

THE STITCHER

Written by

Rod Thompson and Tim Westland

Tim Westland
timwestland@hotmail.com

Rod Thompson
rodthompson1980@gmail.com

FADE IN.

INT. PRITCHETT'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT

A huge mansion with a cabin motif, both pretentious and rustic.

In the spacious main living area, ANIMAL HEAD TROPHIES are mounted on the wall next to twin 60 inch flat screen TVs.

JOHN PRITCHETT (30s) struts around in shorts and no shirt. The perfect male form, a superhero physique.

But the tattoos on his arms - tribal bands, barbed wire, Chinese glyphs - place him in a different category.

Douche.

A bottle of expensive beer in one hand, a phone to his ear in the other. He swaggers through the house...

JOHN

(to phone)

...That's right, I've changed my mind. This land has been in my family since before the civil war, a haven for gold miners and people headed west. If you think I'm just going to hand over three thousand acres of historic natural beauty to a bunch of heartless developers -

The sound of pleading on the other end of the line elicits a grin from John.

JOHN

Calm down, Gary. I'm fucking with you!

John barks out laughter at Gary's expense.

JOHN

You just get me that big check so I can head for sunnier shores.

(pauses)

Stop sounding like a fucking tree hugger and more like my lawyer.

Some rebuttal on the other end. John puts an end to that.

JOHN
I don't give a shit. They can build
on it or burn it to the ground. Let
the townsfolk worry about it.

EXT. PRITCHETT'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Outside in the dark, an unseen **CREATURE** moves through the trees and brush. It lumbers towards the cabin, huffing and chuffing.

CREATURE'S POV: Behind a wide window, John talks on the phone, oblivious.

INT. PRITCHETT'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT

John continues his conversation with Gary.

JOHN
Yeah, I'm flying out tomorrow. I'll
hit you up when I get to Kennedy.
Sure. Later.

He hangs up, then falls back onto the couch, a smug grin on his face.

He grabs the remote to turn on the television, flips from channel to channel.

Before he can settle on what to watch, a sound catches his ear: SCRATCHING at the front door.

JOHN
Stupid cat.

John stands and walks to the --

FOYER

He approaches the front door, opens it. The wind gusts and leaves swirl past his feet and into the cabin.

John watches the mess settle behind him.

JOHN
Aw fuckin' great!

He turns back to the dark outside.

EXT. PRITCHETT'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT

John takes a few steps outside, looks around.

JOHN
Peanut!

The wind howls. He shivers.

JOHN
Oh, screw this.

INT. PRITCHETT'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT

John closes the door and walks towards the living area when he hears it.

GROWLING.

He stops, turns around, and sees the CREATURE. We don't.

JOHN
W-w-what the fuck?

He scrambles backward as the thing stalks forward.

Its growling turns to a malevolent SCREAM. Then it attacks.

And it's John's turn to scream.

CUT TO:

EXT. OZARK MOUNTAINS - DAY

Gray Autumn skies blanket the Ozark mountain range.

IN THE WOODS

- A DEER looks off into the distance. Mesmerized.
- A COUGAR devours prey.
- A BLACK BEAR CUB rolls around in freshly fallen leaves.
- A HAWK surfs the wind, majestic wings spread wide.

BIRD'S EYE:

A road cuts across the spectrum of nature's serenity like a scar across the face of a beauty queen.

On the road, a large CONVERSION VAN makes its way through the twists and turns.

INT. CONVERSION VAN - DAY

Clothed in bright orange vests and half a mile of flannel, five Iraq War buddies drive towards a weekend of hunting and drunken camaraderie.

WILL PROSPERO (30s) drives. A real All American type. If he tore open his shirt and you saw a big "S" on his chest, you wouldn't be surprised. Hero quality.

SEAN MCKENNA (30s) sits shotgun. Smaller than the other guys, his attention is on the MAPS on his iPhone phone. Definitely the nerd of the group.

ZION EDWARDS (30s) sits behind Sean, his polar opposite in almost every way. His muscled physique and ebony skin draw respect from men and catcalls from women. He stares out the window, here... but not quite present.

CRAIG BURWELL (30s) sits behind Will, his feet propped up to showcase the LIGHTNING BOLTS on the sides of his self-heated hiking boots. His arrogance is powered by undeserved pride.

Lastly, **DR. BO HUANG** (30s) lays comfortably among the pile of rucksacks and hunting gear at the back of the van. His eyes may be closed, but he's not asleep.

The atmosphere is casual, except for Craig, who is eternally on edge. He leans over and complains into Will's ear.

CRAIG

Pull over, bro. I gotta take a serious leak.

WILL

We're two clicks from Mayberry, Gomer. Gotta be at least one gas station there you can pollute.

BO

Don't do it, Will. If you unleash Craig on the local sewage system, they'll throw us in the pokey.

SEAN

I wouldn't mind stretching my legs.

WILL

Zion?

ZION
Depends. Number one, or number two?

Craig holds up one finger - his middle one.

EXT. GAINSVILLE - OZARK COUNTY - DAY

Unending forest gives way to a rustic gas station, a dozen aging buildings, and a shitkicker bar. The podunk heartland of America - Hicksville, USA.

The van pulls up to the gas station. The sliding door opens and Craig leaps out.

The other men exit, stretch their legs. Zion heads inside.

ZION
I'm gonna grab a vitamin water. You guys want anything?

Will sizes up the town with a glance.

WILL
You really think this dump has vitamin water?

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

Zion enters and heads for the drink refrigerator.

The scruffy proprietor, **CARL** (40s), follows Zion with suspicious eyes that haven't read a book since the sixth grade.

Zion opens the fridge. It contains lots of beer and soda, but no water at all.

Zion turns to the Carl.

ZION
Where do you keep your water?

CARL
Try the hose outside. Boy.

Zion is taken aback, then his hackles raise.

ZION
Excuse me?

Before Carl can reply, in walks **DEPUTY ERICA LANE** (28), working hard to make everyone forget how attractive she is.

She sees the tension between the two men and gets it.

She flashes a friendly smile at Zion.

ERICA
Welcome to Gainsville. You boys
lost, or do you have a place in your
heart for lost and forgotten back
roads of America?

Zion's eyes are locked in a stare down with Carl.

ZION
Yeah, I was just getting a reminder
of why those roads got lost and
forgotten.

ERICA
How you doing, Carl?

Carl snaps out of the stare down.

CARL
Deputy.

ERICA
Everything all right?

CARL
Ayah. Just waiting for three-fifths
here to buy something.

ZION
What the fuck did you just call me?

Erica takes a step forward, in command, but friendly.

ERICA
That ain't no way to treat visitors,
now is it, Carl? What was it you
were looking to purchase, sir?

ZION
Some vitamin water, ma'am.

This gets a smile out of Erica.

ERICA
You think this dump has Vitamin
water?

CARL

Hey!

The tension leaves Zion and he cracks a smile.

ERICA

You and your friends going hunting?

ZION

Yes ma'am.

ERICA

Your licenses up to date, Mr...

ZION

Zion, ma'am.

Zion reaches for his wallet. Erica waves him off.

ERICA

Most of the in-bred is gone from these parts, Zion, but hillbillies are sewn into the landscape. Where ya headed?

ZION

Proctor's mountain, I think. My boy set it all up. Kind of a reunion retreat thing.

ERICA

Ah, Pritchett's land.

Frustrated, Carl clears his throat.

ERICA

All you're likely to find in these parts is plain old H2O. Carl?

CARL

Yes, Deputy?

ERICA

Bring my friend Zion, here, a case of that bottled water you keep in the cooler back yonder.

Carl grimaces, knows he's lost this one, and stalks away.

ERICA

Sorry about Carl.

Zion shrugs.

ERICA
I expect you'll be the last hunters
on that plot now that John Pritchett
up and --

Carl walks up and slams the flat of water on the counter.

Zion reaches for his wallet, but Erica beats him to it and
hands a five spot to Carl.

ERICA
(flirty)
Southern hospitality.

The bathroom door opens and Craig walks out.

ERICA
You boys be careful out there, ya
hear?

Zion smiles.

ZION
Yes ma'am. Wouldn't want a tussle
with the law.

She nods, turns, and walks out.

Craig watches her leave, then looks at Zion, then at Carl.

He senses something just went down, but can't figure it out.

CRAIG
What'd I miss?

Zion turns and walks out with the water. Craig follows.

Moments later, Carl gags from Craig's smelly foulness.

INT. CONVERSION VAN - DAY

Craig leans over Will's shoulder, aggravated.

CRAIG
The guy said it's the first right
after the Reznick County Historical
marker, and you just passed a
fucking Reznick County Historical
marker.

Sean smacks his iPhone.

SEAN

I usually trust Craig's sense of direction about as far as his husband can throw him, but I think he's right, Will.

CRAIG

Did I ask for your help, Sean.

SEAN

I thought you'd appreciate it. You did get us lost in Balad, after all.

WILL

I thought that was Falujah.

ZION

No, it was Talil. Right after Saddam was hung.

CRAIG

Fuck you, Zion. We got lost because Sean's fucking comm-link was set to UHF 25 and was pulling the way-points for the British team.

In unison, the guys pump their fists in the universal 'jerk off' motion, followed up by laughing. Craig fumes.

WILL

Okay, okay! If it'll shut you up.

Will slows the van and whips a U-TURN.

ZION

As long as we reach the site by sunset. I'm not hiking around after nightfall.

CRAIG

Afraid of the dark, big man? You blend right in.

ZION

Most of me does, dickhead.

Zion taps his right leg. CLINK CLINK. A metal prosthetic.

ZION

Something happens to this, I'd like to be able to see to fix it.

CRAIG
Is that the new leg? Yo, let me see
that thing!

Zion pulls up his pant leg, reveals the most incredibly
badass prosthetic ever made. Lightweight Titanium, hi-tech
servo actuators, insane looking pistons.

CRAIG
Jesus, you're like Lieutenant Dan
from Cybertron!

BO
(Forrest Gump voice)
It's his magic leg!

Craig makes the "NA-NA-NA-NAAA" sound from the Six Million
Dollar Man.

CRAIG
(announcer voice)
The Bionic Negro!

ZION
Better than being the cracker with
heated booties!

Zion brings attention to Craig's HEATED BOOTS with little
L.E.D lightning bolts on the side.

CRAIG
Least I still have toes to keep
warm, fuck-face.

Craig looks out the window. A turn off just ahead.

CRAIG
Dude, you're going to miss it again.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - DAY

The van lurches up the steep winding road and comes a stop
at a fork.

INT. CONVERSION VAN - DAY

Craig looks over Will's shoulder.

CRAIG
Why are we stopping?

To the left, a nice gravel road. To the right, a set of tire tracks lead through tall grass and into the woods.

ZION

Did the guy say anything on the phone about which way to go?

CRAIG

I made the reservation like six months ago. Dude cashed my check and that's the last I heard from him.

Will looks left, then right.

WILL

Spirit of adventure?

CRAIG

Hell, yes. I say go!

BO

As a highly educated medical professional, I'd like to state that this sounds like a bad idea.

CRAIG

Shut up, Sulu!

WILL

Z?

Zion nods. Sean nods, too.

WILL

Boo-Yah!

Will turns right onto the rough tire tracks.

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

The tents are pitched and gear stowed. Sean toys with a battery powered light that's clearly not working.

Craig is holed up in his tent.

ZION

Anybody wanna help me find some wood?

SEAN

Gay.

ZION
Fire wood, dick.

Will raises his hand. Bo nods and joins them.

SEAN
I'll hang back.

Zion looks to Craig's tent.

ZION
Should we ask...?

Will shakes his head and they walk off.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Bo, Zion and Will hike through the forest.

WILL
You ever wonder what's wrong with
Craig? Like seriously ponder?

BO
In medical terms? He's an asshole.

ZION
Being an asshole isn't a medical
condition, Bo.

BO
Why did you invite him, anyway? He's
always - ALWAYS - a pain in the ass.
I thought that after the last time,
we all agreed that -

Something in the brush catches Bo's eye.

Peeking out of from under a bush - the WEIRDEST FUCKING
CREATURE you've ever seen.

But it's not alive. It's stuffed - a taxidermy nightmare.

FOX body. JACK RABBIT legs. SNAPPING TURTLE head. The
unblinking eyes stare right at Zion.

WILL
Holy shit! What is that thing?

Bo kneels and inspects the creature - then smiles.

BO
Ever heard of a Jackalope?

WILL
Those things on postcards, right?

Bo nods.

BO
People sew different animal parts
together and try to make you think
they found some long lost creature.

WILL
What's it doing out here?

BO
Hillbilly humor?

In its mouth, a DEAD CHIPMUNK.

BO
That's real, though.

Bo points to the blood around the Turtle mouth.

BO
The blood is still sticky.
Chipmunk's been dead seven, maybe
eight hours.

Zion shakes his head, eyes looking everywhere at once.

