

THE TERMITE

Written by
Nicholas Walsh

nikolangelo@icloud.com
515-570-3580

SUPER: ECUADOR

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

A super-organism of oozing black army ants hangs from a tree branch like a ton of grapes. A wooden hoop with a yawning gunny sack attached to it slowly rises up and over it.

A machete-wielding hand chops it from the branch. The colony drops into the sack, which swings over on a stick to an open barrel cinched to the side of a BURRO.

A PAISANO dips the bulging gunny sack into the barrel and releases it. He stuffs the rest of the barrel with coca leaves, then covers it with a metal lid. The burro BRAYS.

INT. EXCAVATION HOLE - DAY

SQUEAK! SQUEAK!... The sound of pulleys as the bone-white, quirky face of a MONSTROUS TERMITE pops up from below the screen frame, stares blankly at us, then is jerked upwards out of the frame, revealing the upturned faces of:

CHINCO DIABLO (30s), a short, Mario-looking Latino sporting a red eye patch with a blue iris hand-scribbled on it, and

GUANO BORDELLO (30s), a similarly short Latino, who wears a thick yellow rug flipped over his ears.

EXT. PRE-INCAN PYRAMID - CONTINUOUS

Encased with trees, entangled roots, vines. A cleared side exposes the excavation hole with a wooden gantry over it.

PAISANOS pull on the pulley ropes as a twelve-foot-long, petrified termite rises out of the hole.

MINUTES LATER

Paisanos lower the termite on a sledge down the 50-degree slope with a rope, towards a camouflaged tent below.

In the f.g., DEWEY MOODY (50s), an archaeologist and educated braggadocio, wearing khaki and pith helmet, leans out from behind a tree. He racks his Glock and moves out.

INT. EXCAVATION HOLE - CONTINUOUS

Chinco's eye shines with greed as he tenderly scoops up a glowing emerald Egg -- the size of big yam. He raises it into the light. A shadow spreads over it. Chinco looks up at a Glock pointed down at his face.

DEWEY
That belongs to me.

CHINCO
Who are you?

DEWEY
Quick, toss it up. Where's the Key?

CHINCO
What key?

Threatening yells from o.s., then gunfire: BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
Dewey turns, looks o.s., fires: BLAM! Disappears.

CHINCO
(to Guano)
Rápido!
(hands off the egg)
Stick it in your crotch. I'll do
the talking.

GUANO
Won't it look too big on me?

CHINCO
Give it here.

Chinco snatches it back, starts to cram it into his crotch as shadows spread over them. They look up. GOONS look down. Chinco chuckles nervously as he holds forth the egg.

CHINCO
Look what we found. We show it to
Señor Marvin, no?

INT. CAMOUFLAGED TENT - DAY

A PAISANO ARTISAN sweatshop processing emerald stones. TWO PAISANOS push a gurney with the termite on it into a cubicle.

MARVIN (50s), a large Teutonic man clad in khaki, sits before a laptop monitor Skyping with his narcissistic boss EL TRIUNFO (60's), whose sweep of platinum hair shades his angry forehead like a ball cap bill.

The paisanos park the gurney by the table. Marvin snaps a gesture at them to leave. They scurry out.

EL TRIUNFO
(on monitor; chomping on a
cigar)
Well, looky that. The mother of all
termites. Ultra-top secret on this,
Marvin. You know what to do.

MARVIN

I'll line them up when we're done,
Jeffe. You wanna have a go at them?

EL TRIUNFO

What kind of numb-scull question is
that? Of course I do.

The ground shakes. Marvin staggers, grabs the gurney. The
laptop jumps off the table.

EL TRIUNFO (O.S.)

(shouting; far away)

What's happening there?...Answer
me. Marvin?

The quake stops. Marvin sets the laptop back on the table,
flips open the lid. El Triunfo's face is back on the screen.

EL TRIUNFO

What happened?

MARVIN

Felt like an earthquake, Jeffe.

EL TRIUNFO

It's starting. We're running out of
time. We need to find...

CHINCO/GUANO (O.S.)

Señor Marvin. Señor Marvin. Señor
Marvin. Señor Marvin.

EL TRIUNFO

How dare they barge in when I'm
talking. Hook me up to the remote
sniper rifle and send 'em running.

Chinco and Guano run in.

CHINCO

Señor Marvin. Look!

Chinco holds forth the emerald egg. Marvin's face shines with
lust as he lifts it tenderly from Chinco's hand.

CHINCO

We found it in the termite's nest.

EL TRIUNFO

Aha! You found it! Bring it closer.

Marvin presents it to the monitor. A lone ant crawls on it.

EL TRIUNFO

Ha-ha! The Incan legend is true. By
gawd almighty, I am the chosen one.

Where's the Key that suppose to be
with it...WHAT!
(turns away, annoyed)
This better be damn good.

Somebody urgently murmurs o.s. El Triunfo turns back to us.

EL TRIUNFO
Get out of there, now! The Army's
surrounding you. Grab the emeralds.
Guard my Egg with your life. Move!

Marvin slams the lid shut on the computer.

MARVIN
(to Chinco and Guano)
Here!

He tosses two fat satchels at them, puts the emerald egg into
another, grabs the computer, runs out with them.

MARVIN
Follow me! Let's go!

He runs off. Chinco and Guano hesitate, think about it, then
see SOLDIERS in vehicles in the b.g. roaring towards them.

EXT. EL TRIUNFO'S HELICOPTER - DAY

Chinco and Guano waddle up to the open bay door, pooped.
Marvin, in the pilot's seat, glares angrily at them.

MARVIN
Let's go, you numbskulls! Throw the
bags on! Vamanos!

Chinco and Guano heft the satchels on board as the helicopter
lifts off. They grab on, desperately hanging on as they claw
aboard the rising craft as bullets ricochet around them.

EXT. THREE HELICOPTERS FLYING - DAY

Two "Policia Nacional" helicopter gunships chase El Triunfo's
helicopter through narrow, scenic gorges.

INT. EL TRIUNFO'S HELICOPTER - DAY

Treetops whiz by through the open bay door. Chinco and Guano
hug the satchels, shivering from their boarding ordeal.

EXT. HELICOPTER GUNSHIP #1 - DAY

Fires a missile.

INT. EL TRIUNFO'S HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

Marvin sees it; rams the joystick to the side.

The bay floor tips. Chinco slams against the bulkhead. Guano slides out the open door, grabs the frame by his fingertips.

The two satchels slide past him, tumble into the treetops.

EXT. EL TRIUNFO'S HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

Guano hanging out, bug-eyed with terror. He ducks as the missile shrieks by. Its fin rips the rug from his head.

INT. EL TRIUNFO'S HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

BOOM! Fire lights up the bay door opening, blows Guano back inside as the bay levels out. He collapses against the bulkhead, stupefied. Feels his sweaty bald head.

GUANO

Dios mio. My brains. They're
leaking! Hail Mary, full of...

CHINCO

Guano! No worry. It's sweat.

EXT. STEEP TROPICAL HILL - CONTINUOUS

El Triunfo's helicopter takes cover behind the hill and hovers there. The gunships roar into view from opposite sides of the hill and hover.

EXT. HELICOPTER GUNSHIP #1 - CONTINUOUS

Fires a missile.

EXT. HELICOPTER GUNSHIP #2 - SAME

Fires a missile.

EXT. THREE HELICOPTERS HOVERING - CONTINUOUS

El Triunfo's helicopter rises up. The missiles streak by underneath, narrowly missing one another.

KABOOM! KABOOM! The two gunships evaporate into orange shrapnel. El Triunfo's helicopter, momentarily engulfed, falls away minus a tail rotor; begins to spin.

INT. EL TRIUNFO'S HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

The bay spins. Chinco and Guano cross themselves repeatedly, mumble urgent pleas to God.

MARVIN (O.S.)
 Grab your balls! We're going down!
 Aaaaaaah!

EXT. EL TRIUNFO'S HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

Thrashes through the tree canopy, spinning. The tail section snaps off. The main rotor blades whirl away. The helicopter belly flops onto the jungle floor. WHUMP!

A brief squall of leaves, limbs, and helicopter pieces, then: BAM! A rotor blade pierces the fuselage like an arrow.

INT. EL TRIUNFO'S HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

Chinco and Guano are sprawled against the bulkhead frozen in mid signing as they stare down at the rotor blade buried in the deck between Chinco's splayed legs.

CHINCO
 Yikes! We're on fire!

They slap at the tiny tongues of flames on each other and put them out.

A fire springs to life in the cockpit. Chinco goes over, pulls Marvin back. Marvin's face covered in blood and soot, eyes glazed. Chinco lets go. Marvin slumps forward.

CHINCO
 Es muerto.

Chinco makes a rapid sign of the cross as he mumbles a quick prayer over him, then grabs up Marvin's satchel.

GUANO
 Arriba! It's going to kaboom!

They leap out of the bay door and run into the jungle.

EXT. AMAZON JUNGLE - DAY

Chinco mows through the dense jungle with his machete. Guano waddles after him hugging the satchel.

KABOOM! A fiery cloud shoots into the sky behind them.

LATER - SAME DAY

Chinco tiredly whacks at the jungle undergrowth. Guano waits miserably behind slapping mosquitoes on his bald head.

The ROARING SOUND OF A PLANE TAKING OFF gets their attention.

Chinco whacks ahead a few feet, pushes a frond aside to see:

A jungle airport; the main concourse dead ahead.

CHINCO

Aja! I know where we can hide the
Egg for now. Come on, Guano.

We see the paisano park his burro and begin to untie the barrel of ants at the entrance.

INT. AIRPORT CONCOURSE - DAY

A CUSTOMS AGENT inspects the paisano's ant barrel at the "Customs Counter."

Chinco and Guano enter, cautiously veer away from TWO STROLLING FEDERALES. Chinco points up to the mezzanine.

MEZZANINE

Chinco finds a locker with a key in it. He opens it.

GUANO

(giggling)
Let me hold it otra vez.

Chinco tips the satchel. The egg tumbles out. He grabs for it, juggles it. Guano grabs for it, fumbles it.

GUANO/CHINCO

No, no, no, nooooo!...

The egg leaps over the mezzanine railing as Chinco and Guano fall against it.

They gape down in utter horror, watch the customs agent below turn to pick up the barrel lid as the egg PLOPS into the open barrel. The agent replaces the lid, secures it.

Chinco and Guano race down the mezzanine stairs.

CUSTOMS COUNTER

The paisano fills out an address label he copies from a piece of paper. He hands the label to the customs agent.

Across the lobby, Chingo and Guano lean intimately against the wall, sliding looks at the paisano as he scrunches the paper and tosses it into a wastebasket.

INT. AIRPORT OBSERVATORY - DAY

Chingo and Guano observe the crate being loaded into the plane. Chingo glances down at the crumpled scrap of paper in his hand, slips it into his shirt pocket.

Across the room, Dewey Moody watches them.

SUPER: NEW YORK CITY

INT. JEFF'S STUDIO - DAY

Finished works of glass busts filled with colored sand sit on risers amongst the untidy, liquor bottle strewn studio: Obama, Warhol, Picasso, Hillary, Ali, Lincoln, Clint, Brando, Trump, and Jennifer--Jeff's recent ex-girlfriend.

A glass sculptor's tools-of-the-trade are evident. A kitchenette and living area, with leather couch and chair, occupy one end of the studio.

JEFF FOREMEN (30), unshaven, hair in a pony tail, is power-drilling tiny holes into a glass shell of a six-foot-plus man statue on a divided workbench.

He stops to look over his work, takes sip a whiskey, tilts a bit and farts.

JEFF

Aah. The ease of living alone.

A cell phone CHIMES. Jeff searches frantically on his person, sees it on the floor, picks it up.

JEFF

Hello?... Hola, Jose... You got my ants?... I've been worried sick they wouldn't get here in time for my show... This week?... Great! Call me. Mil gracias, Jose. Ciao.

He pockets the phone, breathes a sigh of happy relief.

An annoying but familiar RAP on the door. Jeff squeezes his eyes shut in pain. He miserably calls out:

JEFF

Come in.

JENNIFER (29) charges in. She's a cold, wannabe-famous dancer/actor, struggling with her surging weight. Her young boyfriend, TODD (26), a yuppie, is at her side.

JENNIFER
(pointing dramatically)
That couch and chair. Mine.

JEFF
Damn, Jen, can't you leave me with something to remember you by? I'm kidding, of course.

JENNIFER
When were you ever serious.
(indicates old wall TV)
You can keep the TV. I got a big screen now, thanks to Todd here.

Todd grins smugly, Jeff could give a shit.

JEFF
Ain't that thoughtful of Todd.

JENNIFER
The silverware!

She brushes past him, goes over to the kitchenette.

JEFF
The silverware, too? Jeez, you really know how to rape a guy when he's down. At least, leave the chopsticks so I can eat dog food.

Todd sneers at Jeff.

TODD
So, you do temp work as a security guard at Walmart, huh? A brain dead job, I would think.

Jeff watches Jennifer remove the silverware box from the cupboard drawer and sort through it. He turns to Todd.

JEFF
You think you've got it made, don't you, Todd? Just wait.

He gets in Todd's face and makes an aggressive sucking sound.

JEFF
Hear that? That's the sound of her sucking money from your pocket. You'll see. Then "brain dead" at Walmart will look like a step up.

Jennifer returns carrying the silverware box.

JENNIFER
Leave Todd alone. There's a spoon
missing. Where is it?

JEFF
It ran away with the dish.

He fakes a laugh to rub it in. Jennifer glares at him.

JENNIFER
That's not funny. Find it! I'm
stopping by Friday to pick up my
bust. You made it for me. Remember?
So, it belongs to me.

JEFF
Be my guest. It doesn't fit with my
celebrity collection anyway.

JENNIFER
Smart ass. See if I remember you
when I become famous. By the way,
movers will be here Saturday to
pick up the furniture. So, be here.
(looks beyond Jeff)
What's that?

She strides over to a colorful urn on the workbench.

JENNIFER
You keeping something from me?

She raises the lid, peeks in, slams the lid back down.

JENNIFER
Ants! You know I'm allergic to
ants. Why didn't you tell me?

JEFF
Did I tell you to open it?

Her face sours as she rummages through her purse, pulls out a
tissue and detonates a sneeze into it. AAH-CHOOO!

JENNIFER
You bastard...CHOOO! Putting ants
in statues is the stupidest idea I
ever heard. AAH CHOOO!

She turns to Todd, grabs him by the arm.

JENNIFER
Come on, Todd. Let's go. CHOOO!

They hurry out. Jeff slams the door shut behind them. From the hallway o.s.--CHOO! AAH-CHOOOO!...

JEFF

Bitch.

He grabs a mallet from the workbench, stomps over to the bust of Jennifer, glares at it, then hammers it to smithereens.

He drops to his knees, sighs--exorcism complete.

