

THE HUNDRED YEAR LOCUST: A FOUR-PART MINISERIES

PART 1: "THE NEW DUSTBOWL"

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EXT. FARMLAND - DAY

A WOMAN and BOY tread across a vast broomcorn field.

The crops are dead and crumbling. Red dust blows all around, as thick as fog.

Their faces are protected by breathing apparatuses.

The Woman's mask has an army green, utilitarian look, with a blacked-out face screen. The Boy's mask has the robotic countenance of his favorite manga superhero, "Mister Maverick" - matte metal, highlighted with red stripes.

SUPER: "TEXAS PANHANDLE, 2036"

They spot a dilapidated farmhouse up ahead. She gives a hand signal and they both crouch low, slowing their advance.

They duck behind a fallen tree trunk. She pokes her head up, examining the two-story house.

HER POV

A hand-painted sign in front of the house reads: "Moved out for good. Water rationing = no crops. Up yours Uncle Sam".

BOY

Good?

WOMAN

Yep. Empty.

She pulls a small electronic device from her pocket, an MP3 player with an LED screen. She powers on the device.

The words "OFF THE GRID" appear in bubble letters. The bubble letters burst and then new words animate onto screen: "FAMILY WI-FI ON THE GO".

WOMAN

Let's go over the rules.

BOY

Mom. Every *time*?

The words "SELECT YOUR PLAYLIST" animate onto her screen.

WOMAN

We've been lucky up until now. That doesn't mean we get to slack.

She scrolls through album covers. She lands on The Beatles' "Hide Your Love Away".

WOMAN

Come on. "Hide Your Love Away" means?

BOY

Means hide. Duh. I got it mom.

Now Iron Maiden's "Run for the Hills" is on her screen. She hides it from him.

WOMAN

And what song means run?

BOY

"Run For the Hills" means run for the motherfuckin' hills. Okay?

She throws her hands up in mock surrender.

WOMAN

Okay.

She puts the device in her pocket and raises up her REVOLVER. She starts to stand up.

BOY

Why can't we keep hitting liquor stores? They've got better stuff.

WOMAN

Because we're in Texas now. Here they shoot first, ask questions never.

BOY

Really?

WOMAN

Really.

INT. FARMHOUSE

It's dark inside. The windows are boarded up. The door creaks open and the Woman and Boy enter. She closes the door behind them, silencing the howling wind.

They both flip their face masks up.

She is JENNIFER GILL, (black, 30), slim and strong, in the prime of life. She wears a filthy white tank-top and tan jeans tucked into engineer boots.

Her son is OLIVER GILL, (10). He wears a beat-up letterman jacket, ratty jeans, high-tops and a faded Prince t-shirt.

She shines her flashlight around the abandoned house: all cobwebs and water stains and peeling wallpaper. She shakes her head in disappointment.

OLIVER
Nothing good?

JENNIFER
I doubt it. I hope they at least
have some canned food.

INT. HALLWAY

They tiptoe along, quiet and slow. Ollie's behind Jennifer. He bumps into an end table and knocks over a vase. It SHATTERS on the ground.

She spins around fast with the gun pointed. She catches her breath. Her adrenaline has spiked. She calms herself.

JENNIFER
You need to be careful.

INT. STAIRCASE

They reach the second story hallway, and each go into a different bedroom. We follow Jennifer.

INT. BEDROOM #1

Jennifer looks inside the closet: Nothing.

She opens the drawers of a dresser: Nothing.

INT. BATHROOM

Jennifer rifles through the medicine cabinet: Old toothbrushes and empty tubes of toothpaste.

She picks up a bottle of pills, full.

The label reads: "CHOI, KENNETH. Take only one pill a day as needed for severe pain."

Suddenly, she hears Ollie SCREAM.

OLLIE
MOOOOOHHHM!

She pockets the pill bottle and runs out the door and down the hall.

INT. BEDROOM #2

She bursts in with her gun drawn.

Ollie is shaking and quivering and pointing toward the open closet doors - Hyperventilating.

OLLIE
M-m-m-mom.

She aims the Revolver and looks inside the closet.

An old, dead white man is seated on the ground, with a shotgun in his hands. She relaxes.

JENNIFER
It's okay, baby. He's just dead. It happens.

There is a duffle-bag next to the man and a note pinned to his shirt.

Jennifer tries to pry the shotgun out of the man's hands, but his grip is tight from rigor mortis.

She puts her boot on his chest and grunts, pulling as hard as she can.

JENNIFER
Come on, friend. That's it.

Finally, he gives up the gun and we hear his knuckles SNAP. His body tips over and his face hits the carpet with a thud.

Ollie is breathing heavily behind her.

JENNIFER
I said it's okay, baby.

Ollie pulls his mask back down over his face.

Jennifer unpins the note and reads it aloud.

JENNIFER

My name is Ernest T. Willis. This is not my house, but I came here to die in peace having been shot by outlaws. I have called the police but it is doubtful they will find me in time to save my life, if they even come at all.

Jennifer looks down and cringes at the sight of a big dried bloodstain on the man's abdomen. She glances back to the note.

JENNIFER

So I hereby leave my rifle, my truck and all my other possessions to whoever finds me first. I pray God it be the cops and not another lawless marauder like the men who did me in. For the record, I shot and killed them just as plainly as they've killed me. Please put this inheritance towards a just and holy cause and bury me under a big tree and...

(she looks back at Ollie)

Anyway, it goes on.

She tosses the note aside. She examines the mighty Mossberg 500 shotgun: an upgrade for sure.

She gives the pistol to her son.

At the dead man's lap is a set of car keys, which she pockets.

Now she focuses on the leather DUFFLE-BAG beside him.

Then it dawns on her...

JENNIFER

Inheritance...

She grabs the bag in a big hurry. She unzips it.

Inside are... Stacks and stacks of cold hard cash - all hundred dollar bills.

JENNIFER

Oh! Oh hell yeah.

Jennifer starts pulling the stacks of cash out of the bag. There is A LOT OF MONEY here.

JENNIFER

This is it, baby. This is our fresh start. We don't have to do this shit anymore.

OLLIE

Woah!

She hugs her son and dances up and down.

JENNIFER

I love you so much, baby.

OLLIE

Mom, chill!

She stops. She grabs the keys. Still smiling.

JENNIFER

Let's see what he was driving.

They get up and head for the door.

OLLIE

Aren't we supposed to bury him?

JENNIFER

Baby, we gotta move.

As they leave, we HOLD on the dead body. A shiny, black GRASSHOPPER-LIKE CREATURE, crawls up out of the dead man's shirt collar.

It bites down into his cheek and begins to chew on him. It burrows further and further until it disappears inside the wound.

INT. GARAGE

Light begins to fill the space as Jennifer heaves the garage door open, revealing a massive armor-plated military vehicle.

OLLIE

No way. Cool!

They step into the garage. The vehicle is like a Hummer on steroids. The wheels alone are as tall as Jennifer is.

JENNIFER

Big, dumb, gas-guzzling, obnoxious-ass car. Rednecks, man.

OLLIE
I think it's badass.

JENNIFER
I drove one once.

OLLIE
You drove one?

JENNIFER
In Afghanistan. That's what it's
built for. Military. Not driving
around the countryside tryin' to
make your dick look-- Tryin' to
look like a man.

OLLIE
I still think it's cool.

JENNIFER
We drive this, we may as well spray-
paint the words "pull me over" on
the side. Let's get his gas. The
fewer stops we gotta make, the
better.

MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer sucks gas out of the tank through a hose. She hands
the hose to Ollie, who funnels the fuel into a red canister.

EXT. HIGHWAY

A beige, late 2000's Station Wagon zooms down the interstate.
The red dust blows all around in the surrounding countryside.

INSIDE THE CAR

Stevie Wonder's jubilant "Uptight" is playing on the MP3
player, and coming through the car stereo.

Jennifer is at the wheel, tapping on the steering wheel,
jamming out in a quiet way. Celebrating her lucky break.

Ollie is in the backseat, his mask tilted up on top of his
head. He reads a MISTER MAVERICK comic on an old iPad with a
cracked screen.

Jennifer sees a road sign: Highway 60, San Antonio, 30 Mi.

She takes a nervous glance at the duffle-bag, down in the passenger footwell.

OLLIE
So where to, Mom?

JENNIFER
I was thinking Mexico. From there
get on a plane. Fly to some island.
You can swim every day. I'll find
me a Latin boyfriend, and never set
foot in this bullshit country
again.

Three big ARMY TROOPER CARRIERS come BARRELING up the highway behind them.

Jennifer has to swerve out of the way, just to let them pass.

Ollie excitedly puts his face against the window to watch the trucks go by.

HIS POV

Soldiers in military fatigues sitting in the back of each truck, and mysterious figures wearing HAZ-MAT SUITS.

OLLIE
Did you ever drive one of *those*,
mom?

JENNIFER
No, honey. What are they doing out
in the middle of nowhere?