ZION
Aw, hell no. This is the kind of
Blair Witch bullshit that black
people do NOT get down with.

Zion backs away.

BO
Relax. The chipmunk probably climbed
into its mouth and cut itself in the
struggle.

ZION
The top two things on my 'get the
fuck outta dodge' list are high
explosives and crazy-ass white
people doin' crazy-ass white people
shit in the woods.

WILL
And what makes you think a white
person did this?

The smile on Will's face is a mile wide.

ZION
Black people have better shit to do
than mess around with animal parts?
Shit's gross.

BO
Explain chitlins.

Without warning, CRASH, the ground beneath Zion gives way
and he drops, barely catching himself on the edge of A DEEP
HOLE.

Bo and Will dive to him, try to pull him up. He won't budge.

ZION
My prosthetic leg. It's caught on
something!

Will and Bo pull harder. Zion grimaces from pain.

BO
Unstrap it!

ZION
You know how much this thing cost?

Zion's forearm slips through Will's weakening grip.

WILL
I'm losing my grip!

ZION
Shit!

Zion reaches down, click click, and the leg falls away.

Will and Bo haul him up and they flop onto their backs, out
of breath.

Zion moans over the loss of his bionic leg, then it turns
into a chuckle.

BO
What's so funny?

ZION
I've fallen and I can't get up!

Will grabs a tree branch that lays nearby, offers it to Zion.

WILL
Here. We even?

The three of them laugh, still out of breath.

WILL
Please tell me you have a spare.

ZION
Of course, but that one was carbon fiber with electro-hydraulic pistons. I could out jump Kobe with one leg.

WILL
What's the spare do?

ZION
Keeps my black ass from leaning too far to the right.

As Will and Bo laugh, Zion looks over at the Fox / Rabbit / Turtle thing.

INT. ZION'S TENT - NIGHT

Zion straps on his spare prosthetic leg, stands, and walks into the --

EXT. CAMP SITE - NIGHT

The men cook dinner and recount what happened.

CRAIG
Sounds like a fucking man trap.

WILL
Your paranoia is at eleven, Craig.
You need to dial it back to a three.

BO
Probably just a well or a mine shaft or something.

ZION
It wasn't a man trap. I could hear our voices echoing. The hole went down a long way.

Craig looks off into the dark night, his weird shit-o-meter still set on high.

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

The guys suit up for the hunt.

EXT. WOODS - DAY - MOVING

The men trek quietly through the forest. A rustling nearby causes them to stop.

Craig is the first up with his gun. He sights in on the movement and fires - BLAM!

ZION
Jesus Christ, Craig. Did you even
LOOK to see what you were shooting
at?

The guys rush over to see the prize. Laying on the ground is the Fox/Jackrabbit/Turtle thing. Stuffing hangs out of the hole in its stomach and back.

CRAIG
What the?

Zion steps up.

ZION
How'd this get here? That mine shaft
is almost a mile away...

More rustling and the men are back on point. They follow the sound as it leads them away.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - DAY

The men walk out of the forest and into a clearing bordered all around by woods.

The path ends at a massive rock wall that thrusts out of the ground and far up past the top of the trees.

The base of the mountain.

To the right is a grungy, moss and dirt covered MOBILE HOME that's been added on to with a rag-tag assemblage of wood and scrapped sheet metal that somehow forms a home.

The barren front yard is a zoo of TAXIDERMY STUFFED ANIMALS of all shapes and sizes. Dozens and dozens of them.

And all of them are the same sort of nightmare amalgamations of inter-species mixes as the Fox/Rabbit/Turtle.

A frail girl, **SESAME** (20 - but looks 16), appears from around the back of the shack. Backwoods as all hell, her thread-thin hair hangs down over a dirty face.

She sees the men and nervously moves toward them.

The guys stare at the hillbilly waif. Craig can't resist.

CRAIG
It's Ellie Mae Clampett!

Craig busts out laughing.

That's when the rusty screen door of the mobile home slams open and out walks **EARL** (50s).

Skinny, but with real muscles, Earl chews a mouth full of chaw and wipes bloody hands on his tattered wife beater.

He glares at Sesame and spits juice toward her. She gets the message and backs away from the men.

He turns his attention to the guys.

EARL
You boys lost?

WILL
No, sir, just hunting.

Earl spits again.

EARL
Get yerself a permit from young
Johnny Pritchett, did ya?

WILL
Yessir.

EARL
Well you was 'sposed to go left at
the fork. This here is my land.

Craig approaches one of the stuffed monstrosities - a BADGER with HAWK'S WINGS and FROG LEGS on its head like antennae.

CRAIG
The fuck is this supposed to be?

EARL
Watch your language around the girl.

Earl spits directly toward Craig.

Bo approaches the body of a DEER with the head of a BOBCAT.

EARL
You boys best get off my land.

Will nods absently, his eyes locked on a creature with the head of a SKUNK head on a CHICKEN BODY.

EARL
The time of stealin' the lifeblood
of my land is over!

Zion stares at a SQUIRREL HEAD on a RAVEN BODY, with the SQUIRREL'S ARMS tucked just under the wing reaching forward.

ZION
These things not part of that
lifeblood, sir?

EARL
We kill to eat 'round these parts.
Some come up off the road, yonder.
Killing for any other reason makes
The Keeper angry.

Craig nods, but his eyes proclaim "WTF?"

CRAIG
The... Keeper? Okay Pops, whatever
you say.

Earl assesses Craig's lightning bolt boots and a shit eating grin crosses his face like a scar.

EARL
Them lightning boots is pretty.

Earl laughs at Craig's expense. Craig takes it personal.

CRAIG
And what the fuck are you wearing
old man?

ZION
Calm down, Craig. He was just
joking.

Earl's face flattens with anger. Some of the creatures seem
to watch Earl, follow him with their eyes.

EARL
Girl, get on 'round to the back.

SESAME
Yessir.

Sesame turns and runs off. Earl watches her go, then comes
down from the porch.

He approaches Craig nonchalantly, then cold cocks him. Craig
flies off his feet and hits the muddy ground, dazed.

Zion and Bo rush in to stop a brawl, but Earl's already
walking back to the porch.

EARL
Ain't the fight you want, boy.

WILL
Whoa! Whoa! Why'd you hit him?

EARL
Told him to mind his mouth in front
of the girl. Can't have no queer in
lightning booties teaching her bad
manners.

Craig, furious, is held back by the other men.

Earl pulls out a massive knife from his waistband, scowling
with intent.

EARL
I done said this ain't a fight you
want. Best you boys get going.

Raging, Craig breaks free but stays put.

CRAIG
You want me to mind my mouth? Fuck
you! How's that, you redneck
motherfucker?

Craig storms off.

WILL
Sir, I'm really sorry. He's just -
we really didn't mean anything...

Earl turns his back to Will, heading indoors.

EARL
Yeah, I reckon y'all best be going.

Earl glances over his shoulder, watches them go, a glint of something in his eyes...

EXT. WOODS - DAY - MOVING

The guys stare daggers at Craig.

WILL
What the hell was that, Craig?

CRAIG
Wait, Duck Dynasty sucker punches me
and I'm the bad guy?

ZION
We're not taking sides, Craig. The
guy asked you to not say fuck in
front of his kid and you said fuck
in front of his kid!

Craig fumes.

CRAIG
Fuck is my favorite adjective. I'll
use it whenever I fucking want in
front of whoever I fucking want.

SEAN
Did you know that Fuck can be a
noun, but it's mostly used as a
verb?

CRAIG
Fuck you, Sean.

SEAN
See?

Everyone allows the joke to break the tension. Even Craig smirks.

The road empties out on to the main gravel road.

Zion looks around, finds a boulder the size of a large pumpkin and rolls it into the middle of the road.

BO
What's that for?

ZION
Insurance.

They turn right and trudge up the steep road.

INT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

The large main room of Earl's wobbly shit-box mobile home houses a few pieces of thrift store furniture and a dirty kitchenette.

The back wall is cut away, with the rag-tag addition tacked on to accommodate Earl's taxidermy work shop.

A thick sheet of blood splattered cloth hangs like a curtain wall between the living area and the shop.

Earl pulls back the cloth and enters the living area.

Sesame sits on the disgusting excuse for a couch.

EARL
You was heading towards them fellers earlier.

SESAME
No, sir... I -

Oddly, she has no accent.

EARL
I got eyes and ears all over the place, missy. I know what I seen.

He walks over to a grotesque TWO-HEADED DOG, "DOUBLE DOG." It lays on the floor, stuffed to look like it's sleeping. He pets it lovingly.

EARL
The Keeper done give me the fourth sight. Can see through the eyes of my creations. Anything you do, I see.

She stares at the ground, terrified. Earl spits on the floor, then takes his apron off.

EARL

I may not be offerin' you up just yet, but you gonna have to get back into The Keeper's sweet graces.

SESAME

(pleading)

Please.

EARL

You gonna have to give up a skin offerin' to make things right.

Earl drops to his knees, leans in and licks her cheek. His hand moves slowly up her thigh. She panics.

SESAME

I got my period this morning.

He pulls away, disgusted.

EARL

The Keeper don't believe in skin offerin's during the time of bleedin'. It's unclean.

Earl stands and walks over a spot on the floor covered in CHALK DUST.

EARL

That's how the Queen of the Birds almost took over, back before the time of Men. Tricking the Keeper into bed while she was on her blood.

He grabs a stick of chalk, draws a circle with some glyphs on the dirty floor.

EARL

In the morning, she ran off into the wood, told all of the creatures and the trees that The Keeper wasn't clean no more, and that they should side with her.

Earl sets one of his taxidermy abominations in the middle of the circle, a SQUIRREL BODY with BAT WINGS.

EARL

To win back their graces, The Keeper promised them for as long as they were under his keep, they'd never know death.

EARL

So with the creatures of the wood,
he slayed the Queen and then ordered
the mountain to cover up his temple
to keep away anyone looking to steal
his powers.

Sesame stares at him.

EARL

It ain't without cost, which you
done seen, but the Keeper keeps his
word.

He closes his eyes, and begins chanting. An unnatural drone,
like prolonged thunder, rattles the shack.

EARL

Almighty Keeper of the wood, accept
this soul offerin' so that this
creature may see life. Let me be
connected to it, and it to me for as
long as it shall live.

Sesame crawls up in a ball, eyes wide - terrified.

Earl opens his eyes, removes a small knife from his pocket
and slices his hand. His blood drips down onto the creature.

A BLUE MIST rises from the blood, then soaks into the thing.

EARL

After all of the blood is gone, only
the soul remains...

A moment later, all goes quiet and the thing comes to life.
It twists and flaps, then calms and looks up at Earl.

EARL

(to Squirrel-Bat)

Get on, now. Go keep an eye on them
boys.

Sesame covers her eyes as the beast flies past her, then out
through a hole in the screen door of the shack.

Earl looks back to Sesame.

EARL

If you can't give up no skin
offering and you want to keep your
life force, then you won't mind
givin' me a *hand* with something.

Earl approaches Sesame, unzips his zipper.

Double Dog comes to life with a whine, sees what Earl has in mind, and covers its eyes with its paws.

EXT. CAMP SITE - NIGHT

A HAND pantomiming jerking off. Craig's hand.

The hunters sit around the fire. Beers, cigars, and laughter. Craig stands over them telling a story, his words slurred.

CRAIG

So she's jerking me off, right!? And out of nowhere, a car door slams. So she's like, "My husband!" So I, you know, look for a place to hide. I'm expecting a Steve Austin motherfucker to come through the door - but NO! It's even worse!

Craig staggers around, acting out the scene.

CRAIG

I'm running around buck-ass naked and in walks a fucking midget!

BO

You're so full of shit.

CRAIG

I shit you not. The dude's face is eye level with my boner.

Hilarious uproar.

SEAN

So what happened? Did he bite it?

CRAIG

Turns out he likes to watch and asked me to bang his old lady.

Zion and Bo throw trash at Craig.

ZION

I call bullshit!

SEAN

That so didn't happen.

CRAIG

This from a man whose entire sex
life revolves around trying to blow
himself.

Will sits back, sipping his beer.

CRAIG

Yo, Brokeback. You shootin'
tomorrow?

Will shakes his head, shows Craig his hands.

WILL

Got enough blood on 'em, already.

CRAIG

You'll change that tune when we're
chowing down on venison steaks and
you're hogging a salad.

ZION

Big words, Craig.

CRAIG

Those of us with white penises gotta
compensate, Z. Bo's Asian - so he's
gonna have to kill twice as many
forest critters as the rest of us.

More laughter, Bo most of all.

ZION

Just don't get Trophy Vision. I
didn't survive three tours in Iraq
and an IED to get shot by your dumb
asses.

WILL

What's Trophy Vision?

ZION

You get so pumped for the kill that
you lose track of what you're really
shooting at. The details get blurred
and distinguishing a friendly from a
hostile gets - difficult.

