

DIGGING DITCHES
IN THE DESERT

by

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"Somewhere in California's Central Valley..."

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

A classic '50s style road-side diner. A wall of windows reveals patrons inside, a neon sign flickers: "Heidi's Pies: Best in the West". The moon backlights distant mountains across the arid plain.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

A woman sits at a booth by the window, looking out at the desert. She has a short black bob with bangs, a choker, and a plain white tee under a man's jacket - like Natalie Portman in *The Professional*, but grown up. This is Shannon (35).

Trouble in her eyes - she looks at her table mate and nods subtly to a vibrant young woman across the diner.

SHANNON

What about her?

Across from her is Todd (40) - tall and broad shouldered, with a five o'clock shadow, slicked back hair, and a jawline you could sleep under. Tattoos peak out from beneath his sleeves. An alternative Marlboro Man. A large duffle bag sits beside him on the bench.

Todd looks at her and follows her eyes to the girl.

TODD

Too skinny.

SHANNON

You *do* like some meat, huh?

He winks. She smiles playfully as a waitress interrupts them with a couple plates of food - lots of meat for Todd.

The waitress is young and pretty, with a simple, small town charm. Her name tag reads TRICIA (22). Shannon gives Todd a knowing eyebrow raise, he winks back as Tricia sets their food down.

TRICIA

Y'all are such a cute couple.

SHANNON

Thank you!

TRICIA

Where are y'all from?

TODD

Oh, everywhere.

TRICIA

Can I get y'all anything else?

She chuckles as Todd looks her up and down, looks at his plate of eggs and various meats, then back at her and smiles.

TODD

Some hot sauce might be nice,
darlin'.

TRICIA

You got it, handsome.
(to Shannon)
Anything for you sweetheart?

Shannon looks back at Todd.

SHANNON

We'll share.

TRICIA

Be back in two shakes.

The waitress leaves and Todd takes a sip of his coffee. Shannon watches her walk away and catches a glimpse of some bruises on her legs, just above her hem.

SHANNON

What do you s'pose her life is
like?

Todd pokes at his eggs, takes a bite of ham, thinking.

TODD

She seems happy.

SHANNON

Well she's paid to seem happy.

TODD

I've met unhappy waitresses.

SHANNON

That's what I'm sayin, they're
generally unhappy.

TODD

Well those ones weren't very good
at their jobs then.

He digs around in his food, she scoffs.

TODD

And if you know they're all
unhappy, why'd you ask if she's
happy?

SHANNON

I didn't - I asked what her life is
like and you said she seems happy.

TODD

Oh, right.

They both laugh and she tosses a balled up straw wrapped at
him. She starts in on her food.

SHANNON

What you s'pose she'll do when gets
older?

He shrugs and takes another sip of coffee, looks back at her.

TODD

She look, what, 21, 22, to you?

SHANNON

Thereabout.

TODD

In my estimation, people that don't
find a way out of a small town by
that age don't really want out.

Todd clocks another diner walking by them. He puts moves his
jacket over top the bag beside him - which is full of cash...
and a handgun. The diner passes and Todd starts back in on
his food.

TODD

A life of everyday excitement isn't
for everyone.

Shannon takes a bite of food and ponders. Tricia returns with
two bottles of hot sauce and places them between the couple.

TRICIA

I didn't know if you folks
preferred Flamin' Iguana or Super
Giant, so I brought both.

SHANNON

Thanks, Trish.

She turns to walk away, but Shannon stops her. Todd puts some
Flamin' Iguana on his eggs.

SHANNON

Let me ask you something, hon--

TODD

Hoo! That's hotter'n a goat's butt
in a pepper patch.

SHANNON

--you ever been out of town?

TRICIA

(confused)

How do you mean?

Todd fixates on a family across the restaurant - tired
parents dealing with a fussy kid.

SHANNON

Well, we're on a bit of a road
trip, but we can't decide where to
head next.

TRICIA

Oh.

SHANNON

Anywhere sorta close but not so
close you might recommend?

The mom shoos the dad away as he tries to help settle the
kid. The defeated man catches Todd watching him, they hold
each other's gaze for a couple moments before the dad breaks.

TRICIA

Hm, well, I've only ever been to my
grandmother's out in Nevada.
Outside Reno.

SHANNON

Yeah, how was that?

TRICIA

I don't really remember, I was only
5.

Todd looks up at Shannon, "see?".

SHANNON

Hm, that's a healthy drive.

Tricia shrugs.

TRICIA

I remember the desert was nice.

SHANNON

Well we do like nice. Maybe we'll head that way.

Tricia smiles and starts to walk away, but Shannon stops her again.

SHANNON

I'm sorry hon, one more question?

TRICIA

Sure.

SHANNON

It is getting a bit late and after a feast like this, I think we're going to need to bed down before driving through the desert

(beat)

I saw a motel up the road--

TRICIA

Pattie's Bed and Bre'k?

SHANNON

That's the one.

TRICIA

Don't stay there.

Shannon and Todd look at each other and chuckle.

SHANNON

Where would you recommend then?

TRICIA

I never been there, but there's a place about an hour up the 80, Lily of the West, I think? I'd take my chances there over Pattie's.

Shannon is curious about Pattie's deal, but hesitates to ask. Tricia answers anyway.

TRICIA

I went to school with Pattie's son.

SHANNON

Oh...?

TRICIA

He puts camera in the bathrooms there.

SHANNON

Oh.

TRICIA

Yeah.

SHANNON

Well, thank you for the heads up.

TRICIA

You got it. Let me know if y'all need anything else.

SHANNON

You got it.

Tricia walks away and the couple share a wide-eyed look and a laugh. A loud car pulls up outside.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

The couple shares a cigarette, leaned against their El Camino. She offers him a drag, he inhales and hands the cigarette back to her, admiring the curves of her face.

SHANNON

You wanna get on the road soon, or just watch me smoke all night, cowboy?

He smiles and looks down at the dirt, kicking a rock.

TODD

Might just stay the night.

She blushes and takes another drag, then looks at him, studying his face.

SHANNON

You got something on your mind?

TODD

(beat)

Nah. Just happy is all, I s'pose.

(beat)

Some people are so miserable together. Shit, alone too, I s'pose. Stuck. Don't have the will or the brains or whatever it is to just live the life they want.

She smiles, ashing her cigarette.

TODD

Well, I'm just happy I get to watch
you smoke a cigarette in the
desert.

She takes his hand and they share a tender moment.

Some yelling in the distance breaks the silence. They walk a few feet from their car to get an angle around the diner. Out back, Tricia is pressed up against a wall, as a large, stuttering redneck looms over her, it's KENNY (26).

TRICIA

I just got my nails done--

KENNY

I told you *not* to use the d-debit
until Friday, d-dumbass, now I
don't have enough for r-rent.

TRICIA

I'm sorry, Ken, I thought--

Todd and Shannon look at each other and start creeping around the building as the other couple argues, oblivious.

KENNY

That's the g-goddamn problem, right
there, T-Tricia. You l-let me do
the thinkin'.

TRICIA

Hey, no - I don't appreciate being
talked to like tha--

WHAP Kenny cuts her off with a swift SLAP in the face. This sets Shannon off, she exchanges a knowing look with Todd as quickens her pace towards them, Todd heads back to the car.

KENNY

Now g-gimme your goddamn tips, I'm
sure you shook that p-pretty ass
enough to cover a manicure--

SHANNON

Hey.

Shannon's voice booms across the desert as she approaches them. The couple looks up, Tricia is scared and embarrassed.

KENNY

F-fuck off, lady.

Tricia looks back and forth between them and gently shakes her head.

TRICIA
D--

KENNY
I said fu--

Kenny turns and points at Shannon. Whoops.

Shannon grabs his wrist and twists it *SNAP*, rabbit punches him in the stomach, throat, and nose, then twists his arm once more for good measure *CRACK*, sending him to the ground. He writhes in pain.

KENNY
You b-BITCH! You b-broke my wrist!

She kicks him in the ribs *POP* as Todd walks up.

SHANNON
(to Tricia)
You need a ride out of here?

KENNY
AND my r-rib!

TRICIA
...no... I got my car....

SHANNON
He have one?

Tricia points at an '86 Mustang in the lot. Todd reaches the group, something in his hand

KENNY
I'm gonna f-fucking kill you, you
f-fucking cunt--

Todd kneels and puts his hand over Kenny's mouth, leaning close.

TODD
You give her those bruises?

He motions to Tricia, who nods. Todd looks back at Kenny, pulls out the gun from the bag, and *BLOWS A HOLE* in Kenny's hand. Kenny screams. Shannon motions for the gun.

He stands and hands the gun to Shannon, pulls a brick of cash from his waistband, and tosses it to Tricia.

SHANNON

Here's the rest of your tip; and here's another one. You don't need to settle for this piece of shit boy or this piece of shit town. You take that and you get out of here. Don't look back. You hear?

Tricia nods. Shannon holds eye contact with her for a moment, then smiles, spits on Kenny, and walks away with Todd.

As they reach their car, Shannon unloads half the gun's clip into Kenny's car, shattering windows and popping tires.

They peel out in their El Camino, spitting dirt and gravel into the air, leaving a license plate clattering to the ground. Diner patrons rush outside, staring as they drive away. A couple attend to the screaming Kenny as Tricia pockets the money and ducks around the building.

TITLE CARD: DIGGING DITCHES IN THE DESERT**EXT. DESERT - NIGHT**

credits roll

A single point of light in a sea of darkness. Grows and becomes a pair of headlights. The dividing lines of a freeway race underneath, disappearing into the dark behind the car.

We land behind the car, following the tail lights. Faint lights of a roadside stop in the distance. The wind whips past, crescendoing to a roar--

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Inside, it's silent.

DAVID (late 20s) is behind the wheel. Tall and lanky, sunken eyes. In a baggy shirt with the words *PUNK BAND* on the front, hair messily tucked behind his ears, days of stubble, he's trying real hard to maintain the punk cred of his slipping youth. He's got the focused eyes of a bird of prey.

AMY (mid-late 20s) sits shotgun. Short and comparatively well groomed, in a sharp black long sleeve, her pony-tailed head leaning against the window. She watches the occasional desert tree and roadsign whip by. It looks like she's had a long day.

They sit in silence.

For an uncomfortably -

- long -

- time.

buzz buzz

Amy's phone lights up the dashboard. David side eyes her as she flips through notifications. She can feel his eyes on her.

AMY

I'm not trying to argue again.

DAVID

Did I say something?

AMY

I can feel your eyes on me.

She responds to a text message. He sighs.

DAVID

(sotto)

...supposed to be a *vacation*...

AMY

Excuse me?

DAVID

Nothing.

She rolls her eyes and keeps typing. He sighs again.

AMY

Oh my god. It's Sunday, David. I have a deadline.

DAVID

"*Real Housewives*"?

AMY

I've had this job the entire time we've been together, this shouldn't be news to you.

DAVID

You've been on your phone the entire trip!

AMY

It's the finale, it's an important article--

DAVID

So important.

AMY

-and that's not even true. You've just been pissy since we left and are using my work as an excuse.

DAVID

That's bullsh--

AMY

And I don't appreciate the passive aggressive shit either. If you have had a problem with me using my phone "all week", you could have brought it up days ago. You wanted to pick a fight, so you let it build up and ruin our vacation and now you're sitting here with a fucking sourpuss acting like you give a shit to make me feel guilty, just like you wanted.

DAVID

Oh, fuck you

AMY

Excuse me?

DAVID

Don't psychoanalyze me, you follow a couple self-help instagrams and think you're Dr. Melfi? Maybe I didn't want to bring it up because I was hoping you'd realize that you were neglecting the vacation on your own and I didn't want to embarrass you or make you self-conscious about it.

AMY

Oh, I'm sure.

DAVID

I don't care that you do a little work, I care that it's consumed you this whole week!

AMY

Consumed me?? I worked after you went to sleep - *without* fucking me, I might add. Some romantic vacation.

DAVID

Maybe I didn't fuck you because you were too busy working!

AMY

Yeah, is that what happened?

She calls his bluff.

DAVID

...whatever.

INT./EXT. CAR/DESERT - NIGHT

The desert outside is nice and quiet, their car races by.

Some moments pass, they both cool down *just* a bit.

AMY

I told you I would need to do some writing this week. I *told* you. And you were fine with it.

DAVID

It's not just this week. It's all the time. You finish work and then just start right in on the book.

AMY

I'm writing the book so I can *stop* recapping Bravo shows for idiots. And what about you?

DAVID

What about me, I don't let my hobby distract from our time together.

AMY

Uh, maybe you should. You haven't written a song in a year.

DAVID

You *know* I sprained my thumb at the company softball game!

She rolls her eyes, tired of talking in circles. She picks her phone back up, types a bit more, then tosses it back on the dash. It's silent again. They both stare out at the road. The roadside lights are getting close. After a few quiet moments a sign whips by:

INSERT:

NEXT GAS AND LODGING
1/2 MILE

AMY

Listen, let's just pull off here and get some sleep. We're both tired. I won't work.

She's trying. David eyes the sign for a moment, still heated.

DAVID

No. I just want to get home.

AMY

Davey, c'mon--

DAVID

No thanks.

He speeds up, whipping by the motel. She's genuinely hurt.

AMY

David--

He reaches down to his phone and blindly hits play - a mashup of Lady Gaga and the Mortal Kombat theme song comes on. Amy looks at him with a mix of shock and pity. He's too proud to change it.

