

SENTIENT - (USA)

Written by

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. SMALL CAVE - DAY

JJ is crouched down near the mouth of a tight cave-like structure. Outside the cave a strange and violent storm is raging on. The sky is red. The winds are hurricane strength. There's a ROAR unlike anything heard before, peculiar, but so powerful.

SYD is trying to gain entrance to the shelter but is injured and can't negotiate the difficult, rocky threshold. Only feet apart, neither man can communicate due to the ferocious howl of the storm. Visibility is near zero.

JJ reaches out for Syd. His arm is stretched. Muscles taugth. Veins distended. He yells, but it cannot be heard.

JJ
Take my hand!

Both men are screaming now. JJ's blood-shot eyes reflect panic and confusion as he desperately tries to help his wounded friend.

The sound of the storm intensifies. JJ's eyes, still fixed on Syd, suddenly register uncomprehending horror. He sees. He screams. His outstretched hand is desperately received by Syd's. The grip they have on one another blanches their flesh.

JJ's eyes widen.

JJ (CONT'D)
No! No! Syd!

FADE OUT.

EXT. LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA, BACK ROAD - DAY

SUPER: 2 HOURS EARLIER - LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA

An extended bed pickup truck with the logo, "Lancaster Power & Energy" printed on its doors, turns off a blacktop highway to make its way up a small and gravelled access road. The day is sunny and clear.

INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY

Four MEN are inside. SYD drives with JJ riding shotgun. Two CREWMEN ride in the backseat.

JJ stares silently out the window watching the treeline pass them by. He seems distracted, his mind a million miles away.

Syd glances at him once or twice before punching him in the shoulder.

SYD

You better start thinking about
that 800 foot tower you're about to
climb instead of that cute little
brunette.

The men in the back chuckle. JJ gives him a smirk.

JJ

Missed your turn-off, asshole.

Syd starts to laugh but stops abruptly to look into his rear-view mirror. Just as abruptly, he slows and begins a bumpy, poorly-executed U-turn.

SYD

Shit. Shit. Shit.

JJ feels his phone VIBRATE. Retrieving it, he sees it's a text message from LINDSEY. A picture of an attractive woman with dark hair and bright eyes appears on his screen. The text reads:

LINDSEY TEXT

Got called into work today. Will
have to postpone dinner. We still
need to talk, though. Not sure how
I feel about all this.

His expression turns more serious. He texts back.

JJ TEXT

I made a mistake. But I thought
you forgave me. We moved on. No?

LINDSEY TEXT

I thought so. This changes things.
Have to go.

JJ reluctantly puts the phone away. It is clear he had more to say. Syd ribs him a little more.

SYD

Ahhh....True love. She can't stand
to be without you.

JJ musters a fake smile.

EXT. FORESTED BACK ROAD - DAY

The pickup labors its way up a stoney road, rocking and swaying as it climbs. Ahead of it, amidst a clearing, stands a tall electrical tower, one in a continuous row that goes on as far as the eye can see.

EXT. TOWER BASE - DAY

The truck comes to a halt near the base of the tower and the men pile out. All are in overalls that sport the company logo on the back. JJ makes his way to the cargo bed and pulls out a body harness, helmet and more gear.

One of the crewmen helps him into the harness. JJ looks up at the tower, blocking out the sun with his gloved hand.

Syd walks over to JJ to examine his gear. Grabbing JJ's lifeline, he gives it a hard tug then retightens it.

SYD

Hey, you got too much slack here,
JJ. Pay attention.

JJ

I've done this a few times, Syd.
Gimmie a break, huh?

SYD

And you're gonna wanna do it a
whole lot more, right. Especially
at the rate you're pullin' in.

JJ laughs. Syd gives the waist belt an extra tug.

SYD (CONT'D)

Everybody knows you vertical boys
get the big bucks. And the chicks.
Let me see your bug wrench.

JJ yanks a tool from his hip and gives it to Syd for inspection.

SYD (CONT'D)

Looks a little stripped. Take
mine.

Syd slides a new wrench into JJ's utility belt and continues to give his gear the once-over.

SYD (CONT'D)
Got your meat hooks?

JJ
Hey, keep your meat hooks...

Syd finishes the old trade joke for him.

SYD
...off me. All right. All right.

They laugh.

EXT. TRANSMISSION TOWER - DAY

JJ is halfway up the tower utilizing a narrow steel ladder. His crew watches from far below. His walkie-talkie SQUAWKS, causing him to stop, buckle in his lifeline and answer the transmission.

JJ
Yeah, what's up?

EXT. TOWER BASE - DAY

Syd, craning his neck to look up at JJ, talks into his hand-held radio.

SYD
Yeah, so headquarters says to check out the isolators on both the north and south sides.

EXT. TRANSMISSION TOWER - DAY

JJ
Roger that.

JJ re-secures the radio's tactical mic to his shoulder, unclamps his lifeline, and continues to ascend.

EXT. TOWER SUMMIT - DAY

Reaching the top, JJ takes a moment to secure himself in place. Off in the great distance, a silhouette of the city of Philadelphia can be seen.

He examines the high-tension cables and their mounts. After sizing up the job, he grabs his tactical mic.

JJ

Syd, looks like both units are pretty banged up. They're gonna need a full overhaul.

SYD (V.O.)

Can't be done today?

JJ

No. I don't have the equipment.

EXT. TOWER BASE - DAY

Syd looks over to the other crewmen and shakes his head. They begin to gather up a few items and return them to the truck.

SYD

Okay. Roger that. Bring it on down.

EXT. TOWER SUMMIT - DAY

JJ begins to prepare for descent when he hears a strange BUZZING. He looks all around, confused. Carefully resting the back of his hand on the tower's structure beam, he realizes he can feel an odd vibration as well. After a moment, he discovers the sound is emitting from the tension wires themselves - wires which come directly from the large city to the east.

He begins to go for his mic, but stops when he notices a reddish hue over-talking the power lines. He follows the changing condition of the lines with his eyes before locking onto the far off city-scape itself. There his eyes widen.

The city of Philadelphia is suddenly basked in a monstrous red glow that places the skyscrapers in sharp relief. There are odd, nearly vertical streaks in the distant sky. In seconds, a red storm of sorts overtakes the metropolis. The storm's force simultaneously widens and advances, pushing in the men's direction with impossible speed.

Panicked, JJ unbuckles and begins to climb down faster than anyone should. With one hand he clutches his mic to warn the others, but the radio does not appear to be working.

JJ
 Syd! Do you see that?! Come in!
 Come in, Syd!

EXT. TOWER BASE - DAY

The men are moving at a lazy pace, the line of trees cutting off their view of the distance.

One of the crewmen notices JJ making his way down at an unsafe speed.

CREWMAN 1
 Hey, what's gotten into your boy?

Syd looks up, then looks concerned. He hastily tries to raise JJ by radio.

SYD
 JJ! What's up, man?

Frustrated, he realizes the radio's not transmitting. He tries again.

SYD (CONT'D)
 What the fu...Slow down, JJ! Tell me what's going on!

He cannot get through. The other crewmen begin to share his alarm.

EXT. TRANSMISSION TOWER - DAY

In his haste, JJ's utility belt clamors against the ladder. One of his wrenches is knocked away free. Falling from a great height, it strikes hard against metal beams sending an unmistakable warning to anyone below.

Aware of his error, he yells out while still scampering down as fast as he can.

JJ
 Shit. Heads-up! Wrench! Wrench!

EXT. TOWER BASE - DAY

The three men are still looking up when they hear the sound of CLANGING and BANGING. Syd's eyes widen.

SYD
 Look alive! Make yourself small!

All three men stop in their tracks, hold their arms tight against their sides and look down at the ground.

A second later JJ's wrench impacts the earth between them with the force of a javelin.

Syd, becoming angry, breaks out of the stance and begins to berate JJ over his carelessness.

SYD (CONT'D)
You wanna kill yourself, fine by
me, but watch what the...!

He's cut off when one of his wide-eyed men grabs him by the shoulder and points east.

Syd turns. His expression becomes quizzical. He sees a reddish hue approaching fast. It's accompanied by a dull but powerful vibrating HUM. Trees are beginning to sway and creak. Birds are fleeing in the opposite direction.

The men look spooked.

EXT. TRANSMISSION TOWER - DAY

JJ can't move fast enough. The wind is kicking up. He yells to his crew below.

JJ
Just start the truck! Fuck the
gear!

