

FERAL
by
Michael Prevette

Original Story
By
Michael Prevette
And
Mark Kimary & Tony Elwood

FADE IN:

EXT-FOREST-DAY

Miles and miles of undeveloped forestland. Pristine, untouched. Green, seemingly a carpet of forest cover, pines and such. It's beautiful. Blue skies with high white clouds all around as a HELICOPTER SHOT ZOOMS the landscape.

Continue with the beautiful carpeted landscape, until finally, find a LARGE CLEAR STRIP OF LAND, A WIDE path cut into the forest. Wide and long, the cleared land is the beginning of some massive construction project.

EXT-CONSTRUCTION SITE-DAY

The forest is being uprooted, piece by piece. A large crew of WORKMEN is busy clearing trees and leveling earth. At the edge of the clearing, a number of extended-cab CREW TRUCKS bearing a company logo are clustered by a makeshift office: an old fashioned Quonset hut.

INT-CONSTRUCTION OFFICE-DAY

The interior has been turned into a nerve center: a handful of COMPUTER WORKSTATIONS have been set up, each loaded with PC and Mac equipment.

At the center of the day - to - day operation: a bank of computers and printers manned by HARVE RABON, an affable guy in his late forties, looks of logger, a hard worker.

HARVE

Damn. More and more friggin'
behind every day.

Across the desk is FREDDIE JAMISON. Jamison is thin, wiry, younger. He has a redneck-arrogant look about him, the type who complains about any and everything at every turn. Harve turns from his computers and leans back in his chair, studying Jamison.

HARVE (CONT'D)

You see Freddie, that's exactly the point I'm trying to make. All I ask is just do the job while you're here. Just give me a good eight hours.

JAMISON

Hey, I do! Every day. Check the punch.

HARVE

The punch ain't the problem. The problem is when you give your card to Bill or somebody who clocks in early, then you show up on the second truck. It's getting to be pretty obvious. Log-to-pay is only one issue here.

Busted. Jamison squirms a bit in his chair, then speaks up.

JAMISON

You just want some reason to bust me, Harve.

HARVE

(frustrated)

No, that's not it. I don't want to let you go. When you focus on the work here, that's great. But you need to focus the entire shift. Clock in when you walk in. Come back from lunch on time. Treat the company's property with some respect.

Jamison is sulky, fidgeting.

HARVE (CONT'D)

We've had to overhaul two engines in the past month. If we keep falling behind schedule and going over budget, they'll get a new boss to run this place. But I won't let it go that far. This job has the highest starting pay in three counties. There are guys lined up waiting for an opening here.

JAMISON

What does that mean?

HARVE

It means I can let you go. I have the grounds. But I don't want to do that. Yet. I need you to work with me, not against me.

JAMISON

You fire me, I'll go to the damn labor board.

HARVE

You don't wanna go there. Trust me. Just get your act together and let's get the job done. Okay?

Without a word Jamison stands and leaves, slamming the door behind him. Once the office is quiet again, Harve sits back and lets out a huge sigh.

EXT-CONSTRUCTION SITE-LATER

The sun is lower in the sky now, but the work continues. At one of the outer areas of this clearing, a BULLDOZER is trying to get leverage on the sawed off STUMP of a HUGE TREE - it's a tremendous tangle of roots, about one-third torn from the ground.

In the cab, Jamison grimaces and swears to himself as he works the gears and tries to maneuver the machine just right. His hands fumble, as he becomes more and more frustrated.

The dozer backs up again, but this time Jamison waits before attacking. He REVS the engine once, twice, and plumes of charcoal smoke billow from the exhaust pipe.

JAMISON

COME ON!

The BLADE of the bulldozer DIGS DOWN deep as Jamison throttles hard and the machine digs in fast and deep and -
 CCCRRRAAAACCKKK! -

The ENTIRE STUMP with it's seeming miles of twisted roots IS RIPPED from its nest, sending CLOUDS OF DIRT AND ROCK into the late day sun as the FRONT OF THE DOZER is LIFTED UP by the momentum and it SLAMS DOWN with a crash.

The other workers around the site drop what they're doing and turn, and in some cases run towards Jamison and his machine.

CLOSE ON JAMISON

as the dust settles around him. Eve though the bulldozer's engine is idling, it makes a horrible GRINDING, SCREECHING, as GOUTS OF BLACK SMOKE belch from the exhaust. Jamison even looks a bit groggy, then slowly his expression turns to smug satisfaction.

JAMISON (CONT'D)

(As he pulls a plug of tobacco
 from a pouch and begins to
 chew)

Well, okay then.

Harve is standing by the door to his office, sipping a cold soda. He watches Jamison, shakes his head.

EXT-CONSTRUCTION SITE-DUSK

A small crowd of workers is gathered around Jamison and the bulldozer. Quitting time, the guys wait for the crew trucks to arrive. General BS all around.

CREW # 1

-had enough for one day?

CREW # 2

-we're here breaking our backs-

JAMISON

-let the damn kindling get the best of me, no way-

The mindless prattle goes on until finally FOCUS ON WHAT THE MEN ARE ROUGHLY GATHERED AROUND:

A LARGE HOLE

where the tree stump was. This is a large hole, easily ten feet in diameter. Of course, the outlying edges of the hole are ragged with jagged roots still jutting from some layers of earth. But, past all that it can clearly see this is a hole in the ground that leads somewhere.

CREW # 3

No, really...where do you think this goes?

CREW # 2

China?

CREW # 4

Shut up. Gold mine, probably. These parts are littered with worked-out mines from the gold rush days.

This quiets everybody.

JAMISON

Who wants to go in?

CREW # 4

I ain't goin' in until somebody tells me what that smell is.

CREW # 2

Dead miners.

JAMISON

Oh, come on. They'd be nothin' but bones.

OFF-SCREEN VOICE

I told you guys to stay the hell away
from that hole!

Everyone turns to see:

Harve leaving his offices and strolling over, smoke trailing
behind him.

HARVE

Company insurance doesn't cover
idiots or their idiot ideas. No one's
going down in that hole, and that's
final. We'll fill it with dirt
tomorrow. Now you fellas pack it up and
go home.

(The group starts to walk away,
grumbling)

HEY? Didn't I tell somebody to put a
barrier around this thing??

Two of the guys stop in their tracks, sigh disgustedly and
slowly walk back towards Harve.

EXT-CONSTRUCTION SITE-NIGHT

One crew truck remains parked by the office, and light shines
through the windows of the hut. After a moment, the lights
click off, and Harve comes out.

Harve looks over the construction site. The heavy machinery
is parked for the night. It's quiet. Stars are shining
brightly above.

He heads towards his truck, taking his time. Then, he stops
in his tracks and turns around, a thoughtful expression on
his face.

Harve walks to his truck, to the passenger's side, and
unlocks the door, leaning inside.

THE HOLE IN THE GROUND

now lined with a few oil drums, with ropes around the
barrels, a crude barrier. IN THE DISTANCE A FLASHLIGHT BEAM
IS COMING CLOSER. He kneels down by the hole, outside of the
makeshift barrier.

Harve's flashlight beam plays around the hole, at the edges,
and into the darkness. Not much can be seen.

Harve edges a bit closer, and finally decides to slip through
the rope barrier and sit on the edge of the opening. He leans
out just a bit to get a better angle for his light,

Harve plays the light with one hand and reaches into his shirt pocket with the other. He takes out a smoke, replaces the pack and digs for his lighter when suddenly the MOUTH OF THE HOLE CRUMBLES beneath him ,and down he goes, into the hole. He gives a short SHOUT, and starts to scramble madly...but calms down.

Now he realizes that he only slipped a few feet, and is in no danger of going down any further. His shoulders remain above ground level. Looking around, he chuckles softly.

HARVE
What the hell.

EXT-CONSTRUCTION SITE-HARVE'S TRUCK-NIGHT

Harve reaches the truck cab. He opens the door and climbs inside. The engine cranks, and Harve lets it idle for a moment when *CRRASSHH!!!*

One of the DRUMS from the edge of the hole SLAMS into the windshield of the cab, SHATTERING THE GLASS.

Quiet now. Harve is stunned. The oil drum blocks most of the windshield. Harve brushes broken glass from his hair, and checks his face for the cuts. Blood flows from a few gashes on his cheek and forehead.

HARVE
Jesus. Jesus, man.

He shakily climbs out, and looks around. Then, he sees it.

The barrels from around the hole are being pulled down into the hole. Unseen hands give HARD, SHARP YANKS, forcing the barrels inch by inch deeper down.

Absentmindedly he wipes the blood from his face with an oil-stained handkerchief. He moves a few steps away from the truck, towards the barrels. He stops, then goes back into the truck and re-appears with his flashlight. He flicks it on and points the beam at the hole as

THE BARRELS EXPLODE FROM THE GROUND and crash back down a few feet away.

Harve stops in his tracks. Really scared now. A SOUND. Faint at first. A few animalistic GRUNTS are heard coming from the hole.

HARVE (CONT'D)
Oh, hell.

He almost flies back to the truck, GRABBING the barrel in the windshield, dragging it across the hood of the truck. As he wrestles with it, THE LOW GRUNTS BECOME AN ANGRY ROAR FROM INSIDE THE HOLE, AND WE HEAR DIRT SHIFTING AND FALLING AS SOMETHING CLAWS IT'S WAY OUT.

Now talking to himself in a frenzied whisper, Harve HEAVES the barrel from the truck and climbs inside, GUNNING THE ENGINE and

at the hole something is trying to rise from down there - more shadows than anything, but something's coming and

The truck BUCKS INTO GEAR and RACES straight at the hole and whatever is inside and

HARVE

suddenly JERKS the wheel and SHOUTS in surprise and fear and

SOMETHING JUMPS UP FROM THE HOLE IN THE GROUND, STILL A SHADOW MORE THAN ANYTHING and

THE TRUCK

VEERS to the side, WHEELS SPINNING with no traction in the loose, torn up soil, and CRASHES straight into Jamison's bulldozer.

It's quiet again now, just for a moment, then the driver's door opens and Harve BURSTS out, falling to the ground, but only for a second, the he's up again and RUNNING now.

EXT - THE WOODS - NIGHT

Harve is TEARING through the heavy underbrush, LEAPING over fallen trees, not daring to look back, just RUNNING full speed and

Far behind him, THE THING IS COMING, CRASHING through the thicket. It must be big, it's making a hell of a lot of noise and

HARVE

is still RUNNING, fast, whimpering and almost crying, maybe in shock in definitely in fear for his life and

THE THING

can't be seen clearly through the forest, but the foliage it tramples in it's wake can be. It almost looks like a *concentrated storm as brush and branches shakes* in advance of the creature. It's coming straight and strong and

HARVE

finally stops as he comes upon a WIDE STREAM banked by ten - foot sloping walls of dirt and debris. His chest heaving, he looks down at the stream, then steals a glance behind him.

In the distance the thing is still coming, heard but unseen.

Harve braces himself and rocks back and forth, getting up energy for the jump.

The stream isn't deep, but it is wide. Add in the sheer, high banks for a formidable jump.

HARVE

gets the gumption, and as THE GROWL OF THE UNSEEN BEAST IS NOW ALMOST DIRECTLY BEHIND HIM, Harve launches himself into the air, HIS FLIGHT IS IN SLOW - MOTION AS WE

CUT TO BLACK SCREEN

MAIN TITLES ROLL

As the TITLES END:

FADE IN:

EXT-CAMPSITE-NIGHT

A shot rings out as a beer bottle EXPLODES. FOUR UPWARDLY-MOBILE CAMPERS are target practicing - CHRIS DOYLE and DANNY HUSTON handle the firearms, KATY BAILEY and MAGGIE MASON are nearby, enduring it all. All mid-twenties, freshly-scrubbed, and half-lit.

Five bottles await as Chris takes aim. He FIRES and misses five times. Danny takes the rifle and reloads.

DANNY

You're shooting blanks again.

MAGGIE

He has that problem sometimes.

DANNY

Don't make me walk over there.

The girls "OOOHH" in mock fear.

Danny grabs two beer cans from a nearby cooler.

DANNY (CONT'D)

We're killing all the party goods.

He sits the beer cans on the fallen tree next to the remnants of the bottles. He steps back, aims and FIRES. The beer can EXPLODES, SHOWERING everybody with beer.

CHRIS
Nice shooting, Tex.

The girls lose interest and move over to the CAMPFIRE.

MAGGIE
Will you boys stop playing Daniel Boone and come join us.

CHRIS
Danny boy, the women are askin' for our presence. Shall we go join the fine lasses for a drink?

Chris reaches into a backpack and pulls out a bottle of tequila.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Compliments of my trust fund.

Chris reaches into his pack and pulls out several cigars. He displays them to Danny.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
La Finca Corona, Havana's best.

DANNY
I've died and gone to heaven.

CHRIS
A toast to friendship.

Chris takes a swig and passes it to Katy. Without taking a drink, she hands it to Danny. Danny takes a drink and winces.

DANNY
Damn. I didn't drink the worm, did I?

CHRIS
(checking the bottle)
Still a wigglin'.

MAGGIE
I'll take that. Here ya go, to us. To the weekend, and to the future.

Maggie takes the bottle and drinks. She passes it to Chris.

CHRIS
I second that!

Chris takes a drink and passes it to Danny.

DANNY

Here, here.

Danny takes a drink. He hands it to Katy.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Come on Katy. It's for our friendship.

KATY

No thanks. Not the friendship, just,
just...whiskey.

DANNY

Come on. Just this once.

Katy looks at the bottle for a moment, then reaches for it.

KATY

Alright.

She eyes the men, winks at Maggie, then turns the bottle up, draining the last few gulps. The guys are awestruck.

The worm goes down, Katy holds it between her teeth, wraps her tongue around it and sucks it down.

Chris looks at Danny, rolls his eyes, and promptly passes out.

Maggie and Chris look at each other.

MAGGIE

I can tie a cherry stem with my tongue.

She grabs him by the shirt collar, pulling him close.

INT. SKERRITT'S HOUSE-NIGHT

A RINGING TELEPHONE. In his dark bedroom, SHERIFF RICHARD SKERRITT fumbles from his sleep and finally snags the phone.

SKERRITT

(groggy)

Mmmm, hello.

INT. SKERRITT'S HOUSE-KITCHEN-NIGHT

Now fresh from the shower, Skerritt enters the kitchen, buttoning his uniform shirt. Over forty, but not much, he's a solidly built man with eyes tired from too many years of second-rate jobs with long hours.

He kisses his wife CONNIE.

CONNIE
You've got to go?

SKERRITT
It's Harve Rabon, something up at the construction site where they're gonna put the ski lodge.

CONNIE
Randy's on duty tonight isn't he?

SKERRITT
He is but-

CONNIE
So let him go.

SKERRITT
Connie, baby. He can man the phones. He's my dispatcher.

CONNIE
What good does a deputy do if he never does anything?

SKERRITT
I only hired him 'cause he's the Mayor's cousin. I've been Sheriff for six years and never needed a second hand. If there's a rabid dog loose up the mountain I'm sure Harve and I can handle it. Okay?

CONNIE
(moving to him)
You're one stubborn son of a bitch.

SKERRITT
(as they embrace)
What is that, a news flash? Hey, it's my job. Protect and serve, remember?

They kiss, nuzzle.

CONNIE
You just did a twelve hour shift.

SKERRITT
I'll be back in ninety minutes. Then back to bed. You can come with.

CONNIE
That's a date, Sheriff.

INT-SKERRITT'S TRUCK-TRAVELING-NIGHT

Skerritt picks up the short-wave radio microphone and turns the unit on.

SKERRITT
Bravo One to base. Over.

DISPATCHER (VOICE-OVER)
Bravo One, we copy. Over.

There's a LOUD BURST OF STATIC that makes Skerritt wince, and when it's finally over:

SKERRITT
I'm heading up to Alan Rodford's, they've got a bear or a cougar up there. Over.