She leans back, resigned, looking out the window.

David side-eyes her to see what she's doing. He's not looking at the road.

Something catches Amy's eye--

AMY

David, look out!

INSERT:

A flash of a figure in the road.

SLAM David jerks the wheel a moment too late and they hit... *something*. The car spins off into the desert. Sand and dirt whips around them as David gets control and they come to a stop. The remaining headlight and tail lights illuminate the cloud of dust hiding the car.

The couple sit still - in shock, breathing heavy.

After a moment, they check themselves and each other - no injuries. They look around and assess the situation... Amy's eyes go wide. She grabs her phone and jumps out of the car.

DAVID

Amy, hey!

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Amy runs back to the road, panicked, using the flashlight on her phone to look around. David runs behind her.

DAVID

Amy! What are you doing?? The road,
be careful!

He can't get her attention as she frantically searches.

AMY

We have to find her!

DAVID

"Her"? What are you talking about,
hey!

AMY

Why aren't you helping me?!

He grabs her by the shoulders wincing at the bright light.

DAVID

Ame - what are you talking about?
What are you looking for?

AMY

...you-- didn't see her?

DAVID

See what? The animal...?

Her eyes well up, realizing he doesn't know.

AMY

David - we hit a *person*.

David looks into her eyes and processes.

DAVID
I... I saw an animal...?

AMY
You weren't looking at the road,
that's why we hit her. I saw a
woman.

She breaks away and keeps on looking. David lets her go,
tries to recall what just happened.

DAVID
Ame - I really don't think it was--

AMY
I know what I saw!

DAVID
Babe, look where we are. What would
someone even be doing out here?

She ignores him, crossing the road to search the other side.

DAVID
Amy! It was an animal. We probably
just winged it and it ran off.
Fuck.
(beat)
Oh *fuck*.

This reminds him about the car. He turns and runs back to the
dissipating dust, waving his hand in front of his face to
clear the air. He gets a clear look - the front of the car is
smashed up, a headlight is out, and it's smoking.

DAVID
Goddammit.

Amy runs over to him, distressed but more present now.

AMY
Hey-

She follows his attention to the car, he's trying futilely to
replace the hanging headlamp.

AMY
Come on!

DAVID
Ame, we hit an animal.

AMY
No-

DAVID

It was an animal. And it ran off.

She just stares at him, unsure how to convince him. He fiddles with the hood, trying to open it.

DAVID

Will you grab the insurance info from the car, please?

AMY

David--

He sighs heavily. She's getting really upset.

AMY

I saw someone.

He gets up and walks over to her, calmly.

DAVID

You looked at the road for half a second and it's pitch black. We hit an animal and it ran off, hurt and terrified.

(beat)

And it's probably dead now.

She looks at the car, then points at the human-sized dent.

AMY

What kind of desert animal does *that* to a car?

DAVID

I don't know what kind of animals live in the desert, Christ. Coyote? An armadillo?

AMY

A 150 pound armadillo jumped 3 feet in the air to get hit by a Corolla?

DAVID

A person was just walking in the middle of a desert highway at 1am?

She doesn't have an answer. David rolls his eyes and opens the passenger door, reaching in for the glove box. Amy kicks a rock and watches it disappear into the dark. He glances at her through the windshield.

The engine sputters and dies.

DAVID

Fuck!

He reaches over and turns the car off and on - nothing. He takes a few deep breathes.

He closes the door, walks around back and starts pulling their bags from the trunk. She walks over slowly and he relents.

DAVID

C'mon. That motel is close, we can walk there and figure this out tomorrow.

She looks around and reluctantly nods, letting him put an arm around her. He lets her go and grabs her bag along with his, dragging them down the highway towards the motel.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

A familiar car pulls into the lot as the couple slowly walks over from the road. The neon sign flickers in the night, letters missing from the "VACANCY" sign. Shannon and Todd get out of the car and walk in ahead of David and Amy, lost in their own conversation.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

David and Amy stand in line behind Todd and Shannon. The lobby and front desk don't seem to have been redecorated (or cleaned) since the '70s - trinkets line the horizontal surfaces, a well-weathered rack is fully stocked with room keys, less one.

A service bell sits between a yellowed landline phone with a foam shoulder rest and a bowl of surely expired candy - Todd rings it.

Nothing. The couples look at each other, perplexed.

TODD

Cotdamn, what is this place, anyway?

Shannon jabs him softly in the ribs. Amy looks around, like she's afraid to breathe the air. Todd rings the bell a couple more times.

There's a clatter from the back room, followed by a series of grunts and hacking. The beaded curtain parts and a stocky woman shambles through. Her clothes match the condition of the lobby - outdated, stale, and possibly soiled.

She makes her way across the room, big keychain on her hip CLANGING as she walks, not acknowledging either couple. She puts her hand on the bell, stopping the faint remnant of the ring, and finally looks up. This is LILY (60s). She speaks like every sentence is a statement of fact.

TODD
Well, howdy, Miss.

His charm has no effect on her. She glares back.

LILY
Three to a room

TODD
Oh, uh, actually we're separate...

As Todd sorts the room with Lily, Shannon looks over the other couple, covered in dirt, and whispering to each other, still mesmerized by the dusty time capsule of the lobby.

DAVID
This is insane...

AMY
How often do you think people stay here?

DAVID
A couple a week?

AMY
Is that enough to keep the lights on...?

DAVID
I have no--

Amy catches Shannon looking at them. Shannon smiles and Amy nervously half smiles back, embarrassed at their state. Shannon tries to make her feel better.

SHANNON
I love your purse.

AMY
Oh, uh, thank you--

She's interrupted by Todd noisily sliding the keys off the counter *SHHHHKK*.

TODD
Let's ramble, sugar.

Todd winks at the couple, Shannon smiles again and waves as they walk out. David steps up to the counter, Lily turns her lazy eye from the other couple to him.

LILY
Can I help you

DAVID
Hi, uh, our car broke down up the road, we need a room for the night.

LILY
Eighty five dollars, and your ID

DAVID
Eighty-fi--

He looks over at Amy in shock, but relents immediately. He pulls out his ID and some cash.

DAVID
Alright. You don't take card do you?

LILY
We do not

He hands her the cash, she quickly counts it.

DAVID
Is there a car repair place near by?

She doesn't reply immediately, making change and grabbing the room key. Amy and David both notice the wall behind Lily - it's covered in "Employee of the Month" plaques, each one with Lily's picture. They glance at each other. She turns.

LILY
Town about 3 miles away, they've an auto body there. Say you break down?

DAVID
Yeah - well, we hit an animal nearby, the car won't start now. I think it's probably the carburetor--

He doesn't know what he's talking about. Amy shifts uncomfortably. Lily slaps his change, receipt, and the key on the counter, making Amy jump, and slides them over. She turns to the bulletin board behind her, covered in handwritten notes and business cards.

LILY

Those coyotes come down from the
mountains, hunt the rabbits out
here. Do a number on a car

David looks over at Amy at the mention of coyotes, "see?"; she rolls her eyes. Lily pulls a business card off the board and slides it over to them. It looks like it's been there for years.

LILY

Tell the man you're staying here,
he'll give you the motel rate

DAVID

Okay, thank you...

AMY

Thank you.

DAVID

They're still open-- I mean, in
business, r--
(off her)
Nevermind.

The couple turn and walk out, Lily watching them the entire way. Just before they walk out the door...

LILY

And be sure to hydrate.

They look back, confused.

AMY

O-okay.

DAVID

Okay...

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

They get their bags outside and Amy gives David a look, trying to read his face. He's more amused than creeped out.

DAVID

(mouthing)
What the fuuuu--

AMY

Is that a normal accent for the
central valley...?

DAVID

It's not a normal accent for
anywhere.

Amy looks back through the window at Lily, popping a candy into her mouth as she migrates back to the lobby back room.

They pass the El Camino as they arrive at their room. The lights in the room beside them are on and there's some shuffling inside. They go inside and the door shuts behind them with a squeak.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT - LATER

Pitch black. Amy stumbles and falls, coughing in the dirt as she gets her bearings. She pulls out her phone and turns on the light, turning to see her surroundings. There's nothing but desert. The sound of bugs and wind.

AMY

Hello?! David?

She rubs her shoulders. Suddenly, there's a sound like someone dragging something heavy through dirt *ssHHTT* She spins, but doesn't see anything. She starts hurriedly walking the other direction. *ssHHTT*

AMY

Hello??

Finally, she stumbles on something - pavement. She steps onto the road and looks both ways; no motel, nothing. She squints in the dark, turning left and right.

She takes a few steps in one direction - *ssHHTT*. She spins around, nothing.

AMY

Who is that? What are you doing??

The dragging fades, but in its place a faint car engine. She can't tell which direction it's coming from.

AMY

Fuck.

She looks both ways, but there are no headlights. The sound of the engine is getting louder. She steps off the road and keeps looking either way, waving her hands to flag it down.

AMY

Stop! Please! Hello!!

Something GRABS her foot, she spins around and shines her light on it - the engine sound drones on - there's a decomposing BODY at her feet. It groans.

Amy SCREAMS and kicks it away, backing up... onto the road.

A horn BLARES as the engine kicks into a higher gear. Amy is blasted with headlights. She looks up for a split second to see the car headed straight for her, the driver's face visible for a split-second - it's David.

INT. AMY AND DAVID'S ROOM - DAY

Still asleep - Amy's eyes dart back and forth under their lids.

Her eyes SHOOT open, terrified - a moment later she GASPS for air, catching her breath. She's sweated through the bed sheets.

She clasps her hand over her face, catching her breath. David grunts and rolls over, dead asleep. The clock reads 5:45am.

She sighs and sits up. After a moment she goes to the window and parts the drapes, the sun has just barely risen. The same cold, dark desert from her dream, under the warm light of the sun now. There's a bump on the wall from the next room.

INT. AMY AND DAVID'S ROOM - DAY

David wakes up and rolls over to an empty bed - just a note from Amy:

AT THE CAR

He sighs heavily and rubs his face, waking up. He picks up the business card from the nightstand and starts dialing on the phone.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Amy marches along side the road towards their car.

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

David steps out of their room and takes in the motel during the day. Now that he can see the whole lot, he notices that there are 3 cars - a Prius, an El Camino, and a Tesla. He sees Todd and Shannon headed towards the lobby, another couple holding the door open for them. David watches them for a moment, then steels himself and heads into the desert.

INT. MOTEL COMMON AREA - DAY

Todd and Shannon enter a sad little dining area, the other two men behind them. A hip young gay couple from LA, this is Jake (35) and Lee (26).

LEE

You owe me 20 bucks.

Jake pulls out his wallet and hands Lee a bill.

JAKE
I honestly don't know what I
expected.

Todd and Shannon laugh as they scoop up some runny eggs.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

David trudges through the desert, Amy is sitting on the mangled hood of the car. She's despondent.

He finally reaches her and pauses, just staring. After a moment she gets down and leans against the bumper.

AMY
Sorry.

David gently smiles and hops on the hood himself, and just sits with her. She scoots up beside him. A quiet moment.

AMY
...I didn't find anything.

He nods, genuinely listening.

AMY
I was so sure I saw someone in the
road.

DAVID
I know.

AMY
I could barely sleep last night
thinking about it.

AMY
But there's nothing here. No blood,
no... sign of distress. Just dirt
and rocks.

DAVID
...and cacti.

She chuckles, but is also still pretty bummed. She sighs.

DAVID
It's been a rough trip, part of
that is my fault. It was late and
super dark... you know?

She nods.

DAVID

You got scared, you thought of the worst possible thing, it makes sense.

She's not convinced, but she's sad and has no evidence. She nods. He hugs her. A tow truck rumbles toward them.

DAVID

It's actually good news that you didn't find anything - whatever we hit wasn't bleeding and was able to walk it off.

The truck pulls off the road and over to them. The driver is a wrinkled, middle-aged man in coveralls, covered in oil and grease stains. He has a busy, gray mustache, and salt and pepper hair poking out from under a cap. This is GREASY CHARLIE (60). He opens the door and leans over it, smiling at the couple.

GREASY CHARLIE

You must be the folks who called.

David hops down and walks over to greet him.

DAVID

Yes, hi, I'm David, we spoke on the phone.

GREASY CHARLIE

Mornin' David, and who is this lovely creature?

Amy doesn't really appreciate that.

DAVID

That's my girlfriend, Amy.

Charlie tips his little hat. Amy is just as polite as she needs to be. He hops down from the truck and over to the car.

GREASY CHARLIE

Looks like you two had quite the night.

DAVID

Yeah, something just... ran on the road. Few seconds later we were here. I guess some animal--

GREASY CHARLIE

Yeah, those coyotes come down here
from the mountains. Eat up the
rabbits.

As he's talking, Charlie fishes a packaged moist toilette out
of his dungarees and hands it to Amy. She's disarmed by this.

DAVID

Yeah, that's what--

GREASY CHARLIE

Wellp, I can hook you up and tow
you back to my shop. Gonna take a
day to get the parts and get you
running again, but it'll be cheaper
than a tow to the next town... plus
you can enjoy the fine desert
cuisine a bit.

DAVID

Any better than that continental
breakfast I saw back at the motel?

Charlie laughs. He's surprisingly charming.

GREASY CHARLIE

There's a diner in town, Edie's.
Best burger in the desert.