BO

He's right. It's one of the leading
causes of friendly fire.

CRAIG

And we're supposed to believe Mr.
Miyagi just because he chimes in?

BO

No. Believe me because I'm smarter
than you - and prettier.

Bo takes a mouth full of beer and spits it into the flames
as everyone "Ohhhhhh"s at Craig's expense.

FROM THE TREES -

Squirrel-Bat watches.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - DAY

Sesame shivers, locked in a cage under Earl's trailer. She
pries at the hinge pins with ragged fingernails. They pop
out and she removes the door without a sound.

As she crawls out, her fur jacket catches on the skirt of
the trailer. It rips and leaves behind a snag of material.

Now free, she runs out into the drizzly, foggy woods.

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

Will comes out of his tent, finds Zion stoking the fire.

WILL

Morning. Everyone still asleep?

ZION

Except Craig. He went to hunt down
some breakfast.

EXT. WOODS - DAY - INTERCHANGE BETWEEN SESAME AND CRAIG

ON SESAME

Sesame runs without looking back. Feverish. Scared. Running
for her life.

ON CRAIG

Perched on a thick tree branch, barely awake. Ten feet
below - a grassy clearing. Perfect feeding grounds for deer.

SESAME runs down an embankment, catches her foot on a root. Tumbles wildly through the underbrush.

CRAIG'S eyes snap open, startled. Movement in the trees near the clearing catches his eye.

SESAME stumbles through the brush, blood trickles from a gash on her forehead.

CRAIG raises his rifle, scoping in on the sound.

SCOPE POV: A beautiful buck ruts in the bushes.

CRAIG
(whispered)
I gotcha, you big, beautiful,
bastard.

SESAME makes it into the clearing -

CRAIG slowly squeezes the trigger -

SCOPE POV: In the cross hairs, the buck wavers and transforms into Sesame - too late!

BANG!

INT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - MORNING

Earl awakens from the gunshot.

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

Bo and Sean now join Will and Zion by the fire.

ZION
Craig's first miss of the morning.

They chuckle until a male scream echoes, loud and primal.

The four men look at each other and react quickly.

Will and Sean bolt toward the sound.

Bo retrieves a med kit. Zion reaches into his pack, pulls out a pistol, and stuffs it in his waist.

Bo and Zion run to catch up.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The four men arrive to see Craig staring down at Sesame, shot in the side and bleeding freely.

BO

Jesus!

Bo rushes in and breaks open the kit. Sean pulls out his phone and holds it in the air for reception.

ZION

The fuck did you do, Craig?

CRAIG

She looked like an animal. A fucking animal. I thought she was...

Bo applies pressure to the wound.

BO

She's bleeding out. Get this fur off of her. Grab some gauze from my kit so I can plug the wound.

Zion does as told. Bo shines a light into her eyes, checks pulse, etc.

BO

We need to get her to a hospital.

CRAIG

Fuck! He's gonna say I did this on purpose cause he punched me. I'm going to fucking jail, man! Fuck!

WILL

Calm down, shut up and go over there.

Zion leads Craig a few feet away, consoles him.

WILL

Bo, can we move her?

BO

We need a MedEvac, man.

Bo looks to Sean, who fiddles with his phone. Sean shakes his head - no signal

Zion glances back to them.

ZION

We carry her out. We have eight good arms and seven good legs.

WILL

I can run back to camp and grab a sleeping bag.

ZION

Go!

Will bolts off across the clearing.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - DAY

Earl steps out onto the porch. He watches the rain for a second and then walks out into it.

The piece of pulled away aluminum under the trailer catches his eye. He approaches, notices something stuck to it, plucks it off.

Fur from Sesame's jacket.

He looks down at her bare footprints running off into the woods. A grin exposes his tobacco stained teeth.

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

Will arrives, grabs a sleeping bag and, as an afterthought, grabs the van keys and jams them in his pocket.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - DAY

Earl follows Sesame's tracks to the edge of the woods.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Will bursts through the brush, sleeping bag in hand.

WILL

Here.

Craig paces nervously, his mind racing.

CRAIG

Look, guys - if we take this chick outta here, I'm going down.

CRAIG
Can't we just - let her bleed out
and then bury her?

This stops the guys cold. Even for Craig, this is low.

SEAN
The fuck is wrong with you, Craig?

BO
We need to keep her body level.

They open the bag and carefully insert her.

BO
Someone needs to go tell her dad.

Groggy and weak, Sesame reacts.

SESAME
No...

SEAN
What did she say?

SESAME
No. Don't - tell - him. He's...

She trail's off into unconsciousness.

WILL
He's what?

CRAIG
Fucking crazy? Dangerous? Fill in
the blank, bitch!

Zion grabs Craig by his collar and lifts him off his feet.

ZION
This girl is dying and it's your
fault. YOUR FAULT! Now grab the
fucking bag and shut the fuck up.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - CUL-DE-SAC - DAY

Sesame lays in the sleeping bag, swaying as the men rush
down the trail.

They reach the end and hurry to the van.

BO
Be easy!

They open the doors and lay her across the floorboard behind the front seats.

Bo climbs into the back with her and Will climbs into the driver seat and shuts the door. He rolls down the window.

WILL
Start packing up. We'll be back as
soon as we can.

ZION
Go!

Will jams the van into gear and drives away.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Earl walks away from the path. He eyes a patch of stirred up brush, sees drag marks leading down an embankment.

Someone fell here.

He descends the embankment. Halfway down, he sees it -

Sesame's fur jacket.

He laughs to himself, cocky, as he reaches the bottom of the embankment and picks up the fur. Then something else catches his eye...

BLOOD. Lots of it amid an orgy of footprints.

His grip on the fur tightens when his eyes land on - a SHOE PRINT with a LIGHTING BOLT logo pressed into it.

The veins in his neck bulge as Earl's face burns bright red. He looks off into the woods, toward the camp site.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

SCREEECH! The van skids to a halt in front of the town's small hospital.

The guys carefully unload Sesame and carry her into the emergency room. **NURSES** and a **DOCTOR** rush up.

DOCTOR
What happened to her?

BO
Our friend shot her on accident.

The **STAFF** hoist Sesame onto a gurney.

DOCTOR
(to NURSE)
Call the Sheriff.

A **NURSE** (20s) picks up the phone and dials.

The Doctor heads off down the hallway, turns and points at Will and Bo.

DOCTOR
You two stay put.

WILL
Wait... our friends...

They look back towards the entrance. Two **SECURITY GUARDS** stand staring at them.

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

Sean and Zion pack their gear while Craig stares off into the distance, slowly losing it.

Zion winces as he bends to lift a backpack. He reaches back and pulls his pistol from waistband.

He sets it on a log next to Craig.

SEAN
Should we leave one tent up in case
they don't get back before dark?

ZION
Good idea.

A rustle in the bushes nearby grabs their attention.

Earl walks into the campsite, one hand holding the fur jacket, the other a wicked large Bowie knife in the other.

He drops the bloodied fur on the ashes of last night's fire and a stare down ensues.

Earl points to the fur with the knife.

EARL
Which one of you done it?

Silence. Craig glances up at him.

EARL

You boys is messing with forces that
you don't understand. Which one of
you killed --

ZION

She's not dead. Our friends took her
to the hospital.

Craig never looks at him. Just talks slowly. Angry.

CRAIG

You dressed her like an animal. You
might as well have pulled the
fucking trigger yourself.

Earl chuckles and scratches his head with the knife.

EARL

Now you done did it. You done
gone --

Earl takes a step forward. Craig whips out his pistol,
levels it at Earl's face.

CRAIG

Not the fight you want, old man.
Isn't that the saying?

Earl stares into Craig's eyes, unamused.

EARL

You have balls after all? Oh yeah,
that killer-blood pumpin' through
your veins.

Earl smiles, looking at the three of them. He glances up at
the sky, then to their half-rolled tents.

EARL

Sun don't keep long this time of
year.

He stares at them and backs away into the woods before
turning around and disappearing into the foliage.

EARL (O.S.)

Woods come alive at night, boys.

Zion, Sean and Craig looks at each other.

ZION

On second thought, pack it all.

INT. HOSPITAL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Will and Bo sit at a small boardroom table. Alone.

The door opens and **SHERIFF KOONTZ** (60s) enters. A good ole boy, if Koontz doesn't know you from birth or from church, something must be wrong with you.

Deputy Erica Lane enters behind him.

Will stands.

WILL
Officer, really, is this necessary?
Our friends --

ERICA
Sit down.

Erica motions with her hand: SIT.

He sits.

KOONTZ
You brought a gunshot victim to my E.R., so hell yes, this is necessary. I'm Sheriff Jay Koontz of the Reznick County Sheriff's Department. This is Deputy Lane. I read your statements, and that's all well and good, but I have a few more questions need answering 'fore I put you on your way.

Bo blows out a long sigh.

BO
Sheriff, we have three friends out in the woods waiting for us to come pick them up before nightfall. One is an amputee.

WILL
Not to mention that girl's dad is probably worried sick about her.

Koontz squints inquisitively.

KOONTZ
Now that's one of them questions that I wanted to follow up on.

Koontz drops his considerable girth into a small chair.

KOONTZ

See, I've lived in this town my entire life. I know every face. Even the wood rats. That girl in there, she ain't nobody I know. Where is it you boys say you were camping at again?

ERICA

They're on Pritchett's land.

Koontz raises an eyebrow.

KOONTZ

Pritchett, huh?

WILL

Yes, sir.

KOONTZ

And you're saying this is Pritchett's daughter?

BO

No, her father's some hillbilly...

Koontz looks at Bo with thinly veiled disdain.

KOONTZ

So, which one of you shot the girl?

BO

Neither. Our friend Craig did.

KOONTZ

And where's Craig?

BO

He was shaken up and in the rush to get her medical assistance, we left him behind.

KOONTZ

You the doctor?

BO

Yes, sir.

Koontz chews on the facts.

KOONTS

I'll be honest with ya, boys. I'm pretty sure you're telling the truth and this was just some shit accident, but a lot of what you're saying don't add up for us *hillbilly* folk.

WILL

Like what?

Koonts looks at both of them, purses his lips, then stands.

KOONTS

I'll send a unit to retrieve your friends. I'd like to keep y'all a little longer just in case I have any more questions. Deputy Lane.

He walks to the door, followed by Erica.

KOONTS

I'll have a deputy posted outside if y'all need anything.

They exit as Will and Bo stand in protest.

WILL

We have rights, ya know!

KOONTS

Sure do!

Koonts shuts the door behind himself.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Koonts and Erica walk a few steps down the hallway.

KOONTS

That girl they brung in may be dirty, but she ain't no wood rat. Run her prints. Something don't feel right.

ERICA

You buying their story?

KOONTS

Have no reason not to, but you know
just as well as I do that ain't
nothing out there on Pritchett's
land but trees, urban legends, and
bad memories. Go on.

ERICA

Yessir.

She heads off and Koonts approaches **DEPUTY OLSON** (20s), a
good looking kid busy flirting with a Nurse.

KOONTS

Olson! You familiar with Johnny
Pritchett's land?

Olson turns quickly, startled, and the nurse goes about her
business.

OLSON

Old Washout road, sure.

KOONTS

Hunters that brought in that GSW
left three of their buddies out
there. I need you to ride over and
pick'em up.

OLSON

Uh, nights coming, Sheriff.

KOONTS

So?

OLSON

I ain't one for superstition, but I
also ain't lookin' to get my head
cut off and put on no stick neither.

KOONTS

Then it's a good thing you got that
shiny sidearm on your hip, isn't it?
Head on out there and fetch them
boys. And keep your eyes peeled.
They said that there's somebody
living up in there.

OLSON

Oh goddamn...

EXT. END OF THE ROAD - NIGHT

The glow of the flashlight on Sean's phone cuts a narrow path through the all encompassing darkness.

SEAN
My battery's running low.

ZION
None of us brought a fucking flashlight other than me?

CRAIG
Where the hell are they?

ZION
Probably being interrogated.

CRAIG
You're just being paranoid, Z. Five-Oh isn't out to get everybody.

ZION
Two strangers from out of town bring a teenage gunshot victim to a podunk hospital in a rented van. Think about it.

A twig snaps somewhere nearby.

SEAN
What was that?

He shines the light.

ZION
Probably a deer or something. Maybe we should start walking, or set the tent up or --

CRAIG
Yeah, so Jed Clampett can jump out of the fucking woods and slice my throat for shooting his daughter? No thanks.

ZION
How are we any safer standing in the fucking darkness in the middle of the woods, Craig?

Another sound grabs their attention. GROWLING.

The same growling from Johnny Pritchett's cabin.

FOUR GLOWING EYES appear in the darkness twenty yards away.

SEAN
Oh, Christ.

ZION
Craig. Pistol?

Craig stares, mesmerized by the eyes. Sheer terror.

ZION
Craig!

CRAIG
It's in my waist.