EXT. TOWER BASE - DAY

Syd can barely make out what JJ is saying, but the two crewmen are panic-driven and take matters into their own hands. Climbing into the pickup, they speed away, kicking up dust as they go.

Syd holds his ground. He can hear trees in the distance SNAPPING like twigs.

EXT. TRANSMISSION TOWER - DAY

JJ sees the truck split.

JJ
Union strong, my ass!

Just about one hundred feet from the ground, JJ grabs the side rails of the ladder with both hands, positions his feet on them, and slides down the last bit of length at high speed. A portion of his right forearm, not protected by his gloves, is burned by the friction causing him to scream.

EXT. TOWER BASE - DAY

The two men rejoin but are unable to communicate due to the HIGH WINDS and NOISE.

Then there's another SOUND. Queer. Unnatural. Metal GROANING and TWISTING under great strain. As the two men run, they look behind them in time to see the electrical tower being, misshapen, distorted by an unseen force.

They make a mad dash for the tree line.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Syd and JJ run through the forest, zigzagging in an attempt to avoid falling trees and branches. They yell out to one another but can't even hear themselves in the SHRIEK and CLAMOR of the storm.

Suddenly there's a great thrust of wind-driven force, a blast of tremendous power. The men are thrown to the ground as trees bow to the unyielding pressure. No sooner than the two get back to their feet, they are drawn backwards, pulled off their feet in the opposite direction. The wind changes it's pitch. A HIGH-PITCHED DRAWING, WHIRLING sound is heard and felt. Trees rock back and crack with the sudden change in directional force.

Again, they get to their feet. Panicked, they spot an outcropping of large rocks protruding from the side of an embankment. They run for it.

EXT. MOUTH OF CAVE - DAY

JJ scrambles, tucking himself into the small cave-like shelter, but Syd falls, smashing his knee on a rock.

Badly injured, he desperately tries to gain entry. JJ reaches for him, yelling at the top of his lungs.

Their trembling hands grasp. JJ pulls and holds his ground.

Incredibly, Syd literally begins to disintegrate right before JJ's eyes at the mouth of the cave.

He looks at his hand in utter horror as he witnesses Syd's grip turn to dust, and slip away between his fingers.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Curling up in a ball, his hands pressed hard against his ears, JJ screams in darkness.

FADE TO:

TITLE:

"SENTIENT"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. CLOSE UP OF GREEN GRASS - DAY

Green grass is blown around lightly by a gentle breeze. BLIP. A dark drop of blood stains the blades, then another.

A CREAKING sound is heard. A shadow sways and looms. More blood drips. BLIP. BLIP.

EXT. SMALL AIRPORT RUNWAY - DAY

The sky emits a reddish hue with a delicate ash drifting down from above. Beneath it a small runway is littered with debris, some of which is still smoking. Long and violent skid marks lead directly into a collection of scattered bodies, luggage and the charred remnants of an aircraft.

EXT. FOREST LINE ALONGSIDE PLANE WRECKAGE - DAY

A large section of fuselage sits impaled on a tree. REESE, a twenty-something male, still strapped to his passenger seat, is swaying gently back and forth. He's about five feet from the ground and is suspended nearly upsidedown. Blood drips from his ears and nose. He awakens suddenly and begins to scream.

He looks around frantically trying to orient himself.

REESE

Somebody!? Anybody, please help me!

Tugging and jerking at the straps, he frees and falls to the ground with a thud. He's slow to get up and struggles to see. There's a strange HUM in the air. He shakes his head and bangs at his ears with the palms of his hands. He takes note of the reddish ash-like substance covering everything. Spotting the runway not far off, he clumsily starts in that direction.

EXT. SMALL AIRPORT RUNWAY - DAY

Reese steps out onto the littered tarmac taking in the carnage. His khaki pants are torn, his Polo shirt is dirty and bloodstained. Spotting a pair of glasses on the ground, he picks them up and tries them on. After a few squints, he discards them.

He looks in every direction and sees only death and wreckage. Crows are beginning to investigate the cadavers.

There are no first responders.

REESE

Help!

His panic swells.

REESE (CONT'D)

Help! There's been an accident!
Doesn't anyone give a shit! Christ!

In the distance he spots the airport's control tower. It appears heavily damaged as does its surrounding structures.

He starts off slowly in that direction. He stops only to pick up another pair of glasses but they're too damaged to be of use. Passing the cockpit section of the aircraft, he's repulsed by the sight of the two dead pilots still strapped to their seats, their flight console pressed into their twisted bodies.

EXT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Reese is overwhelmed by the carnage. Everything is in ruins. Blood still oozes from his ears, and his gait is unsteady. He continues to search for signs of life around the terminal. A lone K-9 dog, confused and still dragging its leash, stops and gives him a curious look. Reese is startled and halts in his tracks. The dog turns and trots off in the opposite direction.

Reese hesitantly heads off in the same direction. Once rounding the bend his bloodshot eyes widen. The dog is sniffing around ashen remains - remains shaped like a man's body. They're seared onto the asphalt surface. Nearby is a K-9 police vehicle, its rear hatch open. The dog appears to be reluctant to leave its faded master.

As Reese turns and slowly looks about, he finds more and more of these eerie remnants of human life. They're scattered and numerous, some even left on walls. Ghostly shadows are everywhere.

Unsettled, he gasps and looks around in every direction. He soon spots an access door still ajar.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Once inside the small wrecked airport terminal he finds it completely empty. No power. All monitor screens are black. Land lines, when tried, are silent.

He yells out. His voice cracks.

REESE

Hey! Anyone here?

He looks up and can see the angry red sky. The roof of the building has been partially torn away, and loose pieces of ceiling are hitting the floor in front of him. He cautiously moves to an expansive but shattered observation window. It looks out onto a courtyard where more ashen remains are found. Frightened, he runs away, heading down and back the way he came.

EXT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Reese bursts out the access door and begins running back toward the plane wreck.

EXT. SMALL AIRPORT RUNWAY - DAY

Upon returning to the wreckage Reese frantically begins to search through luggage. He finds a phone inside a backpack. It's HUMMING oddly and fails to power up. He drops it in helpless desperation.

He quickly moves on but stops by the cockpit. His gaze turns quizzical. The pilots' bodies are gone. Scanning the wreckage he sees that all of the bodies are now missing.

Reese becomes completely unglued and runs into the nearby treeline.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

JJ exits the cave, staggering into the waiting forest. His harness and most of his tools are gone. He seems dazed but continues on. His legs are shaky.

An odd red ash falls all around.

In his pocket something is HUMMING and glowing. He retrieves his cell phone. It appears hot to the touch. It will not power up. Still dazed, he throws it away and rubs his hands.

EXT. TOWER BASE - DAY

Back at the tower JJ is in awe. All of the transmission towers, as far as the horizon can be observed, are down, bent over as if a giant had twisted them into submission. The sky is red and a HUM persists unrelentingly. He looks up, observing reddish particles drifting in the air.

In the distance he spots the pickup truck on its side and heavily damaged.

EXT. TRUCK WRECKAGE - DAY

JJ finds the truck empty. He looks around. There is no one to be found.

EXT. FORESTED BACK ROAD - DAY

JJ is making his way down the same gravel road they had driven up earlier. Blood seeps from his nose. His lips are dry and cracked. After a few hundred feet he stops. In the distance he can hear the sound of running water. He runs hurriedly into the forest.

EXT. FOREST STREAM - DAY

JJ finds a small ribbon of water coursing gently through the forest floor. He falls to his knees and begins lapping up mouthfuls. His thirst slaked, he finds a large tree to rest beneath. His eyes close.

Not far off in the distance, behind the broad base of JJ's resting place, a human figure can be seen moving slowly through the forest. Twigs SNAP beneath its weight but it fails to rouse JJ. After a moment or so, it disappears into the far-off thicket.

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

JJ wakes with a start, his hand grasping at the air.

JJ

Syd!

It takes a moment for him to orient himself. When he does, he stands slowly. He runs his hands through his hair and notices the burn on his arm. It looks tender, painful.

A distant GUNSHOT crackles through the air. JJ pauses. Listens.

After what seems like a long time, a second SHOT is heard. It's still very distant but he turns his head in the direction it came from. Cautiously, he heads in the direction of the sporadic gunfire.

After just a few steps, JJ's attention is drawn back to the nearby stream. It appears swollen. There's much more water flowing now and it's beginning to run up over the banks.

Observing the change in the river's behavior, his brow furrows. Another distant SHOT snaps him out of his distraction and returns him to his trek.

