. We don't have a plan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Finally, Flagg turns to look at him. His eyes are black, glittering in the light of Lloyd's flashlight.

FLAGG

Oh, I have a plan, Lloyd. Don't you worry.

LLOYD HENREID

Groups of our people are running away. In cars, on foot.

FLAGG

But he is coming, Lloyd. Toward us. To us. He must be.

LLOYD HENREID

You can't -- feel him?

FLAGG

He's in control. More than I would have thought. But he'll reveal himself soon enough. He'll have to.

(beat)

I can, however, feel you.

Lloyd bristles slightly, feeling Flagg inside his head.

FLAGG

And I appreciate your loyalty.

LLOYD HENREID

Of course.

Flagg nods, satisfied.

FLAGG

For anyone who wants to leave the city, put together a convoy. You can lead them out and hide in the hills until this attack is over.

LLOYD HENREID

What about you, sir?

FLAGG

I'll be here, Lloyd, to welcome you all back. And I will be twice what I am now. Redman has come into his power. He has the old woman's as well. You can't feel it?

Lloyd gives the smallest shake of his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLAGG

Take our people out of the city,
Lloyd. Take them north.

LLOYD HENREID

North. That way is clear?

Flagg smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOULDER CITY (NV) - DUSK

Stu comes jogging down a dirt road from the canyon into the outskirts of Boulder City, a suburb of Vegas. He immediately starts checking parked and abandoned cars for one that's relatively new with keys in it.

When he finds one, he pulls out the skeletal remains of the driver, reaches in, and pops the hood.

He pulls out of his backpack a diver's bag and unwraps it to get out the car battery charger. He clips it to the battery and starts the car. It comes to life.

INT. CAR - DUSK

Stu speeds through dark neighborhoods, his headlights off. He can see well enough to make his way without them, but only barely; there is little light left in the sky.

He clips a street sign bent over an intersection, webbing his windshield, but he can't use his powers to guide him. He has to keep under Flagg's radar. And he has to hurry.

CUT TO:

EXT. BIG SISTER PEAK - DUSK

To the north of Vegas, Nick's group puts on infrared goggles. He gives the signal and the sharpshooters aim their shots.

EXT. LITTLE SISTER PEAK - DUSK

The LAS VEGANS manning the Howitzer hear the FFETS of bullets and then three of the four tires on their SUV deflate. They can't tell where the shots are coming from, so they can't take cover.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOULDER SHOOTER (O.S.)
 HANDS UP, HANDS UP, HANDS UP, AND
 ON THE GROUND --

The men comply and Nick's group runs up out of the dark
 with plastic wrist restraints out to subdue them.

Nick takes out an infrared strobe, holds it over his head
 and flips it on.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT BASIN HIGHWAY NORTH - DUSK

Glen is watching Little Sister Peak with his own infrared
 goggles on.

GLEN'S POV

Nick's infrared beacon is flashing on top. It becomes
 invisible when Glen takes off his goggles.

BACK TO SCENE

Glen tells his group:

GLEN
 It's secure. Let's go. Flank the
 road and move forward.

The people around him begin to move.

CUT TO:

EXT. TROPICANA AVENUE (LAS VEGAS) - DUSK

Stu comes to within a block of the Vegas Strip and pulls
 over. People are running in the street. He leaves the
 car idling and gets out. A man passes, hand in hand with
 a child. Stu calls out to him:

STU
 Take it --

They do. The man loads in his child and drives off with
 the car, looking at Stu wide-eyed as if he recognizes him
 from some kind of mental wanted poster.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Stu walks onto the Strip. New York, New York is dark, but the silhouette of the miniature Statue of Liberty is visible, as are the castle turrets of the Excalibur across the street.

There is a huge billboard across the side of the Excalibur advertising a show:

A man in a white tunic wielding a sword spars with a man in a blue tunic with a mask on, wielding a scythe. (This is the iconic cover of the original edition of King's novel.)

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT BASIN HIGHWAY NORTH - NIGHT

Lloyd leads over a hundred Las Vegans out of the city and through the roadblock.

They get a few hundred yards past it and hear Glen shout:

GLEN
PUT DOWN YOUR WEAPONS! WE WILL
NOT FIRE ON YOU IF YOU DROP YOUR
WEAPONS.