David looks back at Amy for approval.

DAVID

One more day of vacation?

AMY

Yeah, I'm happy to be out of the
car for a while.

(beat)

And I gotta try this burger.

Charlie spits his tobacco into the dirt and grins.

GREASY CHARLIE

You're gonna love it.

He hits a lever on the truck and the yoke SLAMS into the
dirt.

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

The tow truck pulls up with all three of them. David hops
out, Amy hesitates.

AMY

Hey - I was thinking, I might go into town with Charlie, just check out the town for a bit. Maybe do some work...

(to Charlie)

...if you don't mind driving me?

GREASY CHARLIE

Not one bit. I'll take you back too, hard to find a cab 'round here.

DAVID

Oh.

AMY

Is that okay?

DAVID

Yeah, yeah, of course. Totally. Maybe I'll do something productive too.

A loud noise from the pool, everyone turns to see Jake and Lee whirling margaritas in a blender. David turns back.

DAVID

Hopefully.

AMY

Okay, great. I'll see you in a few hours then?

DAVID

Okay, have a good time.

He closes the door for her and taps it a couple times as Charlie pulls off.

INT. TOW TRUCK - DAY

Amy watches the desert whip by outside as Charlie winds towards the little town hidden in a nook of the hills. The motel is a few miles down a half paved road that leads up to a pocket that hides the town from the highway. She looks at the tiny model that the motel has become.

Amy takes out a little Field Notes notebook with a pen between the pages and jots down a note. Charlie looks over.

GREASY CHARLIE

So what is it you do?

AMY
I'm a writer.

GREASY CHARLIE
Ohh, anything I'd know?

AMY
(laughing)
No, not yet. Unless you read recaps
of Real Housewives of Seattle.

GREASY CHARLIE
Just Potomac.

AMY
Oh.
(beat)
Well, yeah, I'm trying to finish a
true-crime book about investigative
journalists that research serial
killers now though, so hopefully
not the recaps for much longer.

Charlie watches her finish another note and place the
notebook back in her purse.

GREASY CHARLIE
Hopefully.

INT. AMY AND DAVID'S ROOM - DAY

David stares out the window of their room at Jake and Lee
grilling and drinking by the pool. They look like they're
having a good time.

He eventually closes the blinds and plops down on the bed, a
pad of paper and pen in hand. He struggles with starting to
write. Humming a few melodies, scratching out a couple ideas.

He quietly gives up, finds the remote, and turns the tv on.

EXT. EDIE'S DINER - DAY

The main drag is typical of a small town - a cafe, a couple
antiques shops, out of place international restaurants.

The tow truck pulls up in front of Edie's Diner - a single
dining room with a kitchen attached, slanted faux shingle
roofing, and a big neon sign. Amy gets out.

AMY
Thanks again for the lift.

GREASY CHARLIE

My pleasure, darling. Whenever
you're ready you come by the shop,
up a block and to the left.

AMY

Okay great, thank you.

The truck rumbles off, taking their car with it. Amy turns
and looks up at the neon sign, then each way down the street.

INT. TODD AND SHANNON'S ROOM - DAY

Todd and Shannon lay in bed, post-coitus, breathing heavily.
The duffle of money has been dumped out on the bed, spread
around them.

SHANNON

Let's build ourselves a little
cabin up north.

TODD

I was thinking we find the tallest
building on this coast and buy the
top two floors.

She laughs. He gets up and puts on swim trunks with sharks in
innertubes, then fishes a cigarette out of his jacket. She
pulls a porcelain pineapple out of a suitcase, sets it on the
nightstand upside down, and admires it.

SHANNON

You hate most people, you wanna
live in a big city now?

TODD

I want to live as far above them as
I can.

SHANNON

Well a cabin in the middle of the
woods is pretty far from anyone.

TODD

Will there be a place to park my
Ferrari?

SHANNON

Lord help.

Todd parts the blinds to crack the window and lights up. He
looks across the lot and sees Jake and Lee making margaritas
and fiddling with the grill.

TODD
What do you make of the queers?

WHACK Shannon throws a shoe at his head.

TODD
Sorry, gays.

WHACK Another shoe.

TODD
Well goddammit, what can I say?

SHANNON
Just say 'that nice couple'!

TODD
But you know what I mean.

SHANNON
That's not the point, we have to support our homosexual brothers and sisters by not passively adding to oppression.

He nods, rubbing his head. He knows.

TODD
Just glad you only have two feet.

SHANNON
Anyway, they seem nice.

Jake looks up from the grill and sees Todd in the window. He closes the drapes, then peeks and sees Jake walking over.

TODD
Oh shit, he saw me. He's coming over.

SHANNON
What?

Todd scrambles over to the bed and pulls the covers over the money, and off Shannon.

TODD
Well you wanted to be friends with them!

SHANNON
I don't need them to see my tits yet!

TODD
He don't care.

She jumps up to the bathroom as there's a knock at the door. Todd walks over and cracks the door. Jake is standing there with two margaritas in hand.

JAKE
Hey, sailor.

TODD
Howdy, neighbor.

JAKE
Hello back there!

SHANNON (O.S.)
Hi!

JAKE
We are having some trouble with the grill over there and you look like a man who knows how to use his hands, so we were wondering if we could bribe you with a couple drinks to come start the grill for us.

Todd is genuinely charmed and nods.

TODD
Little booze and flattery go a long way.

Jake smiles and hands him the drinks.

JAKE
Feel free to put on some swimming trunks, we're gonna get in the pool in a little bit.
(to Shannon)
You too, honey!

SHANNON (O.S.)
Thanks!

JAKE
I like your tats.

Todd sips his drink, it's strong.

TODD
I like the way you make a margarita.

Jake and Todd *clink* and grin at each other like idiots.

INT. EDIE'S DINER - DAY

Amy's seated at the counter, burger in one hand, watching clips and taking notes on her laptop with the other. A waitress in her 60s with curly, frizzy hair and tobacco stained teeth leans over her, grinning. Her name tag says EDIE (60). She refills her water.

EDIE

Now is that the best, or is that
not the best?

Amy's mouth is full, she tries to swallow and answer.

AMY

Mm-hmm, mmm, *thoo gooth*

Edie smiles triumphantly and turns around, hacking into her apron as she crosses the room. Amy puts her burger down.

She looks at her burger on the plate for a moment, thinking, then looks around the diner.

She sees an elderly woman sitting with two young men with matching black and yellow polo shirts, a young boy in the next stall all by himself, nursing a malt. Down the bar, a middle-aged man seems to be sharpening a knife...

She pulls out her notebook and starts jotting down notes, looking around the room.

Her eyes come back to the end of the bar, Edie is watching her as she pours Knife Guy a coffee. Amy is flustered and puts her notebook away. She looks back up and Edie hasn't moved. It's almost threatening. She pulls out her wallet and pays her bill, then collects her laptop and leaves.

EXT. EDIE'S DINER - DAY

The door jingles as Amy exits the building, looking over her shoulder and hurrying out of view of the windows and Edie.

She catches a woman down the block staring at her. The woman darts around a corner. Amy looks around the street.

EXT. MOTEL POOL - DAY

Todd flips a burger on the grill as Jake lays out by the pool, Lee and Shannon splash around inside. They've become fast friends.

SHANNON

(to Jake)

Jake, your dad was a writer on
"Carl Young's Rock Hard Will"!?

JAKE

Hm?

SHANNON

We love that show!

LEE

Wait, how *old* are you?

She splashes him.

SHANNON

Reruns, sugar.

TODD

What about you, Lee? Did your daddy
work on shows too?

LEE

No, I actually grew up in the town
down the road there.

Todd and Shannon are genuinely surprised and intrigued.

TODD

No shit.

SHANNON

Over there?

Lee sips his margarita.

LEE

Yup, that's how I know about this
little gem. It's not the Ritz
Carlton, but it's cheap and quiet
and has a pool.

TODD

It surely does.

Todd comes over and sits on the edge of the pool, dipping his
toes in.

JAKE

He told me about it and I thought it sounded like a perfect getaway for the weekend - Palm Springs has gotten a little hipster-y, and Big Bear is so *brown* this time of year, so why not enjoy some booze and grilling somewhere new?

TODD

(flipping a burger)

Well it's a good thing we were here then.

JAKE

Our hero.

Jake smiles and nods, like he's got his own private joke.

JAKE

Hey, actually, where are our other neighbors? This should be a motel wide party.

TODD

I saw the girl head back to town with the wrecked car.

SHANNON

Poor angels, what a pain.

JAKE

I think I saw the boyfriend head to their room.

INT. AMY AND DAVID'S ROOM - DAY

The roof of Nakatomi tower explodes on screen, jolting David out of sleep. He rubs his eyes, checks the time, and gets up. He drinks the last of some old water and grabs the ice bucket, puts on his shoes, and heads out.

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

Yawning, he walks past other rooms towards the ice machine, not paying attention to the group at the pool. One room is marked **UNDER CONSTRUCTION**. He starts filling up on ice.

JAKE

Oh, great! Hey!

David's ears perk up.

JAKE
Hey! Punk... rocker guy!

He turns around.

JAKE
That's perfect!

SHANNON
Bring that over!

David is confused. He just stares at them, trying to understand what they are talking about.

The ice bucket overflows and ice falls around his feet, everyone at the pool is laughing. He turns off the machine and kicks the ice chunks away.

TODD
Son, bring the ice over! Have a drink with us.

SHANNON
Come on!

EXT. MOTEL POOL - DAY

David stumbles over with his ice, rubbing his eyes some more.

DAVID
Hey guys, what's up?

JAKE
Dump that ice into the blender and have a drink with us, you maniac.

DAVID
Oh... okay.

He dumps the ice in.

LEE
Where's your lady?

EXT. TOWN MAIN STREET - DAY

Amy walks over to the corner where she saw the woman dart off, but it's an empty alley. Confused, she turns and walks the other direction up the main street.

She sits on a bench in front of a small park and takes a breath. She studies the various people going about their day, and decides to take some notes - she sees ...

- a young man and an older woman talking very casually, almost as if they were coworkers at the water cooler
- a woman at the florist sprays a healthy plant with some light green liquid, and the plant seems to wilt immediately
- a young man mops the floor at a liquor store while the older shopkeep watches over his shoulder, it looks like a bottle has broken, but the spill is a shade of red...

The shopkeep catches her eye and she quickly looks away. Greasy Charlie's is up the street. She glances back to the liquor store and it's empty.

Again, she can feel eyes on her. Left of the liquor store is the police station.... a Deputy is watching her with the same intense look Edie had. He doesn't break.

She gets uncomfortable and heads up the block to the auto body, looking over her shoulder occasionally. He seems to follow from across the road, but the second time she looks back, he's gone..

INT. CHARLIE'S AUTO BODY - DAY

Amy walks into the garage and breathes a sighs in relief.

GREASY CHARLIE
Everything okay, sweetie?

AMY
Yeah, I just--

DEPUTY SMITH (O.S.)
Hey there Charlie, how's it hangin'?

The Deputy that was following Amy suddenly appears from around the corner of the garage.

GREASY CHARLIE
Well hey yourself Deputy, how's business today?

DEPUTY SMITH
Same shit, different smell, guy.
Did I interrupt?

AMY
No. No, I was just, uh--
(to Charlie)
Do you think I could get that ride back?

GREASY CHARLIE

No problem, missy. Let me just wash up.

Amy rolls her eyes a little as she watches Charlie walk off. She rotates back and JUMPS as the Deputy has not moved.

He just stands there, silent, staring, grinning. She's uncomfortable. Finally, he talks... cool as a cucumber.

DEPUTY SMITH

Didn't mean to spook ya.

Amy takes a step back.

AMY

You didn't, I just... hey, I saw you outside didn't I?

DEPUTY SMITH

I don't think so.

AMY

You were looking right at me...

DEPUTY SMITH

Well I was looking at the auto body, which is where I was headed, and it seems you were too, thus I was looking your direction and here we both are. But I don't think I was looking right at you.

AMY

Oh.

This is weird. He lets the moment hang again.

DEPUTY SMITH

That there your car?

He nods towards Amy and David's smashed up car, sitting up on the rack.

AMY

Yeah, we're waiting for it to get fixed.

DEPUTY SMITH

I had an ex-girlfriend that couldn't drive neither.

AMY

Excuse me?

DEPUTY SMITH
No offense intended, I just
sympathize.

AMY
I wasn't driving, actually.

DEPUTY SMITH
Oh, well then excuse me, and please
accept my sincerest apologies.

He's not sincere.

She doesn't respond, making him uncomfortable with silence
now. He coughs and looks back at the car, his demeanor
shifts, he starts acting like a cop, hiking up his belt.

DEPUTY SMITH
So uhhh... what exactly happened
here?

AMY
We... hit an animal. It ran off.

DEPUTY SMITH
Pretty big animal.

AMY
The coyotes come down from the
mountains, hunt the rabbits.

He looks at her.

AMY
So I'm told.

He stares right at her, stepping just a bit closer, silently
interrogating. He breathes in to speak, but is interrupted by
Charlie bursting back in, drying his hands and tossing the
towel in the trash.

GREASY CHARLIE
You ready to go, honey? I still got
some work to do before sun goes
down so let's get you bac--

AMY
Nope, I'm ready!

She briskly makes off towards the tow truck.

DEPUTY SMITH
Ma'am, excuse me, miss?