The Dispatcher responds, but the words are drowned out by more STATIC. Skerritt swears softly, then:

SKERRITT (CONT'D)
Repeat that, I didn't copy. Over.

Silence. He clicks the button on the microphone several times, but nothing happens.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)
Piece of junk.

INT-CONVENIENCE STORE-NIGHT

Skerritt is behind the counter with the clerk, using the store's phone. A pimply CLERK listens in, idly flipping through a magazine.

SKERRITT
(into phone)
Listen, when Sam comes in, have him check it out, he did something to it before, I can't get reception for shit up here. Well, I'm about ready to dig out my old C.B.'s and we'll use those.
(a pause as he listens)
Okay. I'm on it. See ya.

He heads for the door.

CLERK
Finally getting a chance to fight some crime, huh?

SKERRITT
 (snatching the magazine from
 the Clerk's hands)
 Don't let me interrupt your studies,
 okay?
 (he checks it out: Bra Busters
 Monthly)
 Gee I'd hate for a minor to get hold of
 this, huh?

He stuffs the magazine back in the rack on his way out.

INT-DANNY AND KATY'S TENT-NIGHT

The two lovers are wrapped tight around each other, obviously
 naked under a blanket.

KATY
 Danny?

DANNY
 (almost paying attention)
 Hmmm?

KATY
 I really do enjoy getting away like this.

DANNY
 Me too.

KATY
 I mean, it's good for us. You know? Time
 together.

DANNY
 Yeah, I think so too. We're gonna be
 okay, baby.

KATY
 You mean it?

DANNY
 Yeah, of course. All that's in the past.

KATY
 Forever?

DANNY
 As long as forever is.

They kiss lightly. Nothing is said for a moment. Katy is deep
 in thought, wanting to say something, trying to get it out.
 And then:

KATY

As long as my parents will keep helping us out , you mean?

Katy instantly regrets saying it. A wall is between them now.

DANNY

Katy, I'm trying. This is only temporary, and we'll pay them back whatever they lend us. Remember, it was your idea to ask them for the help. We're starting over, you know? Thought that was the idea? We write off all our mistakes, start fresh.

KATY

That is the idea.

DANNY

Well?

KATY

I don't know. I'm just - scared I guess.

DANNY

Of what?

KATY

All our savings went into the store, and it didn't stay open six months. Look at the hole we're in. Chris and Maggie, they have his trust fund to fall back on. I'm wondering if we'll have the money to make rent this month.

DANNY

We'll be fine.

KATY

I do love you.

They kiss, intertwined.

DANNY

Love you, too. You're the only girl I've ever loved.

KATY

I'm being silly. I know that. But it just feels like...like I'm going to lose it all.

She wraps around him, they hug, soft kisses.

Another silence. This one is awkward. Breaking the quiet, we hear off-screen:

CHRIS
(an urgent whisper)
Hey...Danny.

Danny and Katy sit up, making sure they're covered decently.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(opening the tent flap)
Grab your rifle.

EXT-FOREST-NIGHT

Hastily dressed, Danny and Chris are crouched in the brush, hunting rifles at the ready. Danny is edgy, Chris only cautious.

CHRIS
I went out to take a leak and heard it.
It's been creepin' around about half an
hour.

DANNY
What do you think? A bear?

CHRIS
(wrinkling his nose)
I duuno. Whatever it is needs a bath.

They sit there, just on the rim of their camp area. The fire has gone out now, the remaining embers can still be seen glowing. They wait, glancing around.

DANNY
Okay. Back to back so we don't shoot
each other. You circle around that way,
If we see anything, flush it away from
the camp, towards the trucks.

Chris nods agreement. They separate, moving steadily into the thick forest.

Nervous, cautious and slow, Danny creeps through the trees, gun pointed down.

Chris moves with a bit more confidence, his gun at the ready. He casts a steely glare from side to side. He stops, kneels down to examine something on the ground.

A BARE FOOTPRINT, just visible in the bad light. The soft ground has let the mystery guest leave a good impression of the print. A bare footprint, like a large man's foot. But wider. And the toes are spaced strangely.

Chris considers the print, then tries brushing aside nearby leaves to find another. He freezes. His eyes dart to one side.

Danny his own search, must smell the same thing. He kneels down, sniffs, face showing disgust at the odor in the air.

A beat. Nothing. Nothing moves. Danny tries to chill out just a bit when

A DARK SHAPE EXPLODES FROM THE TREE COVER, KNOCKING Danny FLAT AND RUSHING OUT OF FRAME

DANNY (CONT'D)
(in a panic)
Chris!

Chris is up in the instant that Danny yells, rifle poised. A DARK SHAPE is RUSHING towards Chris and he raises his rifle and

The SHAPE comes from out of the cover and LEAPS through the air CRASHING into Chris and he goes down and the shape is TANGLED AROUND HIM for just a second but then it's up and

Danny COMES RUNNING at full speed and THE SHAPE is up again, heading towards the campsite and

Chris TAKES OFF after it, followed by Danny at full speed and
AT THE CAMPSITE

Maggie comes out of her tent to check out the confusion and as THE SHAPE EXPLODES INTO THE CLEARING DIRECTLY AT HER and

Chris raises, aims and fires.

CHRIS
(screaming as he fires)
GET DOWN!

BOOM!

As the rifle FIRES the shadowy figure CRUMPLES to the ground near a frightened Maggie.

Everything is still - Maggie is a rock, Danny and Chris are staring at what has fallen by the burned-out campfire.

Katy peeks out from her tent as the men slowly moves towards the fallen figure.

DANNY
(shell-shocked)
What is it?

It's about the size of an average teenager, but that's where any similarities end. The body is covered in fine hair from head to toe. The fingers are long, tapered to fine nails. The feet are a bit large for the body size, but the toes are oddly spaced, ape-like. The face is not quite simian; not quite human. This is a younger version of a Sasquatch. Blood pools from the bullet wound in its side.

KATY
What's going on?

DANNY
I-I don't—I'm not sure.

CHRIS
Well, whatever it is—it's dead now.

Chris and Danny exchange glances. Danny looks out, away from the campsite.

EXT-THE RODFORD CABIN-NIGHT

Smoke comes from the chimney, lights burn in the windows. A station wagon is parked outside.

On the porch sits ALAN RODFORD, a younger man in his thirties. He has an urban look about him, sharp haircut, his jeans and flannel shirt expertly creased. He sits in a porch rocker, a hurricane lamp the only light. He's waiting.

HEADLIGHTS approach the cabin, a vehicle pulls to a stop behind Rodford's wagon. The new arrival is Skerritt's four-wheel drive truck.

Skerritt steps out of the truck. He drains the last of his soda pop, tosses the bottle back in the truck and closes the door. He walks up to the porch.

SKERRITT
Alan.

RODFORD
Sheriff.

SKERRITT
This better be good.

INT-RODFORD'S CABIN-NIGHT

Harve is here, wrapped in a blanket and sitting by the kitchen table. His hair is still damp; the cuts on his face scabbed over. He holds a cup of coffee in his hands, blowing on it and taking sips. He holds onto the cup for dear life. Skerritt sits opposite him, Rodford leans against the kitchen counter.

SKERRITT

Tell me again.

HARVE

You don't believe me, do you?

SKERRITT

It's not a matter of believing you, Harve. I believe most anything you'd tell me, you know that.

HARVE

Up until now.

SKERRITT

I want to believe you, Harve.

HARVE

But?

SKERRITT

Bigfoot. Fuckin' Bigfoot?

HARVE

Call it whatever you want.

Harve sips his coffee. Rodford comes over with a refill.

SKERRITT

Okay. You've never lied to me. What do you want me do?

HARVE

Let's go look in that hole.

Harve looks to Skerritt for his answer. Skerritt looks at Rodford, who just shrugs.

EXT-COUNTRY ROAD-NIGHT

The moon still shines full as Skerritt's TRUCK ZOOMS by.

INT-SKERRITT'S TRUCK-TRAVELING-NIGHT

Harve is in the passenger's seat, smoking nervously as the Sheriff drives.

SKERRITT

You take this seriously?

HARVE

How could I not? Wait until you see my truck, Richard. Then you'll know.

SKERRITT

You never got a good look at this Thing, whatever was chasing you.

HARVE

I saw enough.

EXT-CONSTRUCTION SITE-NIGHT

It's about the same as earlier. The barrel from the hood of Harve's truck is still on the ground. Harve's truck is still up against the earth-mover from before. The other barrels are crumpled off to the side, between Harve's offices and the hole.

The Sheriff's truck pulls into frame slowly. As it stops, the men get out, but stay at their doors with the engine running.

HARVE

There. See? The barrels.

SKERRITT

I see.

They scan the area, both looking hard for any slight movement.

Various NIGHTTIME NOISES are heard: crickets, owls, etc. The earth-movers are where the crew left them before. There are no signs of damage other than Harve's truck crunched into the bulldozer.

Skerritt takes a long look at Harve's truck.

HARVE

Still paying for the truck too.

Without a word, Skerritt goes to the back of his truck. He opens the hatchback and takes out a shotgun and a powerful flashlight.

SKERRITT

Okay. Let's go have a look.

The two men move away from the truck. Skerritt switches the mag-light on. The HALOGEN BEAM cuts through the night as it plays around the area. Skerritt leads the way as they first approach Harve's crashed four-wheeler.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

No marks. Just the hood and the bumper.

HARVE

Well, I high tailed it outta here real fast. It followed right after me. Unless it came back for a closer look afterwards.

Now they come to the pile of smashed barrels. Both men examine this close. The barrels are really trashed, almost bent in half. Fifty-gallon drums, too.

Harve reaches for a smoke AS A SHARP SNAP IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE. Both men freeze, staring into the night. Skerritt has his rifle ready.

Harve and Skerritt stand and wait for another noise, a rustle, anything. After a moment, Harve leads the way as they move off again, towards the infamous hole-in-the-ground.

The hole has a wider opening than before. Easily twelve feet across now, tapering in as it goes down. Skerritt's light shines down into the hole, but still nothing much can be seen from up here.

HARVE (CONT'D)

Let's just go.

SKERRITT

I thought you wanted me to have a look down there.

Harve glances around the area again. The Sheriff is trying to be as understanding as possible.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

Harve, what did you see here tonight?

HARVE

For God's sake, Richard, I don't know. Whatever it was yanked about two hundred pounds of metal halfway down that hole and then threw 'em thirty feet in the air.

(MORE)

HARVE (CONT'D)

You should've heard it coming up behind me. Like a freight train. You tell me.

Skerritt gets on his behind and edges to the hole.

HARVE (CONT'D)

What am I supposed to do while you're down there?

SKERRITT

Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Stand right here so I can hear you.

Skerritt twists around on his stomach and begins crawling down into the hole.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

I'll be back in three minutes.

Slowly he disappears into the hole. We can hear the shifting of rock and dirt along with the grunts of Skerritt's efforts.

Alone now, Harve is trying desperately to calm himself. He takes several quick breaths, holding the last one and then exhaling slowly.

INT-TUNNEL-NIGHT

Skerritt is crawling along in the earthen tunnel. The tunnel itself is maybe six feet in circumference, so the sheriff can at least crouch as he picks his way along. Thick tree roots stab through the tunnel walls, creating obstacles to be cleared.

With the rifle strapped over one shoulder and the mag-light in one hand, the going is slow. It's murderously hot in here, sweat already pouring off of Skerritt.

The Sheriff continues his lonesome crawl. He swears softly to himself as he stops to mop his brow.

SKERRITT

(calling out)

Harve? Harve?

AT THE HOLE

Harve is crouched by the hole.

HARVE

I hear you! See anything?

SKERRITT (o.s.)

Nothing.

IN THE TUNNEL

Skerritt looks back the way he came, then ahead again.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)
I'm going a bit farther! I'll be
right back!

He starts to move on.

EXT-BY THE HOLE-NIGHT

Harve is standing guard.

HARVE
(low, to himself)
Well, hurry the hell up.

As he waits for word from the Sheriff, Harve suddenly freezes. His eyes dart side to side. Ever so slowly, Harve stands, careful not to move too fast or make too much noise. He turns, watching all around him.

The tree line is still and dark. All around, not a thing moves. And then, the night sounds, the crickets, birds, the owls are all quiet. It's really dead silent now.

The quiet registers with Harve. Trying so hard to keep from freaking out, he closes his eyes, and as he does A SOFT RUSTLE OF BRANCHES IS HEARD.

Harve takes a step or two towards the sounds. He looks back at the hole in the ground- no sign of Skerritt.

Behind Harve, another SOUND of branches and leaves being disturbed. He WHIRLS around at the noise.

Harve scoots down to the hole and sticks his head inside.

HARVE (CONT'D)
(with a furious whisper)
Sheriff! Richard!

IN THE TUNNEL

Skerritt hears the call, and sits up straight. He looks behind him.

SKERRITT
Harve?

BY THE HOLE

Harve is still headfirst in the hole.

HARVE
Get up here now!

Harve pulls himself out of the hole and stands up again, looking around and now he's close to panic again.

IN THE TUNNEL

Skerritt scrambles back towards the opening of the hole.

BY THE HOLE

Harve is almost out of his skin with anxiety. He looks from the hole to the tree line and back again. Still lots of movement in the brush.

Skerritt pulls himself up out of the hole, with Harve's help. Filthy now, the Sheriff stands and unslings his rifle as A LOW, GUTTURAL GROWL COMES FROM THE WOODS.

Both men stop in their tracks. Skerritt brings his rifle to the ready.

At the tree line, no movement can be seen, but the sound of the FOLIAGE BEING THRASHED is loud and clear now.

Skerritt moves towards the trees, handing Harve the flashlight. Together they scan the area, trying to find the source of the sound.

ANOTHER CRASH OF BRANCHES. To the left of the men now. Both swing around; ready for anything, taking a few steps towards the sound.

BEHIND THEM now, ANOTHER CRASH. They BOLT around; advancing past the hole, past Harve's wrecked four-wheeler, back to the Sheriff's truck. Their tension is almost a physical force by now.

Skerritt makes sure a round is chambered in his weapon, and brings it up again.

Harve plays the light into the darkened trees, looking for movement - and there it is.

It's quick, this is just a glance, but we do see A LARGE BODY MOVING BEHIND THE TREES. It's there and gone in a second.

HARVE (CONT'D)
There!

Skerritt sees it, starts to fire, but waits.

HARVE (CONT'D)
What are you waiting for?

Still, he hesitates.

SKERRITT
Crank it up, Harve. Give me some light.

He digs keys from his pocket and tosses them to Harve, who wastes no time in REVVING THE ENGINE of the Sheriff's truck. He WHIPS THE TRUCK AROUND to face the forest and cuts the HEADLIGHTS ON HIGH as the motor dies out.

Something catches Skerritt's eye and BLAM! he FIRES the rifle.

Inside the truck, Harve is startled by the shot. He hits a switch on the dashboard.

The EMERGENCY LIGHTS mounted on top of the cab come on, SWIRLING YELLOW AND BLUE STROBES wash the area.

A ROAR from the forest. A CRASH OF UNDERBRUSH.

Skerritt sights down and FIRES - FIRES AGAIN.

In the cab, Harve is glued to the scene outside and he reaches under the passenger's seat in a frantic rush and

Skerritt has his eye on something out there, he SHOOTS again and

There's MOVEMENT the tree line, another LOUD GROWL, now it's a FLURRY OF ACTIVITY, like Harve said earlier, it's like a freight train coming and it's coming fast and

Skerritt FIRES again, and now Harve is out of the truck, scared but ready for action, he's grabbed a handful of ROAD FLARES and he STRIKES one and HEAVES it towards the approaching freight train and

The RED FLARE lands just short of the trees, but it LIGHTS the scene up, bathing everything in RED, combining with the emergency lights from the truck to illuminate the scene in a nightmarish wash of FLASHING, STROBE LIGHT COLORS.