The four eyes approach.

ZION
(whispered)
Fucking use it!

Craig reaches back slowly, then fumbles the gun. It hits the gravel and cartwheels out of reach.

The growling intensifies.

SEAN
What the hell is it, Z?

ZION
Blind it.

SEAN
What?

ZION
Point your flashlight at it, then
when it charges, throw your phone
one way and we'll run the other.

CRAIG
This isn't fucking Jurassic Park.

ZION
It's called decoying. Do it!

SEAN
Can you even run on that --

ZION

NOW!

Sean presses the button on his phone and the light shines across the distance to where they see - DOUBLE DOG!

CRAIG

What the fuck is that!?

Double Dog snarls and charges.

ZION

Sean, throw the fucking phone! Now!

Sean chucks the phone, but Double Dog isn't fooled.

The guys run in three different directions. Double Dog gives chase to one of them...

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - MOVING

Zion runs full out, doesn't see the branch in his path.

The branch clotheslines him and he comes down with a crash.

ON SEAN

Sean races through the woods, sees a tree with low-hanging branches and climbs it like a spider monkey.

ON CRAIG

Scared shitless, Craig hauls ass through the underbrush. He looks back and sees Double Dog closing the gap.

CRAIG

FUCK!!!

Craig runs with all he has, screaming and crying. He comes to an embankment that leads down to a wide creek.

He tries to stop, but momentum wins and he slides over the edge and tumbles down into the water.

He goes under, then comes up quickly, the frigid water shocking his system.

Then Double Dog reaches the bank.

One head laps up water while the other sniffs the air.

Craig remains submerged to his eyes, motionless.

Something catches the dog's attention and it runs off.

Shaking from the cold, Craig checks to make sure the coast is clear and swims to shore.

He drags himself out of the water and lays in the mud, frozen to the bone.

He takes a few deep breaths, lifts himself to his knees, then - BAM - he's face to face with Double Dog!

The animal snarls, baring teeth from both mouths.

Craig, petrified, just stares back.

CRACK! A twig snaps nearby.

Craig looks up. Earl stands over him holding a billy club.

Craig screams as Earl draws the club back to strike.

ON ZION

Zion lays on his back, wind knocked out of him. He groans.

Craig's scream echoes in the distance.

Zion's eyes snap open. The forest closes in around him, the darkness clawing at him.

His breathing quickens, a PANIC ATTACK setting in.

Craig's screams grow louder.

ZION SEES/HEARS -

Explosions. Gunfire. Screaming. The sights and sounds of war.

A MAN on fire, screaming like a nightmare, runs toward Zion from the darkness. Zion drops to the ground.

BACK TO SCENE -

SILENCE - The explosion wasn't real. Nor the man.

Sweat beads off of Zion's brow, fueled by adrenaline.

ZION
...Sean...?

ON SEAN

Sean listens to Craig's screams as they abruptly stop. Eyes wide with terror, a gnawing sound draws his attention.

To his right, Squirrel/Bat is perched on a branch eating a bird.

SEAN
Please let me be asleep. Please.

The creepy creature bares its bloody fangs with a squeal and then flies away with its kill.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT

Olson's police SUV crawls up the road and comes to a stop when it approaches Zion's boulder.

INT. OLSON'S SUV - NIGHT

Olsen puts his unit in PARK and gets out to move the boulder.

EXT. OLSON'S SUV - NIGHT

As Olsen approaches the boulder, an ANIMAL darts across his path, startling him.

His eyes follow the animal and he sees a tire track path.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Olson exits his vehicle, shines his Maglight around.

He radios in from his shoulder mounted mic.

OLSON
Sheriff, this is Olson, come back.

KOONTZ (O.S.)
(filtered)
Go ahead.

OLSON
Found what appears to be a dwelling of some sort. Looks like a trailer what's been added on to. It's off of Old Washout Road. Turn right at the boulder and follow the road back into the bush.

KOONTIS (O.S.)
 (filtered, staticky)
 Roger that. You see any signs of
 them hunters?

OLSON
 Negative. This might be the girl's
 homeplace. Gonna talk to the father
 and then head on up the road.

Koonts responds, but the incoming message is garbled.

OLSON
 Say again, Sheriff?

More static and broken voices.

OLSON
 Oh, to hell.

Olson takes a few steps back towards his vehicle when the
 sound of movement catches him off guard.

His hand reaches instinctively for his gun.

He turns towards the sound and something scurries in front
 of him about twenty yards or so.

Olson raises his flashlight - sees a small, furry creature.

OLSON
 Damned varmints.

But something's off about this animal and he senses it.

He walks a few paces towards it. The varmint isn't afraid
 and hobbles toward Olsen.

OLSON
 Get on, now.

He shines his flashlight into its eyes and stumbles
 backwards with fear.

OLSON
 What in creation?

The Badger with Hawk's wings and Frog leg antennae
 approaches with an uncoordinated, bandy-legged gate.

As it nears, it makes a weird sort of yakking sound, falls
 on its side and lays still.

Olson approaches, crouches next to the animal. He sees the crude stitches holding it together.

OLSON
Who did this to --

Without warning, the badger's lower jaw unhinges and a SNAKE with the head of a HOUSE CAT slithers out of the badger's throat and launches at Olsen.

Needle teeth sink into Olsen's jugular.

Olson screams, tries to rip the thing off, but the snake coils tightly around his neck while the cat injects its deadly venom.

Olsen collapses to the ground.

The badger-thing awakens, waddles over and feeds on Olsen.

As it drinks his blood, its body begins to glow the same blue as Earl's blood earlier.

It shakes and twitches, absorbing Olsen's life force.

Once the glow fades, the snake-thing retreats back into the badger-thing, which waddles away from Olsen's mangled body.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Will and Bo exit the conference room.

DEPUTY MORSE (20s) young, naive, barely old enough to shave, tries to stop them.

MORSE
Y'all can't --

WILL
If you're not arresting us, we're free to go. Our friends are out there.

KOONTZ (O.S.)
I sent a unit for your friends.

They look over to see Koontz approaching with two coffees.

KOONTZ
Thought you boys might be thirsty.

WILL
We're going to drive back and get
our friends, Sheriff. You have our
information.

Koonts sets the coffees on the Nurse's counter, puts up a
calming hand, speaks into his radio.

KOONTS
(to radio)
Olson, Koonts come back.

Dead air.

KOONTS
(to radio)
Olson, this is Koonts. Come back.
Doug, you hear me out there?

Nothing. He gives up.

KOONTS
Goddamn mountains.

BO
Can we please just --

Bo is interrupted as Deputy Lane runs in, paper in hand.

ERICA
Sheriff. We just got this from
Little Rock.

Lane hands him the paper. A MISSING PERSONS poster.

ERICA
The girl. Her name is Sesame
Lockland, age 20 from Mobile,
Alabama.

Will and Bo exchange worried looks.

ERICA
Student at Colorado State, her
parents reported her missing two
months after she left to go back to
school and never showed up.

Koonts looks at Will and Bo.

WILL
Holy shit. We thought she was that
guy's daughter.

KOONTIS
I just sent Olson out there alone.

Koonts grabs his mic again.

KOONTIS
Olson. Come in.

BO
Sheriff, our friends are out there
alone.

Koonts takes a second to think.

KOONTIS
You two remember how to get back out
to that trailer?

Will and Bo nod.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Zion creeps silently through the woods.

SEAN (O.S.)
Psst.

Zion looks around.

SEAN (O.S.)
(whispered)
Up here.

Zion peers up. Relieved.

ZION
Jesus, you gave me a heart attack.
Are you okay?

SEAN
This place ain't right, Z. That dog
had two heads, man. It's like a two-
headed Cujo, man.

ZION
We need to get out to the main road,
try to flag somebody down.

SEAN
I'm not leaving this tree.

ZION

You need to cowboy-up. I can't do this alone.

SEAN

Go without me.

ZION

My good leg is at the bottom of a pit. If my spare breaks, I'll end up rotting out here before anyone finds me.

SEAN

I just saw a squirrel with bat wings. Fucking bat wings, bro!

ZION

Wait, what?

SEAN

Yeah, it was eating a bird. A blue one. A fucking blue bird, bro!

ZION

None of this make sense. We need to get back to the guns and get the hell out of here. That thing could be anywhere right now.

SEAN

You don't need me.

ZION

We need each other. You remember the day you saw the bag and I didn't. You're the reason I'm not a box of ashes on my mom's mantle right now. I'm not leaving you out here to die.

SEAN

This ain't Iraq, Z.

ZION

No, but something out there is trying to kill us, and to me it's all the same. We're leaving - together.

Sean climbs down.

SEAN

What about Craig?

Zion looks off into the darkness.

ZION
(flat)
Craig's dead.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Earl drags an unconscious Craig by his collar.

EARL
(to self)
I know. I know. This one's going to
have to take the girl's place. Well
no, he ain't as pretty -- I know you
told me to finish'er off quick, but
did you see how pretty she was. I
just wanted to keep her around for
a...

The words trail off as Earl drags Craig into --

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

-- Earl's front yard. Earl sees Olson's SUV.

EARL
What hijinx...?

He drops Craig and pulls out a long knife, then approaches
Olson's police SUV.

Earl slowly circles the vehicle, then sees Olson's remains
on the ground, illuminated by the officer's Maglight.

Earl's brow slumps.

EARL
They done come looking.

Earl closes his eyes, receiving a message from The Keeper.

EARL
Yessir. Just like I always do.

He looks down at Olson's body, some other CREATURES have
come to feed.

Earl walks over to Craig, grabs him by the collar, and drags
him towards the house.

EARL
Looks like your friends made it into
town. Yup. There's gonna be some
killing TO-NIGHT! WOOO!

Earl laughs as he steps through Olson's remains with a
squish, then drags Craig's limp body up the stairs and into
the shack.

One of Craig's ELECTRIC BOOTS falls off.

INT. ERICA'S SUV - NIGHT

Will sits shotgun while Erica drives. Bo sits in the back
seat gazing out into the darkness.

Rain spatters the windshield.

ERICA
Force Recon, huh?

She nods towards Will's arm. Sleeve rolled up, she
references a tattoo of the insignia for USMC Force
Reconnaissance.

WILL
Oh. Yeah.

ERICA
I was 6199. Air Crewman. Two tours.

BO
No shit?

WILL
When did you get out?

ERICA
2007. I was the gunner on a 53 that
went down outside of Balad in '06.
Lost both pilots, my Gunny, and
broke both of my legs. They never
let me fly again, so I didn't see
much point in staying.

WILL
Wait. 2006? Bo, didn't we --

BO
Yeah. What was it, like August?

ERICA
September.

WILL
You ended having to drag --

ERICA
(shocked)
Drag myself into a nearby shwarma stand to take cover. I hid there with two broken legs and nothing but a pistol for four hours.

BO
Jesus. That's right.

WILL
Heh. We provided ground support for the exfil team that got you out. Our buddy Zion lost his leg on that Op.

Erica's mouth drops open. Eyes well a little

ERICA
Jesus. You're serious?

Bo leans up and pats her on the shoulder, then laughs.

BO
You can apologize when we get out there. But something tells me he'd lose it again if it meant saving a life.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Zion and Sean stumble through the darkness.

SEAN
(whispered)
Are you sure this is the way back to our stuff?

ZION
(whispered)
No. It's the way back to that gravel road. Our stuff is at the end of it.

Zion and Sean make their way through the drizzly forest when a new sound catches their ear.

A car door slamming.

Finally... ZION

He pushes through to what appears to be a clearing, then quickly stumbles back into Sean when he realizes they are actually at --

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Sean catches Zion, barely able to hold up his weight.

They look towards the trailer as the police SUV backs away.

SEAN
The cops!

Sean goes to move when Zion stops him.

No. ZION

They see Earl's face illuminated by the dash lights.

SEAN
What's he doing?

Earl puts the SUV in gear, and it moves slowly forward through the soggy yard.

Come on. ZION

Where? SEAN

Zion and Sean creep along the tree line around the property, blending in.

They approach the porch and Zion climbs up. He examines a few empty wooden bases with placards on them.

Shit! ZION

SEAN
What?

ZION

The pedestals are all empty.

SEAN

Wait, so the dog and the squirrel
thing were made... by him?

Zion points out to the yard.

ZION

This place looked like
Frankenstein's petting zoo
yesterday. Now - nothing.

Sean takes a step towards the yard, trips on something.

He looks down to see Craig's boot.

Sean picks up the boot, shows Zion - who snatches it.

ZION

Turn around.

Zion unzips Sean's backpack and puts the boot in.

SEAN

Did he kill Craig?

ZION

If he did - what's he gonna make out
of him? Come on.

They circle around to the side of the trailer, and for the
first time, see the back yard.

Nothing but tall bushes that lead into high trees, then the
tall, flat wall of the mountain. No sign of the police SUV
or where it could have possibly gone.