EXT. MUSEUM OF MODERN ART [MOMA] - DAY

Jeff shuffles up the steps in preoccupied thought. He's wearing his Walmart security guard shirt. He enters.

INT. MUSEUM OF MODERN ART [MOMA] - DAY

Jeff approaches a door that says: "Museum Director."

INT. MUSEUM DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

WENDY FOX (28), athletic, tanned, sashays across the room in her skimpy outfit, unlocks and opens the door to leave.

Jeff falls into the room as he grabs for the retreating doorknob. Wendy catches him. He straightens up.

JEFF

Oops. Sorry. Ah, thanks.

Wendy smiles.

WENDY

No problema. Anytime.

Jeff likes what he sees as she closes the door behind her.

He approaches the Director's desk. The DIRECTOR (40ish) stands with his back to Jeff, desperately tugging his pants. He adjusts his tie, turns to Jeff red-faced, offers his hand.

DIRECTOR

Hey, Jeff! How's that exhibition of yours coming along? Gonna be ready?

JEFF

It's coming.

They shake hands. The Director indicates a chair.

DIRECTOR
Have a seat. We're looking forward
to exhibiting your sand sculptures.

They sit.

JEFF
Yeah. About that. Umm. How often do
you spray for bugs?

DIRECTOR
The exterminator comes around every
month and sprays. Why?

JEFF
He can't spray around my exhibit.

DIRECTOR
Why not?

JEFF
Because one of my pieces will be
filled with live ants.

DIRECTOR
Live ants?

JEFF
I'm using live ants in a piece.

DIRECTOR
Jeff, I can't allow that.

JEFF
Why not?

DIRECTOR
Well...How could a museum organize
a traveling exhibit if it has to
deal with live critters? How could
it be curated and put into the
permanent collection?

JEFF
But they will be encased in glass,
no way of escaping.

DIRECTOR
No live things. Sorry, Jeff.

JEFF
It's a bio-kinetic art piece.
People will be able to touch the
glass and see the ants riffle at
their touch. It'll be a draw.

DIRECTOR

Sounds interesting, Jeff; but again, not here. You'll just have to eliminate that piece from your exhibit. Put it in a gallery or a terrarium somewhere.

JEFF

It's the focal point of my exhibit.

DIRECTOR

Why not use dead ants?

Jeff stares at him astonished.

JEFF

I'm an artist. I can't forsake my muse. You know that.

INT. MUSEUM EXHIBITION HALL - DAY

Jeff steps dejectedly out of the Director's office and mopes down the exhibition hall.

He stops by a skeptic touring group gaping at an exhibit of naked Fiberglas people and various animals in suggestive squatting positions.

He notices Wendy frowning at it. He sees opportunity.

He sidles up next to her, hands clasped behind his back.

JEFF

(staring at exhibit)
Mighty fine work, don't you think?

Wendy glances at him with a look that says, "Are you, like, nuts?" She recognizes him.

WENDY

You're the doorknob guy.

JEFF

That's me. Always reaching.

WENDY

(staring back at artwork)
The work is vulgar.

Jeff rocks on his heels as he observes philosophically.

JEFF

I think it expresses a common physiology amongst all species. Something we all have in common, wherein we are all equals, from gnats to elephants and whales.

She assesses him: dishevelled, pasty, probably broke, looking for a sugar momma--not her type, but, hey, she'll bite.

WENDY

And that would be...?

JEFF

Assholes. Nature is all about assholes. Without them, there can be no life.

WENDY

(surprised; chuckles)

An astute observation. Makes sense when you look at it that way. Are you a docent?

JEFF

No. Just your archetypal starving artist.

WENDY

(eyes his shirt)

Is wearing box store uniforms the new artist fad?

JEFF

Sometimes an artist must temporarily alter his dreams with undesirable gigs in order to live in a reality that everybody perceives as normal.

Wendy nods her head thoughtfully.

WENDY

Alter life's dreams... I like that. What kind of artist are you?

JEFF

I make glass sculptures of celebrities and fill them with colored sand for texture and highlighting. Pretty cool stuff.

WENDY

Interesting.

JEFF

Right now I'm working on a life size statue of actor John Wayne, only this time I'm using an alternative medium: Ants.

WENDY

(with sudden interest)
Ants?

JEFF

Yup. Live ants. Only I just learned from the Director that I can't exhibit it with my show.

WENDY

You have a show coming? Here?

JEFF

Yeah. Opens next month.

WENDY

Why won't he let you exhibit it?

JEFF

No live critters. Dead only. I'm pretty upset about it, to be honest. It's my best work and I can't show it.

Wendy reconsiders; he is interesting.

WENDY

Well...Maybe I can help.

JEFF

Really? How?

WENDY

I've got friends in high places. I might be able to change his mind.

JEFF

I appreciate the offer, but he won't budge.

Dzzzt! Jeff takes out his cell phone, glances at it.

JEFF

Would you...Just a sec. I have to answer this. Don't go.

He turns away; bends his ear to the phone.

JEFF
 (into phone)
 Hello?...Si, Jose...That's
 great!...Thursday?...You came
 through, amigo. Gracias. Ciao.

He puts the phone back into his pocket.

WENDY
 Sounds like good news.

JEFF
 It is. My shipment of ants is
 arriving on Thursday.

WENDY
 Really? From where?

JEFF
 Ecuador.

WENDY
 Oh? Why from Ecuador?

JEFF
 Ecuadoran army ants form a more
 cohesive colony, ideal for my
 sculpture.

WENDY
 (very impressed)
 You've done your research. I didn't
 know that.

JEFF
 You sound interested. Wanna help me
 put them in the statue?

She looks him up and down. She's not uninterested.

WENDY
 You're not one of those genius
 serial killers, are you?

JEFF
 (laughs)
 I don't think so. A genius, maybe.
 I'm Jeff.

WENDY
 Wendy.

She offers her hand; he gladly shakes it, then blurts:

JEFF
 Hi, Wendy. Wanna grab some lunch
 with me?

WENDY
I'm meeting someone.

She looks past Jeff.

WENDY
Oops. There he is now. Have to go.
Got a business card?

JEFF
Sure.

He removes a card from his billfold, hands it to her.

JEFF
Not to be nosey, but are you...

WENDY
I better go before he sees me. He's
the jealous type.

JEFF
Oh.

WENDY
But I would love to see your ants.

JEFF
Then, stop by Thursday afternoon.

WENDY
I'll see what I can do. Ta!

She sashays over to her well-heeled date, MANUEL ORTEZ (40s), Ambassador, beaming a big, white, lecherous grin. He clasps her possessively by the waist and escorts her out.

Jeff waves mechanically in the f.g., disappointed, smitten.

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

A 787 lands.

INT. GATE AREA - DAY

Chinco and Guano elbow their way through the exiting PASSENGERS. Guano now sports a blond Afro wig. They are wearing wrinkled khaki suits with open shirt collars and fake gold chains around their necks.

They break free of the crowd and run smack into the belly of JORGE (30), a tall, sullen, well-dressed Latino. TWO DOOR GOONS stand beside him.

Chinco and Guano turn and start to hurry away. Jorge snags them by the back of their collars and draws them back to him.

JORGE
El Triunfo would like to have a
word with you two. Vamanos.

The goons snare them by the armpits and haul them off.

EXT. JEFF'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Wendy, in her jogging clothes, looks at the business card she's holding, then at the building across the street. She jogs toward it. A Fed-Ex truck is parked in front.

INT. JEFF'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Jeff, now wearing a denim shirt, palms a long blowpipe with an orange bubble of molten glass on one end. He blows into it. The bubble enlarges.

He places the blowpipe perpendicularly on two steel rails next to him, rolls it with one hand and forms the bubble of glass in the cup of his smokey mittened hand. He shakes off the hot mitt, picks up the pipe and blows into it again.

A heavy-fisted knock at the door: BANG, BANG, BANG!

He sets the molten glass end of the blowpipe into the annealing furnace, turns a knob and starts for the door.

He opens it. A FED-EX GUY stands there, out of breath.

JEFF
Am I glad to see you. Come in.

The Fed-Ex guy dollies the crate in. Jeff walks over to the workbench, gestures.

JEFF
Set it here.

Fed-Ex guy sets it down. He hands Jeff a Notepad.

FED-EX GUY
Sign here.

Jeff finger-signs it.

A tapping on the open door.

WENDY (O.S.)
Knock-knock. Helloa!

Jeff spins around in surprise.

JEFF
Hey! Come on in. You couldn't have
timed it better.
(to Fed Ex guy)
Thanks.

The Fed-Ex guy passes Wendy, slams the door behind him.

JEFF
Wow! You made it. I wasn't sure you
would come.

She looks around as Jeff quickly picks up the empty liquor
bottles and dumps them into a basket.

JEFF
Welcome to my messy art cave.

She walks over to the bust of Hillary Clinton, lets her hand
flow over the face

WENDY
I'm impressed.

She sees the pile of broken glass and sand that was Jennifer.

WENDY
Looks like one fell apart.

JEFF
I'm a perfectionist. Sometimes
pieces don't come out as planned.

WENDY
(nods to the crate)
Is that the ants?

JEFF
That be them. Just arrived.
Would you like to do the honors?

Jeff hands Wendy a crowbar.

WENDY
Sure. I love opening ant crates.

She swiftly pops it off like she's done it a thousand times.

JEFF
You're pretty handy with that.

Jeff loosens the strap from around the barrel lid and lifts
it off, revealing A MOUND OF SOPORIFIC ANTS.

JEFF

There they are. Still drugged from the coca leaves...Now I have to quickly put them in this
(indicates bench)
half shell before they get active.
Wanna help?

WENDY

That's what I'm here for.

He pulls out latex gloves from a dispenser above the bench.

WENDY

So that's John Wayne.

JEFF

That's him. Here.
(offers the gloves)
Hope you're not allergic to latex.

WENDY

(takes the gloves)
Thankfully, no.

They wiggle them on.

JEFF

Okay...Just grab a double handful, carefully, like this...

He wiggles his hands around a cluster of ants and lifts them out. He turns and sets them into the open glass half-shell.

JEFF

...and transfer them to this shell.

As Jeff turns back to the barrel, we see the ants in the shell settling, exposing the emerald Egg.

Wendy carefully clams a cluster of ants, swings them over to the shell, covering the egg without noticing it.

LATER

The ants are now all heaped in the shell. Jeff and Wendy are coaxing and rounding them into the extremities.

WENDY

I've always been fascinated how they can cluster like that and not crush each other. Imagine a football pileup that big.

JEFF

It's like bricks in a wall. Add one, makes little difference to the pressure on the other individual bricks in the wall...Okay. That ought to do it.

He picks up the head end of the half-shell cover.

JEFF

Grab the feet.

Wendy lifts the feet end and they fit it over the ant-filled half shell.

Dzzzt! Dzzzt! Wendy takes her cellphone from her purse.

WENDY

Holy crap.
(taps phone)
Hey! Sorry. Running late. Be there in twenty. Okay? Bye.

She grabs her purse and turns to Jeff.

WENDY

Gotta go. It's been fascinating.

JEFF

Just when I was about to break out the wine for a celebratory toast.

Wendy peels off her gloves, tosses them onto the workbench.

WENDY

I'll stop by in the morning when I get off work, if that's okay. I'm curious to see how the colony conforms to the shell.

JEFF

Where do you work?

WENDY

Ah...I'm a hospitality hostess.

JEFF

I'll make some coffee, then.

WENDY

I like the wine idea better. Ta!

She grabs her purse, leaves. Jeff looks after her, enamored.

INT. EL TRIUNFO'S OFFICE - DAY

El Triunfo squints at the monitor screen on his desk. He moves the mouse in an ever tighter circle.

ON MONITOR SCREEN: A PEON runs for his life through a field.

ON MOUSE: El Triunfo's finger CLICKS it: BLAM!

ON MONITOR SCREEN: The fleeing man collapses.

EL TRIUNFO (O.S.)
Aha! Nailed 'im. Got any more?

VOICE ON MONITOR
That's it for today, Jefe.

BACK TO SCENE

He closes the computer lid revealing Chinco and Guano sweating bullets on the other side of the expansive mahogany desk. Their bulging eyeballs follow a SKUNK sidling across the desktop in front of them, its fluffed tail vibrating.

El Triunfo chomps viciously on a cigar as he glowers at them.

CHINCO
The Federales, they surprise us,
Jefe, and blowed up everyt'ing. Me
and Guano here...

EL TRIUNFO
I've spent a fortune looking for
this Egg that will give me the
immortal life I deserve and you two
knuckleheads lose it...

An excruciating pause as he relights his cigar.

EL TRIUNFO
Tell me again how it is that you
got away from the crash without
taking the Egg with you? Have you
no loyalty to me, or regard for
your worthless lives?

GUANO
There was fire everywhere, Jefe. We
had no time to t'ink, but only to
escape with our, ah, worthless
lives. The pilot, he got cooked.

EL TRIUNFO
I had my men scour the wreck site.
They found no emeralds or Egg. You
sure you didn't take them?

Chinco and Guano nearly shake their heads off.

CHINCO
Oh, no, Jefe. Absolutamente. They
all slide-ed into the jungle just
before we crashed.

EL TRIUNFO
You sure of this?

Chinco and Guano nearly nod their heads off.

CHINCO/GUANO
Si, si, si, si....

El Triunfo opens the computer lid back up.

EL TRIUNFO
Alright. You can go now.

Chinco and Guano look at each other as if they've been
granted a reprieve from execution.

GUANO
We can?

CHINCO
(nudges Guano)
We will go now. Gracias, Jefe.

GUANO
Ditto, Jefe.

They turn and walk stiffly away.

EL TRIUNFO
Wait! Turn around.

They freeze, gulp down hard as they stare at a plaque on the
wall in front of them that reads: "Your Life Begins or Ends
Here. Up to You."

They turn slowly around, their faces pinched, *visualising the
bullet about to enter their brains.*

EL TRIUNFO
Here!

He tosses a roll of twenties. Chinco makes a nervous catch.

EL TRIUNFO
Enjoy your stay in New York City.
I'll be in touch.

CHINCO/GUANO
 Gracias, Jefe./Gracias. Usted es un
 gran hombre./Viva El Triunfo!

Jorge leers at Chinco and Guano as they smugly exit the room.
 He turns to El Triunfo.

JORGE
 You don't really believe those
 yahoos, do you, Jefe?

EL TRIUNFO
 Of course not, you idiot! Do I look
 stupid? Tail 'em! Find that Egg, or
 I'll put you in my shooting scope.

Jorge and his two goons scurry out.

INT. JEFF'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Jeff wrestles the six-foot-five, ant-filled statue of John
 Wayne upright onto a riser, steps back, admires it.

EXT. NYC SIDEWALK - DAY

Chinco and Guano stop, huddle. Chinco snaps the rubber band
 from around the money wad and fans it out revealing a twenty
 wrapped around a wad of ones.

CHINCO
 What? El Jeffe es un cheapo.

