

PEOPLE IN CARS

Written by

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EXT. DEATH VALLEY - DAWN

From a pinpoint of light, the sunrise grows until it pries open the desert sky, hot with technicolor wisps of cloud. The morning SOUNDS grow to a low, dry BUZZ.

The Mercurian landscape stretches and CREEKS as the sun slowly microwaves the last of its dying greenery to dust, and the dust settles on the rock to stare up at another day of its eternal sentence.

We hear FOOTSTEPS approaching O.S. - human. They are weak, shuffling, approach falteringly. As they gradually get closer, WE begin to hear LABORED BREATHING - dry and cracked. When the FOOTSTEPS are right next to US, they stop.

It is SILENT for a moment. Then, in an instant, he falls into VIEW - right in front of us, face filling the FRAME. He lies motionless, with the side of his face pushed into the dirt - eyes closed, skin red and peeling, lips swollen and split, barely alive. He would be bleeding from the fall, if he had any liquid left in his body.

He appears to be a man of average build - probably mid-thirties, but appearing much older owing to his condition. His right arm sticks straight out. A folded piece of paper is clutched tightly in his hand.

SAME - HOURS LATER

The only thing that has moved is the sun, which is much higher and bleaching the sky white with heat.

The man is probably dead. He looks stiff and dry as kindling.

A car approaches and CRUNCHES to a stop just outside our view. A door opens. FOOTSTEPS.

DORIS (OS)

It is a man. Jesus Christ!

BOB (OS)

What?!

DORIS

Look for yourself!

BOB

Holy shit!

Another door opens and closes. And FOOTSTEPS approach. BOB and DORIS shout every word.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS
Well, do something!

BOB
(Angry)
What am I supposed to do?!

DORIS
I don't know. See if he's alive!

The legs of Bob and Doris enter FRAME and stand around the body. Like most people in cars, their concept of the world comes from looking through their own bug-spattered windshield.

BOB
Nah, he's dead! Let's go back to that gas station and have them take care of it!

DORIS
How do you know he's dead?!

BOB
He's dead and even if he's not, what are we supposed to do!

DORIS
We can't just leave him here!

BOB
All right, I'll go back, you stay here!

DORIS
No wait. What if he... You know. I don't...!

The man's eyes pop open. He starts to work his mouth, but nothing comes out, and Bob and Doris don't notice.

BOB
Okay, you go and I'll stay!

DORIS
No, it's too dangerous, let's both go!

BOB
That's what I said in the first place!

They head back to the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DORIS (O.S.)

You know what I meant! You know exactly what I meant when I said that! It doesn't have anything to do with that dead man and you know it!

BOB (O.S.)

Shut up!

DORIS (O.S.)

It has to do with that self-centered attitude of yours! This whole trip has been whatever you want! Whatever you want! It's all your mother's fault for giving in every time you opened your damn mouth!

SLAM! The doors are shut, the car starts and spins off down the road, leaving the man opening and closing his mouth, still holding tight to the piece of paper.

INT. CAMELOT HOSPITAL - DAY

Double doors fly open and the man is rolled in on a stretcher by two paramedics JOSE and LES. The nurse, JENNY, has been forewarned and she hustles over and directs them into one of two treatment rooms.

The Camelot, Nevada Memorial Medical Center is small, but new. The equipment is kept up well and the staff is helpful. The pulse of Camelot is somewhat slower than most places and that probably has to do with the climate, which is mostly hot. But where Camelot Memorial lacks in sophisticated brain scanners, it makes up for in its effectiveness at handling snake bites and heatstroke.

JENNY

What's that in the IV?

Jose looks at the bag connected by a tube to the man's arm.

JOSE

Uh, something electro...

JENNY

Good. You got it going in him too fast.

She grabs the valve away from Jose and adjusts the drip.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JENNY (CONT'D)
He hasn't had water in days.
Kidneys can't take that much.

She speaks right into the man's ear.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Sir. Can you hear me? Can you hear
me? Sir. Can you-

JOSE
(Rolling his eyes)
He can't hear you, he's out.

JENNY
(Patronizingly)
I know that.

They lift him efficiently onto a regular bed and she attaches his IV to a stand.

JENNY (CONT'D)
You're supposed to keep talking to
them whether they can hear you or
not. You must be new around here.
You don't seem to know very much.

LES
Barstow.

JENNY
Oh, Barstow. Well, things are a bit
different up here in Camelot. For
one thing, we know what we're
putting in people's arms.

JOSE
I put in what you told me to, okay.

Les gives Jose an "ignore her" look.

JENNY
Let go of that.

She pulls the end of the sheet out of Jose's hand and keeps working on the man.

JENNY (CONT'D)
What else did you or did you not do
for this man?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOSE

(To Les)

Hey, you can deal with her, man.
I'm out of here.

LES

Come on, Jose.

JOSE

No, no. If she's got a problem with
me, I'll listen, okay. But I don't
need this shit.

JENNY

Girls! We have a life to save here!
Can we discuss this later?!

JOSE

Fuck you, bitch.

Jose storms out. Jenny attaches a heart monitor to the man
and adjusts it, so it beeps regularly.

LES

(To Jenny)

Thanks.

JENNY

Les, he's useless. You know that.
Another Barstow drop-out. Just what
you need.

LES

I can't ask people to come here. I
can only nab them on the way
through. And they all seem to come
from Barstow. Speaking of Barstow,
where's Lance?

JENNY

The good doctor's fishing I
believe. Hand me the tape.

She tapes the wires and tubes in place.

LES

What do you think?

JENNY

Well, he's alive. No thanks to Ben
Casey there. What ever came of that
fellow from Vegas?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LES
You hated him too.

JENNY
At least he wasn't from Barstow.

LES
Look, he moved.

Les and Jenny stop talking and stare. Nothing. She squirts some water on a washcloth and wets his face. His eyes pop open, and then his mouth opens and closes.

JENNY
(Quietly)
You know what... I think... you had better... Hmm.
(To the man)
Hello. How do you feel? You're in a hospital... in Camelot, Nevada.

The man just looks lost.

JENNY (CONT'D)
You're all right now. We're taking good care of you. Can you tell me your name? Where are you from?

He opens his mouth and let's out a very dry groan.

JENNY (CONT'D)
(To Les)
Quick hand me that.

LES
What?

JENNY
That. On the tray. Quick.

She hastily rips his fly open, as he passes her the urinal. She manages to get through the layers of clothing and hold it in place under the sheets just in time.

The man is staring straight up, holding his breath. After a moment, he exhales deeply, as relief washes over him.

JENNY (CONT'D)
If you're going to keep that Jose character around, you better show him how to work an IV. He might've blown up this man's kidneys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Almost as quickly as his bladder is emptied, his eyes close again and he drifts away.

INT. MILITARY HELICOPTER - NIGHT

ANGLE POV of the man, as he dreams. He is paralyzed, lying on the cabin deck, face up, staring out the sliding door. His visual field is dominated by quiet stars, stirred by the black lashings of the blades on a moonless night. All SOUND is drowned out by the THUMPING ROAR of the huge rotor. The running lights are off and the helicopter is dark, except for the radium green glow of the instrument panels O.S.

Two helmeted figures hover over him. They are TALKING, but he can't pick up what they're saying, because he doesn't have a helmet with a walkie-talkie. They also have flight suits, which he doesn't.

Suddenly, with a BUMP, they are down.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The man's eyes pop open. He is gasping for air, in a cold sweat. He tries to find his bearings. He is alone. The rotor noise is replaced with the whir of MEDICAL EQUIPMENT and PEOPLE talking and laughing outside the room.

The room is small and shiny with hard surfaces, metal trays, and thin curtains hanging from the ceiling. The light comes from behind his bed - a florescent fixture with plugs and buttons and tubes. An IV bottle hangs on a stand with a tube running down into his wrist. Into his wrist!

He panics and jerks the tube out. It starts bleeding, but all he cares about is getting out. He scrambles out of bed and stumbles to the door.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

He opens the door cautiously. The corridor is long and dark. A clock reads, "3:36." The only light comes from the nurses' station at the far end of the hall, where two nurses are conversing across a counter.

At the other end is a door with a glowing exit sign. He goes that way.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The door opens onto a gravel parking lot beside some dumpsters. He keeps to the shadows and heads toward what looks like the main street.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The new hospital is a single-story structure - the pride of Camelot, Nevada. It has ten rooms, including one they had to repurpose to hold linens because the linen room was repurposed to hold the new x-ray machine.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The main street has four slow lanes, bordered by dirt and gravel parking strips and a haphazard row of uninspired businesses, all dark now. Once every minute or so, a car passes through town at high speed and disappears out the other end in less than five seconds.

He finds a shadow against a wall and rests a moment to take stock of his predicament. A car ZOOMS by, and he has to shield his face from the wake of dust. He looks up and down the highway, and decides to head toward a dirt street running next to an old two-story building.

The CRUNCHING of his feet seems way too loud, so he has to stop occasionally to look back. The farther he goes from the hospital, the darker it becomes. Finally, he stops. He can't see his feet anymore. He can barely see his hands. No ground. No sky. There is just enough light to make out a row of disconnected stores ahead. With no people. And no sound.

Right now is the first time he has felt alive and in control of his senses in days, maybe weeks. Everything is very present and clear. The clearness and nowness of everything buzzes in his head and presses against his eyes. As he looks around, the realization begins to come to him that he is nowhere. Everything in his world has come apart. There is no good or bad, just nothing.

Then, he hears a small SOUND coming from two lights on the horizon. The SOUND grows. He watches with all his soul, as the crescendo of sensation works its power throughout his body. He stands motionless, like a roadkill jackrabbit, staring into the lights. Closer. Louder. Brighter.

Then, another SOUND begins to grow - the SOUND of his own VOICE. The wind from his own lungs is RATTLING the dry chards of vocal chord in harmony with the oncoming sensation.

The car RUSHES by at blinding speed, mere inches from him. As the car passes, the lights illuminate his immediate surroundings in a split second. He is standing in the middle of the street. The dust envelopes him.

EXT. CAMELOT - DAY

The sun rises over Camelot. The sky has already gone through its morning colors and is well into its transformation from deep blue to white.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

The man is asleep. It appears he was sitting cross-legged and simply fell over on his side into a clump of dead grass and dog turds. LYLE the town Sheriff is standing over him, nudging him with a foot.

LYLE

Come on, wake up. Come on. We got to get you back to the hospital. Let's go. Wakey, wakey. That's it.

The man awakens with a start, bolting straight up, eyes wide.

He sees that his tiny clump of dead grass is located on the edge of a busy parking lot, next to the highway. One car is parked two feet from his head. Others are parked this way and that near him, leaving just enough room for a gray SUV to squeeze by, inches from his side.

LYLE(CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Good morning. How we doing today?

MAN

I, uh... Where...

LYLE

You got a name?

MAN

Tom.

LYLE

Tom, huh? You got a last name?

The man catches sight of a license plate inches from his head, "ROG 049".

MAN

Row... Rogger, Roger.

LYLE

(Not buying it)

Tom Roger. Where you from, Tom Roger?

MAN

Uh, Phoenix... Arizona.

LYLE

Where's your ID?

He stands and dusts himself off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN

I seem to have lost it. I was hitching a ride and somehow it got lost... Someplace... Probably fell out... Of the car.

Lyle circles him.

MAN (CONT'D)

I don't know where exactly. I was in town here to make some calls and try to get another license in the works.

LYLE

What were you doing walking around in Death Valley in the middle of August with no water or supplies?

MAN

Well-

LYLE

And why did you leave the hospital to come out here and sleep by the side of the road?

MAN

It's hard to explain-

Lyle cuts him off, puts his arm around him buddy-buddy and walks him back to his cruiser.

LYLE

Tom, I got to tell you something.

MAN

Okay.

LYLE

(Sincerely)

I'll be straight. I think you're lying to me.

MAN

Really?

LYLE

Yup. I think there's a whole big story here that I'm not hearing. What do you think?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAN

Well, I just didn't want to bore you with my problems-

LYLE

(As if serious)

Tom, Tom. I live in Camelot, Nevada. I know boredom. I know it inside and out. I have seen boredom that would turn most mortal men into screaming babies. If I have a problem with you boring me, I'll tell you right away. And I'll be brutally honest. Okay?

The man nods.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Now the way I see it. You're either crazy or you're stupid or you're in real big trouble. Which one?

MAN

Um, the last one.

LYLE

Big trouble?

MAN

Yeah.

LYLE

Good. We're making progress. Now, do you want to tell me about it?

MAN

I can't. Sorry.

LYLE

Why not?

MAN

I don't know.

Lyle cocks his head, disappointed in him.

MAN (CONT'D)

I mean, I don't know, I don't seem to remember... anything.

Lyle looks him right in the eye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MAN (CONT'D)

I just remember walking through the desert and being in the hospital. I don't even know where I am... or how I got out here.

LYLE

Let's go for a ride, shall we?

Lyle holds the back door open for the man. He sits and looks out. The window reflects the cars as they pass by. Lyle pulls away.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Lyle and Jenny are standing outside the man's room with the door closed.

LYLE

I'd say you got a live one here.

JENNY

Amnesia?

LYLE

Why not?

JENNY

Hmm. I've never heard of heatstroke giving someone amnesia.

LYLE

Well, hell if I know. Not much to go on, that's for sure. A doctor could maybe run some tests and figure it out. Speaking of doctors, where is old Lance?

JENNY

Fishing.