SEAN

We need to get out of here, man. We
can head back down to the main
highway. Will and Bo --

ZION

Will and Bo should have been back by
now.

SEAN

What if they were in that police
truck?

ZION

That was probably just the local PD
coming to inform Jethro that his
daughter's in the hospital.

SEAN

What if one of those fucking zoo
freaks popped out of the woods and
ate their asses?

Sean looks around.

SEAN

And two seconds ago that crazy in-
bred motherfucker was right in front
of us and now he's disappeared into
thin air. I don't like this man. Not
all of us are brave, swinging-dick
soldiers.

Zion looks Sean in the eye.

ZION

Bravery is about doing what needs to
be done, even though you know you
might die doing it.

Zion manages a smile.

ZION

It's got nothing to do with my dick.

CRACK! Twigs and underbrush snapping under someone's weight.

SEAN

Shit.

The two of them duck into some bushes and hide as Earl
appears through a nearby thicket by the rock wall.

The old man lurches towards the house with a Sasquatch gait.

He heads up towards the trailer, cranks up a small generator
next to the house and the interior lights flicker through
the windows.

Earl enters through the back door into the WORKSHOP AREA.

SEAN

We need to get to the main road.

INT. ERICA'S SUV - NIGHT

Silence travels with the group, finally broken by Will.

WILL

What's the deal with John Pritchett?
You and the Sheriff exchanged a look
back there.

Erica shifts in her seat.

ERICA

John went and got himself beheaded a
few months back.

BO

What?

ERICA

Yeah, they found his head on a pike
outside of the bank back in May.
Pretty gruesome shit, but he was a
Pritchett, so -

WILL

What does that mean?

Erica grows silent for a few seconds.

ERICA

Urban legend. Back during the
pioneer days, when people were
moving west before the Civil War, a
wagon train of some twenty or so
families got snowed in during the
winter.

BO

Like the Donner Party?

ERICA

Naw. These folks didn't eat each
other. They just hunkered down and
ended up never leaving. A few years
later, this fella named Earl
Pritchett goes down by the river
fishing when he finds a nugget of
gold the size of a man's heart.

WILL

Gold?

ERICA

Gold. After word got out, it wasn't
nothing short of a rush around these
parts.

ERICA

A big diggin' company come down from up North, offered to buy the Earl's stake, but he wouldn't have it. So instead the company offered to lease the land, mine it and split the profits. Now this is where history turns into urban legend. Apparently one day, the old man goes down into the mine to do a little digging on his own, breaks through the floor and falls into some sort of antechamber. But something was in there - waiting.

WILL

Something?

ERICA

Something that drove great, great, great, great grandpappy Pritchett crazy enough that he came out of the mine and killed all of the workers right there on site. Then piked their heads on poles around the entrance to the mine to ward off intruders.

BO

Damn.

ERICA

Oh, it gets better! In the 90s, after his dad passed, the John Pritchett you know leased out the land to a mining company from... hell, somewhere. Anyway, they all went up on the mountain and set up shop, and about a week later --

BO

Let me guess. Earl Pritchett came out of the cave and saw his shadow.

Bo and Will laugh.

ERICA

No. Instead, one of the tellers from the bank, ole miss Ida Jones, found the heads of all of the mine company workers on pikes out in front of the bank.

WILL
Bullshit. That would have been
national news.

ERICA
So would a girl gone missing on her
way to college. A lot of things
never leave these mountains, boys.

She smirks and raises an eye brow at them.

INT. EARL'S TRAILER WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Blood-spattered floor. A long wooden bench full of archaic
tools and medical instruments.

An overhead fluorescent light casts an intermittent flicker
of sterile green light over the room.

In one corner, a large SOMETHING stands covered by a tarp.

Earl reaches up towards the ceiling and pulls down TWO LARGE
HOOKS connected to chains mounted on hand-winches attached
to the ceiling braces.

EXT. WOODS/GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT

Zion and Sean head through the woods until they break
through to the GRAVEL ROAD.

SEAN
Thank God!

Zion turns right, heading back up the mountain.

SEAN
Where're you going? The road's this
way.

ZION
I'm going back for the guns.

SEAN
That's at least a mile in the other
direction.

ZION
And it's at least a mile down to the
main road. How many of those fucking
things are waiting there to stop us?

ZION
I'm not about to let my ass get
attacked by some fucking --

WHOOM!

From ABOVE, the BADGER/HAWK thing flies down and digs its talons into Zion's shoulders and attempts to lift him from the ground.

Zion screams.

ZION
Get it off!

The Badger head chomps down on Zion's trapezoid. He hollers in pain.

ZION
Get this fucking thing off of me!

BLUE MIST emanates from Zion's wounds, swirling around the talons and dissipating into them.

Zion's eyes grow wide and glow with the same blue.

SEAN
Zion!?

Sean grabs a thick tree branch and beats the animal like it owes him money.

Wham. WHAM. WHAM! He beats on the ugly fucking thing, but it won't let go.

Sean cowboys up and puts the abomination in a sleeper hold.

The animal digs into Zion's shoulder, but Sean uses his greater weight and pulls... RIIIIIPPP!

The thing's head rips clean off.

WOOD SHAVINGS and COTTON pour out of the animal in a puff of blue mist that screams as it dissipates.

The Hawk wings flap and the body bounces, giving off more blue mist for a few seconds before going limp.

Sean drops the badger head and it lets out some weak sounds that almost sound like: THANK YOU...

Zion approaches, bleeding and wincing in pain.

The badger head stops making sounds.

ZION

Did that thing just fucking talk?

Out of breath, Sean stares at the beast.

SEAN

I, I think it thanked me.

INT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - WORKSHOP - NIGHT

A HOOK hangs in the air --

Earl drags Craig's now naked body over to the middle of the room, his mouth gagged.

Earl pulls the hook down to ground level.

EARL

We ain't gonna have the time that
I'd-a-liked. No. We gonna have to do
this one quick. No time for the slow
drain.

He smiles with a slight shake of his head, then rams the hook into Craig's armpit, the point coming out of his shoulder. A muffled scream leaves Craig's mouth.

EARL

My creatures, you see, The Keeper
brings'm to life, but you - you're
the spring in the watch what makes'm
go. Your soul is the steam in their
engine.

Earl pats Craig's chest.

EARL

But it don't last, see. Don't
nothing last. No sir.

Earl chuckles

EARL

The girl was supposed to be my
tithe. My offering unto The Keeper,
but I got greedy and kept her too
long. So his wrath will be ten-fold
if'n I don't give him something
soon. Granted, you ain't as purdy as
her...

He grabs the other hook and repeats the process with the other armpit/shoulder. More muffled screams, tears roll down Craig's cheek.

EARL
But you'll do...

He walks over to a hand crank on the wall, turns it. The overhead winch grinds and the hooks lift Craig from the ground.

Beneath him, a hole cut in the floor reveals the ground underneath.

EARL
Now you gonna satisfy my debts, boy.

Craig screams into the gag as Earl takes out his large knife and begins making slices all over his body. Wrists. Inner groin. Achilles tendon.

EARL
Go on, now! Get it out!

Earl removes the gag and Craig wails unnaturally, in pain few have ever felt before.

The blood from the wounds pours down Craig's body, once again giving off the blue mist. It drips down onto the earth, which absorbs the blue mist and crimson liquid.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT

Zion and Sean stop cold at the sound of Craig's screaming.

SEAN
What in the hell is that?

Zion, wracked by guilt, grits his teeth.

He clenches his fists, then continues walking.

SEAN
Aw, shit. How much farther, man?

ZION
We're almost there. Just keep an eye out for that dog.

Zion winces from the talon wounds in his shoulders.

SEAN
You going to be alright man?

ZION
I'm fine.

Zion's walk now more of a hobble, he staggers up to the bags, searches and finds his rifle.

There it is, his Ambush 300 Blackout, a shooter's weapon of choice and loaded with stopping power.

Sean reaches down and retrieves a pistol.

ZION
With any luck, we'll run into Will
and Bo before we run into anything
else.

Zion heads back down the road, now in a War state of mind.

Sean watches him walk away with worried eyes, not having seen Zion like this in a long time.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Two POLICE CARS and one SUV pull up in front of the shack, flanking the place three-wide.

INT. SHERIFF'S SUV - NIGHT

Erica points toward the trailer.

ERICA
I'll be damned!

WILL
What?

She points at a faded, almost rusted away LOGO on the side of the trailer.

ERICA
Evanwald Mining.

BO
What's Evanwald Mining?

ERICA
Company that John Pritchett leased
the land to in the 90s. This must
have been their HQ.

She points to the logo.

INT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

The life pours out of Craig, he's nearly dead.

Headlights sweep through the cracks in the boarded up
windows.

Earl walks over, peers out. He sees Morse and Koonts exit
their cruisers and approach the SUV.

EARL
Looks like the townsfolk done lit
their torches and brought their
pitchforks.

CRAIG
(weak, mumbled)
Help...me...Help...H-H-H-Help...

Earl pulls his knife out again, approaches Craig.

He drags the blade three inches deep across Craig's throat.

EARL
Shoosh, boy. Told you this weren't
the fight you wanted.

Craig's head drops, his chin now a divide through a forked
river of blood.

Earl sheaths the knife, goes to a stack of guns piled in one
corner. Leftovers from previous victims.

He chooses an ancient HUNTING RIFLE.

INT. SHERIFF'S SUV - NIGHT

Erica grabs the SHOTGUN mounted next to the dash.

ERICA
You boys sit tight. Shit goes south,
y'all stay down. Hear?

She gets out, leaves Will and Bo alone.

Will smacks his palm to his forehead, inhales deeply.

BO
You worried about the guys?

WILL
No. Craig may be crazy, but he's a
badass. Z... he'll watch after Sean.

BO
Who'll watch after Z?

A brief pause, then -

WILL
Spend your time worrying about
whether or not this glass is
bulletproof.

Through the windshield they watch Erica, Koonts, and Morse
approach the shack in the beams of the headlights.

The three police raise their weapons as --

Bang!

Morse takes a bullet in the knee and goes down.

Will and Bo slump for cover but still peer through the
windshield.

WILL
Jesus!

A hail of gunfire erupts as Koonts and Erica run for cover
behind one of the cruisers.

Will drops to the floorboard, Bo follows suit.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT

Gunshots echo. Multiple guns, multiple targets.

Z knows this sound, he's heard it before. Firefight.

It awakens something in him. His entire demeanor shifts.

He heads toward it, drawn by it.

SEAN
Hey! Where ya going? What about the
creatures, Z? What about --

Sean gives up, follows reluctantly.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Morse shoots from the ground, dragging himself back towards the cover of the cars.

Erica and Koonts provide cover fire, shooting continuously into the windows of the shack.

KOONTS
Lane! Call for backup!

Morse slides next to his car. Gives a thumbs up.

Koonts runs to the other side of the yard behind a tree.

He sees Earl through a slit in one of the windows.

He aims carefully, his finger squeezes slowly, when --

A THREE HEADED MOUNTAIN LION WITH A DOZEN WINGS AND RAMS
HORNS leaps on him.

BOOM! He blasts one of its heads. Stuffing flies everywhere.

KOONTS
What...the....fuuuuu....

The remaining heads snarl and tear into Koontz, ripping his guts out. As he dies, the creature absorbs his blue glow.

INT. SHERIFF'S SUV - NIGHT

Will peers up to see the two headed monstrosity killing the Sheriff.

WILL
Oh fuck me sideways!

BO
Is that...?

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Morse does his best to reload his revolver through the pain and adrenaline.

The Badger-beast approaches, teeth bared.

MORSE
The hell...?

ON ERICA

She sees the mountain lion-thing shredding Koonts.

Before she can even take aim on it, the creature leaps and flies up to a branch of a nearby tree.

She takes aim and unleashes a barrage of lead towards it.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

It roars as her shots tear its wings off.

Thrashing with pain, it loses grip and falls to the ground.

Stunned only for a moment, it gets up and looks for its tormentor.

BLAM! BLAM!

The nightmare creature's other two heads explode in a cloud of stuffing and sawdust.

It drops like a sack of potatoes.

Erica looks over to Morse and gasps.

The Badger-thing has gnawed all the way through his neck.

Morse's head rolls away from his body.

Then the Badger sees her. It unhinges its jaw and starts that yakking sound.

The Cat/Snake emerges from inside the Badger-thing. It sees her, slithers toward her.

She takes aim and - CLICK.

ERICA
Crap!

She throws the shotgun at the animal and runs for the SUV.

INT. SHERIFF'S SUV - NIGHTS

Erica throws the door open and climbs into the driver seat.

Cat/Snake leaps up, slams into the driver's side window.

BO
WHAT THE FUCK!

WILL
We need to go!

Erica wipes a swath of hair from her face.

ERICA
(pissed)
Fuck that noise.

Earl emerges from his shack, a SHOTGUN at his waist.

He's all smiles.