GUANO
 He don't t'ink too much of us,
 Chinco. I heard he wipes his culo
 with hundred-dollar bills.

CHINCO
 (snickers)
 He tricked us, but we tricked him
 more better.

GUANO
 Si. Not too many peoples walk out
 of there alive.

CHINCO
 All we have to do is get the egg
 and we'll be rich and live forever.
 (puts arm around Guano)
 Come on, Guano, let's get a taco.

INT. JEFF'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jeff is passed out under a lit desk lamp on the worktable, his head nestled in his folded arms near an empty drink.

We hear the studio door being jimmied. It creaks open. Chinco and Guano enter. Guano shines his flashlight into the barrel.

GUANO

Nada.

They sneak up behind Jeff. Chinco nervously pokes a stun gun into Jeff's ribs. Jeff jerks up, startled; turns to Chinco.

CHINCO

The Egg! Where it is, hombre?

JEFF

Egg? What egg?

CHINCO

The Egg in the ants barrel.

Jeff grabs for the stun gun, but connects with it. DZZZAAP! He topples to the floor, convulsing.

Chinco backs away in horror, bumps into something. He slowly turns to face the John Wayne statue, screams, reacts, pokes at it with the stun gun: DZZZAAP! DZZZAAP! DZZZAAP!...

He falls backward in terror as wiry arcs of light chase each other around the statue, POPPING, SNAPPING, shunting spirals of charged electrons up and down, head to toe.

The statue glows electric blue to orange, then a potchy lava red as the ants flatten and coalesce against the glass shell. An ovate object in its chest pulses green light.

The statue vibrates on the hollow riser, like a jackhammer, the noise ear splitting as it beats faster and faster.

The lamp shatters onto the floor. The busts of Warhol and Picasso, then Hillary, Obama, Lincoln, Clint, Brando, Trump crash to the floor into heaps of sand and broken glass.

Chinco and Guano, on their knees, furiously cross themselves.

KABOOM! SWOOSH! Statue detonates a blizzard of glass dust.

We see the vague silhouettes of Chinco and Guano stumble over each other as they flee the studio, screaming.

GUANO/CHINCO

El Diablo!/El Diablo!...

INT. JEFF'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

The studio is shrouded in white dust. A RAP on the door.

JEFF (O.S.)
Come in.

Wendy bounces in with a bottle of wine, then stops in her tracks and gapes at an anaemic zombie resembling Jeff staring at her with wild-eyed, contained excitement.

We notice her left eye is bruised as she scans the place.

WENDY
What's with all the white powder everywhere? It's all over you, too.

JEFF
Silica dust. I was broken into last night and got tased, then the strangest thing happened.

WENDY
And that's not strange?

She notices the smashed statuary. Ali, the lone surviving bust, victorious. She casts her eyes to the workbench.

WENDY
Your artwork is all destroyed and your statue of the Duke is gone, and you're not pissed?

JEFF
Come here. You might want to put the bottle down for a sec.

She gives him a funny look, sets the bottle on the workbench, follows him around the partition.

A granular, brown-skin, bald-headed JOHN WAYNE sits on the workbench, swinging his feet, engrossed fast-forwarding "True Grit" on the wall-mounted TV. He mumbles the fast-forwarding words while absorbing a tube sock into his mouth.

Wendy gawks in disbelief. Jeff lets her take it in.

JEFF
I was stunned but could see they tased him, too, multiple times; then somehow, his glass shell obliterated and he came to life.

Wendy reaches out to touch the ant man, changes her mind.

WENDY
Is this some kind of frat joke?

JEFF
Say "Hi, Duke."

She gives Jeff a dubious look, then turns to John Wayne.

WENDY
Hi, there...er...Duke.

John Wayne turns to Wendy, tube sock dangling from his mouth.

JOHN WAYNE
(John Wayne's voice fast-
forward)
Hiya, Penguin. Good to meet cha.

Wendy shrieks. John Wayne shrieks. Wendy recoils, then draws closer and tentatively presses a finger into John Wayne.

WENDY
Egads! He's real. H-How...

JEFF
He loves John Wayne, Eastwood and Schwarzenegger movies...and nature shows. He's memorized them all by fast forwarding through them...And he can walk... Watch this.

Jeff takes John Wayne by the hand and walks him in a circle. As John Wayne goes around, his face remains fixed on Wendy and gradually morphs into her face.

WENDY
(staring at John Wayne)
Is that my face?

JEFF
He did it to me, too. Maybe he's trying on faces. Look! He's changing back again.

John Wayne's Wendy face morphs back into John Wayne's. Jeff leads him back to the bench.

WENDY
I'm totally blown away. What else does he do?

JEFF
Eat. He's like a goat. He's already eaten all my plants and food crumbs from the bench, the cobwebs, three paint brushes and now my socks.

WENDY
Wow! This puts a whole new slant on my thesis.

JEFF

Thesis?

WENDY

Yeah. I'm working on a masters degree in entomology. My thesis is on the affect of a colony on individual ant behavior. That's why I'm so interested in your project.

Jeff is surprised and pleased, and a tad disappointed.

JEFF

No kidding? What a coincidence. And here I thought it was me that interested you.

WENDY

Just to let you know, I'm taking a break from serious relationships right now to enjoy my freedom.

JEFF

So that guy you met at...

WENDY

A client.

JEFF

I see...

Jeff notices her bruised eye for the first time.

JEFF

What happened to your eye?

WENDY

I hit the faucet brushing my teeth.

JEFF

You should put some ice on that. Let me get you some.

WENDY

Don't bother. I'm okay. Did you see who Tased you?

JEFF

They were a couple of short guys-- Super Mario look-a-likes. One wore an eye patch; the other had an atrocious hairdo. They were looking for an egg.

WENDY

An egg?

JEFF

They said it was in the ant barrel.
If it was, I assume the ants
somehow consumed it.

WENDY

That's strange.

A crumpled scrap of paper on the floor catches Wendy's eye.
She picks it up, blows the dust off, passes it to Jeff.

WENDY

It has your name and address on it.

Jeff stares at the note, then panics.

JEFF

What if it's a Faberge egg and a
vicious Russian cartel is looking
for it. I suddenly feel vulnerable.

WENDY

I'd be worried they might come back
and try again. Sorry. That doesn't
ease your vulnerability, does it?

JEFF

If it wasn't in the ant barrel,
then it must be...

He, then Wendy, look over at John Wayne.

WENDY

You think we picked it up with the
ants without noticing?

They look at each other with the same uncomfortable thought.

JEFF

If that's the case, then the cartel
will certainly return and destroy
John Wayne to find it and probably
kill me, too. What do I do?

Wendy juggles her thoughts on committing herself. Jeff frets.

WENDY

You could hide out at my apartment.

JEFF

I couldn't ask you to do that.
You'd be risking your life, too.

WENDY

You don't have to ask. I'm offering. It's a win-win for me. I get my apartment cleaned and I have a new thesis angle.

JEFF

Okay, then. We need to dress him so he won't look conspicuous in public. I've got a raincoat and a derby.

WENDY

Won't he, like, eat it?

JEFF

He doesn't seem to like synthetic things. He didn't eat my nylon paint brushes, or my polyester socks. The raincoat's polyester; so's the hat.

WENDY

I have some plastic sunglasses.

John Wayne belches. They turn to him.

JEFF

Musta learned that from me.

INT. EL TRIUNFO'S OFFICE - DAY

A giant housefly struggles at the end of giant tweezers. A giant toothpick attaches a glob of glue to it's abdomen.

The tweezers raise the fly above a stand-alone magnifying glass. The fly and tweezers are normal size now.

Chinco and Guano sweat on the other side of the desk, their faces dotted with bloody darts of toilet paper.

Their eyes follow the buzzing fly back and forth as El Triunfo guides it into a fly zapper above their heads. SNAP!

A crispy remnant of the fly lands and sticks to Guano's nose.

El Triunfo slowly reels the thread in, finger over finger. Guano's shivering face moves with it, filling the screen.

EL TRIUNFO (O.S.)

Your shivering. Want me to turn up the heat?

GUANO

Oh, no, no, Jeffe. I'm very warm.

EL TRIUNFO (O.S.)
You remember Marvin here?

Guano slides his eyes sideways.

GUANO
He-he looks familiar.

El Triunfo yanks the string from Guano's nose. Guano scrambles off the desk and stands in an attitude of doom alongside Chinco.

Marvin, beside the desk leaning on a crutch, glares at them. He's half-cocooned in plaster and gauze.

El Triunfo, now stroking the skunk, leans forward.

EL TRIUNFO
Marvin here seems to think you might know something you forgot to tell me. Would you like to fill me in before I introduce you two to my riptide gallery?

Chinco and Guano faint against the desk.

GUANO
Forgive us, Jefe. We can explain.

EL TRIUNFO
It better be good, for your sake and the rest of your greasy kin.

GUANO
It's good, Jefe. Right, Chinco?

He turns to Chinco, eyes pleading.

CHINCO
We couldn't relate to you everyt'ing at the time, Jefe, because we didn't know for sure if the Egg got t'rough or not.

El Triunfo's glares at him disbelievingly.

CHINCO
And if it didn't get t'rough, you would not be so angry because what we said back then would be true. However, I now can tell you...

El Triunfo's glare gets fiercer. Chinco rushes his words.

CHINCO

...that what would have been true earlier is not true now because we know for sure that the egg did make it t'rough and...

El Jefe slams a meaty fist on the desk.

EL TRIUNFO

Stop the gibberish! Where's my Egg?

Chinco gulps audibly; then, meekly:

CHINCO

It's inside the belly of a monster.

El Triunfo snarls as he bites his cigar in half.

GUANO

I saw it, too, Jefe.

EL TRIUNFO

Oh. So you're witnesses to your own lies, are you?

(to Jorge)

Fill me in before I have them filleted and thrown to the sharks.

JORGE

They keep yakking about a monster with exploding skin. They claim they could see the Egg in its stomach beating like a heart.

Chinco and Guano are nodding their heads off in agreement.

GUANO/CHINCO

Es verdad, Jefe. A monster./
Very factual. We swear.

EL TRIUNFO

Exploding skin? See-through stomach?

He leans forward--a lion ready to pounce.

GUANO

It's no lie, Jefe. It cut us all over with exploding skin.

(points to his face)

See.

El Triunfo picks up the string and pendulates it before them.

EL TRIUNFO

See this string? Imagine your balls
glued to the end of it dangling
from a helicopter over a city's
electrical power array.

Guano's eyes glaze over following the swinging string.

EL TRIUNFO

Just keep that image before you as
you lead us to this so-called
monster of yours.

CHINCO

Si, Jefe. You will see we don't
lie. Right, Guano?

GUANO

We don't kid around, Jefe.

INT. JEFF'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Jeff's apartment door creeps opens. Wendy peeks out.

She steps out, gestures "Come on." Jeff leads John Wayne out
by a coat sleeve, closes the door.

John Wayne is dressed in a Derby hat and trench coat and
goggle-eyed rose glasses. He shuffles flat-, but sure-footed
as they guide him towards the staircase.

MRS. FERGUSON, a shrunken, bent-over, extremely aged
neighbor, backs out from her apartment pulling a two-wheeled
cart. She turns to the threesome, taps her cane.

JEFF

Good day, Mrs. Ferguson.

Mrs. Ferguson looks John Wayne up and down through cataract
eyes magnified by thick, owl-eyed glasses. Her ears are
stuffed with hearing aids. She shouts to hear herself.

MRS. FERGUSON

That racket coming from your
apartment last night was enough to
wake up the dead. I oughta know.
Even with my ears charging I nearly
had a stroke.

JEFF

I'm so sorry, Mrs. Ferguson.

MRS. FERGUSON

My false teeth rattled off my
nightstand and broke a tooth. See?

She bares her teeth. A front tooth is missing.

MRS. FERGUSON
 Can't afford a new one. I'll have
 to look like this the rest of my
 days--which, I grant, are few.

JEFF
 I-I don't know what to say...

She pokes John Wayne with her cane.

MRS. FERGUSON
 Be more considerate of your elders,
 young man. Wait'll you're my age;
 you won't believe it.

John Wayne's face morphs into her's--only younger. A cane of
 ants emerges from his coat sleeve. Jeff steps between them.

MRS. FERGUSON
 Next time I'm calling the landlord.

She shuffles past them. John Wayne's face returns to normal
 and the ant cane reels back in.

JEFF
 It won't happen again, Mrs.
 Ferguson. I promise.
 (to Wendy)
 Did you see that? His arm even
 morphed into Mrs. Ferguson's cane.

WENDY
 What can't he morph into?

JOHN WAYNE
 (JW's voice, fast-forward)
 What can't me do? Ha-ha.

They pause in awe for a second.

JEFF
]We better go.

They go to the edge of the stairs, see Mrs. Ferguson blocking
 the way, her pull-along bumping down with agonising slowness.

JEFF
 (to Wendy)
 Better take the freight elevator.

WENDY
 I'm scared to death of open lifts.
 I'll meet you in the alley.

JEFF

Wait...

Wendy squeezes by Mrs. Ferguson.

WENDY

Excuse me, Mrs. Ferguson.

MRS. FERGUSON

You're fine, young lady. Go on.

EXT. JEFF'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Wendy hurries out, crashes into Jorge, is pushed and falls.

JORGE

Outta my way.

WENDY

Asshole.

She watches Mrs. Ferguson get bowled over as Jorge charges up the stairs, his goons following.

Mrs. Ferguson drives her cane into Guano's nuts. He yelps, staggers up the stairs.

MRS. FERGUSON

Brutes! Respect your elders.

Wendy helps her up.

WENDY

Are you okay, Mrs. Ferguson?

MRS. FERGUSON

I can hardly wait to die and get away from these effing assholes.

She shuffles away with her pull-along. Wendy takes off.

INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR/HALLWAY - DAY

Jeff peers through the vertical wooden slats.

Jeff's POV: Jorge and his thugs top the stairs. He kicks in Jeff's studio door and rushes in with his thugs, guns at the ready. The floor level rises, eclipses his view. End POV

JEFF

Damn. Those guys mean business.

INT. JEFF'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Drawers, papers, tools fly through the air. Goons tip over the workbench, knife the couch and chair to shreds. A goon finds a silver spoon in the couch, pockets it.

Guano approaches Jorge; his hands over his balls, grimacing.

GUANO

Jorge. The Egg. It is inside the monster. The monster is no' here.

Jorge hears the faint CLANK of the elevator o.s. He runs off.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jorge enters the hallway, sees the elevator, runs over to it, looks through the slats of the safety gate.

What he sees: Two figures exit and run into the alley.

He rattles the gate in frustration as his goons gather stupidly around him.

JORGE

They're in the alley. There's two of them. The tall one's wearing a hat. Come on!

They stampede to the stairs and thunder down.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Jorge and his goons race to the elevator dock and stop, look about, as if lost. Chinco and Guano catch up, out of breath.