She starts to break away from him, but he puts a hand on her shoulder.

LYLE

He was fishing last time I asked.

JENNY

He likes fish.

LYLE

But he's been fishing for several months now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JENNY

He likes fish a lot.

That look of hers could ice up a six-pack before you could fart Yankee Doodle. He pulls his hand away.

INT. MAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Jenny enters. The man is tucked tightly in bed, resigned to whatever these people have planned for him.

JENNY

Where were you going?

MAN

I don't know.

JENNY

Well, you can't just leave the hospital without checking out and you can't check out without paying. Trauma center work isn't cheap, you know. How do you think I felt when I came in this morning to find you'd taken off in the middle of the night? You didn't even have the common courtesy to say good-bye.

MAN

Sorry.

JENNY

And you can't just wander around the streets without an ID. You have to have a name and you have to be from someplace or they put you in jail. And you can't go to jail because you're too sick.

MAN

I'll pay you back.

JENNY

With what? No wallet, no money, no ID.

MAN

I'll get a job.

JENNY

Doing what?

MAN

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JENNY

Well, you're missing the point. Money isn't the problem, here. It's you, you understand? It's not going to do anybody any good to just stick a Band-Aid on you and toss you out the door. Now, do you really have amnesia or are you just playing games with us?

MAN

I-

JENNY

Before you answer that, I think you should know the Sheriff is checking your fingerprints and mugshot right now with Homeland Security. So, we'll know in a couple of days if you're telling the truth. So, what is it?

MAN

I don't remember anything.

JENNY

(Softening)

You must remember something.

MAN

Well, yeah. I remember the desert and waking up, feeling sick, and walking, nothing to drink, nothing to eat, two days, three days, just walking straight ahead. That's it. And then I was here. I don't know anything else.

Jenny comes closer and takes his hand.

JENNY

The truth will do just fine, Tom.

He doesn't particularly appreciate her condescending tone, but he takes pleasure in having his hand held just the same.

INT. MILITARY HELICOPTER

ANGLE TOM'S POV, as he dreams. He sees the stars again, modulated by the FLAPPING ROTORS. The men with the helmets are there again, too. They converse about Tom, but he can't HEAR them over the rotor noise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

In one swift move, they reach under him and roll him out the door.

Tom has no sense of movement, but knows he must be falling. The HELICOPTER SOUND slowly fades away in a cloud of dust and it is completely SILENT. His only sensation is the blanket of tiny stars. No moon. No earth. Then, a small VOICE comes in, and everything grows dark.

VOICE (O.S.)

One... two... three... four...
five.

INT. TOM'S HOSPITAL ROOM

ANGLE EXTREME CLOSE SHOT of a woman's face, TRACI. She SNAPS her fingers and smiles.

TRACI

There. You feel okay?

ANGLE TRACI AND TOM, as he opens his eyes and looks at her.

TOM

Yeah. I think I actually feel
better than I did before, if that's
possible.

TRACI

Really? Hmm.

They are facing each other sitting in straight chairs. The curtains are closed and the lights are dim.

TRACI (CONT'D)

Were you really hypnotized?

TOM

I guess. Did I tell you anything?

TRACI

(Covering up)

Some things. I'll have to do up an
evaluation of course, but umm...

(Smiling broadly)

Well, so I hypnotized somebody.
That's pretty neat. Never tried
that before.

TOM

Good job.

TRACI

Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

You might want to try it on some of those hard cases at your high school.

TRACI

No. Only a baseball bat will work on those thick skulls.

They CHUCKLE. Traci wonders how she is going to finish this off now.

TRACI (CONT'D)

So... I'll do up the evaluation and umm...

TOM

Do you have any initial thoughts... about me?

TRACI

(Very reassuring)
Oh yes. Of course.

TOM

Like what?

TRACI

I think you have amnesia. Probably. But I don't want to say too much right now. I'll need to do some more research... and study the case... thoroughly.

Tom is giving her a hard time just staring at her. She fiddles with her steno pad.

TRACI (CONT'D)

It'll all be in the evaluation I submit. As a contractor to the hospital, I always do an evaluation, and submit it... through the proper channels.

He keeps staring. She puts the pad in a mostly empty briefcase.

TRACI (CONT'D)

The truth is, this is a little out of my line. And I don't want to just blurt things out without fully researching the situation thoroughly. But it'll all be there... in the...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He leans back in the chair.

TRACI (CONT'D)

I mean, I'm just a Guidance Counselor, after all. Not that I don't do a lot of psychological evaluating, of course, but it's mostly kids acting out and flushing cherry bombs down toilets and throwing rocks and... whatnot.

She doesn't want to let him down.

TRACI (CONT'D)

Please. I don't want you to worry. We aren't the Mayo clinic, but we'll do our best. I promise. Okay? If you want to talk to me, you can call me at the school, anytime. Just ask for Traci.

He nods. She gets up and collects her things. Then, she goes to the door.

TRACI (CONT'D)

So, good luck. I mean, you know, everything's going to work out fine... Most likely. I promise. So...

She gives him a tiny wave and walks out. Tom continues to sit and stare at where she was, because there is nothing else to do.

Then, she is back. She looks at his puppy dog face and motions for him to follow her.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Traci's old Camaro convertible is driving with the top down.

INT. TRACI'S CAMARO

Tom is being a passive passenger.

TRACI

So, we got married and had Floyd and Howie, and lived in apartments, here and there. He'd get a job and I'd take in babysitting. Always on the go, never able to make ends meet. I offered to go to work teaching, but no, no, couldn't do that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRACI (CONT'D)

It's a man's job to bring in the bacon. So, we just had to be content with the way things were. But then, this opportunity came up - a foreman at the mine here. So, we snatched it up, moved to Camelot, lock, stock and barrel, bought a little house on a third of an acre and some chickens and a goat. And things were going pretty good until the mine closed down, about a year and three, four months later. He ended up going back to Phoenix and I stayed here and got a job at the school. Ended up getting a divorce, God is it a year ago? Over a year. Could it be two years? No way. Whoa. So, anyway that's, uh, me in a nutshell.

She looks at Tom for his reaction, which isn't much.

TRACI (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, that was unprofessional of me. I get started and don't know when to stop.

TOM

No. That's okay.

TRACI

You sure?

TOM

I'm sure.

TRACI

It must be very painful.

TOM

No, not really.

TRACI

It's not?

TOM

It's difficult... and frustrating, but I wouldn't say it's particularly painful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TRACI

Hmm. Well, they say amnesia is a kind of defense mechanism that blocks your memory when something really traumatic happens. So, in a sense, you're better off with amnesia than... the memories... Maybe. That's what they say, anyway...

She checks him out. He is just staring up the road in the distance.

TRACI (CONT'D)

Given enough time and patience, the past sort of works itself out. So...

TOM

Sounds like you're done with your evaluation.

TRACI

Oh no. I was just talking in generalities. Sorry. That was very unprofessional of me. I should know better.

(Under breath)

But I don't.

She sees a sign and slows down.

TRACI (CONT'D)

Here it is.

She turns down a small paved road labeled, "Camelot County Airport."

EXT. AIRPORT ROAD

The road takes her up the side of a short plateau. As she reaches the top, the small airport comes into view, spread out over a few dusty acres. It's one small runway, a dozen or so small aircraft, some tin buildings, and two old military hangars. Tom takes everything in.

Next to the hangars, stuck out by itself in the dirt, is the faded hulk of a B-17 airplane.

EXT. AIRPORT BY B-17

As Traci stops next to it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRACI

Do you know what that is?

TOM

What, the B-17?

TRACI

I guess you do.

TOM

Sure. Who doesn't know what a B-17 is?

TRACI

Well, I don't, for one.

TOM

Fine piece of machinery.

Tom follows her, as she gets out and walks over to it.

TOM (CONT'D)

This part of your evaluation?

TRACI

How could looking at an old airplane be part of an evaluation?

She stands under the cockpit and pats the fuselage.

He steps toward the wing and without thinking, automatically starts a "walk around" of the plane, inspecting it as a pilot would. She watches him and follows along. He knows she is watching and gives her a curious look occasionally.

TOM

(Under his breath)

My dream was about helicopters.

TRACI

Military helicopters.

TOM

This isn't a helicopter.

TRACI

It's the closest thing we've got.

He runs his hand along the fuselage.

TRACI (CONT'D)

Do you like it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TOM

What do you mean, do I like it?

TRACI

Some people get off on airplanes
and some don't.

TOM

Sure, I like it. I don't dislike
it. Look a bullet hole.

She runs her finger over it and he continues around. He ends
up at the front looking up at the cockpit.

TOM (CONT'D)

It's called the flying fortress, in
case you're wondering.

TRACI

World War II?

TOM

Yeah. One of the all time great
airplanes.

TRACI

Did you ever want to fly one?

TOM

As a kid. I...

A flood of memories suddenly comes to him, but they are faint
and disjointed.

TOM (CONT'D)

That's funny. Whoa.

TRACI

Tell me.

TOM

You know, when you're a kid, how
you get an imaginary picture of
something? I used to get this
picture of me inside a cockpit,
flying a plane like this. I'd
imagine what it would look like and
feel like...

TRACI

And?

TOM

That picture just came to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TRACI

Do you see anything else?

TOM

Yeah. But it's a feeling... more
than a picture.

His eyes flick back and forth, as if they're watching something in his head. He steps toward the propeller and runs his hand along the edge. His head jangles with the sudden onrush of random memories. He can move, but feels he will miss something vital if he does.

Traci watches, careful to keep her distance, not so sure Tom doesn't need her help.

TRACI

(Cautiously)

Tom?

He shakes his head. For the first time, WE see a very uncharacteristic intensity in him.

TOM

There's no other feeling like it.
No words. No words can describe it.
When you're up, way up in the
mesosphere, where it's deep blue,
dark as night. You can see stars
and it's the middle of the day.
There's nothing to connect you to
anything. It's just you and the
stars. And you're one. That's God.

He looks at her and rattles his head.

TOM (CONT'D)

Well, you wanted to know what I was
seeing.

TRACI

You're a pilot.

He smiles broadly.

TOM

It could be I just like airplanes a
lot.

She holds his hand.

TRACI

Could be. What's that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

She points to a part of the wing.

TOM
Leading edge.

TRACI
Looks like a wing to me.

TOM
(Smiles)
That doesn't prove anything. Let's
go.

He is beginning to feel uncomfortable about something.

TRACI
There's another one in this hangar.

TOM
I don't need to see any more.

TRACI
I want you to tell me what kind it
is.

TOM
No. Let's go.

TRACI
Come on.

He heads back to the car. She watches him, then follows.

ANGLE ON B-17, as WE move up and into the cockpit.

INT. MILITARY AIRPLANE

ANGLE TOM'S POV, as he dreams. The view is a dark blue, star-filled sky, as seen through the cockpit window of a military plane in the POV of the pilot. From the high-pitched ROAR, we know the fighter jet must be going very fast, but the seemingly infinite sky rolls by slowly. The PILOT is communicating with GROUND control.

GROUND (V.O.)
We have you at Mach one, check.

PILOT
Roger that.

The airplane shakes and RUMBLES for a few seconds, as it passes through the speed of sound. Then, it is still again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GROUND (V.O.)
Do you have the target in sight?

PILOT
Negative, still looking.

SILENCE for a moment. The pilot checks his display, nothing.

PILOT (CONT'D)
Still negative. Any suggestions?

GROUND (V.O.)
It's there. Keep looking.

More SILENCE. A few more seconds pass, then out the window we see a tiny flash of light, as if from a star.

PILOT
Got it. Preparing to acquiring
target.

The display shows a tiny round blip of red light, as it locks on.

PILOT (CONT'D)
Target acquired.

GROUND (V.O.)
Deploy gun and engage target.

PILOT
Roger.

The pilot reaches out and presses a button that lights on his control panel.

PILOT (CONT'D)
Lights on.

We HEAR the SOUND of a motor running somewhere in the plane.

PILOT (CONT'D)
The gun is deploying.

Just then, a violent shake. The pilot grabs the rudder hard.

PILOT (CONT'D)
Ground, I'm getting some bad
vibration! Really bad.

GROUND (V.O.)
Can you engage the target?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PILOT

Negative. Negative. Way too much shaking.

The gun CLICKS into position O.S. and the shaking is more violent. It takes all the strength and concentration the pilot can muster to control it.

GROUND (V.O.)

What's up?

PILOT

It's breaking apart.

GROUND (V.O.)

What is?

PILOT

The airplane!

GROUND (V.O.)

Have you locked on target?

PILOT

Negative. I've lost all control! No control!

GROUND (V.O.)

Retract the gun!

The horizon starts to spin. The pilot reaches out and deactivates the button. Then, he grabs the stick hard. The gun motor starts, then sputters.

PILOT

It's stuck!

GROUND (V.O.)

Is the deployment switch deactivated?

PILOT

Roger. It's deactivated, but the gun is stuck! The gun will not retract! Repeat, the gun will not retract!

He presses the button on and off repeatedly. The motor sputters and stops. The airplane is spinning and turning now, faster and faster.

GROUND (V.O.)

Talk to us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PILOT

Cycled the deploy switch repeatedly, but... It's gone! Lost rudder control. Repeat. No rudder, no control!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

As Tom awakens in a panic. His breathing is heavy, his eyes are wide with terror. This nightmare was a little too real. He gets his bearings and starts to calm down.

A realization is coming to him. He doesn't know exactly what, but he has a feeling, a very strong feeling. Something very important and evil has happened, and he was part of it.