The men keep watch, but now it's quiet again, just the ticking of the cab lights and the sizzle of the road flares.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)
What's going on here?

Harve doesn't have an answer; of course he's been shell-shocked for a while now.

Skerritt tries to focus through the FLASHING LIGHTS. Harve STRIKES ANOTHER FLARE and moves to the rear of the truck, TOSSING it back towards the hole.

Harve STRIKES ONE MORE FLARE and TOSSES it, trying to cover the entire area.

The Sheriff tracks to one side, rifle poised, watching for even the slightest movement. The ticking of the CAB LIGHTS continue as they sweep the clearing.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

Harve. In. Now.

Both cautiously back up and climb into the truck. The engine COUGHS, SPUTTERS, DIES.

IN THE CAB

As the engine sputters out.

HARVE

Oh, for cryin' out loud!

SKERRITT

Wait a minute.

Skerritt isn't worried. He calmly turns the ignition key again, and the ENGINE ROARS into life. He GUNS it once just to raise the idle.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

See? don't worry, we're gettin' out of here now.

He shifts into gear, and A TERRIFIC CRASH ROCKS THE TRUCK! Both men are JOLTED FORWARD as something SLAMS into the truck from the rear.

HARVE

What the—

One of the REAR WINDOWS CRASHES by another barrel. Skerritt FLOORS IT and Harve turns around to look out back and

THROUGH THE BACK WINDOW

it's hard to see because the barrel is halfway inside the back of the extended cab, but at the rear window we can see a HUGE, HUMAN-LIKE FORM is right at the back of the cab and

THE TRUCK'S REAR WHEELS

are SPINNING IN THE DIRT with no traction and

SKERRITT

curses as he realizes they're going nowhere and

AT THE BACK OF THE TRUCK

SOMETHING BIG, easily eight feet tall has a grip on the rear bumper, this thing is massive, it's bulk truly impressive, but all that can be seen is this BEAST covered in short, matted fur has the truck in it's grip and

HARVE

reaches for Skerritt's rifle from the backseat and he tries to check the safety, but the TRUCK IS SHAKING so much and the ENGINE IS WHINING so loud and he looks back again and

THE BEAST'S EYES

are staring right at us from under a heavy brow and they are BLOOD RED with tiny black slits almost like cat's eyes and we hear an AWFUL, ANGRY ROAR roar and

SKERRITT

shifts again and

THE TRUCK'S FRONT TIRES

are in gear now and they GRAB DIRT AND SPIN DEEP and

THE TRUCK

TAKES OFF, ESCAPING out of the grip of the creature and

SKERRITT

SCREAMS in victory as an unprepared Harve is hurled into the back seat and

THE TRUCK

FISHTAILS in the dirt, heading straight for the tree line at top speed, but it suddenly WHIPS to one side, turning 180 degrees as the dirt and DIRT AND ROCKS FLY in it's wake and

THE REAR VIEW

is empty, no monster, and

THE TRUCK

is heading straight for a pile of fallen timbers, and it's too late to turn so the TRUCK SLAMS into the TIMBERS which acts as a ramp and the TRUCK TAKES TO THE AIR and

INSIDE THE CAB

both men are on the ride of their life as the truck SLAMS down again, hard and the Sheriff finally gets some control here, GRABBING THE WHEEL for dear life and

THE TRUCK

SPINS around Harve's Quonset hut offices, heading for the access road and SPEEDING AWAY.

INT-SHERIFF'S TRUCK - TRAVELING-NIGHT

Skerritt watches the road ahead and the side and rear view mirrors, seemingly all at one time. Harve wipes his bloody nose on the sleeve of his shirt, just happy to be safe.

HARVE

Is it back there?

SKERRITT

No, no, it's gone, it's gone. Jesus!

HARVE

Oh man, oh man, what the hell was that?

SKERRITT

You're asking me? What's going on here?

I mean, what the hell is going on here?

Harve tends to his bloody nose as Skerritt concentrates on the road ahead.

He cranks the driver's window down, and air streams into the cab. He takes deep, gulping breaths.

EXT-COUNTY ROAD-NIGHT

The sheriff's FOUR-WHEELER ZOOMS by, the only vehicle in sight.

EXT-CAMPSITE-NIGHT

Danny and Katy are sitting by the NOW ROARING CAMPFIRE. Maggie sits near them as Chris paces back and forth. The DEAD CREATURE has been pulled off to the side and is covered by a blanket.

KATY

So what do we do?

MAGGIE

There's only one thing to do, leave now. Go straight back down the mountain and don't turn back.

CHRIS

We're taking it with us.

MAGGIE

Oh, no we're not—

CHRIS

Don't you know what we've got here, honey ?

MAGGIE

No, I Don't know, and that's exactly why we're leaving it here!

DANNY

Chris, this is insane.

CHRIS

Look, I'll tell you what's going on here. This is the find of the century, kids, and we're the ones who found it. This is amazing. We're the ones who finally captured a Bigfoot.

KATY

Oh, come on!

CHRIS

Well, look at it!

Chris walks over to the body and rips the blanket off. The other three campers aren't really relishing the sight of the dead creature, but Chris's mind is going full throttle.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It's not a man. That's for sure. It's not an animal, at least not one we're familiar with. This is the missing link. Do any of you have the slightest idea of what one of those tabloids would pay for a thing like this? For years we've all heard rumors about this kind of thing all over the northwest. Hell, all over the country. Remember that film that guy shot back in the late sixties? Ten seconds of

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)
something walking through the woods. Rich
now.

MAGGIE
Didn't somebody admit that was a hoax?

CHRIS
No. Never proven.

KATY
What we need to do is leave it here, hike
back to the trucks and drive back into
town. Get Sheriff Skerritt and bring him
back up here. He'll know what to do.

CHRIS
Yeah, take all the credit and all the
money. I'm telling you, this is it. We
can pay back all our debt, all of it.

Maggie looks over to Danny and Katy. She sighs heavily and
stands, moving off to the side.

MAGGIE
We can't really leave it here.

DANNY
Maggie, I don't believe you. You're
actually thinking about doing this?

KATY
Thirty seconds ago you were with us!

MAGGIE
I'm not with anybody. But Chris's right.
Somebody is gonna make a mint off of this
thing. Whatever it is.

Chris puts his arms around her, now that she's in agreement.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I don't want to look at the ugly thing
one more second than I have to, but if
this is really a goldmine...why shouldn't
we be the ones to get the rewards?
I still don't like it, but let's be
practical.

DANNY
Practical? You're telling me to be
practical?

MAGGIE

Yes. I know you guys were hit hard when we had to shut down the store. You're in debt worse than we are. Don't you see?

KATY

One way or the other, we need to be leaving here now. Now.

CHRIS

She's right. Let's load it up and go. With the metal frames of our backpacks and rope, we can make a stretcher. No problem. Danny, you've gotta be with me on this, I'm gonna need everybody when we tow this damn thing down the mountain. Katy?

KATY

I just want to go home.

INT-RODFORD'S CABIN-NIGHT

Skerritt and Harve are back at the kitchen table again. Instead of coffee, Rodford is keeping their shot glasses full of whiskey.

SKERRITT

Haven't had the shakes since the Gulf War.

RODFORD

And you're absolutely sure -

HARVE

Go check out what's left of the truck, if You still need some proof.

RODFORD

Let's not spread the word too far. This gets out, the whole valley will be filled with good old boys from across the state. Each one packing heat.

HARVE

We'll keep it quiet. But we need help on this.

SKERRITT

Guys, this is still a bit much for me, okay? I mean, mountain lions can get pretty sizeable. On it's hind legs, it'd stand six feet.

HARVE

Sheriff, you saw what I saw.

SKERRITT

I couldn't see much. Maybe we got a bear, rabid, gone feral.

HARVE

Richard, it picked up the back of the truck. Ain't no bear or cat.

Rodford sips his drink.

RODFORD

How far would you say that tunnel goes?

SKERRITT

Miles maybe. Hard to say.

RODFORD

You know, the mountain and the entire valley could be criss-crossed with those things. A whole network of tunnels. Those old mines have been closed for forty years or more, that thing could've dug tunnels anywhere. Who'd know?

HARVE

They're not man-made, that's for sure. At least they're not offshoots of the original mines. That thing moves across the mountain using the tunnels. I think they go on that far.

RODFORD

(moving to Skerritt)

It's like Harve said: people have been seeing things in these woods for years. Since we were all kids. Bigfoot. Sasquatch. Legends go back before the turn of the century. Always a glimpse, never anything concrete. No hard evidence. Until tonight.

Skerritt gets up from the table and moves towards the kitchen sink. Above the sink is a small window:

The moon and stars light the area. The forest is really quite peaceful now.

SKERRITT

It's just-I've never seen anything like this.

(MORE)

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

This is a resort town for God's sake.
Kids on beer binges, somebody locks the
keys in their Beemer.

RODFORD

The company's been clearing land up there
for about seven months now.

HARVE

Thousands of acres. Thousands more to go.

RODFORD

I think we've been chasing that...thing
farther and farther up into the forest.
It stayed one step ahead of progress all
these years. When you guys tore that tree
up, you just happened to break into the
tunnel. You found what it's been hiding
all this time.

SKERRITT

We finally knocked on it's front door.

EXT-SOMEWHERE IN THE FOREST-NIGHT

The forest is full of NIGHT SOUNDS. LIGHTNING BUGS flutter
here and there. An OWL is heard in the trees.

THE WIDE STREAM FROM BEFORE

is a bit calmer now. Water flows downstream, the sound
soothing. A DEER APPEARS.

A beautiful animal. Gracefully it lopes down the steep bank
and into the stream. It stops to drink from the stream. As it
does, ALL THE SOUNDS OF THE NIGHTTIME FOREST SLOWLY DIE OUT.
The deer drinks for a moment more; then stops. It senses
something is wrong here.

The deer is frozen, almost a still photograph. Nothing moves.
Not a sound.

The only sound is the soft trickle of water downstream. The
animal moves a step or two and

FROM OUT OF NOWHERE A CRASH OF SOUND AND THE BEAST FILLS THE
FRAME FOR A SECOND as it descends on the deer in a LIGHTNING
SWIFT MOVE, almost too fast to see but it's there and the
DEER SQUEALS and there's a SNAP! and

the deer in a heap in the water and THE BEAST is standing
above it. Still mostly in shadow. Tall, seven feet or more
and huge, not Andre the Giant huge, but big nonetheless.

Broad through the shoulders, a massive chest and arms that hang down to the knees.

The Beast reaches down with one arm and grabs the back legs of the deer in one massive paw.

With the deer in one hand, the Beast crosses to the bank and in one amazing movement simply scales the ten-foot embankment. It doesn't really climb or jump up there, it just effortlessly takes a step and it's up there, stunning and unreal in its agility.

EXT-IN THE FOREST WITH THE BEAST - TRAVELING MONTAGE-NIGHT

Following the Beast as it makes it's way into the thick of the forest. We're always a few steps behind, or just off to the side, never getting a good clear look at the features of the massive animal.

At last, the Beast reaches a sloping wall of earth covered with dense overgrowth. The Beast reaches it's free hand out and seems to part some of the foliage, then it walks straightforward, seeming to disappear into the wall itself.

This is actually an abandoned entrance to one of the mining shafts mentioned earlier. A rotted wooden framework can be seen outlining a rough doorway.

INT-THE MINE SHAFT ENTRANCE-NIGHT

Inside the man-made tunnel now, the only light seems to come from the walls. It's dim, obviously some mineral or crystal with a NATURAL DIM LUMINESCENCE. These tunnels are high ceilings, the roofing timbers still holding on.

The Beast disappears around a corner, still dragging the dead animal.

MOVING WITH THE BEAST

as it brings it's catch home. The low light shows the creature just a bit; a strange mixture of human and primate features, but through the shadows, the creature's face shows sharp, angry angles. The Beast's mass fills the tunnel itself, it hunches just a bit to keep from cracking it's skull on the roof support timbers.

INT-MINE TUNNEL - THE LAIR OF THE BEAST

Like the tunnel Skerritt crawled through earlier, this is a rougher-hewn passageway, just wide enough for the creature. As we follow, the tunnel opens into A WIDER ROOM CARVED FROM THE EARTH. Much larger than the previous tunnels, the ceiling must be twenty feet.

The Beast drops the dead deer, hunkering down beside it

THUD. A LONG, WET RIPPING, then SMACKING AND CHEWING as the beast takes entrails from the fresh body cavity and tosses them aside.

To the side, away from the beast is AN IMPRESSIVE PILE OF BONES stretching at least ten feet wide and three high. Animal bone, the skull of a cow, a smaller, more fragile bird's skeleton, etc. Empties.

And yes, a human hand is here, too. No flesh, it's just the skeletal remains, but it was once a human hand, no doubt about it.

EXT-THE GINMILL-NIGHT

Establishing shot of a small honky-tonk on the side of a country road. The Ginmill is like any number of rough country dives: the building itself is at least thirty years old and still clings to the last few original scraps of paint. Neon signs in serious danger of shorting out flash the promise of ice-cold beer.

INT-THE GINMILL-NIGHT

It's not much better in here. Dark, loud, with a rowdy clientele. Various games of pool and poker are in progress. Cowboy hats and boots are considered formal wear. The bar is packed and all the tables and booths are full.

In a corner booth Jamison is holding court now. His girlfriend LANA clings to his side. Across from him, a co-worker named RICHIE sips beer and cuddles his lady BEV.

JAMISON

All I'm sayin' is I'm tired of livin' paycheck to paycheck.

RICHIE

Well, me too, buddy. I'm about one step away from the bank grabbin' hold of most everything I got.

JAMISON

A man of my background and standards shouldn't have to settle for less. Ever.

Lana raises her eyebrows, one hand sneaking under to the table. She leans a bit closer to Jamison revealing a bit more of her ample cleavage.

LANA
I wouldn't say you're settling for
less, big man.

JAMISON
(as Lana's hand works
(some magic under the table, he
(struggles to keep calm)
Lana, baby, I'm blessed to be with you,
lover, but I just want to provide you
with all you desire.

LANA
Ooh, "desire", I like that word.

BEV
You guys are rakin' in more money than
you've ever seen. The problem ain't that
you can't make money, you just can't hold
on to it.

RICHIE
Who asked you?

BEV
It's the truth. Face it, both you guys.

LANA
Look at your tab here tonight. Do you
know how much you're blowing here?

JAMISON
Who's always hollerin' that I never take
her anywhere? What do you think I'm
doing?

Lana's hand comes back up again to light a smoke. She chills
a bit to Jamison now.

LANA
Yeah, every weekend spent hip-deep in
cowboys, how lucky can a girl get?

JAMISON
All I'm saying is that the damn company
is getting filthy rich off all the work
we're doing. We can't unionize, so we
can't get a fair deal.

RICHIE
The foremen and the big bosses are
rolling in it for Christ's sake. Do they
ever lift a finger?
(MORE)

RICHIE (CONT'D)

When was the last time we ever seen Harve out there breakin' his back right beside us?

JAMISON

Right on, pal. If I can't get my dues, maybe they should share some of their stuff with us.

By now the guys are sulky and mean. The women watch them warily.

BEV

What exactly are you fools saying?

Now they're saying nothing.

EXT-FOREST-NIGHT

Chris and the other three are standing around the dead creature. Like Chris said, they've used metal frames from their backpacks, along with rope and a few sturdier tree limbs to form a makeshift stretcher to carry the thing on. The body is still covered by blankets. The camp has been broken down now, everybody packed up.

CHRIS

Okay, just a few more minutes and we go again. I figure another hour and we'll be back at the trucks. What time is it now?

DANNY

(checking his watch)
Right at midnight. We're not making good time here.