EXT. DEEP FOREST - DUSK

JJ is walking slowly. He stops and looks around. The red ash no longer falls but has covered everything around him. Listening. He continues on. After moving deeper and deeper into the darkening forest, he stops and leans on a thick tree.

CRACK! The shot comes from just above JJ's head. He nearly jumps out of his skin when at the same time a spent rifle cartridge falls down the back of his shirt. The hot brass has him dancing to get it out and away from his flesh. He manages to remove it from behind his neck but is unable to hold the hot piece of metal for long. Throwing it to the ground, he hears chuckling from above.

JJ looks up. About thirty feet from the ground a MAN (SAL) is situated among the branches, scoped rifle in hand.

Alarmed JJ slowly backs away.

SAL

Relax. I saw, and heard...you coming a long time ago. If I wanted you dead I would have picked you off a hundred yards away.

Sal climbs down. A much older man, he's surprisingly agile.

Dropping down to the ground, JJ notices he is also carrying a sidearm.

Sal gives him a visual going-over, his rifle casually pointing in JJ's general direction. He scrutinizes him.

SAL (CONT'D)

Power company?

JJ nods. He fixes on the rifle barrel. It wavers but is still pointing at him.

SAL (CONT'D)
Work will be slow for a while.

JJ tries to muster up a chuckle.

The old man still seems uncertain about JJ. He glances at a few of the tools still protruding from JJ's pant pockets.

SAL (CONT'D)
Losing your fuse puller there.

JJ looks at the disheveled pocket and adjusts.

JJ
That's a ground clamp. What are you shooting at?

Sal smirks. It's very subtle. He then slings his rifle over his shoulder.

SAL
I have a small campsite about forty yards back. Sun's going down. My infrared optics aren't working, so...when was the last time you ate?

JJ
...I'm not even sure what day it is. I woke up in a cave. We were...

SAL
Save your strength. And your story. My name's Sal.

JJ
JJ.

SAL
This way, JJ.

Sal walks off. JJ hesitates, then follows suit.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Sal and JJ are seated on rocks across from one another. A fire burns low. JJ is working on a sandwich, Sal, a beer.

JJ
Why not North Korea?

SAL

The DPRK doesn't have that kind of firepower. No. It's gotta be China.

JJ

Why now?

SAL

Now? We've been at war with China for years. They've been manipulating the economy, engaging in cyber warfare... The first shots were fired a long time ago.

JJ

Will they invade?

SAL

God Damned, right. That's the end game. I suspect they'll come in from our southern border. We've been spotting Chinese Military Camps in Mexico for the last ten years.

JJ

And the red stuff everywhere.

JJ brushes some of it from his sleeve and rubs it between his fingers.

JJ (CONT'D)

It's slightly granulated like minute seeds. It's not fallout...

SAL

No. You got me there. Some phenomenon from the upper atmosphere. I really don't know. If it's radioactive we'll be dead in a week.

Rolling his up right sleeve, JJ winces at his friction burn. Sal takes notice, stands and reaches for a pine tree not far away. He pulls away a wad of sap and sits next to JJ.

SAL (CONT'D)

Here.

Sal rubs the sap on JJ's forearm wound. He winces again and begins to protest.

JJ
What is that?

SAL
Relax. You have some skin
breakages here. This will stop any
bleeding and help prevent
infection.

JJ
You a prepper, Sal?

SAL
No. Just used to watch that shit
on TV. Keep rubbing that around.
Seal the whole wound.

Sal returns to his original spot across from JJ. He watches
him dress his wound.

SAL (CONT'D)
Who do you have waitin' on you?

JJ is slow to respond.

JJ
I have a fiancée. She's a
mechanical engineer at the Kinzua
Dam.

JJ pauses and looks around.

JJ (CONT'D)
She's gotta still be there. I know
her. If the dam experienced any
structural damage from the attack
it will be in danger of failing.
She won't let that happen.

Sal nods.

SAL
I'm sure that dam is regulated by
an automated system. With power
out...even with back up
generators...I don't know how long
anyone can prevent...

JJ
Either do I. But on the way out
here I noticed the rivers beginning
to swell.

SAL

And...

JJ

My suspicion is that the dam IS failing. And that spill off gates are being opened. Manually.

SAL

You do know vital elements of infrastructure will be one of the first places the enemy will want to secure.

JJ

All the more reason I have to keep moving.

This registers with Sal.

SAL

But for tonight, you should rest. So...you have a picture of this girl?

JJ reaches for his cell phone but stops.

JJ

Yeah. No. I guess I don't.

He shakes his head. He speaks more to himself than to Sal.

JJ (CONT'D)

I don't have a picture of Lindsey anymore.

SAL

Never did carry one of those things. Now I guess I'm the trendy one.

Sal tends to the fire again, throwing a few more logs onto it. JJ watches him for a moment or two.

JJ

What were you shooting at, Sal?

Sal picks up his beer and takes a long swig.

SAL

You know, soon after we got hit, I went for my HAM radio console.

(MORE)

SAL (CONT'D)
Got some strange, garbled
communications from another
operator. All he kept screaming
was, "Allir eru Daudir."

JJ shakes his head.

JJ
What...

SAL
"Everyone is dead."

JJ takes that in a moment.

JJ
...What language is that?

Sal takes another long pull on his beer, finishing it.

SAL
...It's Icelandic.

JJ's draw drops. His eyes go distant.

SAL (CONT'D)
Get some shut-eye. I'll wake you
first sign of sunup.

EXT. GROUND-LEVEL CELLAR DOORS - DUSK

Twin cellar doors are being pounded from within. Heavy, sporadic THUDS are beginning to take their toll on the worn hinges.

Finally, a well-placed blow pushes one open. LENA, 23 years old, exits. She's dirty, exhausted, keyed up, and still has a party hat reading, "Happy Birthday" hanging from the back of her neck. Looking at the reddish, darkening sky and the strange dusting, she stands frozen in place. She turns around. Her eyes widen. Her lips quiver. She then begins to cry.

A sign reading, "Larry's Bar & Grill," lies in the street. It's the only clue left establishing that a bar ever existed at that location. The building has been swept clean away. Only a lonely country intersection remains.

Pulling off the hat and clutching it she starts walking along the darkened road. No street lights are working. She pulls out her HUMMING cell phone. It's glowing and appears hot to the touch. She drops it. It smashes to the ground.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. BAR - DAY

A BARTENDER approaches Lena who is busy readying the bar for the fast-growing crowd. MUSIC is playing. People are laughing and having a good time.

BARTENDER

Lena. I need you to go down to the basement and find that old bottle of Elijah Craig.

Lena is multi-tasking and looks a little frazzled.

LENA

Seriously? I don't have time for that...Elijah who?

BARTENDER

The 20 year old hooch. We're gonna need it tonight. Special occasion.

He guides her to the basement door and sees that she goes down. As soon as she does, he closes the door and turns to the others smiling. Two other BAR GIRLS waste no time in standing on the bar and hanging a banner reading, "Happy Birthday, Lena!"

INT. BAR BASEMENT - DAY

The lighting is not great. Lena has a hard time finding her way around. It's dusty and cluttered.

LENA

You gotta be kidding me.

She walks into a spider web and briefly freaks out.

LENA (CONT'D)

Hey, guys, I'm gonna need a flashlight or something! It's kind of medieval down here!

She re-climbs the rickety wooden stairs and begins to open the door. It's slammed shut from the other end before she can succeed.

LENA (CONT'D)

Heey! What's up?!

INT. BAR - DAY

The bartender is laughing and waving to the bar girls who are still struggling with a handful of decorations. A few of the patrons are donning party hats.

BARTENDER

(to bar girls)

You better kick it into gear. I'm not sure how long I can hold her.

BAR GIRL

Two more minutes.

BARTENDER

(to Lena behind the door)

The door's stuck. Hey, look in the wooden locker above the old furnace.

INT. BAR BASEMENT - DAY

LENA

Where?

The bartender yells from behind the door.

BARTENDER (V.O.)

The wooden locker! You can't miss it.

Lena flaps her hands by her sides and returns down the steps to the basement floor. She looks around, kicking junk out of her way. In the darkest of corners she sees the old furnace, cold and dust covered. Stepping up to it Lena finds an aged wooden locker just above it. It has, "The Good Stuff," carved into its door. She opens it then smiles in sudden surprise. Inside the locker is a bottle of whiskey with a birthday party hat sitting on its spout.

LENA

You guys...You guys!!