INT. MILITARY BASE SECURITY OFFICE

CLOSE SHOT of a picture, as a printer spits it into a tray. It is Tom. At the bottom is a few paragraphs of small type with the headline, "CAN YOU IDENTIFY?"

A hand reaches in, takes it and places it on a stack of papers. The hand belongs to a military security man in full uniform, a messenger. He carries the stack to the other end of the room, dropping pieces of the stack in "in" baskets as he goes.

He stops at a bulletin board filled with official memos and mugshots. He finds a space and tacks Tom up.

SLOW FADE TO...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

ANGLE ON an all white field, as a quarter flies in and PLOPS dead in the middle.

JENNY (O.S.)

Come on. You can do better than that.

ANGLE TOM AND JENNY. He is wearing a green orderly outfit, pulling on the bottom sheet of a bed, trying desperately to make it tight. Jenny retrieves the quarter and shakes her head, as she watches him.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Weren't you ever in the armed services?

TOM

I don't think so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She butts him out of the way and does a perfect hospital corner in nothing flat.

JENNY

Every man learns this is in boot camp. I swear it's about the only useful thing a man does learn. Of course, my last husband spent six years in the air force and came out as useless as ever.

She does the quarter test, and this time it practically trampolines back up to her hand.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Do you think you could handle mopping the floors?

TOM

Sure.

JENNY

(Mocking him)

Sure. Yeah.

She gets nose to nose with Tom and stares him down.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I swear. With most people you can see some kind of activity going on inside.

Nothing still.

JENNY (CONT'D)

It's like staring into the eyes of a lizard.

She knocks on his forehead.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Anybody home in there?

Tom doesn't know how to react, so he just takes it. She shakes her head and goes back to work straightening up the room.

JENNY (CONT'D)

You don't seem to have much interest at all in finding out who you are, or what's going on, or anything. Do you? It's like you just got spit out and landed here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TOM

I know.

JENNY

You know. You know. What do you know?

TOM

I don't know.

She stops and approaches him face to face.

JENNY

You know what I think? I think you're in some kind of trouble. Maybe you're hiding from the law, and you're making up all this amnesia business. You picked this place because you thought we were all just a bunch of dumb yahoos.

He shrugs.

JENNY (CONT'D)

After you're done milking us for all we're worth, you just move on to the next town, and start all over again with your fake amnesia. What do you think about that?

TOM

(Playing along)

Why would I nearly kill myself in the desert?

JENNY

Hmm.

She leaves the room, thinking. He follows.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

They enter the corridor.

JENNY

Well, you didn't plan on nearly killing yourself, of course.

INT. BABS'S HOSPITAL ROOM

They go in the next room. Jenny goes to the bed and starts undoing it, ignoring the person still lying there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JENNY

You didn't know anything about
deserts, but you were desperate.

BABS is a gaunt old lady with fake orange hair sticking out
all over and IV tubes running into her arms. She takes off
her headphones.

JENNY (CONT'D)

(To Babs)

Get up, Babs.

Without dropping a beat, Babs gathers her IV tubes and rolls
out of bed, as Jenny continues pulling off the sheets.

JENNY (CONT'D)

You needed a place to hide out. You
thought you were safe. You thought
you'd found the perfect solution.
The feds would think you were dead.
But you hadn't counted on the heat.
You used up all your provisions.
And you, uh-

TOM

How did I get out there? I didn't
drive. There's no car.

JENNY

You hiked in. At night. Hand me the
bottom sheet.

BABS

But how did he get out there to
begin with?

Jenny gives her a "what's it to you" look.

JENNY

He took a bus. How do I know?

BABS

That's crazy.

JENNY

He hitch-hiked, then. Doesn't
matter, there're a million ways to
get out there.

(To TOM)

Go out and get me a clean bedpan.

Tom barely HEARS her. The wheels are beginning to turn in his
head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BABS

No, no, no. If he'd just knocked off a bank or something, he wouldn't go hitch-hiking around the country.

He steps away from the ladies.

JENNY

Who said anything about knocking off a bank? He's not a bank robber. He's a con man. He tricks old people into giving him their life savings.

BABS

Who cares?! If you're hiding from the law you don't hitch-hike.

Jenny stops making the bed and turns to Babs.

JENNY

He was desperate. Obviously. He didn't know what he was doing.

BABS

It doesn't wash.

JENNY

When you're desperate you do things you wouldn't ordinarily do.

BABS

(Shaking her head)

I don't know. I can't put my finger on it-

JENNY

Oh, you can't put your finger on anything.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

As Tom comes out of the supply closet, holding a bedpan. He closes the door and stops. He's deep in thought.

He starts walking back to the room, then stops again and turns around. Then, starts walking in the opposite direction, toward the front door. It's clear he doesn't have a solid plan, because his eyes aren't fixed on anything.

When he reaches the glass front doors, he stands for a moment and watches the cars passing by. Then, he sets the bedpan on the floor and walks out.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

As Tom steps out into the 100-degree blast furnace, and walks slowly down the sidewalk by parked cars.

He doesn't quite know what to do, but something inside him is screaming. Something has to happen and it's not going to happen where he was. His eyes dart from here to there, looking for anything, a clue, a sign. But all he sees is the highway, lying there, like a fast-flowing vein, gushing cars this way and that.

Then, he HEARS a ROAR. He looks up. The SOUND is trailing behind a set of sleek shiny military jets, leaving a wake of white vapor 100 miles long. As they turn, the wings send him a metallic wink of sunlight, beckoning him to take some action, whatever that may be. He watches the jets, until they disappear behind a mountain range to the west.

Then, he turns to the pickup truck parked next to him. It's locked. He runs to the car behind it and looks in. No keys. He checks the car behind that one. Keys. He runs around to the driver's side and gets in.

The old primer-colored Volkswagen starts with a WHEEZE. Tom punches the pedal, makes a speedy illegal U-turn and heads out of town.

EXT. HIGHWAY

As Tom drives west, roughly in the direction of the jets. He keeps his eye on the sky. The range of mountains to the west shimmer like a mirage, countering his approach like the moon.

The sun keeps getting hotter and the furnace of wind blasts through the open windows. The farther he goes, the whiter the heat, the brighter the white, the harder it is to see through the waves. His tinder-dry hair flutters wildly, like a field of straw in a tornado.

The VW WHINES and CLATTERS down the straightaway, pushing seventy, obviously faster than it has gone in many years. Then, SILENCE.

The western mountains are still no closer than they were an hour earlier. The town of Camelot is a memory, his only clear memory, the only one he doesn't need. And now the VW is a bad memory.

Tom POUNDS the steering wheel, cursing the engine that refuses to turn, can't turn, has ceased to be. He CRUNCHES the car to a stop on the shoulder and gets out. SLAMS the door and kicks it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It is all QUIET, except for the sizzling of the heat. Then, a familiar ROAR, and he looks up. Another jet. It taunts him as it banks for home across the mountains.

He flips it off.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

Tom is in the shade, sitting on the gravel shoulder, leaning against the VW. His head is bent to the side, eyes half-closed. A car PASSES. Then, another two PASS. The heat is still bad, though the angle of the sun isn't as severe.

Then, a car CRUNCHES to a stop O.S. The engine keeps churning, as the door OPENS and CLOSES, and FOOTSTEPS approach. They stop. A booted foot pokes Tom in the stomach. He looks up through webbed eyes.

ANGLE HIS POV, Lyle standing over him, shaking his head, more exasperated than angry.

LYLE

Come on. Let's go.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Tom enters through the front door, followed by Lyle. They step to the front counter, and Lyle reaches behind it, grabs a form, and slides it over to Tom with a pen.

The office is one large storefront room with a counter separating the public and four metal desks. DORIS the office manager sits at a desk near the counter. The Sheriff has a small office in the back, next to the door leading to the detention area.

LYLE

Here, you can fill this out.

TOM

What's it for?

LYLE

It's the thing we have to fill out when we arrest somebody.

He leaves Tom at the counter and saunters over to one of the hardwood chairs meant for the public.

TOM

Arrest?

Tom is confused by Lyle's casual approach to law enforcement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LYLE

Well, what else can I do? You stole Millie's car and took it for some kind of crazy ass joy ride. Then, you wrecked it. Somebody's has to pay. Right?

Tom looks over the form.

TOM

I don't think it's wrecked.

LYLE

Well, first there's towing. Then, Harv is going to charge poor Millie at least two hundred bucks to replace the valves. Who knows what else he'll find? And he always finds something.

TOM

I'm sorry.

LYLE

Apology accepted. But that's not going to do much good now, is it?

TOM

Do I have to put in my last name?

LYLE

Leave it blank. I'll think of something.

As Tom stares at the form, Lyle gets up and walks around him.

LYLE (CONT'D)

What am I going to do with you Tom? You say you got this amnesia thing. You don't have any ID. You appear out of nowhere and sleep by the side of the road and steal cars... I'd say you're a tad unpredictable. What do you think?

Tom hands him the form. The only thing filled in is "Tom".

TOM

I don't know.

LYLE

(Throwing hands up)
You don't know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TOM

I don't know because... I don't know.

LYLE

Well, where were you going? You must've been going somewhere. You stole a car for Christ sake! Give me a clue!

TOM

I don't know what to say.

LYLE

Okay, why were you going that way instead of that way?!

Tom knows he's not going to buy it.

TOM

Okay. I was following an airplane.

LYLE

Why?

TOM

It was a feeling I had. That's all.

LYLE

(Exasperated)

Come on.

He grabs Tom by the arm and leads him through a door in the counter.

TOM

Are you going to lock me up?

LYLE

I guess. You got any better ideas?

They go through a metal door into the detention area.

INT. DETENTION AREA

Lyle opens a cell door and pushes Tom in, then closes and locks it. Tom sits on the bed.

Lyle stands a moment and stares at him.

LYLE

You almost act like you want to be locked up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tom shrugs. Lyle turns away.

TOM
Sheriff?

LYLE
What?

TOM
Do you have a book I can read or a
paper or something?

LYLE
(Not looking at him)
Yeah. What?

TOM
I don't know.

That's the straw. Lyle flies out and SLAMS the door.

INT. TOM'S CELL - LATE NIGHT

As Tom lies on a cot with the lights off. He can't see the cars flying in and out of town, but he can HEAR their SOUND reflecting off a cinder block wall out the back window and see a continuous lightshow of headlights casting moving shadows on the ceiling.

He stands and paces the cell. He can't seem to shake a vision that keeps replaying in his head.

INT. JET COCKPIT

ANGLE PILOT'S POV OUT THE COCKPIT WINDOW, as Tom's dream replays. The same communications CRACKLE back and forth over a radio, buried beneath the SCREAM and ROAR of a jet fighter, moving faster and faster, spinning out of control - sky, earth, sky, earth, the view twisting incomprehensibly, stuck in fast forward.

ANGLE PILOT as his head snaps in fast motion from the instruments to the window, up and down and to the side.

ANGLE WINDOW as a land mass approaches at the speed of sound.

INT. MILITARY CONTROL ROOM

ANGLE CLOSE on a fast-sweeping radar screen. A blip of light silently blooms, and then disappears against a dim irregular shape.

ANGLE SMALL GROUP OF MILITARY BRASS, barely visible in the dark, room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

All is SILENT, except for the SOUND of men BREATHING uneasily, SHUFFLING PAPERS and SHIFTING in their seats.

ANGLE MONITOR, as a tiny wisp of smoke appears on a distant hill.

ANGLE PRINTER, as it SPITS out long neat columns of data, and then stops.

ANGLE ANOTHER MONITOR, showing a blank screen with occasional flashes and white streaks. Finally, a man's voice...

MAN (O.S.)
(Soto voce)
Damn.

INT. CELL

Tom's eyes are wide, staring up at stars out the back window.

TOM
Damn.

INT. COMMANDER CONDIT'S OFFICE - DAY

ANGLE CLOSE on the police photo of Tom, held up by CONDIT O.S.

CONDIT (O.S.)
Where did you get this?

He lowers the picture, revealing CAPTAIN PEARSALL, standing with his hat under his elbow. PEARSALL is 53, gray, thin and probably sleeps in his uniform.

PEARSALL
Came over the local police feed
yesterday.

ANGLE THE TWO, Condit at his desk with Pearsall facing him.

This is the office of one of the main decision-makers at Radik Naval Air Base. The office is big, only because this particular base has a lot of room. Naval green is the primary color, with a few select pieces of mahogany. The view out the window includes some boxy buildings and an airfield that stretches back forever across a flat, dead hunk of hot desert.

CONDIT
Anybody else see it?

PEARSALL
Hard to say. Probably not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He sets it on his desk. Condit is a very controlled man - screwed down tight, crewcut, always on the verge of exploding internally. This is not a problem for him, just another mission.

CONDIT
(Understated)
Shit.

He owns the SILENCE in the room. He walks to the window and looks out.

CONDIT (CONT'D)
Just a few more days and those bastards will have Streeker bought off and out of our hair.

PEARSALL
Yup.

CONDIT
What do you know about this?

PEARSALL
I know as much as you do. I brought it here as soon as I saw it.

He goes back to the desk, picks up the photo and begins to fold it into a small neat square.

CONDIT
(Still controlled)
All right. So, we deal with it.

Pearsall nods. Condit shoots him an icy look.

CONDIT (CONT'D)
I hope you're not going to bore me with "I told you so's," Mr. Pearsall.

Pearsall swallows hard and avoids his gaze.