JORGE

Check every nook and cranny. They can't just disappear.

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

Jeff, Wendy, and John Wayne round a corner. Jeff runs smack into Jennifer, knocks her back a bit.

JENNIFER

Hey! Watch where you're going.

(sees it's Jeff)

You? Where do you think you're going? I told you I'd be by to pick up my bust today.

(notices Wendy)

Who's she?

JEFF

Got no time to talk right now, Jen.

Jeff digs into his pocket, pulls out a key, gives it to her.

JEFF

Here. Have at it.

JENNIFER

Don't have to be a dick about it.

(to Todd)

Come on, Todd.

Todd, loaded down with shopping largess, avoids looking at Jeff. They march off.

Wendy and Jeff peer back around the corner to see Jorge and his goons pour out of the alley and into the street. A cab screeches its brakes, blares its horn.

Jorge desperately scans the flowing crowd, points to various directions. Goons scatter. Two head towards them.

JEFF

We need to duck in somewhere, fast.

Wendy looks up, sees the entrance to "Franco's Restaurant."

WENDY

Quick! In here.

They slip into the restaurant.

INT. FRANCO'S RESTAURANT - DAY

The place is full with DINERS. Half-mirrors surround the walls. Fake ivy plants hang above the tables.

Wendy espies a empty, secluded high-back booth in the back.

WENDY

There's an empty booth. Come on.

BOOTH

Wendy sits facing the front of the restaurant across from Jeff and John Wayne, who face the mirrored wall. A "Reserved" sign rests on the table. A WAITER approaches.

WAITER

I'm sorry. This table is reserved.
The client would have my job if it
wasn't available for him.

WENDY

All we want is one big bowl of Romaine lettuce and croutons. No dressing.

Wendy hands him a twenty. The waiter takes it.

WAITER

Okay. You got twenty minutes.

EXT. MANHATTAN SIDEWALK - DAY

Chinco and Guano peer through shop windows as they pass them. We see Dewey Moody in the b.g. following them.

INT. FRANCO'S RESTAURANT - DAY

A Romaine leaf sinks into John Wayne's mouth. He gazes goofily at himself in the wall mirror, makes funny faces.

Through the mirror: The heads of Chinco and Guano glide by the restaurant's front window. Guano looks in, does a double take. He furiously beckons Chinco to look in. They run off.

WENDY

...So that was your Ex, huh? Who was that poor schmuck muling all her baggage?

JEFF

A future Walmart employee.

WENDY

What are you going to do, now?

JEFF

I don't know. I-I'm still processing: Why is John Wayne alive? Why am I running from thugs who look like they wouldn't hesitate to murder me?

Dewey scoots in beside Wendy as he eyeballs John Wayne.

WENDY

Hey! Excuse me! Who are you?

DEWEY

Forgive me for barging in like this. My name is Dewey Moody. I'm an archeologist and historian. Do you mind?

He reaches across the table, touches John Wayne's face. John Wayne recoils.

DEWEY

Amazing. You used ants from Ecuador. Is that correct?

JEFF

How would you know that?

DEWEY

An emerald Egg was stolen from a dig site there, near where the ants originated. Its value is inestimable, and it needs returned.

Jeff exchanges a glance with Wendy.

DEWEY

The two hombres who broke into your studio stole it, then clumsily dropped it in the barrel of ants sent to you. I tailed them here.

JEFF

So that's what they were looking for.

DEWEY

Didn't find it, did they? That's because it's inside your ant man.

JEFF

How can you be so sure?

DEWEY

That Egg is the only way he could be brought to life as a unique entity. I'd bet his life on it.

They stare up at John Wayne, whose face has morphed into an evil, malicious face resembling Dewey's.

DEWEY

What's happening to his face?

WENDY

He evidently introduces himself to people by copying their faces--like trying them out. Looks like he's having some difficulty with yours.

JOHN WAYNE

(JW's voice, fast-forward)
...get cross ways of me and you'll think a thousand brick fell on you!

DEWEY

He talks? Incredible! The Egg gave the ant colony a collective intelligence.

JEFF

That's a line from "True Grit." Not sure he understands what he's saying, though.

John Wayne's face returns to normal as he puts a crouton delicately into his mouth.

JOHN WAYNE

(JW's voice, fast-forward)
Slap some bacon on a biscuit and let's go! We're burnin' daylight! Ha-ha.

Dewey leans in confidentially, speaks softly.

DEWEY

There! See? He needs to return to Ecuador so he can save the earth.

WENDY

What? This is getting preposterous.

DEWEY

Let me explain. In Incan mythology, my specialty, it was the Goddess Illa who created life on earth.

John Wayne flicks his tongue at the hanging plant leaf above and sucks it back into his mouth, like an iguana.

DEWEY

She created a monument to herself to forever mark the place from where her spirit sparked life.

John Wayne's face sours, then balloons twice its size.

DEWEY

The monument's location had been lost to history, until I found it recorded in a secret diary by a padre on Pizzaro's third expedition, in 1532.

PHOOFT! A green bolus fires out of John Wayne's mouth, ricochets off the mirror across the room, skewers Guano's wig and blows away the open newspaper he and Chinco hide behind.

Chinco snatches the paper back up and resumes hiding.

Dewey warily observes Chinco and Guano as Jeff and Wendy glance suspiciously at John Wayne smirking innocently.

DEWEY

The padre recorded how the Goddess locked the Egg inside the monument with a Key to safeguard it as a repository to re-seed Earth in case of extinction.

John Wayne grabs lettuce and stuffs it into his mouth.

DEWEY

But, here's the kicker: It was opened some 10,000 years ago and the Egg was lost. If it is not replaced in a timely manner, the Earth will self-destruct.

JEFF

What's "a timely manner" look like?

DEWEY

If the Egg is not returned to the monument by high noon of the twelfth sun of the seventh moon of the Year of the Termite, the sixth extinction will begin in earnest.

WENDY

And when is that exactly?

DEWEY

Translated: Next Tuesday at noon. Four days from now. It's all in the Incan oral tradition.

WENDY

So you're saying we're all, like, going to die in an apocalypse in less than a week?

DEWEY

Only if the Egg is not returned in time...by a termite.

JEFF

A termite?

DEWEY

They were the draft horses of the ancient world--the builders.

WENDY

So?

DEWEY

I think your ant man was animated for the sole purpose to return the Egg to the monument and open it with a Key--its whereabouts only he knows--and stop the extinction.

They look at John Wayne, who contentedly absorbs a leaf.

JEFF

The Duke's not a termite.

DEWEY

He's all Illa's got. She's using us to guide him to Ecuador.

WENDY

You expect us to believe this?

DEWEY

In the chapter entitled "The Last Four Days," the earth will tremble. It will start small at first, then become more violent until the earth shakes off all life upon it.

JEFF

That's a pretty hard pill to swallow: Doomsday--in four days.

The restaurant shivers. A collective gasp from the diners. Hanging plants sway. A glass CRASHES somewhere.

The shaking stops. The wary diners murmur anxiously.

DEWEY

It's happening. It's going to get worse real fast.

Nearly convinced, Jeff glances at Wendy's skeptic face.

Dewey looks off in alarm, sees El Triunfo and his goons trooping towards the restaurant from across the street.

DEWEY

We must leave!

WENDY

We?

DEWEY

Those hombres that tried to rob you work for El Triunfo.

JEFF

El Triunfo? The trillionaire? What does he want with it?

DEWEY

The Egg has the power of life and death--of God, and he wants it. It was his enterprise that stole my discovery notes to the site.

WENDY

Greed and power. I don't get it.

Dewey getting very anxious, sweating.

DEWEY

Listen! Triunfo is coming in and you're sitting at his favorite table. He will see the ant man and take him from you. We must go, now.

WENDY

Go where?

DEWEY

To the hospital, for starters.

WENDY

Why the hospital?

DEWEY

To X-ray the ant man. To prove what I say to you is true.

JEFF

Won't X-rays harm him?

DEWEY

Insects are resistant to X-rays.

JEFF

(shrugs; to Wendy)
What choice do we have? We didn't have any a minute ago.

DEWEY

The hospital is only two blocks away. Quickly, through the kitchen.

Jeff guides John Wayne out of the booth and pulls him along as they all leave through the kitchen doors.

El Triunfo enters with his goons, sees Chinco and Guano go through the kitchen doors, and the "Reserved" sign gone.

EL TRIUNFO

(to a goon)

Keep tailing those two pea brains
and keep me posted.

(to another goon)

Have the frigging waiter who
removed my "Reserved" sign fired.

EXT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Jeff, Wendy, Dewey and John Wayne hurry in.

INT. HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Jeff, Wendy, Dewey, and John Wayne cross the high atrium.

X-RAY LAB

An X-RAY TECH leaves; they enter.

A HOSPITAL HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Chinco and Guano waddle down the hall looking into rooms.

X-RAY LAB

Jeff maneuvers John Wayne into place against the X-ray panel.

JEFF

Now stay still, Duke. Just wanna
see what makes you tick.

JOHN WAYNE

(JW's voice; fast-forward)
Okay, Jeff.

Jeff is startled.

JEFF

You answered. Do you understand me?

JOHN WAYNE

(JW's voice; fast-forward)
I know. Don't tell.

JEFF

I-I won't...Wow.

CONTROL BOOTH

Dewey depresses a button.

DEWEY

Okay. Let's see what we got here.

ON MONITOR SCREEN: An ovate object in John Wayne's chest.

Jeff and Wendy stare at it. The printer is printing o.s.

DEWEY

There it is. The Doomsday Egg. Look at it closely, my friends. You can see the faint lines of a pyramid inside. Inside that, there's a tiny smudge. See it?

JEFF/WENDY

I see it./Yeah.

DEWEY

That is the source of all life on Mother Earth. This Egg contains the D.N.A. of all plant and animal life that has ever existed or can exist on Earth.

The room shakes violently. The monitor, printer, loose objects crash to the floor. Jeff, Wendy, and Dewey tumble into one another. Lights go out.

The rumbling ceases. Alarms sound. Emergency lights beam on. Screaming voices o.s.

They rise up slowly, wary.

DEWEY

The end is beginning.

Jeff looks through the booth window.

JEFF

The Duke! He's gone!

They run out of the control booth.

HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Chaos everywhere. Jeff, Wendy, Dewey weave through PANICKING PEOPLE. They desperately look for The Duke.

Dewey sees Jorge in the crowd and quickly turns about.

JEFF/WENDY

Duke!...Duke!....

Jeff and Wendy frantically peer into open rooms.

X-RAY LAB

Chinco picks up a printer photo. Guano leans in, looks.

GUANO

Es el Huevo.

Chinco folds it, puts it in his pocket. They turn to leave. Jorge blocks the door, glares down at them.

HOSPITAL ATRIUM

Frightened PEOPLE point up to the girders.

MAN #1

Look! Up in the girders!

WOMAN

It's an ape!

MAN #2

It's a terrorist!

KID

It's Spiderman!

John Wayne gayly swings like a monkey from girder to girder. Dewey is below, frustratedly trying to coax him down.

DEWEY

Nice ant-man. Come to daddy.

Jeff and Wendy run in, look up.

JEFF

Duke! Come down from there!

John Wayne rappels to the floor with one arm from the rafters. He lands in front of Jeff; draws his arm back in.

JOHN WAYNE

(JW's voice, FF; to crowd)

Howdy, Penguins. I'm proud of ya..
All of ya.

A WOMAN swoons. KIDS gawk as MOTHERS hurry them off.

DEWEY

Let's go. We're being followed.

John Wayne grins, waves to crowd as Jeff pulls him along.

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Jeff, Wendy, Dewey, John Wayne escape the disgorging crowd.

DEWEY
Quick! This way.

EXT. SUBWAY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Dewey looks back. Sees Jorge spot him.

DEWEY
Here.

Dewey, Jeff, Wendy, John Wayne enter the subway.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - CONTINUOUS

John Wayne merrily slides down the moving handrail as they skip down the escalator.

Jorge and his goons leap the gate, chase after them.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Dewey, Wendy, Jeff, John Wayne crowd into a car as the door slides closed.

EXT. SUBWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jorge bangs on the window as the car moves away. Dewey watches from within. John Wayne bangs back; cracks window.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS

Dewey, Jeff, Wendy hold on to the high rail. John Wayne, balances effortlessly; picks up a paper cup, eats it.

DEWEY
We need a place to hide out and
make a plan.

Wendy glances at Jeff, who shrugs "Why not."

WENDY
We've already decided on my place.
It's the third stop. They'll never
find us there.

The car stops moving, the doors slide open. THREE COCKY PUNKS board. The doors close. The car moves.

Punk #1 pinches a YOUNG LADY in the butt. She flinches away, scowling. The punks laugh.

Punk #1 gets in front of Mrs. Ferguson sitting behind her pull-along, across from John Wayne. He raises his shirt, revealing a gun sticking out from his belt.

PUNK #1
Hey, ol' bones, gib me yo' green.

She bends forward for a better look; then, in a loud voice:

MRS. FERGUSON
I ain't that horny, you insolent twig. Is that all you got?

The punk, suddenly embarrassed, drops his shirt; reaches into her open purse, takes her coin purse.

MRS. FERGUSON
Hey! That's my beggin' money. Give it back. Help! Thief!

Jeff reacts.

JEFF
Hey! Give her back her...

The punk jams his gun into Jeff's gut.

PUNK #1
Shud-up! Gimme yo' billfold.

Jeff removes his billfold and hands it to him. The punk sees John Wayne, points the gun at his face.

PUNK #1
Gimme yo' stash, or I'll blow...you...to...

The punk stares in horror as John Wayne's face morphs into the mirror image of the punk's terrified face.

The punk shrinks back, drops his gun as John Wayne's hand, now a cannon of a gun, presses against the punk's nose.

The Duke's punk's face blurs and morphs back into John Wayne.

JOHN WAYNE
(JW's voice, fast-forward)
Penguin, if you're lookin' fer trouble, I'll accommodate ya.

The punk rattles his head "No."

The car rolls to a stop.

The punk breaks free. The car doors open.

John Wayne clamps onto punk #1's ass and drags him back to Mrs. Ferguson. The trembling punk gingerly drops the coin purse back into her open purse.

He swings him over to Jeff, who happily lifts his billfold from the punk's pocket.

As John Wayne swings him back around, Mrs. Ferguson harpoons him in the groin with her cane.

A scream freezes unheard on the punk's face as John Wayne forklifts him to the open doors and flings him out.

The punk crumples onto the platform writhing in agony.

The car erupts in cheers and clapping.

Mrs. Ferguson wheels her cart away.

MRS. FERGUSON
(loud; to herself)
Kids nowadays. No shame. Seems the
bigger their mouths, the tinier
their junk.

INT. WENDY'S EFFICIENCY APT - NIGHT

Jeff paces. Wendy observes John Wayne on the couch absorbed with the TV. Dewey pours himself a drink.