Flying just above the trucks are four large OBSERVATION DRONES, each with four rotors and a swiveling camera turret.

INT. STATION WAGON - LATER

Jennifer sees a big roadblock up ahead. The trooper carriers are parked at the roadblock, and the troops are unloading.

JENNIFER
Shit.

She kills the stereo.

OLLIE
So, no Mexico?

JENNIFER
Just hold on.

EXT. ROADBLOCK

COLONEL WILL TRAVERS (60), heavily decorated, stares through binoculars at the approaching Station Wagon. He sees Jennifer at the wheel.

COLONEL TRAVERS
Here comes the first customer.
Someone go tell sexy to turn around
and drive as far away as possible.
If I see you get her phone number
though, I'm confiscating it.

One of the HAZ-MAT guys walks up to the Colonel. He lifts up his mask, revealing STANLEY CLYDE, (30s) white, bookish.

STANLEY
Sir. Just a moment...

TRAVERS' POV

The Station Wagon does a three-point turn and heads back down the highway.

COLONEL TRAVERS
Huh. Guess that took care of
itself.

STANLEY
Well, not necessarily, sir.

COLONEL TRAVERS
What do you mean? We have a
quarantine, don't we? Then the
situation is under control.

STANLEY
The "situation" is far from under
control, sir. You see these
windstorms coming? They're likely
to carry the "situation" with them.

Travers puts down his binoculars and gets in Clyde's face.

COLONEL TRAVERS
Well, I guess the clock is ticking
for you then. Time to earn your
pay.

INT. STATION WAGON

Jennifer reads a sign that says: "Dallas 300 Mi., Houston, 450 Mi., Town of Clemens, Next Exit."

OLLIE

Mom, are we going back the way we came?

She pulls off at the "Clemens" exit.

JENNIFER

Not a chance. We'll just lay low and try the highway again tomorrow.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

As the Station Wagon zooms past, we HOLD on a rat skulking along the top of a fence. The rat is moving in on a locust, which sits patiently still.

The rat attacks the locust, trying to bite it, but the insect instead bites onto the rat's face.

The rodent squeals in pain as the locust bites its face again and again with great speed.

EXT. MAIN STREET

The Station Wagon pulls into "Downtown" Clemens - little more than a drugstore, a one-room church and a sheriff's station.

Jennifer scans the area. There's no-one around.

They pull up closer to the sheriff's station. The windows are all boarded up.

Jennifer puts the car in park. She hides the shotgun in the duffle bag and steps out of the car. The dirt beneath her feet is dry and sun bleached and full of deep cracks.

There is a sun-damaged, yellowing notice taped inside the front window of the Sheriff's station.

INSERT NOTICE:

"10/15/34 - The Sheriff has retired
and the Sheriff's Station is closed
due to lack of funds.

(MORE)

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

The nearest law-enforcement is in
Borger, 60 miles North on the
highway. Please be safe and risk-
averse in Clemens and we recommend
you arm yourself for protection.
"Bear one another's burdens and so
fulfill the law of Christ,
Galatians 6:2"

ON JENNIFER

She smiles to herself. Ollie calls from the car.

OLLIE

Everything okay, mom?

JENNIFER

Everything's perfect.

She turns around. Ollie is pulling out the duffle bag. He
grabs the shotgun, and holds it up.

JENNIFER

Put that away!

She runs over. She grabs the shotgun from his hand.

INT. CHURCH

A MAN WITH SLICK BLACK HAIR is watching them through the
church window. We can hear someone in the room strumming
pleasant chords on an electric guitar.

The Man watching sees Jennifer grab the shotgun away from
Ollie. The duffle-bag falls out of the car and lands open on
the dirt ground.

The wads of cash are briefly on view. Jennifer quickly grabs
the bag and the gun, and chastises her son as she hides them
away again.

ON JENNIFER

She hears the faint sound of the guitar music coming from the
church across the street.

JENNIFER

(to Ollie)

Stay here for a sec.

Jennifer walks towards the church. The music grows louder: An electric guitar and a man's voice singing.

INT. CHURCH

Jennifer opens the creaking wooden doors and enters the small chapel.

Two men are playing an old-time hymnal up at the pulpit.

The singer is in his 40s. He wears long black robes, has slick black hair and his face is unnaturally white with thick foundation makeup.

This is RAMON.

The guitarist plays through a fender amp. He's 30, white and extremely lanky. He wears a Hawaiian shirt and has frizzy red hair and a goatee.

This is WOODY.

They stop playing when they see Jennifer.

RAMON

No service today. This is rehearsal.

Jennifer strolls up the pew towards them. Woody starts faintly playing a blues riff.

Jennifer watches Woody jam. She nods her head a little to the music. He plays a little louder.

JENNIFER

I'm looking for room and board.
Just for one night.

RAMON

For that you'll want... The Oasis.

Ramon takes a most theatrical bow as he pushes open the back doors.

Down the road is a decaying 1950s motel, with solar panels on the roof. The big, bright sign above reads: "THE DESERT OASIS. POOL. AIR CONDITIONER."

JENNIFER

Thanks.

She starts to head out the door. Ramon steps in front of her, holding up a tin collection plate.

RAMON

It's customary to leave a donation.

She stares at him blankly.

JENNIFER

Maybe later, friend.

She heads to the doorway.

RAMON

You've got dirt on you.

She turns around. He's standing close now, looking right through her.

JENNIFER

Excuse me?

RAMON

I know your kind. You're one of these raiders -- these thieves, out there taking what isn't yours.

Her face shows a realization -- did he see the bag?

JENNIFER

I didn't steal anything, friend.

Now he stares her in the face, with piercing eyes and a faint smile.

RAMON

Really? Not ever?

She doesn't answer that one. She walks toward the exit.

RAMON

You read the sign. Man's law has abandoned this town, which leaves only God's law. And God isn't some -
- hick sheriff you can hide from.

JENNIFER

A man who speaks for God -- that always turns out well.

(then)

Listen, I'll be gone tomorrow. Until then, how about we just stay out of each other's way?

She walks out the door. Woody doesn't look up. He keeps jamming on his blues riff. She takes her leave, Ramon calls out after her.

RAMON

It's parasites like you that are making this world to burn. you have invoked God's wrath! Raising your son to be a criminal like you. You can not hide your sins from God!

JENNIFER

(without turning around)

Prick.

She slams the door behind her.

EXT. MAIN STREET

Jennifer sees Ollie across the street, talking to a pretty hispanic girl of nine years old. This is LUPITA.

LUPITA

Is that an official Mister Maverick mask?

He unstraps the mask and hands it to her.

OLLIE

Uh huh. That's a respirator for all the dust, and these are headphones. My mom plays me songs.

She looks at the mask's silver face, and the respiratory tubes and pipes behind it. She's impressed.

LUPITA

Fancy boy. Where'd you get it?

OLLIE

Well I -- She -- We bought it.

LUPITA

We just use hankies and goggles for the storms. Works pretty good.

Jennifer calls from across the road.

JENNIFER

I told you to wait with the car. Now let's go.

OLLIE

Just a sec!

JENNIFER

No. Now!

Ollie groans.

OLLIE

Yeah yeah! Sorry, maybe I'll see you around.

LUPITA

You and your mom can come eat at my mom's cantina tomorrow.

Ollie takes off towards his mom. He calls back to Lupita as he goes.

OLLIE

Maybe we will. Thanks!

They get back in the car and drive it into the lot of the OASIS MOTEL.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE

The doorbell makes a loud chime as Jennifer and Ollie enter the tiny check-in room.

KARL, (50S), the burly, ruddy-faced clerk doesn't look up from the book he's reading: 'HAWAII' by James Mitchner. A dog-eared old doorstop of a novel.

KARL

Something you need?

JENNIFER

Well, a room had crossed my mind.

Karl licks his thumb and turns another of the yellowed pages.

KARL

Where you in from?

JENNIFER

Ohio.

He glances them up and down, and then back down to his book.

KARL

That's far. That even *true*?

JENNIFER

Listen, I just need a room, friend.

KARL
All full up. No vacancy.

Jennifer looks outside. There are only four cars in the otherwise empty lot.

JENNIFER
Is that a fact?

He puts the book down. His hand drifts under the counter and onto a shotgun which hangs just out of sight.

KARL
I've had drifters before, lady. No thanks. No vacancy.

She sees this move. She can just imagine the kind of firepower this hillbilly is hiding under the counter.

JENNIFER
Alright. You have yourself a peachy day now.

They turn around to leave. Karl sees the tattoo on Jennifer's right shoulder: An anchor surrounded by the letters "U.S.M.C".

KARL
Hold up.

Jennifer turns around. Karl points to his shoulder, then to her's.

KARL
Where'd you serve? Afghanistan?
Pakistan?

Jennifer walks toward him, with a knowing smile.

JENNIFER
Oh, I'm acquainted with all the Stans.

KARL
Uncle Sam still cuttin' your checks?

JENNIFER
(chuckles)
Not for some time now.