INT. BAR - DAY

The bar crew hears Lena yelling up to them and start to laugh. The laughing is cut short, however, when they begin to hear a strange vibrating ROAR coming from outside. One of the BAR PATRONS goes to the windows.

BAR PATRON
Hey, something is going on out
here.

The bar girls look concerned.

BAR GIRL
...Tornado?

BAR PATRON
(pulling party hat off)
No. No. Not a tornado...

The patron's face is fixed on something he sees outside. One bar girl jumps down and walks up by his side. Others start to take notice as well.

INT. BAR BASEMENT - DAY

Lena, preparing to ascend the steps with hat on and bottle in hand, stops short. She too, hears, feels something queer. Her smile dwindles away.

LENA
(nervously)
Guys? What's going on?

She runs over to a basement window, wipes it with her sleeve and peers out.

INT. BAR - DAY

Everyone at the bar is standing by the windows. Looks of curiosity surrender quickly into looks of sheer terror. They simultaneously begin to scream and attempt to take cover.

INT. BAR BASEMENT - DAY

Lena sees a streak in the sky and hears a thunderous BLAST from above. She's thrown hard to the floor. The bottle shatters into a million pieces. Everything around her is shaking savagely. She covers her head with her hands and screams.

RETURN TO PRESENT

EXT. DARK ROAD - DUSK

Lena is still walking, crying and clutching her hat. Coming upon a car still in decent condition, she runs up to it.

Peering inside, she sees the keys are still in the ignition. Lena throws open the door and turns the key. The engine clicks dead. She tries again. Her frustration mounts.

LENA

Jesus! Does anything work!?

Reese steps out of the shadows.

REESE

No.

Lena jumps. Her eyes afraid.

LENA

Who are you?

REESE

Nobody.

LENA

What?

REESE

Nothing works. Nothing.

Reese's eyes are somewhat vacant.

She gets out of the car when she notices he's bleeding from his right ear.

LENA

You're bleeding.

REESE

So are you.

He gestures to his nose meaning her's.

Lena puts her hand up just in time to catch a rivulet of blood trickling down.

LENA

Oh, God!

He steps up and pulls a handkerchief from his back pocket. He hands it to her.

REESE

It's okay. It comes and goes.

LENA

And that's "okay?"

He sighs.

REESE
If you're looking to me for
answers, don't.

She wipes her nose and her tears.

LENA
I've never seen anything like this.
There was a streak in the sky. I
saw it! Did you?

REESE
I honestly don't know. All I know
is that I must have really whacked
my head because things I'm
seeing...

LENA
A meteor? It had to be a meteor!

He gets frustrated quickly.

REESE
I don't know! Please stop yelling!

She starts to cry. He stops and resets his tone. He notices
her hat.

REESE (CONT'D)
...Whose birthday?

LENA
What?

He gestures to her hat. Lena throws it.

LENA (CONT'D)
Mine. It's my birthday today.

Her crying returns.

Reese looks awkward. After a moment, he closes the distance
and delicately embraces her. She leans into him, her crying
becoming more intense.

REESE
...Happy birthday.

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

JJ awakes by the fire pit. The fire has long been out. Sal is already standing, rifle slung over his shoulder. He has some extra gear by his feet.

SAL

I have some Java in the thermos there.

JJ rubs the sleep out of his eyes.

JJ

Going hunting?

Sal tosses a small backpack in his direction.

JJ (CONT'D)

Sal, I need to keep moving. I don't have time...

SAL

How's your arm?

JJ looks at it. It appears to be improving. He sighs.

JJ

Better...Much better.

SAL

Good to hear. This way, JJ.

He turns and starts off into the forest. JJ stands and shakes his head. He then grabs the gear and thermos, and reluctantly follows Sal.

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - DAY

Sal, walking about thirty feet ahead of JJ, comes to a rocky ridge. It overlooks an expansive piece of land. He lies down on his stomach and positions the high-powered rifle.

As JJ approaches, Sal gestures for him to lie down next to him. When JJ does, he see what Sal is looking over. Below is a large building surrounded on all sides by thick stone walls. Towers, some of which have fallen, stand on every corner. One side of the heavy wall has collapsed completely.

SAL

In your pack is a spotter scope. Take it out and look out about fifty yards from that collapsed wall.

JJ does as he's told. Positioning the small mount, he peers into the lense.

EXT. P.O.V. THROUGH SPOTTER LENSE - DAY

The lense moves back and forth, up and down. In it high grass can be seen.

SAL (V.O.)
What do you see?

JJ (V.O.)
Nothing. Just weeds.

SAL (V.O.)
Swing it to your left.

The lense moves over.

JJ (V.O.)
Okay...

SAL (V.O.)
Anything?

JJ (V.O.)
No. Wait. Yes. There's a man. A
man in an orange jump...

CRACK! A shot jumps from Sal's rifle. JJ sees the man in the orange jumpsuit drop.

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - DAY

Throwing the lense off to his side, JJ rolls over and away from Sal. His eyes are wide. He's on the verge of sheer panic.

JJ
Why did you do that!?

Sal nonchalantly unfastens the strap on his sidearm holster. He keeps his hand over it. In it is a chrome revolver with "Salvi" carved into its handle.

SAL
You think I'm a bad person, JJ?
Are you prepared to stop me?

JJ looks at the handgun.

JJ

Why did you shoot that man?

SAL

That was no man. You see that building down there. That's Graterford Prison. It's a maximum security facility. I worked there for thirty years. A C.O. That "man" was Harold J. Benson. A lifer. He killed, dismembered and consumed eight children over the course of two years.

JJ looks out over the ridge, then back to Sal.

Sal continues, pointing a stiff finger at the ruined prison.

SAL (CONT'D)

The wall you see now compromised guarded cell block D. Block D housed the worst of the worst. The creatures in there kept me from sleeping most nights. I would have nightmares that they got out, were free to roam and prey among us.

JJ

But, Sal...

SAL

That nightmare came true.

JJ

With everything going on now. With all that has happened. This is your first order of business?

Sal becomes even more vehement. His voice trembles.

SAL

You're God-damned right!

The two men look at one another. No one says anything for a moment.

SAL (CONT'D)

You think I'm wrong? You can't stomach what I'm doing? This is who I am now. And I can sure use your help.

Sal turns and refocuses down field. JJ stares at him.

SAL (CONT'D)

I feel for your gal and all, but there's nothing you can do. Here you can do something worthwhile. Besides my cabin is situated on high ground. Moved there shortly after that fuckin' dam was built.

JJ stares at the revolver. He looks at Sal still adjusting the sights on his scope. He looks again at the derelict prison.

With slow resolution, JJ returns to the spotter scope and resumes his duty.

EXT. P.O.V. THROUGH SPOTTER LENSE - DAY

JJ works the lense around. He sees something moving, but says nothing. Sal is silent. Waiting.

Another man in an orange jumpsuit appears. He's struggling, trying to free himself from the rubble. He seems to be only slightly injured.

JJ is quiet.

The man breaks free and is making his way around the backside of the building. He will soon be out of sight.

Still, JJ says nothing.

The man is only ten feet away from disappearing into obscurity.

JJ (V.O.)

Got one. About twenty feet from the downed north tower.

CRACK!

The man drops. Sal cackles.

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - DAY

JJ hangs his head low. Sal still peers into his rifle scope, slowly swinging the long gun from left to right.

SAL

Still with me, son?

JJ doesn't answer. Instead he looks over at Sal's side arm. He then slowly returns to the spotter scope.

EXT. P.O.V. THROUGH SPOTTER LENSE - DAY

Another figure is spotted by JJ. It's too far off and is standing in the shadows beneath a clutch of trees. He pulls focus in and out. The figure is of a man. He's silhouetted. It's unclear as to what he is wearing.

JJ (V.O.)
...I think...

JJ struggles with the lense. The male figure moves. When he does, an odd bluish aura, very subtle, is seen around him. The figure then stops abruptly and seems to fixate on JJ as if it knows he is there, knows it is being observed.

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - DAY

JJ pulls his face away from the spotter scope and looks up at the sun. He then uses his sleeve to wipe the lense clean. He blows into it. Re-focuses.

EXT. P.O.V. THROUGH SPOTTER LENSE - DAY

The figure is gone.

JJ (V.O.)
...No. Just a shadow, I guess.