She stops reluctantly.

DEPUTY SMITH
Just one question, where are you
staying?

She looks around, not wanting to answer, but unsure what else to say.

AMY
The uh, Lily of the West, by the
highway...

DEPUTY SMITH
(suddenly chipper)
Ah yeah, Lily makes a killer
continental breakfast. You have
yourself a good rest of your stay.
Charlie's gonna take great care of
you.

He slaps Charlie on the arm and grins that slimy grin. Amy nods and opens the door to the truck.

GREASY CHARLIE
I interrupt somethin'?

DEPUTY SMITH
Nah, just inquiring about our
guests --

INT. TOW TRUCK - DAY

Amy watches the two men stand and exchange a few more words, but she can't hear them from inside the cab. Charlie looks over at her, then back to the Deputy and laughs. She fidgets as they wrap up and Charlie heads over. He opens the cab.

GREASY CHARLIE
Ready?

AMY
Yup!

He starts the truck and they pull off.

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

Charlie's tow truck pulls up to the motel, the pool is... a scene. 90's jams are pumping from a boom box, everyone has a drink in hand, and David is doing a cannonball.

INT. TOW TRUCK - DAY

Amy's jaw is hanging as Charlie pulls to a stop.

AMY
What the f--

GREASY CHARLIE
Looks like you guys made some
friends.

AMY
It certainly does.

Charlie makes eye contact with Lee as Amy hops out.

EXT. MOTEL POOL - DAY

Amy walks up apprehensively, Jake sees her first.

AMY
Hey everyone...

JAKE
There she is!

The group cheers.

SHANNON
Girl!!! I had no idea you guys were
so much fun! Get in here!

DAVID
Hey babe!

David hops out and starts to make his way over to her.

AMY
I uh, don't have a bathing suit
on...

SHANNON
That never stopped anyone!

The group hollers enthusiastically. David stumbles over to her, not wasted but well on his way.

AMY
What's going on?

DAVID
These guys are so much fun!

He starts introducing everyone.

AMY
I should, uh... let me just get
changed and freshen up.

SHANNON
Okay, but hurry back.

Shannon pouts as Amy gives David a *glance* and sets her drink down. David gestures "one minute" to everyone and follows her back to their room.

INT. AMY AND DAVID'S ROOM - DAY

The couple enters and close the door behind them.

DAVID
Hey, what's up? Are you okay?

AMY
Yeah, no, I don't know. Yes.

DAVID
Okay.

AMY
I thought you were going to work?

DAVID
Well I started to, but I went to
get ice and they offered me drinks,
and were just real friendly...

AMY
Oh.

DAVID
It's just, you know, this is still
vacation, right?

AMY
Yeah, I guess...

DAVID
What happened out there? You're
like, shaken?

He takes her hands and sits them down on the edge of the bed, she calms down a little. Takes a deep breath.

AMY
The town was... weird. People were
just, off, you know?

DAVID

How so?

AMY

It's hard to describe, like, just acting... slightly off. It's that uncanny valley thing.

DAVID

Weird.

AMY

Yeah, and it was like, harmless at first. I was just taking some notes, just people watching... but then I kept feeling like people were... watching me, and, I don't know... I felt... unwelcome.

David is being genuinely consoling. He rubs her back.

DAVID

I'm sorry, babe.

AMY

And then, I went to the car place to get a ride back, and there was this Sheriff's Deputy. And he was... so creepy.

DAVID

Jesus.

AMY

It wasn't just that, when I wouldn't flirt back he like, got all cop on me and started asking about the car.

DAVID

What did you tell him?

AMY

I told him we hit a coyote that with a taste for lapin a la cocotte and it ran off afterwards.

DAVID

And what did he say?

AMY

He... just kind of stared at me.

DAVID
Weird... he must not be French.

AMY
Yeah. No.

BANG BANG BANG someone knocks on the door.

LEE (O.S.)
Hey, get out here, you two. The crowd's getting restless!

SHANNON (O.S.)
Get out here!

DAVID
One second!
(to Amy)
Listen, this is a weird small town. Weird small towns have weird people living in them.

AMY
(nodding)
...weird small people...

DAVID
Right. We haven't done anything wrong, so there's nothing to worry about, okay?

AMY
Yeah...

DAVID
Let's go out and have some drinks with these nice people. We came on vacation to have fun and these are fun people. Let's do what we came out to do. Forget about the other stuff.

AMY
Okay.

They hug and get up, Lee is waiting for them outside.

LEE
Have you ever done DMT?

EXT. MOTEL POOL - NIGHT

BRIEF MONTAGE:

Set to "Feel Good Hit of the Summer" by Queens of the Stone Age.

Everyone is drinking, having a good time. The white powder comes out. They trip and get a little touchy. It's wholesome, adults-on-drugs-in-the-desert fun.

Things calm down and everyone retires around the fire pit. Everyone is still a bit stoned, but it's a very chill vibe.

SHANNON

Amy, you were in town all day,
right?

AMY

For a few hours, yeah.

SHANNON

What was it like?

She sighs and sort of looks around pensively.

AMY

It was... quaint.

TODD

Awwwww she's holding out on us!

SHANNON

What happened?

Amy looks at David, then opens up.

AMY

It was cute, just... weird. Like,
people acted funny. I dunno,
probably just a smal-- different
town thing.

JAKE

Lee is from there!

Amy looks horrified. Lee looks at her.

AMY

Oh my g-- I'm so sorry, I didn't
mean anything by it, truly...

He laughs, breaking the tension.

LEE

It's okay. It is weird! Even more
so being the only Asian kid. That's
why I got out. No offense taken.

AMY
Okay, wait, maybe you can help
then-

LEE
With what?

AMY
I was just in town and the people
there have this... accent?

SHANNON
Yeah, we noticed that too.

LEE
Accent?

AMY
You don't hear... it?

LEE
I must be used to it.

DAVID
She's an investigative journalist,
so she's always picking up on weird
little things like that.

She slaps his arm and shoots him a look. Lee laughs.

SHANNON
So, what does a kid do for fun out
here anyhow?

TODD
I imagine it involves tumbleweeds.

LEE
Mostly this, actually.

JAKE
Doing drugs and sitting around a
fire?

LEE
Exactly.

Everyone laughs. Lee puts on a voice.

LEE
We told a lot of scary stories. Out
here in the desert, it gets pitch
black, it's cold, no one around for
miles... it can be a scary place.

JAKE
I'm getting scared already.

TODD
Tell us a scary story!

SHANNON
Yeah!

JAKE
Oooooo story time!

DAVID
Yeah!

Amy is a little uncomfortable, but not about to break up the mood. Lee plays it up, but is obviously about to spin a yarn.

LEE
I dunno...

EVERYONE
(chanting)
SCA-RY! STO-RY! SCA-RY! STO-RY!

LEE
Alright, alright.

He leans into the fire light, letting sinister shadows dance across his face. The mood slows to a crawl, everyone hanging on his words.

LEE
This is a story told to every child in the desert - told to them by their parents, whose parents told them. Decades ago, there was an old hermit that lived in a shack just outside of a small town, kinda like this one here.

TODD
Oh shit, this is good.

SHANNON
Shh!

LEE
This old man, people would see him wander into the desert every single morning. With a shovel. At first they thought maybe he was trying to die out there, let the birds pick him apart, but he kept coming back at sun down, every time. So they paid him no mind. He was just... peculiar.

He looks at Amy as he says that last word. She dodges his eyes. He continues.

LEE

One summer, it was an especially hot year. Hottest the desert's ever seen, they say. People worried about the old man, out there on his own, but he always came back. One day though, someone's dog went missing. And the next week, another. Then another. Then, a little girl.

The group is riveted.

LEE

They just disappeared during the night. No rhyme or reason. So mobs did what mobs will do, they got good and unruly, and they decided to target the outsider. I mean, who else could have been attacking the most vulnerable in town? So they set out to the old man's hut, broke his door down, and pulled him out of bed, interrogating him, poking him with pointed sticks, putting their torches by his face, torturing him. But it was no use, he didn't speak the language and was too terrified to provide any answers anyway. Well, after a while they threw him out of his hut and set it on fire. As he watched his home burn, they yelled and kicked at him to go back to the desert, and he finally did. Just wandered out into the desert to die.

DAVID

Jesus Christ.

JAKE

Does someone have the rights to this?

LEE

And the killing stopped. The townspeople were convinced they caught the culprit and sent him to the desert to die.

SHANNON

But they didn't...

LEE

They didn't. One year to the day of the first death, it happened again. Another pet. The next day, another child. And it went on for a week, just like before. And then it stopped. No bodies. No evidence of what happened. People and animals just... vanished.

Jaws on the floor.

LEE

And then it happened again the next year. And the next. Every year since then, there's a week in the desert where people just... vanish.

Amy is particularly creeped out.

LEE

So people watch the horizon extra close in the summer, and sometimes they say they can see a short, fat, hunched over figure way out in the distance... dragging a shovel, coming to take you or someone you love, and bury them out here, never to be seen again.

It's quiet for a few moments.

TODD

...ho-ly shit.

JAKE

Wow, you need a promotion.

SHANNON

Cot-damn.

DAVID

Wow.

David nudges Amy, who's stoic. She perks up a little.

AMY

Yeah, wow... that's... wild.

TODD

Alright, now that we've got a scary story done, there's only one more step for a successful party, at least how we do it in Texas.

LEE

What's that?

TODD

My little cowpie knows.

Shannon pulls her top off. Everyone is stunned.

SHANNON

Everyone gets naked!

TODD

Now that's a Texas party!

They both start disrobing and dive into the pool naked. Jake and Lee don't join in, but they're not exactly against it either.

David has a big surprised grin on his face, but he looks over at Amy, who is not less enthused.

AMY

This might be my cue, everyone.

The group groans in disapproval.

AMY

I'm sorry, it's just been a long, hot day! I've gotta get some rest.

She gives David the *come hither* eyes.

DAVID

She's right, I need to recharge a bit too. We'll see you guys tomorrow though!

They both stand up and start heading towards their room.

JAKE

Oof they're probably right, we should go into town tomorrow and grab some more *supplies*.

He shakes an empty margarita glass.

JAKE

(to Lee)

And you've got to show me around
your old stomping grounds.

He takes Lee's arm and they head to their room as well.
Shannon is doing backstrokes.

LEE

Night everybody.

TODD

Alright, party poopers, have a nice
early night.

AMY

Night!

DAVID

Night!

SHANNON

(playfully)

Lame!

INT. AMY AND DAVID'S ROOM - DAY

Amy and David get inside and immediately start kissing
heavily. Like it's been a while. They struggle to get each
other's clothes off as quickly as possible and make their way
over to the bed.

Amy falls onto the mattress on her back, David on top of her,
kissing her neck. She opens her eyes for a moment and
pauses... is there... something... outside?

David doesn't slow down, she starts patting his back to stop.
There is definitely something in the distance, barely
catching the moonlight - the shape of a short, fat person...
holding something.

AMY

(hushed)

David - David, the window!

DAVID

I don't think they mind--

AMY

No, stop! There's... there's
something out there, look!

He pulls back and looks out the window, squinting, trying to
see what she sees.

DAVID
Ame... there's nothing there.

AMY
You don't see that!?

She pushes him off and goes over to the window, buttoning up her pants. He reluctantly follows.

DAVID
Where?

She focuses, but it's gone.

AMY
Godamm--

A CLANGING of keys Lily walks by the window, startling Amy.

DAVID
See? It was just Lily.

AMY
It was *not* - what I saw was like
200 feet out in the desert.

DAVID
Amy... there's no--

AMY
FUCK! You never believe me!

DAVID
Whoa, hey--

AMY
No! This is bullshit. Just like the
car, you *immediately* didn't believe
me.

DAVID
It was an animal!

AMY
We don't actually know that, and
it's also not the fucking point.
You default to not believing me!

DAVID
I do not!

AMY

You do! What are we even doing here, if you can't trust me for a couple minutes?

He tries to hold her hand.

DAVID

Come on, we're vacation...

AMY

Are we?? We've both been miserable all week until 5 minutes ago, and you managed to fuck that up by not even attempting to humor me.

DAVID

I didn't see anything!

AMY

Not the *point*. I'm going to bed.

He looks around the room.

DAVID

Is this a not-sleeping-in-the-same-bed fight?

She gets under the covers, not looking at him.

AMY

Do whatever you want.

DAVID

(sotto)

...fuck.

CUT TO BLACK

THE NEXT MORNING

David is lying on the floor surrounded by pillows and twisted sheets. Amy's barely covered by her sheets. It's a scene.

BANG BANG BANG

Someone is knocking on the door and they mean serious business. David shoots up, still half asleep, Amy pulls a pillow over her head.

BANG BANG BANG

AMY
 (yelling)
 It's 7am, what could you possibly
 want??
 (to David)
 Would you please go see who it is?

DAVID
 Goddammit...

He stumbles over to the door just as-- *BANG BANG BANG*

DAVID
 I'm opening it! Chill, chill--

The door swings open just as he pulls down on the handle. The Deputy Amy saw in town is standing there, next to the Sheriff. SHERIFF WEST (65) is a barrel-chested, broad shouldered man, with a gray mustache and salt and pepper stubble all over. He pulls off his anachronistically stylish sunglasses off and points them at David.

SHERIFF WEST
 You're not a lady.

DAVID
 Uh, no...