CHRIS

That's okay. An hour to the trucks, the drive back into town...I figure we'll be home by two-thirty, no later. We load this thing up into my truck, the gear in yours. Okay?

MAGGIE

Then what?

CHRIS

First thing in the morning, we call the TV stations. Get some coverage on this. Now after that, hey, the sky's the limit.

DANNY

Why not call the university first, find out exactly what this thing is?

CHRIS

TV first, make sure we publicly claim this as ours. That way, nobody can dispute it.

MAGGIE

Let's just get going.

DANNY

Yeah. I really don't care what happens, let's just get home.

KATY

Let's go, then.

Danny and Chris each grab a handle on the front of the stretcher, dragging the creature with the rear end of the stretcher dragging the ground.

EXT-NEIGHBORHOOD-NIGHT

The sheriff's truck is parked in front of a two-story ranch house at the foot of the mountains.

INT-ANDY HORNER'S RANCH HOUSE-NIGHT

ANDY HORNER, the local head of the animal shelter is now hosting Skerritt, Harve and Rodford in his private study. Horner is in his mid-thirties, a friendly, heavy-set man. He wears sweat clothes and rubs a towel across his freshly washed hair.

ANDY

Fellas, this is a bit out of my authority. I mean, animal control basically corrals pesky doggies and rescues kitties from the trees, right?

SKERRITT

Come on, Andy. You faced down a full-grown black bear in Jim Thompson's back yard last spring. I think you're the guy to help us, here.

ANDY

(clapping Skerritt on the shoulder)
Okay Mulder, let's head for the great unknown!

SKERRITT

For Christ's sake, Andy.

ANDY

Okay, sorry, but listen, I have no reason to doubt you guys. Just like you, I've been in these woods for a hundred reasons for years now. I've heard the same stories you've all heard. I've gone up there tracking a wildcat or a black bear, and come home with a new outlook on life.

They exchange glances.

RODFORD

Meaning?

INT-ANDY'S SHED-NIGHT

Andy has converted a stand-alone two-car garage into his workroom. Empty animal cages are stacked in one corner. Bottles of chemicals line one wall, floor to ceiling. A handmade cabinet stands in the far corner, padlocked. Andy stands by it.

ANDY

I knew you'd come here sooner or later. Crazy stories, mostly. You know, I can't count the times I've been called in the middle of the night; "Andy, Andy, come up here, quick, there's something huge outside, I'm scared, I'm scared!" So, up I go, into the high country, sometimes just into the foothills. Bobcat, bear, sometimes just a rabid dog or even an over-eager Lab. But people have got good reason to be careful in these parts. It's like in your line of work, Richard. You see things.

He digs keys out of his pocket and studies the cabinet before continuing.

ANDY (CONT'D)

You see a side of human nature that most folks never see. Never want to see. But you go on, looking under the rocks, uncovering more that you want to ever admit to. Same with me, in a way at least. I've seen things too.

He takes his keys and unlocks the cabinet.

ANDY (CONT'D)
 You guys probably have been thinking
 you're crazy. Who'd blame you?

Andy takes a large padded envelope from the cabinet and brings it over.

The other three stand back, anticipating. Andy waits a beat, shrugs, then dumps the contents of the envelope on the table.

DOZENS OF PHOTOS spill out, all snapshots of the Beast. All from far away, the creature just about out of view, blurred images, obviously pictures snapped at a moment's notice in a frenzy of motion. Hidden behind trees, disappearing into the forest, etc.

ANDY (CONT'D)
 Kind of a hobby.

RODFORD
 I'll be damned.

SKERRITT
 (after a beat)
 How come you never mentioned this to me?

ANDY
 You get crank calls; I get crank calls...I didn't want to be seen as just another crank. How long did it take you to decide Harve wasn't just feeding you a line?

ANDY (CONT'D)
 I've got enough tranquilizers in here to drop a herd of elephants. I've got nitrates, poisons - you tell me what you need. But whatever you decide, we're gonna need a lot.

Andy goes back to the cabinet once more. He rummages around a bit, then finds something; another item wrapped in a shop rag.

Andy finally turns around and faces the men. He's deep in thought, and slowly begins to unwrap this last item.

ANDY (CONT'D)
 (as if remembering a passage
 from a book)
 "Nor is it to be thought that man is
 either the last or the oldest of earth's
 masters."

Skerritt watches and we watch him. His eyes widen slightly as he sees what Andy is holding, although we can't see it yet. The sheriff's face fills with dread.

Andy brings over a LARGE SKELETAL HAND, the remnant of one of these beasts. In proportion, the hand is twice the size of a man's hand, the fingers extraordinarily long, the thumb with that distinctive ape-like crook.

ANDY (CONT'D)

"...or that the common bulk of life
and substance walks alone".

He sits the relic on the table. This time, no one wants to get too close.

SOUND: a loud, sudden metallic "CHA-CHUNK" and

INT-ANDY'S STUDY-NIGHT

The men are by Andy's gun cabinet; the sound heard is Andy pumping the chamber on a huge tranquilizer rifle. He passes the rifle to the sheriff.

ANDY

I'm ready to rock and roll.

He takes another rifle and passes it to Harve.

SKERRITT

Nice piece, Andy. Don't forget I do
pack some firepower myself.

ANDY

Some of these are special. My
tranquilizer guns. Got sidearms, too.

He takes two pistols from the cabinet and brandishes them proudly. Rodford comes up and takes the pistols in hand.

SKERRITT

Alan, you don't have to be involved in
this. I have no idea what's going to
happen.

RODFORD

You kidding? Somebody's gotta watch out
for you guys. This could be history.

HARVE

We could be history, if we're not
careful.

INT-JAMISON'S TRUCK-TRAVELING-NIGHT

Jamison and Richie are in the front seat, the women in the back. The guys suck on beers, growing more and more surly.

JAMISON

We take only the stuff I know we can fence. The computers, all that crap. Maybe we can hold all the records and stuff for ransom.

RICHIE

Let's just sell it outright. We can pawn most of the office equipment over at Pikeville. Get maybe a thousand for it.

JAMISON

Now, that's thinking, Richie. But that's just the start of what I got waiting for those cheap bastards. We'll get some money out of this deal, but we're gonna cost them some cash, too. Mark my words.

INT-THE BEAST'S LAIR-NIGHT

Deep in shadow, the Beast is sprawled in a corner, resting on a crude nest of brush, weeds, pine needles, etc. One hand idly traces lazily in the dirt floor.

The deer carcass from earlier has been gutted. The ground around the body is soaked with blood, meat and organs spilling from the cavity.

The Beast turns over in its bed, restless. At length it finally sits up, looking around the cave, searching for something. The creature slowly rolls out of the nest and hunches down on the earthen floor. It growls softly. Again.

CLOSE ON THE BEAST'S EYES

as it looks down at the deer, then around the cave. Once again, even though the eyes are monstrous, intelligence is at work here. It's brow furrows.

THE BEAST

walks away from the deer, turning a corner to another part of the cave. Down a short passage, there's another large cave-like clearing in these tunnels. Another pile of bones in the corner, and another crude nest made of brush and twigs.

The Beast surveys the scene; it's movements now a bit quicker than before.

The creature moves to the nest and bends down, patting the makeshift bed with its paw. It glances back around the room again, then focuses on the bed.

Another guttural noise. The Beast abruptly stands and leaves this room as well. It heads down a new tunnel to another room. The monster seems more agitated now, almost growling, huffing with every step, faster and faster.

The Beast enters a third room, similar to the other dens. This layout is smaller, however.

There is another nest on one side of the lair. The first two beds were very much the same, each easily ten feet long, to accommodate the large creature - or creatures. This bed, however, is maybe six feet in length; just the right size to fit the smaller Beast shot down at Chris's camping area.

The Beast reaches the smaller bed, feeling the nest like in the room before. This time, the action sends the creature over the edge. Obviously the nest is cold and has been empty for some time. A MOURNFUL WAIL rises from the creature, a sound of distress chilling and harsh. The Beast stands full height, and issues several horrid, LOUD BARKS. The barks build in intensity as the creature drops back to the bed again, and pats the brush down.

This time the Beast is silent, plunging it's hands into the nest, its chest heaving as it's entire body begins to shake. It takes deeper and deeper breaths, and finally, a TERRIFYING ROAR comes from the Beast, loud and long and awful. Now the creature is in full fury, it RIPS the nest to pieces, SCATTERING the brush and needles across the room.

IN ANOTHER PART OF THE TUNNELS

Looking into the tunnels as the CRY of the Beast ECHOES and reverberates. The ROARS continue as we stay focused on the tunnel, looking into the darkness. The sounds fade away as WE SLOWLY FADE TO BLACK.

Black screen. Silence. Now, hear the usual forest sounds and IN THE BLACK SCREEN WE SLOWLY SEE HUNDREDS OF POINTS OF LIGHT, STARS, AND FADE IN ON:

EXT-FOREST-NIGHT

The stars are crystal clear, but now clouds are moving in, covering the moon as THE CAMERA PANS DOWN TO THE FOREST, and in the distance are Chris, Danny, Maggie and Katy trudging along, carrying the fallen Beast on the stretcher.

CLOSE ON THE GROUP

as they continue along, down a steep grade. Chris and Danny handle the weight while the ladies bring up the rear.

CHRIS

All right, we're just about there. Hold on.

DANNY

It's about time. Damn back is killing me. Can you see the trucks from here?

CHRIS

Not quite. Just don't drop it again.

DANNY

It's heavy!

CHRIS

I know it's heavy, but don't drop it!

DANNY

What does it matter, it's dead anyway.

The ladies are tired of this; it's been an ongoing topic.

MAGGIE

(frustrated)

Jesus, Danny, just carry it! We'll be there in five minutes!

KATY

He's doing the best he can!

EXT. HORNER'S RANCH HOUSE-NIGHT

The men load gear into the trucks. Skerritt stands to the side, watching them finish up.

Andy sees him, comes over, nice and easy.

ANDY

Ready to roll?

SKERRITT

I guess.

ANDY

(quiet)

You okay?

SKERRITT
 (a deep breath)
 Sure, yeah, why wouldn't I be?

ANDY
 I know this is...not standard duty. For
 either of us. I'm still not sure if I
 believe it myself.

He chuckles. Skerritt doesn't.

ANDY (CONT'D)
 We'll check it out. It's an animal. I
 deal with animals.

EXT-ROADSIDE-NIGHT

The group exits the tree line onto the wide shoulder of a deserted country road. Two sport utility vehicles are parked on the shoulder about a hundred yards away. The group stays on the shoulder as they move towards the trucks. HEAT LIGHTNING FLASHES.

Katy glances behind her, a sharp turn as she hears or senses something. She stops in her tracks as the other three keep moving. She looks at her friends moving away, then turns back to the tree line.

Nothing. Just Katy and the night. She relaxes just a bit, slowly moving to catch up.

BY THE TRUCKS

the guys finally set the stretcher down by Chris's truck, relieved. They move on to Danny's truck and take off the backpacks, setting all the gear down. Maggie comes from behind to hug Chris. Danny bends over and stretches back up, hoping for relief for his aching back.

MAGGIE
 Almost home.

During this next, they walk back to Danny's truck and unlock the back gate. Now they load their packs inside. THUNDER now, accompanied by more VIVID LIGHTNING.

CHRIS
 We're there in an hour.

DANNY
 I'm about to drop here. God, what a
 marathon that was.

The men stow the gear and put the rifles in the back of the truck. Chris moves to the back of his four-wheeler and unlocks the back, then turns and looks at the dead Beast, lying in it's stretcher.

CHRIS

Okay, pal. Just play along. One more leg, we're home and you make us all millionaires, okay?

DANNY

(he looks from the Beast to the bed of the truck)
Is that thing gonna fit? Looks like it'll be tight.

CHRIS

Yeah, it'll fit. Unless rigor mortis has set in. Might have to break its legs then.

Maggie pretends to gag as Chris chuckles. A LOUD THUNDERCLAP and FLASH OF LIGHTNING startles everybody.

DANNY

Gonna be bad. Can you smell the rain?

RAIN begins to fall now, a soft but steady shower.

DANNY (CONT'D)

On cue. Great. Well, we might as well load it up.

Chris and Danny bend down as the girls stand back. They undo the ropes holding the blanket in place and uncover the Beast. For a moment they just wait, looking at the dead creature, neither one wanting to touch it.

CLOSE ON THE YOUNG CREATURE'S FACE

It looks quite benign now, eyes closed, at rest.

The face of the young Beast, although almost covered with fine hair, is distinctly humanoid. The brow is more pronounced, the mouth has that distinct simian outward curve to the lips; but the eyes and nose are more human in appearance. The lips are parted slightly, we can see canine fangs.

Maggie and Katy shudder at the creature, both women wanting to be anywhere but here. Katy pulls the hood of her jacket up, looking for shelter from the increasing rain.

Danny and Chris unstrap the creature from the stretcher, and with effort load it into the truck bed, sighing with relief once finished.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Damn.

CHRIS

Okay, just follow us back, we'll get the gear separated back at my place, and we'll finally call it a night.

DANNY

Look, on the way back, let's stop by the Casa De La Pancake and get something. I don't know about you guys, but I'm starving here.

CHRIS

Sounds good, everybody game?

General agreements, and they head to their trucks. The trucks are loosely parked back to front, with Chris's truck in the front. They climb in.

INT-CHRIS'S TRUCK-NIGHT

Maggie sits right beside Chris as they settle in. The wear and tear of tonight is obvious on their faces. The RAIN FALLS HARDER now; we hear it on the roof of the truck. (NOTE: The STORM, with rain, thunder and lightning, should continue throughout the rest of the film)

MAGGIE

I'm not sure I like that thing riding in back.

CHRIS

Aw, don't worry. It's dead, you know. And we're getting out of here.

Maggie takes Chris's face in her hands and kisses him lovingly.

MAGGIE

The things I go through for you.

INT-DANNY'S TRUCK-NIGHT

Katy and Danny sit in the darkened truck, just as tired as their friends. Katy looks out her side window.

There's not much to see, it's dark and the rain is beating down. LIGHTNING illuminates the scene for a second as thunder rolls.

Katy traces her finger on the window, following the patterns of rain as they beat against the vehicle. It's all catching up to her now; she's weary and it shows.

Danny is just sitting there. Katy reaches over, brushing her hand against his cheek. He looks over at her and reaches out, squeezing her hand.

KATY

Let's get going.

Danny turns the ignition, THE ENGINE TURNS OVER and he clicks on the HEADLIGHTS and as he does Katy gasps and SCREAMS and

KATY'S P.O.V: THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

The Beast, the massive eight-foot tall Beast is standing ten feet away from the hood of the truck, just standing there, a frightening sight in the rain and the lightning and

INSIDE DANNY'S TRUCK

Both Danny and Katy are panic stricken and Danny REVS the engine but it's still in park and

THE BEAST

can be seen through the windshield moving towards the truck now and

DANNY

SLAMS the truck into gear but it's reverse and

DANNY'S TRUCK

ROCKETS BACKWARDS into Chris's truck and

INSIDE CHRIS'S TRUCK

Chris and Maggie are rocked by the CRASH and

INSIDE DANNY'S TRUCK

Katy is still in shock, SCREAMING as Danny GRINDS THE GEARS and

DANNY'S TRUCK

TAKES OFF, SWERVING around the Beast and

CHRIS AND MAGGIE

see the Beast now, reacting and

THE BEAST

is moving towards their truck now and

CHRIS

FLOORS his engine and JERKS the gear shift knob and

CHRIS'S TRUCK

JOLTS forward directly at the Beast but it LEAPS UP and onto the hood of the truck and

MAGGIE

SCREAMS as the TRUCK SHUDDERS with the weight of the impact and Chris curses and

THE BEAST

is on the hood right at the windshield now and

DANNY

has stopped his truck and he looks on with horror and

CHRIS'S TRUCK

SCREECHES to a halt and the Beast TUMBLES off the hood onto the road and we hear GEARS GRIND and as the Beast picks itself up, ROARING now, Chris's truck SPINS around past the creature and

DANNY'S TRUCK

SPINS on the wet road now with Chris's truck right behind it and the Beast is standing up again, HOWLING in anger at the departing vehicles.

