

THE FORTUNE CHRONICLES

ONE HOUR PILOT

Written by

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First Draft 6/17/2018

This is the way the world ends,
This is the way the world ends,
This is the way the world ends,
Not with a bang but a whimper.

- T.S. Eliot

TEASER

INT. HAMBONE'S CAFE - DAY

SUPER: Fortune, New Mexico

SUPER: 1977

The cafe crowd is comprised almost entirely of oilfield workers eating lunch and smoking cigarettes. In the background a Tammy Wynette song plays on the jukebox.

HANK POWELL (36) sits at the counter, dressed in dirty coveralls with stitching scars above the breast pocket where a name patch was removed. He finishes with his meal and then sits and watches NONA GAIL COATES (29) scurry around delivering orders and clearing tables. As she comes back behind the counter, Hank finally catches her eye and they smile at each other.

HANK

We still on for a movie tonight?

NONA GAIL

I don't see why not. I think Bennett will be okay with Mama watching him.

HANK

That boy ought to get out of the house more. Play some baseball or something.

NONA GAIL

I tell him that but he just says he likes reading books and watching TV. Doesn't ever want to go outside.

HANK

I guess that's okay. I never was much of a bookworm myself. Otherwise I wouldn't be out here doing this kind of work.

He rises off the stool and pulls out his wallet.

HANK (cont'd)

Speaking of which...

NONA GAIL

I'll see you tonight then.

EXT. OIL FIELD OF OUTSIDE FORTUNE - DAY

Hank is working on an idle, rust-covered oilfield PUMP JACK. His attention is focused on the "stuffing box", a valve with a rod running through it vertically that slides up and down as it pulls oil out of the ground.

As Hank uses a rag to wipe away some dirt and loosen a bolt, he notices an oddly glowing gelatin-like substance that is oozing from around the rod. He bends for a closer look and...

EXT. SAME OIL FIELD LOCATION - SOME TIME LATER

Hank sits on the pickup tailgate dazed, blankly staring into space. He suddenly snaps to and looks around.

Sitting beside him on the tailgate is an old Skippy peanut butter jar filled with the same gelatin substance that slowly cycles through a range of glowing and pulsating colors. Looking straight at this stuff seems to bother Hank.

He looks down beside the pickup and sees a pile of nuts, bolts, washers and such.

A quick image of Hank hurriedly digging through the back of his pickup bed, coming up with the jar of parts and quickly pouring them out in the dirt to empty the jar.

Hank musters his courage and lifts the jar to take a closer look at the contents. When he does, the stuff inside shifts slightly and its glow pulsates even more.

INT. HANK POWELL'S PICKUP - FORTUNE HIGHWAY - A SHORT TIME LATER

As Hank drives along the highway with both hands on the wheel and staring straight ahead, the jar sits in a cardboard box on the passenger seat, with a red oilfield rag draped over it.

The pickup rolls past a road sign that reads:

FORTUNE, NM
CITY LIMITS
POP. 127

END TEASER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT ONE

EXT. FORTUNE, NEW MEXICO HIGHWAY - DAY

Hank's pickup nears Fortune, which is essentially just a small scattering of tin shop buildings, small houses, and a cafe, all scattered along a stretch of two-lane highway.

Hank glances down at the rag-covered jar and smiles.

He allows his pickup to coast to a stop just as he is rolling past a pipeyard filled with rusting oilfield equipment.

He is focused on a large steel A-frame rack standing not far from the highway. It resembles a large playground swingset, except instead of swings, massive oil well drilling tools and pulleys hang suspended from chains.

As he stares at the A-frame he loses track of where he is again until the horn of a passing semi-truck brings him out of it.

He throws the truck into gear and continues down the road, turning off the highway and rolling past Hambone's Cafe and down a dirt road that runs beside it.

EXT. COATES' RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Hank rolls up in front of the house where Nona Gail Coates and her son Bennett live with Nona Gail's mother. He carefully lifts the rag-covered jar from the box and gingerly carries it up to the front porch.

He pauses at the front door as he tries to see if he can tell who is inside before knocking. As he bends to peer through a window, the stuff in the jar shifts and startles him, almost making him drop it.

BENNETT

Mama won't be home until later.

Momentarily startled, Hank turns to find eleven-year-old BENNETT COATES standing behind him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HANK

Oh, hey there, Bennie. Actually, I came by here to see how you were doing. So, are you having a good summer?

Bennett shrugs.

BENNETT

I guess so.

HANK

That's good. That's real good. Say, do you have time to sit and talk for a little bit?

Another shrug. And a slightly wary look.

BENNETT

Sure, I guess. What do you want to talk about?

Hank looks around and spots a pair of rusted metal lawn chairs.

HANK

Come on over here, Bennie.