SHERIFF WEST
 Who are ya

AMY (O.S.)
 Who is that?

DAVID
 Uh, David Weiss, what's--

SHERIFF WEST
 Who is that?

DAVID
 My, girlfriend--

SHERIFF WEST
 Amy Miller?

AMY
 David, what's goi--

Sheriff West pushes past David and waltzes into the room. Amy pulls the covers over herself and scoots back, then recognizes Deputy Smith and gets more concerned.

AMY
Hey, you can't just--

DAVID
You can't just come in without a
warrant, what's going on here?

West, without taking his eyes off Amy, raises a baggy of DMT.

SHERIFF WEST
This is yours.

AMY
Is that a question?

SHERIFF WEST
It is.

AMY
No.

SHERIFF WEST
What?

AMY
That's not my baggy of white
powder.

DAVID
It's not.

SHERIFF WEST
What? No, I said it *is* your bag,
not that that was a question.

AMY
Oh. Well it's not.

DAVID
It's not.

SHERIFF WEST
Yes it is. And so is this.

He holds up her wallet, her ID sticking out.

SHERIFF WEST
We found the substance in question
in the same bag as this wallet,
left out by the pool.

Smith tosses Amy's purse on the bed.

SHERIFF WEST

Which contained this ID, which...

He looks at it, then shows it back to her.

SHERIFF WEST

...is you.

AMY

That's bullshit, those aren't my drugs, if that's what it even is, and you have no right coming in here--

SHERIFF WEST

We've got probable cause, and we need the Manager's permission, not yours. Now get dressed and let's go.

DAVID

Whoa, you're not taking her anywhere.

DEPUTY SMITH

Shut up, boy.

SHERIFF WEST

Li'l miss, we found illegal substances on your property, you're not batting your eyes out of this one. Get dressed, get in the squad car, you're coming in to get booked. I'm sure loverboy will pay your bail in a couple days.

AMY

A couple *days*--?

DAVID

Hold on, it's not hers. It's mine.

West finally turns around.

SHERIFF WEST

What's that?

AMY

David! Don't!

DAVID

It's mine, okay? I left it in her bag, but she didn't know. She didn't even know I had it on me.

He puts his wrists out, waiting for cuffs. Smith looks at West, who chuckles and shakes his head.

SHERIFF WEST
Whatever. Let's get out of here.

He starts towards the door. Smith smacks David's hands and leads him after West.

DEPUTY SMITH
I don't need cuffs for you, pipsqueak. Let's move.

AMY
David!

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

She follows David and the Sheriffs outside, on their way to the car. David looks over his shoulder at her.

DAVID
It's fine, let them book me. Just find a ride into town and bail me out.

Smith laughs.

DAVID
What's funny?

DEPUTY SMITH
You ain't gettin' bail today, boy.

DAVID
Are you kidding me? For a gram of coke.

Smith starts loading him into the car.

DEPUTY SMITH
We picked you up at a motel, you're a flight risk.

AMY
A *flight* risk?! He's not from Russia!

SHERIFF WEST
We ain't letting you slip away that easy.

DAVID
I don't think that's legal?

SLAM

Amy bangs on the car door as Smith gets in and the car starts.

DAVID

Amy!

AMY

I'll get Shannon to drive me, I'm right behind you!

Amy runs to Shannon's room as the Sheriff's car kicks up dust and peels out of the lot.

INT. TODD AND SHANNON'S ROOM - DAY

BANG BANG BANG Todd and Shannon are lying in bed, just woken up from the car peeling out. They shoot up at the sound of frantic knocking on the door. Shannon jumps up and looks through the peephole, Todd goes to hide their duffle bag.

TODD

(hushed)

Who the fuck is that?

SHANNON

I don't know!

She sees Amy, gives Todd a moment to finish hiding the bag, and opens the door.

SHANNON

Sweet girl, what's going on?

AMY

I'm so sorry, I need help. The cops just showed up and arrested David, and they're taking him to lockup, and I need a ride over there to figure this out. I'm sorry, but can you please drive me to town?

SHANNON

Oh my god.

She looks back at Todd, neither of them know what to do.

SHANNON

Um - okay, yes, of course, darlin'. Give me one minute to get clothed.

Todd shoots her a look - "is this smart??"

She replies - "she needs help!". He lays back, exasperated.

EXT. SHERIFF STATION - DAY

The girls pull up in Shannon's El Camino. The dusty squad car is parked out front. Shannon is trying to hide her nervousness from Amy.

SHANNON

You go ahead in, I'll find parking.

AMY

Okay.

(beat)

Fuck.

SHANNON

It's gonna be okay, hon.

Amy gets out and makes her way up to the station.

INT. SHERIFF STATION - DAY

Amy opens the door and Deputy Smith is sitting at the table, reading a book. Without looking at her, he puts his hand up to stop her and starts talking.

DEPUTY SMITH

Your boyfriend is staying in lock up for 48 hours.

AMY

That's--

DEPUTY SMITH

I know, it's bullshit. But you happen to be in one of three counties in the US that allow for extended holding for minor drugs offenses. Gives us time to investigate the suspect's belongings and/or domicile. Which, by the way, you can expect sometime tomorrow.

AMY

That's not--

DEPUTY SMITH

Fair, I know. But it is what it is
and there's nothing you can do.
Now, you can come back in forty--

He looks at his watch.

DEPUTY SMITH

--seven and a quarter hours and
post bail, until then, his ass is
ours.

AMY

Can I just--

DEPUTY SMITH

See him? Unfortunately visiting
hours are over.

She looks at her watch.

AMY

But it's--

DEPUTY SMITH

Sunday.

AMY

I want to know that he's okay!

Smith finally looks up from his book. He stares her down for
a moment.

DEPUTY SMITH

You can see right through that door
right there that he's just fine.

She takes a step forward and glances over - sure enough, she
can see him sitting in a cell. He's fine. Sad, but fine.

DEPUTY SMITH

I suggest you go back to your motel
and get comfy. You can meet with
him tomorrow, during visiting
hours.

He goes back to his book, flipping a page. She's stunned. He
puts his hand down and there is a moment of silence. Finally,
she turns and starts walking out.

DEPUTY SMITH

Or you could take this opportunity
to dump his ass and just go home.

She stops. He starts laughing hysterically to himself. She exits.

EXT. SHERIFF STATION - DAY

Amy walks outside in a daze. A car horn honks in the distance. She looks up and sees Shannon up the block, standing next to her car and waving.

INT./EXT. CHARLIE'S AUTO BODY - DAY

She walks up the street towards Shannon, but is stopped by Greasy Charlie.

GREASY CHARLIE

Oh there you are, I been calling you all morning.

AMY

Oh, uh, sorry.... it's been hectic.

GREASY CHARLIE

You sure you're doing a desert vacation right?

AMY

I, uh... hey, how is the car?

GREASY CHARLIE

Well now that's what I was calling about. Turns out it's gonna be a couple more days.

AMY

Ugh, what?

GREASY CHARLIE

I am sorry, we had to wait another day or two on a part though. And we're a little swamped at the moment.

He motions to the garage, full of cars that weren't there the day before. Amy is resigned to her bad luck.

AMY

Okay, whatever. Thanks for the update.

GREASY CHARLIE

My pleasure, miss. You have yourself a good day.

He watches her walk off towards Shannon.

EXT. EDIE'S DINER - DAY

Amy stands by Shannon's car, looking for her. A knock at the window startles her. It's Shannon, waving her inside the diner.

SHANNON

Get in here, I got you a malt.

INT. EDIE'S DINER - DAY

Amy walks back around to the booth Shannon is in and slides in across from her.

SHANNON

I saw you walking back alone and figured you'd need something sweet.

AMY

Thanks.

SHANNON

What's going on? How's your man?

Amy sighs hard.

AMY

I don't know, they wouldn't let me back to see him and said they're legally allowed to hold him without bail for 48 hours.

SHANNON

That's bullshit.

AMY

That's what I said, but I guess there's a law about it specific to this town? What am I going to do anyway, call the FBI? It'd take them two days to come out, if they gave a shit, which they won't because why would they?

SHANNON

Right right... Did you get to see him at least?

AMY

Yeah, he's okay.

SHANNON

Poor guy.

AMY

Yeah.

SHANNON

...well shit. I guess that's not as bad as it could be.

AMY

I guess. This whole week has just been a catastrophe.

SHANNON

I'm sorry, sugar. And I'm sorry that they found anything on your stuff in the first place - I don't know how anything ended up in your purse anyway...

AMY

It's fine, it's fine... we all partook. I don't remember much of last night anyway, someone must have just dropped it, I guess? On brand for this vacation, frankly.

Shannon gives her a hug.

SHANNON

Sweet girl. Let's eat something while we're here, food'll do you good.

They're becoming fast friends. Edie comes by and drops off two malts.

SHANNON

Can we get a couple burgers too, darlin'? Rare for me.

EDIE

You got it.

Edie winks awkwardly and shambles off.

SHANNON

She's... odd?

AMY

If you think she's weird, let me show you something else.

EXT. MOTEL POOL - DAY

Back at the motel, Todd, Jake, and Lee are seated on the edge of the jacuzzi, feet in the water, drinking beers.

TODD

So, what do you two do on Cocktails
& Cadavers exactly?

LEE

We write?

TODD

Like, the plot?

JAKE

Everything...?

TODD

Ohh, oh.

(beat)

But, just the situations and what
happens right?

LEE

I mean, we write everything.

TODD

Even the conversations?

LEE

The dialogue?

JAKE

Yeah, we write the dialogue too.

TODD

(fascinated)

Now, I thought the actors wrote
their own lines.

LEE

That... no...

Shannon's El Camino comes roaring up into the parking lot.
She parks and the girls get out, walking up towards the pool
to greet everyone. Amy nods to the beers.

AMY

Already?

LEE

It's vacation!

JAKE

How's Dave? Is everything okay?

AMY

They're holding him for a couple days. He's safe, but there's literally nothing I can do today.

JAKE

Shit.

LEE

Come have a drink with us.

AMY

Ugh, that sounds nice... I'm so tired and worried though.

Shannon rubs her back, consoling her.

TODD

C'mon, sugar. You can relax out here, we're just drinkin', not playin' football.

Jake nods. She looks at Shannon, her new bestie. She's got a look that she'll support her either way.

AMY

Okay, I could use a little sun anyway.

Todd claps his hands in celebration.

TODD

Well al-*right*

LATER THAT AFTERNOON

The sun is setting as Amy polishes off a beer and places the empty beside a few others. Everyone else's pile is bigger. Lee and Todd are in the jacuzzi.

TODD

Did either of you work on LOST?

JAKE

That's a bit before my time.

TODD

Now *that* was a show. You should do a show like that.

Lee finishes a beer, looks at his pile, grins, and TOSSES it over the fence and into the desert *SMASH*

Everyone sort of giggles, looks at one another, and one by one throw one of their own empties over into the desert.

LILY (O.S.)

Hey!

Lily appears behind them, furious.

LILY

Don't you throw another bottle!

SHANNON

We're sorry!

LILY

(sotto)

Goddamn ingrates-

AMY

Yeah, we're so sorry! That was dumb, we'll clean it up.

The boys chuckle to themselves, trying to keep it cool. Lily grumbles off back into the office.

AMY

Shit, was that bad? She seemed pissed.

TODD

Ahhhhh it's all just old glass out there anyway.

LEE

Huh?

TODD

You know, the dirt. It's tiny pieces of glass.

AMY

Oh, the sand.

TODD

Whatever. Pass me a beer, junior.

Lee fishes one out of the cooler and tosses it over to Todd.

JAKE

You know, you guys are way more fun than the last people that were here. I wish your guy was here.

AMY

...yeah. Me too.

SHANNON

Damn, how long y'all been here? You takin' up residence?

JAKE

They were just here the day before you guys, showed up the same day as us.

LEE

Such wet blankets.

TODD

How so?

JAKE

Just seemed anxious about something or another, and kind of boring. They came out and had a drink with us, but didn't talk at all, then just went to their room. And left in the morning.

LEE

You all are a much better time.

Lee sort of drags his hand over Todd's arm affectionately. Amy and Shannon catch it.

TODD

Cheers to that.

The vibe is changing a bit. Shannon gets up and walks over to the jacuzzi, strips to her underwear, and steps in.

JAKE

I'm gonna hit the head. Be right back.

Jake gets up and gives Lee and little nod as Todd slides over and starts kissing Shannon's arm. Lee is into it. Shannon starts rubbing Lee's chest as Todd continues.

Amy watches this for a moment as Jake disappears into his room. Finally, she's had enough.

AMY

Alright guys, I think I'm gonna retire.

SHANNON

Aw sugar, don't go.

TODD

Yeah, stick around!

AMY

No really, it's okay. I'm so tired. I gotta go see David early tomorrow anyway. You guys... have fun.

Lee watches her walk back to her room as everyone goes back to what they were doing.

EXT. AMY AND DAVID'S ROOM - NIGHT

Amy pulls out her key and begins to unlock the door when she sees a shadow duck behind the corner of the building. She looks back - Todd, Shannon, and Lee are still in the jacuzzi.

AMY

Hey - Jake?

She walks around the building... nothing.

AMY

Jake? What are you doing?

No answer. Just faint sounds of giggling from the jacuzzi. Sand and rocks as far as the eye can see.