EXT-MOUNTAIN ROADS-THE CHASE-NIGHT

The Beast watches the trucks SPEED away and it moves off to one side of the road, and as it moves into the tree line it does so with a speed we wouldn't expect and

THE TWO TRUCKS

ZOOM away down the mountain road and

DANNY AND KATY

are freaking out.

DANNY

Jesus! What the hell was that?

KATY

Oh God, Oh God, it's after us, it's after us.

IN CHRIS'S TRUCK

chaos reigns here, too, Chris lighting a cigarette as Maggie keeps a watchful eye out the rear of the truck.

CHRIS

I don't damn believe it, I don't damn believe it.

MAGGIE

I can't see it!

IN THE WOODS

the Beast is MOVING through the woods, LEAPING branches and deadfall, it's amazing something so big can move so fast and

THE TRUCKS

are ROCKETING down the twisting roads and

DANNY

STRUGGLES to keep the truck on the road as Katy is hyperventilating, but at least she is calming down and

THE BEAST

HURTLES through the forest, really moving as it goes down a deep sloping bank and

THE TRUCKS

round a sharp curve, SWINGING out into the other lane and

A CAR IS COMING UP THE MOUNTAIN DIRECTLY AT THE TRUCKS AND

DANNY

SHOUTS as he YANKS the wheel back to the right and a HORN BLARES and

CHRIS'S TRUCK

SLIDES back into it's lane with a SQUEAL OF TIRES and the other car RACES by, the HORN BLASTING and

DANNY'S TRUCK

almost runs off the road into a ditch, but he pulls back onto the road, overcompensating and now the truck's BRAKES LOCK on and the it SPINS around one hundred and eighty degrees, pointing back at Chris's oncoming truck and

INSIDE CHRIS'S TRUCK

Chris curses as he realizes what's going to happen, but it's all happening too fast and

DANNY'S TRUCK

is HIT HEAD ON by Chris's vehicle, hard and fast and the CRASH is almost deafening and both trucks now HURTLE off the road, Danny's truck SLAMMING back into a tree, crushed now from the front and the rear. Chris's ENGINE COUGHS out, but we hear the other truck motor REVVING WILDLY, at an almost insane level.

Chris and Maggie JUMP out of their truck and RUN over to their friends.

CHRIS

Hey! You guys okay?

The passenger door swings open, and Maggie helps a dazed Katy climb out.

KATY

Oh God. Oh, get us out of here.

CHRIS

Danny! Danny!

Danny slides over and climbs out. He's rammed his head into the dashboard, it's bleeding.

KATY

Oh, baby.

DANNY

I'm okay, I'm okay. I think.

MAGGIE

Jesus. I don't believe any of this. What was that thing

DANNY
 (gesturing to the cargo in
 the back of Chris's truck)
 A king-sized one of those things.

KATY
 Lemme see your head.

DANNY
 It's okay, let's just go. I want to go
 home.

Chris takes Danny by the arm, leading him to the other truck.
 The ladies follow.

KATY
 Should we try to move our truck?

Danny looks back, considering this.

DANNY
 It's trashed for now. Let's leave it and
 come back in the daylight.

Maggie opens the passenger side door and helps Katy in, and
 as she does, SMASH! a WATERMELON-SIZED ROCK CRASHES into the
 hood of Chris's truck, scaring the life out of everybody,
 dismissing the momentary quiet.

CHRIS
 Get in, get in, go, go, go!

Everybody climbs in, men in the front, women in the back, and
 Chris GUNS the engine into life, and then:

DANNY
 Wait! Wait! The rifles! The rifles!
 They're in my truck!

CHRIS
 God damn it!

KATY
 Let's go!

DANNY
 NO! We need them!

For a moment, no one knows what to do. Chris is torn, Danny
 definitely wants those guns, but the ladies just want to go.
 Then, Chris calls it:

CHRIS
 Hurry.

Maggie and Katy SHOUT in disagreement as Danny steels himself and opens the door again.

DANNY

BOLTS from the truck and SCURRIES to his wrecked four-wheeler. He tears open the driver door and LEAPS inside.

IN THE WRECKED TRUCK

Danny climbs into the back bed in a panic. The crash has scattered everything that was packed before. It's a tangle of backpacks, toolboxes, fishing rods, etc. He digs into the pile, SLINGING junk aside.

CHRIS AND THE OTHERS

wait impatiently. Chris drums his fingers on the steering wheel.

MAGGIE

He's crazy.

CHRIS

We need the guns.

KATY

You see anything out there?

IN DANNY'S TRUCK

he's found the rifles. He slings one across his shoulder, gripping another. He looks down at the jumble of gear, thinking of what else to grab. WHAM! THE WINDSHIELD BEHIND Danny SHATTERS as another large ROCK crashes through. He spins around, rifle raised, waiting for the slightest movement.

Through the windshield, nothing can be seen. Nothing moves. Rain pours in through the shattered window.

Danny waits, sweat trickling down his face. He's breathing heavy, really scared, that rifle still up and ready.

OUTSIDE THE TWO TRUCKS

it's another waiting game. Chris GUNS his engine once.

CHRIS, KATY & MAGGIE

watch and wait.

KATY (CONT'D)
 (under her breath)
 Come on, come on, come on.

INSIDE DANNY'S TRUCK

he's still waiting. Nothing is out there to be seen. Very cautiously, he creeps back into the front seat. He looks out both side windows, then pushes the rock over on the seat, out of his way. He waits.

FROM OUTSIDE DANNY'S TRUCK

the door slowly opens. Danny slides out, planting both feet and pausing, giving the entire area the once over.

THE TREES

on both sides of the trucks. No sign of the Beast. Danny knows it's there.

INSIDE CHRIS'S TRUCK

they breathe a sigh of relief as Danny finally climbs inside.

KATY (CONT'D)
 What took you so long?

She's angry, she's relieved, she's almost in tears and grabs him from over the seat to kiss him.

CHRIS
 Let's rock.

He shifts into gear, gives it some gas—and the truck doesn't move - SPINNING WHEELS can be heard.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 What—Jesus, come on—

He tries it again, a bit more gas this time. The engine REVS, the truck moves a little, but not much.

DANNY
 We're stuck! We're stuck on the bumper!

THE FRONT OF THE TRUCKS

The two front bumpers have tangled together in the crash. Crumpled steel is hooked on Chris's bumper. The truck isn't going anywhere.

IN CHRIS'S TRUCK

they're losing their cool again. Chris shifts down, and FLOORS IT.

CHRIS
(about to ignite)
COME ON! MOVE!

We hear the WHEELS SPINNING, but the truck doesn't back away. Above the rain, the WHINE of the tires in the mud and the thunder, we hear a ANOTHER SOUND: the ANGRY ROAR of the Beast. It's close, very close.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
We gotta unhook these trucks, man.

Danny opens his door again as the women YELL in protest. He takes one rifle with him.

BY THE BUMPERS OF THE TRUCKS

Danny looks at the damage. He glances around as we hear the Beast ROAR again. He brings the rifle up, looking for a target, waiting.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(from inside)
Come on, man! Do it now!

Danny finally turns back to the bumpers as Chris REVS the engine again. Danny places his hands on the hood of Chris' truck and pushes down, hard. Each time he PUSHES DOWN, Chris GOOSES the engine again, trying to free the vehicle.

THE KNOBBY WHEELS OF THE TRUCK

SPIN in place and SLING MUD everywhere.

DANNY

SLAMS down on the hood again, and we hear a CRUNCH OF METAL, but still it's no good.

INSIDE THE TRUCK

Maggie and Katy clutch the back of the front seat in tension. Chris grits his teeth, trying to separate the trucks by his sheer will.

MAGGIE
(a whisper)
Oh, please.

OUTSIDE THE TRUCK

Danny SCREAMS with effort as he pushes down on the hood and the ENGINE WHINES again, and now the truck is free and it WHIPS back, knocking Danny down.

The TRUCK SQUEALS to a stop twenty feet away. Danny runs to climb in, but now we hear the HOWL of the Beast again, and Danny looks up and the entire scene is bathed in WHITE LIGHT as LIGHTNING washes over everything and the THUNDER BLASTS and

ON THE EMBANKMENT TO THE SIDE OF THE TRUCK

the Beast is there now on the bank about twenty feet up or so but it's not really standing - it's PUSHING against a TREMENDOUS TREE that's rooted in the edge of the slope and

DANNY

looks up in terror and he knows what's about to happen and we hear a BUILDING, DEEP CRACKING and

THE BEAST

is UPROOTING THE TREE, ripping it right out of the ground, and it starts to fall and the Beast SCREAMS with the effort and sure enough, the TREE GIVES WAY , the roots SNAPPING from the earth and the Beast gives a heave-ho and

THE OLD TREE

which has to be ten feet through the middle FALLS, perfect, CRASHING down across the road, blocking the way down the mountain road

IN THE TRUCK

everyone is stunned and

DANNY

raises his rifle again but this time he FIRES TWICE and

THE BEAST

with it's head thrown back, ROARING, SCREAMING, and Danny must have missed or something because the Beast is still standing there and then it digs down into the ground, pulling up something from the spot the tree had just occupied and

DANNY

stands there watching as HUGE CLOUDS OF WET EARTH fall nearby, hurled by the Beast and then suddenly Katy is there by his side and she grabs him by the arms.

KATY

Get in!

She YANKS him almost off his feet and they both fly inside in the truck as the ENGINE RUMBLES.

INSIDE THE TRUCK

Danny and Katy settle in as Chris looks at the fallen tree.

CHRIS

Can't go home that way.

MAGGIE

LOOK!

As she shouts she points and everyone looks and

THE BEAST

LEAPS down from high on the bank, landing perfectly on its feet, like a gymnast in its agility, and it strides towards the truck and

CHRIS

YANKS the transmission back into gear and

THE TRUCK

SCREECHES backward, SMOKE ROLLING from the tires as they grab for any traction on the road and the Beast moves right up to the truck, reaching out as it get closer to the grill and it takes one or two steps and it's right there and then the TRUCK SHUDDERS as the gears shift again and the truck JUMPS forward suddenly, it's more of a lurch but it RAMS into the Beast as it reaches out and

THE BEAST

is KNOCKED BACKWARDS by the hard collision and it lands on its back a few feet away but is back up in just a second, moving again and

THE TRUCK

SKIDS around a sharp curve, heading back up the mountain now and as Chris STOMPS THE PEDAL the truck just takes off in the direction it came from and

THE BEAST

is behind the truck, RUNNING full out, keeping pace although the truck has a good lead and

INSIDE THE TRUCK

Chris concentrates on the road ahead as everybody else looks out the back window and Danny is POUNDING his hand on the seatback.

DANNY

Movemovemovemove!

Everybody SHOUTS encouragement as the truck gains speed and

The speedometer is climbing from fifty to sixty and beyond and

Danny is looking out the back window and his expression changes from exhilaration to disbelief and

THROUGH THE BACK WINDOW

the Beast is RUNNING FULL STEAM behind the truck, maybe one hundred feet behind it but something is odd about the creature and the way it's running and:

DANNY (CONT'D)

Oh, hell.

Chris turns back to steal a glance and

THE BEAST

is really running now, using all fours, almost that unique-primate-knuckles-into-the-ground gait but also it looks almost feline, it's body stretching, legs a blur as it comes and the son of a bitch is MOVING FAST, really pouring it on, bounding great strides and coming up fast and

INSIDE THE TRUCK

it's pandemonium again as they know they're screwed and they SCREAM for Chris to make the truck go faster and

THROUGH THE BACK WINDOW

the Beast is RUNNING full out now and it was once a hundred feet away but now it's gaining every second and

THE TRUCK

ZOOMS by and

THE BEAST

LEAPS into the air and LANDS on the top of the cab and

INSIDE THE TRUCK

the vehicle SHAKES with the impact and

THE BEAST

is on the cab and it rears back with one paw and SLAMS it down and

INSIDE THE TRUCK

the creature's fist PUNCTURES the roof of the cab into the passenger area and it's CLAWS SLICE the air as it reaches blindly for someone and

Danny grabs his rifle and tries to bring it up but he's also trying to stay out of reach of the Beast and

ON THE ROOF

the Beast ROARS in anger as it searches for a target and it grabs the edge of the hole it's punched with it's other hand and it YANKS back and there's a RENDING OF METAL as the hole is bigger now, the Beast can fit both arms in and

INSIDE THE TRUCK

both arms reach down, and the Beast is coming in, there's no doubt about it and

With a SHOUT Danny pushes the rifle muzzle up into the hole and as he does the BEAST LUNGES IN grabbing him by the arms and the TALONS RIP into his flesh and he SCREAMS and as he does he pulls the trigger and the SHOTGUN FIRES and

THE BEAST

is HIT and it FLIPS back, off the truck and onto the road and

DANNY

sinks back into his seat, BLOOD FLOWING from his wound and
THE TRUCK

ROCKETS OFF, Chris's a hell of a driver and it disappears up
the road and around the bend and

INSIDE THE TRUCK

relief all around except for Danny who is in obvious pain,
his wound bleeding profusely.

BACK ON THE ROAD

the Beast is gone. The road is empty. Lightning flashes in
the sky.

FADE TO BLACK

HOLD ON BLACK FOR A MINUTE. THEN WE HEAR:

A LIGHT SCRATCHING. A WHISPER of voices. Then the smash of
GLASS BREAKING and CUT TO:

INT-CONSTRUCTION SITE-HARVE'S OFFICE-NIGHT

The front door has four small inset panes of glass, one of
which is now shattered. A hand reaches in, down, and unlocks
the door, and as the door swings open:

JAMISON

Bingo.

Jamison, Richie and the women enter. Actually, the men walk
right in as the women stand in the doorway.

RICHIE

It's all ours now.

With a FLASHLIGHT as their guide, the guys browse through the
office.

JAMISON

Lookit this stuff. Spent more on this
junk in here than I make in a whole year.

The women take a step inside, as the guys look everything
over. There are three complete computer workstations here,
each with monitor, tower, printer/fax, etc. They examine the
coffeepots, the small fridge, the desk furniture with the
chairs, etc.

As they browse, they make mental notes of stuff to take, talking low, with occasional grunts of disgust at the money spent on the layout.

Bev and Lana are nervous. They watch their men and steal glances out the door.

LANA

Let's go.

JAMISON

Hey, we got a ton of stuff to pack up here. It may take an hour or so. Don't worry, we'll be long gone before anybody knows we're here.

RICHIE

You know, we gotta bag this computer crap. We can't haul it out to the truck in the rain.

JAMISON

Tell you what, you organize this stuff, I'll fix everything outside.

Bev and Lana exchange worried looks.

LANA

What do you plan to do out there?

EXT-CONSTRUCTION SITE-NIGHT

Getting soaked in the rain but not caring, Jamison walks across the site to where the earth moving machines are parked. He notices Harve's truck where it rammed the bulldozer earlier.

At the truck, Jamison walks around one side of the truck, inspecting the impact.

INSIDE HARVE'S OFFICE

Richie is trying to organize the loot. He's stacked some of the office machines on the floor and is unhooking some more cables, whistling softly.

BEV

Come on, this is stupid.

He continues packing as he speaks.

RICHIE

You won't say that when you see what we'll get for this stuff. Thousands, baby.

LANA

Look, Richie, he's a blowhard, we all know that. I love him, but he doesn't think things through. He's cutting his own throat.

RICHIE

We're getting what belongs to us.

BEV

You're putting yourself out of a job. Don't you realize that?