Erica throws the vehicle into gear and guns it.

WILL
Ohhhh...

BO
Shhhiiiiittt...

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Spitting rocks and mud from the back tires, the SUV quickly covers the distance to the front porch.

Earl gets off one shot, spider-webbing the windshield before the SUV barrels into him.

The SUV smashes through Earl, through the porch, into the trailer.

INT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

The SUV destroys the living area and launches Earl across the room.

He windmills through the bloodied cloth divider and into the workshop.

He comes to a rest at Craig's feet. Blood flows from multiple injuries, mixes with what remains of Craig's.

INT. SHERIFF'S SUV - NIGHT

Erica removes her pistol from her holster, kicks out the shattered windshield and climbs out.

Cat/Snake slithers towards her.

She aims without looking, ends it with a single shot.

INT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Erica walks over to Earl, who's managed to drag himself across the floor.

He spits blood at her and laughs.

EARL
You think you beat me?

She stares down at the man, something familiar about him, his face.

Then it clicks.

ERICA
My God. Earl Pritchett...

Earl continues to cough up blood and laughs as he crawls to the base of the tarp-covered SOMETHING in the corner.

EARL
The Keeper done give me the gift.
Y'all's too late! I done got the
gift!

He quickly draws an old six-shooter from his waist, but Erica's quicker and ends his life with a shot to his head.

Earl goes limp, blood pouring from his head.

The blood pools around the base of the seven-foot-tall SOMETHING under the tarp. The blood glows with a tinge of blue - unnoticed by Erica.

WILL (O.S.)
Aw fuck, Craig!

She turns, sees Will and Bo staring at Craig's lifeless body.

She speaks into her shoulder-mounted radio.

ERICA

Dispatch, this is seven-two. I have two officers and two civilians down at the old Evanwald Mining site off of Washout Road. Send medical support and backup. Lots of backup.

DISPATCH (O.S.)

(filtered)

Roger, seven-two. Did you say the old Evanwald Mining site?

ERICA

Affirmative, Dispatch.

She looks at Craig, then back to Will and Bo.

ERICA

Is this the man who shot the girl?

Bo nods, barely able to contain his emotion.

WILL

What kind of a human being would do this?

Erica approaches the hole on the floor, looks down at the soggy earth.

A noise behind them catches them off guard.

Erica spins, her gun aimed instinctively at --

Zion!

He stands next to the SUV, hands up in the air.

ZION

Please - do not shoot the innocent black man.

Sean appears behind him. They both see Craig hanging in the middle of the workshop.

FADE TO:

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Bright LED panels, powered by generators, illuminate fifteen or so marked and unmarked police vehicles, a fire truck, two ambulances, and two Coroner's vans.

Thirty **EMERGENCY PERSONNEL** mill about. **FIREFIGHTERS**, **POLICE**, **CSI**, and **EMS**.

The **CORONER** straps a body into the back of his van, then heads back into the house where **COPS** are everywhere collecting evidence.

Sean, Will and Bo stand with Erica near an ambulance where a **PARAMEDIC** tends to Zion's shoulder wounds. His **RIFLE** lays next to him in the ambulance.

WILL
How ya feeling?

Zion looks at each of them, concerned.

ZION
How many were there? Creatures, how many?

WILL
I don't know. There was a Badger with wings that yacked up a Snake-thing.

ZION
I met that one. What else?

ERICA
I killed a mountain lion with three heads. Jesus, how am I gonna fill out a report on this?

ZION
What about the dog with two heads, or the squirrel with bat wings?

ERICA
You mean there's more?

ZION
Lots.

BO
How can this shit be real? You can't stuff a dead animal with wood chips and cotton, spout some sort of mumbo jumbo incantation and bring them back to life. Shit doesn't work like that.

ZION

Look around, Doc. This yard was filled with those things yesterday. Now what? Nothing. They're all - out there.

Zion motions to the darkness.

BO

I'm not a hundred percent convinced on what any of us saw. You guys are talking about magic like it's real. It's fiction. Hocus pocus bullshit.

SEAN

Science is built upon the discoveries of hocus pocus bullshit. You don't know what you don't know until you realize that you didn't know it.

WILL

I don't give a damn why or how any of this shit is happening. I just want off this mountain before I end up like Craig.

Sean realizes what slipped out and everyone grows quiet.

ZION

(to Erica)

How long before his family can claim his body?

INT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

The Coroner approaches Craig's body, shakes his head.

He sees the chains, follows them up across the ceiling to the hand crank. He looks to a nearby **DETECTIVE**.

CORONER

Y'all done with this one?

The Detective nods.

The Coroner grabs the crank handle and begins turning.

Next to him, the SOMETHING moves beneath the tarp, unnoticed by the Coroner.

ON THE DETECTIVE

The Detective kicks at a mound of sawdust next to the pile of Earl's discarded weapons.

CORONER (O.S.)
You reckon he was going to stuff
this feller? Goddamned crazy
mountain --

A SPLATTER OF BLOOD crosses the floor in front of the Detective so fast that it startles him.

A gurgling sound catches his ear.

He turns and sees the Coroner - eyes wide, blood pouring from his mouth - and a huge fucking rack of antlers protruding from his chest!

DETECTIVE
What the --

Then with a disgusting ripping sound, the antlers withdraw from the Coroner's body and he drops like a stone.

Behind him, the antlers protrude from under the tarp.

With a loud groaning moan, a HUMAN HAND reaches out from underneath and pulls the tarp away.

The room full of cops stares in terror at the blood-dripping antlers as they rise on a BUCK'S HEAD attached to a massive HUMAN TORSO and long, muscular BEAR LEGS.

Horns and limbs from a dozen creatures protrude from all over the back and side of the BEAST's body.

Its arms are covered in tattoos - Johnny Pritchett's torso!

The Beast rises to its full seven and a half feet of unholy terror.

The abomination reaches out, arms wide, takes a deep breath through flaring deer nostrils and ROARS!

The Detective grabs for his pistol but the Beast drops to all fours and charges.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Will, Erica, and Bo walk away from the ambulance where Sean remains with Zion.

WILL
You think we could get a ride to
collect the rest of our stuff. I
think we're going to head into town
to --

ROAR!

They all turn towards the shack.

An eruption of GUNFIRE from inside of the house.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Everyone outside drops to the ground or runs for cover.

ON SEAN AND ZION

At the sound of gunfire, Sean ducks, grabs his backpack,
leaps into the ambulance with Zion and shuts the door.

INT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK

Bullets hit the Beast square in the chest and bounce off.

It tears through the room, rips everything it meets apart.

It grabs one OFFICER by both arms, tears them off.

Holding the bloody stumps close to its body, tendrils of
blue mist connect the arms to Beast's torso, the skin merges
together seamlessly.

The new arms swing wildly as the Beast charges towards
another Detective. Again, he removes an arm, then rips the
Detectives head off.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK

Erica and the other officers keep their pistols drawn.

Silence lingers, and loud footfalls echo inside before --

BOOM!

A HEAD flies through the window, lodging into the windshield
of the police cruiser that Erica, Will, and Bo are hiding
behind.

ON ERICA, WILL, AND BO

ERICA
You two stay down.

INT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK

Beast walks towards a Paramedic that's attempting to crawl away.

He flips the man over, then kneels next to him.

Placing all of his hands on the Paramedic, the Beast summons the man's life force. The blue mist leaves his body like streamers that circles the Beast's arms and soaks in.

The Beast looks over to the stack of collected guns.

It reaches for a rifle.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK

An unsettling quiet lingers.

A gunshot rings out and an Officer falls.

The Beast emerges from the large hole in the trailer.

It stands tall atop Erica's SUV, the hunting rifle in one of its arms and a large satchel of ammo slung across its chest.

Police open fire, but the bullets ricochet with a metallic *ting*.

ERICA
(yelling)
Pritchett put some sort of armor
under the skin!

The Beast lets out a primal bleat. Loud, pulsing, rhythmic.

A CALL!

It leaps twenty feet up into a nearby tree, springs to another branch, and disappears into the woods.

For a moment, silence and confusion set in. Then --

From the woods all around the shack, the skittering sound of breaking sticks and crunching leaves.

A tsunami of movement coming towards them.

BO
I don't like the sound of that.

All of the police and emergency Personnel spin around frantically, searching the darkness.

BANG!

An OFFICER drops from a rifle shot to his thigh.

Then, out of the woods - **ALL OF EARL'S CREATURES** descend upon the trailer.

Hideous amorphous amalgamations cobbled together from every type of animal in the forest, hundreds of them pour into the clearing and attack the unprepared emergency workers.

ERICA
RUN!

Erica, Will, and Bo run for the Ambulance.

Another gunshot from up in the trees and a FIREFIGHTER goes down. The creatures swarm him, devouring his body and soaking in the precious blue mist.

Gunshots fill the air as the police open fire on the army of creatures.

Amidst their gunfire, the loud BLAM! of the Beast's rifle echoes and another body falls.

The Beast hunts from the darkness, feeding his young.

INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

Sean and Zion climb through the back, into the driver and passenger's seats.

Erica enters through the back, followed by Bo and Will, who closes the doors just as a freakish varmint smashes into it.

WILL
Go! Go! Go!

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

The carnage continues as the creatures tear, claw, bite, and ravage the remaining emergency personnel.

Blue mist hovers over the entire yard. The animals shake and convulse as they absorb it.

INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

Erica watches her friends dying. She moves to open the rear door of the van.

Will stops her.

ERICA
Those are my friends out there!

WILL
There's nothing we can do. We're outnumbered.

BO
The big one, the part human one,
it's out in the woods. We need to
get out of here.

Sean and Zion peer through the windshield, into the trees.

SEAN
I don't see anything.

ZION
It's too goddamned dark!

A huge SNAKE with WINGS and two dozen EAGLE TALONS lands hard against the windshield. It scratches at the glass as it crawls like a millipede.

Sean and Zion startle backwards just as a rifle shot rings out and a bullet blasts through the windshield, barely missing Zion.

They look back into the woods where the Beast takes aim.

Sean starts the engine, throws it into REVERSE just as another shot ricochets off the side view mirror.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Flooring the gas, the ambulance advances backward along the side of the trailer.

ERICA
What are you...?

Thump. Thump. Thump - the ambulance plows and bounces over bodies and creatures before it crashes through some small trees and careens down a SIXTY FOOT SLOPE.

INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

They all bounce around the inside of the ambulance.

EXT. POND - NIGHT

At the bottom of the slope, the ambulance tears through the foliage and splashes tail-first into a pond.

Buoyant, the ambulance floats out to the middle of the pond, then bottoms out a little over a hundred feet from shore.

INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

Zion busts out his window with the butt of his rifle.

ZION
Everyone out!

One by one, they climb out ONTO THE ROOF.

EXT. POND - NIGHT

Will, the last one out, climbs up just as the front dips under and touches bottom. The waterline just below the window.

WILL
It's not that deep. I think we're good.

BO
Mountain water's ice cold this time of year.

Surrounded by silence, an occasional gunshot rings out from up at the trailer. Erica huffs, mad as hell.

ERICA
We need to do something.

BO
There's nothing we can do.

ERICA

Why in the hell did you drive the damned ambulance into the pond?

SEAN

I'm sorry if I was being shot at by a monster with a gun! How was I supposed to know there was a fucking lake down here.

Then they hear it - CHATTERING and the sound of the creatures stampeding down the slope.

ZION

Jesus, they're coming!

The abominations hit the water running, and slowly swims towards the ambulance.

Fear grips everyone.

BO

Shit...

Sean takes off his backpack and sets it on the roof.

SEAN

Guys, I got this!

He jumps into the water.

ZION

Sean, what the fuck are you doing?

Sean swims over to the window, reenters the ambulance, then emerges a few seconds later with a DEFIBRILLATOR held in one hand and Zion's RIFLE in the other.

ZION

What the hell is that?

BO

(excited)

A defibrillator!

Sean hands the device and the rifle up to Bo.

Zion grabs his rifle.

IN THE WATER

A large BASS swims underwater - multiple TALONS from various birds of prey jut from the sides of the fish.

ON THE AMBULANCE

Sean attempts to climb up as he had moments earlier, but can't seem to get a grip.

SEAN
It's cool. I'll try to --

BANG!

A rifle shot rips through Sean's shoulder. He screams.

ON THE SHORE

The Beast chuffs with satisfaction. It jumps and uses its dozens of horns and arms to climb up and disappears into the dense foliage of the trees.

IN THE WATER

Sean cries out in pain and floats away from the ambulance.

ON THE AMBULANCE

The others drop to lay flat.

ZION
SEAN!

Zion drags himself over to the edge closest to Sean, and extends his hand out to him.

ZION
Sean, take my hand.

SEAN
I'm fucking shot, man.

ZION
I know. It hurts like hell. Grab my hand, brother.

Sean struggles to make his way towards the ambulance.