Hank sits and Bennett follows him timidly, sitting on the edge of a chair and staring off towards an empty field, not digging the idea of a conversation.

HANK (cont'd)

Listen, kid. I know you're not crazy about me and your mama seeing each other. And, I know I haven't paid you much attention before, but I'd really like for us to get to be friends.

Bennett nods without answering.

HANK (cont'd)

Now I think a lot of your mama, and I know that you're more important to her than anything in the world. And I know that means that if I'm going to keep seeing her then you and I have to work on being buddies. Does that make sense?

BENNETT

I guess so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HANK

Well, one of the things that buddies do for each other is to show each other things that they find. Like say you're out playing and you find an arrowhead or something really neat like that, you could show it to me. See what I mean?

BENNETT

Sorry, but I haven't ever found an arrowhead.

HANK

That's okay. Maybe you can tell me about a book you been reading or something like that instead. Anyway, I found something today that I wanted to show you. Cause you're my buddy, right?

Hank swings the rag-covered jar up and sets it on the arm of the lawn chair. Bennett inches away, eyeing the jar cautiously.

BENNETT

Is it a snake?

HANK

No, it's not a snake.

Hank looks off at the horizon as he gather his words.

HANK (cont'd)

I don't know how much you know about the oil that gets pumped out of these wells we have out here surrounding us, but that oil has been down underneath the ground there for millions of years before we pump it up here to the surface.

BENNETT

Isn't it from dead dinosaurs or something?

Hank nods slowly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HANK

Yes it is. It's mostly from dead dinosaurs, but it's important to remember that it's been down there for a long, long time, and lots of things can happen in a few million years. During all that time underground, some things stay the same, and some other things keep changing. Evolving is what they call it.

BENNETT

You mean like how monkeys changed into people?

HANK

Sort of like that, yes. Except what I'm talking about might not be exactly like that. But, it's a good comparison, Bennie. Let's just say for right now that some things keep changing, even when everything else seems to be staying the same for the most part. Anyway, I found something pretty neat when I was working on one of those oil wells this afternoon, and I thought you'd like to see it.

Hank pulls the red rag off the top of the jar and tosses it aside.

Bennett stares at the jar as the substance inside begins to glow brighter and pulsate. Its colors shift and the stuff becomes more active than ever before, as if its proximity to the boy triggers an excited reaction in its behavior. Hank keeps his eyes on Bennett, avoiding looking directly at the jar again.

Finally, Bennett looks up and we see him smile for the first time.

BENNETT

Can I keep it?

INT. HANK POWELL'S MOBILE HOME - NIGHT

Hank stands in the narrow hallway of the mobile home, holding the bathroom door open so he can use the mirror on the back of it as he stares into his own eyes. He finally blinks and pulls his gaze away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks down and holds his arms out to examine himself, as if noticing for the first time that he has dressed himself in a black suit, complete with tie and dress shoes. He walks down the hallway to the kitchen and glances at the clock. It is past nine.

He notices the sink is full of dirty dishes, so he puts a stopper in the sink drain, squirts in some dishwashing soap and turns the water on.

While the sink is filling, he glances over and sees his keys lying on the counter. Without missing a beat, he picks them up and walks out of the trailer and to his pickup, leaving the mobile home door standing open, the water still running in the sink.

INT. HANK POWELL'S PICKUP - NIGHT

Hank pulls away from the mobile home and drives off into the night.

INT. HANK POWELL'S PICKUP - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Hank snaps out of his daze to see that he is parked alongside the highway. He looks across the field to see the big A-frame oilfield tool rack standing in the moonlight.

EXT. OIL FIELD PIPEYARD - NIGHT

Hank is standing underneath the A-frame, gazing up at the three massive oilfield tools hanging there. The tools are hanging from heavy steel chains, and a fourth chain hangs empty.

EXT. OIL FIELD PIPEYARD - NIGHT

Hank has found a large wooden cable spool and is rolling it toward the pipe rack.

EXT. HIGHWAY OUTSIDE FORTUNE - DAYBREAK

A semi-truck rumbles by and blows its horn at Hank Powell's pickup, still parked beside the highway with the driver's door open. In the distance is the massive A-frame where the three oilfield tools hang. But now there is something hanging from the fourth chain, swaying slightly in the breeze. And even from a distance we can see it's Hank Powell.

INT. BENNETT COATES' BEDROOM - DAY

Bennett Coates is happily laughing and quietly whispering to the Skippy peanut butter jar that Hank Powell gave him. He takes it to the window and holds it up to the light. The contents of the jar pulsates and squirms excitedly.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. BENNETT COATES' BEDROOM - DAY

Back on eleven-year-old Bennett Coates as he holds the Skippy jar up to the light. As we shift POV from the jar back to Bennett, he's suddenly changed into the adult Bennett (50's), standing at a wall of windows inside his office in the ultra-modern building that houses the headquarters of Kymira Corporation, holding the same jar up to the light.