INT. SHERIFF STATION LOCKUP - NIGHT

West and Smith sit at a table across from the cell David is in, playing cards and chatting over beers. David lays on a thin mattress on a block of concrete in his cell. He stares up at the ceiling, listening.

DEPUTY SMITH

...so, you can take a picture and send it to friends or people who just follow you--

SHERIFF WEST

Strangers?

DEPUTY SMITH

--if you want, sure, and then it disappears after a day.

SHERIFF WEST
Well what's the point of that?

DEPUTY SMITH
It's fun.

SHERIFF WEST
But why does it disappear?

DEPUTY SMITH
Well sometimes you don't want it to stay up.

SHERIFF WEST
What do you take pictures of?

DEPUTY SMITH
I don't know, going out with friends... pets... titties...

SHERIFF WEST
Jesus Christ.

DEPUTY SMITH
You can put fun filters on your face too. That don't sound like fun to you, Sheriff?

SHERIFF WEST
Son, that sounds about as fun as shitting in my hands and clapping. Besides the titties.

Smith laughs and lays down a card. David sighs loudly, the men don't look up from their cards.

SHERIFF WEST
That what you do back in Silicon Valley, son? Send pictures of your boobies back and forth with your girlfriends while you do ayahuasca?

DAVID
Jesus Christ. It wasn't mine.

SHERIFF WEST
You can just call me "Sheriff" - and I know it wasn't yours.

DAVID
What?

SHERIFF WEST
It was your girlfriend's.

DAVID

Godammit.

SHERIFF WEST

Now, what I'm interested in, is why you took the fall for her. I didn't see a ring on either of your fingers. You're gonna take a potential drug charge for some girl you're not bound to in the eyes of the lord?

Smith laughs again, David glares at him.

DAVID

Someone dropped it in her bag.

Both men laugh at this.

DEPUTY SMITH

Possession is 9/10s of the law.

DAVID

Isn't that something third-graders say to each other? Or is that another weird small-town law you have here?

West doesn't appreciate the back talk.

DEPUTY SMITH

The fact is, we found a baggy of an illegal drug on her property. You wanna say it's yours, that's fine, but one of you is going down for it.

DAVID

You know, that's something that's been bugging me - how did you even know to look in her bag? Or come to the motel in the first place?

West stands up and turns towards the cell. Menacing.

SHERIFF WEST

That sounded like you asking me a question.

DAVID

Uh... yeah--

SHERIFF WEST
I'll be goddammed if I'm
interrogated by an inmate in my own
jail.

DAVID
I'm not an inmate, I'm being
detained pending investigation of a
crime I didn't commit.

SHERIFF WEST
Hell you say to me, son?

West shoves a chair to the ground.

DEPUTY SMITH
Oh, we got a lawyer here, huh? Keep
talking and see what happens.

DAVID
No, but now that you mention it, I
want a lawyer. Call me a lawyer.

A tense moment passes... and both men erupt into laughter.

DAVID
I'm not speaking until I get a
lawyer.

SHERIFF WEST
Yeah, that's just fine. We'll call
you one now, he'll be here in about
5 hours.

DEPUTY SMITH
You keep real quiet til then.

They both laugh as West returns to the table and they go back
to drinking and their card game. David leans back on his bed
and watches them.

EXT. AMY AND DAVID'S ROOM - NIGHT

Amy hears a rustle from behind the building, some whimpering?

AMY
Jake, are you okay?

She uses her phone to look around in the dark, going further
behind the building.

EXT. MOTEL POOL - NIGHT

In the jacuzzi, Todd is loving his first makeout session with a man and Lee is happy to oblige, while Shannon watches, rubbing Todd's shoulders. A shadowy figure emerges from behind them, a creepy rustling sound...

It's Jake, with a bucket of ice. He slides in the jacuzzi, smiling.

JAKE

Looks like you guys got to know each other a little better while I was gone.

SHANNON

I had a good feeling about this place when we checked in.

She slides over to him and runs her hand over his leg.

INT. SHERIFF STATION LOCKUP - NIGHT

Smith and West continue playing cards, drinking, laughing. David is curled up in his cell, facing the wall.

SHERIFF WEST

--so, Edie, god bless her, tosses this huge rock into the lake and, I shit you not, completely drenches herself. I looked up at her, bone dry, and said, 'Edie, the hell you doing up there all wet?'

The men laugh at the story. Smith looks at David in the cell, then back to West. They sharing a knowing look, West nods.

DEPUTY SMITH

Hey boy, you gettin' hungry in there?

No answer.

DEPUTY SMITH

C'mon, I know you haven't eaten. You must be feelin' it.

David doesn't move, but his eyes are open. Smith takes on lighter tone.

DEPUTY SMITH

Now listen, we may not like you and
we may bust balls, but we are still
men of the law, we ain't gonna let
you starve. Get on up, come get
this sandwich.

David slowly raises his head and looks back, Smith has gotten
up and is walking to the cell with a sandwich. David gets up
and walks towards the bars.

DEPUTY SMITH

There he is. Listen, we got this
delicious pastrami on rye here, god
willin' and the creek don't rise
you're not a fuckin vegan.

DAVID

(sotto)

What creek...?

Smith reaches the bars before David, and raises the sandwich
up to hand it to him... but just pushes it through the bars
so it purposefully falls apart and drops to the floor on the
other side. Smiling the whole time.

DEPUTY SMITH

Whoops.

David's feet are covered in sandwich ingredients. He looks
like he knew this might happen. He exhales deeply.

Smith cackles as he sits back down, slapping the table.

DEPUTY SMITH

(to West)

You see that?

DAVID

You can't keep me here forever, I'm
gonna sue the shit out of you
assholes.

West speaks up, very serious.

SHERIFF WEST

You better eat something, it's
gonna be a long night and you're
not getting anything else.

DAVID

Fuck you.

SHERIFF WEST

Now hey hey hey, ain't nothing
wrong with floor food. Still got
all the vital nutrients and such.
Besides, the Deputy here cleaned
that cell himself, just before you
showed up, didn't you, Deputy?

Smith is picking his teeth, grinning.

DEPUTY SMITH

I sure did, Sheriff.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Amy is looking around with the limited range of the light on
her phone. A twig SNAPS and there's a THUD.

AMY

...Jake?

The sound of something big BARRELING towards Amy. She screams
and runs back to the front of the building and her room.

EXT. MOTEL POOL - NIGHT

Shannon, Todd, Jake, and Lee are occupied - but Shannon
catches a glimpse of Amy just as she runs to her door and
slams the door shut.

SHANNON

Ame--?

She excuses herself and gets out of the jacuzzi.

INT. SHERIFF STATION LOCKUP - NIGHT

David looks down at the food. He *is* starving. There is some
meat that hasn't touched the ground. After a moment, he
squats and cautiously picks it up, examining it. The men
watch him from the corner of their eyes. He starts eating the
floor sandwich. They smile and laugh to themselves as he
eats.

DEPUTY SMITH

Hey you look like you need
something to wash that down.

Just as David looks up, a beer bottle SHATTERS on the bars
and sprays glass all over the cell. Smith howls as West looks
on, smiling. Their cards are down, this is what they're doing
now.

David has some minor cuts, the food is covered in glass, everything is soaked in beer.

DAVID
What the *fuck*?!

He jumps back and loses his balance, cutting his hand. He cowers in the corner, holding his bleeding hand.

SHERIFF WEST
Aw horseshit, look what you did.

West gets up and leaves the room.

INT. AMY AND DAVID'S ROOM - NIGHT

Amy locks the door and leans against it for a moment, catching her breath. She peeks through the blinds, looking at the jacuzzi, then trying to see down the walkway, where she came from.

SHANNON (O.S.)
Amy? You okay?

She looks back towards the jacuzzi and sees Shannon approaching. She tries to get her bearings, getting ready to open the door, but doesn't see the cloaked figure behind her - IN THE ROOM. *CLICK* Just as she unlocks the door, it lunges and wraps her up, pulling her back to the bathroom.

INT. SHERIFF STATION LOCKUP - NIGHT

Smith calls out after West as he goes to check on David.

DEPUTY SMITH
Aw c'mon, he's okay!
(to David)
You're okay, buddy.
(to West)
It's just a *little* blood!

West walks back in with a first aid kit and slides it to David. Smith grins at David.

SHERIFF WEST
Clean yourself up, you don't want to lose too much blood yet.

EXT. AMY AND DAVID'S ROOM - NIGHT

Shannon gets to the door and knocks.

SHANNON

Hey. Amy. Everything okay? I saw
you run inside... Amy?

She's worried. She tries the handle and the door opens.

The room is empty.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

A light flicks on overhead. We're in a windowless concrete room, a single dim, hanging light. The walls are mostly hidden by old, stacked boxes, there's a concrete stair case leading up to a trap door. Amy rubs her eyes, taking in the room. She's terrified.

WOMAN (O.S.)

You're going to want to attack me,
but you really should *not* do that.

Amy spins around - the figure that grabbed her. She scurries back as they drop the cloak revealing a young woman - a bit younger than Amy, but they look similar. They could be friends, or sisters. She's covered in dust, dried blood, bruises... she's been through something. This is JOLENE (19). Amy is still scared, but she softens. This woman doesn't seem like a threat...

Jolene places a bottle of water in front of Amy and sits in a chair across from her.

JOLENE

Drink, you need to hydrate.

Amy hesitates. Jolene notices and gets up, grabs the water bottle, and drinks some herself.

JOLENE

It's not poisoned or anything.
Drink.

Amy takes the bottle and chugs, realizing how thirsty she was. Jolene watches her. Amy finishes and wipes her mouth.

AMY

Who... who are you? Where are we?

JOLENE

My name is Jolene. We're at the
motel, under your room.

AMY

What? How? What happened to you?

Jolene sighs hard.

JOLENE

This is where the story takes a hard left.

FLASHBACK:

INT./EXT. CAR/CITY - NIGHT

A familiar Prius drives away from a major city. From the opposite direction, a sign reads: "Now entering Fog City". Inside, Jolene is sprayed with blood, dressed in dirty punk clothes. Seated next to her is another young woman, more of a normie. This is ALI (21). They smile at each other.

JOLENE (V.O.)

I had to... leave my hometown in a hurry, so my friend and I just got in a car and left.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The Prius speeds along the desert road the motel is on.

JOLENE (V.O.)

We drove all night and the next day, and finally stopped here to clean up and sleep a little.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - SUNSET

The Prius is parked in the lot, same one that's there now.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

The girls wait in line behind LEE, as he talks to Lily. She hands him some toothpaste and soap and he leaves, looking at the girls. They step up to the usual grumpy Lily.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jolene washes the blood and dirt off in the shower.

JOLENE (V.O.)

It felt so good to be in bed, to be clean... I ignored my bullshit detector. But something felt off about this place.

LATER:

She curls up in bed with Ali and they fall asleep. A shadow moves across the wall.

Jolene's eyes SHOOT open. She's facing the bathroom - it's dark, but she can make out someone emerging from a hole in the ground where the tub used to be. She begins to scream, but another figure appears directly in front of her and covers her mouth.

Before the attackers can restrain her, Jolene reaches under her pillow and grabs a switchblade, FLICKS it open, and SLASHES at the GOON. She catches one with the knife, but they manage to subdue her and one of the Goons sticks it in their pocket. They grab Ali too and drag them back to the bathroom.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

Jolene and Ali are tied to chairs, in a room similar to the one Amy woke up in, but used for torture rather than storage. One of the Goons SLAPS Jolene in the face.

JOLENE (V.O.)

They just beat the shit out of us.
Stabbed us. Never said a thing. I
don't know why.

They focus their attention on Ali, Jolene sees her chance. She distracts one of the Goons and head butts them, knocking them down beside her. The other one comes over and Jolene stands up and SPINS around, whipping her chair into them. She lays down beside the first person and fishes her knife out of their pocket, and cuts herself free.

She runs over to Ali and STABS the Goon near her, then frees Ali and they make their way up the stairs. They push up on the trap door and it opens into their motel bathroom. The KO'd Goon wakes up and starts after them.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

The girls BURST through the door, out of their room, and race towards their car. LILY emerges from behind it. With a shotgun. They spin around and head into the desert, the first torturer emerging from the room holding his head.

LILY

C'mon, idiot.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

The girls run through the pitch black desert *BLAM* Lily's shotgun illuminating the desert momentarily. Ali is crying.

JOLENE
C'mon, keep going!

They don't see the headlights rapidly approaching.

JOLENE (V.O.)
That's when you guys showed up.

WHAM.

Ali is hit by a car and goes flying two dozen feet back towards Lily and her assistant, skipping along the ground like a ragdoll. The car spins to a stop, the headlights illuminating the dust cloud.

Lily and her assistant grab Ali and drag her into a hole a dozen yards from the car. The three of them hide in there.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Jolene limps back to the motel - knife in hand, in a rage.

JOLENE (V.O.)
I went back to the motel to wait
for them. Wait for you. I didn't
know if you two were part of it or
what. I waited to kill you.

She leans against a building, breathing heavy, looking every direction, waiting for a threat that doesn't come. She peeks around the building - Amy and David are checking in. Lily is in the lobby, like nothing happened.

JOLENE (V.O.)
I was too tired to fight, so I
found this room and hid until the
morning.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Jolene is wearing her cloak, walking around the motel rooms in the pitch black night.

JOLENE (V.O.)
They took my keys, so I was going
to hotwire that El Camino, but you
and the other couple...