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - DAY

JJ takes a moment to collect himself. He looks over at Sal who is still fixated down field.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. BARN - DAY

Lena, seated in some hay, looks at Reese who is still sleeping. Holding a set of keys, she begins to scrape into her arm. She then digs, causing herself to bleed. She winces slightly but does not stop until Reese suddenly awakens. She yanks down her sleeve.

Reese rouses slowly.

REESE

What time is it?

LENA

My sundial's in my other pants.

He stands and peeks out of the door. He spots the property's half-ruined farmhouse not far off.

REESE

Well, there's the home of the property. I don't see anyone though.

LENA

Let's knock. I'm starving.

REESE

Hey, I wanted to knock last night.

LENA

It was too late and too dark. They would have shot us. I'm sure everyone is on high alert for looters or whatnot.

REESE

You watch too much TV, Lena.

LENA

Well, go right ahead then. I'm waiting here.

Reese hesitates. He swings the door open and starts out. After a moment, he reappears.

REESE

Maybe it would appear less threatening if a girl was next to me.

Lena rolls her eyes and joins him.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

The two step up onto the porch, peering into windows and yelling out sporadically. They knock on doors and rap on windows. Working their way around the back, they see the entire rear portion of the home has been ripped open. They are able to slip inside easily.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Carefully they move about the ruined homestead. Reese goes through cupboards and Lena opens the cellar door and yells down. There's no answer.

REESE

Why would they be in the basement?

LENA

Call it a hunch.

REESE

Hey, I found something.

He holds a sealed mason jar about a foot from his face. Squinting to read the label, he yells over to Lena.

REESE (CONT'D)

Is this food?

INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN AREA - DAY

The two are seated across from one another eating an assortment of canned fruits. Reese seems to be struggling with the concept of eating out of a jar.

LENA

So, I'm guessing you're not a country boy.

REESE

Pittsburg.

LENA

Never been. Hell, the last time I was in Philly was a class trip. What are you doing out here?

REESE

I work in I.T. Was supposed to do a little consulting for Lancaster General Hospital. I specialize in PACS, Picture Archiving and Communication Systems.

Wiping peach syrup from her chin and only half listening.

LENA

Scrapbooking.

Reese pauses.

REESE

Wait. What? No. It's the transfer of large digital images for display and storage purposes. CMU grad.

She nods seemingly uninterested.

REESE (CONT'D)

Where did you go to school?

LENA

I'm between universities at the moment.

He picks up the sarcasm and returns to his meal.

LENA (CONT'D)

...Sorry. I'm a...I was a barkeep. My sister is a senior at Temple. It's all I ever hear about.

She stops eating.

LENA (CONT'D)

And right now I have no idea if she's dead or alive.

She begins to look as if she's going to become upset but reels it back in.

REESE

You okay?

LENA

Yep. I've cried more in the last twenty-four hours than I have in the last ten years.

REESE
Your folks...?

LENA
Dad and step mom. We're not close.

She looks up at his forehead and comments on one of several bruises and scrapes.

LENA (CONT'D)
That bruise over your right eye
looks pretty nasty.

He puts his hand over it.

REESE
I know. Feel like I was hit with a
sledgehammer. I was on a
Gulfstream jet. Just a quick hop-
over from Pitt. I remember we were
just coming in to land, you know
making our approach. Heard the
pilots screaming about a flame out
or something. "Brace!" "Brace!"
That was the last thing I heard.
That's what they said. "Brace!"
"Brace!"

His voice drifts in and out. She listens patiently.

REESE (CONT'D)
Woke up in a tree. There were
bodies...There were bodies but then
they were...

Lena stands and places her hand on his shoulder.

REESE (CONT'D)
They were there, then they
weren't...

LENA
Reese, go lay down.

REESE
No, I'm good.

LENA
Really. Just go close your eyes.
I'll look around and see if I can
find anything of use.

He stands. She guides him to a nearby couch. After clearing it of plaster and dry wall, she lays him down.

REESE

But nothing works, Lena.

LENA

Just lay down a bit. Let me look around.

He closes his eyes. Lena pulls a knitted blanket off a chair and puts it over him.

Her hands on her hips, she bights her lip and looks around the dilapidated home.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

JJ and Sal are walking together. JJ is in front of Sal who still carries the rifle.

JJ hears a moaning up ahead and picks up his pace. Sal follows with a smile creeping over his face.

They come upon an escape PRISONER in an orange jumpsuit. His leg is caught in a large bear trap and is clearly fractured. Not far from the man, but out of reach, is a 45 Cal. Handgun.

JJ sees the gun, Sal, only the prisoner.

JJ

Sal! You're trapping them?

The man is crying out and holding his shattered leg. JJ approaches the trap.

SAL

Back away, JJ.

JJ

No. Don't do this. Please.

Sal pulls his revolver. The prisoner's eyes widen.

PRISONER

Please, Sal. You remember me. I never gave you no trouble.

SAL

No, you didn't. You were a well-behaved little cop killer.

Sal shoots the man in the head. JJ turns away, repulsed.

JJ

Jesus Christ.

SAL
He has nothing to do with this.

Sal re-holsters and bends down to free the trap.

SAL (CONT'D)
Give me a hand. I wanna reset this
over by the ridge there.

JJ spies the 45.

As Sal pries the jaws of the trap open, he feels a gun on the back of his head. JJ is standing over him.

JJ
Guess he snagged a guard's gun.

Sal does not move.

SAL
Killed him for it, is more like it.

JJ
Maybe.

SAL
Gonna kill me?

JJ
Maybe.

JJ reaches down and removes Sal's revolver. He empties the shells in his hand and throws them into the bushes. He then tosses the revolver in the opposite direction. He unslings Sal's high-powered rifle, grabs it by the barrel and heaves it far and away.

SAL
That's a mistake. You should kill
me.

JJ
I'm not you.

Sal laughs.

SAL
No, but I am. And you're not going
to be able to get far enough away
from me before I drop you like a
buck in season.

JJ begins to back away.

JJ
Perhaps I have more faith in
humanity.

Sal becomes enraged. He stands but keeps his distance.

SAL
Well, you're gonna need that faith
when you find Chinamen lining up
two at a time to fuck that pretty
little girl of your's!

JJ
I saw what did this. Saw it coming
miles away, Sal. Wasn't the
Chinese.

SAL
What did you see?

JJ
Steaks in the sky! A red plume...

SAL
ICBMs!

JJ continues to increase his distance.

JJ
No! I don't know what I saw, but
it wasn't...

SAL
Kill me, boy! Kill me now! I
swear, the moment I sight you in...

Shaking his head, JJ runs off. Sal watches him, he eyes
glaring.

EXT. SPARSE FOREST - DAY

JJ is nearly out of breath and can run no more. He looks all
around before spotting an open road not far away. He makes
for that direction.

P.O.V. THROUGH RIFLE LENSE - DAY

JJ walks laboriously toward the open road ahead. The cross
hairs find him easily.

EXT. HIGH IN TREE - DAY

Sal is positioned perfectly, rifle extended, barrel resting on a branch.

SAL
(to himself)
I got you...

Sal's finger closes around the trigger. He hesitates, begins to weep.

He pulls the rifle back and points it to the sky. He fires a round straight up.

EXT. FOREST'S EDGE MEETS ROAD - DAY

JJ hears the shot from far off. He pauses, exhibits an uncertain smile, then continues along the road.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Reese, asleep on the couch, is awoken gently as he feels Lena placing a pair of old-fashion wire rim glasses on his face. His eyes flutter as he sits up.

REESE

Hey, where did you get these?

LENA

Do they work?

He picks up a magazine from the floor and looks at it. He smiles.

REESE

Yes!

He then tilts the corner of them and holds his palms out by his face.

REESE (CONT'D)

Do they work?

She looks him over, her hand on her chin.

LENA

No. But they'll have to do.

EXT. FARM ENVIRONS - DAY

Reese and Lena are walking about the farm. Lena takes notice of a handful of goats and sheep roaming the property.

LENA

Reese. You know what's odd?

Meanwhile, Reese has stumbled upon an old tractor partially hidden by fallen debris.

REESE

Look at this.

She makes her way over to him.

LENA

Yes. Another useless old machine.

REESE

"Old" is the key word. Help me out here.

They start to remove some of the debris. It's not easy. They work both in tandem and independently in order to get the job done.

LENA

So, why are the animals okay?

He grunts, pushing a large tree branch from the machine.

REESE

I don't know. Lucky, I guess.

LENA

Maybe. Just seems odd. I mean the people here had shelter. Animals didn't.

REESE

Animals just resort...

He stops.

LENA

What is it?