PEARSALL
I don't think that'll be necessary, sir.

Condit can't stand Pearsall, because he can't hurt him. When he swings, it's like punching air.

CONDIT
All right, see what's up. No point in sending up any red flags yet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PEARSALL

Yes, sir. And if we do perceive a problem here?

CONDIT

Then, we'll take care of it, Captain. Thank you.

Pearsall takes his cue and marches out. Condit puts the folded photo in an ashtray and sets it ablaze with his lighter.

INT. TOM'S CELL - DAY

Lyle unlocks the door. Tom is seated on the cot holding an empty breakfast tray.

LYLE

Come on, Tom. Traci's bailing you out.

TOM

Traci?

Tom goes to the door.

LYLE

She insisted. I tried to talk her out of it. But she seems to have this urge to rehabilitate you, I guess.

Tom starts to head out the door, but Lyle grabs his arm. He stares Tom straight in the eye. Lyle is downright embarrassed about what he feels he must say.

LYLE (CONT'D)

I want you to know, this girl's been through a lot. I don't want anything to happen to her.

TOM

Nothing's going to happen.

Lyle squeezes his arm.

LYLE

I'm not accusing you of anything. I just don't trust you. Nothing personal. I like you. I don't think you got it in you to hurt anybody. But I could be wrong.

(With difficulty)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LYLE (CONT'D)
And I could kill you. Just so you
know.

Heavy stuff for Tom and for Lyle.

TOM
(Earnestly)
You can trust me.

Lyle is going to need more convincing.

TOM (CONT'D)
I know I keep doing crazy things.
But I'll be okay.

The hand is still tight on his arm.

TOM (CONT'D)
I have a good feeling about this.
I'm really not a bad guy.

Lyle is softening.

TOM (CONT'D)
I like her too. I'd never hurt her.

Lyle drops his arm and looks away.

LYLE
Okay. Get back here day after
tomorrow at ten sharp and you can
talk to the judge.

Tom nods and walks out. Lyle closes the cell door, all the
while keeping an eye on him.

INT. TRACI'S CONVERTIBLE

They are driving through what there is of the town.

TRACI
I don't know about the law
sometimes. I mean, what's it going
to prove to keep you locked up?

TOM
I don't know. Lyle seems okay.

TRACI
Oh yeah? What did he feed you for
breakfast?

TOM
Oatmeal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRACI
That's all?

TOM
Coffee and juice.

TRACI
That's not very much.

TOM
I think he was mad at me.

TRACI
He doesn't think you're telling the truth. Neither does Jenny at the hospital.

TOM
Do you?

TRACI
I already told you. You have amnesia and it was brought on by some sort of trauma. That's why it's not going to do anybody any good to lock you up. We have to get to the root of the trauma. That's the only way we're ever going to get your memory back.

They are virtually out of town now. Tom is watching the scenery go by, running his thumb up and down the door jamb.

TOM
Umm, where are we going?

She gives him a serious look.

TRACI
We have to talk.

INT. TRUCK STOP - DAY

They sit in a plastic booth by the window. Traci is reading the menu.

TOM
How do you know I'm not a car thief?

TRACI
Do you think you are?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM AND TRACI

I don't know.

TRACI

Well, don't worry about it.
Millie'll live. Her husband can
drive her to the hospital until the
car gets fixed. And you can do
something to work off the debt.

The waitress VIRGINIA arrives.

VIRGINIA

What'll it be, hon.

TRACI

I'll take some coffee...

Virginia is distracted by something at the other end of the
diner.

VIRGINIA

(Shouting O.S.)

The short stack goes to the other
guy. He's got the side of bacon.
No, the other other guy.

(Pointing)

Him, with the green thing. Yeah.

(Back to Traci)

Sorry, was that coffee, hon?

TRACI

Yes, and he would like a special.

VIRGINIA

(To Tom)

What kind of juice?

TOM

Oh, uh, no juice.

(To Traci)

I can't... I don't have any...

TRACI

(To Virginia)

Orange juice.

TOM

What?

VIRGINIA

(To Traci)

Coffee?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TRACI
 (To Tom)
 Coffee?

TOM
 Coffee?!

TRACI
 (To Virginia)
 Coffee.

TOM
 No, no.

VIRGINIA
 (To Tom)
 What then?

TRACI
 (To Virginia)
 Coffee.

More distraction. Tom mimes "I'm broke" to Traci. Traci mimes "don't worry about it." Tom mimes "you can't do this."

VIRGINIA
 (Shouting Offscreen)
 Bill, that guy wants something. Did you get him his toast? Well get him his toast, then. The man needs his toast, for crying out loud. Sorry.
 (To Traci)
 Does he want coffee?

TOM
 No.

TRACI
 Yes!

VIRGINIA
 Well, I'll bring it and you guys work it out.

Virginia flies off.

TOM
 Traci.

TRACI
 Don't worry. I have an expense account.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TOM
No, you don't.

TRACI
How do you know?

TOM
This town doesn't even know what an
expense account is.

TRACI
Well, maybe it's not exactly an
expense account.

TOM
(Genuinely upset)
You're paying for it out of your
own pocket.

TRACI
No, not really.

TOM
Now, why are you doing this? You
don't even know me? You're bailing
me out of jail and buying me
breakfast...

TRACI
Does it upset you that a woman is
paying your way?

He stops. Maybe it is a little.

TRACI (CONT'D)
You see? This is exciting. Every
step of the way, we get some new
insight into your character.

TOM
Is that why you're doing this? To
get insight into my character?

TRACI
Hmm. I think that's part of it. I
like my job. Taking care of you is
part of my job. You must like your
job?

TOM
What job?

TRACI
Airplane pilot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

He smiles and puts his arm up across the seat back.

TOM

I'm not an airplane pilot.

She studies him and smiles.

TRACI

I think you are.

TOM

I want to know how we got onto this subject?

TRACI

Does it bother you?

TOM

No. It's just not relevant right now. I'm interested in finding out why you're buying me breakfast?

TRACI

I'm buying you breakfast because you're hungry.

TOM

I never said I was hungry.

TRACI

And afterwards, I'm going to help you.

TOM

I never said I needed help.

TRACI

Don't you want your memory back?

TOM

Yes, but... You know... You don't need to do this.

TRACI

I bailed you out, which means I'm responsible for you. I can't just let you run free. Can I?

TOM

This is not what I had in mind.

TRACI

And what did you have in mind, Tom?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

He looks away from her.

TRACI (CONT'D)

You need to loosen up a little. I guess you have to be kind of uptight to be a pilot.

TOM

I'm not a pilot.

TRACI

You'd do better taking the opportunities as they come.

Virginia brings the coffees, putting one cup in front of Traci and one in front of Tom.

VIRGINIA

Hon, I didn't ask you what kind of toast you wanted?

Tom defers to Traci. A loud CRASH and SCREAM occurs O.S., followed by wild pandemonium. Virginia is distracted again.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

(Shouting O.S.)

Get the rag and clean him up! It's back of the counter!

(To TRACI)

Shit. Nothing like a shot of hot coffee in the lap to wake you up in the morning, huh? Any of those kids at your high school looking for a job?

Traci raises her eyebrows and looks at Tom. He rolls his eyes.

TRACI

I'll ask.

EXT. DR. TREHUNE'S HOUSE - DAY

ANGLE CLOSE ON ROADSIDE MAILBOX with the lettering, "DR. LACE TREHUNE."

CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal Lyle, standing there beside his cruiser. He opens the mailbox. It's empty. He walks around a scruffy picket fence and up a gravel driveway to a small house.

The house is turquoise blue, faded and chipped, prefab, built early seventies by someone with serious budget constraints.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is no car in the carport. Everything is overrun with weeds. Trash has blown up over the unused flowerbed.

Warning notices have been taped to the door and a heavy padlock has been added. He checks the lock. Someone has used a crowbar to tear the lock away from the jamb. The doorknob doesn't turn, but the door opens easily with a gentle push.

INT. DR. TREHUNE'S HOUSE

He enters. Furnishings are sparse and cheap, and covered with thick dust. He flicks a few light switches. They're all dead.

As he explores, he realizes it's more than an empty ransacked house. It reveals the last few depressing pages of a person's life, someone who stopped caring and gave up.

INT. KITCHEN

The trash is full of wine bottles, the cabinets full of spider webs. The water is off.

INT. BEDROOM

The one bedroom consists of a mattress on the floor with no sheets and a wire where a phone used to be. Any item that was worth anything has been removed.

He starts to open the door to the half bathroom, but something is in the way. He gives it an extra shove, and an arm pops out. As soon as his heart catches up, he sees that the arm is fake. He reaches behind the door and pulls out a full-sized, mostly-deflated inflatable woman.

He opens a few boxes in the closet. They're all empty. Then, he reaches over the top shelf and sweeps his hand across the back. He feels something and freezes. Mere inches from his nose is a large scorpion poised to strike.

He moves his hand back slowly. Waits. Watches. Then, he jerks his hand back as fast as he can, nearly falling over backwards. The stinger nails the wood shelf.

INT. HOSPITAL

Jenny is behind the nurses' station counter near the emergency area. She is holding a radio mike and taking notes on a clipboard. Les' voice is coming from an ambulance enroute.

LES (V.O.)

It's maybe an inch deep and pretty dirty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JENNY

(On mike)

Is it bleeding bad?

LES (V.O.)

No. It was. I think we got it stopped okay.

JENNY

Did it hit any organs?

LES (V.O.)

I don't see anything. It's kinda near where his liver is.

JENNY

I'll call Alvin General and give them a heads up. We'll clean him up and get him stabilized, and take it from there.

Jenny looks up and there's Lyle, standing across the counter. She looks surprised, then gives him a little acknowledging smile.

LES (V.O.)

Don't suppose Lance is around?

JENNY

Things were slow, so he left about an hour ago. I'll give him a call.

Jenny puts the mike down and finishes something in her notes.

LYLE

Don't bother.

JENNY

(Fabricating)

Okay. Why? Have you seen him?

LYLE

No. Neither have you.

She turns away from Lyle and goes to Millie who's preparing the treatment room.

JENNY

Better get the trauma tray ready, Millie. We have a stab wound coming in. I'll call Alvin.

She picks up the phone and starts dialing. Lyle follows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LYLE

I looked through his house and checked with the post office, Jenny. He disappeared almost four months ago.

Jenny looks away from him and bites her lip, waiting for an answer on the phone.

JENNY

(Quietly)
I know that.

LYLE

Well?

JENNY

We had to keep open. Couldn't just lock up and send all the patients home. 'Sorry our inebriated doctor disappeared. Everybody home.'

LYLE

Does the board know about it? Are they looking for a replacement? You can't run this hospital without a damn doctor!

She gets through.

JENNY

(On Phone)
This is Jenny at Camelot Memorial. Who's this? Hi, Laverne. We have a stab wound coming in here we might need to send on to you. Uh, huh. That's good.

The emergency doors open and the stretcher flies in. She points them toward the treatment room. The patient is a big farmer, late thirties.

JENNY (CONT'D)

(On phone)
Got to run. I'll call you either way. Okay, bye.

She ditches Lyle and heads for the patient. He follows.

LYLE

Just answer me this. Does the board know?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JENNY
No.

LYLE
Why?

JENNY
I haven't told them.

The patient is bracing himself, teeth clenched. She starts to poke around in the wound and he flinches badly.

JENNY (CONT'D)
(To Patient)
The pitchfork was dirty?

He nods. That's Millie's cue to start the lavage.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Now, this is going to hurt a bit.
You can squeeze my hand.
(To Millie)
I think we'll be all right here.

Lyle has to look the other way.

LYLE
Are you going to tell them?

JENNY
They would be more inclined to simply shut the place down. Can't let that happen.

The lavage hurts. The patient winces and GROANS LOUDLY.

LYLE
Jenny!

JENNY
We don't need another washed-up drunk from Barstow, which is what we'd get if we left it up to those cheap bastards on the board.
(To the patient)
We need to get you a little shot here to kill the germs.

PATIENT
Ah, gee. I hate shots. Do I have to?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JENNY

You won't feel a thing. She prepares the syringe.

LYLE

I sympathize with you. But you are going to get in deep trouble if you don't have a-

JENNY

(Stopping him)

Lyle!

She points with her eyes to the patient. She doesn't want to make him nervous.

JENNY (CONT'D)

(To patient, cheerfully)

Here we go.

She sticks him and he SCREAMS.

LYLE

I'm going to have to tell them, Jenny.

JENNY

Good, you do that. You can also go fuck yourself. Now go away, you're not sterile.

She shuts him off by sliding a curtain in front of him. He knows better than to argue with Jenny when she's holding a needle. He turns on his heel and walks out.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION

A beige government car pulls up in front. "Radik Naval Air Base" is on the door. A DRIVER and PASSENGER get out. They don't look like they belong in this town or particularly want to. The driver's face is bandaged from several nasty cuts.

They look up and down the street, then go inside.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION

DORIS is kneeling behind the counter, checking on forms stacked in a cupboard when the two approach her. They don't seem very pleasant and this makes her nervous. She stands.

DORIS

Can I help you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER
We'd like to speak with Sheriff
Wagner?

DORIS
He's not in right now.

The driver stares at her.

DORIS (CONT'D)
I can call him on the radio, if
it's an emergency.

DRIVER
(Lying)
No, that's all right. We spoke with
him earlier.
(Cheesy smile)
Maybe you can help us?

She tries a smile.