KARL
Uncle Sam does not take care of our warriors.

(MORE)

KARL (CONT'D)
(thumbs pointing at
himself)
Karl, however, does.

He pulls down a key from the key rack.

KARL
You can have room 24. Second floor
in the back. Nice and quiet.
That'll be twenty-five dollars.

JENNIFER
I appreciate it. Mind if I pay
cash, or do you only take scans?

She tilts her hand up. There is a small, glowing blueish
implant inside her wrist.

Karl BURSTS OUT laughing.

KARL
Scans? Lady you really are a long
way from home. Ain't nobody around
here got scans.

JENNIFER
Cash suits me fine.

She puts her money down and Karl hands her the key. She looks
out to the courtyard. The concrete is cracked and the green,
filthy pool water is mostly dried up.

KARL
This is a dustbowl town. We're low
on water. Electricity is rationed
too. The people you see are the
last stubborn hold-outs. We'd
rather keep roughing it than go
live up Big Brother's ass.

JENNIFER
"Don't tread on me."

KARL
That's the idea. You might think
we're yocals, but you'll find most
of us are nice enough people. Enjoy
your stay.

Jennifer and Ollie exit through the door to the courtyard.
Karl still chuckles to himself.

KARL
"Scans".

He picks up his book and starts reading again.

BACK IN THE LOT

Jennifer and Ollie grab thier few belongings from the car, the biggest of which is the duffle-bag. As she grabs it, she scans, to see who is watching.

Nobody. She pulls the bag from the car.

She walks across the motel courtyard, bag over her shoulder. She looks behind her again.

Ramon is standing in the street, wearing his black robes, and watching her.

JENNIFER
This asshole again?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer and Ollie enter the small, perfunctory room. To Karl's credit, it is at least clean.

They each climb onto one of the twin beds.

She takes the bed closer to the door, and carefully leans the shotgun against the wall between the bed-frame and the nightstand.

She sits cross-legged, facing the window. She cracks her neck and stretches her arms and massages her own shoulders. She lets out a groan that speaks to long-endured pain.

She turns off the lamp on her nightstand. The room goes dark. She closes her eyes and sits perfectly still, meditating.

Ollie lies in his bed, facing away from her, but his eyes are wide open, staring at the wall.

TIME PASSES...

She sighs as she opens her eyes again. She glances over her shoulder at 'sleeping' Ollie. She reaches for a small medicine bag.

She stands up and then she tiptoes toward the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

She flips on the light and puts the bag down on the counter. She gets a good look at herself in the mirror.

She pulls up her shirt in the back and twists around to look at her back in the mirror.

Her entire back is covered in thick, gruesome scars from third degree burns, and there is big surgery scar that runs down the entire length of her spine.

Another sigh as she opens the medicine bag. It contains myriad bottles of prescription opioids. None of the labels are in Jennifer's name.

She grabs a handful of pills and throws them in her mouth. She takes a swig off of a bottle of Hennessey to chase this cocktail down.

She closes the light.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Jennifer tip toes back to bed.

OLLIE

Mom.

This stops her.

JENNIFER

Go to sleep, Ollie.

OLLIE

I can't. I keep seeing that dead man's face.

JENNIFER

You're gonna have to toughen up, kid.

She gets in bed. She stares at the ceiling for a moment.

JENNIFER

Alright. Come over.

Ollie gets out of his bed and climbs in and snuggles next to his mother. She holds him tight.

OLLIE

I miss dad.

JENNIFER

Me too, baby. Now lets get some sleep.

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

The wind is howling. Karl is folding up a patio umbrella. Suddenly, he SCREAMS in pain.

KARL

OW SHIT!

He drops the umbrella and grabs his right calf and starts hopping around in pain, cursing.

KARL

Ow god damn!

Finally, he pulls up his pant leg and there on his calf is a locust with it's face buried into his calf and lots of blood coming out.

KARL

What the *hell*?

He pulls the insect out and stomps on it with his boot. We hear it crunch.

He looks around the patio. More Locusts have been swept in by the wind. They sit perfectly still, as if they're watching him.

Waiting...

He limps his way back into the office and slams the door shut behind him.

INT. OFFICE

He collapses backward, and knocks over his bookcase. He lands on his back surrounded by fallen copies of history books, encyclopedias, old farmers' almanacs.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

We PUSH IN on Jennifer, squirming in her sleep. Dreaming. Ollie is cuddled up next to her.

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

We PUSH IN down an aisle. The shelves have been shot up in a gun fight. Bagged and canned goods lie exploded all over the floor.

The Cashier dead on the floor behind the checkout counter, shot through the chest.

We hear HEAVY BREATHING.

Two DEAD MEN in ski masks are collapsed in the aisle, both of them bleeding from gunshot wounds.

PLING! PLING! Bullets from outside pierce the glass storefront. A soda bottle explodes in one of the aisles. The glass storefront is littered with bullet holes.

Jennifer, is ducked down low, wearing a ski mask. In her arms is a wounded man - the source of the heavy breathing - Her husband, DAVEY (30).

An amplified voice comes from outside.

VOICE (O.C.)

To any remaining robbers. This is
your last chance to surrender.

Jennifer pulls Davey's mask off. He's quivering in pain.

JENNIFER

Shit. What do we *do*?

DAVEY

You gotta go, baby. While you still
can.

Jennifer indicates the two dead robbers.

JENNIFER

We never should have hooked up with
these animals. Why would they just
start shooting like that?

There are empty bullet casings all around the dead robbers and smoke still rises from the barrels of their assault rifles.

DAVEY

It's too late for all that. You
gotta get the hell out of here.

JENNIFER

No. I'm not leaving you.

DAVEY

Jennifer. Jennifer. Jennifer. Stop.
Please. Think about Ollie. He's all
that matters. Ain't nobody in this
fucked up world gonna take care of
him if we're both gone.

EXT. PARKING LOT

We're in a frozen NORTHERN CITY. It is snowing outside and
the ground is covered with ice.

Twenty five SWAT COPS close in on the front of the store.
They wear sleek body armor and carry assault weapons.

INT. SUPERMARKET

Davey puts a new clip in his assault rifle.

DAVEY

There's a way out through the
basement. Go wake up Ollie and put
this town in your rearview mirror
tonight.

Jennifer is crying. Shaking her head 'no'.

JENNIFER

What are you doing?

Davey looks down at his bloody wound. He raises his assault
rifle and stands up slowly, labored from pain.

DAVEY

I'm buying you time. Now GO!

He starts hobbling his way toward the front of the store.
Jennifer hesitates. Then finally she gets up and runs toward
the back.

She looks back over her shoulder. Davey shouts to her.

DAVEY

Ollie's all that matters now.
Nobody else!

He OPENS FIRE on the cops with his automatic rifle, spraying
bullets through the glass storefront.

Davey's body gets filled with bullets. He keeps on shooting
wildly as he collapses. Jennifer runs to the back of the
store.

EXT. STREET

We PUSH IN on a manhole cover as it slowly starts to lift. We hear Jennifer groaning with everything she's got.

Finally... The manhole cover slides out of the way, and Jennifer climbs out and runs for it. The Supermarket and all the flashing police lights are behind her.

INT. APARTMENT

A rundown, one bedroom unit. Peeling paint and water stains cover the walls. Ollie sleeps in a cot on the floor. Jennifer bursts in and tries to shake him awake.

JENNIFER

Ollie. We gotta go. We gotta leave town right now.

She keeps shaking him, but he doesn't wake up. She screams.

JENNIFER

Ollie! Ollie!

She looks down again. And the boy has vanished.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY (PRESENT)

It's morning. Ollie is trying to shake Jennifer awake.

OLLIE

Mom. Mom, wake up!

It's no good. She's conked. Then he sees it -- the bottle of pills she took. He picks up the bottle and reads the label and notices the mostly empty bottle of booze.

He understands. He lets her sleep. He goes to the door and leaves the room, quietly closing the door behind him.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - HOURS LATER

Jennifer wakes up in bed and sits up with a gasp.

The LED clock reads 12:15 PM. She rubs her eyes, still drowsy, hung over. She scans the room.

Ollie is GONE.

A deafening windstorm beats against the wall and the windows outside.

The door is ajar. The door flaps open and shut again with the wind as the open latch slams repeatedly against the wall.

She stands up.

She slips into her boots. Grabs her mask and the shotgun and runs out the door.

EXT. COURTYARD - SAME

Jennifer runs across the court-yard. Shotgun in one hand, mask in the other. Her boots still unlaced.

The red, windy dust storm is fierce, physically slowing her progress as she runs.

JENNIFER

Ollie!

There are locusts on the ground all around the courtyard. Many of them are drowning in the pool.

She gets to Karl's office and tries the door. Locked.

She looks in. Empty.

A hand-written sign in the window: "GONE TO THE CANTINA. BACK AT 2 PM."

She runs toward the street.

THWUCK! A bug hits her in the face and then is blown away.

JENNIFER

Ow!