EXT. BENNETT COATES' KYMIRA CORPORATION OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: Kymira Corporation Headquarters

SUPER: Fortune, New Mexico

SUPER: Present day

Kymira has transformed present-day Fortune, New Mexico, previously a dusty collection of buildings and oilfield pipeyards into a sprawling corporate campus with carefully manicured grounds.

INT. BENNETT COATES' OFFICE - DAY

The office decor is sparse and furnishings minimal. The wall that runs perpendicular to the glass sheet of exterior windows is made of glossy green backlit glass with dozens of foot-wide glass shelves jutting out at carefully arranged intervals, from floor to ceiling.

Each shelf holds some kind of consumer product or electronic device. A bottle of bathroom cleanser on a shelf next to a shelf holding a cell phone. A coffee maker on a shelf next to a shelf holding a box of breakfast cereal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There are several dozen products on individual shelves, making the entire wall resemble an avant-garde art installation or a museum displaying artifacts of modern consumerism.

Adult Bennett, dressed in a tailored suit, crosses from the windows and carefully places the Skippy jar inside a wall safe, which he closes and locks.

EXT. LOS ANGELES TRAFFIC - DAY

SUPER: Los Angeles, California

GORDY FRANKLIN is stuck in evening rush hour traffic in his ten-year-old car.

Broken air conditioner. Windows down. A necktie loosened over a dress shirt that has seen a long day.

For Gordy, it's hot, noisy and uncomfortable, while all around him are people sealed in newer model air-conditioned cocoons.

EXT. FRANKLIN HOME - DAY

Gordy pulls into his drive and parks behind an older model mini van, climbs out of his car and walks to the front door, carrying his canvas lunch bag.

It's a modest home, with no garage, but a driveway wide enough to accommodate two cars.

A decades-old VW Beetle is parked on the grass next to the mini van, draped with an old stained and faded canvas cover.

INT. FRANKLIN HOME - DAY

Gordy walks through the living room to find NICOLE FRANKLIN in the kitchen, preparing dinner.

GORDY

Hey, you.

NICOLE

Hey yourself.

They kiss and Gordy puts his lunch pail on top of the refrigerator.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICOLE (cont'd)
Was Tyler out there?

GORDY
Didn't see him.

NICOLE
He was going over to Aaron's house
after school to work on a project,
but I thought he'd be home by now.

This bothers Gordy.

GORDY
Why did they have to go over there?
They could work here just as easily.

NICOLE
I'm sure it's okay. He knows not to
eat or drink anything while he's over
there. Really. He only eats what we
give him here.

GORDY
You think so? Sometimes I'm not so
sure.

Gordy takes a glass from the cabinet and fills it from the
kitchen tap. Starts to drink and then holds the glass up to
the light and squints at the contents before drinking.

NICOLE
He's a teenager, that's all. To him
it's all about what his friends think
right now.

GORDY
Yeah, and his friends all think his
old man is a nutjob.

NICOLE
Now that's not true. Oh, I went by
that office supply place you looked
up online but they didn't have the
printer ribbons you're looking for.
The kid there said even if they had
any left in stock it would be cheaper
to buy a new printer. But you knew
that already.

GORDY
I'll see if I can find another
source.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GORDY (cont'd)

There are plenty of people selling them on the black market websites but they want an arm and a leg. I just thought we could find some old dead stock on a shelf somewhere.

NICOLE

What about a newer printer? Maybe not a brand new one, but one a little newer than the one we have?

GORDY

I'll have to check the list of what's considered safe. The problem is that Kymira Corporation has been making chips for well over a decade and the lists of safe electronic devices aren't all that accurate when it comes to things like printers.

NICOLE

Does it really matter that much with a printer? I mean I can see why you wouldn't want something like a phone or a computer that might have more chips and stuff, but what harm could a printer do?

GORDY

What harm?

She sees her mis-step.

NICOLE

It's not that-- I mean, I know you said it's not just one thing, that it could be a combination of things, but... It-it's not like I don't believe--

Gordy just smiles tiredly and shakes his head. This is old ground they've covered before.

GORDY

No, that's okay. Really. I'll be in the bedroom.

Turns away and starts toward the hallway.

GORDY (cont'd)

Maybe Tyler's friends are right. Maybe I am a nutjob.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

NICOLE

Gordy!

He stops and turns back around to face her.

NICOLE (cont'd)

You know I didn't mean it that way.
It all seems perfectly plausible to
me.

He crosses to her and gives her a kiss.

GORDY

Your nutjob will be in the bedroom
contacting the mother ship.

INT. GORDY AND NICOLE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Gordy sits at a small desk crowded with a decades-old boxy
computer monitor and keyboard.