Lloyd looks around, confused, and sees: Boulderites have them surrounded forward on both sides of the highway. The only way out is back.

GLEN
OUR ACTIONS ARE NOT AIMED AT THE
PEOPLE OF LAS VEGAS. WE DON'T
WANT YOUR LIVES, YOUR CITY, OR
YOUR PROPERTY. WE WANT TO OFFER
HELP AND SHELTER TO ANY OF YOU WHO
NEEDS IT.
(beat)
DROP ALL WEAPONS AND COME FORWARD,
HANDS UP, SO WE CAN SEE THEM.

People around Lloyd are looking to him. Flagg has set them up. He slowly puts down his weapon, overwhelmed.

LLOYD HENREID
Do what he says. DO WHAT HE SAYS.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.

CUT TO:

EXT. LITTLE SISTER PEAK - NIGHT

Up on the hill, Nick and his group of sharpshooters have set a perimeter and are lying on the ground all around the howitzer surveying the hillsides.

Behind Nick, the howitzer begins to move on its own. It loads its own shell and aims itself at the Basin Highway below. The other men see it happening. They yell to one another. One of them shakes Nick, turning him around just as the big howitzer goes off.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT BASIN HIGHWAY NORTH - NIGHT

Boulderites are just putting down their weapons and walking forward to be frisked when they hear the artillery explosion up on the dark hillside.

The shell WHISTLES TOWARD THEM.

LLOYD HENREID

Oh, my God -- !

It EXPLODES in the dead center of the group, killing Boulderites and Las Vegans in equal numbers and shattering the pavement.

People scatter in every direction as a second SHELL WHISTLES in over their heads.

CUT TO:

EXT. LITTLE SISTER PEAK - NIGHT

Nick and the others are trying to disable the howitzer. One of the men tries to keep the next shell from loading itself into the chamber. His fingers are taken clean off.

Nick looks around for something, anything, to stop it. He starts screaming at his men to run, to get away. Then he picks up one of the waiting shells. The muzzle is aimed low enough that he's able to reach it.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

Stu is coming up to the ominous black pyramid of the Luxor when he hears the shelling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He turns to see the second explosion and closes his eyes,
thrusting out a hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT BASIN HIGHWAY NORTH - NIGHT

The second SHELL HITS behind the group and people begin
as they run.

As the THIRD SHELL SCREAMS IN, it explodes over the group
in a flash of silver Stu is sending, a much more evolved
version of his rescue at the fuel tanks.

Shrapnel and fire slides down the sides as if down a dome
made of glass. Some people at the edges are still
injured and killed, but it has saved many many more.

Glen shouts:

GLEN
IT'S STU. KEEP RUNNING -- ALL OF
YOU!

CUT TO:

INT. LUXOR HOTEL - FLAGG'S SUITE - NIGHT

Flagg is sitting in his perch above the city when this
happens. His eyes flash open and he can see immediately
that Stu is down on the Strip.

He launches himself out of the chair, shattering the
window in front of him with his mind. He charges out it
and into the air fifteen stories over the street.

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

Stu whirls around to see:

Flagg is walking down the slope of the casino, kept from
sliding by his power. His cowboy boots crack the glass
under his feet as he goes. He is grinning at Stu.

Above and behind him, the spotlight at the top of the
pyramid comes ablaze. Flagg glances around the city,
turning all the lights back on with his mind, the
darkness a ruse. All of it expendable.

"VIVA LAS VEGAS" MONTAGE

1. The garish lights of all the Strip's casinos blaze on.
2. The fountains burst up into bubbling life.
3. The Stratosphere needle comes alight and the rides atop launch into motion.
4. People out in the dark streets see all this, see Flagg coming down the Luxor with death in his eyes, and run.

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

The path between them is lit up with the city lights. Stu starts running toward the Luxor to meet Flagg.

Before Flagg even reaches the ground, he throws a field of force square at Stu. Stu is driven back 20'.

Flagg shatters every window within a block and as glass rains down, he redirects it all at Stu.

Stu is able to roll into a crouch and shield himself from all the glass. It hits the gray, glowing air inches from his face and shoots off, a billion pieces, down the street behind him.