She touches her cheek. It's bleeding.

THWUCK! Another one comes and lands on her shoulder. It bites down hard.

JENNIFER

Ah!

She swats at her shoulder, killing the bug. There is a deep, bloody gouge.

JENNIFER

Motherfucker!

She puts her breathing mask on and heads to...

MAIN ROAD

Without the hotel to block the wind storm, she now feels it's full affect. Red sand blows everywhere. It scrapes against her bare arms like sandpaper.

The sound of the wind is positively overpowering. She can barely see as far as the other side of the street.

She yells out, helpless to be heard over the wind.

JENNIFER

Anybody seen my boy!?

EXT. ROSIE'S CANTINA

The howling dust storm pounds against the side of this old school Tex Mex restaurant.

INT. CANTINA

All's quiet. A soft Tejano folk ballad plays on the sound system.

Karl sits at the bar, talking to ROSIE (Latina, mid 40), who is behind the counter. She wears a western cut button-down shirt tucked into her Levis.

Karl's finishing a plate of enchiladas. Nobody else is around.

KARL

The Polynesians sailed three
thousand miles on these little
rafts before they got to Hawaii.
Didn't even know there was a Hawaii
to be found when they set out. Can
you imagine?

He pushes his empty plate aside. He rubs the back of his calf, cringing in pain.

KARL

I know people who are eighty years
old and never even been outside the
panhandle.

ROSIE

Alright. Big talker. You sold me.
Let's move to Hawaii.

Karl laughs.

KARL

Yeah. I figure if I sell the Oasis I'll be able to buy out the Hyatt Regency on Maui. Anyway, that shoreline's half way underwater by now.

ROSIE

Have we reached that point?

KARL

Eh?

ROSIE

No future anymore. Everyone just looking to the past while we wait for the end.

Karl agitates. He continues to rub his calf.

ROSIE

Come on. Let's see it.

He pulls up his pant leg and shows her the nasty, deep wound on his calf.

KARL

I never experienced anything like it. Thing just upped and bit me.

ROSIE

That's nasty. Put something on it. What do we even have that *bites* like that?

He shrugs. Rosie goes to the window and looks at the storm.

KARL

Well, I'm supposed to get back to work, but I ain't goin out in that mess. Say, where's Lupita?

ROSIE

Out playing with the boy who came in yesterday. You know, the black one?

KARL

Oh I know them.

ROSIE

The storm's getting bad. I'm starting to worry a little.

EXT. CLEARING - SAME

Ollie and Lupita are playing out in the thick of the storm. Ollie in his Mister Maverick mask. Lupita with goggles on and a handkerchief covering her nose and mouth.

She sneaks up on him and makes a "gun" out of her index fingers.

LUPITA

Haha! You're my prisoner now,
Mister Maverick.

OLLIE

You'll never take me! Blasters!

He makes laser sound effects as he "shoots at her" with his upturned palms. Lupita screams and then runs off, disappearing into the storm.

Ollie chases after her.

EXT. MAIN STREET

Jennifer roams through the dust storm. She can't see even a few feet in front of her.

She hears a WHIMPER.

JENNIFER

Somebody there?

Another whimper. She runs toward the sound and sees...

A dying yellow Labrador. Collapsed on it's side. Breathing heavily. Whining. A dozen or more locusts feeding on its flesh.

Jennifer stares in horror at this unbelievable sight.

She levels her shotgun, about to put the dog out of it's misery.

A few locusts jump from the dog and get airborne. They're coming straight at Jennifer. She runs.

One bites her neck. She smashes it.

She runs like hell.

Another one bites her back. She reaches for it and pinches it and crushes it between her fingers.

She looks back. Now hundreds of them are riding the storm in her direction.

Jennifer moves fast, tapping into every grueling ounce of bootcamp training she ever received.

She looks to her right, where a slower, older woman is being overtaken by the bugs. The woman stops running and now she collapses as the creatures begin to feast on her.

Jennifer runs even faster, towards the....

PARKING LOT

She can't see her car.

She hits the button on her keychain. The Station Wagon beeps twice and she runs toward the sound.

She grabs the handle and swings the door open.

INT. STATION WAGON

She dives into the car and so do about eight or nine Locusts.

They bite her. She smashes and flings them as she screams in pain and they bite her some more.

She swats them. Something bites her leg and she screams again and slaps the side of her pants repeatedly until it stops.

She sits back and catches her breath. She watches the wind and dust flap all around the car.

JENNIFER

Ollie.

She scrambles for the dashboard. Opens it up, and pulls out her MP3 device.

The device shows one out of five possible bars of service.

She starts scrolling through tracks.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE FARMHOUSE

Lupita runs towards a barely visible fence. Ollie runs behind her.

LUPITA
This is my mom's farm. The last one
in the area.

Ollie looks admiringly at the farmhouse.

OLLIE
So cool. I've never seen one that's
not falling apart.

LUPITA
Let's go take cover Mister
Maverick.

They run for it, Lupita giggling at their fun little
adventure.

As they get closer, Ollie sees the silhouette of a cow.

OLLIE
What's that?

She laughs at him.

LUPITA
You never seen a cow before? Follow
me, city boy.

A CLOSER SHOT reveals to us the cow is dead where it stands,
being devoured by Locusts, with Ollie and Lupita running
straight towards it in the background.

CLOSE ON OLLIE

He gets to the fence. He puts his hand down on the wood,
about to leap over.

And Locusts are circling the cow as they feast.

Ollie gets a leg over the fence. He stops.

OLLIE
Do they bite?

LUPITA
Dios mío. No! Cows don't bite. They
teach you anything in the city?

OLLIE
I was just kidding.

LUPITA
Sure you were.

Ollie takes a big leap off of the fence. He runs closer to the cow.

Suddenly...

Iron Maiden starts blasting into his headphones: "Run for the Hills".

It comes on so loud and sudden, it startles the boy.

He stops.

Now he sees the little black shapes orbiting the cow. And the cow's flesh has been chewed all over.

OLLIE

Lupita!

He starts backing away. He looks up now. A big black swarm has risen up and is orbiting behind the farmhouse.

OLLIE

Lupita, we gotta go!

He grabs her hand and pulls her. She resists.

LUPITA

What?

OLLIE

Come on. Let's go!

He pulls the girl by her hand and they run away. Bruce Dickinson's voice still wailing in his ears: "Run for the hills, run for the hills."

INT./EXT. STATION WAGON

A multitude of Locusts are swarming now.

Jennifer drives blind down main street. She runs the wipers, which squish bugs on the windshield.

THWUMP! - A dying man throws himself onto the hood of the car. Jennifer can see the bugs eating him alive. The look of terror frozen on his face as they devour his cheeks and nose.

Jennifer swerves around him, and...

CRASH! - The station wagon plows into an oncoming pickup truck. The impact is HARD. Jennifer's head SMACKS against the dashboard.

The front ends of both vehicles are caved in. The Station Wagon is blowing black smoke, which mixes in with the red dust storm.

Jennifer's head is bleeding. The driver of the other truck is screaming at her, but she can't hear a word.

She picks up the MP3 player, and switches the song to "You've got to Hide Your Love Away."

EXT. CLEARING

Ollie and Lupita run. The Beatles song now starts blasting into his headphones.

He stops.

OLLIE

New plan. We can't run. We gotta
hide somewhere safe.

LUPITA

Where?

They both look up where the biggest cloud of dust yet is barreling their way. The mass of dust is taller than the peak of the farmhouse.

OLLIE

I don't know! Whadayou got?

She grips his hand tightly.

LUPITA

This way!

They take off running, staying ahead of the imminent storm, swatting away Locusts who jump at them.

IN THE AIR ABOVE

We FOLLOW the big swarm of Locusts, their numbers countless, riding in the eye of the dust cloud, bearing down towards the Earth below.

EXT. CANTINA

Rosie ventures into the dust-storm, yelling out.

ROSIE

Lupita! Lupitaaaaa!

THWUMP! A locust flies in and bites her arm.

THWUMP! Then another, and another. She screams.

Karl comes up behind her.

KARL
Let's go. Come on!

He pulls her back toward the restaurant. He gets bit on the face.

INT. RESTAURANT

Karl falls into the restaurant, holding Rosie in his arms. He gets up and slams the door shut.

The two of them chase bugs and stomp them.

KARL
What in the name of god?

ROSIE
She's out there!

INT. STATION WAGON

Jennifer sees the Church through the storm and the bugs. The pickup truck driver, a fat man, gets out of his truck and makes a break for the church.

JENNIFER
No no no. Don't do that. Don't--

Locusts pounce on him before he reaches the front steps. He stops and contorts in pain, giving more Locusts a chance to pile onto him and finally their numbers bring him down.

Jennifer is breathing heavy. Sweating.

JENNIFER
Too slow. That's all. Too fucking slow.

She puts her mask on and puts her hand on the car door handle.

INT. CHURCH

Ramon is leading church service. Woody is playing his guitar.

