

CALDERA

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According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the super volcano under Yellowstone National Park erupts every 600,000-800,000 years. These apocalyptic eruptions wipe out most of the life in the western half of the United States and plunge the world into a global winter.

The last eruption took place 640,000 years ago...

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Before we dive in - a Prologue for you, the reader:

Scientists at Yellowstone National Park contact the White House with information that the super volcano under Yellowstone is days from an imminent and devastating eruption. The (fictional, competent) President immediately alerts the military and FEMA as he begins preparations to take the knowledge public.

Hours later, as the military mobilizes across the country, the restless caldera erupts. The effects are disastrous. Tens of thousands are killed instantly and in the coming weeks a blanket of deadly ash covers the western half of the United States. Millions perish as the politicians in Washington struggle to keep the country afloat.

And as the ash settles and a global winter begins, survivors emerge and begin to migrate east...

TEASER

1 INT. DODGE CITY, KS - GARDNER GENERAL STORE - DAY (**THREE** 1
MONTHS AFTER)

Close on a wall mural. As we pan across it reveal a long, sloping countryside. Not professional, but certainly skilled. A few beats of an evergreen forest, mountains in the background. A small lake. It's basic... but sometimes that's okay.

The beautiful scenery is broken up by a crude stick figure next to the lake shore. Too big for the painting - a child's work painted over an adult's. As we continue to pan, more stick figures. A family of five as tall as the disproportioned log cabin they stand next to. The camera finds the hand of a small artist, halfway through painting a ... dog? Horse? Too amateur to tell.

ROSE GARDNER, 12, mixed, tongue half out in concentration, adds ears (must be a dog then).

Past Rose, find the hands of our artist, HAILEY GARDNER, 45, Black, touching up the shoreline on the other side of the pond.

Suddenly -

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! Like someone hitting a garage door with a fist. Hailey's hand slips... a brown streak across the blue water.

Wide now, establish the inside of GARDNER GENERAL STORE - a large, one room shop wedged in the middle of a strip mall. Rearranged SHELVING acts as a divider to break the large space into two "rooms."

THE BACK ROOM:

FOUR TENTS squeezed into the open space. A door to the back office. A walk in freezer. The window at the top of the back wall has been covered with a WHITE SHEET - enough natural light filters in to light the room but no one can see in or out.

THE FRONT ROOM:

A FOLDING TABLE with FIVE CAMP CHAIRS around it. In the corner, a large sheet of wood across stacked crates makes a DIY countertop for some POTS, PANS, and CUTLERY. The left wall of the front room displays the half finished mural.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

MAN (O.S.)
Hello? Is anyone there?

The five members of the Gardner family, spread across the store, are frozen in place. They all stare at the grey security paneling covering the store front.

CHARLES GARDNER, 47, white, silently motions to his family - slow... quiet. They all stand as one and move quietly to the large, walk in freezer at the back of the store.

Charles holds the door open for his family, and as they file in we get our first good looks at:

LUCAS GARDNER, 18, mixed, good looking, gets his athleticism from his mom. Probably a bit cocky in high school, but he's grown up quickly in the last three months. Not a free thinker, takes his cues from his father.

THEO GARDNER, 15, mixed, immature, he wanted to be an athlete but has more of his father's sense of humor. Antsy from being cooped up and eager to get out of his brother's shadow.

Rose is ushered in by her mom. She's soft, frightens easily, still in the princess and dolls stage. She isn't meant for this world.

Hailey passes her husband. She's athletic, book smart, and beautiful without any make up. Hot headed emotionally, but with good instincts. Hailey has some tough lessons ahead of her as the heroine of our series.

bang, bang, bang. Softer. Coming from the shop next door.

Charles follows them inside. Slim, average looking, cautiously optimistic, the class clown wooed Hailey with laughter. His street smarts have been valuable in the last three months, but it's also made him too smart for his own good.

As the freezer door shuts behind him the camera pans over to 10 WATER JUGS lined up against the wall. Eight are empty, the ninth is a quarter full, and the last full jug has a large "X" mark in duct tape.

SUPER: Three Months After

Black. The sound of breathing. Hailey finds the PROPANE LAMP and lights it, illuminating the family in a dim glow.

The walk in freezer is bare save for a few scattered BOOKS and a small pile of PILLOWS and BLANKETS in the corner.

Lucas grabs a SHOTGUN leaning against the wall.

CHARLES GARDNER
Give me that.

Lucas hands it over without complaint as Theo leans against the wall and slides to the floor.

THEO GARDNER
We can all shoot dad.

Charles ignores his teenage son.

ROSE GARDNER
I forgot my book. Can I go get it?
I'll be quiet.

Hailey strokes her daughter's hair.

HAILEY GARDNER
You know the rules. Two hours will
fly by.

THEO GARDNER
(German accent)
Cooler.

Charles and Hailey meet eyes. A twitch of a smile on their lips at The Great Escape reference.

As Lucas grabs a pillow from the corner and lays down -

LUCAS GARDNER
It's not that funny when you say it
every time.

Theo scowls. The propane lamp casts flickers of light across the family as they lapse into silence.

3

INT. GARDNER GENERAL STORE - LATER

3

Charles, Hailey, Lucas, and Theo play EUCHRE at the table. Rose is back in her tent. Hailey wins a hand and reels in the cards.

The comfortable silence is broken by the BEEPING of Charles's wrist watch. Again, the family stands as one and makes their way to the back room - this time to the water jugs.

Hailey fills five identical CUPS (each with a line marked "8oz.") and passes them around. Quiet focus. Each drop is precious, and they are all careful to use two hands. Hailey makes sure her children finish before she raises the cup to her own lips.

We follow Charles's eyes to the empty water jugs. Off the family drinking quietly -

CUT TO:

4

INT. GARDNER GENERAL STORE - LATER

4

Hailey finishes cleaning a POT with a paper towel next to the PROPANE STOVE. The rest of the family sit around the kitchen table. Remains of a dinner of canned ravioli on PAPER PLATES.

ROSE GARDNER

May I be excused?

As Hailey sits down -

CHARLES GARDNER

We need to have one of our family meetings.

HAILEY GARDNER

(off guard)

We do?

THEO GARDNER

About the water?

CHARLES GARDNER

(eyes on Hailey)

Yes.

ROSE GARDNER

What about it?

THEO GARDNER

We're almost out. We're going to die unless we figure out a way to get more.

LUCAS GARDNER

Dick.

THEO GARDNER

(hot)

It's true.

Rose looks distraught.

CHARLES GARDNER
 Language, Lucas.
 (to Rose)
 No one is going to die, baby. I
 promise.

LUCAS GARDNER
 So what do we do? We can't just
 leave here.

ROSE GARDNER
 I don't want to leave.

CHARLES GARDNER
 How would we live here without a
 water supply?

HAILEY GARDNER
 We could forage for water in the
 nearby shops and homes.

CHARLES GARDNER
 Okay, but there are clearly still
 people out there. I can't guarantee
 they wouldn't try to hurt us if
 they knew we were here.

THEO GARDNER
 We have guns.

CHARLES GARDNER
 And what do you think happens when
 someone with a bigger gun decides
 they'd like to live here?

THEO GARDNER
 We fight.

LUCAS GARDNER
 Just like the Alamo.

CHARLES GARDNER
 He's right. Once anyone knows we're
 here it becomes a trap, not a home.

HAILEY GARDNER
 Hang on a second. The people
 outside are more desperate than
 dangerous.

CHARLES GARDNER
 Desperate and dangerous... those
 two words mean the same thing.
 (MORE)

CHARLES GARDNER (CONT'D)

Our anonymity is our greatest strength if we stay in one place.

LUCAS GARDNER

But if there's not water here, and we can't leave to find more... what other options do we really have.

A beat. Charles looks to his wife again as he speaks. She knows what's coming.

CHARLES GARDNER

We could... pack up our things. Head east.

THEO GARDNER

Away from the grey?

CHARLES GARDNER

Away from the grey.

HAILEY GARDNER

You really think that's safer than staying put? You just said there are still people out there.

CHARLES GARDNER

Maybe as we head east things get better.

HAILEY GARDNER

Maybe. We don't know anything about the state of the country.

CHARLES GARDNER

I know you hate that word. Right now, though, the only certainty is that it's not good here.

HAILEY GARDNER

We could still be rescued.