INT. TRUCK STOP

As a plate of greasy meatloaf and mashed potatoes is PLUNKED
down on a table.

TRUCKER 1
You got any catsup?

Tom sets a chili size in front of the Trucker's friend.

TOM
Sure.

Tom points to a bottle next to the napkin dispenser.

TRUCKER 1
Hell, if it was a snake it would've
bit me. (Ha ha ha ha)

Tom is sporting some new thrift store clothes and a waist
apron in his new role. To get in the spirit, he's chewing a
couple of sticks of gum, but there is just something about
him that doesn't fit in.

He wipes his hands on his apron and gives the guy a half
smile.

TOM
Anything else?

TRUCKER 1
More coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRUCKER 2

Same here.

TOM

Got it.

The diner is mostly empty now in the early afternoon. Tom reaches behind the counter and grabs a coffee urn. Virginia is back there, with her foot up on a box, jawing with BILL a customer.

She grabs Tom's arm and pulls him over.

VIRGINIA

This is my new boy, Tom.

BILL

How you doin'?

Bill is in Virginia's peer group - early fifties, a rough and tough desert rat.

TOM

Good.

BILL

Hey now, don't let this old girl get you down. Okay?

She whacks Bill on the shoulder.

BILL (CONT'D)

And especially, don't let her get you alone in any dark rooms.

(Ha, ha, ha)

Whack. They each have smoker's laughs - gravelly harrumphs followed by a fit of coughing.

VIRGINIA

Don't you listen to him.

She pulls Tom closer.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Tom here's got amnesia.

Bill thinks that's an odd thing to have.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Don't worry, it ain't something you get from doorknobs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BILL

Well, if anything's gonna cure you,
it'd be that coffee.

Whack.

BILL (CONT'D)

(In secret)

I spilled some on my pants and it
got rid of my jock itch.

Whack. Harrumph. Cough.

Tom seizes the opportunity to break away from this
stimulating conversation and refill the truckers' coffee.

As he pours, he looks out the front window, and notices a
beige car parking. There is nothing particularly unusual
about the car, but there is something about it that peaks his
interest.

He watches as the driver and passenger get out, walk to the
entrance and come in.

They are ordinary looking people, only slightly over-dressed
for this place. Both are strong, late thirties, know how to
move to seem bigger and more powerful than they have any
right to be.

Tom turns away from them and goes behind the counter to
replace the urn. The Driver notices him and points him out to
the Passenger. There is something about Tom that peaks their
interest. They sit at the counter and continue to watch him.

Virginia and Bill are still talking.

TOM

(To Virginia)

Do you want me to...

He points to the new customers.

VIRGINIA

Sure you go ahead.

(In secret)

Get 'em to buy some of that apple
pie before it goes bad.

BILL

Hey, it ain't polite to poison the
customers.

VIRGINIA

You be quiet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Whack.

Tom approaches the two. It is disconcerting the way they keep grinning at him.

TOM
What'll it be?

The two glance at each other.

PASSENGER
You... don't...

The Driver cuts him off with a backhand to the chest.

DRIVER
Excuse us. We just need a couple of minutes to make up our minds.

TOM
Do you want coffee?

DRIVER
I'll have some tea.

PASSENGER
(Smiling)
Do you make chocolate malts?

Tom glances at the shake machine behind him and takes a stab.

TOM
Looks that way.

PASSENGER
With real malt?

TOM
I'll have to ask.

Tom starts to leave.

DRIVER
Wait. Get back here.

Tom stops. They stare at each other for an uncomfortably long time.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. You look like someone we know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Tom doesn't remark. He turns away from them and walks along the counter toward the coffee. He can feel their eyes burning into him.

Virginia is serious now, as she watches the interaction. Tom is pale and his eyes are staring funny. He picks up the coffee, then puts it down. Then, he quietly walks into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

He hurries through the door and back to the unkempt dishwashing area. His eyes are glazed and wide, again, moving as if reading something in his head. He takes a dish and sprays it off, then puts it down. He paces and peers around the corner toward the door.

He walks into the kitchen and looks out the order window into the dining room, hoping not to catch their eye. But they are gone.

INT. DINING ROOM

Tom pushes the doors open and surveys the room. Nothing. And the beige car is gone too. He looks to the right. Virginia and Bill are staring at him.

INT. TRACI'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

As Hamburger Helper bubbles away on the stove. Tom stirs it with a wooden spoon, then takes a test bite. Traci is setting the table.

TRACI

Hey, you don't have to do that.
You've been around greasy food all
day.

TOM

I'm on a roll. Virginia said if I
do real good with the dishes
tomorrow, she'll have me working
tables by Wednesday. I think that
means waiting on them.

TRACI

I'll bet you've never had such a
quick promotion.

HOWIE flies in through the backdoor trailing dust. He is seven, skinny, wears clothes that are always a few inches too small. He approaches the man at the stove.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 HOWIE
Hey Tom, guess what?

 TOM
What?

 HOWIE
We found a rattler.

Traci's mouth drops.

 HOWIE (CONT'D)
It was this long.

 TRACI
I hope you guys stayed away from
it.

 HOWIE
We bashed its head in. Floyd's
bringing it.

Traci turns and looks out the backdoor window.

ANGLE TRACI'S POV as Floyd holds up the dead snake.

RESUME KITCHEN, as she opens the door and SHOUTS.

 TRACI
No, Floyd. Put that down, now!
Outside the yard.

Howie gets himself a drink from the sink faucet.

 HOWIE
Hey Tom, are you going to live
here?

 TOM
I don't know, Howie, your Mom
hasn't told me.

 HOWIE
Are you guys getting married?

Traci is amused. Tom is not very comfortable around kids.

 TOM
I don't think so. I'm just one of
your mother's patients.

 HOWIE
What's wrong with you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TOM

Amnesia.

HOWIE

Oh, you're the guy that thinks he's
an airplane pilot.

TOM

(To Traci)

Whatever happened to client
confidentiality?

HOWIE

Has she tried to hypnotize you yet?

TOM

Yeah.

HOWIE

Did it work?

TOM

I think so.

HOWIE

She tried to do Floyd and me, but
it didn't work. Floyd had to pee.

Enough with the kids.

TRACI

Howie go wash your hands and face,
please.

Floyd, 4, is standing behind her.

TRACI (CONT'D)

And take Floyd with you.

They run off, seemingly obediently. Traci comes over to
observe Tom, as he stirs the Helper and a pot of lima beans.

TRACI (CONT'D)

I would say you haven't done much
heavy physical labor.

TOM

Why?

TRACI

Your hands are smooth... and
delicate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TOM
Hey, watch it.

She studies his hands.

TRACI
Good fine motor control.

TOM
Why do I feel like I'm up for
auction in this house?

TRACI
Steady eyes... pretty even
tempered...

TOM
Let me guess. Like a pilot.

TRACI
Or a watchmaker. Or a doctor.

TOM
Or a cat burglar.

TRACI
You're in good physical shape,
lean, healthy...

TOM
Good teeth...

TRACI
Not bad looking.

TOM
Maybe I'm an exotic dancer from
Vegas.

TRACI
I wouldn't go that far.

TOM
Okay, the outskirts of Vegas.

TRACI
I want to hypnotize you.

TOM
Right now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

TRACI

No, after dinner. I want to dig deeper. See what's behind those plane crash dreams.

Tom's mood sours.

TOM

They're not dreams anymore.

His helplessness touches Traci.

TRACI

Let me finish this. You go in the living room and relax.

He doesn't argue.

INT. LIVING ROOM

As in most American homes, the TV is going on its own. The news is on.

Tom roams about the room touching their family art objects: a hand drawn card to Mom on her birthday, pictures of the kids and Traci (one includes a man), some delicate pieces of china (kept out of the reach of children).

He looks out the wide front window. A dirt driveway moseys across a short stretch of pasture to a two-lane road. The road turns slightly here and runs past the airport, a mile away. Tom can see the short control tower and the hangar roofs.

He steps outside and stands on the porch, staring at the sunset.

THE CAMERA PANS AWAY FROM TOM to the TV. The REPORTER is in the middle of a story with file footage.

TV REPORTER

(Voice over)

...Steinbeck Aircraft has announced a preliminary order from the United States Government for three Streeker Jet Fighters. The price tag for these controversial top secret jets tops the six billion dollar mark.

The footage shows animation of a sleek, swept-wing jet shooting upwards into a dark blue sky.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TV REPORTER (CONT'D)

They're built to track down and disable enemy satellites. How they do that is what makes them top secret, as well as controversial. Proponents of the program say Streeker will give the United States the edge in strategic defense. Opponents say... it just doesn't work...

CLICK. The TV goes off.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK to include Traci, as she turns off the TV and looks out the window. Tom is gone.

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

Tom is walking along the shoulder toward the airport, not in any particular hurry. Perhaps he was bored and just wanted to go for a walk. Or maybe there is something about airplanes that keeps drawing him.

The sunset is just as spectacular and surreal as the sunrise - a cloudless, dusty orange aura spreading over half the sky and fading into a deep blue starry night in the other half.

EXT. TRACI'S PORCH

Traci is not sure what to do, as she stares off down the road at the tiny figure of Tom plodding along, kicking stones. Howie SLAMS out the front door, with his usual urgent need for something. Traci keeps her eye on Tom.

HOWIE

What are you doing?

TRACI

Did you wash your hands and face?

HOWIE

Yeah. I'm hungry.

TRACI

Go inside. I'll be there in a minute.

Howie sees Tom.

HOWIE

What's he doing?

TRACI

He's walking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWIE

I thought he was eating with us.

TRACI

He is. Go inside and wait.

HOWIE

How much longer?

TRACI

Three minutes.

HOWIE

I'm hungry.

TRACI

Go now!

He moans and SLAMS back in the house. Traci sits on a ratty wicker chair.

EXT. ROAD

Tom continues his walk. A small aircraft makes its approach and lands, and Tom watches it. As he does, a car comes into VIEW, approaching on the road.

As he continues his walk, the car slows and starts to tail him. It is the beige car.

EXT. PORCH

Traci stands and steps to the edge of the porch, when she spots the beige car.

EXT. ROAD

Tom watches the plane until it dips out of view. Then, he hears a tire SNAP on a rock, and turns back.

Tom's eyes grow wide, as the Driver flashes a spotlight in his face. Now, he recognizes the car, remembers the bright spotlights. He starts to back away.

The right door flies open and the Passenger gets out. He approaches Tom without saying a word, walking purposefully, with that same sinister smile on his face.

EXT. FRONT YARD

Traci has made her way down the drive toward the road.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGLE HER POV as Tom turns and starts running into the desert. The Passenger takes off after him. The Driver stops the car and joins the chase.

RESUME TRACI, as she freezes.

EXT. DESERT

The desert floor is in shadow now, as the Driver and Passenger chase Tom over brush and around stands of prickly pear cactus. Tom has the upper hand, because of his recent first-hand experience, and takes them on a wild run.

DRIVER

Shit!

The Driver stumbles on a bed of jumping cactus that coat his lower right leg with detached pods of sharp needles and dig in deeper with every movement. The Passenger continues without stopping and follows Tom into a dry wash.

EXT. DRY WASH

The sand is deep in parts, but affords Tom a visible path. He clearly has the advantage. The Passenger falls behind, as he labors to gain traction in the sand. He trips and twists his ankle on an invisible rock.

The wash deepens and Tom knows he will be trapped if he keeps following it. He glances back. The Passenger is now a dark shape, a safe distance behind him.

Tom seizes the advantage and scrambles up the side of the wash. He is just about to pull himself over the top of the six-foot bank, when the rock he is holding gives way.

He falls back and lands in the loose sand, face up. The breath is knocked out of him, but he is otherwise in good shape. He attempts to pull himself together, but the time he loses is just enough to allow the Passenger to catch up.

A foot comes out of the darkness and lands heavy on his chest, shoving him back to ground. When he turns and looks up, a flashlight beam hits him in the face. He can also make out the shape of an automatic pistol aimed his way.

PASSENGER

Let's go, Major.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The two goons strong-arm Tom into the backseat of the beige car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His hands are bound with zip-tie handcuffs, so when they shove him in, he lands on his side. The two get in the front. The Driver makes a quick U-turn and they speed off.

EXT. TRACI'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

She is in her car, with the convertible top rolled up, motor idling and lights off, watching from the end of her driveway. Howie and Floyd are in the backseat with their pajamas on. They are uncharacteristically quiet - Traci having previously planted the fear of God in them.

Her car is waiting far enough back from the road, so it's hidden from the beige car as it passes. She waits a moment, then takes off after the car, keeping a safe distance back.

EXT. CAMELOT MAIN STREET

The two cars pass calmly through town and out the other end, heading west in the direction of the hills.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The two straight lanes are mostly free of cars. Traci hangs back a good distance to avoid detection, as the two cars move along at a brisk speed.

Hot points of starlight pepper the moonless sky. Human-like silhouettes of Joshua trees leave shadow snapshots of nightmare images, as they fly by.

INT. BEIGE CAR

Tom sits silently in the back, staring straight ahead.

PASSENGER

(To the Driver)

Stop at the next gas station, would you?

DRIVER

Why?

PASSENGER

I want to get some munchies.

DRIVER

Can't you wait till we get there?

PASSENGER

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER
(Whining)
It's only an hour.

PASSENGER
(Loses it)
Hey, this sucks enough as it is. We didn't get any lunch, didn't get any dinner. We've been driving around in the fucking heat all day, chasing this asshole around in the fucking desert. I'm not asking a lot. Okay?