About a dozen men, women and children look out the windows at the unfolding disaster as Ramon preaches from the pulpit.

Ramon is theatrical, to say the least. He's downright baroque.

RAMON

And the lord said there would be a day of reckoning. Well now look out these windows and tell me what you see.

The Churchgoers are gasping and screaming.

RAMON

And notice those of us spending our Sunday in the lord's house have been spared. While those who thought they had something better to do today, well they've learned their lesson.

INT/ EXT. STATION WAGON

Jennifer is psyching herself up.

JENNIFER

Just gotta be fast. That's all.

She grabs her shotgun.

She opens the door and RUNS FOR IT.

It's a mad dash. The bugs are biting her exposed arms and shoulders. They bite the back of her neck. They're swarming her.

KA-BOOM! She **BLASTS** the bugs in front of her with the shotgun. Their mass so thick that it disperses with the blast.

CH-CHK She racks the shotgun and blasts the bugs again.

INT. CHURCH

The church-folk watch Jennifer's heroic dash.

She reaches the church steps and tries the door. Locked.

JENNIFER

Fuck.

She's getting chewed up.

JENNIFER
Whoever's in there better move. I'm
gonna blast!

She racks the gun and...

KA-BLAM! Blows the lock. She bursts in through the door.

INT. CHURCH

She enters fast and slams the door closed behind her. She grabs a bench and drags it to the door to keep it from flying open.

JENNIFER
Has anyone seen my boy. I gotta
find my boy!

She flips her mask up. She's a bloody mess.

JENNIFER
Somebody please!

Ramon approaches her down the aisle.

RAMON
Of course we'll help you dear.
You're in the lord's house. We
don't turn *anyone* away.

A man named FRANK, (65) and his wife, BETHANY (60), use their coats to blot Jennifer's wounds.

A young girl named SHAUNA (15), walks over to Jennifer and kneels down.

SHAUNA
I think I saw your son. He was at
Rosie's cantina earlier.

Jennifer stands up and goes to the window. The storm is blowing strong. Countless locusts swarm too and fro.

RAMON
Not much you can do in this storm.
Just pray with us. We'll pray for
your boy together.

He leans down over her.

RAMON
Now, hand me that gun.

She shakes her head 'no'.

EXT. FARMHOUSE

We PUSH IN on a wooden cellar door in the ground. Locusts jump and buzz all around.

INT. CELLAR

Ollie uses a nail gun to pin a canvas tarp over the gaps in the cellar doorframe.

Lupita swipes a bug off of herself and stomps on it. Ollie shines a flashlight around this dark dirty cellar.

OLLIE
Any more?

LUPITA
I don't see any.

OLLIE
You okay?

LUPITA
It hurts.

He shines the flashlight on her and she has fresh cuts all over her arm and another on her neck.

OLLIE
At least we're not out there. You should wash the cuts if we can find water.

The wind beats against the cellar door above them. The POOM, POOM, POOM sound is loud and jarring.

There's also the crazed HUMMING of the SWARM outside.

LUPITA
I'm so scared.

Ollie has his Mister Maverick mask in his hand. He looks down at it.

OLLIE
I know. But my mom'll come get us.

LUPITA
Can you call her?

OLLIE
Uh-uh. We never use phones. She
says the FBI listens to 'em.

Lupita casts him a confused glance.

He pulls an "Off the Grid" MP3 player from his pocket.

OLLIE
We use songs instead.

EXT. CHURCH

The dusty wind still blows against the walls of the church, but the storm is beginning to settle. The Locusts are EVERYWHERE. They hum in unison, creating a hellish, buzzing chorus. The high-pitched sound is murder on the ears.

INT. CHURCH

RAMON
You're an animal, feeding off the
carcass of our civilization. And
now, you have brought this plague
with you. This is all your fault.

WOODY
Take it easy, Ramon.

RAMON
Take it easy? On her? She dragged
her boy into a life of sin and now
the lord has punished her, by
taking her boy away.

Jennifer snaps out of it.

JENNIFER
Why would he punish me by hurting
my son. If I wanna blow your head
off, I shoot you, not your wife,
not your grandma, not your kid. I
kill you.

RAMON
That was a threat. You all heard
it, folks. You see who we're
dealing with.

Ramon walks closer to Jennifer.

RAMON
Give me that gun right now.

JENNIFER
If you come even one step closer...

Ramon goes to the window and looks out.

RAMON
This is a wakeup call. We're all sinners. Even worse, we *tolerate* sin in others. Because of this, the ten plagues have begun. Just as the book of Exodus warned, we must now contend with the Lord's vengeance, with the coming of God's Locusts.

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW

The wind has calmed. The ground is covered with hundreds of thousands of shiny, black Locusts. Their numbers are legion. They feast on the carcasses of dead townsfolk. They all face in the direction of the church, as if they know they have the place surrounded, and the next meal awaits inside those walls.

And in the center of the road is Jennifer's wrecked Station Wagon.

RAMON (O.C.)
This place of worship is the last safe haven you'll find.

ON JENNIFER

A tear runs down her cheek. She's looking at the churchgoers with contempt and suspicion. The churchgoers are scared and shocked and panicking.

BETHANY
We need to get help.

Frank looks down at his cell phone.

FRANK
I got no service. Anyone else?

The few people carrying cell phones all look at their phones and shake their heads 'no'.

Ramon begins to laugh.

RAMON

Even at this late hour, you look to
your material possessions for
salvation. You think the
"authorities" can save you. All of
your false idols have run their
course. There is but one power left
that can save you, the Lord.

Suddenly, a jingle starts playing-- an eight-bit sequence of three ascending notes. The jingle repeats as Jennifer scrambles into her jeans pocket and pulls out her MP3 player.

INSERT LED SCREEN

The words "Oliver liked a song" animate onto screen. Jennifer clicks on the popup. The Beatles' "Hide Your Love Away" artwork pops on to screen and then a little thumbs icon animates onto the artwork.

JENNIFER

Her face lights up. She stands up. Animated. Renewed.

JENNIFER

He's alive. My boy's alive.

Ramon looks disappointed. This undermines his narrative.

Frank goes to the window and looks out.

FRANK

That's great. I really am happy for
you, hon. But how in hell are you
gonna get to him?

Jennifer runs over and looks out too. And there is the sea of locusts, all staring into the windows, just daring her to try.

Jennifer looks at a banner taped to the wall with duct tape. It reads: "CHRIST'S CHURCH POTLUCK - AUGUST, 7TH"

She looks over to the other side of the room where the frightened parishioners are huddled. Behind them is a small storage closet.

Jennifer goes over to the closet. The parishioners hustle to move out of her way. She looks at the padlock on the closet door. She looks at Ramon, staring back at her.

She raises up the butt of the shotgun, ready to smash the lock.

WOODY
Just take 'em.

Woody hands her a keyring. She opens the closet. Inside are a rubber garbage can, a broom and a mop, and on a high up shelf, the roll of duct tape.

Now Jennifer eyes the parishioners.

JENNIFER
I'm gonna need your clothes.

BETHANY
Why? What are you going to do to us?

Jennifer walks up to the group.

JENNIFER
Nothing. I just need your clothes.
Please.

People start taking off their clothes as Jennifer points the shotgun at them.

She walks down the line of parishioners, pointing and indicating which garments she wants. She reaches Frank.

JENNIFER
Your jacket.

Frank begrudgingly removes his heavyweight, Carhatt jacket, exposing the pistol concealed in a shoulder-holster.

JENNIFER
You were right not to draw that weapon, sir. I'd have killed you.

She puts her hand out, and he takes off his shoulder harness and hands her the holstered pistol.

BETHANY
You can't possibly think you're going out there.

RAMON
She thinks she can bully her way out of this. She thinks there's some place out there safer than the house of God. Let her learn, I say.

Jennifer points the shotgun at Ramon.

JENNIFER

That robe.

Ramon glares at her from across the room. She starts walking towards him. He begins to take off his robe.

Jennifer puts on the layers and layers of clothing. Then she wears the robe over everything. She starts ripping strips of duct tape and sealing the clothes off at the neck, and the wrists and the ankles. She walks toward the front door.

Jennifer is wearing her breather mask, and taping her exposed neck up with duct tape.

JENNIFER

Somebody point out Rosie's grill.

Jennifer finishes taping herself up. Shauna steps forward.

SHAUNA

It's about a half-mile that way.

Jennifer turns back around and walks to the door.

RAMON

Everyone stand back.

The parishioners huddle in fear as Jennifer gets ready to go through the door. Bethany runs over to her and falls to her knees, crying.

BETHANY

Don't just leave us like this!

She grabs onto Jennifer's leg.

JENNIFER

I'm gonna tell you straight. I
gotta find my son first thing. Then
I'm putting this town far behind
me. If I see help, I'll send it
your way.

Jennifer's masked face looks down at Bethany.

JENNIFER

I'm not a bad person.

She turns around and heads for the door.

EXT. CHURCH

The door slowly opens and Jennifer takes her first step outside. She closes it behind her.