CHARLES GARDNER

Who do you think is coming for us?

A beat. Hailey doesn't have much to say.

LUCAS GARDNER

If we did leave... how would that work.

CHARLES GARDNER

We have the supplies for it. Water, obviously.

(MORE)

CHARLES GARDNER (CONT'D)

Enough dry and canned food to last us weeks. Not to mention plenty of camping supplies.

LUCAS GARDNER

Thank God mom didn't let you take the camping stuff off our inventory last year.

CHARLES GARDNER

She's always been one step ahead of me.

Hailey's look says she clearly doesn't think that's the case right now.

THEO GARDNER

So, what... are we really doing this?

A beat. Hailey searches for a reason to stay.

HAILEY GARDNER

We decided to stay here as long as we possibly could.

CHARLES GARDNER

Would you rather make this journey with or without water?

Another beat. Of course she knows she'd rather have it.

CHARLES GARDNER (CONT'D)

Lucas, what do you think?

LUCAS GARDNER

Whatever you think is best Dad, you know that.

No one notices Hailey's face twist a bit - that stung.

ROSE GARDNER

Can I be excused?

CHARLES GARDNER

Sure, baby.

Rose stands and retreats into her tent. The rest of the family watches her go - this is beyond her. A beat, then -

HAILEY GARDNER

We'll have to take extra precautions.

CHARLES GARDNER
And everyone will have to pull
their own weight.

THEO GARDNER
That means Rose too.

HAILEY GARDNER
She'll pull the weight of a 12 year
old.

LUCAS GARDNER
When do we leave?

Charles looks to Hailey for her to fully back the plan. She looks back, not sure at all that this is the right move.

PRELAP: The rattling sound of the metal security garage door.

5 EXT. GARDNER GENERAL STORE - DAWN

5

As the garage door opens, reveal the Gardner family: Charles in front with the SHOTGUN. Theo and Lucas hold RIFLES. Rose carries a STUFFED DOLL and holds Hailey's hand. Everyone is bundled up for the cold - everyone except Rose shoulder HIKING BACKPACKS.

The Gardner's POV: Finally, we see it. A cold, grey winter has settled over the broken landscape. Some light gets through a haze of dark... clouds? No, a blanket of ash swirls across the hemisphere.

All around them a mix of ash and snow covers the stores, cars, and streets. Dirty, grey, parking lot snowbanks where the wind has decided to dump it. No other signs of life than the five people standing in awe of their new world.

Grey snow begins to fall.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

6 EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING (10 YEARS AFTER) 6

Close on dripping icicles. They fall from barren trees next to Route 33 - a small, two lane road cutting through a dead forest. A dirty landscape of melting, grey snow. But the sky looks clear... the 10 year global winter is ending.

We follow the road. Cars are parked oddly here and there. Abandoned. Through the lifeless trees we catch glimpses of the Arkansas River.

An old sign ahead:

Welcome to Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

Another makeshift sign just past it, this one clearly newer:

This is our home. Please proceed carefully...

We hold on this for a few beats - it's a request and a warning.

The sound of a vehicle. A small BOX TRUCK drives by on its way into town.

7 EXT. PINE BLUFF, AR - SAME 7

We follow the box truck around a bend and into Pine Bluff. It's a sparse collection of roadside shops and restaurants on either side of Route 33. A town square just off the main road holds a church and courthouse. A few bars. A single movie theater. Two old motels. Looks like the kind of town that should be dying. Perhaps ten years ago it was. And yet...

There is no ash here. Snow has been cleared long ago. There are people on the streets. From a distance, the town seems to be prospering.

8 EXT. DINER - SAME 8

Closer now as the box truck pulls up to the Diner - we can see that a few things look off. Most of the buildings don't have power and the ones that do have ARMED GUARDS posted. MOTORCYCLES and DIRT BIKES are parked in abundance where cars would usually be. The citizens look rougher - men and women alike wear and carry firearms of all kinds.

The driver, WILL KITCHNER, 40's, rough looking, hops out of truck as the diner owner, EVAN MACY, 50's, balding and portly, steps out to meet him.

EVAN MACY

Oranges?

WILL KITCHNER

No. Christ. One time, we bring 'em one time and now you never shut up about it.

He makes his way to the back of the truck and opens it as HAROLD MACY, 19, and CRAIG MACY, 24, join their father outside.

EVAN MACY

Grab a box. Craig, don't you fuckin' think about carrying the eggs again.

They all grab a box and head inside. NATE ODELL watches them enter from his rocking chair next to the door. An ASSAULT RIFLE rests on his lap. As Will passes they nod to each other.

NATE ODELL

Will.

WILL KITCHNER

Nate.

9 INT. DINER - SAME

9

Will, Harold, and Craig set the boxes down and head back outside for another load.

Evan grabs a POT OF COFFEE from behind the counter and heads to the back booth where a man sits alone with his back to the wall.

LEON ADDER, 40's, white, has a DIRTY PLATE and a CUP OF COFFEE in front of him. The leader of Pine Bluff has a decidedly blue collar look to him - he's loud and brash, but intelligent in a street smart kind of way. He watches some of the other patrons with interest, making no attempt to hide it. No one seems to mind.

Evan wordlessly signals to him with the coffee pot - more?

LEON ADDER

Please.

Evan pours. Eyes the nearly empty plate.

EVAN MACY
Still workin' on that?

LEON ADDER
Picking at it. Get to prolong the
start of my day long as I'm still
eating.

EVAN MACY
Take your time.

He turns to go.

LEON ADDER
They bring any oranges today?

EVAN MACY
Sorry Leon, no.

LEON ADDER
Damn shame. It was nice, having
fruit.

EVAN MACY
Shore was. Freeze dried doesn't
quite do it.

LEON ADDER
I don't mind it.
(a beat)
People are goin' about like they
don't know what day it is.

EVAN MACY
It's Tuesday, I think.

LEON ADDER
Not the day, Mr. Evan. The
occasion.

EVAN MACY
Oh?

LEON ADDER
Ten years. It's been ten years
exactly since it all went grey. You
remember what you were doing?

Evan thinks on it a sec, then -

EVAN MACY
Workin' I suppose.

LEON ADDER
What was your profession.

EVAN MACY
Not exactly a profession. I was a
dishwasher.

LEON ADDER
A dishwasher!

EVAN MACY
Yessir.

LEON ADDER
Whereabouts?

EVAN MACY
Up in Little Rock. At an Applebees.

LEON ADDER
At an Applebees. Look at you now.

EVAN MACY
Sir?

LEON ADDER
I said look at you now. Running
your own diner. Got your kids
workin' for you. Family business.
That's nice, real nice. You ever
imagine that?

EVAN MACY
I never imagined a lot of things
that happened the last ten years.

Leon laughs. More of a bark.

LEON ADDER
That is true. Very true. So this
has all been good to you then?

EVAN MACY
Oh, well, I... I wouldn't say that.

LEON ADDER
Why not?

EVAN MACY
It don't hardly seem... I don't
think...

He trails off. Not quite sure what to say about that. A beat
while Leon lets him stew in his discomfort.

LEON ADDER

You were a dishwasher. At an Applebees. Suffice it to say you weren't exactly preparing yourself for a career as a small business owner. Then God opens up on us and all creation and you find yourself running a diner. Where I'm sitting... looks like it was preeeeetty good for ya.

EVAN MACY

Sir, we lost family.

LEON ADDER

(sharp)

People been losing family since Cain and Abel.

EVAN MACY

Yessir.

LEON ADDER

Help your boys finish unloading that food I brought for ya.

Evan moves off as RICHARD DURAND, 40's, leathery skin, dumb, enters. He hovers at the door, spots Leon, and makes his way over to the table.

Richard sits and grabs a piece of sausage off Leon's plate. His boss eyes him coolly.

LEON ADDER (CONT'D)

Have a seat, Mr. Richard.

RICHARD DURAND

Thanks, Leon.

(re: food)

You done with this?

LEON ADDER

I surely am now.

Richard takes a bite. Chews without manners.

RICHARD DURAND

Some kind of trouble over at the Motel 6. That new kid you got runnin' things went and broke old Carl's hand.

LEON ADDER

What the fuck for?

RICHARD DURAND
 Hell if I know. Carl's holed up in
 his room. Shot the door to shit
 with that old AK he's got.