He pulls up a Tor browser screen and logs onto the dark web,
then through several other levels of login screens until he
finally comes to one with only two words: "Logan Parker"

He clicks on the name and another login box appears and once
he logs in, a video viewer window opens up. Gordy presses
the 'play' symbol on the video player and we see LOGAN
PARKER sitting at a desk that has been set up in an attempt
to replicate a newscaster's desk.

Only the background is lit, leaving Logan in shadows,
obscuring his identity. When he speaks his voice shifts in
timbre, as if it is being altered electronically.

LOGAN

Welcome back, friends. If you've
found your way here to this video
then you already know at least a
little bit about Kymira Corporation
and their relentless push to inundate
our daily existence with their
products and with products based on
raw materials they provide to other
companies.

Behind Logan a large graphic appears, combining the words
'BE' and 'AWARE' that merge together to overlap and spell
out 'BEWARE'.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOGAN (cont'd)

You may have already begun to read the labels on your foods, or to research the items that fill store shelves to trace their connections back to Kymira Corporation. You may have wondered why...

A series of pulp journalism graphics appear in rapid fire behind Logan, depicting the explosive rise of Kymira Corporation and its leader BENNETT COATES.

LOGAN (cont'd)

...and how one company that nobody had even heard of ten years ago has grown its influence over the design and manufacture of so many different types of products that so many people use every day. Well, keep listening my friends and we'll explore the truth about Kymira Corporation together and their connection to the so-called miracle drugs Concentral and Rejoynix that are turning people into zombies who do nothing but work like robots for those in power...

The phone rings in another part of the house.

LOGAN (cont'd)

...but to really understand Kymira Corporation, you have to know about its leader, Bennett Coates.

Nicole pushes the bedroom door open.

NICOLE

There's somebody on the phone for you. They said it's about your dad.

The last person Gordy would expect to be contacted about.

GORDY

My dad?

INT KITCHEN - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Gordy picks up receiver of the vintage 1960's wall-mounted phone. As he talks, teenaged TYLER FRANKLIN arrives home.

GORDY

Hello?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nicole is working on dinner as she tries to listen in on Gordy.

TYLER
Sorry I'm late. We had to wait for
Aaron's brother to get home with the
laptop--

Nicole shushes him, focused on Gordy's conversation

GORDY
(Into phone)
So, is he going to be okay?

GORDY (cont'd)
Right. Yeah, let me get a pen.

Nicole scrambles to give him a notepad and pen. Gordy jots down a phone number.

GORDY (cont'd)
Okay, well thank you. Yes, I've got
it. And if anything changes, please
give me a call.

Gordy hangs up and starts back toward the bedroom.

NICOLE
Gordy?

TYLER
Who was that?

Gordy stops and weighs his answer.

GORDY
Um, just somebody from work.

NICOLE
Gordy. Shouldn't we talk about this?

TYLER
What? What's going on?

Gordy reluctantly returns to the kitchen.

GORDY
Okay. Tyler, there's something I need
to tell you.

TYLER
Who was on the phone?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Gordy looks apprehensively at Nicole.

GORDY

It was somebody from Carlsbad, New Mexico. My father is in the hospital there.

TYLER

Wait, your father? I thought he was dead.

GORDY

I know, but the truth is he isn't.

TYLER

But you told me he died years ago. I have a grandfather that's still alive that I never even met? What the hell?

NICOLE

Tyler!

TYLER

Why would you lie to me about something like that? This is bullshit.

NICOLE

That's enough Tyler!

GORDY

No, he's right. Tyler, you're right, I shouldn't have lied to you.

NICOLE

Your father and I--

GORDY

Just give me a second here--

This kind of communication isn't Gordy's strong suit.

GORDY (cont'd)

Tyler, it's hard to explain, but your grandfather and I haven't spoken since way before you were born.

TYLER

What do you mean? You had a fight, or what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GORDY

Well, lets put it this way. After my mother died, your grandfather started drinking and just never stopped. I left home as soon as I was able to. I honestly didn't even know if he was still alive or not.

TYLER

I don't get it. You just left him there and never looked back? Your own dad?

GORDY

It was complicated.

TYLER

Yeah, must have been. I guess it was a lot easier to forget about him than to try to figure it out.

NICOLE

Tyler! You will not speak to your father that way!

TYLER

Fair enough. I'll be in my room.

Tyler marches off down the hall and slams his bedroom door.

NICOLE

What did they say?

GORDY

Somebody found him wandering along the highway, disoriented and barely alive.

NICOLE

Why Carlsbad? I thought he was in Fortune?

GORDY

Carlsbad isn't far from Fortune. The nearest town with a hospital.

NICOLE

What are you going to do?

GORDY

I don't know. I swore I'd never go back there, and especially with what I know about Kymira Corporation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

NICOLE

You need to go. You've got to go.
He's your father, Gordy.