He doesn't answer.

PASSENGER (CONT'D)
(To Tom)
Hey Major, you want anything?

Tom looks away from him.

PASSENGER (CONT'D)
(To Driver)
The Major's hungry too.
(To Tom)
Hey, did you really get amnesia?

He clenches his teeth and stares out the side window.

PASSENGER (CONT'D)
The Major forgot how to talk too.

DRIVER
Leave it.

PASSENGER
No. The Major's pissing me off now.

The Passenger reaches to the backseat with a club and strikes Tom across the chest. Tom bends over and GASPS for air.

DRIVER
Stupid shit!

The Driver attempts to grab the club away from the Passenger, and the car swerves dangerously off onto the shoulder at seventy plus. The Driver cranks the wheel to the left to get back on the road and the Passenger gets thrown against the door. This gives the Driver an opening to grab the other end of the club.

Back on the road, the car continues to swerve back and forth, as the two struggle with the club.

INT. TRACI'S CAR

All three are staring out the front window in shock.

TRACI

They're going to kill him. Good
God.

HOWIE

Why are they going to kill him?

ANGLE THEIR POV, as the beige car drives back on the road and
straightens out. Traci resumes her cruising speed.

RESUME THE THREE

TRACI

I don't know. It has something to
do with the military, because
that's a military car. And it has
to do with jet fighters and planes
crashing and helicopters. And
getting amnesia and being lost in
the desert. But then, maybe the
dreams don't have anything to do
with this at all.

She thinks, tries to put the pieces together.

HOWIE

I thought you said he was a pilot?

TRACI

I said, he might be a pilot.

HOWIE

Well, maybe he was flying and his
plane augured in out in the desert.
And then, he hit his head on
something and got amnesia.

TRACI

Yeah, I thought of that too. But,
first of all, if a plane had
crashed around here, we would've
known about it. And, second of all,
even if he had survived, which is
unlikely, he would have broken
bones and bruises and cuts. There
wasn't a mark on him.

The beige car is signaling to turn right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRACI (CONT'D)

Uh oh.

EXT. HIGHWAY

As the beige car pulls off the road into a gas station. Traci slows.

INT. TRACI'S CAR

They are panicking.

HOWIE

Look! Look! Look! Look!...

TRACI

Wait stop. Let's think rationally here.

Traci follows them in.

EXT. GAS STATION

Traci stops next to a pump on the other side of the island from the beige car. The Passenger gets out and walks to the rear of the car, opens the gas tank and starts pumping.

Traci gets out and does the same. They notice her watching them and she smiles. They smile back.

INT. BEIGE CAR

Tom sees her and his brain starts to spin. The Driver is smiling stupidly.

ANGLE FROM THEIR POV, as Traci decides to play it up. She gives them a few sensuous moves and checks them out. The Driver is transfixed, as she slowly slides the pump handle into the spout, then bends revealingly to vend the gas.

INT. TRACI'S CAR

Howie and Floyd watch in awe, as they witness this new side of their mother.

FLOYD

(Whispering)

What is she doing?

HOWIE

I don't know. Just shut up.

Traci looks in through the driver's window, still keeping in character.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRACI
 (Sweetly to Howie)
 Howie, remember that trick you
 played on your Dad the day he left
 us?

HOWIE
 No.

TRACI
 (Nodding)
 Yes, you do.

HOWIE
 (Now, he smiles)
 Oh yeah.

TRACI
 Get the cutters out of that toolbox
 and...

She indicates the beige car with her eyes.

TRACI (CONT'D)
 But be careful.

HOWIE
 (Still smiling)
 I will.

EXT. GAS STATION

The Passenger finishes and hangs up the handle, all the while keeping his eye on the action. Traci has curves she hasn't used in ten years. The Passenger heads for the mini-mart to pay.

ANGLE FROM BEHIND THE BEIGE CAR, as the CAMERA PULLS BACK and DOWN to reveal Howie. He is hunkered down behind the car. When he sees the Passenger walk away toward the mini-mart, he creeps around the rear of the car to the Driver's side, which faces away from Traci's car.

ANGLE ON TRACI, as she hangs up her handle, and notices the sign on the door of the beige car. This appears to interest her. She slinks over to the car and pokes her head in the open passenger window. Then, with some kind of fake accent...

TRACI
 You boys pilots?

DRIVER
 (Smiling Stiffly)
 Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tom is still processing.

TRACI

I just love pilots, with their big long airplanes. What kind do you have?

DRIVER

Big and long.

TRACI

Is it a jet?

DRIVER

Oh, you bet.

TRACI

Ooh. I hope it doesn't go too fast.

DRIVER

No problem. It's a slow jet.

Tom rolls his eyes. He can't believe the Driver is buying the cheesy cracks. She checks out the Driver's crotch and wets her lips.

ANGLE ON HOWIE, as he cuts the valve stem on the left rear tire and air starts to escape. Then, he sneaks around the back to the other side and crawls to the other tire. Traci can see him out of the corner of her eye.

TRACI

Is this guy in the back seat a pilot too?

DRIVER

We all are.

TRACI

That's nice. Real nice.

She gives the Driver a hypnotizing gaze. His eyes seem to be frozen in hers. They smile.

ANGLE ON HOWIE, as he cuts the valve.

RESUME TRACI. In a flash, she reaches in, unlocks Tom's door and pulls it open. The Driver shakes his head.

TRACI (CONT'D)

Run!

By the time the Driver realizes what's happening, Tom, Traci and Howie are already racing to Traci's car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DRIVER

Hey. What the fuck are you doing?
That guy's not really a pilot! What
the fuck!

Traci starts her car, the Driver his.

ANGLE ON THE PASSENGER THROUGH THE MINI-MART DOORS, as he sees the activity. He drops an armload of candy bars and blows through the door.

ANGLE TRACI, as she peels out. The Passenger is there just in time to SLAM a fist down on her trunk. But she is gone.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Get in, Damn it!

The Passenger climbs in and the car takes off with the door still open. It CRASHES into a metal column and pump before the Passenger finally SLAMS it closed.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Now, we see what Traci's Camaro can do, as it flies down the highway.

INT. TRACI'S CAR

The kids already know, but it's a new experience for Tom. He fumbles with the seat belt, as Traci takes them on a white knuckle ride.

TRACI

(Calmly)
You kids all buckled in?

HOWIE

Yes, Mom.

Traci checks the rear view mirror.

EXT. HIGHWAY

She appears to be going the wrong way down the highway, but we're not really sure what she is up to. The large military engine in the beige car has allowed them to catch up.

She lets them get within two car lengths of her, then she turns right and floors the pedal. The car fishes badly, then straightens out down a dirt road. The Driver tries the same maneuver, but the deflated tires cause him to spin a few three-sixties before finding the horizon.

EXT. DIRT ROAD

Traci is long gone down the dirt road. The Driver gives the beige car all it's got, but discovers immediately that what it hasn't got is air in the back tires.

He gets half a mile down the dirt road before HEARING the metal rims GRIND in the dirt.

Traci has taken a turn somewhere and disappeared in the dark. He POUNDS his foot on the brake and the rims SCREECH to a stop.

INT. TRACI'S CAR

She checks the mirror and slows down a bit.

TRACI

That should take care of them.

Tom has nearly lost his voice and his fingers have welded themselves to the seat.

TOM

Where did you learn to drive like that?

TRACI

I guess it just comes naturally.

TOM

Oh. Good. Umm... I don't know what to say. I wasn't expecting... that.

TRACI

Well... neither was I. I guess.

He looks in the backseat and waves.

TOM

Howie. Floyd. How is everybody?

KIDS

Okay.

TOM

Thank you.

TRACI

You're welcome.

EXT. HIGHWAY

She makes another high-speed turn back onto the main highway to Camelot.

INT. TRACI'S CAR

TRACI
Who were those guys?

TOM
The ones in my dream.

TRACI
In the helicopter?

TOM
And elsewhere.

He is being his usual uninformative self.

TRACI
Well?

TOM
Well, what?

TRACI
Do you want to tell me about it?

TOM
I don't know what to tell you. I think I recognize them, but I don't know who they are or what they want. I just know I had to run. I mean, what would you do if two strange men came after you?

TRACI
How did they find you? How did they know you were with me?

TOM
Well, the Sheriff sent my picture out. They must've seen it.

TRACI
Lyle. They called Lyle and he told them.

They chew on that for awhile. Then...

TOM
They called me Major.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They turn to each other. He waits for a reaction. She turns away and smiles.

TRACI

Major.

INT. LYLE'S OFFICE

He is standing in his miniscule office across the desk from Traci. Tom and the kids can be seen through the open door, as Howie uses the valve-stem cutter to remove Tom's handcuffs. Lyle is trying to keep the conversation private.

LYLE

They told me he was a test pilot.

TRACI

That's what we thought too, but-

LYLE

Shh. He was testing some new airplane and crashed it. They thought he was burned in the wreckage, until they saw the picture. They think he must've bailed out.

TRACI

Where was the plane crash?!

LYLE

On the base somewhere, I guess.

TRACI

That's at least fifty miles from here. How could he walk that far in this heat? And don't you think he would've been bruised and banged up after bailing out of a jet fighter? There's not a scratch on him.

LYLE

How do you know it's a jet fighter?

TRACI

Okay, why would he be testing a prop plane?

LYLE

I don't know.

TRACI

And why would they chase after him and tie him up?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LYLE

I don't know. I have my theories.

He studies Tom.

TRACI

Well, I just think the methods they used were a bit unusual, don't you.

LYLE

I suppose. But it's not my job to second-guess the U.S. military.

The phone RINGS.

LYLE (CONT'D)

(On phone)

Camelot Sheriff Department, Sheriff Wagner speaking... Oh hello Captain.

Traci leans against the door and looks at Tom. He and the three kids are just sitting, their eyes glazed from the stress.

LYLE (CONT'D)

(On phone)

Well sir, sorry about that. Yes. Yes. It was just a little misunderstanding...

INT. SHERIFF'S MAIN ROOM

She walks over to Tom and pulls him to the side out of Lyle's view.

TRACI

They told Lyle you were a test pilot that bailed out before a plane crash.

He shakes his head.

TRACI (CONT'D)

Well, that's what they're saying. And they came here to take you back. You said they called you a Major.

He is still shaking his head.

TRACI (CONT'D)

Think!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

It makes sense. I guess. But no, it doesn't make sense. I can't fly an airplane. Somebody else crashed, and the pilot did die.

TRACI

What?

TOM

I don't know. The dreams. The helicopter. Being thrown out.

INT. LYLE'S OFFICE

He is still on the phone.

LYLE

Yes sir. I'm sorry about all this. I'll keep them in custody. Yes, you can get him here at my office. Right now is fine. I'll be waiting up. Right. Bye.

He hangs up, and then looks out the door into the other room. They're gone.

INT. TOM'S MILITARY OFFICE

ANGLE POV OF TOM as he dreams. The office is small with just enough room for a chair, a desk and a shelf of books. A door SLAMS open and two men enter. They are the Driver and Passenger. They stare down at him with venom in their eyes.

The Driver reaches out to grab Tom, but he slips away and stands back from them.

DRIVER

Come on, Major. If you make it easy on us, we promise not to hurt you. Okay?

He stays in one spot and they approach him slowly. Out of their view, he reaches behind him and picks up a large laboratory flask. The shelf has a few other flasks and bottles of chemicals.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

(Getting chummy)

You see. It's not going to do any good to fight us. The odds are on our side. Okay? All we want to do is talk-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRASH! Tom busts the flask against the Driver's temple, knocking him to the floor. Tom spins around and heads into an adjacent room with the Passenger hot on his heels.

PASSENGER
Son of a bitch!

INT. INFIRMARY

Tom runs in. The room contains six beds with ceiling curtains, various metal trays on wheels, and glass cabinets with drugs and various supplies.

Tom launches a stretcher into the Passenger to slow him down. Then, he pitches a jar of red peroxide at his face. Tom figures a barrage of thrown items is bound to give him a temporary edge - trays, bottles, trash cans.

PASSENGER
You are so dead! You fucking son of
a bitch!

As Tom runs toward the door at the opposite end of the room, the Passenger is forced to fight his way through all the bottles and trays and wheeled beds.

INT. HALLWAY

Tom steps out of the infirmary and right into the clutches of the Driver. Blood is running freely from multiple deep glass cuts. He grabs Tom's arm hard - no more nice guy.

But before the Driver can land a fist in Tom's midriff, Tom swipes his backhand across the Driver's face, tearing wounds open deeper and causing him to YELL and grab for his face.

Tom pulls away and barely escapes the Passenger, hurling his body out the door. He is halfway down the hall before the Passenger regains his balance and the two take chase.

Tom BLOWS through the double doors at the end and runs outside.

EXT. INFIRMARY BLDG. - NIGHT

He can't go straight, because he'll run into a wall. If he turns left, he runs right into a helicopter waiting at full idle, complete with spotlights illuminating everything and a soldier with an automatic rifle.

He chooses to turn right into the darkness. He turns again at the corner of the infirmary building and runs along the side. The soldier sees him and takes chase with gun raised.

EXT. INFIRMARY SIDE

Tom runs well ahead of him and is nearly invisible in the shadows. He has desperation on his side. The soldier stops and fires a warning shot into the darkness, then hangs back.

The infirmary building is a long, WWII, single story wooden structure with a few high windows. Tom is out of breath, his initial jolt of energy on the wane. Halfway down is an indentation with double doors. Tom ducks in there to catch his breath.

