

EXT. PICNIC GROUND - AFTERNOON

FADE IN on TITLE SEQUENCE

HIGH ANGLE of a busy park by a lake on a sunny Sunday. Picnic Lake is one of the main destinations for folks after church in the desert town of Show Low, Arizona. People are clumped together in groups, throwing Frisbees, swimming, sunning themselves on the cool grass, and socializing.

WE survey the grounds in the point of view of a fly, as it enjoys the smorgasbord of greasy pork ribs and potato salad.

We swoop down and land on a birthday cake belonging to a party of 6-year-olds. A parent guarding the cake shoos us off.

WE land in some red stuff on a plate next to a teen couple making out.

WE fly up and land on some macaroni salad. The owner is one of four elderly women.

ELDERLY WOMAN 1

I remember when they first came to town. You couldn't pry them apart. She was always pawing him in public.

ELDERLY WOMAN 2

(Aghast)

No.

ELDERLY WOMAN 1

Yes. But that's what you'd expect from Californians, I suppose.

ELDERLY WOMAN 3

I thought they were from Utah.

ELDERLY WOMAN 1

He was from Utah many years ago. But she was definitely LA.

WE are scooped up in a spoon, but escape moments before passing into the maw of one of the larger women.

WE land on a pink cherry cake belonging to a silent young family of three. The father is watching a game on his cell phone, while the mother shovels green stuff into a baby. WE move closer to the man. He sees US and SLAMS his fist down on the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PICNIC MOTHER  
Good Lord, what was that?

PICNIC FATHER  
A fly.

PICNIC MOTHER  
My gawd, do you have to make...

WE survive and continue bouncing from one feast to another.

Finally, WE land on some red Jell-O belonging to ROBIN (7). His parents DAN and JUDY, and sister SARA (10) are sitting with him at a picnic table.

JUDY  
You kids finish, so we can start packing up.

WE become so intoxicated by the gelatinous mound, WE don't notice a heavy object falling from above. There is a sudden deafening SQUISH and everything turns red, and then SILENT and BLACK.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON JUDY as she looks down in anger.

JUDY (CONT'D)  
That is not funny.

ANGLE FULL SHOT

Robin pulls the butt of his toy gun out of the red goo. He and Sara laugh at the sight of the Jell-O and fly guts splattered everywhere. Dan looks at them askance, brushing chunks off his arm.

DAN  
Robin, why did you do that?

ROBIN  
There was a fly in my Jell-O.

DAN  
Really. And this is what we do when there's a fly in our Jell-O?

ROBIN  
Sorree.

DAN  
That was not a good choice, pal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROBIN

I said sorry.

JUDY

Honey, can you go rinse him off?  
I'll get this.

Dan leads Robin to a faucet, as Judy starts wrapping up food.

ROBIN

Can I have some more?

DAN

I'll give you some more.

ROBIN

(Smiling)  
Okay.

DAN

I was being sarcastic.

ROBIN

What does that mean?

DAN

It means you're not getting  
anymore.

JUDY

What time does that game start?

DAN

That game starts at four.

JUDY

Oh. So I guess we won't have any  
time for the boat.

DAN

Yeah, it doesn't look that way.  
Sorry.

SARA

Mom! We never get to go in the  
boat!

JUDY

I know.

DAN

Kids, you know I've been looking  
forward to this for a long time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

They stare at him.

DAN (CONT'D)  
It's the play-offs!

SARA  
So?

DAN  
The play-offs! It's the play-offs!  
It's very important!

Sara and Judy aren't hearing a convincing argument.

JUDY  
(Applying guilt)  
We'll go out some other time.

SARA  
What other time?

JUDY  
Maybe next weekend... unless  
there's another game.

DAN  
(Groaning)  
Depends on what happens today.

JUDY  
(Shrugging)  
I don't see what the point of  
getting a boat is if there's always  
baseball.

DAN  
There isn't always baseball.

JUDY  
Can't you miss one game?

DAN  
Judy...

JUDY  
We spent all that time putting it  
in the water. Now you have to pull  
it right back out.

She stares at Dan with sad eyes.

DAN  
What.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JUDY

Nothing.

(Looks away and packs)  
Instead of buying a boat, we  
should've just got a bigger TV.  
Would've been cheaper.

DAN

We don't need a bigger TV and we're  
going to use the boat, just not  
today.

He returns and helps her pack.

JUDY

(Looking OFFSCREEN)  
Look at it. It's just sitting there  
in the water doing nothing, all  
alone.

ANGLE HER POV THE BOAT.

The boat has developed character over the years, but has a  
small custom cabin and suits the family.

RESUME THE GROUP

DAN

You can stop trying to make me feel  
guilty.

JUDY

I'm not trying to make you feel  
anything. I'm just stating the  
facts.

DAN

Well, so am I.

SARA

Why can't dad go home and we stay  
here and go in the boat?

JUDY

(To Dan)  
Why not?

DAN

What? No. I'm not going to drive  
all the way back here after the  
game just to pick you guys up. No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

JUDY

How about if we go out for just a little while?

DAN

I don't know. Why does everything have to get so complicated? We'll go out next weekend. Probably.

JUDY

I know. Sara and I will take the boat out for a few minutes, while you and Robin stay here and clean up. We'll be back by the time you're done.

SARA

Yeah!

ROBIN

I want to go too.

DAN

You might as well take them both.

JUDY

No Robin, you stay here and help your dad. We'll be back in twenty minutes. Perfect.

Judy starts to gather items to take on the boat.

DAN

(Reluctantly)

Fine. Come on, Robin. You help me and I'll let you steer the car on the way home.

ROBIN

Cool.

JUDY

I don't know about that.

ROBIN

Dad let's me do it all the time.