GORDY

I can't believe he's even still
alive.

NICOLE

Maybe this is like a second chance or
something.

GORDY

Going back there to rescue some old
drunk isn't going to bring my mother
back.

NICOLE

I didn't mean that.

GORDY

But that's what it comes down to
isn't it? My father crawled into the
bottle rather than confront Bennett
Coates about what happened to my
mother, and I always hated him for
it. But, I'm not any better. I just
packed my bags and moved away.

NICOLE

That's not how it was--

GORDY

That's exactly how it was. I was as
big a coward as he was. And, you know
what? I still am.

NICOLE

No, Gordy--

GORDY

It's true. The instant you told me
that phone call was about my father,
I was terrified. But, not terrified
that he was hurt or dead, but
terrified that whatever happened I
might have to go back to Fortune and
face Bennett Coates again.

From behind them...

TYLER

Then take me with you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

GORDY

Tyler--

TYLER

No, seriously. I've heard all about Bennett Coates and the stuff about Kymira Corporation being so evil and all, but it's just a bunch of shit--

NICOLE

Tyler!

TYLER

--and the fact that I don't believe any of it means I'm not afraid of this guy.

GORDY

I'm sorry son, but this is something--

TYLER

Dad. Just think about it. This is my only living grandfather and I've never even met him. Just think about it, okay?

END ACT TWO**ACT THREE**

INT. DIMLY-LIT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Silhouetted profile of a woman (50's) dressed in a nightgown, propped up in bed as she reads a paperback book.

A bedside lamp provides the only light in the room. On the bedside table the digital clock reads 11:59.

As the woman turns a page the clock display changes to 12:00, the radio automatically turns on and we hear the theme music for the MIDNIGHT TO DAWN DECLASSIFIED radio show.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A middle-aged store clerk plays online poker in an empty store as the same radio theme plays.

EXT. BUSY DENVER, COLORADO FREEWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Truckers and taxicabs dominate the traffic this late at night.

DEAN DIXON (PRE-LAP)

Good Thursday morning, my friends. If you're out there tuning around on your radio dial and you happened upon our program, let me welcome you to Midnight to Dawn Declassified, where we delve into the weird, the mysterious, the sinister and the unexplained.

INT. MIDNIGHT TO DAWN DECLASSIFIED STUDIOS - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Inside the windows of a radio broadcast booth, DEAN DIXON (60's) sits across the desk from JEFF WADE (33). Both are wearing headphones.

DEAN DIXON

I'm your host, Dean Dixon and in this hour of the program I'm very pleased to welcome back one of the most well-known and widely-read figures in modern UFO abduction research. Jeff Wade's book "Visitations", which tells the story of his first visits from extraterrestrials when he was just a teenager in Missouri, continues to be a bestseller in the M-2-D-2 online bookstore, and has been translated into thirteen foreign languages.

Dean leans forward with his finger on a button.

DEAN DIXON (cont'd)

And we'll be right back to get into the latest developments on UFO abductions with Jeff Wade after these messages.

Dean presses the button and he and Jeff remove their headphones as recorded ads begin to play over the studio monitors.

DEAN DIXON (cont'd)

Good to see you, man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFF

Good to see you too. You finally lost the mustache. Was that recent?

DEAN DIXON

Oh, I guess it's been a couple of months. Got tired of keeping the damn thing trimmed. Plus, it was turning white so I was starting to look like Mark Twain.

JEFF

Time marches on. I'm even getting a little gray myself.

DEAN DIXON

Yeah, but you could always blame yours on those experiments the aliens did on you.

JEFF

Yeah, I guess.

DEAN DIXON

Hey, are we gonna be able to work out some kind of appearance together at the MUFON Symposium in August?

JEFF

I don't know. They're still working out the schedule, so I don't know when I'll be speaking yet, and I'm supposed to do some book signings around the area while I'm down there.

DEAN DIXON

Well, I sure hope we can get together while we're there. So, what else have you got going on these days?

JEFF

Oh, not much. After I leave here I'm headed south into New Mexico. The UFO Festival at Roswell starts tomorrow.

DEAN DIXON

Yeah, you can't miss Roswell.

JEFF

You know it's kind of cheesy the way they have it set up. But I tell you what, I sell a hell of a lot of books in Roswell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEAN DIXON
That's where it all started, brother.

JEFF
The mother lode.

DEAN DIXON
Without Roswell I'd be stuck playing
hillbilly music on a local station in
Podunk Hollow somewhere.

JEFF
Yeah, Roswell's been good to both of
us.

DEAN DIXON
So, you're in your car, right?

JEFF
Yeah. I'll be driving down there.

DEAN DIXON
You'll be passing right by Taos. You
gonna stop in and see Grayson?