Reese stops what he's doing. He looks at Lena then off into the distance as he thinks aloud.

REESE

At the airport, after the crash. I spotted a police K-9. Well, he actually spotted me. He still had his leash on.

LENA

Okay...

REESE

Well a K-9 cop never lets go of his dog, right?

LENA

No. Unless he needs it to attack someone.

REESE

So it stands to reason that the cop would have had his dog by his side. Always.

Lena blinks her eyes, thinking to herself. She looks out to the animals in the field.

LENA

Was his body nearby?

Reese looks at her but doesn't answer. A strange look appears on his face as if his mind traveled somewhere dark. He quickly returns his attention to the tractor.

REESE

The keys are still in it.

LENA

What makes you think this heap will work when even new cars don't?

He jumps into the seat, messes with some pedals and turns the key. It CLICKS.

LENA (CONT'D)

Told ya.

He scratches his head and looks around the property. Spotting a root cellar, he hops off and heads toward it.

REESE

Pop the hood.

She sighs and does as she's told.

INT. ROOT CELLAR - DAY

Reese is struggling to see in the darkened underground structure. He presses the door open wide to allow as much light in as possible. Looking about, he spots a compressor.

EXT. FARM ENVIRONS - DAY

Lena is sitting by the tractor waiting for Reese to reemerge. She begins to impulsively pick at the fresh wound on her arm.

Reese returns with a bit of a pep in his step. He's holding a small gadget in his hand.

REESE

I took this ignition switch off a compressor down there.

She sighs.

LENA

So...

He stops and looks at her with an air of discovery.

REESE

It was underground.

She does not share his enthusiasm.

LENA

K...

He huffs and moves past her, quickly making his way over to the tractor engine. He has a handful of screwdrivers poking out of his back pocket.

After a few minutes of tinkering, he hops back up onto the tractor.

LENA (CONT'D)

This is a waste of time, Reese.

He turns the key. The engine actually tries to turnover. He fumbles with the controls.

Lena's eyes widen.

LENA (CONT'D)

Holy shit! Move over, geek!

She uses her ass to shove him off the seat. Pulling at the choke, and pressing down on the clutch, she tries again.

LENA (CONT'D)

This isn't a Lexus. You got a few extra moves here.

It fires up loudly. They look at each other smiling.

REESE

That was my whole point!

She revs it as he clears it of all remaining debris. Lena puts it into gear and after a few jerky movements, rolls it into a clearing. She hops off but leaves the engine running.

LENA

Why is this working? I don't get it.

REESE

I think there was an EMP effect of some sort.

LENA
I don't know what that is.

REESE
Electromagnetic pulse.

She stares at him.

REESE (CONT'D)
It's a fast and silent wave of energy that destroys all sensitive electronic equipment. Everything. Microchips, digital electronic equipment, the kinds of technology that's virtually in everything we own and operate today. The ignition set I used was shielded from that.

LENA
Is that what happened? An EMP?

REESE
Well...it's part of it. An EMP can occur for different reasons.

LENA
Like...?

REESE
A nuclear blast. A sun spot.

She looks confused and stares at the tractor.

REESE (CONT'D)
This old machine doesn't rely on a lot of the delicate circuitry found in modern vehicles. That's why it started.

LENA
Could a meteor strike cause an EMP?

He pauses.

REESE
...I don't know.

His thoughts carry him away for a moment as Lena eyes up the tractor. She smirks.

LENA
I'm driving.

REESE

Fine. We should load up.

LENA

Food. Water. Clothes. Fuel.
There's an army base in Carlisle.

REESE

How do you know it hasn't been
destroyed? Or mobilized?

LENA

I don't. But I think we should
find good people before bad people
find us.

REESE

Bad people?

LENA

I know a thing or two about human
nature, Reese. Folks are not going
to be on their best behavior.
Checks and balances will be on hold
for a while.

He nods and runs a shaky hand through his hair.

LENA (CONT'D)

I searched what was left of the
farmhouse for a gun.

His eyes widen.

REESE

You have a gun?

LENA

No. I couldn't find any.

Reese looks relieved. She gives him an odd look.

LENA (CONT'D)

That wasn't supposed to be good
news. Let's get going.

She peers out once more at the unaffected animals as they hop
on the machine, and rumble down the empty road.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA ZOO - DAY

DAMIAN, thirty something male, is atop a large cage. He's fixed a rope onto the handle and is attempting to open a gate from a safe distance.

CAROLYN, thirty something female, watches from an even safer distance.

DAMIAN
I'm letting them go!

She looks uncertain. Both are disheveled and are wearing caps that read, "Philadelphia Zoo."

CAROLYN
Are you sure this is what we should
be doing, Damian?

He struggles with the rope and mechanisms. He becomes agitated.

DAMIAN
Carolyn, we've been over this.
There is no way we can take care of
this many animals. It's the only
humane thing left to do.

She bites her lip.

CAROLYN
Yeah, but...for the first time in
my life I'm more worried about
people.

The gate flies open with a loud CLANG. With that, two large leopards scurry out and run across the park zoo, over a low fence and out well beyond the park's perimeter.

Damian looks out over what remains of the big city. It's in ruins as far as the eye can see. There's an odd bluish aura surrounding the entire metropolis.

DAMIAN
(to himself)
What people.

EXT. OVERHEAD VIEW, PHILADELPHIA - DAY

The city is in ruins. A collective bluish aura permeates from the dwellings below.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA ZOO - DAY

Damian stands from a crouched position still looking over the city-scape.

DAMIAN

I don't recall giving you a hard time when you released your Saddle-billed Storks?

CAROLYN

Very funny. You're releasing large carnivores...

DAMIAN

And the large carnivores were my charge.

She shakes her. Damian looks over his shoulder to the rhino paddock where an enormous black rhinoceros lumbers back and forth. He looks back over to Carolyn smiling wryly.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Thudley is a herbivore.

Her eyes widen.

CAROLYN

Thudley is a three-thousand pound Black Rhino.

He laughs.

DAMIAN

...Who's gonna love the foliage along Girard Avenue!

JOEY, a teenager, runs over and interrupts them.

JOEY

Damian! The Gazelles and Impalas are out. I freed them along the west side. I thought they might work their way over to Fairmount Park.

DAMIAN

Thanks, Joey. Good thinking.

The boy turns and begins to walk away.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Joey!

He stops and looks at Damian.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Take it easy, right?

JOEY
It's all good.

He continues to walk away. Damian glances at Carolyn.

CAROLYN
His meds...

DAMIAN
...are at home. In New Jersey.

She has a worried look.

CAROLYN
I'm going to check in on the rest
of the birds.

She walks away. Damian pulls a flask from his side pocket and takes a long stiff pull from it.

EXT. BACK ROAD - DAY

JJ comes across an Amish buggy, damaged and on its side. The horse is nowhere to be found. Reaching inside of the cab, he finds a jug of water which he consumes eagerly. He also spots bags of raw carrots. He begins placing as many carrots as he can carry inside his backpack.

He looks around.

JJ
Hello! Anybody!

There is no one to be found anywhere. He organizes his supplies and presses on.

Unbeknownst to JJ, his slow departure is being observed by a BLACK WOMAN standing motionless within the treeline.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DUSK

Driving the tractor, Reese and Lena are making slow progress down a country road, working their way around abandoned vehicles here and there. They check every car and truck they come upon. There are no people. There are no bodies.

Eventually they come upon the wreckage of a large aircraft. A 747, it appears to have come in hard, splitting trees through the forest and ending up fragmented in a corn field.

Lena starts to hop off.

REESE

What are you doing?

LENA

We should look through the wreckage. See if there is anything we can use.

Reese looks suddenly ill and on the verge of panic.

REESE

No.

LENA

Why not? There could be food, medicine...

REESE

We have plenty of food for now.

LENA

I don't understand...

He yells out.

REESE

I'm not going over there, Lena!
No! No!

Seeing his abrupt change of demeanor, she acquiesces and returns to the tractor.

LENA

Okay...

They continue on not saying a word to one another.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA ZOO - NIGHT

The night sky is clear. A harvest moon sits high in the dark sky. Below this sky, Damian sits atop rocks and boulders overlooking a large but empty animal pen. He's slouched against a stone and appears to be very drunk. He takes a long, hard pull from his flask. Looking up at the moon, he begins to howl. He laughs and chokes then howls again. In the distance the HOWLING is returned. Damian laughs harder. Drinks harder.