CUT TO:

EXT. LITTLE SISTER PEAK - NIGHT

Nick sees the protection over the people fleeing up 15 disappear. So, as the fourth shell loads in, Nick raises the shell in his hands and shoves it into the front bore of the howitzer. It doesn't slide in, but he's able to wedge it there in the muzzle. When the gun fires and the two shells meet, the WHOLE ARTILLERY PIECE EXPLODES, a double blast of metal and fire.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

Flagg keeps walking to him. He and Stu are 50' apart.

FLAGG

Let me have you, and the others
can live.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU

I'm not here to negotiate. I know
what I have and I know how to use
it now.

Stu muscles into a standing position and throws the field
of force back at Flagg, but this time as its own billion
fragments.

Flagg teases them apart and walks as if down a narrow
alley between them. He looks at Stu, grinning.

FLAGG

You'll die trying. All of you.
And I'll start with the littlest
one.

Stu immediately understands what he means, and YELLS.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT BASIN HIGHWAY NORTH - PULLOUT - NIGHT

Frannie and some of the others from the rear camp have
come down half a mile toward the shelling and commotion.
They can see a massive group of people coming up the
highway on foot. Many have flashlights or lanterns.
Then she hears the WEEPING and MOANING of the wounded.

She starts moving toward them, yelling over her shoulder.

FRANNIE

Doctors! Anyone else go back and
bring the vans up! Now!

She is about to reach the first of the walking wounded
when a blast from Flagg hits her.

She staggers back, CRYING OUT in pain, clutching her
belly. She cries out again. Then it stops as suddenly
as it began. One of the BOULDER DOCTORS runs to her
side.

FRANNIE

It's all right. It hurt for a
second, but then it --

In the doctor's flashlight, he can see her pant leg runs
wet, blood or amniotic fluid it's hard to tell. But then
doubles over again in pain.

She SCREAMS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Someone in the crowd hears her and rushes forward. It's
Harold Laudner, fleeing with the other Las Vegas.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

Flagg is striding toward Stu, pulling down pieces from
the edifices of casinos on the Strip with his mind --
some of the Excalibur's mock turrets, pieces of New York
New York -- and trying to bring them down on Stu.

Stu is able to deflect it all, but barely. In
retaliation, he pulls up the pavement from under Flagg's
feet in a sudden heave. Flagg stumbles backward.

Stu leaps to the edge of the broken road and stands over
Flagg, pinning him to the ground with his mind.

Behind him, Flagg starts plucking cars up off the street.
They fly through the pulsing lights of the Strip, arcing
toward Stu's back.

Stu senses them and whirls around to protect himself.
The cars bounce off of his mental shield, but tamping it
down a little at a time. But they lose their guts and
fluids on impact and tumble away.

This is both exhausting and inexact. Stu is taking some
of the blow of each attack and weakening from it, as is
Flagg.

But Flagg is up like a shot and on top of Stu, shoving
him to the ground and straddling him, hammering him into
place with psychic blows, one hand covering Stu's face.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT BASIN HIGHWAY NORTH - PULLOUT - NIGHT

Frannie is being carried back to the rear camp on a
blanket. She is in labor, having the baby now.

People have gathered around, both Boulderites and Las
Vegas, looking on with about as much surprise at a live
birth as they did for the shelling attack.

BOULDER DOCTOR

Frannie. Don't push. Not yet.

Frannie is SCREAMING, struggling with the birth. She can
hear and see the destruction happening down on the Strip.
Her mind races to find Stu's, but she can't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Doctor tells the others carrying her:

BOULDER DOCTOR
All right -- Here. Here is good.
Get me that red backpack --

The people carrying gently put her down. One crouches at Frannie's side and takes her hand. It is Harold.

She looks up into his face and recognizes him through her pain. She starts shaking her head, but Harold is shaking his as well, tears in his eyes, pleading with her silently not to give him away.

BOULDER DOCTOR
Okay, Fran -- Ready for this
now -- ?

With no choice, Frannie holds onto his hand and takes what help he can give her. She begins to push.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

Flagg's hand is glowing silver as he tries to pull Stu's power out of him.

But Stu sends a burst up the front of Flagg's chest, breaking his sternum. Flagg yells in rage and pain and Stu breaks his hold and forces him back.

Stu now has Flagg by the throat, choking him, his thumbs on Flagg's Adam's Apple.