JEFF
I hadn't thought about it. But yeah,
maybe so.

DEAN DIXON
I'm sure he'd love to see his little
protege all grown up now. Man! I'd
love for him to come out of
retirement and come on the show. That
would be epic!

JEFF
It would, but I heard his health
isn't that good anymore.

Dean picks up his headphones again.

DEAN DIXON
Well, hey. A guy can dream, right.
Okay, we're back live in fifteen.

EXT. FRANKLIN HOME DRIVEWAY - DAY

Gordy and Tyler work on the VW bug, its canvas cover lying
to the side in the grass.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gordy is on his knees beside the open driver's door and working on the wiring underneath the dashboard. Tyler watches and holds a flashlight.

GORDY

I think this green wire is supposed to be connected over here, but it looks like it came loose. We'll need to solder it back. Why don't you go get that soldering gun on the shelf in the laundry room. And, we'll need the long extension cord too.

Tyler heads inside as Gordy uncoils himself from beneath the steering wheel and sits on the driveway resting.

INT. FRANKLIN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tyler comes through the kitchen from the laundry room, carrying a soldering gun kit with a coil of extension cord draped over one shoulder, and as he does, the phone rings.

Tyler unloads on the kitchen bar and picks up the receiver.

TYLER

(into phone)

Hello?

INT. BENNETT COATE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

BENNETT

(into phone)

Hello? Is this Tyler?

INTERCUTTING BETWEEN BENNETT COATES' OFFICE AND FRANKLIN KITCHEN

TYLER

(into phone)

Yeah. Who is this?

BENNETT

(into phone)

Tyler, my name is Bennett Coates and I'm really excited to get to talk to you. I've known your father and grandfather since I was a little boy. Does your dad ever talk about growing up in Fortune?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYLER
 (into phone)
 No, not really.

BENNETT
 (into phone)
 Well, the reason I'm calling is to let you know that we're taking good care of Grandpa here at the Kymira Corporation's state-of-the-art medical facilities.

TYLER
 (into phone)
 Hang on, let me get my dad.

BENNETT
 (into phone)
 Oh no, that's okay Tyler. Just let him know that we transferred your grandfather here so we can take better care of him. And, I'm really hoping your dad will bring you here for a visit real soon.

TYLER
 (into phone)
 But wait--

BENNETT
 (into phone)
 Bye now. See you soon, I hope.

INT. BENNETT COATES' OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Bennett smiles to himself as he finishes the call. Bennett's protege, HOLLY POLLARD (27) sits across the desk from him, watching. She bears an uncanny resemblance to Bennett.

HOLLY
 I don't get it. I understand why you wanted the old man. To find out what makes him different from other people, but why do you need the son and grandson?

BENNETT
 As I've told you for many years, the time is coming when the human race will take its next step in the evolutionary process.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY

The Merge.

BENNETT

Yes, the Merge. But, as you know, not every human being is biologically ready for the Merge. Some are more resistant to the changes that must take place within their DNA for the Merge to succeed without complications. Your own DNA resists the changes, as did your mother's.

He stands and walks to the window.

BENNETT (cont'd)

We've made some progress by analyzing the old man, but we need access to Gordy and Tyler to see how their DNA reacts to our processes.

HOLLY

But, we're making progress, right?

BENNETT

We are. So much so that I think it may be time to begin slowly revealing information about the Merge and what it will mean for mankind. The general public needs to begin to explore the idea of a merger of all human consciousness. To begin to understand the benefit of such an event.

HOLLY

But how do you even begin to tell people what's coming without starting some kind of global panic?

BENNETT

I don't know. I just don't know.

INT. FRANKLIN KITCHEN - DAY - LATER

Gordy and Tyler come in carrying bags of groceries while Nicole empties the bags and puts things away.

TYLER

I don't see what the big deal is. We just go out there and visit him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GORDY

Well, it is a big deal. This is what they do. Kymira Corporation. They take over things. Listen, Tyler, I know it was wrong to never tell you about my dad. But—

Gordy gets an idea, and exits the kitchen.

NICOLE

So he said they moved him from the hospital in Carlsbad back to Fortune? Where Kymira Corporation is?

TYLER

Yeah. He said it was a nice place. State-of-the-art.

Gordy comes back carrying a worn accordion file folder. He sets it on the bar and begins digging through the compartments inside.

GORDY

They're just getting control of the situation. Who knows what really happened to Dad.

NICOLE

Maybe it's for legal reasons. You said Kymira owns all of the land for miles and miles. If anything happened to your dad it was probably on their land. Maybe it's their lawyers trying to cover their butts.

Gordy's found what he's looking for in the file. He pulls out an envelope of old photographs and quickly sorts through them, finally holding out a photo with curled edges.

GORDY

Okay, Tyler. This is your grandfather.