EXT. HIGHWAY OVERPASS - NIGHT

A pack of Timber Wolves is moving freely about the abandoned highway. The alpha male, however, has stopped to answer the call in the night.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. DARK WOODS - NIGHT

The same moon looms overhead. JJ is making his way up a steep hill.

EXT. MAKESHIFT SHELETR - NIGHT

On high ground, JJ, has situated a tarp over a downed tree providing himself with some shelter for the night. He has dug out a small fire pit and begins to search the area for wood.

EXT. DARK WOODS - NIGHT

JJ looks about the dark woods using a small flashlight.

Abruptly, he begins to hear whispering. He stops, listens, looks around. The whispering is sporadic and soon he can make out his name being uttered.

WHISPERING VOICE

JJ...

His eyes widen.

JJ

Who is that?

WHISPERING VOICE

Ssssssyd...

He rubs his ears, whips the light around. His light hits a human figure standing between the trees. Phantom-like, it appears to be Syd. He's battered, his clothes torn and his eyes are missing. Though the phantom's mouth does not move, it seems to be the source of the haunting whisper.

WHISPERING VOICE (CONT'D)

I waited for you....You Let me
die...

His panic swells.

JJ

Syd! Syd, I'm sorry. There was
nothing I could do!

JJ drops the light but retrieves it quickly. When he does, the phantom is gone. JJ begins to shake and cry.

EXT. MAKESHIFT SHELETR - NIGHT

JJ tries to calm down and get comfortable. He checks to make sure his 45 is still in his backpack. A fire is burning nearby.

He stirs, looking fragile and uncertain. In time, he surrenders to sleep.

EXT. WOODS - DAWN

The black woman stands and watches JJ sleep. She's does so from a canopy of dimly lit trees not far from his shelter. She scans his body and position with a PULSATILE SOUND WAVE of light.

She then turns and walks off into the woods as the morning sun begins to crest.

EXT. MAKESHIFT SHELETR - DAY

JJ awakens amidst sheer terror. A nightmare. It takes him a few moments to regain his sensorium.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

JJ is walking along the road when he spots a cluster of tall trees.

EXT. TREE - DAY

JJ makes is making his way up a tree at a very quick pace. Continuing up he reaches a spot where he can see for several miles. He uses some of his grappling tools to extend himself out onto a long branch. In the far-off distance he can see wisps of smoke rising from the ground here and there.

EXT. JJ'S P.O.V. THROUGH LENSE - DAY

Raising his spotter's scope, he sees the dam many miles away. JJ then pans around more, distinguishing the source of the smoke pillars. One of them is from a helicopter crash site. He then spots a small body of water not far off. Refocusing, he observes several bodies floating within it.

EXT. TREE - DAY

Dropping the scope away, he appears disturbed by the finding. He then repositions himself and prepares to ascend even higher when he spots something happening below.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A little AMISH GIRL is walking along the road. She seems upset and lost.

Suddenly, and without warning, she is approached by four horsemen exiting the forest line.

EXT. TREE - DAY

JJ, looking concerned, begins to climb down immediately.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The little girl is facing the four horsemen now emerging from the forest. They appear to be coal miners. A HEAVILY BEARDED MAN is on the lead horse.

All of the soot-covered men have serious looks on their faces. They have helmets with lights on them dangling from the saddles as well as pick axes and other assorted tools.

The man on the lead horse is leering over the frightened girl just as JJ runs to the her side.

JJ
(cautiously)
Hello. Hey. How can I help you?

The man looks over JJ, then back to the little girl.

BEARDED MAN
Your daughter?

JJ
Yes.

BEARDED MAN
You're not Amish.

JJ
No. Oh, her clothes...It was all I could find. Her's were in pretty bad shape.

The stranger does not seem convinced.

BEARDED MAN
She don't look like you.

JJ
More so her mother. You guys coal miners?

BEARDED MAN
What's left of them. We were 'bout a thousand feet below the earth when all hell broke loose up here. Funny. Hell being up here.

JJ smiles awkwardly. The bearded man focuses on the little girl again.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)
You know, there's some odd folk runnin' around. Deviants.

JJ swallows. Looks at the girl who looks back at him with fear and pleading in her eyes.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)
Lots of bad things. High strangeness. But we've been taken matters into our own hands. Until the lights come back on that is.

JJ spots the bearded man's pick ax dangling off the side of his horse. It appears to be stained with dried blood. JJ then pulls the little girl behind him ever so slightly. He slides his backpack to his left shoulder.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)
She's real quiet.

JJ
...Yeah. Just a little shy. You guys see any Chinese Military?

BEARDED MAN
Chinese?

JJ
It's a theory.

BEARDED MAN
Wrong one. Chinese got nothing to do with this. This is the government at work.

(MORE)

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)
They brought this on. Got their
police state now.

JJ
I can't buy into that.

BEARDED MAN
Of course you can't. Like the rest
of them you've been too busy
staring at all the shiny gadgets
they've been sellin' us over the
last twenty years. Big TV screens.
Tiny hand-held phones and games.
Distracting us with gifts. Kinda'
like showing a bush native a Zippo
lighter while the rest of the boys
run off with their women and gold.

The men behind him laugh. JJ smiles an uneasy smile.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)
Meanwhile they chip away at our
rights, our way of livin'. Before
you know it you look up and the sky
is fallin'.

More chuckling from behind him, as the bearded man fixes his
gaze upon the little girl. He walks his horse over slowly in
order to get a better look at her. He leans down off the
saddle.

JJ licks his lips. He lets the backpack slide further down
his arm and keeps himself between the stranger and the girl.

The other three men on horses fan out to the flanks a bit,
semi encircling JJ and the child. The lead coal miner
continues to leer at her. Her eyes meet his. She's shaking
and beginning to clutch JJ's side.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)
Hello, sweetheart.

She just stares at him. JJ is holding his breath.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)
What's your name, little girl?

She looks at him fearfully.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)
Don't you have a name?

JJ puts his hand on her shoulder. She stares at the mounted
stranger above her. He stares back. His eyes move to JJ.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)
What's your daughter's name?

JJ balks. The men glare at him, fumble with their packs.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)
I'm talkin' to you, pal.

JJ
It's...

AMISH GIRL
...Jenny.

The coal miner looks at her and smiles, his teeth not much cleaner than his face.

BEARDED MAN
Well, what a pretty little name for
a pretty little girl.

He glances back at JJ, his smile gone.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)
You sure she's your kin?

JJ is shoved slightly by the hindquarters of one of the horses.

JJ
What kind of question is that?

BEARDED MAN
You're right. I'm done askin'
questions.

The bearded man lunges for the child, but JJ quickly picks her up, ducks beneath one of the horses, and savagely screams as he FIRES SEVERAL ROUNDS into the air.

The horses rear up, throwing one man off.

JJ
Go now or I kill the horses then
you!

The men are alarmed, caught off guard. The fallen one limps back onto his mount.

JJ stands his ground, the girl cowering behind him.

They ride off the same way they came.

JJ closes his eyes for a moment before addressing the wide-eyed girl. She's very shaken and begins to cry. He crouches down to her.

JJ (CONT'D)

You okay?

A physical and emotional mess, she's crying too hard to respond. Her clothes are tattered, her bonnet, missing.

JJ (CONT'D)

Was that your buggy way back there?

She nods.

JJ (CONT'D)

Your folks?

Her crying intensifies. He stops asking questions and tries to give her a hug but she recoils.

JJ (CONT'D)

Okay. Okay. I'm sorry. Do you
just want to walk with me a while?

She looks all around before giving him an uncertain nod. They then begin to walk along the road. She follows behind him a few paces, wiping her nose with her wrist.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. PHILADELPHIA ZOO, OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Damian is atop an observation tower. Using a mounted telescope, he spies movement in the great distance. It takes him a moment to focus in on what he's seeing.

EXT. DAMIAN'S P.O.V. THROUGH LENSE - DAY

A small column of vehicles is moving in his direction. Smoke puffs, emitting from engines, escape here and there.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA ZOO, OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Damian pulls away from the telescope in disbelief. After a moment, he returns his attention to the spy glass again.

EXT. DAMIAN'S P.O.V. THROUGH LENSE - DAY

The column is getting closer.

There is an armored vehicle followed by a jeep at the front. Behind are two larger trucks, troop carriers. In the rear a second armored vehicle is visible. Both armored vehicles have gunners situated atop them.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA ZOO, OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Damian pulls away again, still staring off in the distance. He yells out for Carolyn.

DAMIAN

Carolyn!