The Locusts fill the roads. This is their town now. Their chattering chorus reaches a piercing crescendo.

Jennifer takes another step toward the road. She moves slowly. She's padded from head to toe. Her boots take one slow step after another, like the first person to set foot on Mars.

Another step...

The bugs see her. They move closer as she approaches. It's like they're watching her.

She walks toward her car. Bugs start to jump onto her. She swipes them away with the barrel of the Mossberg.

The chatter gets louder still. It's as if they're talking about her.

She passes the remains of the guy whose car she crashed into, the guy who made a break for the church. Hundreds of bugs are feasting on his body now. They have chewed his face.

Jennifer is frightened, swiping away more locusts, stepping further out.

INT. CHURCH

The parishioners watch as Jennifer reaches her car, and goes around the far side.

RAMON

She'll never make it.

The car is smashed so hard into the pickup truck that it's hard to tell where one vehicle ends and the other begins.

EXT. ROAD

From beneath the car, Jennifer sees black oil has spilled out into a big puddle on the dusty road. Jennifer crouches down for a better look.

The Locusts are avoiding the puddle. A few unlucky ones are drowning in the oil.

Inside, she sees the bag of cash. The stacks of money have been thrown around in the crash. She reaches to open the door.

HER POV

THWUP!-- A Locust lands right on her face-mask. She looks down. Locusts have glommed onto her clothes while she was distracted.

They are starting to chew their way through the layers.

JENNIFER

Starts thrashing around, swiping and swatting them, but there are too many now. She is breathing heavily, starting to panic.

She begins to run down the road.

ON HER BACK

A locust has torn a nice sized hole through Ramon's black robe. It's working it's way through the other layers.

It disappears into the layers.

She SCREAMS OUT. She almost keels over in pain. She slaps and swats at her body, but the pain keeps coming.

She stumbles a moment.

A spot of blood appears on her white jean jacket underneath. The blood blanches and the red spot grows bigger and bigger.

Jennifer keeps running with all she's got. Locusts still chewing their way at her clothing. Through her face-mask we see her teeth gritting with pain.

INT. ROSIE'S CANTINA

Rosie has her head down, her hand on her brow with fear and depression. Karl consoles her with a hand on her shoulder.

ROSIE

My baby.

KARL

Rosie, we don't know what's what yet. So you cannot panic. Please.

He hears something. He stops.

It's a faint cry. He goes to the window. Rosie stands up and follows him to the window.

THEY SEE...

A figure wearing a breathing mask and a bundle of black robes, running toward the door. Karl draws his gun.

JENNIFER SEES...

...Karl in the window.

JENNIFER (O.C.)
Open the door! Open the door
please!

He looks at Rosie. Rosie looks back at him. What to do?

He points the gun. His finger on the trigger.

Jennifer's in his sights.

KARL
Awe hell.

He puts the gun down and unlocks the front door.

Jennifer comes tumbling in. Hundreds of locusts pour through the door before Karl can close it again.

Rosie runs to the kitchen sink and grabs a pressure hose.

Rosie runs back in with the hose and opens it up, firing at Jennifer, full blast.

Jennifer writhes around against the pressure as the locusts go flying off of her.

Karl stomps on as many of them as he can until no more locusts are moving.

Jennifer grabs Karl by the leg.

JENNIFER
Get it out of me. Get it out of me!

She starts ripping off her layers of clothes. Karl sees what she's doing. He begins to help her tear the clothes away.

She's down to her undershirt. It's soaked through with blood. She pulls up the shirt. There is a nasty, bloody hole in the side of her torso, near the ribs.

She collapses to the ground with a THUMP!

INT. CANTINA - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer lies unconscious as Rosie digs inside the wound with a pair of tweezers. The wound is deep and cavernous. Rosie keeps feeling around inside.

She pinches with the tweezers. We hear the creature squeal.

ROSIE
I got something!

She clamps down the tweezers and carefully pulls them back out of Jennifer's wound, like she's playing a game of 'Operation'.

Karl watches this with equal parts curiosity and disgust. He holds a bottle of Tequila at his side.

The tweezers emerge. They have in their grasp a living, thrashing Locust.

Karl opens the Tequila, about to pour it over the wound. Jennifer grabs his wrist. She looks him square in the eye.

He hands her the bottle and she takes a giant swig.

JENNIFER
Okay.

Karl takes the bottle back and pours it onto the wound.

Jennifer shouts out in pain.

Rosie brings the tweezers down onto a table top. She is ready to smash the creature with a mallet.

JENNIFER (O.C.)
(quiet, slurry)
Don't.

They both look at Jennifer. She summons all her might and picks herself up off of the ground.

JENNIFER
Don't kill it!

She hobbles over to Rosie and Karl. She leans in to look at the thrashing, trapped creature.

JENNIFER

I wanna find out what he's made of.

LATER...

The Locust is trapped inside a clear, acrylic cake tray. Karl and Rosie stare at the thrashing bug. Karl drills a small hole into the lid of the cake tray.

Jennifer sits crosslegged on the floor. Eyes closed. Meditating. Karl walks over to her.

KARL

We're ready.

Jennifer gets up slowly and comes over to them. She holds her side, still in pain.

KARL

That really helps, huh?

JENNIFER

I've learned different ways to live with pain. Sometimes the meditation helps. Sometimes I need something... stronger.

ROSIE

Your boy, he--

JENNIFER

Is alive. I know he is. If your little girl was with him, then she might be okay too.

ROSIE

How do you know? Did the Dalai Llama just whisper it in your ear?

Jennifer holds up her MP3 device.

JENNIFER

Ever seen one of these? They stopped making them ten years ago. It generates it's own signal. The closer I get to Ollie's device, the more bars I have. I had one bar in town. Right now I've got three. So I'm know I'm getting close.

KARL
Rosie, your farm?

ROSIE
Maybe. The basement would be the
safest place to go.

Jennifer goes over to the cake tray.

She pours water into the tray, filling it up. The bug hates
this. It thrashes around in the water, helpless, drowning.

JENNIFER
I guess you ain't so tough. Just a
bug at the end of the day.
Tweezers?

Rosie slides the tweezers in through the hole and grabs onto
the bug. Jennifer lifts the cover off and water spills
everywhere.

Jennifer sets the lid back down. Rosie lets go of the tongs
and the bug is trapped again.

JENNIFER
We know you don't like water. What
else?

She reaches a long nosed barbecue lighter into the hole and
lights it. The Locust is immediately repelled. It cowers
against the side of the lid. It makes a sound like a scream.

JENNIFER
You're smart. You wanna live. Good.
We'll use that against you.

Jennifer looks around the restaurant.

She sees a propane tank. Across the room she sees a fire
extinguisher.

JENNIFER
You got more tools around here?

KARL
Where are you from lady?

JENNIFER
Jennifer.

KARL
Where are you from Jennifer?

JENNIFER
Up north. Why?

KARL
Because you're in Texas now. And in Texas we come prepared to take care of our own shit.

INT. KITCHEN SUPPLY CLOSET

The doors swing open and Jennifer, Karl and Rosie look in at the well stocked shelves full of supplies and industrial-caliber tools.

Jennifer nods her approval. She starts pulling supplies down off of the shelves.

KARL
What are we working on here, Jennifer?

JENNIFER
You were in the service, weren't you?

KARL
I was just a grunt, little miss special forces.

JENNIFER
Doesn't matter. This comes straight from the basic training handbook. We're gonna build our own weapons and take the fight to them.

INT. REFRIGERATOR

The glass door is slid open. Rosie and Jennifer stare at an entire hanging cow's carcass.

JENNIFER
Can you start carving that up?

ROSIE
Of course, but Jennifer, you have maybe an hour and a half until dusk.

Karl is laying out tools in the background. Rosie turns to him.

ROSIE
I mean, you're not gonna fight
those things in the dark?

Jennifer grabs a fire extinguisher. She scans the interior of the Cantina. She sees a second, smaller extinguisher and grabs that one too.

JENNIFER
If I have to. Here. Empty these.

She hands them to Karl.

Rosie goes back to the task of butchering the meat.

QUICK CUTS...

KARL

Empties all the foam from the fire extinguishers in the back of the restaurant.

JENNIFER

Has a barbecue lighter in her hands. She searches through drawers and finds a second one.

She sets the lighters and some duct tape down on the ground.

ROSIE

Takes her butcher knife and slides the carved chunks of meat into a heavy sack.

JENNIFER

Drills two holes in each of the fire extinguishers. She fills them with propane gas and then tapes the barbecue lighters onto the fire extinguishers so that they are aimed diagonally up toward the nozzles.

THEN...

Jennifer squeezes the nozzle and sends up a big blast of orange flame from her homemade FLAMETHROWER.

She smiles.

Karl attempts to master the use of his homemade flamethrower. At first, the fuel engages with the pilot light and creates only a thin, long stream of fiery liquid.

JENNIFER

You need a spray, not a stream.
Like this.