He looks defeated and wild, like a deer trapped on a freeway. He checks around the edge in the direction he was running - just darkness.

He decides to go back inside.

INT. INFIRMARY HALLWAY

Tom peers around the corner. It's empty. He runs up the hall and back into his office.

INT. TOM'S MILITARY OFFICE

He pulls open a desk file drawer and pours through the file tabs. He opens one marked personal and thumbs through the pages. He hears FOOTSTEPS running and getting closer. He finds a paper and folds it. The door SLAMS open. In the split second before the Passenger jams a rifle butt in his solar plexus, Tom stuffs the paper in his pants, beneath his underwear.

TRACI (O.S.)

One, two...

Tom is on the floor, looking up. The Passenger has both of his arms pinned with hard sole shoes. The Driver approaches with a full hypodermic.

TRACI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Three, four...

He jabs the needle six inches into Tom's arm and everything goes white.

TRACI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Five.

INT. CAMELOT HOSPITAL ROOM

Traci and Tom are facing each other in hard chairs. Tom is gasping and holding his head in his hands. Traci has a hand on his knee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRACI
Are you okay?

TOM
The memo. The memo! I remember!

TRACI
What does it say?

TOM
I don't know. I'm not sure. We got
to find it!

Tom is seriously agitated, out of control. He is obviously
beyond Traci's control.

TRACI
Where is it?

TOM
I'm thinking. I'm thinking!

He gets up and paces the room, pounding his temples hard.
He's flying apart before her eyes. She stands, poised to step
in.

TRACI
Take your time-

TOM
NO!

TRACI
If you calm down a bit-

He stops and looks at her.

TOM
In my hand.

TRACI
What do you mean?

TOM
I mean! Traci, it was in my hand! I
was holding it when I was in the
desert! I know I was! When they
picked me up, I was holding the
damn memo!

TRACI
Do you remember where your stuff
is?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TOM

I don't know! Where are my clothes?
The ones I was wearing?!

TRACI

I know.

She gives him a "calm down" sign with her hand and opens the door. She checks the corridor, then walks out, followed by Tom.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

It is late night, and the area is empty. Most of the lights are off, except for the nurses' station across the hall. Millie looks up, as Traci approaches her with a smile.

TRACI

Millie, do you still have Tom's
personal items from when he was
picked up?

MILLIE

I suppose. Somewhere.

Millie is okay with Traci, but is not so sure about Tom, since he was the one that just totaled her car. She gets up and looks in the cabinets and shelves around the station.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

All he had was a ripped-up t-shirt
and pants as I recall. Jenny might
have tossed it.

Millie is thorough but painfully slow. Tom's patience is about to snap, and Traci can see it.

TRACI

(To Tom)

Do you remember anything, like who
was around when you changed
clothes?

TOM

No. I didn't change my clothes. I
was out. Somebody else did it.

MILLIE

Well, I don't know...

TRACI

Could it be in the office?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MILLIE

No, we always keep that stuff right around here.

She picks up a paper bag and looks in.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

Here it is. John Doe, that must be you. Here I was looking for Tom something.

Tom grabs it from her, as soon as she holds it within range, and starts pulling everything out.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

Well I'll be. We usually put personal belongings in one of those plastic bags with a name on it. Jenny must've been in a hurry, is all I can figure. Maybe she was waiting until we found out who he was for sure.

It is not loose in the bag, no pockets in the shirt.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

That should be everything, except what he's got on.

An alarm goes off on a machine in a room behind the station.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

Oh shoot, Mr. Jakeman again. Excuse me.

She goes to Mr. Jakeman, who can be seen through a window, asleep with oxygen tubes and IV's running into him.

Tom is looking through the pants pockets, turning them inside out. Then, he puts his hand in the back pocket and there it is.

TOM

This is it! Yes!

TRACI

Shh. Calm down.

TOM

I can't.

He unfolds the badly mangled piece of white paper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TOM (CONT'D)

This... is... my... whole life.
This is it.

He stares at the paper, but he's shaking too much to read it.
He hands it to Traci.

TRACI

(Reading)

"Confidential, from Admiral Hughie Tanner, to Commander Mark Condit, Radik Naval Air Base," blah, blah, blah. "There is good reason to believe there are some serious aerodynamic instabilities connected with deploying the gun at high altitude. The contractor wants more time to make a fix, but further delay will kill the program and that can't happen. Keep Streeker alive at all costs. Do whatever you have to. We need results and they have to be positive. Signed Admiral..."

Throughout the reading, Tom gets more and more agitated. He punctuates his thoughts by pounding the counter.

TOM

Those bastards. Those damn bastards! Streeker. I remember. I remember it all.

Traci is not sure how to deal with this new Tom. He is suddenly bold and self-assured.

TRACI

Isn't Streeker that billion dollar...

TOM

Multi-billion. Yes. Yes.

He is flying apart and pulling together at the same time. His mind is inundated with memories and the pieces are all locking in place faster than he can handle it. When he speaks, we only HEAR fragments of what is going on in his mind.

TOM (CONT'D)

But it has "some aerodynamic instabilities", like it crashes. It doesn't fly.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TOM (CONT'D)

Billions of dollars wasted on this machine that won't stay in the air!

TRACI

This Commander Condit, do you know-

TOM

Yes. Oh yes. I know him.

TRACI

He made it crash?

TOM

No. It crashes fine on its own. He was in charge of the flight test. He knew there were problems and he sent it up anyway. He was going to whitewash the results. If it shook the pilots brains loose, he was going to say that it demonstrated a tendency to destabilize this and that. He hadn't counted on it just coming unglued and buying the side of a hill.

TRACI

You remember now?

TOM

Yes.

He stops pacing.

TOM (CONT'D)

I was there.

TRACI

A pilot?

TOM

No. I was there... in the control room... when it crashed. The pilot was a good friend of mine. Bob Chen. I couldn't just step aside and let them get away with it.

He is momentarily sidetracked thinking about Bob.

TRACI

It must've been hard on you to lose a friend?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

TOM

Yes. I mean, if you're a test pilot, you have to accept a certain amount of risk. That comes with the territory. But then, I found this memo. It was just sitting there with a bunch of papers in Condit's secretary's office. And I found it and I got a little crazy. I began pissing off the wrong people. I thought I could trust this one Captain, but he turned against me. Then, everyone was against me. Condit had the whole base scared shitless. He's a killer. You cross him and you're dead. I told the wrong people I was going to expose the whole thing, take it to the press or something. But you don't go around saying things like that when you're working in a top secret program, especially if someone is pulling shit like Condit was. I guess I figured I was immune, because I wasn't really one of them. Until they came after me.

TRACI

Wait. What do you mean you weren't one of them?

He walks behind the counter and picks up a stethoscope.

TOM

I'm a doctor. Doctors can do whatever they want.

TRACI

A doctor?

TOM

They always have a doctor around when they're doing flight tests.

TRACI

So, you were in the room? The control room?

TOM

And I saw the whole thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

TRACI

Okay. Let me get this straight. You saw the crash, then you found the memo. Then, you threatened them, so they grabbed you, and tried to get rid of you.

He is calming now.

TOM

Yes. And here we are today.

She is thinking, hardly HEARS Tom yammer on.

TOM (CONT'D)

(Quietly)

I feel like I did my first day of residency. It's like I can remember facts and details out of a book, but I can't remember ever treating anybody. I don't know if I even remember how to be a doctor. What if I have to learn it all over again?

Traci finds there is something almost disturbing about this new confident, bold Tom.

TRACI

I wonder why they didn't just kill you? Like with a gun?

Tom wonders where this came from.

TOM

I don't know.

TRACI

I mean, why would they just dump you in the desert?

TOM

(Not prepared)

Well. The two that grabbed me aren't exactly mental giants. They probably had some plan all worked out and I came along and hosed it for them.

She'll buy that for now. Millie is back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

TRACI

Well, we'd better go. Lyle is going to come here after he checks the house.

(To Millie)

Millie, the kids are asleep in there. I'll call you in a few hours.

MILLIE

(To Traci)

Are you going to be okay?

Meaning Tom.

TRACI

Yeah, we just need to find a place for Tom to stay.

MILLIE

What do you want me to tell... you know...?

TRACI

Just tell him what I told you. I don't want you to get mixed up in this too.

MILLIE

Good luck, honey.

TRACI

Thanks.

They run out a side door.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

They emerge from an employee entrance by the dumpsters, and make their way a short distance to the car. In an uncharacteristic move, Tom reaches out and stops Traci. She turns back.

TRACI

What!

He holds both of her arms.

TOM

You believe me, don't you?

She nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM (CONT'D)
I hope you do.

TRACI
I do. Do you?

TOM
(Very sure)
Yes.

An electricity passes between them at that moment, and they draw together in a deep embrace. It is close and heartfelt, a long embrace, something they both need.

When they pull apart and look in each other's eyes, they know more about each other. And without saying a word, they know everything is going to be all right, even if everything goes wrong.

They run to the car and get in, and she drives around the building through the gravel lot toward the street.

EXT. HOSPITAL BY STREET

As she approaches the street, she looks to her left, and sees Lyle's car. It has just parked and the Driver and Passenger are getting out. Lyle is still in the car with the motor running.

She sees them first and guns the gas pedal. The car spins out in the gravel, giving Lyle enough time to pull forward and block her exit. She runs the car right up to Lyle's and hits the brakes.

The Driver, who was in the process of getting out of the cruiser when Lyle pulled ahead, picks himself up and follows Lyle to Traci's side of the car. The Passenger heads toward Tom's side.

Traci and Tom stay in the car and lock the doors with the windows rolled up. She is staring straight ahead with her mouth set tight when Lyle tries the door.

LYLE
Traci, come on. We have to give
this guy back.

She ignores him. He pulls angrily on the door handle.

LYLE (CONT'D)
Come on! He doesn't belong to you!
Traci!
(To the Driver)
Shit!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The three are surrounding the front of the car.

LYLE (CONT'D)
What do you think you're going to do with him?

Nothing.

LYLE (CONT'D)
(To the Driver)
Would you explain it to her?

DRIVER
(Mr. Friendly)
Be happy to.

The Driver bends over and looks through her window with a big smile.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
Can you open the window, Mrs. Dunnavan?

She doesn't.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
It's just hard to talk with your window closed. Please.

She opens it a crack. He immediately gets his fingers in and pulls it open more.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
Mrs. Dunnavan, I don't know what the Major told you, but the truth is, he has some very serious mental issues. He is actually quite dangerous and unstable. And the sooner we get him back to the base hospital the better. As I say, I don't know what he has told you, but-

TRACI
I know about psychology. That's what I do for a living. I have studied him and do not find him particularly unstable.

LYLE
Tell her about the test pilot thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DRIVER

Mrs. Dunnavan, this man is one of our test pilots, working in highly confidential top-secret government programs. He bailed out recently just before the plane he was testing crashed. And we have been searching for him for several days now-

TRACI

If he's so unstable, why do you let him test airplanes?

LYLE

Traci, come on...

DRIVER

No, that's a good question. Since you are a professional, I'm sure you understand this better than I. Our doctors concluded that his problems, psychologically speaking, would not effect his performance as a test pilot, and since he is one of our better pilots, we decided to take that risk and allow him to continue. Now we know differently, of course.

Traci is still unmoved. The Driver is coming to the end of his patience.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Please, open the door.

TRACI

It's not true, Lyle. He's lying. Tom is a doctor.

LYLE

A doctor! Traci.

TRACI

He caught them fudging the results of some flight test and they tried to kill him.

LYLE

(Shaking his head)
Traci.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DRIVER

Is that what he told you?

(He fakes a laugh)

So, you're going to believe some guy you found crawling around in the desert before the United States Government?

TRACI

Yes. Lyle. Look at this.

(To Tom)

Show him the memo.

Tom unfolds it and holds it to the window.

TRACI (CONT'D)

Tom found this memo from some admiral, telling the commander of the base to fake the test.

LYLE

How do you know it's real?

TRACI

It's signed by the admiral. See?

LYLE

I don't know.

TRACI

Tom was going to send it to the press, but they grabbed him first and threw him out of a helicopter in the desert, and left him to die.

The Driver looks at Lyle and shakes his head.

DRIVER

(Smiling)

He's lying, Mrs Dunnavan. Can't you see he's making a fool of you?

LYLE

Come on, Traci, he's out of his head!

TRACI

Then, tell me how he got amnesia!

LYLE

(Shouting)

He doesn't have amnesia! He never had amnesia! He's crazy!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LYLE (CONT'D)

He's made all this up, including that paper! Use your damn head!

TRACI

Why would he make this up?!

LYLE

He's crazy!

TRACI

He's not crazy!

DRIVER

Mrs. Dunnavan...

He has another bomb to drop.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

I'm not really able to go into the full details, because the matter is strictly confidential. But I can say this much. We believe Tom has been selling secrets to our enemy. We believe he purposely crashed the plane, so he could make a clean escape. That's the truth. I'm sorry, I can't tell you anymore.

Traci looks at Tom.

TOM

It's not true. You hypnotized me. How could I make it up?

TRACI

(Quietly)

Hold on.

LYLE

Come on, Traci. You're in enough trouble as it is. Don't make it worse on yourself.

She sees something out of the corner of her eye. The Passenger is silently cutting through her convertible top with a knife.

She turns. The Driver is forcing the window open more. She makes her decision.