LEON ADDER
 Kid dead?

RICHARD DURAND
 Far from it. Sitting off to the
 side of Carl's door in a lawn
 chair. Sawed off shotgun in his
 lap.

Leon stretches, stands, dons the TAN CARHARTT COAT in the
 booth next to him.

LEON ADDER
 Let's go see what it's all about.

The two men head for the door.

10 INT. MONTGOMERY MILITARY BASE - HOSPITAL - EXAM ROOM - DAY 10
 (10 YEARS AFTER)

An empty exam room. Generic. No real context where we are in
 the country. Someone fumbles at the door, then it opens and
 two people practically fall into the room.

Doctor ERIKA HOLMES, 33, White, beautiful with a lot of
 effort, and Private LIZ MARKSON, 37, plain but owning her
 look, rip at each others clothing as they kiss. Erika wears a
 white doctor coat and scrubs. Liz is in her military
 fatigues. Not for long.

Liz pushes Erika back against the examination table while
 Erika wrestles with her belt. Erika strips off her white lab
 coat, then raises her arms so Liz can take her shirt off. Liz
 kisses down Erika's stomach, then pulls her scrubs down as
 she goes lower...

Close on Erika as she looks up at the ceiling and closes her
 eyes. Moans. Smiling, Liz looks up at her.

LIZ MARKSON
 Shhhh.

11 INT. EXAM ROOM - BATHROOM - LATER

11

Liz dresses, looking at herself in the mirror. She buttons
 dress fatigues, small smile on her face. Notices a button is
 missing. Fuck.

As she opens the door -

LIZ MARKSON
You tore a button off. I'm gonna
catch hell f-

12

INT. EXAM ROOM - SAME

12

Erika is laid out on the exam room table using the white exam table paper as a "blanket" to cover herself. Equal parts sexy and funny.

She bats her eyes.

ERIKA HOLMES
Hope it was worth it.

LIZ MARKSON
At least I'll have this mental
snapshot to think about when they
reassign me to the night shift.

ERIKA HOLMES
You poor thing.

LIZ MARKSON
And you won't even be here to
comfort me.

ERIKA HOLMES
God, you're a pussy. It's three
days.

LIZ MARKSON
Is it so bad to miss you?

Erika mimes throwing up. Liz throws her scrubs at her. As Erika starts to dress -

LIZ MARKSON (CONT'D)
And how am I a pussy if I'm
sneaking around with you, risking a
discharge.

ERIKA HOLMES
Please. That creepy C.O. of yours
catching us in the act would land
you a promotion.

LIZ MARKSON
You're very humble.

ERIKA HOLMES
Most doctors are.

Liz watches Erika dress for a moment. Necklace swinging as she bends to tie her shoes. The way she curls the laces of her shoes into bunny ears. Small details.

LIZ MARKSON
How'd you feel about that moment of silence today?

ERIKA HOLMES
Can't believe it's been a decade.

LIZ MARKSON
Yeah.
(a beat)
My Grandparents were in Oregon.

ERIKA HOLMES
Oh. God, I'm sorry. Maybe they -

LIZ MARKSON
Nah. When they weren't trying to save my damned soul they were saving all their energy for the drive to church on Sunday. Besides, I was already enlisted so I would have been notified if they showed up somewhere.

Erika finishes cinching her shoes. Steps up to Liz and puts a hand on her cheek. Liz leans into it - awkward in her seldom exposed vulnerability.

ERIKA HOLMES
Are you okay?

LIZ MARKSON
Yeah. I mean, especially these last couple months.

ERIKA HOLMES
What a coincidence.

LIZ MARKSON
Don't let it go to your head.

They kiss. Long and deep. Finally, Erika breaks away.

ERIKA HOLMES
Wait a minute before following me out?

LIZ MARKSON
 Okay. I'll see you in a couple
 days.

Erika snaps a salute.

ERIKA HOLMES
 Aye, ma'am.

She smiles and exits. Liz watches her go.

13

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

13

Erika makes her way to the Nurses Station. AMANDA CROSS, 50,
 strict but kind, looks up from her desk.

ERIKA HOLMES
 How's Sargent Ellison doing?

AMANDA CROSS
 Fussy. The way they bitch,
 sometimes it's easy to forget
 they're soldiers.

ERIKA HOLMES
 They're just looking for someone to
 take care of them.

AMANDA CROSS
 Hm. I took care of him all right.
 Threw an Aspirin at his head.

ERIKA HOLMES
 Ice cold.

AMANDA CROSS
 Didn't your shift end 15 minutes
 ago? Thought you had a bus to
 catch.

ERIKA HOLMES
 I do. Had to wrap a few things up.

AMANDA CROSS
 Mmmm-hmmm. How many physicals does
 one soldier need?

ERIKA HOLMES
 (with a smile)
 I don't have the faintest idea what
 you mean.

Erika heads off toward the locker room.

AMANDA CROSS
(teasing)
Oo-rah.

ERIKA HOLMES
Shut up.

AMANDA CROSS
Move that booty. Bus leaves in half
an hour.

ERIKA HOLMES
(over her shoulder)
Yeah, yeah.

14 INT. MILITARY BASE - LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 14

Moving quickly, Erika changes into street clothes. Struggles to pull a DUFFEL BAG out of the small locker and slams it shut. Moves off.

15 EXT. INSIDE MAIN GATE - CONVOY - MOMENTS LATER 15

Erika jogs up to an idling School Bus that's painted in army colors and reinforced with steel plating. A cow catcher bolted to the front completes the military makeover.

Erika sweeps the hair out of her eyes and boards. Grabs a seat near the front and looks out the grated window.

16 EXT. OUTSIDE MAIN GATE - CONVOY - MOMENTS LATER 16

A small convoy exits the military base - a HUMVEE in front, SUPPLY TRUCK and SCHOOL BUS in the middle, and a HUMVEE at the rear. They head north, passing a sign that reads:
MONTGOMERY - 5 MILES

17 EXT./INT. CITY LIMITS - CONVOY - SCHOOL BUS - MOMENTS LATER 17

There aren't many cars on the road, but there are people everywhere. TENTS are set up all along the road just outside the city.

Erika watches out the window as they pass through the dirty, overcrowded city. Her face is hard to read as we see flashes of a city more reminiscent of a ghetto.

Soldiers patrol everywhere - they stand on street corners and move through alleyways. TRASH is piled around dumpsters.

A WOMAN is on her knees, begging a soldier for something. He doesn't look down.

17A EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - HIGHWAY - LATER

17A

The convoy travels through the countryside. Erika watches as they pass a massive camp set up just off the highway. Children run amongst RAGGED TENTS and RV's that don't look like they've been driven in quite some time. Parents wash clothes by hand. Everything looks dirty.

A SEMI TRUCK with a HUMVEE escort in front and behind it passes the convoy going south. "**US CARES PACKAGE**" stamped on the side in bright, inviting letters.

MAN ON BUS

(to friend)

Bout five years too late, far as
I'm concerned. South is too far
gone.

LATER

The convoy drives through a wooded area. Not a lot of green here, mostly gnarled and dead trees. It ends abruptly. Trees on both sides have been leveled. It's a flat, barren wasteland. BARBED WIRE and **DO NOT ENTER** SIGNS where the trees end. Some kind of No Man's Land.

Up ahead, a CHECKPOINT comes into view. Guard Towers. Concrete pillboxes and soldiers. Reinforced fencing east to west stretching out of sight in both directions. The convoy slows. Stops.

18 INT. CHECKPOINT - SCHOOL BUS - SAME

18

A SOLDIER boards the bus as Erika digs into her bag. He checks credentials from the PASSENGERS, who all hold them up like they've done it before.

LATER

The convoy drives through the gate. A much shorter No Man's Land, then back into the woods. The trees here are alive. It's not bright green, but green nonetheless.

Erika stares out at the passing countryside pensively.

19

EXT. PINE BLUFF, AR - MOTEL 6 - DAY

19

Leon and Richard enter the two story Motel 6 courtyard and survey the scene. Families cautiously look out from their windows.

A door toward the end of the row has been splintered with bullet holes. Near it, a man sits in a LAWN CHAIR angled to see both the door and entrance of the motel. His back to a dried out pool.