She slowly eases the trigger and... POOF!-- Another proper burst of flames.

Karl gives it another shot. He gets the thin stream again.

JENNIFER

You can do it.

Karl keeps easing on the trigger and finally... POOF!-- He gets the desired result.

JENNIFER

Are we good?

Rosie nods.

JENNIFER

Remember we get each other's backs
out there. We stick together and--

KARL

What we should do is wait.

JENNIFER

Wait? Are you crazy? My kid is out
there.

KARL

Listen to them.

And they pause. And the creatures' humming has grown as loud as a power station.

KARL

They're at peak activity. We won't
stand a chance if we go out right
now. Look, last night when I first
got bit, most of them were just
sitting there... torpid.

JENNIFER

Torpid?

KARL

If these things are anything like the Cicada they resemble, they'll have their quiet hours. They'll settle at some point and get some rest. Stop feeding on everything in sight.

ROSIE

How can you be sure?

KARL

I can't be sure, but let's just see. One thing I know is we can't save those kids if we're already bug food.

Jennifer paces a little. She walks over to the window. The incessant humming grows deafeningly loud as she gets nearer.

She thinks on it...

JENNIFER

Alright. We'll give it a little time.

TIME LAPSE

--Jennifer sits on the ground, her back to the wall. She lifts her shirt and looks at the nasty, deep wound where the creature burrowed in.

--The three of them put on layers of the clothing that Jennifer brought in with her. Split three ways, it's not quite the suit of armor it was when Jennifer wore it all herself.

--Karl practices using his flamethrower again. And again, he gets the stream. Jennifer walks over to him and stays his hand. He tries again, and now gets the ball of flames.

LATER

They each are sitting in different corners of the dining room. Jennifer's ears perk up.

JENNIFER

Hey. You hear that?

The once overpowering hum has reduced to a gentle chirping. She looks at the captive insect in the cake dish. It is lying perfectly still.

She runs over to the dish. She taps on the plastic. The once hyper-sensitive insect barely moves.

She looks at Karl. He nods. It's time. She looks at Rosie.

KARL
Told ya. Torpid.

ROSIE
But for how long?

JENNIFER
Doesn't matter. It's now or never,
people.

Rosie nods. She gathers her gunny sack full of raw meat.

A nervous Karl picks up his flamethrower.

A battle-ready Jennifer picks up hers. They each have a flashlight.

Rosie crosses herself for luck.

EXT. CANTINA

The front door slowly creaks open and Jennifer sticks her head out, mask on.

Nothing bites her. She shines her flashlight into the road. The horde of Locusts has thinned out. The ones who remain are sitting still, or fluttering about in a lethargic way.

She steps out gently. Karl and Rosie follow her. The three of them move ever so slowly, carefully stepping around the bugs, so as not to perturb them.

They have their backs to each other for protection, forming a triangle that is guarded on all sides, with Jennifer up front.

They are committed now, leaving the cantina behind them and stepping out into the night. The pilot lights of their flamethrowers shine brightly, as do their flashlights.

The insects' song surrounds them, suggesting there are many, many Locusts hiding in the night.

A bug lands on Jennifer, but she pinches it and crushes it. Then another, and she does the same.

KARL
Up there!

A small swarm buzzes toward them. Karl and Jennifer both open fire with their flamethrowers. The bugs that aren't killed give up and fly away.

Rosie sees a cluster of bugs on the ground nearby. She throws out a big piece of raw meat, as far as she can toss it, and the bugs calmly descend upon the bait.

The group continue on this way-- occasionally threatening the creatures with fire, or diverting them with raw meat.

Jennifer shines her flashlight up into the trees. Masses of Locusts have swarmed into the branches and leaves where they have piled on top of each other and are laconically feeding on exposed drops of gooey sap.

The locusts are so abundant, it's almost hard to see the tree behind all the creatures that are devouring it.

ROSIE

They're eating everything in sight.

Karl shines his light on the creatures.

KARL

You've come to take over, is that it?

JENNIFER

How much farther is your truck, Rosie?

ROSIE

Just up at the top of this hill.

They move towards the top of the slight incline, occasionally crushing bugs beneath their feet.

A new sound comes into focus, a whirling, chopping sound that starts to grow louder than the chirping.

An object flying overhead draws closer and closer: A large, hi-tech DRONE with four rotors flies right over their heads.

KARL

Military?

JENNIFER

Gotta be.

ROSIE

Looking for us?

JENNIFER

*Observing us. If they were looking
for us, they'd be here already.
We're not hard to find.*

The drone's camera is a pivoting turret with a glowing red dot in the middle. The lens tracks each member of the group, one by one.

It scans Karl's right arm. Then Rosie's arm next.

And then it beeps, as it locates the blue glowing scanner inside Jennifer's arm.

KARL

You're found. You didn't want to
be, did you?

Jennifer just looks at him.

The machine continues to fly on it's course. Scanning the landscape.

ROSIE

Why don't you help us! We've got
kids, Bendejo!

The uncaring machine stays it's course, disappearing into the night sky.

ROSIE

Come back! Chinga tu madre!

Jennifer chuckles at that.

KARL

(laughing)
Rosie!

Jennifer's smile suddenly drops. She gets her flamethrower ready.

JENNIFER

Here we go.

UP AHEAD

We see Rosie's small, white Toyota pickup truck and it is swarmed by flying Locusts. In the driver's seat is a human corpse.

JENNIFER

Rosie, did you leave your doors
unlocked?

Rosie looks at Karl. Karl looks at Rosie and then they both look at Jennifer, who has her flamethrower ready to blast.

INSIDE THE TRUCK

The creatures have picked off most of the flesh, and are now working on the skeleton.

Lumps of wet, liquified flesh have fallen onto the dashboard and the bucket seats, and clusters of bugs feast on these bits of human debris.

OUTSIDE

The swarm is buzzing all around the truck, a mob of Locusts twelve feet high.

JENNIFER

We're gonna time this. On three,
Rosie you throw out that meat.
Karl, we make a rush and clear out
this truck. One...

Karl nods. He lights his pilot flame.

JENNIFER

Two...

Rosie opens the bag onto the ground. She gets two handfuls of meat.

JENNIFER

Three!

Rosie tosses out the meat, which attracts some of the swarm.

Then she tips the whole bag over and runs over to Karl. Many of the bugs take the bait.

Jennifer runs headlong toward the truck and the remaining bugs and she just opens her flamethrower up, clearing away countless numbers of these squealing creatures.

Karl uses his flamethrower to protect the group, creating a circle of flames around their side of the truck.

Now Jennifer opens the door and torches the corpse and all the bugs feeding on it.

She pulls the burning corpse to the ground.

Another short, controlled blast from the flamethrower clears the bugs out of the cabin and the three of them pile in to the truck.

INSIDE THE CABIN

Jennifer is in the driver's seat. Now she sees what the problem was: The passenger window is cracked open ever-so slightly.

JENNIFER

Rosie, you almost provided that poor bastard perfect shelter.

Jennifer puts her hand out.

JENNIFER

Keys?

Rosie hands her the keys. She turns the ignition and she quickly rolls the window up as fast as she can.

Jennifer grabs her MP3 player.

JENNIFER

Full bars. Ollie's close.

ROSIE

My farm. That's where they must be.

Jennifer scrolls through songs. She lands on an album cover: Sam & Dave's greatest hits.

She presses play and as the truck pulls away WE HEAR the opening heavy-soul riff of Sam and Dave's 'Hold on, I'm coming.'

INT. BASEMENT

Ollie and Lupita are holding onto each other for warmth and protection. Ollie's MP3 player springs to life with the Sam & Dave song.

He looks at the title on his screen. He smiles as he shows the screen to Lupita.

OLLIE

Hold on, Lupita. My mom's coming!

EXT. FARMHOUSE

The Toyota slows as it approaches the barn with it's basement trap-door, the tires crunching and squelching the dormant insects.

INSIDE THE TRUCK

Jennifer turns to Karl.

JENNIFER
Keep it running.

He nods agreement. Rosie points to the trap door.

ROSIE
Down there.

Jennifer and Rosie leap out of the truck and run to the basement door.

INT. BASEMENT

Ollie and Lupita hear the rusty door hinges creak open. Moonlight pours down into the basement stairway.

Lupita runs and grabs the nail gun.

OLLIE
Relax, Lupita.

Lupita shakes her head, terrified.

They look at each other. Ollie lowers his face mask.

He and Lupita slowly back up into the corner of the dark room. He has his hand on the trigger of the nail gun.

OLLIE
It's her. I'm telling you.

A figure appears in silhouette. Lupita's face drops.

LUPITA
Mamá!

She drops the gun and runs to Rosie.

Jennifer is the next one down the stairs.

Ollie flips his mask back up. He is smiling with relief.

OLLIE
You came. I knew it!

Jennifer runs over to her son, clutching the boy so tightly it knocks the wind out of him.

JENNIFER
What were you thinking, running out on me? How foolish can you be?