CRUNCH. She cranks the window closed hard on the Driver's fingers. He YELLS. She opens the window and he pulls his fingers out, as she pops the car into reverse and punches the pedal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Gravel and dirt spray like bullets from the tires. She skids back, then slams the car into drive.

TRACI
Look out, Lyle!

He jumps and just in time. The rag top Camaro flies over the curb, tires SCREAMING, then corrects into a straight path out of town. The car doesn't catch up with the tires until it is a mile down the highway.

Lyle is fuming.

LYLE
Jesus! Get in!

Lyle has the cruiser halfway through town, with sirens and light bar blazing, before the two even have their doors closed.

INT. TRACI'S CAR

Tom's fingers are, once again, welded to the seat.

TOM
You know. You don't have to do this.

TRACI
It's no trouble. Don't worry about it.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Traci slows and turns right down a narrow road. Lyle is right behind her.

INT. TRACI'S CAR

Their white knuckle adventure takes the two down a skinny road with no center line.

TOM
Where are we going?

TRACI
The only way we're ever going to get out of this mess is to get that memo to the right people.

TOM
Okay, who?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRACI

What do you mean, who? Don't you know?

TOM

I never got that far.

INT. LYLE'S CRUISER

They have to SHOUT over the SIREN. The Driver is in the front with Lyle.

DRIVER

Where are they headed?

LYLE

Hell if I know. There's nothing out here.

DRIVER

Call for assistance. Get her blocked off.

LYLE

(Anger welling)

Sorry, we're fresh out of assistance right now.

DRIVER

What you mean to say is, this is your only cop car.

The Driver and Passenger share a snicker.

LYLE

(Seething)

Would you mind buckling your fucking seatbelts?

DRIVER

Lyle. Lyle. You just concentrate on stopping that car up there. Okay?

EXT. DIRT ROAD

The road gets narrower and turns to dirt. She turns right down another dirt road. There are no streetlights out here, just a small house or two set back from the road every mile or so.

The cruiser follows her around the corner, with SIREN blaring and lights flashing.

INT. TRACI'S CAR

TOM
The closest military installation
is Fort Thomas.

TRACI
That's twenty miles from here.

TOM
Which way?

She points behind them.

TOM (CONT'D)
Great!

TRACI
Do you know anybody there?

TOM
No, but I figure we can find a
general or commander or something
and tell him the story.

TRACI
And who are they going to believe?

TOM
Well, we can't go back to Radik and
we can't go back to Camelot. Where
else is there?

They think for a moment, then...

TRACI
Okay.

EXT. ROAD

She sends the Camaro into a patch of dirt off the road and makes a fast U-turn. The Sheriff tries to cut them off, but things are moving too fast, and the thick cloud of dust, which has just caught up with them, has reduced visibility to zero. He hits his brakes and she jogs around him with ease.

INT. LYLE'S CRUISER

He pounds the steering wheel and spins around after her, madder than ever.

DRIVER
What the hell is that bitch doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PASSENGER

Whatever it is, she's succeeding.

They look at each other and shake their heads.

LYLE

Do you guys want to answer me one question?!

He straightens out on the dirt road. The dust is thicker than ever.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Screw this thing!

He kills the SIREN.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Is that guy really worth all this?
I'm going to wear these damn tires
down to the hubcaps.

DRIVER

We'll get you some new tires, Lyle.

LYLE

What about our lives?

DRIVER

If we don't bring this asshole
back, we won't have any.

ANGLE LYLE'S POV OUT THE FRONT WINDOW. The glare of the lights on the dust cloud is cutting visibility down to inches. Lyle has to navigate by watching Traci's tail lights.

LYLE

Shit.

EXT. ROAD

Traci makes a left turn at high speed.

INT. CRUISER

Lyle sees the tail lights suddenly fly off to the left.

LYLE

Shit!

He misses the turn and goes straight.

EXT. ROAD

Lyle's cruiser heads straight off of a steep 20 foot embankment. The car flips onto its side, and slides forward into a high-voltage power stanchion.

The CRUNCHING and GRATING of metal end, and all is QUIET, except for the HISS of radiator steam.

INT. TRACI'S CAR

Still at high speed, she checks her mirror.

ANGLE HER POV. The flashing lights that were following her are dim and seem to be coming from the side of the road.

TRACI

My God.

RESUME TRACI AND TOM, as she skids to a stop.

TOM

What? Why are you stopping?

TRACI

Something's wrong.

He looks back.

TOM

It looks like they went off the road.

They watch a moment longer. No movement.

TRACI

I'm going back.

She starts to turn the car around. The road is narrow, so she has to go back and forth between reverse and drive several times.

TOM

Why?!

TRACI

Maybe they're hurt.

TOM

I doubt it. They probably just went off into a ditch.

TRACI

Did you see the drop back there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

But we can get away clean now!

TRACI

Don't you care about them? I thought you were a doctor?!

That stops him for a moment.

TOM

I don't believe you're doing this.

TRACI

I don't believe you either.

TOM

After what those bastards did to me, I don't give a shit what happens to them. I really don't. We're driving right back into their hands.

TRACI

I've known Lyle for nine years.

Tom watches her, as her eyes begin to tear up.

TRACI (CONT'D)

I can't believe I did this. I just can't believe it. I don't know what got into me.

TOM

It's not your fault.

TRACI

Yes, it is.

She stops the car at the intersection.

ANGLE HER POV. From her window, the flashing lights clearly illuminate the wrecked cruiser.

RESUME TRACI AND TOM

TRACI (CONT'D)

You don't have to come.

TOM

Good.

She gets out and SLAMS the door.

EXT. EMBANKMENT

She slides down and runs to the car, resting precariously on its side with the driver's side facing up. She sniffs. Gas!

There is sign of life inside. She looks through the windshield. Lyle is trying to free himself from the steering wheel. The bloody head of the Driver is sticking through a jagged hole in the windshield.

TRACI

I'm here to help you! Umm, are you all right?

(To Herself)

That was a stupid thing to say. Stupid. Stupid.

LYLE

Traci, get me out of here!

She climbs as high as she can by stepping on the light bar. The car CREEKS badly with every movement.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Look out. You'll tip the whole thing over.

TRACI

Where are you, Lyle?

LYLE

Reach in, I'll grab you.

He takes her arm and together they pull up. It takes all her strength, but it gives him enough leverage to squeeze past the dislocated steering wheel and up through the window.

Their combined weights cause the cruiser to rock with the slightest movement. They hold on to each other for balance.

TRACI

Let's jump down together. Ready. Go.

The sudden shift of weight causes the cruiser to sway. When it steadies, Lyle checks the front windshield.

LYLE

I told him to put his damn seatbelt on.

Lyle is shocky and dazed. The sight of the Driver causes him to swoon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRACI

Come on. Let's go sit down. There's nothing you can do for him.

LYLE

(Sniffing)

Gas. We better get away before it catches fire.

Traci puts an arm around him and they move quickly away from the car toward the road.

They HEAR a GROAN coming from somewhere, and they both turn.

LYLE (CONT'D)

He must be in the back seat.

TRACI

How the hell are we supposed to get him out?

Another GROAN. But it is not from the car. They look around them. The desert is dark. The only illumination is from the flashing light bar.

ANGLE THEIR POV. Back fifty feet or so they see two legs sticking out from behind a creosote bush.

RESUME THE TWO as they run to the Passenger, and Lyle kneels by his head.

He is lying on his back, bent over a mound of dirt. He seems to be in fairly good shape, except for his neck and part of his face, which must have scraped against the door jamb when he was thrown out. His left leg is bent awkwardly, obviously causing him pain. But the immediate problem is his throat. Every breath he takes is strained.

LYLE

He can't breathe. Looks like a crushed windpipe.

Lyle is pale.

TRACI

Why don't you sit down before you keel over?

LYLE

No. I'm okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TRACI

Please. It's not going to do me any good to have to drag one more body out of here.

He sits on a rock.

TRACI (CONT'D)

It doesn't look like he's bleeding too bad anyway.

LYLE

He's best off right where he is. Probably got an injured back.

She pulls out her cell phone and holds it up. No service.

TRACI

Damn. I'll have to go back for help. There was a house down that way.

LYLE

They don't have a phone.

TRACI

Then, I'll go the other way.

LYLE

Fine.

Lyle is too far gone to argue with her. She turns away from him and sees Tom. He is standing back from them, staring at the body.

TRACI

I'm going for help. Can you stay?

He nods. She watches him, as he steps toward the dying man and stares.

The Passenger is semi-conscious - no doubt in a great deal of pain. By the panicked expression on his face, it's clear that all he wants is to be able to take a deep breath and scream. It's a pitiful sight. Tom's face is cold.

She turns and runs to her car.

TOM

Where's the other one?

LYLE

Dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TOM
You okay?

LYLE
Not bad.

Tom doesn't react. He kneels down and examines the man's throat.

TOM
You got a knife?

LYLE
That depends. What are you going to do to him?

TOM
Save his life.

LYLE
I don't know.

TOM
He can't breathe. I have to open his airway.

Lyle shakes his head.

TOM (CONT'D)
Suit yourself.

Lyle rethinks his decision and takes a knife out of his pocket. He stares at it a moment, and then holds it out.

LYLE
Be careful. It's sharp.

Tom grabs the knife, opens it and kneels. Then, he looks up in frustration.

TOM
I need light!

On cue, the car EXPLODES in skyrocketing bright flame. The initial blast is hot, but they are back a safe distance. Tom starts to work.

Lyle takes off his hat, and loosens his shirt and tie. He seems comfortable now sitting on his rock, watching Tom saw away. The Passenger has passed out from the pain. Except for the ROAR of the car fire and the invisible SOUND of CRICKETS, everything is quiet and peaceful. It almost takes one back to an old West campfire on the Pecos. Lyle starts to sing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LYLE

People. People who need people.
Are the luckiest people in the
world...

Meanwhile, the GASPING and GURGLING from the Passenger increase as Tom starts to break through.

LYLE (CONT'D)

One person.
One very special person
A feeling deep in your soul
Says you were half now you're whole
No more hunger and thirst
But first be a person who needs
people...

Tom makes one last cut and pushes on the Passenger's stomach. We HEAR a sudden spluttery rush of air whistle through the hole in his neck. He is going to be all right.

Tom adjusts the man's head, and then wipes the knife on his pants and hands it back to Lyle.

TOM

So, how are you doing?

LYLE

Better. I think I'm okay now.

Tom sits on a rock across from Lyle.

LYLE (CONT'D)

So, you're a doctor, huh?

TOM

Yup.

LYLE

Good to know. Real good.

Lyle really does feel better. He slips into his "camp-out in the desert," pensive mode.

LYLE (CONT'D)

You know, when I was a kid, I used to grab my sleeping bag and a pack of my Dad's cigarettes, and just walk back into the desert, a mile or so, away from the people and the cars and all the trappings of civilization, and just lay there with the stars for my blanket. And you know what I'd think about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

TOM

What?

LYLE

I'd think about the people and cars and the trappings of civilization. In particular, though, I'd dream about owning my own car - a big, fast, powerful one that would impress the shit out of people, and mainly chicks. And you know what?

TOM

What?

LYLE

My dream came true.

He points to the blazing cruiser.

TOM

Sorry about that.

LYLE

Oh, no biggie.

The CAMERA PULLS BACK to a WIDE SHOT of the three people and the burning car. The MUSIC is easy, the mood is hopeful. You almost want to break out the marshmallows.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

TITLE: A few years later

An Ace bandage is being wound around a small wrist belonging to Howie. Jenny is doing the work, and Traci is sitting on the bed trying to keep her son from fidgeting.

JENNY

Now, do you feel better?

HOWIE

Yeah.

JENNY

Be careful of it for a few weeks or you'll make it worse.

TRACI

You listen to her, okay?

HOWIE

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRACI
I'm serious.

HOWIE
I know. I know.

He hops down off the bed.

JENNY
Any news about the trial?

TRACI
It's been postponed again. Their attorneys keep pushing it back, hoping the press will lose interest.

Traci walks toward the doors that lead out of the treatment room. Jenny follows.

JENNY
I hope they nail them.

TRACI
They will. They have to. People just can't get away with doing things like that.

JENNY
What do you mean? It happens all the time.

Traci turns and notices the office door open with the light off.

TRACI
Where's the good doctor?

JENNY
I believe he said he was going fishing.

Traci looks back at Jenny with true surprise written on her face.

TRACI
Fishing?

EXT. ROCKY STREAM

A fishing lure PLUNKS into the running water. Everything is fresh now, and bright and still hot. Tom is holding the pole. His shoes are off and his working pants are rolled up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

Hey, bring the pail back. What if I catch something? Floyd?

Floyd is carrying the pail around, playing with it. He sets it down next to Tom.

TOM (CONT'D)

Do you want to hold the pole a while?

FLOYD

No. How come it's still wriggling?

Floyd takes the fish out of the pail and holds it up by its tail.

TOM

It's not dead yet. That's why it's in the water. Put it back.

He doesn't and the fish flips out of his hand and back into the stream.

FLOYD

Uh oh.

TOM

Yeah. "Uh oh". Now we got to catch it again.

Floyd throws a rock in the water.

TOM (CONT'D)

Hey. Don't do that, you'll scare the fish off.

He smiles and does it again. Tom tries to grab him, but Floyd just laughs and runs out of range. Tom puts the pole down and chases after him.

TOM (CONT'D)

I'll teach you to scare my fish off.

Floyd is laughing so hard he can barely stand.

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