ALEJANDRO, 33, Latino, smokes casually as he watches the door. A SAWED OFF SHOTGUN sits on his lap, barrel pointed in the general direction of Carl's motel door. Intelligent, cynical, he has a quiet confidence and his words are always measured. A very "Man With No Name" vibe to him.

Leon and Richard stop in front of him. Alejandro looks up at them. Hands in coat pockets, Leon waits for him to speak. Nothing. Finally -

LEON ADDER

What's all this Mr. Alejandro? You ain't had this place for five days yet.

ALEJANDRO

No sir.

LEON ADDER

I hear you broke Carl's hand.

Alejandro indicates with the butt of the shotgun.

ALEJANDRO

Thought he woulda been happy I used this end.

LEON ADDER

Uh huh. What'd he do to deserve your generous good will?

A beat, then -

ALEJANDRO

He called me a name.

LEON ADDER

He called you a name?

ALEJANDRO

Yessir.

LEON ADDER
So you broke his hand over it.

ALEJANDRO
Yessir.

LEON ADDER
What'd he call you?

ALEJANDRO
Can't recall.
(scratching his chin)
Think it had somethin' to do with
not working for a dirty spic.

LEON ADDER
He ain't been tidying up?

ALEJANDRO
Not since you gave me the keys.

Richard spits.

LEON ADDER
CARL!

Nothing.

LEON ADDER (CONT'D)
CARL! GODDAMMIT!

Still nothing.

LEON ADDER (CONT'D)
How d'you know he didn't go out the
back window?

ALEJANDRO
Mags took it upon herself to go
round back with her rifle.

RICHARD DURAND
That girl can shoot.

Leon approaches the door, making sure to keep to the side of
it.

LEON ADDER
Carl. It's Leon Adder.

A beat.

CARL (O.S.)
I aint' pickin' up trash for no
wetback!

LEON ADDER
No one's gonna make you do shit you
don't wanna do. Come on out now.

Carl appears at the doorway, an old AK-47 in one hand. The barrel rests on the forearm of his injured hand, which hangs limp at the wrist.

Alejandro stands slowly, fingering the trigger of the shotgun.

LEON ADDER (CONT'D)
Give me that thing.

CARL
So he can blow me away? Fuck that.

Alejandro sets the shotgun down. Holds his hands out for Carl to see.

Carl reluctantly hands the gun over. Leon steps closer so only Carl can hear him.

LEON ADDER
You were mad at me I didn't give
you his job last week.

CARL
He's a tourist, Leon. We've known
each other for 25 years.

LEON ADDER
Sure, long enough to know it's
really 'cause you don't like
workin' for a Mexican.

CARL
What do you want me to say? I'm
tried of getting passed over.

A beat while Leon considers.

LEON ADDER
How'd you like his job?

CARL
Yessir. Very much.

LEON ADDER

Okay.
(over his shoulder)
Carl here wants your job.

ALEJANDRO

Does he?

LEON ADDER

Think he'd do a better job than
you?

ALEJANDRO

Only one way to figure out.

Leon steps back, away from the two of them. MAGGIE "MAGS"
HACKETT, 40's, certified badass, appears from around the side
of the motel.

LEON ADDER

You heard him, Carl. Take his job.

CARL

Bout time sir, thank you.

LEON ADDER

What're you thanking me for? I
ain't givin' it to you.

CARL

So then what -

ALEJANDRO

I'm only gonna give him a few more
seconds to figure it out.

Leon looks to Carl, raises his eyebrows.

LEON ADDER

Tick tock.

Carl gets it. He blanches.

CARL

That ain't fair. My hand's broke.

LEON ADDER

It sure is.

A few seconds pass as Carl looks from Alejandro to Leon.

MAGS

Say you're sorry and pick up a
broom ya fuckin' idiot.

Carl sees Alejandro glance her way and uses the distraction to go for the pistol in his shoulder strap.

Alejandro is faster. He actually lets Carl fumble with the gun, then draws with his left and puts a round in Carl's belly.

Carl sits down. Shocked. He puts a hand to his stomach. Stares up at Leon.

CARL

That wasn't fair. It wasn't fair.
My hand...

Alejandro walks up to him. Levels the pistol at his head.

ALEJANDRO

It was fair Carl. I'm a righty.

Alejandro shoots Carl in the head. Looks to Leon.

ALEJANDRO (CONT'D)

Anything about that not sit right
with you?

LEON ADDER

Bout how I expected it to turn out.

And off their look of mutual respect for each other, we -

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

20 EXT. NORTHEAST REGION - SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY 20

Establish a cookie cutter, suburban neighborhood. There's green in the trees here. Bushes. Even flowers. We close in on a one story home.

21 EXT. HOLMES'S HOME - BACKYARD - SAME 21

Out back, Erika sits in the yard with her parents, JEREMY HOLMES, 60's, and PATRICIA HOLMES, 60's. They eat lunch on a blanket. Erika lounges in the grass, savoring an orange.

ERIKA HOLMES

This is nice.

PATRICIA HOLMES

Mmm. You seem to be doing well for yourself.

ERIKA HOLMES

It's not a bad gig for either of us.

PATRICIA HOLMES

It's not home.

ERIKA HOLMES

Of course it's not. It's better. It exists.

An awkward beat.

JEREMY HOLMES

We're very happy to be here.

ERIKA HOLMES

I can't believe you get fruit.

PATRICIA HOLMES

It showed up at the grocery store about two months ago.

JEREMY HOLMES

It's a sign of growth when they can afford to grow luxuries like fruit instead of corn and wheat.

ERIKA HOLMES

All we get at the base is freeze dried.

PATRICIA HOLMES

Why don't you come live up here with us?

ERIKA HOLMES

You know that's not how it works. Besides, unemployed and living at home ... haven't we done that dance before?

PATRICIA HOLMES

I just don't understand why you don't want us to be together as a family.

JEREMY HOLMES

Honey...

ERIKA HOLMES

MOM. We've been over this. I know that you know you two wouldn't be living up here with all this green grass and fruit if I wasn't working on that base. We'd all be sleeping six to a room in some shitty apartment down south. That what you want?

JEREMY HOLMES

Okay, okay. We only have a few days together. Let's take it easy.

Erika lays back in the grass, stretching, and looks up at the sky.

ERIKA HOLMES

I am taking it easy, Dad. This is the only time I get to.

22

EXT. PINE BLUFF, AR - OUTSKIRTS - MORNING

22

A PICKUP TRUCK with a large WATER TANK in the bed is parked in the middle of the road near the entrance to town. A long line has formed behind it. The people carry WATER JUGS, WATER BOTTLES, even COOKING POTS. One by one, they get water for themselves and their families.

Leon watches off to the side. He takes pleasure in providing resources for the people in his town. A wolf tending to his flock of sheep.

Alejandro waits in line. He clocks Leon overseeing the water distribution.

Nobody notices the MAN and WOMAN stumble into town from the west. He half carries, half drags her along - it's clear she wouldn't be able to stand without his help. She carries a BUNDLE in her arms.

At the sight of people the Man sinks to his knees. Unsupported, she follows him down to the ground.

DERRICK BEATTY, 28, thin, long hair, sits on the edge of the truck bed watching the line of people. He's the first to notice them. He stands.

DERRICK BEATTY
(pointing)
Boss.

Leon turns to Derrick and follows his finger, sees them in the road.

LEON ADDER
WATER!

Leon runs to them. The Man looks at him dazedly. Leon squats down and starts to look them over.

LEON ADDER (CONT'D)
WATER! Christ.

The woman holds the bundle to her chest. Won't let him touch it.

Derrick sprints over with a WATER BOTTLE in hand. The smell almost knocks him over. He reacts, then pushes through it.

DERRICK BEATTY
Jesus.

Leon takes the water bottle.

LEON ADDER
Shut the fuck up. Go get Nurse.

The Man reaches for the water but Leon slaps his hands away.

LEON ADDER (CONT'D)
Hey. Hey, hey. Slow. Easy. Put your hands down. Open your mouth.

MAN
(hoarse)
Her. Please.

Leon turns to the Woman, squirts a few streams of water in her open mouth. Turns back to the Man, does the same thing. He feeds them like baby birds as curious people start to gather around them.

VERNON "NURSE" REED sprints up to them with Derrick close behind.

VERNON "NURSE" REED
Jesus. Where'd they come from?

MAN
West.