BY HARVE'S TRUCK

Jamison has crawled up on the dozer, bending over to the massive engine. He carefully reaches in and RIPS out some SPARK PLUG WIRES. With his hunting knife he slits a cable here, a hose there. Liquids spill out onto the ground. Jamison hops down to the ground and steps back to admire his work. Satisfied that he's destroyed this dozer, he walks to the next machine in line.

BACK IN HARVE'S OFFICE

Same conversation as before.

RICHIE

He got me this job, you know. I was outta work after the masonry plant shut down. Out of work five months. He got me this job.

BEV

He's gonna cost you this job.

In the distance, we hear a TRUCK HORN BLOW. Lana notices as Richie continues packing stuff. Bev hears it too.

BEV (CONT'D)

Somebody's coming.

Richie straightens up, looking at the door.

OUTSIDE HARVE'S OFFICE

We see Jamison's truck parked behind the hut, out of sight. Jamison is nowhere to be found. Richie and the women step out into the rain as the new vehicle arrives.

Its Chris's truck, SWERVING up the access road and onto the site, LIGHTS FLASHING, HORN SOUNDING. The truck hits the brakes and SKIDS in the mud, stopping near Richie.

Chris and Maggie BURST out of the truck.

MAGGIE

Help us!

CHRIS

We need help! A phone!

Chris grabs Richie by the shoulders.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Man, you gotta help us! It's out there!

MAGGIE

We need a phone! Call the police!

LANA

What're you talking about?

MAGGIE

My God, it's probably right down the road! It's probably watching us right now!

BEV

What?

Danny and Katy come up now. Danny has used his shirt as a makeshift tourniquet, but he's still lost a lot of blood. He leans against Katy for support.

BEV (CONT'D)

What happened?

DANNY

Lady, you wouldn't believe us. We just need a phone. You got a phone?

RICHIE

We ain't got a phone.

CHRIS

Come on. You gotta have a phone here, come on.

RICHIE

Well, ah, the storm—you see, the lines are all down.

MAGGIE
Don't you use cell phones?

LANA
(trying to change the subject)
Mister, what happened to your arm?

CHRIS
(totally ignoring her)
Look, we gotta get somebody up here now!

RICHIE
Well, ah, I don't know if you can use
these phones.

This stops everybody.

CHRIS
Looke here, pal. We ran into some
serious business back down the road. We
need some help.

Richie just looks at them. No response.

MAGGIE
Listen, you get inside there, use the
phone, the C.B.'s, the cell phone, two
tin cans, whatever, you just get somebody
up here, okay?

FROM OFF-SCREEN WE HEAR: that distinctive sound of a PUMP
SHOTGUN CHAMBERING a round, and then we CUT TO:

JAMISON
Nobody's calling the police.

He comes into sight from around the building, pointing the
gun at the new arrivals.

Chris and the others freeze. Chris speaks in an even,
measured tone.

CHRIS
I don't know what's going on here. I
don't care. But we need some help.
(no answer from Jamison. He
just studies them)
Look, you can see, my friend's hurt.

Jamison looks over at Danny, who cradles his bleeding arm.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
We're lost. We can't get down the
mountain. We need help, that's all.

No answer. Jamison looks them over, sighting down the shotgun at them.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

We need medical help. And the police.

A beat. Then:

JAMISON

What're you doing here?

CHRIS

I told you. We can't get down the mountain.

JAMISON

Why not? You got a truck. Road goes north and south. I suggest you go south.

KATY

We can't! It's back there!

RICHIE

(edgy, starting to freak out)
What's back there?

JAMISON

You folks shouldn't be here. This is none of your business.

MAGGIE

Listen, something attacked us back there, and it's probably coming this way.

A pause. Jamison studies Chris and the others. They don't dare move. Richie, Lana and Bev slide over towards Jamison. It's a standoff.

CHRIS

If you don't believe us, look in the back of the damn truck!

Still nothing from Jamison. He just keeps the sights on them.

Everybody is afraid to move. Chris and Danny keep their eyes on Jamison. Maggie is directly behind Chris, Katy is beside Danny. Nobody moves.

A SOUND in the distance. Danny notices first. ANOTHER ENGINE, getting louder. He glances at Chris, who hears it to. Somebody else is on the way.

Skerritt's truck comes up the access road and onto the sight. It moves at a slow pace.

The Sheriff's truck is followed by Andy's animal control truck, a dirty pickup with a huge steel cage in the back bed.

Jamison slowly lowers his rifle, but the tension is still in the air.

Everybody just waits as the new arrivals pull up. Both the new trucks idle down and shut off. Very slowly, Skerritt and Harve climb out of the first truck, staying right at the doors.

SKERRITT

Evenin'.

Jamison and Richie know the jig is up now. They look at the Sheriff and Harve.

Harve studies the men. He's angry, but letting the Sheriff play his hand. Skerritt casually looks around the site, then turns back to Jamison.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

What're you folks doing up here? A little late to be out.

Skerritt notices Jamison is still holding the rifle at his side. Jamison tries to hide the rifle behind him.

JAMISON

Just out. Enjoyin' the night air.

The Sheriff looks at the office door and sees it's forced open.

Now Andy and Rodford have joined the Sheriff, standing slightly behind him. Andy has one of his pistols in hand.

SKERRITT

I think I need a better explanation than that.

Chris moves as far as possible from Jamison's group, closer to Skerritt. He looks from the drunken rednecks to the Sheriff and his posse, then back again. Finally, he breaks:

CHRIS

Sheriff, there's something we need to talk about.

SKERRITT

Is that right?

DANNY

(his voice weak)
 Sheriff, in the back of the truck,
 there's - well, we just gotta show you
 something.

This catches Andy's attention. He looks through the window into the back of the truck. He touches Skerritt on the arm.

ANDY

Richard, I think this is what we came
 here for.

Skerritt turns his attention to Andy for a moment and when he does:

Jamison takes a step backwards as if to make a break for it and

Skerritt sees this and he turns and in a second he's WHIPPED HIS PISTOL OUT and it comes up and as he does

Jamison freezes in place but BRINGS HIS RIFLE UP again now it's pointed at the Sheriff and

BOOM! Skerritt's PISTOL FIRES and JAMISON'S SHOTGUN BLASTS at the same time and

The TRUCK WINDOW by Andy's head SHATTERS as he ducks and

JAMISON GOES down in the dirt and it's all over.

Lana SCREAMS and drops down to Jamison, who is crumpled in the mud, bleeding. Everybody else stands there for a second, and then finally Andy and the Sheriff run over and stoop down to Jamison.

SKERRITT

Goddamn idiot!

He probes the wound as Jamison gasps and writhes. Lana moves back, letting the men deal with Jamison. There's a huge sucking chest wound here, it's serious, and they frantically try to deal with it.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

(over his shoulder, to anybody)
 First aid kit in my truck! Get it!

Rodford dives into the Sheriff's truck to retrieve the kit. He comes back out, and as he does, he stops in his tracks. He looks to the access road. He looks to the tree line.

A gust of wind waves the trees. The rain picks up, harder now.

Rodford slowly walks back towards the others, keeping an eye to the side.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

Alan, come on!

Rodford picks up the pace, and just as he reaches the group, that UNEARTHLY MOAN of the Beast sounds again, somewhere in the darkness.

Everybody hears it, but not everybody knows what it means. Chris and his group tense up yet again, as Harve runs back to the Sheriff's truck.

RICHIE

What was that?

Skerritt, still applying first aid to Jamison, just looks up at Richie.

CHRIS

Sheriff?

Chris and the Sheriff meet eyes. They know each other knows.

SKERRITT

I want all you people out of here right now.

KATY

Sounds good to me. But, how did you guys get up here, the road is blocked.

HARVE

We came up the logging road. It's bumpy, but it's passable.

Jamison makes a soft, gurgling sound, obviously on his last legs.

LANA

(grabbing Skerritt's jacket)

We gotta get him to the hospital.

Richie hasn't been listening to the last bit, and he reaches down to the Sheriff. Lana lets go of Skerritt's jacket and sits back as Richie moves in.

RICHIE

What was that noise?

Harve comes back now, passing out the firearms to Rodford and Andy. Richie notices this, and it drives him closer to the edge.

Chris and the others watch as Rodford and Andy takes positions around the outside of the group, armed and ready.

LANA
(low, to Skerritt)
This didn't have to happen.

Skerritt grabs Lana by the arms.

SKERRITT
Listen to me. Take this man back down the mountain, now.

Another ROAR in the woods, too loud, too close to ignores. Skerritt stands up and takes out his pistol, watching the tree line.

As everyone watches the darkness surrounding them, Danny sags back against Chris's truck, sinking slowly to the ground, finally falling onto his side.

KATY
(dropping beside him)
Danny!

Chris the others turn to look. Maggie joins Katy at Danny's side.

KATY (CONT'D)
Oh no, oh no.

On his back, Danny is fading out. His eyes blink rapidly, and he tries to talk, but nothing comes out.

KATY (CONT'D)
Come on baby, stay with me.

Andy comes over, gently moving Katy aside. He starts unwrapping the crude bandage on Danny's arm.

KATY (CONT'D)
Is he gonna be okay?

ANDY
Jesus, he's lost a lot of blood.

Rodford, Chris, Harve and the Sheriff keep any eye out for any movement out there, watching the trees, guns at the ready.

The tree line is still, no movement, but we hear the Beast out there, moving, GRUNTING, BARKING.

Richie and his girls watch everything. Lana watches it all, too, but she seems more detached than the others.

Rodford catches sight of something and swings his tranquilizer rifle around, sighting down the barrel, ready to fire.

Still, nothing but the sound of the Beast out there.

The men follow the noise with their guns.

HARVE
It's circling us.

They wait, tense, ready for action.

RODFORD
(dipping his rifle barrel)
I hope these things work.

Lana watches it all, not really afraid, she's more in a world of her own.

LANA
(to herself)
He's just stupid, that's all.

She stoops down to Jamison, who still twitches, still with us. She strokes his hair.

LANA (CONT'D)
It'll be okay.

Skerritt and the others keep close watch on the forest.

Andy is wiping blood away from the deep gashes on Danny's arm; it's almost to the bone.

ANDY
So much blood, God.

Danny looks up at Katy, trying to smile.

DANNY
(choking it out)
Love you, baby.

Now we see Lana again, she has Jamison's shotgun in her grasp, she takes a few almost mechanical steps forward, and as she does:

LANA

He's just a big mouth, he wouldn't
really shoot anybody. He wouldn't.

But obviously she will, and SHE RAISES THE SHOTGUN, CHAMBERS
A ROUND and

Skerritt and the others heard her last words and they turn
and

Andy and Katy and Maggie look up and now it's too late to
move and

BOOM! the SHOTGUN BLASTS and

Skerritt is standing in front of Harve and both DIVE in
opposite directions trying to move out of the way and they
just start to move when the blast is heard and as Skerritt
dives HARVE IS HIT and the impact KNOCKS HIM OFF HIS FEET and

Lana PUMPS the gun, chambering another round and

Skerritt is on the ground and he FIRES his pistol and

LANA IS HIT and now she goes down and

Harve is on his back, motionless, not too far from Danny, and
Harve still isn't moving.

Everybody stands there; unbelieving, just staring at the
carnage, four people down, and Skerritt and Rodford drop down
to Harve.

SKERRITT

Harve?

Eyes closed. Still. He's gone.

Skerritt looks up at Richie and Bev.

They look back, afraid, pleading innocence in their eyes.

RICHIE

Hey...you know, they both,
well... you know-

ROOAARRR! The Beast is close now and

This sends Richie and Bev RUNNING, they high-tail it around
the building, everybody just lets them go and

BEHIND THE OFFICE

Richie and Bev round the corner, moving for their parked truck and as they reach it Bev looks and SCREAMS and

the Beast is RUNNING straight towards them, out of the woods, it's on all fours, galloping just like before and LIGHTNING FLASHES and the Beast is coming towards us, ROARING and Bev is STILL SCREAMING and

the Beast is on them and this is all so quick; and the Beast is at the truck and Bev SCREAMS and Richie turns and the Beast is there and IT GRABS Richie by one arm and one leg and now Richie is CRYING and :

The Beast SLINGS him in its grip WHAM into the side of the truck, SPLATTERING BLOOD and now Chris and Skerritt and Rodford round the corner and WHAM Richie is SLAMMED into the truck again and he's dead now but the Beast SLINGS him again and Skerritt wants to shoot but Bev is right in the way and WHAM Richie's skull is pulp now and

Rodford steps up with his dart rifle and now the Beast is at Bev and she's pretty much left our universe and the Beast reaches down and grabs a rock from the ground and Rodford FIRES and the dart hits the Beast in the neck and it doesn't even stop it GRABS Bev by the throat and BRINGS THE ROCK DOWN and - CRUNCH - heard more than seen and the men are speechless they just stare and the Beast turns looking straight at them and it ROARS IN DEFIANCE.

Skerritt and the men stand there for just a second and then the Sheriff reacts as:

the Beast takes a step forward towards them and

the Sheriff's PISTOL FIRES and as it does the Beast LEAPS back onto the top of Jamison's truck and the shot BLOWS THE RADIATOR of the truck and

the Beast is on the top of the cab and it LEAPS again, onto the ground now and it's OFF AND RUNNING and as it does

the three men OPEN FIRE, A BARRAGE OF GUNFIRE and

the Beast GALLOPS OFF, across the ground and into the dark again.

As their ammo runs out, Chris, Skerritt and Rodford CLICK on empty chambers, then they realize their guns are empty. They try to recover their wits.

SKERRITT

God.

They look at the remains of Richie and Bev. Skerritt moves up close, wincing as he draws near. This is bad.

As the Sheriff stares at the bodies with a vacant look, Rodford and Chris look to the darkness. CUT TO:

IN FRONT OF THE OFFICE-BY THE TRUCKS

The three men come around the side of the building, stopping where Andy and Katy are kneeling by Danny. Andy stands, his hands soaked in blood.

ANDY

He's gone. They're all dead.

Skerritt looks down at the sobbing Katy. She returns the look, heartbroken. Her eyes say it all; this man was her life.

Skerritt doesn't know what to say. He's scared. He looks up, around, lost. Maggie kneels down to comfort Katy.

Skerritt marches to his truck and yanks the door open, sitting in the driver's seat and picking up the radio mike.

SKERRITT

(into the radio)

Bravo One to base. Bravo One to base.

(STATIC from the radio as
Skerritt fiddles with a few
knobs on the radio)

Bravo One to base, do you copy? Over.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

Bravo One this is base, we copy, over.

Skerritt is at a loss. He starts to speak then waits.

DISPATCHER (CONT'D)

Bravo One, this is base, what's your
twenty? Over.

Another pause, Skerritt tries to collect himself. Then, finally:

SKERRITT

Guys? This is Richard. We got a situation
up here.

DISPATCHER

(the voice not so formal now)
Richard? What's your twenty, boy?

SKERRITT

Listen to me. I need, ah, I don't know
what-

He pauses, then looks at Andy, who is standing near. He turns to him:

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

(he switches the mike back on)

I - hey, I got a mess up here.

Another pause. No sounds from the radio, not even static now. Skerritt fiddles with the radio, clicks the button on the mike a few times, and then sags in the seat.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

It's dead.

ANDY

What?

SKERRITT

Been having problems with the stupid
radio all summer. Town council wouldn't
approve money for a new system.

Chris joins them.

CHRIS

That thing could be back at any minute.

SKERRITT

I'll get us out of here, don't worry.

INT-HARVE'S OFFICE-NIGHT

Two tables have been cleared off and pushed together, and on the tables is the body of the younger Beast. Skerritt and Andy study it closely, the others hang back in the shadows. Rodford stands at the door, watching the perimeter, rifle in hand.

SKERRITT

You brought it down with one shot?