JEFF
How are we going to find a monument
in the jungle within four days when
Spain's best couldn't find it?

Dewey reaches into his pants pocket, pulls out a folded page of foxed vellum, spreads it open on the kitchenette table.

DEWEY
Despair not. I've got the original
map right here. I carefully tore it
out of the Padre's diary.

WENDY
You tore a page out of a rare
manuscript? That's sacrilege. Why
not just copy it?

DEWEY
It won't matter, if the world ends.

WENDY
Hmm.

ON A MAP OF ECUADOR Dewey's index finger follows a zig-zag line from an ancient village to an "X."

DEWEY (O.S.)
 This village is now Quito. And...
 (traces; stabs the "X")
 the monument is here. This area is
 unexplored. With only four days to
 find it, we must leave ASAP.

WENDY
 What about passports? The Duke
 certainly doesn't have one.

JEFF
 And I forgot to renew mine.

DEWEY
 Look. If the world is ending in
 four days like the prophesy says,
 then we must do whatever it takes,
 including hijacking a airplane.

JEFF
 Hijack a plane! Are you crazy?

DEWEY
 It's either that or we die with
 everybody else, wishing we had done
 what we're planning to do now.

The room shudders. A wall clock crashes to the table as they grab onto it. Chinaware rattles. The shaking stops. In the tense stillness, we hear the TV.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)
 (shaky voice)
 ...is shaking the entire West
 Coast. Shockwaves are registering
 off the Richter Scale...This is the
 one, folks...

Wendy takes the remote from John Wayne, who is mouthing the words; turns the volume up.

INCLUDE TV SCREEN

NEWS REPORTER
 ...California is splitting off. The
 entire west coast could slide into
 the sea, including me. Reports are
 coming in that extinct volcanoes
 are erupting everywhere on earth.

He chokes with emotion; begins to act crazed.

NEWS REPORTER
 If we split off, coastal cities
 around the world will drown in
 tsunamis. Billions of people will
 die...Oh, my gawd! I can't...!

He sobs, puts a revolver into his mouth; his hands shaking.

NEWS REPORTER
 (lowers the revolver)
 Wait! This just in.

WENDY (O.S.)
 My gawd. It's really happening.

NEWS REPORTER
 The F.A.A. is calling all civilian
 aircraft out of the sky, except
 military. I repeat. The F.A.A....
 Oh, sweet Jesus, forgive me...

He inserts revolver into mouth. The TV screen goes blank.

WENDY
 I have an idea. Gimme a minute.

She pulls out her cellphone as she hurries into the bedroom
 and closes the door behind her.

JEFF
 (to Dewey)
 Alright. I'm in. But we hijack the
 plane after all the passengers have
 deplaned. No guns. Okay? We got to
 convince the pilot to fly us.

DEWEY
 I'll fly it.

JEFF
 What? You?

DEWEY
 I'll fly it. Didn't I tell you I
 have a commercial pilot's license?

JEFF
 That one flew right by me.

DEWEY
 Yep. Flew Covert Ops troops to Mali
 and other hot spots in Africa. Bet
 you didn't know we're fighting wars
 in Africa. Also, Central and South
 America. We're everywhere.

JEFF

What haven't you done?

DEWEY

I never learned C.P.R. Can't see myself saving anybody. I figure, when your time is up, it's up.

JEFF

That's reassuring.

Wendy strides out of the bedroom with a good-news smile.

WENDY

I got us a plane to Ecuador.

JEFF

All air traffic is shut down except military planes.

WENDY

And diplomatic planes. The Ecuadoran ambassador is a client of mine and is leaving now. He's sending a car around for us. I better change.

Dewey is stunned. She starts back into the bedroom.

WENDY

(stops; turns around)

Oh, by the way, Jeff. I forgot to tell you in all the excitement. The museum director changed his mind. Your live ant statue is in.

She turns into the bedroom. Jeff stares, mouth agape.

EXT. WENDY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - ON WAITING LIMO

Wendy, now dressed in khakis, gets in, followed by, Dewey, John Wayne, and Jeff. The limo drives off.

In the b.g., a parked car's lights go on; follows.

EXT. CORPORATE HANGER TARMAC - NIGHT

Jeff, Wendy, John Wayne, Dewey get out of the limo, head to a private jet waiting, engines running.

In the f.g., a Lincoln TownCar stops, snuffs its lights.

INT. LINCOLN TOWNCAR - NIGHT - INCLUDE PRIVATE JET IN B.G.

El Triunfo, slumped in the passenger seat, watches Wendy, Jeff, Dewey, John Wayne cross the tarmac to the jet. Guano leans into the frame from the back seat, points.

GUANO

See, Jefe? El monster.

EXT. PRIVATE JET ON TARMAC - CONTINUOUS

Manuel Ortez [Wendy's date at the museum] is the Ecuadoran Ambassador. He waits by the jet with his attaché, JUAN DIEGO (30s), a sinister, beefy ape in a tight suit.

The Ambassador opens his arms, his smile beaming on Wendy.

AMBASSADOR

Kittie koo-koo! Welcome.

WENDY

Badassa...Ahem. Ambassador. Thank you for giving us a lift.

He hugs her, pats, squeezes her butt, and air-kisses her on both cheeks. He turns graciously to the others.

AMBASSADOR

And these are your friends, I presume? Welcome...

They shake hands. The earth rumbles under their feet.

AMBASSADOR

We must get off the runway and into the air, now. Everybody, on board!

They clamber aboard. Juan Diego, the last in, turns towards the Lincoln TownCar, gives a thumb-up.

INT. LINCOLN TOWNCAR - SAME

El Triunfo sees Juan Diego's thumb-up.

EL TRIUNFO

By the time that plane lands in Ecuador, Juan will have possession of the Egg for me. That's loyalty.

EXT. AIRPORT RUNWAY - NIGHT

The private jet speeds down the runway, lifts off.

INT. PRIVATE JET - NIGHT

John Wayne is kicked back speed-watching movie videos.

The Ambassador is on the couch massaging the back of Wendy's shoulders. He sucks on her neck. She feigns a giggle and gently pushes him away.

Jeff glances at Wendy as she playfully wards off the Ambassador's approaches. Wendy sees him, rolls her eyes. Jeff feigns a smile, can't watch, turns away.

Juan Diego refills Jeff's, then Dewey's, liquor glass.

JUAN DIEGO

I understand you have possession of the Doomsday Egg.

JEFF

Doomsday egg?

JUAN DIEGO

You know what I talk about. Your chica tell the Ambassador about it. I got excellent memory.

He lifts a small voice recorder from his breast pocket, slides it back in. Jeff senses trouble. Takes a nervous sip.

JEFF

She was probably relating a old Incan myth we heard recently about such an egg. Fascinating stuff.

JUAN DIEGO

I t'ink it's true, and you have it.

JEFF

Everybody has his opinion. They say all myth has some fact in it; doesn't mean it's entirely false or entirely true.

JUAN DIEGO

Why you go to Ecuador, hombre?

JEFF

(hesitates; thinks)
To get away from the earthquakes.

JUAN DIEGO

There are earthquakes in Ecuador, tambien. I hear whoever possess the Egg has power to create, como Dios.

JEFF

Really? I-I wouldn't know.

JUAN DIEGO
I t'ink so. El Triunfo tell me the
Egg is in that ant freak of yours.

DEWEY
You on El Triunfo's payroll?

JUAN DIEGO
(chuckles)
Used to be. No more, once I get my
hands on that Egg.

Jeff glances nervously at Dewey.

JUAN DIEGO
There's only one way to find out,
and that's to open him up. No?

He pulls out a switchblade knife, flips it open.

JEFF
What are you doing?

Juan starts for John Wayne, Jeff and Dewey react. Juan whips
around, swipes his knife. They cave back.

AMBASSADOR
Juan! Are you crazy? Not here!

Juan gets behind John Wayne, raises knife.

JEFF
Look out, Duke!

John Wayne turns as the knife plunges into his chest.

He clasps Juan's fist and pulls the knife out. He twists his
wrist to curiously examine the knife from all angles,
unwittingly breaking it: SNAP! Juan screams.

JOHN WAYNE
You bad penguin?

A SONIC BOOM jolts the plane and tilts the cabin sharply.
Everybody tumbles against the fuselage. Glasses, bottles
CRASH against it.

The jet engines SCREAM.

The cabin free-falls, leaps.

Gravity crushes everybody to the deck.

Jeff strains to raise himself to look out a porthole.

He sees an obliterating mountaintop engulfing them in
lightening-split black ash.

JEFF
It's a volcano eruption.

WEND
In the Smokey Mountains?

DEWEY
No-No! I need to live!

John Wayne gets up, turns the emergency hatch handles.

JEFF
Duke! No!

John Wayne rips the hatch cover part-way open.

A howling, whooshing gale sucks out everything not tied down.

Juan Diego slams into it butt first, plugs it momentarily. His startled face crashes to his feet as he POPS out like a Champaign cork into the chaotic void.

John Wayne immediately secures the hatch cover as Jeff, then the others, crash against it.

The plane levels, in control again. John Wayne settles back into his seat to watch T.V.

JOHN WAYNE
(JW's voice; fast forward)
Very bad penguin. Giddy up go! Ha!

They stare up at him with mouths agape.

SUPER: ECUADOR

EXT. QUITO AIRPORT - DAY

The Ambassador's jet touches down.

EXT. AIRPORT BUSINESS HANGER - DAY - ON LAND ROVER

Dewey at the wheel; Jeff, shotgun; Wendy in the back seat behind Jeff; John Wayne, next to her. The Ambassador hands a small, loaded backpack to each of them.

AMBASSADOR
Consider this my apology for the despicable actions of my traitorous attaché. If I can be of any further service to you, please ask.

DEWEY

Thank you, Ambassador. We appreciate the vehicle and everything you've done for us.

AMBASSADOR

Consider it an investment in my future. Good luck on your mission.
(to Wendy)
I will see you soon for a little honey, no?

WENDY

I'll check my calendar. Tootle-do.

AMBASSADOR

(laughs)
You are funny.

Dewey puts the Land Rover into gear and drives away.

The Ambassador waves goodbye; aside to his AIDE.

AMBASSADOR

They're bugged. I want to know where they are at all times.

EXT. SAVANNA ROAD - NIGHT - ON LAND ROVER

A pair of headlights bounces along it.

INT. LAND ROVER

Dewey, Jeff, Wendy and John Wayne are jostled about.

WENDY

This is rough, I think I'd make better time jogging.

Dewey chuckles. Jeff is quiet.

WENDY

You with us, Jeff?

Silence. Finally:

JEFF

What did the ambassador mean by "a little honey?"

WENDY

Really? Do I have to spell it out?

JEFF

You're a hooker.

WENDY

How did you say it: "One must must temporarily alter his life's dream with undesirable gigs...Well, that's me, too. It pays for my education. So there!

JEFF

I'm disappointed is all.

WENDY

Disappointed? If you're looking for Miss Perfection, I ain't it. Frankly, I'm disappointed in you.

Jeff is taken aback.

JEFF

He gave you the black eye, didn't he?

DEWEY

All right, you two. Put down the knives. We're almost there.

EXT. JUNGLE TRAIL - DAY - ON LAND ROVER

As it plows through the overgrowth. Monkey's scatter.

EXT. PYRAMID DIG SITE - DAY

The Land Rover brakes by the abandoned camouflaged tent. Next to it are a dozen fresh graves with makeshift crosses.

Jeff, Wendy, Dewey get out and stretch their legs. John Wayne tries his best to mimic them, but comically exaggerates.

INT. CAMOUFLAGED TENT - DAY

They approach a pile of brush. Dewey throws it aside to reveal the termite buried within.

DEWEY

I hid it to avoid rediscovery.

WENDY

Wow! A giant coptotermes testaceus. So this guy was the architect of the ancient world, huh? Amazing.

John Wayne reverently puts his hand on its abdomen, mumbles an incoherent chant.

JEFF

Look at that. He's feeling a connection.

DEWEY

That connection will lead the ant man to the monument.

EXT. CAMOUFLAGED TENT - DAY

Dewey spreads his map out on a hood of the Land Rover. He studies it, looks off, and points to a dark jungle opening.

DEWEY

That way.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

John Wayne leads by swinging and hooting from the tree branches with the BUSH MONKEYS. Dewey whacks the overgrowth with his machete as Jeff and Wendy follow.

EXT. CAMOUFLAGED TENT - DAY

A Jeep is parked next to the Land Rover. Jorge leans against it, smoking, as he watches El Triunfo's helicopter set down.

Marvin limps out spraying fog from aerosol canisters at El Triunfo as he emerges, coughing.

El Triunfo slaps at a mosquito on his face, already peppered with red mosquito bites. He approaches Jorge.

EL TRIUNFO

Where are they?

JORGE

(points to jungle opening)
They went that way. I sent Chinco and Guano ahead to scout.

EL TRIUNFO

Those two idiots couldn't find their way down a straight road with G.P.S.

(glares at Jorge)
What the hell are you doing standing here yakking at me for? Get your butt in that jungle and find that Egg and the Key!

He indicates two goons.

EL TRIUNFO

Take these yahoos with you. I don't want to see your mugs again unless you have something for me to salivate over. We clear?

JORGE/GOONS

Si, Jefe./We won't let you down./You will see our mugs again.

They stampede off. El Triunfo swats a mosquito on his cheek.

EL TRIUNFO

Ooh! What am I? A frickin' mosquito magnet. Marvin!

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - EVENING

Dewey, Jeff, and Wendy drag themselves out of the dense jungle and collapse under a shade tree, exhausted.

DEWEY

Let's bivouac here for the night.

No objections. They lay back. John Wayne mimics.

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY

The rising sun spreads its light over four sleeping bodies. Jeff and Dewey are under their coverlets, snoring. John Wayne spoons Jeff trying unsuccessfully to mimic his snoring.

Wendy stirs, sits up, urgency written on her face. She looks around, grabs her backpack and hurries off.

EXT. ROCKY SLOPE - DAY

Wendy gets behind a tree hanging over a stony slope. She sets her backpack down and starts to unbuckle her belt.

Her foot slips. She starts sliding. She grabs a branch. It snaps off. She falls. Slides faster down a steep embankment.

EXT. CLIFF EDGE - CONTINUOUS

Wendy rides an avalanche of stones over the edge.

WENDY

Shee-it! Aaaagh!

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Wendy plunges into it. After a minute, she bobs up gasping for air as she's carried to the misty edge of a cataract.

EXT. WATERFALL POOL - DAY

Chinco and Guano thirstily scoop water into their mouths.

WENDY (O.S.)
Aaaaagh!

They look up to see Wendy cannonball into the pool. She bobs up face down, drifts towards them.

Chinco and Guano gape at each other; wade in after her.

EXT. STEEP ROCKY HILL - DAY

Jeff cups his hands to his mouth.