She peers inside Amy and David's room, they're asleep.

JOLENE (V.O.)

I knew you weren't part of it, and I figured maybe I could save you guys *and* get the car, we could all get out of here...

Amy wakes up and Jolene ducks - she sees Lily approaching from the lobby and darts away.

JOLENE (V.O.)

I had to wait until I could get you alone to explain everything.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Amy is staring at her, jaw on the floor. Jolene just watches her, waiting for a reaction.

AMY

Wait... you didn't explain everything. Who took you? Why are these rooms here?

JOLENE

That's all I know. I've been stuck in here and running around in the dark the last two nights, so I haven't exactly been able to collect a ton of information. I just know that something is seriously fucked up about this motel, we need to get out of here.

Amy looks around, bewildered.

AMY

What's... in all these boxes?

JOLENE

Costumes.

AMY

Costumes...?

JOLENE

Yeah, like stage outfits. Plumbers, clown outfits, waitress dresses, mechanics. I don't know. I got this cloak from a Phantom of the Opera outfit.

AMY

(sotto)

What the fu--

JOLENE

I figured the mask was too much.

AMY

We... we should go to the police.

JOLENE

Can't do that. We need to get in your friend's car and leave.

AMY

Wait, why not?

JOLENE

One of the guys that beat us - he had a deputy badge.

Amy's face goes pale.

JOLENE

Hey - where's your boyfriend? I didn't see him tonight.

EXT. MOTEL POOL - NIGHT

Shannon walks back to the group at the pool, who are really getting into it.

SHANNON

Guys.

Everyone looks up. Lee slips out of the jacuzzi and walks back to the grill, adjusting his trunks.

SHANNON

I can't find Amy, she walked to her room, but the door is unlocked and she isn't inside. I think something is seriously wrong.

Todd and Jake look at each other, processing the information.

JAKE

Well--

Lee walks back to the jacuzzi with a large knife and, without missing a beat, comes up behind Todd and buries the knife in his chest.

Todd is silent for a moment before realizing what's happened. Shannon SCREAMS. Jake jumps out of the jacuzzi and scrambles backwards as Todd's blood clouds across the bubbling water.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Jolene chases after Amy as she scrambles up the stairs to the trap door.

INT. AMY AND DAVID'S ROOM - NIGHT

Amy tears across the room, Jolene just emerging behind her.

JOLENE

Hey, what's going on??

Amy gets to the door but doesn't hear the screams outside. Jolene does. She grabs Amy and wraps her hand around her mouth before Amy can open the door.

JOLENE

Listen.

Amy hears the screams, she stops trying to open the door. The girls carefully look through the blinds.

Todd is lying on the ground by the jacuzzi, bleeding out. Lee is coming after Shannon with the knife, and Jake is in shock.

EXT. MOTEL POOL - NIGHT

Amy and Jolene run over to Todd, checking his wound.

JOLENE

Help her, I'll get him back there.

Amy looks up at Shannon - she's WHOOPING Lee's ass. The knife is on the ground and she's in a rage, straddling his chest and pounding on his face.

AMY

I don't think she needs it.

Jake finally gets up and pulls Shannon off Lee before she kills him.

JAKE

Stop! Please! Don't kill him!

SHANNON

Why not?!

Jake silently pleads, and after a moment Shannon gets her bearings and runs back to Todd. Jolene is back in the room tearing sheets for Todd's wound. Lee starts to get up, but Amy puts her foot on his chest, keeping him down.

IN SLOW MOTION

Roses Are Falling by Orville Peck plays

Todd reaches his hand out for Shannon, just a couple feet away. He's clearly dying, but they'll get to spend a couple moments together...

There's a flash of light, followed by a boom - like thunder. Her face is sprayed with blood. His head disintegrates before her eyes. What's left of his body slumps over as she screams

Everyone freezes. A shotgun reloads. Everyone turns to the source of the sound...

It's Lily. Standing fifteen feet from Todd and Shannon with a smoking shotgun.

Lee pushes Amy's foot off of him and limps over to Lily, standing by her side. His face is a bloody pulp.

LILY
You okay, baby?

Lily's accent and odd cadence are gone. Lee shrugs and wipes some blood from his face. Lily approaches Shannon and pokes the gun into her chest, pushing her.

LILY
Let's go, honey. All'a you.

Lily waves the gun at everyone and they all follow Lee back to the motel room adjacent to the lobby.

BANG BANG

Lily shoots out the tires of the cars as they go.

INT. KILL ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone files into the **UNDER CONSTRUCTION** room - the inside has been fashioned into a kill room. White tiled walls with chains bolted to them, a large metal table in the middle, various surgical instruments, a bathroom in the back.

Lily holds everyone at gunpoint. Lee grabs a knife and puts it up to Jake's throat, smiling.

LEE
You first.

JAKE
Lee, what the fuck, what is this?
Who are you?

Lee stabs him in the shoulder. Jake screams.

LEE
Get on the table, or it'll be worse.

Jake starts crying and lets Lee strap him down.

LEE
C'mon, you gotta admit this is a little familiar.

Lily smiles as she holds Amy, Jolene, and Shannon at gun point. She motions towards the chains.

LILY
Lock yourselves up.

AMY
(sotto)
I knew that accent was bullshit.

The girls do it - *click click click*. Lily turns her attention to the boys, as Lee slathers anesthetic gel on Jake's abdomen, before examining it.

LEE
Consider this a gift.

JAKE
Why - why are you doing this? We love each other...

LEE
It has been fun, but we both knew it wasn't going to last.

He finds the kidney and marks it with a magic marker. He grabs a blade from the table.

JAKE
What?

LEE
You were up for showrunner on the new Jon Hamm thing anyway. You wouldn't have time for me after that. Just think about it like you got the gig.

JAKE
But I'd still be alive!

LEE
I mean, you'd be so busy, you'd
barely have a life anyway.

JAKE
Why are we quipping?!

He JABS the scalpel into Jake's side, he screams.

LILY
All this, for you to just stab him?

LEE
What do you mean?

LILY
I just thought you'd be a little
more, methodical about it, is all.
You built this out like a doctor's
office and then just stabbed him
like you're gutting a fish.

Lee thinks about this, looks at the messy cut in Jake's side,
then at his instrument.

LEE
Okay, good note.

Lily nods as Lee makes a more precise cut down Jake's side.
He screams again.

The girls look at each other confused. Shannon checks on Lily
- she's not paying attention - and pulls a bobby pin from her
hair. She starts picking the lock on her chains.

LILY
Can you even see through that eye?

Lee wipes some blood from his face.

LEE
It's a little rough.
(beat)
You know what, let me get the
anatomy book. I don't know what I'm
doing here.

JAKE
What?!

Lee walks through a door at the other side of the room. Jake
exhales, half passed out from pain.

A lock CLICKS as Shannon pops it open, Lily turns around and Shannon quickly hides her hand. Amy tries to distract Lily.

AMY

So how did you two meet?

LILY

Huh?

AMY

You and Lee. Is that his real name?
Just seems like sort of an unlikely
pairing.

LILY

You shut up.

AMY

Hey how did you get all the
concrete for this anyway?

Lily approaches Amy, Shannon gets back to work on the other lock.

LILY

I said shut up.

AMY

You're gonna kill us anyway, right?
Why not tell us what the hell is
happening here?

Lily WHACKS her with the butt of the shotgun.

LILY

We are going to kill you. But I can
make it happen soon or much later.

Amy looks back at her, blood pouring from her mouth.

AMY

A little pain never hurt anyone.

Lily laughs and fires her shotgun at the opposite wall, just as Lee walks back in.

LEE

Whoa!

(beat)

My tile!

Everyone freezes and watches her.

LILY

I'm actually starting to like you.

She takes the shotgun barrel and slowly presses it against Amy's face - her skin SIZZLES and smokes. She screams.

Meanwhile, Shannon picks the lock on the other hand and frees herself. Lee shifts his eyes and see her.

LEE

Hey!

Lily looks back at Lee. In one swift move, Shannon grabs the gun from Lily, whips her in the head with it, knocking her over, and blows a hole in Lee's shoulder as he rushes over.

SHANNON

(to Amy)

You okay?

AMY

I guess. Fuck.

Shannon kneels down with her shin on Lily's neck and fishes through her pockets for the big keyring she's been swinging around this whole time.

Jake stirs back to life with all the commotion. Shannon finds the keys and tosses them to Jake, as he wriggles a hand free. He unlocks Amy and Jolene as Shannon secures Lee, still squirming on the ground.

Lee's laughing, blood dripping from his mouth and shoulder.

LEE

You're... so... fucked....

SHANNON

Yeah?

LEE

You're never going to get out of here aliv-

She turns and fires - Lily's head disintegrates. The girls and Jake jump back.

SHANNON

Your odds aren't looking so good either, cowboy.

She racks the gun and points it at him. This shuts Lee up, realizing she's not fucking around.

Amy storms over from Lily and shoves Lee to the ground.

AMY
What the fuck is this place?

LEE
Just... kill me. I won't tell you anything.

Jolene grabs a scalpel and walks over.

JOLENE
Hold his head down.

Amy straddles him and pins his head against the floor. Jolene kneels down and cuts through his cheek, giving him half a Chelsea grin. He screams and spits blood.

JOLENE
You locked us in a torture room, you fucking idiot. How long do you wanna play this game?

LEE
Fine! Godammit, fine.

They let him breathe a little as he starts talking.

LEE
This place - The Motel - is just a dumping ground. Lily was sort of a janitor... with tenure. There are rooms like this under the whole town. People like us have been here since settlers came out West, and there are centuries old places like this on the East Coast.

AMY
What the fuck are you doing here?

LEE
We breed the boogeymen you tell stories about.

They all look at each other.

LEE
(to Amy)
That's what you want to do, right? Investigative journalism? True crime? You're writing about us.
(MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)

Richard Ramirez, Charles Manson,
Black Dahlia... as far back as HH
Holmes.

JOLENE

What are you talking about--

LEE

We exist to nudge culture in
whatever direction we see fit. We
cull the population, instill fear
in the public, create mythologies -
we control popular culture.

Shannon laughs.

LEE

Go ahead and laugh. Amy knows. Mass
murderers are woven into the
history of this country, only a
degree or two removed from every
major historical event. And their
mythologies have shaped us since
before the constitution.

Amy is white as a sheet, putting this together.

LEE

The serial killer defined America,
and we perfected the serial killer.

Jolene and Shannon aren't convinced, but thoroughly creeped
out. Amy is pale. None of them notice the low rumble coming
from outside the room. Lee laughs to himself.

LEE

It doesn't fucking matter anyway.
None of us are getting out of here.
(to Amy)
Your boyfriend either.

Amy looks up at him, rage in her eyes. Jolene notices the
sound.

SHANNON

Why should we be so worried?
There's three of us, and you have a
hole in your shoulder and half a
face.

JOLENE

...what is that?

LEE

It's not me you should be worried about.

The sound grows louder, but it seems to be all around. Jolene gets up and looks in the bathroom. Shannon and Amy crane their heads around to see.

AMY

What's going on?

The bathtub exhales like a metro bus and starts lifting up... revealing another *secret staircase*.

Jolene stumbles back and the girls watch as three young men emerge from the floor - they're dressed in wrap-around sunglasses and matching polo tees, back the blue tattoos on their forearms. Fucking Proud Boy scum. Amy recognizes them from town. Behind them is Edie the waitress. Lee is laughing maniacally on the floor.

The boys each whip out axes. Edie has a butcher's knife. Jolene readies her scalpel. Amy grabs Lee's machete. Shannon points the shotgun at them. Jake hangs back, holding his side and bleeding profusely.

A moment of calm - save for Lee's laughing - before chaos erupts.

The Proud Boys rush the girls. Shannon fires off her last two shells, knocking one Boy off his feet. Lee's head is stepped on and caved in as soon as the melee begins.

Jolene and Amy go to work on the other two Boys, Edie hanging back. Jolene manages to down her guy, then goes to help Amy.

Edie squares off with Shannon and manages to knock her down. She turns her attention to Jake, and buries her knife in his neck. She looks up and sees the tide of the fight turning though, and retreats to the bathtub.

Jolene helps Amy wrestle off her Proud Boys.

JOLENE

(to Amy)

I got him, follow her!

She cracks her guy in the jaw as Amy runs after Edie. Shannon gets up and walks over to the downed MAGA goon and kicks him in the head, splattering blood on the wall.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - NIGHT

Amy chases Edie down the stairs and around a couple corners, arriving at what seems to be an Armory.

ARMORY

Edie is at a weapon rack, pulling down a crossbow. Amy rushes her and manages to grab a hold before Edie can fire. They wrestle for a moment before Amy gets control and fires a bolt through Edie's head. Amy's stands over her corpse, heaving.

JOLENE (O.S.)

Amy! You okay?!

SHANNON (O.S.)

Where are you, girl?

AMY

I'm down here!

She looks around the walls, weapons everywhere. The girls arrive and switch on more lights, revealing a room similar to Jolene's, but not for storage... it's Lily's armory. There's another door across the room, and a seemingly infinite tunnel with rails and a mine cart. The girls are in awe.

AMY

Where are we?

SHANNON

We must be under the lobby.

JOLENE

And where the fuck does *that* go?

UNDER LOBBY

They cross over to the other room and explore. There's a wall of photos, Employee of the Month style, like upstairs. Every one is of Lily. They go back decades, to her as a young woman.