Tyler takes the photo and studies it. The photograph shows a forty-five year old Norman Franklin with a six-year-old Gordy astride a shiny new bicycle.

TYLER

Holy crap, is that you when you were a little kid?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GORDY

Yeah, that's the bike I got for Christmas that year.

TYLER

Sweet! So that's my grandfather, huh?

GORDY

That's him.

TYLER

Listen, Dad. If you're not cool with him being there in Fortune, then why don't we just drive down there and bring him back to L.A.?

GORDY

That would be exactly what Bennett Coates wants. He wouldn't call here unless he was trying to get me to come back to Fortune, where he can control the situation.

TYLER

To tell you the truth, he sounded like a nice, normal, polite kind of guy. Nothing like how Logan Parker describes him.

GORDY

How do you know so much about Logan Parker?

TYLER

It's no big secret. It's on the internet, Dad.

GORDY

Show me. But first we need to finish with the bug.

EXT. FRANKLIN HOME - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Down the block from the Franklin home a car sits parked at the curb. The windows are rolled up, and inside A MAN and A WOMAN appear to be having a spirited conversation.

Gordy and Tyler come out of the house and begin picking up their tools and putting the canvas cover back over the VW.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The man and woman in the car continue to converse, but as we move closer we notice they are taking turns stealing glances at the Franklin home.

INT. OBSERVING COUPLE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The inside of the vehicle is quiet except for the low hum of the car's engine and air conditioner.

The couple's movements are just as animated as before, but inside the car it becomes apparent that no sounds are coming from their moving mouths.

Moving closer to the observers.

Something odd about their eyes.

Close enough to reveal the irises of their eyes, which start an odd shade of lavender and slowly cycle through a range of colors not normally observed in the human eye, but exactly like the colors exhibited by the substance in the Skippy peanut butter jar in Bennett Coates' possession.

EXT. NEAR VENICE BEACH - DAY

Gordy pulls into a parking space and gets out of his car. He pulls a piece of folded paper out and checks his location with a street sign before walking toward the beach.

EXT. VENICE BEACH SURF SHOP - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Gordy steps up to an open-front surf shop tentatively, and talks to an attendant. The young male attendant steps out of the surf shop and points toward the ocean. Gordy follows his directions and starts walking toward the water, focused on a male surfer skillfully navigating the waves.

As Gordy gets closer to the edge of the water, an attractive but menacing young woman with GREEN HAIR runs up from behind, steps in front of him, and puts a hand on his chest to stop him. Gordy listens as she talks, glancing toward the water and shaking his head. He argues, but Green Hair stands her ground.

Reluctantly, Gordy finally begins taking his shirt off. Then his shoes and socks. He looks at her one last time before shaking his head in resignation and dropping his pants in the sand, reduced to his patterned boxer-briefs. Satisfied, Green Hair steps aside and starts back toward the surf shop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXT. VENICE BEACH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

As Gordy approaches the surf, still wearing only boxer-briefs, Logan Parker wades out of the waves, dragging a surfboard behind him.

LOGAN
Gordy?

GORDY
Yeah! You Logan?

Logan holds up a hand.

LOGAN
Just hold up there for a second if
you don't mind.

Gordy stops in his tracks, standing there pale and exposed in his underwear, as Logan walks a few steps closer and then stops, turns toward the surf shop, inserts his thumb and middle finger into his mouth and gives a loud whistle.

A few seconds later Green Hair comes running up, looking annoyed. She stops and looks at Logan, who nods toward Gordy. She looks at Gordy and then back at Logan.

GREEN HAIR
Really?

LOGAN
Safety first.

Green Hair rolls her eyes and quickly steps over to Gordy. Before he can react she grabs the waistband of his boxer-briefs with one hand and plunges her other hand down inside, first in the front and then in the rear.

It's over within five seconds and Green Hair turns to Logan with venom in her eyes. Logan digs into the waistband of his board shorts and pulls out a soggy folded hundred, which he holds up between two fingers. Green Hair scowls and snatches the bill before stalking away.

Logan turns to Gordy.

LOGAN (cont'd)
Sorry, bud. I gotta take precautions.

INT. LOGAN'S STUDIO - DAY

Logan and Gordy sit at a wooden picnic table in a room off the back of the surf shop. Gordy is once again dressed.

In one corner, a video camera on a tripod is pointed at a desk flanked by a large green screen.

Surfboards lean against the walls and a well-used beach cruiser bicycle is parked to one side.

Logan picks at a takeout sushi container with chopsticks.

LOGAN

You sure you don't want some? I really, really trust these guys as far as the ingredients and what-not.

GORDY

No, thanks. So, what do you think?

LOGAN

Okay, so let me see if I follow. Kymira's people snatched your dad and are what, holding him hostage?

GORDY

I know it sounds far-fetched.