JEFF
Wendy!...Wendy!...

He looks down the embankment, sees her backpack against a tree. He shuffles down towards it. Slips. Grabs onto a small tree as he watches rocks tumble down the embankment, pass a broken branch, and disappear over the cliff edge.

JEFF
No! Wendy?

EXT. EDGE OF CLIFF - LATER

Jeff sits staring off. John Wayne swings in the tree branches above with the Howler monkeys. Dewey stands by Jeff.

DEWEY
We need to get going. Call your ant man down.

JEFF
Don't you get it? Wendy's gone. I should never have questioned her. What an idiot I am.

DEWEY
You can mourn her later. Let's go.

Jeff looks up at him with contempt.

EXT. CAMOUFLAGED TENT - DAY

Jorge dumps the trussed Wendy at the feet of El Triunfo, who sits in his portable gold throne before a bonfire stroking the skunk on his lap. He forces her to her knees.

WENDY
Get off me, you brute!

El Triunfo slaps a mosquito on his face, now swollen red and lumpy. He wipes it off on his blood-smearred shirt sleeve.

EL TRIUNFO
(to Wendy)
Who are you?

WENDY
Who are you?

EL TRIUNFO
What do you mean, Who am I?
Everybody on the planet recognises
me. I'm El Triunfo.

WENDY
The pictures of El Triunfo I've
seen show him as a handsome man.
You can't be him.

EL TRIUNFO
(to Marvin)
Get me a mirror.

Marvin hands him a mirror. El Triunfo snatches it away and stares aghast at it.

EL TRIUNFO
My face! Somebody get me some
calamine. Quick! Why didn't anybody
tell me I was looking like a mushy
strawberry? Are you blind? You
idiots planning a coup?

CHORUS OF GOONS
Mercy, no, Jefe!/ Never, Jefe!/ God
forbid!/ We no stupido, Jefe!/ Viva
El Triunfo!...

Marvin smears white lotion all over El Triunfo's face.

EL TRIUNFO
(to Marvin)
Get H.Q. to load all my tanker
planes worldwide with Triunfo Four-
T-Z-D insecticide and fumigate the
whole damn jungle. I want them
eradicated from this hemisphere.

MARVIN
Right away, Jefe.

He hobbles off.

EL TRIUNFO
(to Chinco and Guano)
You two! Get your asses back out there and find that monster like you found this one, or I'll chop you up and stew you for supper.

CHINCO
You got it, Jefe.

GUANO
We don't taste too good, Jefe.

Chinco elbows Guano. El Triunfo glares at him. They run off.

He turns to Wendy.

EL TRIUNFO
I know that you are traveling with an artsy dweeb and a monster he created that has my Egg in it. Where are they?

WENDY
I really have no idea. I'm lost.

EL TRIUNFO
Stubborn, eh?

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

Dewey waves a handkerchief trying to coax John Wayne down from the trees.

DEWEY
Come on down, ant man. I gotta treat for you.

John Wayne ignores him. He turns to Jeff, still in a funk, draws his Glock and points it at him. Jeff leans away.

JEFF
Hey! What's with the gun?

DEWEY
Snap out of it. Call your ape down. We need to go.

VOICE (O.S.)
Oye!

Startled, they glance about, see nothing. Then:

NAKED ANTEDILUVIAN ABORIGINES--little red men with no discernible genitalia, heads crowned with a wild display of colored feathers--appear magically from the shadows.

They stare up in awe at John Wayne, who drops to the ground to meet them. They close in around him, chuckling.

Jeff rises, watches the aborigines converse with John Wayne.

The natives laugh and nod approvingly.

CHORUS OF NATIVES

JonWayne...Ha-ha. JonWayne....

They pull John Wayne away, gesture for Jeff and Dewey to follow them. Dewey holsters his gun.

DEWEY

Well, I'll be. Legend has it that a tribe of pre-ancient peoples still wanders the jungle searching for the lost Key. Could this be them?

They follow.

DEWEY

Sorry about the gun. Just trying to get your attention is all.

INT. INDIAN LODGE - NIGHT

An open-sided rectangular pole lodge. Amber-tinted ambiance. Tiki torches aflame. A stone-ringed campfire. Rocks for sitting. A board table with two clay mugs and a jug on it.

Aborigines "Ooh" and "Ah" as they pat John Wayne.

The shaman, ATLI (ageless), approaches Jeff and Dewey. He's agile and fit. He stops in front of Jeff and chuckles.

JEFF

(aside; to Dewey)
This guy is making me nervous.

ATLI

(with posh accent)
No need to be nervous.

JEFF

What? You--you speak English?

ATLI

We speak all languages. I am Atli, the shaman here.

JEFF
 Uh, hi. I--I'm Jeff.
 (turns to Dewey)
 This is Dewey. And over there
 (indicating)
 is John Wayne.

Atli hugs Jeff, then holds him briefly at arm's length.

ATLI
 Welcome. We've been waiting for you
 and, finally, here you are, just in
 the nick of time, as prophesied.

JEFF
 Me? You've been waiting for me?

ATLI
 You are the chosen one. You brought
 Illa's Egg back to us.

Jeff is dumbfounded. Dewey bristles.

ATLI
 Let's have a drink. Relax a bit.

JOHN WAYNE (O.S.)
 (Clint Eastwood voice; FF)
 "...Go ahead, make my day!"

Atli turns towards John Wayne, clicks his tongue. Four aborigines leave the laughing group surrounding him. They sit around the fire ring, begin CLACKING TUNED STONES.

Atli picks up the jug and pours a green liquid into two mugs. He hands one to Jeff, keeps the other for himself.

ATLI
 Please, drink.

Jeff sees Dewey is pissed, shrugs apologetically.

JEFF
 (to Atli)
 What is this?

ATLI
 It's Chicha, the drink of the
 goddess Illa. It is very relaxing.
 Lots of fragrant notes.

LATER - SAME NIGHT

The four aborigines clack the stones together with syncopated rhythm. A harmonised tune hums from their throats.

Jeff and Atli jive to the music. Dewey glowers.

JEFF

(slurring; to Atli)

This is quite a restorative drink.
It gives me a happy feeling when I
really should be miserable.

He takes a drink, savors the taste, chuckles.

JEFF

Tell me, Shaman Atli, how do you
know all languages when you live
here in the jungle, presumably in
no contact with the outside world?

ATLI

When you're ninety thousand years
old you pick up a lot of stuff.

JEFF

Ninety thousand? Come on! Really?

ATLI

That is correct, give or take. Ten
thousand years ago--seems like
yesterday--we left the Portal of
Illa to audit life on earth since
the last extinction event...

JEFF

Audit?

ATLI

That is correct. We do a census
every tenth millennium, you see.

He chuckles. Takes a sip. Dewey is silently furious.

ATLI

Things looked pretty good after the
Flood, so we went back home to
report our findings, but lost the
Portal Key and couldn't get back
in. Been looking for it ever since.

JEFF

You've been looking for a lost key
for ten thousand years?

ATLI

That is correct. To make matters
worse, the Egg, which also must be
present at the monument before the
Portal can open, went missing, too.

JEFF

You need both to get back in?

ATLI

It's a security thing. A termite must also be present. So, you see, we were in a pickle until you came along--as predicted.

JEFF

I--I'm honored, I guess. But I wasn't the one who found...

ATLI

To make matters more worse, the termite guarding the Egg also went missing with the Egg. You brought us two of the missing components--the termite and the Egg.

JEFF

But, John Wayne's all ant, not a termite in him...and you're still missing the Key.

ATLI

He'll do. Your mission is to find the Key and insert it into Ella's cheek within two days when my audit's due or we all go extinct.

JOHN WAYNE (O.S.)

(Schwarzenegger's voice;
FF)

...Hasta la vista, Penguin!

They turn to see John Wayne, wearing Arnold Schwarzenegger's face, swing his arm, now morphed into a semi-automatic cannon. The aborigines howl uproariously, roll in the dirt.

ATLI

Of course, ants, termites, mosquitoes, cockroaches, and some fishes are excepted, as always in these extinction events.

JEFF

How will I find the Key in two days when you couldn't find it in ten thousand years?

ATLI

Only Ella knows. When you put on the Mitts of Understanding, you will be given insight.

JEFF

Mitts of understanding?

ATLI

That is correct. It's a trip and a half, I'll tell ya. But no worries. I will be with you. You will be given a vision of the whereabouts of the Key--as prophesied.

Dewey leans over, pokes Jeff. Jeff turns to him.

DEWEY

We need to talk. Privately.

JEFF

Okay. Sure.

(to Atli)

Excuse us a moment, Shaman Atli.

Jeff, giggling to himself, stands, wobbles a bit and steps away with Dewey. Dewey talks through clinched teeth.

DEWEY

I'm the one who found the dang Egg and he's giving you all the credit. I can't take it much longer.

JEFF

I know. I tried to tell him, but...

DEWEY

Stop chuckling!

JEFF

Can't help it... You must admit, it originally belongs to them.

DEWEY

Doesn't matter. Finders, keepers.

ATLI (O.S.)

Are you ready?

Atli approaches Jeff with a pair of catcher's mitts woven from grass with oil-like droplets oozing all over. The four aborigine musicians get beside him, humming.

ATLI

You will get answers to all your questions when you put these on.

JEFF

Oh, yeah? How does it work?

ATLI

It's hard to explain. Put them
on. I will guide you. No worries.

Dewey smirks. He's familiar with the ritual.

DEWEY

Go on. What have you got to lose?
I'll keep an eye on the ant man.

Jeff turns to Atli.

JEFF

Okay, let's do it.

Two aborigines grab Jeff's arms, hold them still. The other
two secure the mitts over Jeff's hands.

ON MITTS: The oil droplets are ant abdominals squirming in
the fiber spaces, suggesting heads and mandibles within.

Jeff's eyes flare open, screaming hot alarm. He struggles to
shake the mitts off. The aborigines hold him firm.

DEWEY

Those are Bullet ants. They
have the most painful sting known
to man. Now laugh. Enjoy. Ha-ha....

Jeff yowls a visceral scream.

MINUTES LATER

The aborigines pull the gloves off. Jeff, crazed, pouring
sweat, stares in horror at his quivering, gangrenous hands.

He screams as he high steps in circles, fluttering his hands
to extinguish the fire-like pain.

JEFF

Aaaahhhh!...

MOMENTS LATER

Now on the ground, Jeff tosses about deliriously.

SERIES OF RAPID IMAGES

--A dazzling emerald GREEN FLASH.

--Jeff falls into a fiery abyss, hands ablaze, screaming.

--FLASH! John Wayne melts into a pile of ants.

--FLASH! A key-like object in the petrified ant's abdomen.

--FLASH! The Key inserted in a hole below a woman's eye.

--FLASH! Wendy bound in rope, squirming.

--FLASH! Triunfo's bloated head explodes.

--FLASH! New York City skyline crumbles to the ground.

--FLASH! From space: A smoggy, molten Earth.

--FLASH! Blackness.

BACK TO SCENE: Giggling aborigines gaze down on Jeff as he dozes fitfully. Dewey indicates to an ABORIGINE to pull John Wayne from the circle and follow him.

EXT. INDIAN LODGE - NIGHT

Dewey guides the aborigine and John Wayne into the jungle darkness. TWO CURIOUS ABORIGINES follow them.

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY

The threesome enter a clearing and stop. Dewey turns to the aborigine, brings forth a canister of insecticide and sprays him in the face. The aborigine shrieks and runs away.

DEWEY

(to John Wayne)

Finally. I have you alone. No more pretending.

JOHN WAYNE

(JW's voice, normal)

Your a bad penguin, ain't cha?

DEWEY

To others, you are a wonder. To me, you're nothing but a box of Cracker Jacks with a priceless fortune inside. I finally get what's mine.

JOHN WAYNE

Cracker jacks?

Dewey sprays insecticide at him. John Wayne wilts, sinks.

Dewey knives open John Wayne's chest, pulls out the pulsing green Egg, stares at it, giggles insanely.

He stuffs it into his satchel; runs off with it.

INT. INDIAN LODGE - DAY

Jeff opens and closes his unblemished hands. His eyes bright.

JEFF

...I can't imagine a more clear-headed, sober high. I feel great, like I can do anything.

ATLI

One must experience pain to unlock the mind to visions and strengthen it. You are now one of us. You can visit anytime.

JEFF

I had a dream Wendy was still alive, but tied up, in danger.

ATLI

I saw her through your visions. She's quite fetching.

JEFF

Then she's alive?

ATLI

That is correct. I also saw a termite with the Key stuck in its belly. But I couldn't make out its location.

JEFF

I know where it is...How long was I out for?

ATLI

You have till noon today.

JEFF

(looks at his watch)
Six hours? How are we...
(looks around, panicking)
Where's John Wayne?...Dewey?

The sprayed aborigine runs up, gestures urgently.

ABORIGINE

JonWayne. Come!

EXT. CLIFF PATH - DAY

Dewey pulls his map out, studies it, looks off.

In the leafy shadows we see two aborigines eye him, put hollow reeds to their mouths, aim, blow: PHOOT! PHOOT!

Ants smack onto Dewey's neck. He leaps, stunned.

DEWEY
Ow! Oh, no! Aaaagh!

He slaps his neck. An ant crashes onto the back of his hand. He panics. Another crashes onto his face.

He takes off in a blind run, screaming, slapping at himself, then drops out of sight. The scream fades. SPLASH!

The two aborigines approach the edge of a cliff, look over. They run off giggling.

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY

Jeff and a reverent assemblage of aborigines look calmly down at the deflated form of John Wayne. Atli lays banana leaves over him, chants a prayer.

LATER

Atli hands Jeff a woven purse and a hollow reed.

JEFF
What's this?

ATLI
An ant shooter. Pluck an ant from the card, insert it head first in the reed, aim, and blow. Like this.

Atli blows into his closed fist.

ATLI
Go find your woman, then remove the Key from the termite and insert it into the monument before the sun's zenith. Illa will guide you. I will meet you there with the Egg.

Atli turns and disappears into the dark jungle.

JEFF
Wait! How will I find it?

EXT. WATERFALL POOL - DAY

Chinco and Guano are taking a siesta on shore. A man screams o.s. They jolt awake and look up startled as

Dewey smacks into the pool. He bops up face down.

LATER

Chinco withdraws the pulsing green egg from Dewey's satchel.

CHINCO
Dios mio! God is watching over us,
Guano. Es la manna de cielo.

GUANO
We are rich! No more payday loans.
Cuidado, Chinco. Better put it back
before we lose it again.

CHINCO
Don't worry, Guano. You couldn't
pry it from my dead hands.

The earth shakes, knocks Chinco off his feet. The egg leaps from his hand and plonks into Guano's suspended pants.

The shaking stops. Guano stares down at his pendulous crotch.

CHINCO
It looks good on you, Guano.

An ant crashes onto his neck. His eye goes big with alarm.