VERNON "NURSE" REED
West? Christ, Leon, how many years
has -

LEON ADDER
Focus, Nurse. The baby. She has a
baby.

Vernon squats down to the Woman. She pulls away from him at first.

VERNON "NURSE" REED
It's okay. It's okay.

He leans in, smells the bundle. Recoils. Turns to Leon. Can only shake his head.

Leon passes the water bottle to him and stands.

LEON ADDER
(to Derrick, low)
Ride back to the Range and grab
some clothes for both of them.
Wool, not the cotton we stock
Rick's place with.

He does a one over of the gathering crowd. Sees Alejandro observing it all off to the side.

Leon stalks away, calls him over with a small jerk of his head. Alejandro joins him as they walk back into the heart of Pine Bluff.

LEON ADDER (CONT'D)
You got spare rooms?

ALEJANDRO

Sure do.

LEON ADDER

I'm gonna have 'em bunk with Nurse tonight and maybe tomorrow. Depends on how malnourished they are under those rags. Have a room ready.

ALEJANDRO

Yup.

23

EXT. WOODED HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

23

The Gardner's walk down the highway amongst abandoned cars. Theo peers into one as he passes it. Hailey turns, beckons to Rose to keep up. Ash kicks up where they walk.

Lucas and Charles walk together out in front.

LUCAS GARDNER

How long do you think we should go?

CHARLES GARDNER

Far as we can each day, long as we leave ourselves enough daylight to find a safe place for the night.

LUCAS GARDNER

Safe?

CHARLES GARDNER

Well, relatively.

LUCAS GARDNER

Is the whole country covered in ash like it is here?

CHARLES GARDNER

I truly don't know. Depends on how the wind was blowing at the time.

LUCAS GARDNER

It can't all be like this.

CHARLES GARDNER

I sure hope not.

Lucas stops. Charles follows his gaze. A BODY in the road ahead. The cold weather has kept it from decomposing. Still, a body is a body. It's the first one they've seen.

Charles turns back.

CHARLES GARDNER (CONT'D)
Everyone come here.

They form up around him.

CHARLES GARDNER (CONT'D)
There's a body in the road ahead.

Theo cranes his neck to look around Charles. Rose looks scared. Hailey puts a comforting hand on her back.

CHARLES GARDNER (CONT'D)
It's okay, sweetheart. I promise.
I'm going to carry you past it. You
can put your head in my chest.

Charles passes the shotgun over to Hailey. She holds it in a way so that no one watching would doubt her ability to use it.

Charles squats down and holds his arms out. Rose folds into his embrace and he lifts her up. Looks to Lucas.

CHARLES GARDNER (CONT'D)
Ready?

The family sets off again, walking to the far right side of the road as they pass the body. Theo veers a bit to get a closer look.

The Gardner's round a bend in the road and come to a jarring halt.

Ahead of them, bodies in the road and grass on either side. A few. Then dozens. Further up the road... hundreds.

ROSE GARDNER
(muffled)
Are we past it yet?

Charles at a loss of words for a beat.

CHARLES GARDNER
Not... not quite yet honey. Keep
your head in my shirt, okay?

Charles presses on and the rest follow. As they start to pass bodies -

THEO GARDNER
How far does it go?

HAILEY GARDNER
(a sharp hiss)
Shhh

Lucas is a little green but he's too curious not to get closer looks at some of the bodies they pass. He falls in with Theo.

LUCAS GARDNER
(low)
No blood.

THEO GARDNER
(low)
How do you think they died?

Lucas shakes his head wordlessly. Behind them -

HAILEY GARDNER
Charles.

CHARLES GARDNER
(not looking back)
Yeah, baby?

HAILEY GARDNER
CHARLES!

Charles, Lucas, and Theo turn to see Hailey has stopped walking. A MAN, 40's, stands behind her with a GUN to her head. A WHITE MEDICAL MASK covers his face.

Everyone freezes. The MAN takes the shotgun out of her hands.

One of the bodies behind Charles stands with a RIFLE - a TEENAGE GIRL. She wears a white medical mask too.

Charles feels a poke on his back. Turns to find her standing there. And off this ambush, we -

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

24 EXT. WOODED HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

24

Back to the ambush.

CHARLES GARDNER
Lucas. Theo. Easy.

Spooked, his sons turn to see the Girl - LEXI HOFFMAN, 16.
Lucas takes his hand off the trigger. Theo reluctantly follows suit.

Rose brings her head up from her father's chest. She sees the bodies around them before the living threats. Breaks down into tears.

CHARLES GARDNER (CONT'D)
Hey. Hey. They can't hurt you.
Easy, sweetheart. It's okay.

He slowly squats down, keeping his eyes on Lexi. Rose sobs as he sets her down and brings her into a hug.

ROSE GARDNER
I don't want to do this. I want to go back.

Charles doesn't know what to say.

LEXI HOFFMAN
I was really scared of the bodies at first too.

Rose turns, surprised to see her.

LEXI HOFFMAN (CONT'D)
I cried all the time. After a while, I realized it was okay to cry. To be sad. But it's not scary. I promise.

Rose's crying subsides a bit.

ROSE GARDNER
Who... who are you?

LEXI HOFFMAN
I'm Lexi. What's your name.

ROSE GARDNER
Rose.

MARCUS HOFFMAN (O.C.)
We're the Hoffman's.

Charles turns back to him. Marcus walks Hailey up and the rest of the family drifts closer together.

MARCUS HOFFMAN (CONT'D)
(to Rose, but really for
Charles)
We're friends. But we need to check
something with your guns.

ROSE GARDNER
Why?

MARCUS HOFFMAN
To make sure they're working okay.
Sometimes this ash can kick up and
get into them.

Rose doesn't understand the hidden message but accepts it anyway. Lucas and Theo don't look so convinced.

THEO GARDNER
Oh, they work just fine.

CHARLES GARDNER
Theo.

A beat. He's thinking hard. Helpless without a gun. Looks to Hailey. Looks to his sons. They look scared.

CHARLES GARDNER (CONT'D)
Okay, kids, let's have them take a
look.

THEO GARDNER
DAD.

CHARLES GARDNER
Now.

Theo looks mutinous but holds his gun out to Marcus. He carefully takes the guns from both sons and slings them over his shoulder.

Lexi moves around to stand next to her father. Both hold their guns loosely, but keep them pointed towards the Gardner's.

MARCUS HOFFMAN
Can we all acknowledge the position
we're in?

HAILEY GARDNER
Obviously.

A beat.

MARCUS HOFFMAN
Good.

Marcus pulls the mask down so it hangs around his neck. He holds the shotgun out for Hailey, stock out so the barrel is pointed at his belly. Hailey accepts it hesitantly.

Lexi pulls her mask down as Marcus hands the rifles back to Lucas and Theo. She's very pretty. Theo stares.

CHARLES GARDNER
Why?

MARCUS HOFFMAN
Quicker than a trust fall.

He steps forward, hand out. Charles reluctantly shakes.

MARCUS HOFFMAN (CONT'D)
Thanks for understanding. Marcus.

CHARLES GARDNER
Charles. That's Lucas, Theo. This is Rose. And you've already met my wife, Hailey.

MARCUS HOFFMAN
(to Hailey)
I'd apologize, but, once you've been out here awhile...

HAILEY GARDNER
Why are you wearing those masks.

MARCUS HOFFMAN
Like I said, when you walk it kicks up ash. You must have noticed.

Marcus unslings his BACKPACK and opens it. Pulls out a handful of WHITE MEDICAL MASKS and holds them out.

MARCUS HOFFMAN (CONT'D)
Once you get settled for the night it's okay to take 'em off. When you're traveling, though, always best to wear them.

Hailey takes them.

HAILEY GARDNER
Thank you. Really.

As she passes them out -

THEO GARDNER
How do you know?

LEXI HOFFMAN
(aggressive)
We've been outside. From the
beginning. YOU still look clean.

THEO GARDNER
So?

MARCUS HOFFMAN
We should get off the highway if
we're going to talk about this
more. There's a service road that
runs east a mile north of here. We
can cut through the woods to get to
it.

HAILEY GARDNER
Why do we need to get off the
highway?

MARCUS HOFFMAN
Well, like my daughter was saying -
doesn't look like you've been out
here traveling very long. It's
better to stay off the bigger
roads. Less foot traffic.