CHRIS

Yeah. Just one.

ANDY

Lucky shot. We pumped that thing out back
full of drugs and bullets. It laughed at
us and ran away.

Skerritt looks at the group. Maggie and Katy sit on office chairs. Chris is grim, staring at the open door. Andy and Rodford are ready.

EXT-HARVE'S OFFICES-BY THE TRUCKS-NIGHT

The three remaining trucks are parked close together. Chris and the Sheriff are loading Danny's body, now wrapped in a tarp, into the back of Andy's truck.

CHRIS
(nodding towards the office)
What about that thing inside?

SKERRITT
Leave it. For now. We're going home first.

The body inside, they slam the tailgate shut. Chris looks at Danny's body, then back to the offices.

CHRIS
You know, I wanted to keep the damn thing to get a reward. Get rich selling it to the papers.

SKERRITT
And now?

He doesn't have an answer. Andy walks up.

ANDY
Everybody's ready. Let's get in the trucks and go.

SKERRITT
They're all inside?

ANDY
Yeah.

They start back to the hut, and we hear a DISTANT RUMBLE, it quickly increases in volume, FOOTSTEPS POUNDING ON SHEET METAL, on the roof of the office, and then with another DEAFENING ROAR:

The Beast LEAPS DOWN from the roof of the office and lands in front of the three men, it crouches down, SNARLING, facing them down and the men have fallen back in surprise and

INSIDE THE OFFICE

Rodford and the women react to the appearance of the Beast and

OUTSIDE

It's like a wild west showdown: Skerritt, Chris and Andy are too scared to move, they're on the balls of their feet, frozen in one place and the Beast is still SNARLING, SPITTING, TWITCHING, like it's ready to spring and

The Beast is furious, looking at the men as it waits to attack. Its lips are curled back in a snarl, its RAZOR FANGS DRIPPING WITH SALIVA, the eyes are alive, aware, cunning as it waits and it doesn't really look as much like an ape now, its more bestial, savage, its TONGUE FLICKS OUT like a snake, it's licking it's lips as it studies its dinner and

Skerritt's hand moves ever so slowly towards his holstered pistol and

Rodford stands in the doorway, bringing his rifle up and he CHAMBERS A ROUND and as he does

The Beast hears the sound and WHIRLS, almost too fast to see and it's up and it HURTLES to the doorway and - BOOM FROM RODFORD'S SHOTGUN and Rodford backs up as the Beast RAMS into the doorway, too big to easily fit through and Rodford FIRES again and

Skerritt has his gun drawn and he SHOOTS and

The Beast moves again, SPINNING away from Rodford, straight into Skerritt and it KNOCKS him down and keeps moving and it SLAMS INTO Chris'S TRUCK head first and now it stops for a moment, stunned and

Skerritt is joined by the other men and they SHOOT AGAIN and

The Beast scurries around the side of the truck, missing most of the gunfire, now the GUNFIRE BLOWS THE TIRES on Chris's truck and

The men are off and RUNNING, following the Beast around the side of the truck and

It's gone. Not in sight. The men keep their guns ready.

CHRIS

Where is it?

SKERRITT

Okay, now, let's move everybody out.

They run back to the office.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)
 (shouting as he runs)
 Let's move, everybody in the trucks! Now!

As the men reach the office, Katy and Maggie come rushing out.

ANDY
 Get in now! Let's go!

They move towards the trucks and as they do

The Beast comes RUSHING out of the darkness again, stopping at Andy's county vehicle.

Everybody stops as they see the Beast and

The Beast reaches down under the chassis of the truck and HOWLING IN ANGER it lifts up and FLIPS THE TRUCK OVER onto its side, the BODIES OF JAMISON, HARVE, LANA AND Danny SPILLING OUT into the mud.

KATY SCREAMS at the sight, the others wait, watching for the Beast's next move. They're halfway between the truck and the office.

The Beast is still closer to Andy's now-wrecked truck, but too close to Skerritt's truck for comfort. The Beast waits, another standoff.

RODFORD
 We've gotta get to that truck.

The Beast looks to Skerritt's truck, then to the group, understanding that it's keeping them at bay.

As they ponder their next move, we hear a GROWL from behind them and they hear it too and they turn and see behind them:

ANOTHER BEAST, waiting maybe thirty feet away. Remember that we saw two adult nests in the lair earlier. This creature waits in the half-light, watching. It's larger than the first, bulkier, the dominant one.

KATY
 Oh, no, please, no.

Skerritt and Rodford face one monster, Andy and Chris face the other, trying to guess what the next move will be. The creatures have them boxed in, trapped.

SKERRITT
 Keep them in sight, don't let them disappear.

Everyone is waiting, afraid to go back or forward. The two creatures are keeping their distance, but keeping anyone else from moving.

ANDY

What do we do?

Then, the question is answered for them as the Beast by the truck ROARS for distraction and

The larger Beast comes CHARGING towards the group, GALLOPING on it's paws like the other one and

Andy and Chris try to aim at the Beast but it's really moving and it's right on the group and the other two men turn and then the Beast is there and it PLOWS into the group and most of them go down in a heap and

It's a flash, almost too quick to see but the Beast reaches down and GRABS MAGGIE in its arms and then it's off again and

Everyone is in shock but they react and Skerritt raises his gun but Chris knocks his arms down:

CHRIS

No! It's got Maggie!

And we hear her SCREAMING as the Beast RUNS away, heading for the hole at the edge of the site, the opening that started all this and

Everyone CHARGES and

The Beast disappears down the hole, DRAGGING A SCREAMING MAGGIE, and her screams are muffled as they go underground.

The other Beast has disappeared into the night somewhere. Andy and Rodford keep an eye out as everyone crowds around the hole. Chris jumps in but Skerritt grabs his arm.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Let me go!

SKERRITT

You can't go down there!

CHRIS

It's got her!

SKERRITT

Wait! Let's think this out!

CHRIS

If I don't go down there, she'll die!

RODFORD
You'll die too if you just charge down
there!

Chris finally calms down.

SKERRITT
Listen, we'll go after her. I promise
you, but let's plan this out.

CHRIS
There's no time to plan.

Chris sits on the edge of the hole, eager to jump in but
holding back.

ANDY
I agree with him Sheriff. If we're going
we need to go in now. But don't forget
that's exactly what it wants. It wants us
on it's own territory. Who knows what's
down there.

SKERRITT
All right, we'll go in now. Chris, you,
me, and Andy. Alan, I want you to take
her home. Both of you get my truck and
get out of here. That other thing is
still out here somewhere.

KATY
How will you get back down the mountain?

SKERRITT
Let's worry about that later.

RODFORD
There's a Park Ranger tower about three
miles down.

SKERRITT
There won't be anyone there.

RODFORD
The radio will still be there.

SKERRITT
I need some stuff out of my truck. Let's
get a move on here.

Skerritt help Chris climb out of the hole, and as he does

CUT TO:

THE TAILLIGHTS OF SKERRITT'S TRUCK

as Rodford and Katy pull away, the truck sliding a bit in the mud. The men watch the truck disappear down the secondary logging road.

Loaded now with backpacks, rope and assorted gear, Skerritt leads the way towards the opening.

INT-TUNNELS-NIGHT

It's dark, Skerritt's HALOGEN MAG LIGHT shines as the three men crawl through the tunnel. The rain has played havoc here; too, it's a soupy mess.

SKERRITT

Look for anything, another tunnel
branching off, anything. And if you hear
anything, speak up.

Single file, they crawl through the cramped, muddy tunnel. Skerritt leads the way, flashlight cutting into the darkness. Chris is right behind, toting his rifle and a backpack full of ammo. Andy brings up the rear, occasionally checking behind him with the light.

At this point, beyond Skerritt we can see the tunnel widens out into a larger room. It's still a few feet ahead.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

Up here, something different up here.

Grunting, he slides around in the tunnel so he can emerge feet first.

INT-THE TUNNELS-LARGER ROOM

This room seems like a junction. It's tall enough to stand up in and wide enough for the men to gather comfortably. Another crawlspace tunnel takes up across the room at chest level; a smaller tunnel is on another wall. But by one wall, there's a wide hole in the floor. Maybe five feet wide, just enough space to drop down into. The men stretch as they emerge from the tunnel, and focus on the hole in the floor.

CHRIS

Which way?

SKERRITT

Good question. Andy?

ANDY

(examining the other wall
tunnel with his flashlight)
(MORE)

ANDY (CONT'D)

Beats me. We got three choices here. I can't find any tracks, so your guess is as good as mine.

CHRIS

(calling out in all directions)
Maggie! Maggie, baby!

SKERRITT

Hey, let's not announce we're here. Surprise is all we've got.

ANDY

It knows we're here. Don't worry about surprise.

CHRIS

Come on, we've gotta find her. Before—

He pauses, not wanting to finish the sentence.

ANDY

She's okay. Remember, it led us down here.

She's the bait.

SKERRITT

Come on, these things are monsters. They can't be leading us into a trap. They're beasts. Animals.

ANDY

Animals hunt. Animals can think. They had us surrounded back up there, and when they had the right distraction, it grabbed Maggie. That's intelligence. That's cunning. Don't underestimate what we're dealing with okay?

CHRIS

Okay. So. Which direction?

EXT-FOREST-LOGGING ROAD-NIGHT

The Sheriff's truck is off the side of the road in the ditch. Katy is standing by the driver's door, flashlight in hand, scouring the woods. Rodford sits behind the wheel, using the radio.

RODFORD

(into the radio)
We're on the logging road. The one that branches off of county road one-one-six.
(MORE)

RODFORD (CONT'D)
 (STATIC bursts through the
 speaker, with a voice
 heard faintly in the
 background)
 What? Repeat that!

More static, then one sharp burst and the radio is silent.
 Rodford tosses it in disgust.

RODFORD (CONT'D)
 Damn!

KATY
 Alan, what now?

RODFORD
 Well, we're not driving anywhere, that's
 for sure. The road's too muddy, I'd just
 lose it again. Going uphill was entirely
 different. I say we walk.

KATY
 How far is that tower?

RODFORD
 (pointing into the woods)
 About two miles that way.

KATY
 Two miles through the middle of the
 forest in the pouring rain with two of
 those fucking things out there?

RODFORD
 Sounds about right.

Moving to the back of the truck, Rodford opens the hatch and
 stuffs various supplies into his pack. He hands Katy a
 tranquilizer gun, stuffs one behind his belt buckle, and
 slings the rifle over his shoulder.

KATY
 (suddenly alert)
 What was that?

RODFORD
 (alert now, too)
 What?

They look all around, Katy with the flashlight, Rodford with
 rifle ready.

KATY
 I heard it out there.

Listen. The Beast is moving out there. It's just a whisper now and then, but the creature is moving softly through the brush.

KATY (CONT'D)

We'll never make to that tower.

Slowly, they start back up the road, in the direction they came. The mud is terribly deep, their feet slosh and suck in the mire. As they move, they watch all around them.

RODFORD

Don't leave my side.

She takes his hand. Rodford stops, and Katy stops with him. He motions for silence.

KATY

It's playing with us.

Rodford considers this. They start walking again. A bit faster now. Rodford looks back over his shoulder.

Off the side of the road, the slightest hint of motion back there in the trees.

Really worried now, they pick up the pace. We hear the Beast moving as well.

KATY (CONT'D)

Alan-

RODFORD

Wait.

Katy looks behind her, Rodford looks too. They walk faster now. Movement in the forest.

RODFORD (CONT'D)

Now.

They break into an ALL-OUT RUN.

INT-TUNNELS-JUNCTION ROOM

Chris is being lowered into the hole in the junction room floor. A ROPE HARNESS holds him in place, with the other two men manning the rope.

CHRIS

Slow, guys, don't drop me.

IN THE SHAFT WITH CHRIS

It's cramped, he shines light all around, the rifle over his shoulder. He shines the light up, down, on the tunnel sides, etc. He's lowered with slow, jerky motions.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Nothing yet. Keep going.

ANDY
(off-screen, calling out)
How far down does it go?

CHRIS
Can't tell.

SKERRITT AND ANDY

Strain as they lower the rope.

Chris keeps dropping down the hole, then:

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Hold it!

He jerks to a stop.

SKERRITT
(off screen)
What?

Chris has found a HORIZONTAL TUNNEL breaking off from the shaft. It's right at his chest level now, so he braces himself with his hands on the ledge.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Another tunnel. Don't know where it goes.

He brings his flash around, shining it into the new tunnel. Dark in there.

Chris leans in a bit closer, shining the light a bit deeper.

Just beyond the light, something is in the tunnel. A shape, a mass, hard to distinguish. It's about ten feet in, just beyond the light.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Something's in there. Something.

SKERRITT AND ANDY

are on guard now.

SKERRITT

What is it?

CHRIS

looks up at the head of the shaft then back into the tunnel.

CHRIS

I don't know.

He looks down, shining the light beneath him. Nothing down there. The light plays around, still nothing.

Chris focuses the light back into the tunnel.

Chris hoists himself up, crawling into the tunnel.

SKERRITT

Chris? What's going on?

He ignores Skerritt. On his stomach, he crawls into the new tunnel.

SKERRITT

feels the slack on the rope, and is more concerned now.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

Chris! What's going on down there?

CHRIS

ignores him yet again. Cautiously, he slides into the tunnel, his legs still hanging over the edge. He stops, scared. He points the light ahead, and his face sags.

We now see Maggie is there, stuffed into the tunnel. Part of her scalp is torn away, dried blood crusted over her face.

Chris is speechless. Anger, loss, all emotions pour over him. He finally starts to whimper.

CHRIS

Baby.

He crawls up to her body. He's almost afraid to touch her, as if touching her will hurt her more. He breaks down in tears, moaning and crying.

SKERRITT AND ANDY

hear this, and know what Chris has found.

CHRIS

strokes her hair, whispering to her, crying. His sadness quickly turns to rage, the fires build up inside him, he trembles and starts backing out of the tunnel, his face a grim visage. It's hard to back out, and the effort makes him even angrier.

He makes it to the mouth of the tunnel, and manages to sit up on the ledge.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I'm going down!

He gets ready to slide off the edge.

SKERRITT AND ANDY

feel a HARD TUG on the line as Chris moves, then a HARDER TUG, a JOLT. They exchange looks.