JUDY

All the time?

DAN

Just go get in the boat.

(Calling after her)

And remember to turn the gas on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Judy and Sara run off.

DAN (CONT'D)  
 (continuing; to Robin)  
 Let's see, what can you do? Get a  
 white trashbag out of one of those  
 sacks over there.

ROBIN  
 What does it look like?

DAN  
 You know. One of those... trash  
 bags. They're big and plastic and  
 you put trash in them.

Robin looks through the sacks as Dan packs up. The boat  
 starts. Dan looks up.

ANGLE HIS POV BOAT, as Judy and Sara prepare to launch it.

RESUME DAN

ROBIN  
 I can't find it.

DAN  
 Okay. They're rolled up and the  
 roll is in a box, a red box, a  
 little red box and it says trash  
 can liners.

ROBIN  
 Liners?

DAN  
 L-I-N-E-R-S.

ROBIN  
 Is this it?

DAN  
 No, those are the matches.

ROBIN  
 Is this it?

DAN  
 That's the catsup. Are you just  
 playing around?

ROBIN  
 (Smiling)  
 I'm being sarcastic. Is this it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

DAN

Do I have to come over there and  
show you?

Dan looks through the sacks.

DAN (CONT'D)

Don't tell me she forgot to pack  
the damn-

He is cut short by an earth-shattering EXPLOSION. They look  
up toward the water.

ANGLE THEIR POV IN SLOW MOTION, as a bright orange ball of  
flame expands from the boat, propelling pieces of it out in  
every direction at the speed of sound.

INTERCUT SLOW MOTION of Dan and Robin watching, unable to  
move. The one moment is stretched absurdly, the orange glow  
lasting forever. WE HEAR the SCREAMS and CRIES of the crowd  
slowly emerge through the BLAST. Time loses all meaning, as  
the single moment replays endlessly.

Then, suddenly, everything seems to come too fast.

EXT PICNIC GROUND - LATER

Dan and Robin are seated at a bench, surrounded by flashing  
lights, frantic talking, and emergency activity. A PARAMEDIC  
kneels in front of them.

PARAMEDIC

The question is, are YOU guys all  
right?

DAN

(He's not)  
Yes. I'm okay.

PARAMEDIC

You sure?

DAN

My wife and...

PARAMEDIC

They... they're gone, Mr. Byers.

DAN

They're gone? Where?

The Paramedic is distracted by something and leaves.

EXT PICNIC GROUND - LATER

Another paramedic loads a victim on a stretcher.

EXT PICNIC GROUND - LATER

As a helpful woman holds Dan's and Robin's hands.

HELPFUL WOMAN 1

Are you going to be all right?

DAN

Yes. Thank you.

HELPFUL WOMAN 1

If you need anything, anything at all, don't hesitate.

DAN

Thank you.

EXT PICNIC GROUND - LATER

Another paramedic helps a young girl with a deep cut on her face.

EXT PICNIC GROUND - LATER

PARAMEDIC 2 sits facing Dan and Robin.

PARAMEDIC 2

So, you think it was a problem with the gas?

DAN

Yes. It leaked.

PARAMEDIC 2

Uh huh. What, uh, where did it leak?

DAN

The engine compartment would fill up with gas fumes.

PARAMEDIC 2

So, you could turn it off or something?

DAN

Yes, when we weren't using it.

PARAMEDIC 2

You think it was left on then?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN  
(Bravely)  
I guess it was.

PARAMEDIC 2  
And the heat today I'm sure had a  
lot to do with it turning volatile  
in that confined space.

DAN  
Yes, yes.

PARAMEDIC 2  
So, that's what you think?

DAN  
Yes.

PARAMEDIC 2  
How are you doing?

DAN  
Okay. I'm doing okay.

EXT PICNIC GROUND - LATER

ANGLE ON a group standing around the smoking, melted hull of  
the boat.

ANGLE ON a small girl staring at what could be the charred  
fragment of a small arm on the grass.

EXT PICNIC GROUND - LATER

Dan and Robin are seated at another bench as Paramedic 1 and  
two cops hover over them.

COP 1  
So you say, you think it was the  
gas?

DAN  
Yes, gas would leak into the engine  
compartment.

COP 1  
I don't understand.

DAN  
The gas would leak into the engine  
compartment.

Cop 1 shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PARAMEDIC 1

Floyd, they would normally turn the gas off. Dan thinks he must've left it on.

COP 1

(To Paramedic 1)

Okay, let me get this straight. It was normally left off?

COP 2

And then they would turn it on.

COP 1

Oh, I see. So it was normally off unless they were about to start the engine?

COP 2

Right. And they would keep it on as long as the engine was running.

COP 1

Okay, I see. Is that pretty much the way it worked, Mr. Byers?

DAN

Yes, yes.

COP 1

Sorry, you'll have to excuse me. I'm not very mechanical. So, your speculation is that you left it on and that caused the explosion?

DAN

Umm. It would seem so. Yes.

Cop 1 gives Cop 2 a suspicious glance.

COP 1

Mmm hmm. How are you doing by the way?

DAN

Okay.

COP 1

Good.

Cop 1 motions Cop 2 over for a private talk.

PARAMEDIC 1

You guys feeling okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAN

Well, I have felt better. Is everything okay?

PARAMEDIC 1

Oh yeah. It's just routine stuff. I wouldn't worry.

(To Robin)

How are you doing, son?

Robin answers with a stare. His eyes tell it all - a distant stare, a mixture of a deep sense of loss, confusion, grief, and utter terror. It sends a chill through the paramedic. It's too much for him to deal with. This kid has been to another dimension and has not quite returned.

PARAMEDIC 1 (CONT'D)

Hang in there, okay?

Robin continues the stare.