CHARLES GARDNER
And why should we follow you?

MARCUS HOFFMAN
The bigger group you're in, the
less likely you are of running into
anyone. Most of the people out here
are traveling alone. Or with one or
two others. They're weak.
Desperate. Less likely to go after
a strong group.

THEO GARDNER
So you need us to avoid getting
hurt.

A statement. Not so much a question.

LEXI HOFFMAN

We can handle ourselves easily
enough.

(pointed)

Obviously.

MARCUS HOFFMAN

This world hasn't corrupted you
yet. You've been inside, right?
Waiting it out. But that time is
over. And you had to move.

(a beat)

Truth is, you're soft. We're not.
You're lucky you ran into us,
first.

His statement hangs there. Then -

LEXI HOFFMAN

We're going east. We heard the ash
fall didn't get past the
Mississippi. There's still cities.
People.

MARCUS HOFFMAN

We can go our separate ways any
time you don't feel comfortable.

Charles looks to Hailey. He isn't convinced.

MARCUS HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

Look, it's tough to put faith in
anything out here. I get it. If it
makes you feel any better, we'll
walk in front. But we are walking.

(a beat)

Okay. That's my pitch. Follow if
you want.

Marcus turns and sets off. Lexi gives Theo the eyes before
following her father. He stares off after her.

Hailey takes Rose's other hand so that she's between her
parents.

HAILEY GARDNER

Come on. Just for now.

The Gardner's follow the Hoffman's. We watch them disappear
into the woods.

25 INT. PINE BLUFF, AR - BAR - DAY

25

Alejandro drinks alone at the bar. His back to the wall, legs propped up on the other chair.

Leon enters, surveys the bar and spots him. He makes his way over.

LEON ADDER
Mind if I sit?

Alejandro lets his feet fall. Pushes the chair out a bit with one foot. Leon angles the chair so they are both facing the door.

LEON ADDER (CONT'D)
Never much liked putting my back to anything.

They sit in silence for a moment.

LEON ADDER (CONT'D)
(indicating bottle)
You mind?

ALEJANDRO
Hell, it's your town.

Leon smiles. Good answer.

LEON ADDER
Mr. Malorie! 'Nother shooter over here.

The bartender, MALORIE, 40's, brings a glass over. Sets it down and heads back to the bar.

Leon pours himself a few fingers, then tops off Alejandro. They drink. A beat, then -

LEON ADDER (CONT'D)
I've been here my whole life. You know that?

ALEJANDRO
Nope.

LEON ADDER
We used to have this terrible problem with traffic. People were really only stopping here for gas on their way to somewhere else. Cars would come whipping through at 50... 60 miles an hour.

ALEJANDRO

Mm.

LEON ADDER

I took to going to the Mayor's office at the top of every month, begging him to put a sign up. Just a reminder so people would slow down. Nah, too much of an eyesore, he'd say. Don't think he ever took me seriously - we got plenty heated more than once about it.

ALEJANDRO

He'd have put one up if someone had died.

LEON ADDER

Exactly. Problem with leadership in general: It's reactionary. Not proactive. I like to be proactive.

ALEJANDRO

Makes sense.

LEON ADDER

That in mind... What can you do for me? You seem to have a head on your shoulders. And you clearly know your way around a gun.

ALEJANDRO

Out here you need both.

LEON ADDER

True. My point being, you seem a bit overqualified to run a section of my housing.

Alejandro shrugs. Drinks. Leon considers him.

LEON ADDER (CONT'D)

I used to run a gun range just outside town. Lucky profession, all things considered. Nowadays it's more of a compound for me and some of the other guys. I'd like you to come see it with me.

ALEJANDRO

I'm already happy to have some stability.

LEON ADDER

(scoffs)

Stability.

(a beat)

Back when everything was falling apart, this place was a madhouse. People coming and going from all over. Locals didn't know what to do, who to trust. People were dying, killing each other more out of confusion than anything else. It's good now, but back then I had to use fear to reel things back in. Had to do what it took so there was some kind of control.

ALEJANDRO

I'm not here to judge your sins.

(a beat)

That Mayor probably didn't like you taking over.

LEON ADDER

Heh, no sir.

(he takes a drink)

When I found him, he was hiding in his office. Hadn't even gone home to protect his family. He probably wasn't a threat at that point to be completely honest. I didn't care. He was trembling when I shot him.

ALEJANDRO

And then?

LEON ADDER

I went and put my sign up.

A small smile from Alejandro. They drink together.

26

EXT. OUTSIDE PINE BLUFF, AR - DIRT ROAD - LATER

26

Track Leon and Alejandro riding MOTORCYCLES down a dirt back road along the Arkansas River. They turn off it and a LARGE COMPOUND comes into view - "The Range." Reinforced barbed wire fencing snakes along the perimeter.

Two armed GUARDS push the barricade at the entrance aside so the two men can pull in.

27

EXT. THE RANGE - SAME

27

Leon and Alejandro park in front of a long row of bunk style housing alongside a line of other MOTORCYCLES. The wood looks fresh, maybe only a few years old.

As Alejandro dismounts he takes in his surroundings. It has the look of a conspiracy theory summer camp brought to life. To the left, a MAN refuels his motorcycle next to a TANKER TRUCK of gas - minus the cab. A few others play pickup basketball in the middle. To the right, the Arkansas River serves as one of the borders to the compound.

Leon watches him take it all in.

LEON ADDER

Nice, innit?

ALEJANDRO

How long?

LEON ADDER

Housing went up about five years ago. After a few incidents, just made sense to keep my guys away from Pine Bluff when they ain't working.

Alejandro looks to the deserted gun range.

LEON ADDER (CONT'D)

Yeah. Haven't used that since almost the beginning. Too much noise. It attracted the wrong kind of attention before we were strong enough to handle conflict. Now though -

(holding his arms out)

- it's damn near a military base, no?

ALEJANDRO

What about that?

Alejandro points to a LARGE WOODEN STRUCTURE next to the river.

LEON ADDER

S'where we filter all the water that goes to the town.

Alejandro takes it all in. It's quite a bit to digest.

LEON ADDER (CONT'D)
I want to show you something.

28 INT. SMALL WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

28

Leon opens the door to a small warehouse next to the abandoned gun range.

LEON ADDER
Used to hold ammunition, guns,
random supplies my Daddy wanted to
hold onto. Now, though -

Reverse angle, we see the small warehouse is stockpiled with resources. BOXES OF CANNED GOODS, PRODUCE, CLOTHING, TOOLS, FIRST AID KITS, and BACKUP POWER GENERATORS are stacked on pallets throughout the warehouse.

Astute viewers will notice that some of the boxes are marked: **US CARES PACKAGE**. This is a callback to the semi truck Erika passed in Act One, and a foreshadow to where all these supplies come from.

Alejandro's eyes widen. This is how Leon keeps the town running.

Derek approaches, eating an ORANGE.

DERRICK BEATTY
Hey boss. Just finished unloading
the new shipment. Rig left about an
hour ago.

He peels a slice, gives it to Leon. Then, to Alejandro -

DERRICK BEATTY (CONT'D)
Orange?

Alejandro tentatively accepts.

ALEJANDRO
Good for the town, having fresh
fruit.

Derrick laughs. Looks to Leon. Back to Alejandro.

DERRICK BEATTY
The town? Hell, the fruit stays
here.

A beat while Alejandro processes this. Leon watches him for a reaction. Then -

ALEJANDRO

Where does it all come from?

Smiling, Leon turns and steers Alejandro back toward the door.

LEON ADDER

Come on. We have a lot to discuss.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

29

EXT. WOODED SERVICE ROAD - DAY

29

The Gardner's and Hoffman's walk down a small, wooded service road. Theo and Lexi walk a few steps behind the rest of the group.

LUCAS GARDNER

Do you know how all those people back there died? I didn't see any blood or wounds.

MARCUS HOFFMAN

It was the ash... got in their lungs.

CHARLES GARDNER

How do you know that's what happened?

MARCUS HOFFMAN

You'll see that same thing just outside of most towns you come across. Most people weren't lucky enough to have the resources on hand to stay put. Do you remember how thick the ash was in the air at the beginning?

HAILEY GARDNER

We never went outside.