All the while, the horde of creatures close in.

SEAN
You gotta use the defibrillator.

ZION
Not until you're out of the water.
Now take my fucking hand!

Sean swims closer, reaches up.

ZION
That's it.

SEAN
It hurts, Z.

ZION
Think about who you're talking to,
man!

Sean laughs nervously as the other men slide over to help hoist Sean from the water.

Out of nowhere, the Talon Bass emerges from the water.

Its razor talons wrap around Sean's head and tear at his face until they catch in his eye sockets.

Sean screams and thrashes. The guys can't hold on and Sean is pulled under the icy water.

ZION
SEAN!!!

Another shot rings out, the bullet hitting the ambulance just in front of Bo.

Bo looks over to see the Beast with its rifle running along the shore, then back into the woods.

BO
Zion, drop this fucker!

Bo tries to slide Zion his rifle but Zion focuses on finding Sean.

ZION
SEAN!!!

BO
Z, take the shot.

Zion screams into the dark water.

Some of the quicker swimming creatures reach the ambulance's hood and scramble clumsily over the windshield and up onto the large roof.

Erica charges the defibrillator as Will kicks the creatures back into the water.

Bo stands and helps Will defend their position.

Zion just stares into the water.

ERICA
Thirty seconds!

BANG!

Another rifle shot nearly takes out Erica, grazes her across her right shoulder. Just a flesh wound.

ERICA
Jee-zus.

WILL
You okay?

ERICA
FUCK!

Zion looks up, sees three people who need his protection.

He stands, shifts his weight onto his one good leg.

In the distance, the Beast reloads.

Zion lifts his rifle, takes aim.

ZION
You want us, motherfucker!?

The Beast roars loudly.

Zion pulls the trigger. BLAM! A second later, one of Johnny Pritchett's arms explodes, a combination of meat and sawdust.

ZION
Come and get us. BITCH!

The defibrillator beeps.

ZION
Fry those motherfuckers. Now!

Bo reaches down, turns the SHOCK MAGNITUDE dial from MIN to MAX. A spectrum bar of lights goes from green to red.

BO
CLEAR!

Bo drops the defibrillator pads into the water.

Whoooooomp! A shockwave of electricity pulses through the water, instantly frying all of the creatures in range.

The Beast roars with anger from the shore.

Bo pulls the defibrillator from the water and presses the recharge button.

ZION

You like that? I wonder what your
children taste like all fried up!
WOOOO!

Another roar of anger and a wild shot from the hip.

Zion takes the opportunity and - BLAM! - Pritchett's other arm explodes.

More creatures swim up to the ambulance.

The defibrillator beeps - recharged.

ZION

Do it!

Another zap kills dozens more of the little bastards.

The Beast stomps and roars, pissed. It shoots and shoots, but anger clouds its aim. Not a single shot comes close.

Zion returns fire, blowing one of the antler racks from the Beast's head.

The Beast WAILS loudly, then flees into the woods.

Sean's body floats to the surface with a bunch of mutilated fish.

From all of the creatures, the blue mist rises into the air.

Like a breeze, whispers fill the air. The grateful life forces, now freed from powering the abominations.

The defibrillator smokes, shorted out, and Will pulls the pads from the water.

ERICA

Are they all dead?

BO

Fuck, I hope so.

Zion sees Sean floating out in the water. Bo notices and feels like shit for what he just said.

BO

Shit...

WILL

We need to get ashore and head back towards the trailer.

ZION

I'm not leaving without Sean. Craig either.

Will places a hand on Zion's shoulder. Nods.

WILL

We need to go back and see if anyone survived. And there's at least twenty different vehicles we can use to get off of this mountain.

ERICA

Guns too.

Bo nods.

BO

Let me take a look at that.

Bo inspects Erica's shoulder wound as she grabs her mic.

ERICA

Dispatch, seven-two.

A broken transmission comes back.

DISPATCH(O.S.)

(filtered)

...two...say again...

ERICA

This is seven-two, over.

Nothing but static.

BO

Flesh. You're good.

ERICA

We need to get to higher ground.

They climb down from the ambulance, and begin wading to shore in the shallow water.

Zion carries the rifle over his head, wearing Sean's backpack as he pulls Sean's dead body through the water. Face sullen, serious. Heated anger.

Will looks to Bo.

WILL

It'll be waiting for us in the woods. That thing.

ZION

Yah, but he's not mad anymore, he's scared. Fuck him.

ERICA

Did that thing look scared to you?

ZION

We just annihilated most of his army and I took a nice chunk out of his head. He's scared. If we're lucky, he'll stay in hiding until we're gone.

Erica stops moving, waist deep and only a ten yards or so from shore.

ERICA

I'm not leaving.

The guys stop and turn.

ZION

Yo! Two of my boys are dead because of these crazy-ass woods. You wanna stay, you have my blessings, but I'm taking my boy's body and I'm getting the fuck out of here before I end up just like him.

ERICA

That thing is Earl Lee Pritchett. The man that fell in the mine. I've seen that face in pictures at every Founder's Day picnic this town's ever had.

BO
The guy from the urban legend? He'd
be over a hundred and sixty years
old. Impossible.

Bo and Erica watch several dead creatures float by.

Erica shoots Bo a "what about those fuckin' things" look.

BO
OK, so we're fighting a 160 year old
bear monster thing with twenty arms
and a gun. Continue.

ERICA
We need to shut this shit down.
(to Bo)
Navy Cross?
(to Will)
Bronze Star?

They all share a look.

ERICA
I'm not psychic. I ran your records
at the hospital.

ZION
What's any of that have to do with
this?

ERICA
A bunch of decorated Marines and
you're just going to leave me
here...?

The men share a look.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Bodies and abandoned vehicles litter the yard.

Soaking wet, Will, Bo and Erica emerge from woods at the top
of the slope.

Erica takes point with her pistol.

Will and Bo stop at two bodies and pick up a shotgun and a
pistol respectively.

The three of them approach a police cruiser, crouch down.

Erica sees her friends among the dead, covers her mouth.

WILL
You okay?

She nods.

Bo peers into the cruiser --

BO
No keys.

Will puts his hand on her shoulder.

WILL
Take a minute. Breathe.

Tears begin to form in Erica's eyes. She wipes them.

ERICA
I'm sorry.

WILL
It's cool. You have to let it out.
You have to process it.

BO
I'm still trying to process it.

ERICA
I just. I know them. Their families.
Good people.

ZION
You have to channel that emotion.
Turn it into napalm and use it to
send this shit back to whatever
fresh hell it came from.

BO
Hell yeah.

Erica wipes the tears, takes a few deep breaths.

ERICA
Hell yeah.

WILL
(to Bo)
How do you want to do this?

BO

I'd prefer with a car. Cloth in the gas tank? Pull a Mel Gibson.

WILL

We just want to draw him out, not burn down the whole forest. I think I saw some cans around back if you want to just Molotov it.

BO

No. Car and a rag. Trust me.

ERICA

Can we make some kind of explosive. An I-E-D?

BO

God no! Don't even fucking mention that around Zion.

WILL

That's how he lost his leg. Dude can't even enjoy fireworks on the Fourth of July anymore.

ERICA

Sorry.

WILL

Our idea will work, but we need to find a car with the keys in it.

ERICA

Check the bodies.

Will looks around at all of the corpses.

WILL

I'll be right back.

Will stays low, runs across the barren yard to the closest body.

He checks the pockets. Eureka! He pulls the keys from the pocket, hits the keyless entry and a nearby unmarked cruiser chirps.

He runs over, opens the door, climbs in.

BO

I'll be right back, little sister.

ERICA
I'll cover you.

Bo runs over to -

INT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Bo runs into the large hole in the front of the trailer and snatches a piece of the bloodied drop cloth that used to separate the workshop.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Will starts the car and quickly pulls it around to where Erica waits.

Bo exits the trailer and hunkers down behind the car. He tears a long strip from the drop cloth, opens the gas tank and stuffs the strip inside.

Will rolls down the window.

WILL
Quick! Light it.

Bo takes out a lighter and torches the rag.

Will puts the car in gear, and it begins to roll as he opens the door to get out.

POP!

A bullet spiderwebs the windshield and catches Will in the shoulder.

He screams.

BO
Will!

Another shot catches Will in the side.

A blood rose blooms on his shirt, a mortal wound.

He manages to open the door with the last of his strength and tries to tumble out, but the seat belt has him and he's stuck half way out.

Still in gear, the sedan drags him as it rolls across the yard towards the woods.

BO
Z! I need cover!

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The Beast aims at Bo and Erica from the trees.

EXT. THE SLOPE - NIGHT

SCOPE POV - Crosshairs scan around for a target.

A muzzle flash in the distance illuminates the Beast.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

The Beast's bullet ricochets off the ground in front of Bo as he runs to free Will from the seat belt.

Bo drops to the ground behind the firetruck.

EXT. THE SLOPE - NIGHT

SCOPE POV - the Crosshairs lock on to the Beast.

ON THE SLOPE

Zion lays prone, rifle scope to his eye.

ZION
Who loves ya, bitch.

Zion pulls the trigger - BLAM!

The bullet travels the distance - blows the Beast's gun hand off at the wrist.

The Beast's rifle drops to the ground. It howls in agony as sawdust pours from the missing hand.

With a roar, it launches for the protection of the treetops.

BACK ON THE SLOPE

Zion stands, and hobbles quickly towards the trailer.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

The sedan rolls into the woods, dragging a barely conscious Will.

WILL
(weak)
Doc...

Bo stands again and chases, but the car picks up speed as it rolls downhill towards the slope.

Will fumbles with the seat belt. Clumsy.

Zion sees the car rolling away from him to his left, then the flames of the rag enter the gas pipe.

ZION
Doc! Get back!

Bo stops, looks to Zion, then back at the car as it enters the woods. It slows and comes to rest next to the rock wall.

ON WILL

WILL
(weak)
Doc... get me --

BOOOOM! The car explodes! Flames blast in all directions.

The concussion knocks Bo through the air. He slams into the ground hard.

Zion drops to the ground, shaking, hands over his ears.

The surrounding forest turns into a firestorm.

Erica rushes over to Bo.

ERICA
You okay?

Bo stares at the burning car and his friend's burning body.

Erica keeps her head on a swivel.

ERICA
Bo, we need to keep moving.

Zion also makes his way towards Bo.

BO
No. This is where we draw him in.

Bo points to the rock face of the mountain.

Where there was once foliage, now a hidden entrance to the mine is revealed.

ERICA
Holy shit! The mine.

Bo looks to Zion.

BO
We gotta move, brother. That
fucker's not going to stay hidden
for --

With a howl, the Beast drops down from a flaming tree, right behind Bo.

The creature grabs Bo, lifts him off the ground and stares at him, face to monstrous face - and starts to suck the life force out of him.

Zion runs at the Beast, but it backhands him - knocking him away.

Mist wafts out of Bo's eyes and mouth, but not fast enough. The Beast tears off Bo's head and the mist flows freely.

Zion grabs his rifle and BLAM! - shoots the Beast in the side.

The monster roars and tosses Bo's drained corpse aside.

Erica backs away towards the mine.

ZION
Die you motherfucker!

Zion empties a full magazine into the monster with no effect, so he charges in and swings his rifle like a baseball bat.

Back lit by the blazing forest, he bashes the rifle butt into the Beast's forehead, then wallops it across its snout.

The Beast wobbles.

Zion grabs it by its antlers and knees the Beast in the face repeatedly.

Beast chuffs, then delivers an uppercut.

Zion flies backward about five feet. Lands hard.

The Beast pulls a machete from its ammo satchel and stalks toward Zion, its eyes burning red.

Zion's shaken. Loopy. The rifle two or three feet away.

The Beast stands over him, raises the blade.

BANG!

A bullet tears through Beast's leg, right at the knee.

The creature howls, the leg weakens, but doesn't give way.

Erica takes aim at the other knee, pulls the trigger.

CLICK. Empty.

Zion rolls, grabs his rifle and swings it at the shot leg.

SNAP!

The Beast collapses, its knee fucked up, but still mobile and still very lethal.

Erica grabs Zion by the hand and helps him up.

ERICA
Quick. Into the mine!

INT. MINE - NIGHT

The glow of the fire back-lights them as they race down the old tunnel into the mountain.

About twenty yards in, they come upon a police SUV.

ERICA
This was Olson's.

ZION
Holy shit. We watched the old guy
drive off in this thing earlier.

As they travel deeper down the tunnel, they pass more and more cars. More than a dozen altogether - wedged into offshoots of the mine.

ERICA
How many people has he...

They come to the end of the tunnel, where it opens up into a larger room and a deep chasm.

A rudimentary stairwell is carved into the wall of the chasm.

At the bottom of the stairs, a SOFT, FLICKERING GLOW.

Zion begins making his way down the stairs slowly, followed by Erica. They finally reach --

THE MINE FOYER

Torches light the opening to two different shafts - a fork.