Now the rope is TUGGED HARD, pulling-these-men-off-their-feet hard, then, a SCREAM FROM Chris - cut short - a FURIOUS, NEVER ENDING GROWL, and the ROPE JERKS again, and Skerritt and Andy try hard to keep a firm grip, but they're in danger of getting yanked into the hole themselves, and then SNAP! the ROPE BREAKS and it's all slack and the lack of tension sends Skerritt and Andy SPRAWLING, and the recoil sends SOMETHING SHOOTING up out of the shaft and it comes down and it's only the TOP HALF OF Chris'S BODY, RIPPED IN HALF BELOW THE WAIST and his torso SPRAYS BLOOD everywhere and his carcass lands on the ground and it's horrible and

Skerritt can't believe it and he scurries away from the body and looks down into the hole and

The Beast is climbing up, straight towards him, it's bulk fills the hole and it's coming right at them like a rocket just clawing it's way up the shaft and

Skerritt SHOUTS as he backs up and he reaches back for his rifle and

now the Beast's head is out of the shaft and it plants its claws in the dirt as it begins to heave itself up and it's coming out now and

with a FIERCE SHOUT Andy just SWINGS his rifle like a club SMASHING the butt across the skull of the Beast and the wooden rifle STOCK SNAPS OFF but it stuns the Beast and now they take the advantage and

Skerritt and Andy LEAP back into the original tunnel, crouched over, escaping and

the Beast is slowly pulling itself out of the hole and

IN THE TUNNEL

the men are scared out of their wits, cursing and CRAWLING through the sloppy, muddy tunnel and

behind them we see the Beast is at the mouth of the tunnel now and

Skerritt looks back and sees the Beast and he shouts in fear and they keep surging ahead and

now the Beast is in the tunnel, closing up the gap and

Skerritt is behind Andy and he's urging him to move faster and in the lead Andy is moving as fast as he can but the tunnel is so damn muddy he SLIPS AND FUMBLES and gets upright again and behind him the Beast is coming and Skerritt is trying to keep from looking behind to see the monster because it'll cost him precious seconds and so he keeps going and now Andy can see the actual light at the end of the tunnel about one hundred feet ahead and Skerritt sees it too and they POUR ON MORE SPEED and now the Beast is on their heels, it's there and they're so close but they're not going to make it because the Beast REACHES OUT and GRABS Skerritt by his boot and PULLS HARD and the Sheriff SCREAMS because it's got him and Andy stops because he sees Skerritt is caught and

Skerritt is KICKING at the Beast, kicking hard and it's trying to pull him closer, holding onto that one boot, just REELING HIM IN and

Andy still has his fragmented rifle and he turns and SLIDES back down to Skerritt and

Skerritt is KICKING FURIOUSLY at the Beast and it SCREAMS in frustration, the tunnel makes any movement difficult but then the Beast gets Skerritt's other boot and HOWLS IN TRIUMPH and

Andy CRAWLS right over Skerritt and just SHOVES his rifle forward and BLAM!

the Beast SCREAMS and slides back and lets go off Skerritt and

they TAKE OFF like bats out of hell and they just fly to the mouth of the tunnel and cut to:

EXT-CONSTRUCTION SITE-NIGHT

Rodford and Katy are RUNNING up from the utility road when Andy and Skerritt CRAWL from the hole. Rodford heads towards the hole.

RODFORD

Hey!

SKERRITT

(pulling himself up)

No! Go back! It's right behind us!

They change course and RUN towards Harve's office, Skerritt and Andy right behind them. From inside the hole, we hear the Beast still HOWLING IN PAIN.

They reach the building and RUN inside, SLAMMING the door behind them.

INT-HARVE'S OFFICE-NIGHT

Frenzied activity: Katy and Rodford keep watch through the door while the other two search all the desktops and the piles of booty Richie left behind.

SKERRITT

Where's the damn radios?

ANDY

(to Katy)

Is it out there?

She shakes her head "no".

Skerritt and Andy sift through the piles and finally find one radio. Skerritt slams it down on the desk and examines the unit.

SKERRITT

Where the hell are the power cables?

ANDY

What?

RODFORD

Hey! I see it!

They crowd at the door.

THROUGH THE BROKEN WINDOW

nothing can be seen out of the ordinary.

Rodford turns to the others.

RODFORD (CONT'D)

I saw it. It climbed out and took off towards the trees. I saw it.

SKERRITT

Well, we gotta get this damn radio working. They disconnected the cables, they're somewhere in here. Find them.

RODFORD

How's our ammo?

SKERRITT

I got a backpack full, shells, darts, flares. What else we got?

They sort out the weapons as they're counted out.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

I got my pistol, one rifle. Alan?

Rodford and Katy have theirs, one shotgun, and one pistol. Skerritt hands his pistol to Andy.

ANDY

That's it. Okay, let's load up. Richard, watch out here.

He reaches into Skerritt's backpack and takes out boxes off ammo, and everybody reloads their weapons.

The reloading continues, then SMASH! A ROCK CRASHES through the window, shattering the rest of it. Everybody jumps back as we hear the Beast raising a ruckus outside.

Skerritt CHAMBERS A ROUND in his rifle, everybody else gets ready. Andy moves as close as he dares to the window, trying to peek outside.

The others stand back, at the ready. Andy gets close to the window.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Can't see it.

They wait. Andy gets a bit braver and stands right at the window.

BOOM! A loud but hollow BANG from overhead, the Beast is on the roof. Everybody jumps, then points their weapons up, trying to find the source of the sound. Skerritt and Andy stay near the front of the office, aiming up, while Katy and Rodford move to the back, also training their sights on the metal ceiling.

The Beast can be heard moving up there, they can't pinpoint exactly where it is.

They watch the curved roof, hoping to see indentations with the sound of footfalls, but can't see anything.

Andy aims at the roof, jerking his barrel to track the sounds.

Rodford plays the same game, aiming at the roof, trying to get a bead on the location of the Beast. WHAM! A hard crash now, it's BEATING on the roof.

Rodford FIRES TWO SHOTS up, but now the POUNDING CONTINUES on another section of the roof. He waits for another shot.

Skerritt and Andy are ready, waiting. It's tense, quiet.

Katy is trembling, but still aiming the gun. The Beast walks across the roof again.

Skerritt and Andy move across the room, trying to pinpoint the sounds. Rodford and Katy now move towards the front of the room.

Nothing now, no sounds from above. Everybody waits.

From one curving wall now, loud SCREECHING AND TEARING METAL, one large panel of siding is being PEELED AWAY, everybody jumps and by the time they realize what's happening, a large section of siding has been RIPPED OPEN and the Beast is there and it starts to SMASH THROUGH THE SUPPORT BEAM on it's way and

Katy and Rodford back against the front wall as Skerritt and Andy move towards the Beast and Skerritt SHOOTS but the shot hits the steel support beam so it RICOCHETS around the room and then the Beast enters, slowly folding its body to fit through the gaps left by the support beams and it enters through the gaping hole in the wall, and everybody backs up, but the Beast stops as soon as it steps inside.

Skerritt and Andy aim right at the large creature, their eyes wide, they're frozen in fear, they know they should shoot but the thing is only a few feet away now and

the Beast stands there, knowing that now it's the one who is surrounded, it's fenced in now, four weapons are aimed at it and

Rodford and Katy are like the others, too scared to really do anything, they just wait for any movement and:

the Beast is weighing its options, looking from Skerritt to Rodford and back again and then its mood changes as it sees:

The body of the younger Beast killed earlier. It's still sprawled on a table top, lifeless and

the Beast looks at its dead offspring, the creature almost seems sad at first, its features soften and it slumps a bit. With one razor talon claw it reaches out to touch the younger creature, but then the hand draws back.

Skerritt knows the Beast has seen it's dead child. He looks at the dead creature.

The Beast looks from its offspring to the human pointing the rifle at it, and now the Beast seems to pump itself up a bit, its shoulders straighten, its chest heaves and

It's a split second, but Skerritt knows what's coming and his eyes meet

the Beast's INHUMAN RED EYES and

just as Skerritt OPENS FIRE the Beast CHARGES him and the shot goes off but it doesn't faze the creature in its rage and it BACKHANDS SKERRITT and he SLAMS against the wall and as he does Andy SHOOTs and it hits the Beast but again no effect so with one SWING of its massive fist Andy goes FLYING and now the Beast is moving on the prone Skerritt it's CHARGING FAST but the Sheriff is so out of it he just lays there and Rodford tries to get a shot off but the gun just clicks and now the Beast is on Skerritt it GRABS his arms and he comes awake, SCREAMING in pain as the Beast's TALONS CLAW into his arm and

the Beast's eyes roll over black and it bares its fangs

and Skerritt can't do anything so he just closes his eyes and waits for a quick death and just as the Beast LUNGES ITS JAWS at the Sheriff and

Katy is there and she SCREAMING AS SHE FLIES ACROSS THE ROOM and her pistol is right against the Beast's skull it's paying her no attention and she OPENS FIRE, SHOOTING AGAIN AND AGAIN and the BEASTS'S SKULL IS BLOW APART by the point blank fire and BLOOD AND BRAINS go everywhere especially all over Skerritt and

Katy empties the gun as the Beast collapses and Skerritt just rolls out of the way and Katy is clicking on empty chambers now, just squeezing the trigger, her face a mask of rage and revenge and

Rodford comes up and softly pulls her arm down, taking the smoking gun from her hand and he tosses it to the side.

RODFORD

It's dead.

It is dead; no doubt about it. Half the head is gone.

Andy picks himself up from the corner where he'd fallen and helps a shaken Skerritt to stand up. They gather, looking down at the fallen Beast.

SKERRITT

Jesus.

All business now, Rodford ejects the dud shell from his rifle, reaches into a small pouch on the side of the pack he's wearing, and loads a few more shells.

EXT-CONSTRUCTION SITE - HARVE'S OFFICE-DAWN

The sun is just beginning to come up in the distance, it's still dark but the horizon is purple. The door to the office opens, Rodford steps out. After seeing the coast is clear, he motions, and the others follow.

SKERRITT

Down the road. Run all the way.

They start out, RUNNING past Chris's dead truck, and Andy's overturned truck, heading for the road.

From the distant treeline, the other Beast emerges. It drops to all fours and RACES to them.

Turning and seeing the Beast, Andy shouts and they all pour on speed.

They're not going to make it; the Beast is closing the gap too fast. Skerritt realizes this and he turns, drawing his gun and waiting for the right shot. Andy and Rodford join him, but Katy is unsure what to do.

SKERRITT (CONT'D)

(to Katy)

Get out of here!

She takes a few more steps, not wanting to leave them, but then she sees the Beast and

it's GALLOPING straight towards them full speed and

Katy takes off RUNNING and

the Beast is heading for the men who are standing their ground and here it comes and

they finally SHOOT and:

as they do the Beast SPRINGS INTO THE AIR, leaping over them and it's past them and they never even had time to fire a shot and

it LANDS ten feet away from Katy and she freezes as it stalks her - it stalks her like a jungle cat, slinking around on its paws and it's close now and she's too frightened to run for it because she'll never make it and

Skerritt and the others can't take a shot they might hit her and they're almost out of their minds now and

so is Katy, she backs up but the Beast backs her around, heading her back towards the men and towards Andy's overturned truck and

the Beast is enjoying this, just stalking her because she can't get away and

now the men have had enough and they RUSH to Katy and

the Beast sees them coming and

so does Katy and she DROPS to the ground and as she does the Beast CHARGES Skerritt and the others and they FIRE AGAIN and

as the BULLETS RIP into the Beast it JUMPS the men, KNOCKING them over and they're all in a tangle and the Beast GRABS Andy by the arm and we hear it SNAP and it SLINGS him up and then SNAPS him down, SLAMMING him into the ground with incredible force and it's BONE CRUNCHING as he hits the ground and Rodford stands and before he can do anything the Beast GRABS him by the face and it THROWS him aside as well and

Skerritt knows he's next so he turns to run but the Beast reaches out, SLASHING and the force of the blow TEARS open his backpack, spilling all the ammo and flares and Skerritt SMASHES into the undercarriage of Andy's overturned truck and

Katy is terrified, no gun, no way of helping anyone now and

Skerritt stands up as the Beast stalks him, and he's backed up against the overturned truck, nowhere to run to and

KATY

Run!

SKERRITT

Get out of here!

He wants to grab a weapon or something, but it's all out of his reach except for a ROAD FLARE so he grabs it and as he does the Beast SLASHES out and RIPS A CHUNK OF FLESH from Skerritt's arm, but he manages to STRIKE THE FLARE and it comes to life, bright red and

the Beast backs off a bit from this now but it tenses back, getting ready to spring and

Skerritt is energized by the terror and he shouts again:

SKERRITT (CONT'D)
Katy, get out of here!

He waves the SIZZLING road flare back and forth, keeping the Beast at bay and it's working at least for now but not for long and

the Beast tenses on its hind quarters, a predator about to strike and

Skerritt is ready and he turns his back to the Beast facing the chassis of the overturned truck and

the Beast LEAPS AND SLAMS into the Sheriff and

Skerritt braces himself as the Beast RIPS into him and he has the road flare in one hand and with the other free hand he reaches over and he unscrews the cap on the gas tank of the truck and

the Beast SINKS ITS FANGS into Skerritt's neck and

as he SCREAMS in agony he drops the road flare into the gas tank and

it's just a split second reaction but Katy sees what about to happen and she screams and

WHOOM! the TRUCK EXPLODES IN A HUGE FIREBALL and

the CONCUSSION KNOCKS Katy to the ground and

the FIREBALL rises into the dark morning sky, a brilliant INFERNO lighting up the entire area, it seems to rise forever and then the DEBRIS begins to fall everywhere.

Katy rolls over and sits up, watching the fire, stunned.

The truck BLAZES away, DEBRIS AND ASHES raining down. There's no sign of the Beast or the Sheriff, maybe just as well.

Katy crawls over to Rodford and Andy, it's a short distance but it seems to take her forever.

Andy's body is crumpled in the dirt, his neck twisted at an unnatural angle. Rodford is face down on the ground, not moving. She sits down between them, looking from one to the other. She leans over, her ear to Rodford's chest, listening for a breath.

After a moment, she sits back up, dazed, confused, looking around. She slumps back down, falling across Rodford, fading away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT-HOSPITAL WAITING AREA-DAY

A typical hospital waiting area: orange couches and chairs, magazines everywhere, half-full coffee cups, etc. The waiting area is full, and off in one corner is Rodford, staring at his feet, bored. One side of his face is bruised and swollen, the other cheek covered with bandages, the remnants of the Beast's attack.

A DOCTOR finally walks up and taps Rodford's shoulder and catching his attention. They speak quietly and then the doctor walks away. After a moment, Rodford stands and walks down the corridor.

A POLICEMAN sits on a plastic chair outside a private room. He gestures for Rodford to stop.

POLICEMAN

She's awake.

RODFORD

The doctor told me.

POLICEMAN

Hey?

Rodford stops, turns.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

What the hell happened on that mountain?

Rodford's stare is blank. He blinks, turns, enters the private room.

INT-KATY'S HOSPITAL ROOM-DAY

Katy sits up in bed, drinking juice. There are dark circles under her eyes, a definite shading of gray in the hair now. After a soft knock at the door, Rodford enters.

Katy smiles as she sees him.

RODFORD

Hi.

He walks over to the side of the bed as she puts her cup of juice away. They exchange looks. Awkward. No one wants to speak first. Then:

RODFORD (CONT'D)

I know it's a stupid question, but are you okay?

KATY

As well as can be. I guess. I don't know, I'm still in shock, I think.

RODFORD

Yeah. You were out for a while. Got a little worried, there.

He tries a smile, but neither one can manage much. He reaches out to take her hand, and she squeezes, not letting go.

KATY

I can't believe they're all-

Her eyes mist over.

RODFORD

We made it. We're here. That's what counts now. I keep telling myself that.

He lets go of his hand, just strokes it softly.

RODFORD (CONT'D)

I keep telling myself that.

He moves away from the bed, standing by the window. He's finding it hard to look at her for long.

KATY

Was the Sheriff married?

RODFORD

Yeah. I just left their house. All the family is there. Got a boy, too. Goes to school with my nephew. Andy's wife...she's not too good. I don't know what to do, what to tell her to comfort her, I don't know what to tell anybody.

KATY

The police tried to talk to me earlier. I couldn't say much of anything. I guess they'll be back.

RODFORD

They got me too. Police, state police,
state bureau of investigations. Just tell
them the truth.

It's quiet for a few moments.

RODFORD (CONT'D)

You know, if you need anything, I mean,
if there's anything I can do, you know,
just call me, okay? I mean, if you need
somebody to talk to.

KATY

I don't know what anybody can do.

Rodford keeps looking out the window.

KATY (CONT'D)

But you'll be the first one I call.

He reaches to hug her, and she grabs him, holding him long
and squeezing tight. She does not want to let go, but at last
she does, wiping away tears as she settles back into the
pillow.

Rodford moves towards the door. As he opens it, he stands in
the doorway, looking at her.

Katy tries to smile, tries not to cry as she watches Rodford.
She wipes away a few more tears. There's nothing more to say.

RODFORD'S P.O.V:

as he leaves, there's Katy in her bed, looking at Rodford,
trying to brave, trying to keep it together, and the door
closes, and she's gone, out of sight and as the door latches
shut.

FADE OUT.

THE END