OLLIE
You're blaming *me*! What the hell is wrong with you, mom?

Jennifer is beside herself.

JENNIFER
What did you just say?

OLLIE
All you talk about is wanting to protect me, and then all you do is drag me from one dangerous place to another. I'm sick of it. You wouldn't wake up today 'cause you can't stop taking those pills. And that's *my* fault?

JENNIFER
You don't understa--

OLLIE
Here's what I understand. I understand we're stuck in this place we should have never come to, and now we're gonna die.

Jennifer's eyes are tearing up. She hugs her son.

JENNIFER
Okay. Okay, Ollie. Please stop. Look at me. I'm gonna get us out of here. You just gotta trust me, Okay?

The crying boy nods.

OLLIE
How? Those things are everywhere.

Jennifer stands up. She paces the room. Thinking. She looks at the group. She stops pacing.

JENNIFER

Okay. Everyone. I think I know how to get us out of here. Come with me.

INT. TOYOTA

The four of them squeeze into the cabin of the tiny Toyota truck. Lupita on Rosie's lap. Ollie halfway into Karl's lap. Jennifer at the wheel again.

JENNIFER

Just outside of town we saw an armored car, built like a tank. Nobody knows it's there. If we can make it to that car, then we can get the out of this town alive.

She looks at the gas gauge. Close to empty.

JENNIFER

We'll need some gas.

KARL

Back at the hotel I've got a few barrels.

She throws the truck in gear. Jennifer smiles.

JENNIFER

Ah. Some good news. Now we're talking.

Rosie's face drops.

ROSIE

Look out!

KA-BLAM!-- A gunshot pierces the front end of the truck. Smoke instantly rises up.

KA-BLAM! KA-BLAM!-- The tires are shot out. We hear the air leak out as the truck sinks a little.

JENNIFER

Ollie!

She pushes Ollie's head down. Rosie hugs onto Lupita.

Jennifer grabs her shotgun.

Two figures wearing thick, industrial-strength coveralls are outside the truck.

FIGURE #1

I found 'em!

The figures are wearing welder's face-screens, and carrying gas-powered torches.

Karl has his pistol out.

Jennifer's ready to fire. A third figure's voice comes from behind the truck.

FIGURE #3

I wouldn't do that.

They turn their necks. This man is pointing a big 357 magnum at them and we PUSH IN as he tips up his face screen.

It's Ramon. He looks at Jennifer.

RAMON

You left us in the lurch today.
You're going to pay for that.

Jennifer looks around. Two more figures emerge. One of them wearing motorcycle leathers and a helmet and a balaclava. The other is Woody, in coveralls, with an assault rifle.

KARL

Ramon. Don't--

RAMON

Shut your mouth, Karl. I didn't see you in church today.

The men surround the truck, five of them in total.

Jennifer's eyes scan as she weighs her options.

JENNIFER

What do you want from us?

RAMON

You're asking the wrong question.

With an upturned palm, he gestures at the surroundings, the chirping bugs.

RAMON

It's what do *they* want. God sent this plague for a reason. And I bet that reason is *you*.

Ollie cowers in his mother's lap.

OLLIE
Leave us alone!

RAMON
You are an innocent. No harm will
befall you. Just make sure she
cooperates.

Jennifer finishes her assessment: outnumbered, outgunned.

RAMON
Get out here.

She slowly opens the door and steps forward from the car.

Ramon looks into the bed of the truck. From the collection of
old tools and junk he produces a shovel.

RAMON
Come on out, everyone. Gather
'round, nice and slow.

The others emerge from the truck. Lupita clings to Rosie.
Karl surrenders his gun to one of the masked men.

Ramon presents the shovel to Jennifer.

RAMON
I want you to dig yourself a ditch.

JENNIFER.
Go fuck yourself.

One of the masked men racks a new cartridge into Jennifer's
shotgun.

She takes the shovel from Ramon.

RAMON
Dig and be quick about it. I want
you buried in up to your neck.

OLLIE
What are you doing to my mom?!

He tries to run to her, but one of the men grabs him by his
shirt collar. The man holds a gun nonchalantly, but
threateningly next to Ollie's head.

RAMON
Dig. Bitch. Now.

She breaks ground into the soft dirt. She looks back at
Ramon. He draws an imaginary line at his own neck.

RAMON

Up to your neck. And be fast about it. I don't want to be out here when they wake back up.

ROSIE

Ramon, please don't do this!

Ramon turns to one of his associates.

RAMON

(quietly)

Find that bag of hers now -- before the locusts start up again.

JENNIFER

So that's what this is about.

RAMON

Shut your mouth!

He goes and stands next to Ollie. Jennifer has no choice but to do as he says.

RAMON

This woman -- this criminal, has brought her sinful ways into our town. And the Lord will not let us turn a blind eye. His patience is up. There must be a bloodletting. These creatures must be offered a sacrifice, that the rest of us be spared. This is God's wish. Now gather 'round and let us repent.

He produces a bible and starts to read a verse, like a pastor at a funeral.

AN OVERHEAD SHOT

We get a wider and wider view of Jennifer digging her own grave, and the men with their guns standing all around, and the frightened bystanders.

And Ollie on his knees, sobbing and screaming.

And Ramon performing his prayer ritual.

And all around them, the chattering of the stirring Locusts.

FADE TO BLACK.

We hear...

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)
 Authorities have closed all
 highways leading in and out of the
 panhandle area....

EXT. HOUSE IN THE WOODS - NIGHT

We see two YOUNG CHILDREN running and yelling and zapping
 each other with water pistols.

And there is a SUPER over the scene...

CHEROKEE RESERVATION, TAHLEQUAH,
 OKLAHOMA

We FOLLOW the two Native American Children as they run past a
 police 4 x 4 truck, parked outside the house.

INSERT: TV MONITOR

The female NEWSCASTER, an attractive talking head, continues
 to report from her desk.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
 As the dust storm continues to
 spread over the next few days,
 evacuation and rescue efforts will
 continue. The president has
 declared a State of Emergency.

On the right of the screen is a map of the Texas Panhandle,
 with an Orange Colored animation showing the projected
 expansion of the storm, spreading out across the entire U.S.
Plains region.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Two figures sit on a couch in the dark, watching the
 broadcast.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
 We'll keep bringing you up-to-the-
 minute coverage as the deadliest
 storm in a hundred years continues
 its lethal rampage.

CLOSE ON:

An ancient, wrinkled hand clutching a shiny black walking
 cane.

LARRY ECHO HAWK, 30s, dressed in reservation police blues, sits beside WILMER ECHO HAWK. Wilmer is just about the oldest man you'll ever see in your life.

LARRY

She said the storm already killed
hundreds of people, great grandpa.
And they may end up having to
evacuate all the way out here.

Wilmer's wrinkled hand fumbles around on the end table and finds a small plastic case. He opens it and pulls out a shiny set of dentures. He pops them into his mouth and then wiggles his lips around until they're in place.

WILMER

I heard what she said.

Wilmer turns to face Larry. His face is so wrinkled it is a work of art to behold. His eyes are almost pure white, the irises having been blasted away by sun and time.

WILMER

I'm blind, not deaf.

A TV commercial chatters away behind them.

LARRY

Mute.

The TV monitor goes silent and the word 'MUTE' appears.

WILMER

Well I can certainly still *talk*.

LARRY

No. It's the-- never mind. They
showed a picture of one of the
bodies. The skin was just... *torn*
away. It was ghastly, great
grandpa.

Wilmer shifts his weight onto his cane and ever-so-slowly hoists himself up off of the couch.

Larry puts his hand on Wilmer's, to help him, but Wilmer slaps it away.

He's up now. His waste-length hair is straight and silver in color. He wears a wool sport coat, a bolo tie, jeans and a good pair of leather boots.

Larry watches Wilmer cross the living room, feeling his way forward with the cane.

WILMER

We're supposed to believe the "dust storm" did all this to people?

He arrives at a closet across the room and feels for the latch.

Just then the children run in, yelling about something.

BECKIE

Daddy, can we go--

ALLISTER

Daddy--

LARRY

Shhh. Have some respect.

That silences them.

WILMER

Can you gas up your truck and be ready to leave tonight?

He opens the closet and feels around on a shelf inside. He pulls down a different cane: a very old, raw, wooden one, which is adorned with hand carvings.

LARRY

Sure, great grandpa. Mind if I ask why?

We FOLLOW Wilmer's hand down the cane, as he feels the carvings with his thumb and index finger.

There is an Eagle at the very top. Below that is the face of a coyote, and below the coyote is some kind of non-human mask, a spirit perhaps. If we're paying attention, we notice this face bears a certain resemblance to Mr. Maverick.

WILMER (O.C.)

"Why?"...

Finally his thumb lands on what it's been looking for: a carving of a vicious-looking Locust. Wilmer carefully traces the shape of the bug over and over again with his thumb.

WILMER (O.C.)

Because we need to go to Texas right now. Come. I'll explain on the way.

FADE OUT