Erica looks around, sees something of use and reaches out for a stick of --

ZION
Don't! That's dynamite.

Zion backs away.

ERICA
We can use it. We can lure him in and collapse the tunnel. Dynamite this old could blow with as little as a change in temperature.

ZION
NO! No fucking explosives. I don't do fucking explosives. We'll find another way.

CRACK!

They hear the heavy footfalls of the Beast echo closer and closer.

ERICA
Shit! Come on.

Erica grabs a torch and heads down the left shaft, Zion stares at the dynamite, then follows her.

LEFT SHAFT

Making their way, the path veers to the right and they continue to follow it deeper and deeper.

ZION
It's fucking dank down here.

ERICA
(annoyed)
What did you think a mine would
smell like?

Zion sniffs. Something repugnant.

ZION
There's something else.

ERICA
Fear.

Zion's face scrunches.

ZION
That's some cold shit.

She smiles.

ERICA
I'm sorry - WATCH OUT!

She grabs his shirt.

Zion freezes, teetering on the edge of a deep chasm.

ZION
Shit!

Zion peers into the darkness.

ZION
Fuck. Dead end.

Erica looks around with the torch.

To the right of the precipice, a path hugs the wall, leading
up to large BUILDING carved from the cavern around them.

The stone glows a subdued, supernatural blue.

A waterfall roars on the other side of the abyssal pit,
about fifty yards away.

ERICA
My God!

ZION
(awestruck)
What is this?

ERICA
It's all true.

They traverse the small stone walkway, bordered on one side by a sheer wall, and the abyss on the other.

Ahead of them, what they thought was one building turns out to be a COMPLEX OF ANCIENT TEMPLES.

On the wall next to them, RUNIC CARVINGS.

Zion looks at the carvings.

ZION
It looks ancient, like the Ziggurat.

ERICA
The what?

ZION
Birthplace of Abraham. It was just outside of one of our bases in Iraq. You could take tours of it. Shit like this was scribbled on every wall. I mean, it wasn't exactly like this, but - the shit was old.

The small path ends at a wide floor that connects via steps to all of the temples, the largest of which sits on the edge of the abyss.

An AMBER GLOW flickers within that one.

ERICA
This is what Earl Pritchett found down here! It's what made him immortal.

After a pause for thought, they both stop and stare at the LARGE COLUMNS of the carved buildings.

ZION
It's what drove him nuts.

Erica looks upon the temples in wonder.

ERICA
It's amazing. This is ancient. Pre-history.

ERICA

Whoever, or whatever, built it must
have given Pritchett his powers.
This place has to be worth a
fortune.

ZION

Check your Trophy vision. This place
could be your tomb.

He points back the way they came:

ZION

That supernatural butt fucking ugly
bear thing is still coming after us,
ya know.

They approach the temple with the glow, passing hundreds of
statuettes of CREATURES NEVER BEFORE SEEN.

INT. TEMPLE - NIGHT

They reach the last step, stand amid rune-covered columns.

ZION

Jesus Christ!

A circular fire pit in the center of the room illuminates
carvings on the walls.

Beings, not human, shown with the animals of the woods.

Dinosaurs. Mammals. Sea creatures. Other things which defy
description.

A time line of the Ancients.

ERICA

Do you feel it? The power here? It's
like static waiting to shock.

ZION

I feel like we need to leave. Now.

Whispering, ethereal voices echoes through the chamber.

Erica's focus drifts and she falls into a sort of trance.

ERICA

They're still here, Zion. Can you
hear them?

She closes her eyes.

ERICA
(to the voices)
Yes, I would protect them for you.

Then Zion hears it. He grabs at his head, struggles.

ZION
(to voices)
Get outta my fucking head.

Erica turns towards the wall, stares at the runes, touches them lovingly.

Zion backs towards the exit, shaking his head clear.

ERICA
(to voices)
We would. We would keep them all
safe. The three of us.

Zion covers his ears.

ZION
Block them out, Erica. Don't listen.

ERICA
Why? They offer immortality and the
power to give life. The Keeper of
the Wood will give us these things.
We're smarter than Pritchett. More
responsible.

Zion's head is more clear now. He pleads with Erica from a safe distance.

ZION
Erica, we need to leave. We have to
go. Back up.

She turns to him, her eyes now glowing a faint blue. She closes the distance and, without warning, backhands him.

He flies across the room, lands hard.

ERICA
(demon voice)
The Keeper demands we stay! The
power of Nature can be ours to
control.

She floats over to him, reaches down and lifts him from the ground.

ERICA
Give yourself unto The Keeper.

ZION
Erica, please - Remember! Remember what just happened. Remember your people up there getting ripped apart by those things.

She tosses him effortlessly and he smashes into a wall.

The Beast enters. Docile. Watching.

ERICA
There is a cleansing to come.

Zion lays on his back, the wind knocked out of him.

He opens his eyes, sees the stars of the night sky through a small HOLE in the ceiling. He makes the connection!

ERICA
Humanity was a mistake. The ancients will once again wash over the Earth and reclaim what once was. A new beginning from bitter ends. We will usher in the new age.

Turning his head to the right, Zion sees his lost MECHANICAL LEG laying on the floor.

ERICA
The Keeper grows stronger now, every drop of blood spilled is a feast of life. With every death, an orgy of renewal.

Zion grabs the leg.

ZION
And how long before you turn into a madman like Pritchett? How long before you're wandering through the woods with an army of patchwork zoo buddies?

Erica regards the Beast.

ERICA

Earl Lee was - a poor choice. But
you and I - a smart woman and a
soldier. We could create beautiful
death. We could create perfection.

Zion stands, bionic leg behind his back.

Erica floats over to him.

ERICA

We could be mated for eternity.

He swings.

WHAM!

Erica takes the mechanical leg to the side of her face!

She falls to the floor with a thump.

ZION

Nah, I'm good.

The Beast roars, charges with its machete drawn.

Zion and the Beast battle, blade versus leg.

Beast throws a wallop, continuously hitting so hard that
with every block, Zion takes two steps backward.

The temporary leg that he wears begins to give way under the
onslaught.

Zion backs away, out onto the steps.

INT. CAVERN - NIGHT

Zion descends the steps, hobbles across the flat ground
towards the abyss.

The Beast follows, bats Zion to the ground with a huge paw,
playing with his food.

Zion, out of breath and weak, flips a switch on the
mechanical leg. Lights and small motors inside whir to life.

Beast brings the machete down, Zion rolls out of the way.

Zion crawls to the back of the temple, places himself with
the building to his back and the Beast between him and the
abyss.

The Beast roars.

ZION
(focused, angry)
You call that a war face, bitch?

Zion yells, his face contorting with anger.

He leaps and attacks Beast, catching the creature off guard.
He spits his words with every wallop!

ZION
THIS - IS - A - WAR - FACE!

He swings like a madman, hitting the Beast in the face over and over. Screaming!

The Beast backs away with every hit - coming closer and closer to the abyss.

Wham - wham - wham.

The Beast stands on the edge of the cliff, darkness falling away behind him into nothingness.

ZION
You like the taste of metal?

WHAM!

ZION
You ain't no big thing.

WHAM!

ZION
In fact, why don't you -

WHAM!

Zion slams his foot into Beast's leg. It goes down on one knee.

Zion braces himself, plants the foot of the prosthetic against the Beast's face.

ZION
Go stuff yourself!

He hits an actuator inside the leg's knee joint.

The foot shoots out like a piston, slams into Beast's face and knocks it over the edge of the abyss.

Zion peers over the edge, hears the creature's roar echo and fade away.

He looks at the bionic leg with respect, then his temp leg finally gives out on him and he falls on his ass.

Zion unstraps the broken leg and looks at it with a chuckle.

A moment of calm. Both enemies defeated.

ZION
All this shit and now you want to
give out?

He straps on the mechanical leg, then hears it. Footsteps.

Zion gets to his feet, turns and sees Erica walking towards him.

ZION
Shit.

ERICA
If you will not take up the mantle,
you will die before us all.

ZION
Us?

She holds out her hands and a blue mist appears out of nowhere, swirls in a cyclonic pattern and then settles on the ground like Dry Ice fog.

The mist creeps over to the stone animal statues.

The hideous, never before seen animals begin moving.

ERICA
Command my army, or fall before it!

Zion rolls his eyes, then bolts for the stairs.

Erica's demon laugh echoes behind him as he enters the -

MINE SHAFT

The roar of a thousand unearthly stone creatures reaches his ears as he runs up the sloping incline towards --

THE MINE FOYER

Zion exits the shaft and begins mounting the stairs when he stops.

He quickly takes off Sean's backpack.

The chitter of the approaching creatures closes in.

He opens the pack to reveal CRAIG'S LIGHTNING BOLT BOOT!

A cacophony of noise resonates from within the shaft.

He glances down the tunnel, looks towards box upon box of dynamite, breathes heavily.

ZION

Fuck fear.

Zion grabs three sticks of dynamite from a nearby box and places them gently into the boot.

The first of the critters enters the foyer, followed by another and another - a nightmare assortment of tentacles and pincers and claws.

ZION

Anyone else got cold feet?

He presses a button on the side of the boot, and the LIGHTNING BOLT on the side begins to glow.

Zion sets the boot gently next to a half dozen boxes of old dynamite, then runs hard up the stairs.

The multitude of creatures exits the shaft and pour over the boot and boxes like waves. Thousands of them heading to the stairs.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Zion comes out of the cave as fast as he can. The forest fire is mostly just smoldering trees now.

Zion runs as far from the entrance of the mine as possible.

INT. CAVERN - NIGHT

The lightning bolt on the boot begins flashing as the animals pass.

One creature stops to notice the blinking light.

The blinking stops.

KA-BOOOOOM!!!

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

The fires of hell tear their way up and out of the mine.

Zion is knocked to the ground. Behind him, the rock wall collapses, sealing the mine shaft forever.

INT. CAVERN - NIGHT

THE SHAFT

The fire shoots down the tunnel towards the -

TEMPLES

It bellows out of the shaft as the cave collapses around Erica.

Unfazed, she opens her arms and looks to the ceiling.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - NIGHT

Zion stands, sees the collapsing mine entrance, and smiles.

He falls back onto his ass. Worn out.

ZION
I fucking hate hunting.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

A POLICE OFFICER stands outside of a room with a closed door.

INT. HOSPITAL - ZION'S ROOM

AGENT DAWSON (40s) stands over Zion, questioning him. The look on his face says it all. DISBELIEF.

AGENT DAWSON
So after the Man-Bear-Deer fell into the hole, you say Deputy Erica Lane attacked you.

ZION
Yeah. But it wasn't her. It was like she was possessed.

AGENT DAWSON
So you blew her up?

ZION
No. I mean, yeah. She was in the temple when I blew it up.

Dawson squints. Processing it all. Searching for motive.

A knock, and another **AGENT** enters, handing Dawson some paperwork.

Dawson reads, takes visual note of Zion.

AGENT DAWSON
Now that's funny.

ZION
What?

AGENT DAWSON
Were you aware of Deputy Lane's previous military experience in the Marine Corps?

ZION
No.

AGENT DAWSON
Seems she was in a pretty horrific helicopter crash in Iraq. A crash that you and your buddies responded to. Same operation where you lost your leg.

Zion sees the pieces of the puzzle falling into place.

ZION
Aw, c'mon. You can't think...

AGENT DAWSON
What are the odds of the girl who caused you to lose your leg in an explosion, randomly dying in an explosion - that you caused?

Zion feels cornered.

ZION
No. That's bullshit. All of those people! The animals came alive. That fucking thing is in the cave!

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - DAY

SPECIAL AGENT ROOSEVELT (30s) speaks into his phone while numerous **FBI AGENTS** comb the place for evidence.

ROOSEVELT

(to phone)

...He's saying that - you ready for this - stuffed animals did it. No. Not like Teddy Ruxpin. Taxidermy. The pond behind the trailer is full of them. - Yeah, the missing girl with the gunshot is awake and backs up his story, but they've both been through some shit. The deputy? She's pretty banged up, but she's alive. They're transporting her now.

Rescue workers put an unconscious Erica in the back of an ambulance, and close the door. The ambulance pulls away with siren's blaring.

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

Erica's head sways with the motion of the vehicle, an oxygen mask over her mouth.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER/SHACK - DAY

Roosevelt walks over to one of the stuffed creatures.

ROOSEVELT

(to phone)

Right now ATF is questioning him in relation to the explosion. It seems pretty cut and dry. War vet with PTSD went ape shit and killed everyone. Case closed.

He bends down and picks up the Squirrel/Bat thing, long-since dead.

In its mouth, a HUMAN FINGER.

ROOSEVELT

What the hell?

He reaches to pull the finger out - and Squirrel/Bat comes alive with a shrieking squeal!

CUT TO:

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

Erica's eyes pop open - GLOWING BLUE.

FADE OUT.