His yell is returned, but it is laden with stress and anxiety.

CAROLYN (V.O.)

Damian!

Still distracted, he doesn't pick up on the disconnect right away.

DAMIAN

Carolyn! Hey, Carolyn!

CAROLYN (V.O.)

Damian!

DAMIAN
Come look at this!

CAROLYN (V.O.)
For Christ's sake! Get down here
now!

He looks over the edge and peers down at Carolyn who appears to be in a state of sheer panic.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

JJ and Jenny are walking slowly along a narrow trail. They stop and sit across from one another.

JJ opens his pack and offers her a protein bar. She hesitantly takes it.

JJ
You don't remember anything?

After a couple of bites, she mumbles a few words at a time.

JENNY
Something strong knocked our buggy
over. The sky looked strange. My
mother screamed something. That's
all.

JJ
When you woke they were
just...gone?

She nods, tears starting again.

JENNY
Chief ran off.

JJ
Chief? Your horse.

She nods. He takes a swig of water.

JENNY
Father spoke of the end of the
world coming soon.

JJ stops mid drink.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Those men. They were the four
horsemen of the apocalypse. Father
spoke of them often.

JJ scoffs.

JJ
More like the four assholes of
Carbon County.

She recoils at his language.

JJ (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm sure your father
was a well-read and honest man, but
those guys were...just bad men.

She looks down.

JENNY
You don't read the bible.

JJ
No. Does that make me a bad man?

She starts to nod but it's uncertain and without conviction.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL/COUNTRY BACK ROAD - DAY

JJ and Jenny are leaving a forest trail for a country back road. JJ pauses and listens. ROARING WATER is heard. He motions for Jenny to stay put as he runs up a steep embankment not far from their position. From that vantage point he can see the rivers are swelling even more. His face reflects deep concern.

EXT. BACK ROAD - DAY

JJ and Jenny are walking faster now. They soon come upon a damaged and abandoned gas station. There's an old tractor parked out front. As they pass it, JJ places his hand on the engine hood. His eyes widen a bit. They keep moving. As he peers into what used to be the front office, he sees Reese, Lena and a third man, DALLAS, sitting around.

Dallas is a large man. He has an odd tattoo on the left side of his neck and is wearing a mechanic's pants and T-shirt.

INT. GAS STATION OFFICE - DAY

JJ enters with Jenny in tow.

JJ
Hi.

DALLAS

Hi!

JJ

You guys got that old thing running. That's great.

Dallas smiles and nods, The other two just remain neutral. Reese has a black eye. Lena appears somewhat traumatized, her clothes disheveled.

JJ (CONT'D)

...I'm JJ. This is...this is Jenny.

DALLAS

Dallas. This here is Lena and Reese.

JJ nods quickly, speaks quickly. Reese and Lena just glance awkwardly at one another before looking back at JJ.

JJ sets his pack down. Jenny stands at the doorway giving Dallas an uneasy stare.

When JJ's back is turned, Dallas's smile quickly disappears as he glares at the other two. The smile returns as JJ spins around. Jenny sees this.

JJ

I'm happy to see others are doing okay. This is great.

DALLAS

Yeah, we're doing okay so far. Right, Lena?

Dallas musses her hair. She smiles weakly. Reese attempts to give a visual cue indicating Dallas is not with them, but JJ is not picking it up. Instead looks over Dallas and the clothes he's wearing.

JJ

You a mechanic?

Dallas smiles and nods. JJ looks at the others who remain quiet but share quizzical stares. His eyes bounce between the couple and Dallas.

JJ (CONT'D)

There's something you all should know. I have good reason to believe that the Kinzua Dam is damaged.

(MORE)

JJ (CONT'D)
 If I'm right, this area can flood
 and flood fast. We should use that
 tractor to get to high ground as
 quickly as possible. Can we hop
 along?

No one says anything.

JJ (CONT'D)
 These two talk, Dallas?

DALLAS
 Not much. In fact I can't even get
 this one to open her mouth.

Dallas gives Lena a wink. JJ looks confused.

JJ
 You guys hearing me okay? I think
 we're in trouble here.

JJ continues to visually inspect Reese and Lena. They appear
 to want to speak but don't.

JJ (CONT'D)
 How do you all know each other?

Neither of them answer.

DALLAS
 We all...

JJ holds his hand up.

JJ
 Thanks, Dallas. If it's all the
 same, I'd rather hear it from them.

Dallas's look becomes more serious. He momentarily locks
 eyes with Jenny. Staring into his intense gaze, she suddenly
 gasps and runs outside.

JJ (CONT'D)
 Shit.

EXT. ABANDONED GAS STATION - DAY

Little Jenny quickly whips around the side of the building.
 JJ is not far behind her.

JJ
 Jenny! Where are you going?

As JJ goes after her, Dallas walks toward the door. He turns and glowers at Reese and Lena.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA ZOO, ZEBRA PEN - DAY

Damian and Carolyn run up to the zebra pen. The main gate is open but a couple zebras still remain. They're panicked and frightened, running back and forth.

Joey is having an active seizure in the middle of the pen.

CAROLYN

He was letting the zebras out!

Damian runs into the pen, dodging one of the panicked animals. Another of the spooked zebras inadvertently tramples over Joey's legs as he continues to convulse.

DAMIAN

Get him out! Get him out!

Damian holds his arms out wide and attempts to steer the zebras away.

Carolyn struggles with trying to drag Joey out of harm's way. It's not easy for her. She falls herself, and at times has to let Joey go to avoid being trampled.

A zebra knocks Damian to the ground. He jumps back up and resumes his method of control.

Joey, still in active seizure is being dragged by Carolyn to the very edge of the enclosure.

Again a Zebra runs across his shattered legs. A crunching sound is heard. Carolyn cringes and screams but continues to drag the boy. Joey's hands are rigid. His eyes are rolled up into his head and his mouth is foaming profusely. Damian finally manages to free the last two zebras. He quickly runs over to Carolyn and Joey.

CAROLYN

Turn him on his side!

They roll him over. He begins to make a choking sound.

DAMIAN

He's turning blue!

CAROLYN

I know!

Joey's convulsing slows. Carolyn looks and listens.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
He's not breathing.

They turn him back. She begins mouth to mouth.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
Get on his chest!

Damian positions himself to begin chest compressions but then stops. He looks at the boy's broken and disfigured legs.

DAMIAN
Carolyn. Carolyn.

CAROLYN
No!

DAMIAN
Carolyn.

She begins to cry mid rescue breath.

CAROLYN
Joey...

DAMIAN
What are we doing? He's gone.

CAROLYN
But we can...

DAMIAN
No. No we can't.

He puts his hand on her shoulder. She continues to sob. Damian stands. As he turns to exit the cage he finds himself staring at CAPTAIN DYER, a tall military man who is flanked by two armed American soldiers.

Dyer motions to a couple of his medics who instantly rush to the aid of the boy.

CAPTAIN DYER
Just back away. Let my men assess the situation.

Damian approaches him. Carolyn backs away.

DAMIAN
Who are you? How did you get the vehicles to...

CAPTAIN DYER

If I may ask some questions... Who was in charge here? How many survivors are there? And whose decision was it to release the animals?

Damian swallows. The captain gets a look from one of his medics leaning over Joey's body. The medic shakes his head.

The captain's radio SQUAWKS. He responds.

CAPTAIN DYER (CONT'D)

Go.

A troubled but official VOICE is heard.

RADIO (V.O.)

Yeah, Cap. You better get down to the water's edge. Not going to believe this, sir.

EXT. SCHUYLKILL RIVER'S EDGE - DAY

A handful of soldiers are standing on the riverbank looking out to the water where hundreds of bodies are afloat.

EXT. BEHIND ABANDONED GAS STATION - DAY

Jenny scurries onto the rear property of the gas station then down a steep embankment. JJ, not far behind her, stops in his tracks and looks down. There's a pile of clothing stuffed behind some rusted auto parts. It's a crumpled orange jumpsuit. He squats down and examines it. The letters, D.O.C. are printed on the back of it.

JENNY

(yelling)

You're bad people. I don't belong here!

He looks down at the jumpsuit again, then back to Jenny.

JJ

Jenny, get over here!

There comes a LOW RUMBLE from the forest. A deluge suddenly bursts from the woods, spills into the embankment and surrounds Jenny.

JJ turns around but is met by Dallas standing on higher ground. He is grinning ear to ear, holding a large hunting knife in one hand, and Lena by the hair in the other.

FADE OUT.