CHINCO
Aaaagh! Oh! I'm shot!

An ant smacks into Guano's neck.

GUANO
What? Aaagh! I'm shot, too! Aaaagh!

The two aborigines stand up from the jungle undergrowth, blow through their reeds: PHOOT! PHOOT! Guano's wig flies away. An ant crashes onto his bald head.

An aborigine dashes in, plunges his hand into Guano's crotch, tugs on something that won't come out.

GUANO
Aaaagh! Mis cajones! Aaaagh!

He digs deeper, pulls out the egg, leaps into the jungle.

Guano and Chinco hop-dance, scream in agony.

INT. CAMOUFLAGED TENT - DAY

Wendy sits tied to a chair across the table from El Triunfo. Her left index finger is Velcroed to a finger guillotine.

El Triunfo teases the trip string as he watches her draw on a piece of paper with her right hand. Jorge stands behind her.

WENDY
 (to herself)
 Wait...That isn't it.
 (she erases; redraws)
 Okay...Yeah, that's it.

ON THE PAPER: Her pen traces a cartoonish zig-zag line moving away from a "Here we are" circle to an "X."

WENDY (O.S.)
 (as she traces)
 You follow this windy trail here...
 until you get to the "X."

El Triunfo snatches the paper from her, glares at it.

EL TRIUNFO
 This is incomprehensible
 scribbling! Makes me dizzy!

He scrunches the paper into in his fist; throws it at her.

EL TRIUNFO
 Get ready to lose your nose-picker.

He teasingly pulls on the string.

WENDY
 I don't have a photographic mind.
 That's the best I can recall.

Wendy stares at the black-capped cyst ready to burst at the end of El Triunfo's nose. She makes a disgusted face.

EL TRIUNFO
 (chuckles, sneers)
 What? Too gruesome for you?

WENDY
 Yuck! What's that on the end of
 your nose?

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY

The two aborigines present the green pulsing egg to Atli.

EXT. CAMOUFLAGED TENT - EDGE OF CLEARING - DAY

Jeff separates a couple of fronds, looks out at goons drinking, horsing around by the tent in the b.g.

He carefully plucks a Bullet Ant from the woven card, crams it into the reed. He puts it to his mouth, holds it in his palm like a glass blower, aims, blows. PHOOT!

A goon arches, hops.

GOON
Aaaaaagh! I'm shot!

JEFF
(to himself)
Hmm. That's pretty slick.

He loads another ant. PHOOT!

SHOTS OF BULLET ANTS hitting necks and faces. Goons high-step, yowl, gyrate as if in a wild, drunken hoedown.

We sight down the reed with Jeff as he moves it over to El Triunfo's head under the open tent.

INT. CAMOUFLAGED TENT - DAY

El Triunfo holds a hand mirror while Jorge squeezes the cyst at the end of El Triunfo's nose. A Bullet Ant slams into El Triunfo's cheek. He leaps up screaming.

A Bullet Ant slams into Jorge's lip. He leaps up, runs out with El Triunfo.

EL TRIUNFO/JORGE/GOONS (O.S.)
(in chorus)
Aaaaaaagh! Aaaaagh! Aaaaagh!....

Jeff runs in.

WENDY
Oh, Jeff! Am I glad to see you! Be careful. My finger.

Jeff hurriedly unties her; bumps the guillotine. The blade swooshes down as Wendy yanks her finger out.

She raises her finger, stares at it. The fingernail is cut off square. She shivers at a gruesome thought.

She leaps up and hugs Jeff. Startled, he melts into her for a second, then reluctantly pulls away.

JEFF
I'm sorry I was so stupid earlier.
Will you forgive me?

WENDY
You saved my finger. How could I not?

JEFF
Come on, then. No time...

He leads her behind the cubicle, to the petrified termite laying on the ground. He rips away a tent pole.

WENDY
What are you doing?

JEFF
Dissecting a termite.

He strikes the termite's abdomen with the pole: Kraack! It splits open, revealing a knobbed emerald Skeleton Key half-embedded. He pries it out with his fingers.

JEFF
This is the Key to the monument.

WENDY
How did you know?

JEFF
I dreamt it.

Wendy looks at him oddly. Jeff drops the Key into his satchel. He deftly plucks ants from the woven fibre card, shoves them into the reed.

WENDY
What are you doing? Those are Bullet Ants. A bite from just one will make you wish you were dead.

JEFF
Believe me, I know.

EL TRIUNFO (O.S.)
Where are they? I'll kill 'em.

El Triunfo, cupping his cheek, enters with Jorge, whose lower lip is now an enormous, livid pout. Howling goons, insane with pain, stagger up beside them. El Triunfo spots Jeff.

EL TRIUNFO
There they are! Grab 'em!

Jeff puts the reed to his mouth, takes a deep breath and blows: PH-PH-PH-PHOOT! He sweeps it.

Ants zip out like bullets from an Uzi, smashing goons in the face; El Triunfo, between the eyes; Jorge, in the eye, as they grope blindly for their guns.

EL TRIUNFO/JORGE/GOONS
Aaaaaagh! Aaaaaagh! Aaaaaagh!...

EXT. CAMOUFLAGED TENT - CONTINUOUS

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!... Jeff and Wendy leap into the jungle, bullets ripping the foliage to shreds around them.

EXT. FORKED JUNGLE PATH - DAY

Jeff and Wendy run up to a stop at a triple fork in the trail out of breath.

WENDY
Which way?

JEFF
Don't know. It's an eeny, meeny,
miny, moe decision.

Their attention is drawn to the noisy Howler monkeys seemingly beckoning them on one of the paths.

WENDY
I think the monkeys want us to
follow them.

JEFF
It's in their interest for us to
find the monument, too. Let's go.

They take off running, following the chattering monkeys.

EXT. NARROW CLIFF PATH - DAY

Wendy slips, clings to the face of the cliff frozen in fear.

JEFF
You alright?

WENDY
I-I can't do this. I'm going to
fall.

Jeff backs up, grabs her arm.

JEFF
Don't look down. I got you. Trust
me, okay?

WENDY
O-Okay.

Jeff carefully inches her along the slippery trail as Howler monkeys leap sure-footed around them.

LATER - END OF CLIFF PATH

Wendy slips off the cliff path, swings out in mid-air as Jeff pulls her onto solid ground. Wendy collapses in relief.

WENDY
That's twice you saved my life.
What is it with you?

JEFF
I don't want to lose you. You're
the coolest girl I've ever met.

Wendy sits up and kisses him on the cheek.

WENDY
That's the most truthful thing a
man has ever said to me.

Jeff blushes; looks at his watch.

JEFF
Ahem. We better get going.

EXT. JUNGLE PATH - CONTINUOUS

The path makes an oxbow. Jeff and Wendy run along it.

EXT. JUNGLE PATH - CONTINUOUS

Jeff and Wendy running. They follow an opposite oxbow, similar to her drawing; take another oxbow,...then another.

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY

Jeff and Wendy run out of the jungle and stop. Hands on knees, out of breath, they look around themselves.

JEFF
We hit a dead end.

He notices a knobbed pin attached to Wendy's back collar.

WENDY
This has to be it. We don't have
time to go back.

JEFF
Hold still.

He plucks it off, examines it.

WENDY
What is it?

JEFF
It's a bugging device.

He picks up a stone, steps over to a vine strewn cliff, and smashes the pin against it.

JEFF
There. They can't track us anymore,
not that it makes a difference now.

An earthquake rains rubble from the cliff as Wendy and Jeff stumble away, dodging it. After a moment, the quake ceases.

Wendy stares up in awe at the cliff wall.

WENDY
Ah, Jeff? Look up.

Jeff looks up, his jaw drops at what he sees:

EXT. STONE MONUMENT OF THE GODDESS ILLA - DAY

Looming skyward, it depicts a forward-leaning woman in a mid-length skirt, her hands crossed over to opposing knees. Her green stone eyes are wide and her mouth open, as if pleasantly surprised. On her right cheek, an empty hole.

Wendy and Jeff gape at their discovery.

JEFF
Unbelievable. The Goddess Illa is a
Marilyn Monroe look-a-like.

WENDY
She's the eternal woman.

JEFF
The key fits in that hole below the
eye. I dreamt that, too.
(looks at his watch)
Thirty minutes to doomsday.
(to himself)
Okay, Atli. You can show yourself
now with the Egg.

WENDY
Who's Atli?

DEWEY (O.S.)
(hoarse, raspy)
Hold it right there!

Jeff and Wendy spin around to face Dewey standing up from the undergrowth pointing a Glock at them, his neck swollen black.

JEFF
Traitor! Where's the Egg?

WENDY
I knew there was something evil about you.

DEWEY
I'm guessing it will be here soon. What I want now is that Key you have in your satchel.

JEFF
You heard Atli: Without the Egg and the Key here together by noon, the world will end.

DEWEY
It will end for all but the possessor--that's me. Didn't tell you that part. I will have eternal life with creation powers.

An abrupt CHOPPING SOUND as El Triunfo's helicopter rounds the monolith, sets down, shuts down its engines.

DEWEY
Dang it! No funny stuff. Remember, I've got you in my gun sights.

He sinks down and disappears into the jungle undergrowth.

Marvin limps out of the helicopter wearing a gas mask and a container on his back. He wands white fog over the area.

El Triunfo materializes from the fog pointing his Glock at Jeff. His swollen calamine face pocked with ulcers and leaking pustules; his cheek and forehead gangrenous.

EL TRIUNFO
Well, well. Looky what we have here. You have something in that satchel I want. Hand it over... Where's that monster and my Egg?

JEFF
He was killed and the Egg stolen...

EL TRIUNFO
By whom? His name wouldn't happen to be Dewey Moody, would it?

JEFF
You know him?

EL TRIUNFO

Longer than I care to remember.
I'll deal with him later. Right
now, I want the Key. Hand it over!

JEFF

(glances at the watch)
The earth is going to self-destruct
if I don't insert this Key in the
next fifteen minutes. Then what
good will it do you?

El Triunfo fires his gun: BLAM! Jeff stumbles back a step and
stares incredulously at the bloody wound in his arm.

EL TRIUNFO

You fools with small minds. It
takes boldness to be great like me.
I'll own the planet and create what
I want. Get it? Now, give it here.

He takes aim.

DEWEY (O.S.)

Toss your gun or I'll blow your
rotten head into pie filling.

El Triunfo freezes, tosses his gun.

EL TRIUNFO

That you, Doodee? Shoulda known.

He turns around to face Dewey.

EL TRIUNFO

Still jealous of me, little bro?
Too bad you couldn't make it with
all that education you had.

DEWEY

You made your fortune stealing my
ideas. I was the brains. It's time
to take what's mine.

EL TRIUNFO

Put that gun down and I'll split
the planet with you. You take the
Eastern hemisphere and I'll take
the Western. How 'bout it?

DEWEY

Shut up, Drumph. What's mine is
mine. One hundred percent. And I'm
not sharing one pebble with you.

EL TRIUNFO
I shoulda smothered you in the crib
and called it SIDS.

DEWEY
(to Jeff)
Toss the satchel here.

Jeff reluctantly tosses it to him.

DEWEY
(to El Triunfo)
Any last words?

EL TRIUNFO
Yeah. Look behind you.

DEWEY
Nice try. Say bye-bye, Drumph.

AMBASSADOR (O.S.)
Drop the gun. Toss the bag to me.

Dewey freezes. The Ambassador steps into frame, pistol drawn.
Dewey drops his gun, turns, tosses the satchel to him.

AMBASSADOR
You Americanos think you can just
come into my country, rape her, and
abscond with her virgin treasures.
Remove your clothes and bend over.

JEFF
Ambassador, please. We only have...
(glances at his watch)
six minutes to doomsday.

WENDY
I have room on my calendar now.
Just pick a time. No charge.

AMBASSADOR
You don't come close to the orgasm
I'll get when I possess that Key.

WENDY
You better look behind you, first.

AMBASSADOR
Ha! Is that the best you can come
up with? Have you lost your wit?

CHINCO (O.S.)
Drop your pistola!

The Ambassador starts, rotates slowly around to see Chinco and Guano pointing Tasers at him, shaking like leaves. The Ambassador laughs, keeps his gun on them.

DEWEY (O.S.)
Toss the gun! Give me the satchel.

AMBASSADOR
Huh?

The Ambassador looks back over his shoulder, sees Dewey levelling his Glock at him. He tosses his gun and hands the bag to him. Dewey giggles smugly.

EL TRIUNFO (O.S.)
Lose the gun, Doodee!

Dewey winces. He turns slowly around as El Triunfo presses his Glock into Dewey's nose. Dewey tosses his gun.

EL TRIUNFO
Pie-filling, huh?

Wendy beats the bandaged Marvin to Dewey's gun.

WENDY
Drop it, Triunfo!

El Triunfo seethes. He whirls around, gun in hand. Wendy, holding the gun shakily with both hands, closes her eyes and fires: BLAM!

El Triunfo's ear flies away. He throws down the gun, cups his bleeding ear.

EL TRIUNFO
Aaagh! My ear! You bitch! My beautiful ear. Aaaagh!

JEFF
(to Dewey)
Toss the satchel here.

Dewey tosses it to him.

JEFF
(to Wendy)
I can't climb. You'll have to.

WENDY
I-I can't. You saw me lose it on the cliff. I've been afraid of heights ever since my prankster uncle dropped me when I was three.

JEFF

Then pretend you're two again, or
we're dead.

Jeff glances at his watch as Wendy appraises the near-vertical 30-foot climb. She hands off the gun to Jeff and puts the satchel strap around her neck.

WENDY

O-kay, then. Here goes nothing.
You'll catch me if I fall, right?

JEFF

Don't worry. I'll catch you.
But, you have to go. NOW.
(seethes to himself)
Where the heck are you, Atli?

Wendy leaps onto the monument, grabs a vine, hand-over-hands herself up it, her feet scrambling, slipping up the stone skirt and over the arms and breast.

She's at the nose, looks down, freezes, suddenly three again.

JEFF

Come on, Wendy. You can do it!

WENDY

I-I can't move.

JEFF

Have your two-year-old self hold
onto the vine and reach over to the
hole. You're almost there.

She gathers the courage and pushes off, sets herself next to the hole. She removes the key from the satchel.

The monument shakes violently.

Wendy fends off loose stones raining down on her as the vine breaks. She grabs onto the hole, loses the key. It bounces off the monument's breast, lands at Jeff's feet.

Jeff fights for balance, tosses the Key as he falls backward.

Wendy screams as she reaches for it, misses.

On its downward arc, she snatches it to her breast.

Jeff glances at his watch.

JEFF

Ten seconds!

Wendy reaches to stab the key in the hole, pauses.

WENDY

I can't! My hand's in the way!

A violent shaking, things get blurry. In the blur we see a steady hand grab her arm as another hand grabs the Key from her other hand and plunges it into the hole.