JOLENE

Jesus Christ.

She turns around, the wall of Lily smiling behind her. On the wall across, there's a map of the desert surrounding the motel, with X's all over the open space.

JOLENE

Look...

AMY
 Fuckface said she was a janitor...
 has she been burying bodies all
 over the desert?

Jolene runs her hand over a fresh X on the map, distraught.

Shannon kicks a bodybag next to a mine cart, then realizes what it is and jumps back.

SHANNON
 Fuck!

AMY
 The bodies must be coming in carts
 from down the tunnel...

JOLENE
 So what's down the tunnel?

AMY
 The only thing that direction is
 the town...

SHANNON
 Must be how those little shitheads
 got here.

MOMENTS LATER

The girls all sit down on the floor, exhausted.

JOLENE
 I mean...

AMY
 Yeah...

JOLENE
 How the fuck did we end up here.

AMY
 We were just driving along...
 having a stupid fight.

JOLENE
 I mean, we stumbled on a *centuries*
old murder-cult. Honestly.

They all take it in. Amy looks at the walls and spots a map of the tunnel system. The tunnel beside them leads to the Sheriff station. Light bulb.

AMY

This tunnel leads to the station.
David...

Jolene and Shannon both look up, at each other, at Amy.

SHANNON

I'll tell you something, darlin's.
Without my Todd here, I don't have
much of anything to go back to.
Now, I'm sure I could start a new
life somewhere, find some man that
rubs my feet, and live a couple
dozen more years.

They're hanging on her words.

SHANNON

But right now, that's a far second
to taking that mine cart into the
lion's den and taking out as many
of these motherfuckers as I can
before they get me. A *far* second.

JOLENE

Fuck yeah.

AMY

We rescue him, or die trying?

SHANNON

That's what I'm thinking.

They all look at each other in agreement.

JOLENE

I'm really glad I met you guys.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- The girls gear up, grabbing whatever weapons they can
carry. Shannon loads the shotgun, looks over at Jolene as she
loads a revolver.

SHANNON

You ever fired one of those before?

- Jolene finishes loading the gun, spins the chamber, and
whips it closed in an impressive display. She cocks it and
looks down the barrel.

JOLENE

Once or twice.

- Shannon is impressed.

- They finishing gearing up and start getting the mine cart free. Shannon and Jolene look over at Amy as she pauses, runs to the wall, and grabs a single hand grenade.

AMY
...might come in handy.

The girls lift an occupied body bag from the cart and pile in. They make their way down the tunnel, using their phones as flash lights.

INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

A dim light in the distance gets closer and brighter. They finally emerge in another basement, this one is much bigger.

INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

A cinderblock lined room, with a single stainless steel table in the center. A drainage rut runs to the tunnel, a pile of occupied body bags lean against a wall near the tunnel.

SHANNON
What the fuck...

The girls look around as they walk toward the only set of doors, across the room.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hall goes on and on, it's lined with doors with small windows. Each door leads to a staircase. As they make their way up the hall, they read the plaques by the doors...

JOLENE
"Charlie's Auto..."

SHANNON
"Edie's Diner..."

AMY
"Secret Staircase Books..." Guys,
these are all businesses from the
town. They must lead up to them.

AMY
Jesus Christ. The whole town is
connected.

Further up, there are doors that lead straight to various rooms... a dojo, a firing range, class rooms...

SHANNON
Shit, he wasn't kidding.

JOLENE
These... are all for training?

AMY
Do you hear that?

They make their way up to the doors and peek inside.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Inside is a small auditorium, like in a middle school. The seats are packed with the townspeople, and on stage are Smith and West. They're giving some sort of presentation.

SHERIFF WEST
--Now tonight, we have a very
special guest. Some of you may have
seen him around town or up at the
station...

Smith dips offstage for a moment, then returns pushing a hooded figure in a wheel chair.

SHERIFF WEST
Our very good friend, DAVID...
something.

Smith whips the hood off and it is indeed, David.

Peeking through the door, Amy's face sinks.

DEPUTY SMITH
Say hi to everyone, big guy!

David looks around the room in horror, making sounds behind his duct taped mouth. Smith slaps him on the back.

DEPUTY SMITH
There you go, good job bud.

West laughs to himself, watching Smith toy with David.

SHERIFF WEST
Alright, tonight we're gonna have a
bit of a demonstration with knives,
led, of course, by our resident
expert, Rudy. C'mon up here Rudy,
let's get started.

We recognize the balding, middle aged man with a bad combover and a bowling jersey who stands up in the aisle and ROCKETS a knife at David - it plants itself in the arm of the wheel chair, an inch from his arm. The crowd erupts in applause as he makes his way up. This is RUDY (55).

Across the room, the girls use the applause to slip inside unnoticed. They start working their way around the back the room, prepping their weapons.

RUDY

Now, the thing you want to remember
about cutting open a human body
is--

SHERIFF WEST

HEY!

Sheriff West cuts him off, standing up and pointing directly at the girls. Everyone in the room turns around. They freeze.

Smith hits a switch on the side of the stage and the doors to the room slam shut and lock.

SHERIFF WEST

Don't let them leave.

The girls look at each other for a moment.

Smith and West jump off the stage and rush towards them. Amy pulls the pin on her grenade... and tosses it into the middle of the seating area.

BLAM

Body parts erupt out of the seats. Smith's face is blown off. West is knocked back into a wall, and slumps down to the floor.

A breath after the blast - a handful of townspeople are still alive - including the FLORIST, the SHOP BOY, and the YOUNG MAN/GRANNY team. The girls run to the stage, towards David. Amy hugs him.

AMY

Are you okay?

DAVID

Yeah, I think so.

JOLENE

Good. Use this.

Jolene sticks a machete in his hand and pulls him up by his armpit. The townsfolk hit the stage and a melee erupts.

Bruised and bleeding - The Florist breaks her shears in two and wields them as dual machetes, the Shop Boy rips an American flag off the flagpole and whips it around like a Silambam staff, and the Granny - surprisingly strong - whips the Young Boy around and TOSSES him on stage, where he bounces off a wall and lands in a fighting stance. He stumbles a bit, injured from the blast.

Shannon tackles the Granny and they wrestle as Jolene blows away a few stragglers, including Rudy. *Click click* She runs out of ammo and tosses the gun at the Young Boy, who bats it away and roundhouses her.

David and Amy back themselves up against a door, and she tries to open the door as he deals with the Florist.

AMY

I need something to open this door!

DAVID

I'm a little tied up!

Seeing they are running out of time, Jolene and Shannon topple a shelf onto the mob, buying them some time to help David and Amy with the exit.

The Florist knocks David down and is about to deliver a killing blow, but Shannon catches her in the backswing, takes the shear out of her hand, and redirects it through her throat.

SHANNON

Never did have a green thumb.

She tosses the shear to Amy, who uses it to pry the lock handle off. Jolene kicks the Young Boy in the head, stunning him, and the all run through the open door.

JOLENE

Why are we quipping?!

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY - NIGHT

On the other side, they look around for something to barricade the door, as the townsfolk push the shelf off.

SHANNON

Break that glass and toss me the fire hose.

Shannon opens two doors on opposite sides of the hall as Jolene retrieves the hose and tosses it to her. Shannon loops the hose around the handles a few times, creating a makeshift barricade. Amy looks at her, uneasy.

SHANNON
--I know, but it'll have to do,
let's go.

They run/limp down the hall, to the nearest door. The plaque says it's for the Sheriff Station. The townsfolk struggle against the doors behind them.

DAVID
Godammit, I was just here.

They push through the door, there's a ladder on the other side. They make their way up.

West pushes to the front of the group of townies as they clear the barricade - he's pissed.

INT. SHERIFF STATION LOCKUP - NIGHT

The toilet inside the cell where David was held slowly rises up and Shannon emerges. She looks around.

SHANNON
Ugh, why always the fucking
bathroom.

She pulls herself out and helps Amy and David and Jolene after her.

JOLENE
Can we lock this?

SHANNON
They'll just go up a hatch next
building over.

JOLENE
It'll buy us some time.

DAVID
Do we have a way out of the town?

They think. Amy looks at West's table outside the cell and spots a bottle of vodka.

AMY
I can buy us some more time.

She rushes over and grabs the bottle. The mob gets closer.

SHANNON

You better hurry.

Amy tears a nearby Sheriff's uniform, grabs the bottle and sticks the rag inside. Jolene sees what she's doing and tosses her a lighter. Amy lights it up.

AMY

Badass pun.

She drops the Molotov Cocktail down the hatch - it *THUNKS* into West's head, but doesn't break until it hits the ground below, engulfing the rest of the townsfolk in flames.

She slams the hatch shut, muffling the screams from below.

JOLENE

Did you just say "badass pun"?

AMY

It's a placeholder.

SHANNON

You guys are weird.

DAVID

Guys... do we have a car?

SHANNON

What about yours? Isn't it at the shop?

AMY

I doubt they actually fixed it.

JOLENE

Were there other cars there? They must have the keys around.

DAVID

That sounds good.

SHANNON

Okay, so we get out of here, grab some guns on the way? Head to the Auto Body, get a car...

As she recites the plan, the toilet hatch starts to slowly lift up - no one notices. It finally tips over and *BANGS* into the ground beside it.

Everyone spins around - West emerges from the hatch groaning with his last ounce of adrenaline, and *LUNGES* at them.

Thinking fast, Jolene pulls David and Amy back out of the cell, and Shannon slams the door on West - but he manages to get his hand in the jamb.

The heavy cell door crushes his hand, but keeps it from shutting. It bounces back open and he grabs Amy with his good hand and pulls her into the cell, closing the door and locking them inside together, everyone else on the other side.

Amy struggles, but West handcuffs his bad arm to her and starts choking her, laughing as he does it.

JOLENE

There have to be keys for the door
in here somewhere!

Jolene, Shannon, and David try to find them as West tightens his grip, laughing hysterically.

SHERIFF WEST

Those keys you're looking for?
They're right here on my belt.

David grabs the bars, at a loss, as Jolene gets to work trying to pick the lock. West laughs maniacally as he teeters at the edge of the trap door, draining the life from Amy.

DAVID

Hurry! He's killing her!

JOLENE

I'm trying!

Amy concentrates, centering herself. She breathes deep and musters enough strength to shift her weight and push herself and West backwards, knocking him into the hatch.

Amy is able to stay on the ground, but West - who is a solid 270 pounds - dangles from her arm, over the fire. He laughs as he hangs there. We hear her arm POP out of socket, the cuff cuts into her wrist. She screams.

SHERIFF WEST

C'mon sweetie, just let go. We'll
do it together.

Amy struggles futilely, he's too heavy. Shannon and David look on in horror as Jolene tries to pick the lock. Amy is slipping.

Desperate, Amy spots a pneumatic lift button for the heavy trap door and gets an idea.

She painstakingly maneuvers herself to the wall, plants her feet, lets herself drop a little to reach it, breathes deep once more, and hits the button.

The door closes not very quickly, but steadily - West realizes what she's doing and screams.

SHERIFF WEST

W-what, are you nuts? NO

Amy screams with him as the door closes on her wrist, just above the cuffs, crushing her bones without hesitating and eventually SEVERING her hand completely.

West screams as he tumbles down the shaft to his death.

Amy rolls over, lying on the floor and breathing heavily, holding her bloody stump. Jolene manages to pick the lock and rushes over to her as David grabs a first aid kit and follows. Shannon takes off through the opposite door.

Amy struggles to keep her eyes open as the Jolene and David tend to her - the room gets blurry, she blinks slowly and we go to black with her--

FADE TO BLACK, THEN:

MOMENTS LATER

Shannon comes back in with keys, hurrying everyone out, they lift Amy up.

FADE TO BLACK, THEN:

MOMENTS LATER

They load Amy into a police cruiser and shut the door, she rests her head on Shannon's lap.

FADE TO BLACK, THEN:

MOMENTS LATER

Amy looks around the car, half conscious, Jolene drives, David is shotgun, looking at her, trying to keep her calm.

AMY

David...

DAVID

Amy, you're going to be okay, just hang in there.

AMY
If I live...

DAVID
You're going to, baby, and this is
going to make a hell of a book--

AMY
We are totally--

DAVID
Yeah, I know, just--

AMY
...breaking up.

Her eyes close again, and she passes out.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT - LATER

The police cruiser RACES down the otherwise quiet highway,
sirens painting the road red and blue.

FADE TO BLACK.

UNDER CREDITS:

INT. BARNES AND NOBLE - DAY

Amy smiles and takes questions from a large crowd, gathered
for a book reading. Posters on either side of her promote her
book, "*How I Escaped America's Murder Cult*". She's a hit.

INT. ROCK CLUB - NIGHT

A band closes out a ripping set to a fanatical crowd. We
weave through the members as they leave the stage for the
green room, up the stairs, and to the office, where David
sighs heavily and enters numbers into an excel spreadsheet.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

A sleepy town is off in the distance, full moon sitting above
it. We pull back as two figures enter from opposite sides of
the frame - they take a few steps forward and stop.

One flicks open a lighter and brings it to her mouth to light
a cigarette. It's Shannon. She exhales and passes the
cigarette to reveal Jolene. Shannon snaps the lighter closed.

Jolene takes a drag and the women resuming walking towards
the town, each with an arsenal strapped to their backs,
carrying gas cans.