Each is trying to pull the other's power into himself. The familiar silvery lines pulling away from their features visually shows the tug of war between them.

The life is nearly choked out of Flagg, suddenly, and with real surprise, he sees he is beat. He leans up and for an instant, the silvery lines of their powers touch.

It sends each of the men rocketing away, as if repelled.

Stu is thrown back, but staggers to his feet and makes his way again toward Flagg.

Flagg sees he is not going to defeat Stu, so with his last surge of power, he hurls the glass and iron spotlight off the top of the Luxor in a bright comet arc and, just as Stu is about to lunge and deal the coup de grace, it comes falling out of the dark and impales Flagg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It skewers and crushes him feet from Stu, its floodlight still fully on and blindingly bright. But as Flagg dies, it fades to nothing.

Stu has a single moment where he could reach in and take Flagg's power from him. And he almost does. He goes to his knees at his side about to pull it forward. But finally, he cannot. He sees it leave Flagg, and suddenly, he has in front of him just a man -- someone Stu might have known in life, a guy in the middle like he used to be. Then the man dies.

All the lights in Vegas go out, the fountains shut off, and the city is again plunged into darkness, this time for good.

Stu staggers back a step, and then falls on the pavement. He's taken many injuries in the fight and is, perhaps, dying himself.

The Strip around him has been demolished. A few people who have been hiding wander out and call to one another.

Stu touches his chest and neck, and sees how he is bleeding in many places. He concentrates his power to try to stop it, to heal himself, but he is so weak.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT BASIN HIGHWAY NORTH - PULLOUT - NIGHT

Frannie is heaving and panting, pushing and screaming, but finally there is a CRY as the BABY is born. People in the crowd around her MURMUR. The doctor holds the baby up to examine it. He nods, the baby looks healthy.

The baby cries, bloody and squinting in the light of all the flashlights pointed at it.

Fran cries. She's exhausted, but cannot keep from asking.

FRANNIE

When will we know? When will we
know if she'll catch it?

BOULDER DOCTOR

Soon, Frannie. We'll know soon.
Stay calm. Whatever happens, she
will need that.

(beat)

Let's get you both comfortable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frannie looks for Harold, but he's slipped into the crowd
and away.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

Stu is on the ground, slipping away, when someone walks
up -- a shape in the dark, moving slowly, his flashlight
sweeping over Stu. When Stu moves to try to see who it
is, the figure startles.

TOM (O.S.)

Mr. Redman?

Stu tries to speak to him, but all that comes out is the
man's name. Tom comes to his side in the dark.

STU

Tom. Tom, I need help --

TOM

Come on. We'll go to a hospital.

He tries to help Stu up. Stu winces.

STU

Not that kind.

TOM

Oh. I know what it is. Tom
Cullen knows.

STU

You do?

TOM

That man Flagg took it from
people. I saw it. He took them
by the hand and got their silver.
You need my silver, Mr. Redman?

STU

I won't take it unless you want to
give it. You won't get it back.

TOM

Will it help you?

Stu nods. Without hesitation, Tom puts his hand in
Stu's. Stu is moved to tears. Without hesitating, he
pulls Tom's magic out and into himself. Tom smiles at
the funny feeling it gives him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Stu lets go of his hand and puts both his hands on his own chest. He's able to heal himself enough now. He glows with the silver energy and then it fades.

He lays there, healed, looking up at Tom. And then at the stars in the sky behind him.

STU

Thank you, Tom. Thank you.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT BASIN HIGHWAY NORTH - PULLOUT - DAWN

In the first light of morning, the last of the survivors of the Battle of Las Vegas are coming up the highway to the pullout. Behind them, the city is dark again, patches of it smoking.

Stu arrives on foot with Tom at his side. He looks over the crowd for familiar faces.

Most of the dead and wounded have been brought in. Of the 450 they came with, at least a hundred are dead, and not counting those who died on Hoover Dam. Many many more are wounded. At least half as many Las Vegans are with them now.

Stu looks around, taking it all in, doing his own private calculations of benefits and costs. He sees a long row of tents has been set up. He can tell which one Frannie's inside.

TOM

Do you see Nick? Can you help me find him?

Stu looks at Tom. He thinks how to tell him. He puts a hand on his shoulder.