The earthquake stops. Wendy looks up. It's John Wayne.

WENDY

Boy, am I glad to see you.

JOHN WAYNE

(normal JW voice)

Hi, Wendy. Me, too.

Wendy is stunned by his reply.

JEFF

Duke! You're alive!

Jeff glances at his watch as Atli and his aborigines seem to appear out of nowhere around him.

ON WATCH FACE: The second hand jerks to twelve o'clock.

JEFF

(to Atli)

Y-your timing is...how should I put it...exquisite, to say the least. Th-that was uncomfortably close.

ATLI

Timing is relative. One is just more dramatic than the other; however, the deed gets done just the same.

Jorge rappels down the statue forehead, a spray can in his hand. He lands beside John Wayne.

WENDY

Duke! Look out!

John Wayne kicks the can out of Jorge's hand and deposits Wendy atop the monument's head.

He grabs Jorge's arm, twirls him like a hammer thrower.

Jorge flies away like a rocket, eventually becoming a screaming speck on the horizon, then nothing.

John Wayne leaps to the ground with Wendy in arms, lands softly, and releases her. He turns, faces the monument. This is the moment for which he was created, and he's ready.

The earth shakes and rumbles. The sky boils black. Tectonic thunder. Fractured lightening.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

A gloomy, stormy panoramic view of the city trembling.

INT. BOMB SHELTER - DAY

A shaky tableau of TERRIFIED PEOPLE, packed like sardines.

EXT. STONE MONUMENT OF THE GODDESS ILLA - DAY

Wendy stumbles over to Jeff. John Wayne stands rigid before the monument, unaffected by the shaking, the rest a blur.

JEFF

I thought we stopped it.

A bolt of lightening strikes the Key, igniting a swirling green lit saucer over the monument.

The stone skirt slowly lifts, GRINDING, straining. Loose stones tumble down. Vines hang freely like a bead curtain.

The ground quivers knocking everybody to the ground.

The skirt lifts higher, expanding ever outward, then CLUNKS to a halt, leaving a frilled awning over a black Portal.

The angry clouds in the sky evaporate, quaking ceases.

The green disk of light shrinks to a laser beam and directs itself to the Egg in John Wayne's chest.

John Wayne arches. A green light cones from his chest to the black Portal, lighting up another dimension: An ancient world of alabaster pyramids. A CROWD watches from inside.

An ABORIGINAL leaves the crowd, steps up to the Portal, pulls down on a string cord: CLICK! The green beam cone disappears and we are left with an open lit Portal.

John Wayne walks up to the Portal and steps through. Atli's aborigines jog through. The ecstatic crowd greets them [unheard] as if warriors returning home alive.

El Triunfo gapes in awe at the Portal.

EL TRIUNFO
 (out of his mind)
 I AM THE CHOSEN ONE! A new world
 awaits my rule! I will have eternal
 life and control the riches of the
 universe! Ha-ha. I am GAAWD!

He charges at the Portal with his arms glory-spread, Marvin hobbling fast behind him. The Ambassador, Dewey, Chinco and Guano behind them.

He crosses an invisible barrier as he enters the Portal and instantly disappears: PFFT! El Triunfo drifts away in a putrid-green vapor cloud.

130 The Ambassador and Marvin, racing a close second and third, hit the barrier with a forward-leaning "nose" finish. PFFT! PFFT! Two brown vapors rise from where they once were.

Dewey, Chinco and Guano skid to a stop as the three vapor columns drift upwards before their startled faces.

Jeff and Wendy stare in wonder. Chinco and Guano back away from the Portal and approach Jeff.

CHINCO
 Señor Foreman. You help us?

JEFF
 You're the thieves who broke into my studio and tased me. Why should I...?

GUANO
 No, no. It wasn't us, Señor Foreman.

JEFF
 How do you know my name?

CHINCO
 It was us. I cannot tell a lie--
 (indicates Guano)
 like Guano here.

GUANO
 We are free hombres now, Señor. We will tell the truth from now on.

Atli turns to Jeff and Wendy.

ATLI
 Come. Follow me.

They follow Atli to the Portal. Chinco calls after them.

CHINCO

We work for you now. Okay, Señor Foreman? We will protect you--for free!

GUANO

With our miserable lives.

Atli steps through. Wendy stops, grabs Jeff's arm.

WENDY

How do we know we aren't going to be fried like the others?

ATLI

(hearing her)

Oops! My bad. One tends to forget with age, but then, you are our first ever outside visitors.

He pulls down and holds the string.

ATLI

Okay. You may step through now.

131 Jeff and Wendy step through. Atli releases the string. 131

Dewey's face rages with disappointment and jealousy.

DEWEY

Why are they being feted and not me? I brought them here. I found the dang Egg. The honor belongs to me!

He walks up to the Portal.

DEWEY

Atli, just hear me out.

He steps through. PFFT! Black smoke rises and drifts away.

Chinco and Guano share a look of horror and fear.

INT. PORTAL - DAY

Giggling ABORIGINES form a horseshoe around Jeff and Wendy and John Wayne. THREE GIANT TERMITES lumber towards them.

They approach the trio, wrap them with their mandibles and rear up with them for all to see. The crowd erupts in cheers. Jeff and Wendy, somewhat stunned, happily wave.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

A clear, sunny day. All is normal again.

INT./EXT. BOMB SHELTER - DAY

Relieved people tentatively leave the shelter into the light.

INT. T.V. STATION - DAY

The news reporter withdraws the pistol barrel from his mouth.

NEWS REPORTER

...This just in: The earth is calm.
No more quakes reported anywhere.
We should breathe a sign of relief.
It was a close call...

INT. PORTAL - LATER THAT DAY

A crowd surrounds John Wayne, morphed into Clint Eastwood.

JOHN WAYNE

(Clint's FF voice)

Do ya' feel lucky, penguin?

The aborigines roar with laughter as John Wayne stands over an aboriginal volunteer pointing his arm morphed into a gun.

Atli takes Jeff and Wendy aside.

ATLI

Humanity just got a taste of their extinction, but it is certain to happen again--very soon--unless...

JEFF

Unless what?

ATLI

Humans stop breeding. The Earth cannot support your children's children without total collapse.

JEFF

I'm afraid that will never happen. Governments encourage unlimited births. Religions praise it.

WENDY

And we're selfish and greedy. We're not collaborative thinkers, like ants.

ATLI

Humankind has become a malignant cancer on Illa's creation. It's killing the very life-force from which it derives its own life. Such foolishness.

WENDY

There's no way they will come to their senses in time, not even when the apocalyptic blood-bath they are praying for begins.

ATLI

If you can't change, then you have fifty years left, give or take.

JEFF

Fifty years?

ATLI

That is correct. They will be miserably years as the fishes die off, waters evaporate, lands burn to dust, then the great die-off. Poof. Bye, bye humanity.

Jeff's spirit deflates hearing this.

JEFF

If it's inevitable, then why should we care anymore, about anything? Let the apocalypse begin.

ATLI

Every day alive is a day not dead. Embrace it. Love it. You have been given wisdom. Teach them.

JEFF

They'll just label me a doomsday crackpot. I fear we are already past the point of no return.

ATLI

No sweat, then. We'll just start over, like before. You are welcome to seek refuge with us. Be the next Adam and Eve. Get a leg up on evolution. What do you say?

JEFF
 (glances at Wendy)
 We'll get back to you on that.

Jeff removes his Timex watch and gives it to Atli.

JEFF
 This is for you. Something to
 remember us by. It's all I got that
 has any value to show my thanks.

ATLI
 We will treasure it and put it in
 our Extinction Number Six Museum to
 honor you and this closing chapter
 in Earth's history.

John Wayne leads termites carrying bulging sacks into the scene. They stop in front of Jeff and set down their loads.

ATLI
 And we have something for you. It's
 gravel to us, but you may find a
 good use for them.

JOHN WAYNE
 (John Wayne's normal
 voice)
 Here's lookin' at cha, Jeff.

He opens a bag, lifts out a handful of glittering jewels. He's gobsmacked. Jeff looks at John Wayne admiringly.

JEFF
 I wish I could take you back with
 me, instead.

Atli puts the watch to his ear, listens to its ticking, then holds it out and reads something on it. He laughs.

ATLI
 It has a lifetime warranty. How
 'bout that. Excellent.

We back off the scene and close in on open Portal and

MATCH CUT:

INT. MOMA - DAY

to a diorama of the open Portal.

A sign reads: "Post-Apocalyptic Eden--In the Beginning."

Scattered around the large room are Jeff's reconstructed busts of celebrities filled with live ants.

PEOPLE dressed to the nines mingle genially, get a sensation touching the riffling statuary.

A PIANO PLAYER plays soft music.

A WAITER wends his way through the crowd one-handing a tray of full champagne glasses. Guests pick them off as he passes.

He drifts by Jeff, now tanned, the picture of health, his arm in a sling. He is poised and confident; microphones in his face, cameras flashing.

Extra guards stand around the perimeter. Amongst them, dressed sharply as legitimate guards, are Chinco and Guano.

Platinum Rastafarian ringlets splay out from under Guano's cap. Chinco wears his go-to-church white eye-patch with a red cross over a square blue iris.

The Museum Director gleefully approaches Jeff.

MUSEUM DIRECTOR
 Congratulations, Jeff. You stuck to your muse. This is the biggest reception we've ever hosted. And, we are getting show requests from museums the world over. Great work.

JEFF
 Thanks for changing your mind.

They shake hands. The Director leaves, glad-handing his way.

Mrs. Ferguson taps Jeff lightly on the shoulder with her cane. She no longer wears glasses, her cataracts gone, her hearing aids invisible. She is dressed in a light blue dress with a white blouse and an expensive cardigan sweater. Around her neck is a string of emeralds.

Jeff turns to her. She smiles with perfect dentures.

JEFF
 Mrs. Ferguson. You look great.

MRS. FERGUSON
 Thanks to you, young man. You've restored my faith in humanity, or in you, anyway.

JEFF
 Well, you just enjoy the rest of your life in comfort, Mrs. Ferguson. You deserve it.

Mrs. Ferguson pinches Jeff's cheek.

MRS. FERGUSON

Sweet boy.
(turns away)
Weee! I feel like eighty again.

She air-fences with her cane as she shuffles away.

AH-CHOO! Jeff frowns, looks off to the familiar sound.

JENNIFER

Excuse me! Make way! Comin'
through. I know the artist.

Jennifer shoulders her way through the crowd towards Jeff. We see Todd hanging back wearing a Walmart work shirt.

She gets between Jeff and the cameras. She strains to maintain a genuine smile, her allergy nibbling at it.

JENNIFER

Jeff. Dawlink.

JEFF

Jennifer. What are you doing here?

She suffocates him with a hug, sneaks a look at the camera.

JEFF

Careful. My arm.

JENNIFER

Oh, sorry, sweetheart.

She sneezes on his shoulder: CHOO! She twirls to the camera.

JENNIFER

I am so proud of this guy. Jeff will be the first to admit that he wouldn't be here if it wasn't for me. I gave him the emotional support he needed. Didn't I, dear?

Jennifer puts her hand up as Jeff starts to protest.

JENNIFER

He may kid and call it nagging, but my loving counselling style gave him the foundation for the man he is today. Right, Jeffrey dear?

She stretches to kiss Jeff on the cheek. He wilts back. Wendy steps into the scene, smiles at Jennifer.

WENDY

Congratulations. Jeff's told me so much about you. He couldn't have done this without you, I'm sure.

She offers her hand. Jennifer is taken aback, gives her a skeptical look, then offers a limp hand. They shake. Jeff looks confused.

JENNIFER

Really? Why, er...thank you.

Jennifer turns away, whispers in Jeff's ear:

JENNIFER

Let's start over.

Wendy shakes an open envelope of Bullet Ants into Jennifer's open purse.

Jennifer wraps an arm around Jeff's neck, turns to the press.

JENNIFER

We stuck with each other through
thick and thi...AH CHOOO! Oh, my...
Pardon me.

She crams her hand into her purse and pulls out a tissue crawling with bullet ants. She puts the tissue to her nose and suddenly waves it away in horror.

Her eyes stare down like Klieg lamps at ants chomping on the tip of her nose. She shrieks, leaps away, slapping at her nose with her one hand and vigorously waving the other in the air trying to shake off the ants clinging to it.

JENNIFER

OH, GAWD! YOU MOTHER... AH CHOOOO!

Todd shrinks back from the crowd, spins around, runs out.

Jennifer rushes back and forth in a tight circle, leaping, howling, waving her arms like a touched evangelical.

The piano player sees her, catches on, livens it up with a fast rendition of the "William Tell Overture." A crowd spontaneously gathers around her, claps to the fast rhythm.

Guano dances in, gives her a few twirls and shuffle-steps, then surreptitiously zaps her with a stun gun. She goes rigid in an apparent finale.

Chinco slides in on one knee as she topples into his arms, like a fainting damsel, hand fluttering at the end of a straight, paralyzed arm. He pauses for affect.

The crowd claps and cheers. Chinco bows. Affecting an exit with dignity, they carry Jennifer off like the Statue of Liberty. The crowd claps for more.

Wendy turns to Jeff and smiles.

WENDY
 Sorry about that. Wanna be my
 forever guy?

Jeff edges closer, desire in his eyes.

JEFF
 Will it cost me?

WENDY
 A taste of your lips.

Their lips meet, tentatively taste, explore, then mutually
 pull apart and look deep into each other's eyes.

They grab onto each other and kiss passionately as we look
 beyond them to a group of people in the corner, surrounding
 something of extreme interest--what they came here to see--
 John Wayne.

JOHN WAYNE
 (Schwarzenegger's voice)
 ...Sayonara, Baby!

The crowd erupts in laughter.

FADE OUT

ON BLACK SCREEN - SUPER IMPOSE:

--JENNIFER BECOMES A TIC-TOC SENSATION WHEN HER UNIQUE DANCE,
 KNOWN AS *THE JENNY HOP*, GOES VIRAL, WITH OVER TWO BILLION
 FOLLOWERS.

--TODD BECOMES THE YOUNGEST EVER CEO OF WALMART.

--CHINCO AND GUANO OPEN A SUCCESSFUL CHAIN OF CUSTOM WIG
 STORES.

--JEFF AND WENDY BECOME AMBASSADORS FOR MINIMALIST CHILD
 BEARING. THEY HAVE FIVE ADOPTED CHILDREN, AND COUNTING.

--JOHN WAYNE BECOMES A FAMOUS MOVIE ACTOR KNOWN FOR USING
 MEMORABLE ONE-LINERS. HE CO-WROTE THE AUTO-BIOGRAPHICAL,
 OSCAR-WINNING *THE TERMITE*. HE IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON *THE*
NEMATODE AS EXECUTIVE PRODUCER.

--ATLI MOVED BACK THE DATE FOR THE NEXT MASS EXTINCTION EVENT
 TO 2045, OR SOONER.

THE END