MARCUS HOFFMAN

A luxury that most didn't have. You can't imagine the hysteria... I mean, chaos kills. No one knew what to do, where to go. You see people running one way, you're gonna follow them. I think most people were too panicked to realize they were breathing in the ash as fast as they could run from it.

CHARLES GARDNER

So they... what? Suffocated on it?

MARCUS HOFFMAN

Exactly. When ash gets wet it becomes a paste... almost like concrete. Imagine choking on that while it fills your lungs.

HAILEY GARDNER
That's terrible.

MARCUS HOFFMAN
It is.

Hailey looks back, sees Theo with his white mask in his hand. He's doing something to it.

HAILEY GARDNER
Theo! Put that on.

THEO GARDNER
Hang on. Almost done.

HAILEY GARDNER
NOW!

THEO GARDNER
Okay. Geez.
(to Lexi)
Thanks.

Theo hands her a BLACK MARKER. Lexi giggles as Theo puts his mask back on - he's drawn a comical "scary face" on it.

Hailey roles her eyes and turns back, but we stay with Theo and Lexi. She takes out a ZIPLOCK BAG OF JERKY.

LEXI HOFFMAN
Want some?

THEO GARDNER
Thanks, but that's okay. We have
our own food.

Theo takes out a BAG OF TRAIL MIX. They each take a bite and walk in silence for a moment. Theo glances over at Lexi. He's definitely into her.

THEO GARDNER (CONT'D)
Check this out.

Theo tosses a peanut in the air and tries to catch it in his mouth - it hits his nose and bounces to the ground.

LEXI HOFFMAN
Nice.

She rips off a small piece of jerky and mimics him... except that she catches her piece.

Theo tries again. Success. They make a game of it, trying to see who can toss their food the highest.

MARCUS HOFFMAN (O.S.)

LEXI!

Lexi freezes just before another throw. This time it's Marcus scolding his kid.

MARCUS HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

Don't play with your food.

LEXI HOFFMAN

Sorry, daddy.

Marcus turns back and resumes walking. Theo catches Lexi's eye. Grinning, he tosses an M&M in the air and catches it. Sparks between them.

30

EXT. MONTGOMERY MILITARY BASE - MAIN GATE - DAY

30

The sound of sirens. Soft in the distance, then louder as they get closer. The gate opens and an AMBULANCE flies in.

A DOCTOR and THREE NURSES sprint out of the hospital to meet them. Erika close behind.

MEDICS unload two injured men on stretchers from the first ambulance. As they're wheeled into the hospital, two more AMBULANCES drive into the complex. No lights.

Erika veers off toward them. The DRIVER climbs out as she arrives.

ERIKA HOLMES

How many do you have? Status?

DRIVER

Dead. All of them. I'm driving a fucking hearse.

ERIKA HOLMES

What happened?

MEDIC

Ambush of some kind. 10 miles west of here. Whoever did it was thorough. Fucking animals.

Erika turns and jogs back to the hospital. A group of soldiers have gathered near the hospital doors, Liz among them.

LIZ MARKSON

(mouthing)

Who?

Erika can only shake her head as she enters.

31 INT. HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

31

Erika enters and makes her way to the nurse's station. Amanda looks up.

AMANDA CROSS

They're stable. Unconscious...
looks like they both took nasty
blows to the head from the butt of
a rifle.

(a beat)

Where are the others? Jane said
three busses came in.

ERIKA HOLMES

(shaking her head)

Just those two.

AMANDA CROSS

Oh God. What happened?

ERIKA HOLMES

Ambush.

LIZ MARKSON (O.S.)

Are they okay? Who is it?

Erika turns to her.

AMANDA CROSS

No ID's yet. Their tags were gone.

ERIKA HOLMES

What are you doing in here?

LIZ MARKSON

They were stationed here. Must have
been, it happened so close. Maybe I
can help you ID them.

AMANDA CROSS

We really shou-

ERIKA HOLMES

What room are they in?

With a sigh -

AMANDA CROSS

Four. Should be prepping for a CAT
scan any minute.

ERIKA HOLMES
Come on, hurry.

Erika and Liz move off quickly.

32 INT. ROOM 4 - MOMENTS LATER

32

The TWO SOLDIERS lie in adjacent beds. Their bloody clothing has been cut away and replaced with gowns. Erika and Liz enter.

LIZ MARKSON
- a quick look to see if I
recognize them and I'll get out of
your hair.

ERIKA HOLMES
These aren't my patients - you know
how much trouble I can get in?

Liz approaches one of the beds. She looks at them one at a time, head cocked slightly to the side.

Erika looks over her shoulder anxiously. Liz turns to her.

LIZ MARKSON
I definitely don't know their
names... or their faces even. It's
weird though, I recognize most guys
just from being around the base.

ERIKA HOLMES
Okay, come on, let's g-

The man in the bed next to Liz abruptly sits up. WAYLAND IRVING, 50's, Black, grizzled from years of guerrilla warfare, holds a small SCALPEL to Liz's throat.

Erika takes an involuntary step back toward the door. Opens her mouth, but -

WAYLAND IRVING
Ah, quiet, now.

Erika is frozen in place. The other GUERRILLA FIGHTER, small, thin, sits up and moves quickly to the door. Shuts and locks it.

WAYLAND IRVING (CONT'D)
Thank you.

He deftly cuts Liz's throat. A fine mist of blood sprays Erika as she throws up her hands instinctively. Liz gurgles blood and Wayland lets her sink to the floor.

Erika opens her mouth to scream. The Guerrilla Fighter clamps a hand over her mouth from behind.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

33

INT. MONTGOMERY MILITARY BASE - HOSPITAL - ROOM 4

33

Back in Room 4. Wayland watches Erika's reaction. She relaxes a bit in the Guerrilla Fighter's arms. Submission.

WAYLAND IRVING

Quiet now. We can do this without
you, if you'd rather... you know...

He looks down at Liz's body pointedly. A few fingers still twitching. He bends down and grabs her SIDEARM.

Erika closes her eyes. Looks like she might faint. We hold on her for almost too long, trying to figure out how she'll respond to her situation. Then -

ERIKA HOLMES

Y-you can't.

WAYLAND IRVING

I can't what?

ERIKA HOLMES

Make it out of here. Not without
me. You're not shooting your way
out. You wouldn't make it 20 steps.

Wayland looks to his partner. Not sure what to make of this woman.

WAYLAND IRVING

Who said we're trying to make it
out?

ERIKA HOLMES

No one. But it's easy to see you
devoted a lot of energy into
getting in here. My guess? You had
a plan right up until this second,
and now you have to improvise. No,
this isn't some suicide run or
you'd already be shooting.

(bitter)

Besides, you're far better at
killing soldiers from the side of
the road. You must want something.

She pauses. Her eyes drift to the gash in Liz's neck.

ERIKA HOLMES (CONT'D)
Medical supplies, is that it?
(sarcastic)
I bet you know exactly where the
supply closet is.

Another beat.

WAYLAND IRVING
What's your name.

ERIKA HOLMES
You really want to waste time
getting to know each other?

WAYLAND IRVING
Fine. Intros later. Where is it?

Erika takes a step back and peers into the connecting door to the adjacent room. Wayland raises the pistol, but she's not running. She's scouting.

ERIKA HOLMES
Forget the supply closet for a
second. We have minutes until they
come to get you for a CAT scan.
Maybe not even that. We need to
move your beds into the next room
so the attending thinks you've
already been taken.

WAYLAND IRVING
(indicating Liz)
Okay, help me get her on the bed.

ERIKA HOLMES
Fuck that.

WAYLAND IRVING
You want to test me?

ERIKA HOLMES
(shrugging)
Shoot me and die running.

Wayland thinks quickly.

WAYLAND IRVING
Okay. Stand over here. Away from
the door.

Erika complies. Wayland and the Guerrilla Fighter bend down and hoist Liz up onto one of the vacated beds.

Wayland tosses the Guerrilla Fighter a sheet and he bends to mop up the blood. Then -

WAYLAND IRVING (CONT'D)
Grab an end.

Erika does and they push the bed with Liz's body into the adjacent room.

34

INT. ROOM 5 - SAME

34

The Guerrilla Fighter is just behind them, pulling the second bed in.

The door closes behind him. They all take a beat.

WAYLAND IRVING
Okay, where is it.

ERIKA HOLMES
A few hallways over. But you'll never make it looking like that.