STU

Nick's gone, Tom. He died in the night.

(pointing back)

Up on that hill, helping us try to keep people safe.

Tom looks at him, then back at the hill. A beat.

STU

There was a battle here. 'Little Sister Peak.' Will you remember that?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU (CONT'D)

That Nick died at the Battle of
Little Sister Peak? We'll write
it all down.

Tom nods, very sad. He may never have been sadder than
now. He puts his hands together and makes a gesture of a
bird flying away.

STU

That's right.

TOM

He'll be in a book? A history
book.

STU

Yeah. He will. So will you.

Tom already looks proud, not of himself, but of Nick.

TOM

Is he still up there?

STU

No. They brought him down.

TOM

That's good. I'm glad.

Stu looks at the long row of bodies in sleeping bags.

STU

He's there, Tom. That green one --

Tom looks at him, confused.

TOM

Can I say goodbye? Will he hear
me?

STU

Yes, I think so. If he can where
he is, he will.

TOM

You mean if he's in heaven. You
don't think he's in the other
place, do you?

STU

Not a chance.

Tom nods and goes. Stu takes a moment to steady himself,
feeling what Tom is feeling. Then he goes to the tent to
find Frannie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As he approaches it, he can hear the BABY COOING inside
and he visibly relaxes. Now he does cry. He knew it was
true in his mind, but it's another thing to hear it with
his own ears.

And be sure.

FADE TO:

EXT. THE FLATIRONS - DAY

The peaks of the Flatirons glow coldly in the white
afternoon light. Most of the aspen trees have dropped
their leaves, but a few are still hanging on.

EXT. CHAUTAUQUA - EDGE OF PARK - DAY

People around the Chautauqua are busy, carrying firewood
up to the cabins, putting up storm windows, and battening
down for winter. In fact, the first stars of snow are in
the air, floating down.

Stu is helping with a crew that is putting up a snow
fence. Glen is with him. They put the last roll in
place and step back.

STU

We hit a thousand yesterday.

GLEN

We should have a party.

STU

Yeah. We should.

They look up at the peaks, then at each other.

GLEN

You don't think he's gonna walk in
here, do you?

STU

Harold? He knows we'd put him in
jail.

(thinks)

But maybe that's better than
wherever he is now.

Glen looks at the mountain, then back at Stu.

GLEN

And Flagg. You really don't feel
him anymore?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STU

I have dreams sometimes. But I
have dreams about a lot of things
now. Most of 'em good.

Glen nods.

EXT. CHAUTAUQUA - DINING HALL - DAY

Stu goes up the steps of the dining hall and walks down
the wrap-around porch. Frannie's there with her DAUGHTER
(2 months), both of them bundled up against the afternoon
chill. She is with a circle of other men and women who
are sitting with Boulder's children -- Joe included --
coloring with, reading to, and rocking them.

Frannie's eyes meet Stu's. They just look at one another
for a long moment. She looks down on the baby and then
smiles, lovely enough to be a painting herself.

All at once, the holiday lights hung around the porch
twinkle to life. Some of the porch lights come on as
well and the lights inside.

People around the lawn all stop and start to APPLAUD and
CHEER. The kids around the table are grinning ear-to-
ear. Frannie smiles, then laughs. Stu does as well.
Maybe they'll be okay after all.

The snow continues to fall.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. TULUM, MEXICO - DAY

INITIAL CLOSING CREDITS.

Harold walks into a shattered gulf town from the white
sand beach. The shops have long since been looted.
Vegetation has grown up unchecked and untended for nearly
a year.

He looks around, curious, having walked many miles to get
to this place. His sneakers are falling apart on his
feet.

He continues into town, through weeds and shattered glass
down the main street, until he sees something in one of
the shop windows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He goes over and reaches in through the broken display case. He pulls out a pair of new gaucho boots. He puts them on. They fit.

At the far end of town, a group of people has gathered to split up supplies from a foraging run. They watch him approach warily. Some have guns, others machetes.

But Harold exudes ease and confidence now. He puts a hand up in greeting and says, in perfect Spanish:

HAROLD

Hola!

(beat)

¿Cuál de ustedes es el que manda?

<Which one of you is in charge?>

And he is smiling. Always smiling.

REMAINING CLOSING CREDITS.

FADE OUT.

THE END

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