Wayland looks around the room. His eyes fall on Liz's body.

WAYLAND IRVING
Can you fit in that?

GUERRILLA FIGHTER
There's blood on it.

ERIKA HOLMES
Doesn't matter. Maybe people will think you helped with the intake. If we get stopped you're fucked either way.

WAYLAND IRVING
We're fucked.

ERIKA HOLMES
Right. We're fucked.

The Guerrilla Fighter starts to roughly undress Liz.

ERIKA HOLMES (CONT'D)
Careful with her.

The Guerrilla Fighter looks at her. Doesn't respond. Goes back to undressing her, but he's gentler.

As the Guerrilla Fighter swaps his gown for the military fatigues, Erika covers Liz's body with a sheet so her bare skin isn't exposed. There's a tenderness to it. Wayland clocks it.

WAYLAND IRVING
You knew that soldier.

ERIKA HOLMES
Her name was Liz.

WAYLAND IRVING
They're all just soldiers to me.

Their eyes meet. Fresh pain behind hers. Old pain turned to rage behind his.

GUERRILLA FIGHTER
Boots don't fit.

Moment broken, they look at him. And off this -

PRELAP: The sound of bare feet on linoleum flooring.

35

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

35

Close on two bare feet behind a hospital bed on wheels.

Wide now, we see the Guerrilla Fighter pushing the hospital bed holding Wayland. Erika in stride with them, bent over Wayland - she pretends to tend to him while he holds the pistol to her gut.

The trio passes a few small groups of DOCTORS and NURSES - they consult charts, fill out paperwork, or are too absorbed in conversation to notice the intruders.

They round a bend.

ERIKA HOLMES
Okay. Second door on the right.
Push the bed up against the wall.

They park the hospital bed.

ERIKA HOLMES (CONT'D)
Give me a sec to unlock it.

Erika crosses the hallway, pulling out a SET OF KEYS. She unlocks the door and opens it, flips the light on, then tries to slip inside and slam the door shut.

36

INT. SUPPLY CLOSET - SAME

36

A HAND catches the door before it closes behind her. Wayland steps inside with her and shuts the door.

WAYLAND IRVING

Nice try.

ERIKA HOLMES

Had to.

(a beat)

So what? Are you going to kill me now? Quiet, in the dark.

Wayland grabs a LARGE TOTE BAG from a shelf. Shoves it into Erika's chest.

WAYLAND IRVING

Make me a first aid kit. Big one.
Gauze, bandages, morphine...
anything that can be used on wounds
quickly and on the go.

Erika holds his gaze for a minute, then starts filling the bag with MEDICAL SUPPLIES. As she does -

WAYLAND IRVING (CONT'D)

Were you a doctor? Before?

She pauses at the question. Resumes packing.

ERIKA HOLMES

I had flunked out of medical school
a few months before. Was living at
home... again. My parents had had
it with me. The drinking. They
didn't even know about the pills. I
was about to be out on my ass.

She hands him the full bag.

ERIKA HOLMES (CONT'D)

Then, you know
(miming an explosion with
her hands)
- ka-pughhhhhh

She stops, thinks about it.

ERIKA HOLMES (CONT'D)

Dunno about the rest of the world,
but it gave me another chance.

Wayland grabs another LARGE TOTE. Hands it to her.

WAYLAND IRVING
Do that again.

As she starts to fill the second bag -

WAYLAND IRVING (CONT'D)
I was a fisherman. Down in
Nawleans.

ERIKA HOLMES
Heh. I can see that.

WAYLAND IRVING
I had this cabin, few miles inside
the mouth of the Red River. It'd
been five... six months. There was
no work to be done. Ash all in the
water and shit. I was out at my
dock when the first body floated
past. Then another. Then ten more.
Pretty soon it was like a goddamn
parade.

Erika slowly approaches him, second bag full.

WAYLAND IRVING (CONT'D)
There was this boy. Face up.
Bloated. Got caught on the end of
my dock. I took my oar out of the
boat. But I couldn't... touch him.

He shakes off the memory. Grabs a third LARGE TOTE.

WAYLAND IRVING (CONT'D)
That's the kind of fresh start your
military likes to give.

ERIKA HOLMES
Red River was a long time ago. It's
not like every soldier was there
when -

But a voice outside interrupts her -

GUARD (O.S.)
Let me see your credentials,
soldier.

Wayland and Erika tense.

GUERRILLA FIGHTER (O.S.)
I - they must have -

GUARD (O.S.)
Put your hands where I ca- umphh

The door shakes as the Guerrilla Fighter tackles the Guard into it. Wayland grabs the door handle but Erika puts her hand on his.

ERIKA HOLMES
(mouthing)
Wait.

Sounds of the two men struggling.

GUARD (O.S.)
HELP!

Footsteps running. Screams. The sounds of a few men running.

WAYLAND IRVING
Best way out. Tell me now or I kill you and take my chances.

ERIKA HOLMES
Garbage pickup is at the back of the building. Right out of here and straight back.
(checking watch)
We've either just missed it or it's about to happen. Either way, best chance at an open gate.

WAYLAND IRVING
Good. Ready?

ERIKA HOLMES
I'm staying here.

WAYLAND IRVING
The hell you are. I need you in case things go south.

ERIKA HOLMES
Little late for that.

WAYLAND IRVING
All the more reason to come. Keep your eyes straight ahead and keep moving.

Wayland hoists one of the bags. Erika takes the other one. They exit the supply closet.

37 INT. HALLWAY - SAME

37

A few scared NURSES and DOCTORS are in the hallway looking in the opposite direction as Wayland and Erika walk by them. No one pays them any attention.

BANG! BANG!

Erika and the staff members wince at the sounds of gunfire. Wayland doesn't. Presses ahead with his arm holding Erika's elbow.

BANG!BANG!BANG!BANG!BANG!BANG!BANG

Silence. Erika and Wayland arrive at the end of the hallway. They duck inside a door to the left with a sign above it that reads: **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

38 EXT. HOSPITAL - WASTE MANAGEMENT STATION - SAME

38

A GARBAGE TRUCK idles next to a row of dumpsters. Two GARBAGE MEN huddle behind them. In the background, soldiers sprint toward the front of the hospital and out of sight.

Wayland pulls Erika to the Garbage Truck and makes her climb into the cab. He follows her inside.

Wayland puts the truck into gear and hits the gas. The truck lurches forward towards a smaller gate at the rear of the compound. It gathers speed. Rams into the small fence, busting it open.

We follow the garbage truck down the road to freedom. And as Wayland escapes with Erika -

Wait. The passenger door opens and Erika throws herself out of the moving truck! She rolls a few times in the grass on the side of the road.

Erika stands. We hold on her silhouette as she watches the Garbage Truck disappear into the distance.

39 EXT. HILL - DAY

39

The Gardner's and Hoffman's are climbing a hill. A field and forest of trees behind them. Marcus out in front with Lexi and Theo. Lucas following.

Hailey and Charles, carrying Rose, bring up the rear.

CHARLES GARDNER

What do you think? We'll go our separate ways in the morning?

HAILEY GARDNER

Why? They could have killed us a dozen times today if they had wanted to. They gave us advice about the road. And the masks. And they're going East. Just like you wanted.

CHARLES GARDNER

You think we need him to make it.

A statement more than a question. It stings.

HAILEY GARDNER

Baby, I'm not saying we couldn't do it alone. I'm not. But we don't need to.

(a beat)

They've been out here, surviving. He's kept his daughter alive.

Charles shifts Rose in his arms. He's thinking.

CHARLES GARDNER

Okay. We'll travel with them for now.

(to Rose)

We're getting close to the top. Think you can walk the rest of the way?

ROSE GARDNER

I'm tired.

HAILEY GARDNER

So is Daddy, sweetheart. Come on, we'll do it together.

ROSE GARDNER

Okay.

Charles sets her down.

Marcus, Theo, Lucas, and Lexi have come to a stop at the top of the hill. They stare down at the field below as Charles, Hailey, and Rose join them.

Below them is the wreckage of an airplane. A big one. The wings have been torn off. The nose is crumpled.

Pieces of the plane are scattered all across the field. Along the side of the plane, upside down, are the words "AIR FORCE ONE."

The small group looks to each other. Then back down at the plane. And off the sight of this wreckage we -

END OF PILOT