LOGAN

Not for Kymira Corporation it doesn't. But, you're here because you want me to go to Fortune, New Mexico, march into the jaws of Kymira Corporation and demand they release him?

GORDY

You're always talking about how evil they are and how we have to resist them.

LOGAN

Correct. YOU need to resist them. This is your problem, dude. It's your father. You need to man up and go get him yourself.

GORDY

I can't.

LOGAN

What do you mean you can't?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gordy stands and begins pacing.

GORDY

I just can't. What about Logan's Army, as you call it. All of those people that listen to your broadcasts? The resistance movement against Kymira Corporation.

LOGAN

Mostly shut-ins and conspiracy freaks. Some of them are so far out there they'll believe anything.

GORDY

Come on. This gives you the perfect opportunity to confront Kymira about something concrete.

LOGAN

Sorry, bud. This is your fight.

GORDY

Please. I really need your help with this. Give me one good reason you can't.

Logan thinks about it and then stands and closes the door to the surf shop before answering.

LOGAN

(quietly)

I can't do it because I don't drive.

GORDY

What? This is L.A. Everybody drives.

EXT. NEW MEXICO DESERT SOUTH OF TAOS - DAY

GRAYSON BLACKHEART (81) sits in a wooden rocking chair on the front porch of an old cabin, reading a book. He looks up and watches the dust cloud raised by a car headed down the dirt road that leads to his cabin.

INT. JEFF WADE'S CAR - DAY

The approaching visitor is Jeff Wade. He smiles when he spots Grayson on the porch and carefully avoids running over a wandering chicken as he parks the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jeff parks, gets out of the car and stretches before walking up to the porch and embracing Grayson. They head into the cabin.

INT. GRAYSON BLACKHEART'S CABIN - NIGHT

The cabin is decorated with an eclectic mixture of African and Native American art. Indian blankets cover rustic furniture pieces. A fire burns in the fireplace.

Grayson and Jeff sit at a weathered wooden table with a bottle of scotch and half-empty glasses. The conversation has played out and they've done their catching up.

Jeff toys with his drink glass and glances up at the old man.

JEFF

How did you know when it was time to do something else?

GRAYSON

Humph. That's easy, when the ratings slid and they fired me.

JEFF

But, you could have taken your show anywhere. Or, gotten a syndication deal on your own.

GRAYSON

I don't know. Hell, I'd like to say that I already saw radio dying back then, but I didn't.

JEFF

But there are still a lot of people interested in UFO's and the paranormal. And there's nobody who did more to create an industry around that than you.

GRAYSON

Yeah, but it's all so scattered nowadays. People have so many other sources to get information from. You've got YouTube and blogs and websites and streaming podcasts. One guy can't really stand out and dominate a subject like you could twenty or thirty years ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFF

But then you've got the convention circuit today that didn't really exist back then.

GRAYSON

And that's good for a guy like you, who's got a story to peddle. But all I ever really did was find people like you and draw people's attention to you. Give you a platform to tell your story. There's all sorts of ways to get your story out there today.

GRAYSON (cont'd)

What's this all about, anyway? What's going on?

JEFF

I don't know. I just don't feel like I've got what it takes to do this anymore. Maybe I'm losing my ability to lie to people with a straight face.

GRAYSON

It's always been my experience that the audience is pretty good about sniffing out a bad liar, and letting them know by ignoring them. If you're still keeping their attention then you must be doing okay.

JEFF

Last night, on Dean Dixon's show, this woman called in. And, she started relating how aliens used to come into her room at night and do all sorts of things to her. And of course Dean was just eating it up, asking her if she saw any lights in the sky or crop circles nearby. And I'm sitting there thinking this poor woman needs some serious psychiatric help. Either she's totally imagining things or she was so horribly abused by some family member that she's made up this entire alien story as a coping mechanism of some kind.

GRAYSON

So, you don't think she could have just made it up to get attention.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JEFF

What?

GRAYSON

Like you did. You don't think you've got a monopoly on making up stories do you?

JEFF

Hmmm. Well, no.

GRAYSON

You just don't respect your audience enough to think they might be as creative as you were back when you were a teenager.

JEFF

(gestures towards
Grayson)

Yeah, but I was guided by the best.

GRAYSON

Oh, no. All I did was give you a few pointers about connecting with the audience and leaving a few things open to interpretation. Basic marketing, really. I seem to recall that you halfway believed your own story back then. You still thought there might be something to the stories about UFO sightings and alien abductions, even if yours was based on a foggy recollection that might have only been a dream. You still believed there was some mystery to solve.

JEFF

I did believe. For a long time. I can't even say when I stopped believing, but it was a long time ago.

GRAYSON

Maybe your life would be easier if you could get some of that mystery back.

JEFF

No doubt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GRAYSON

Let me ask you something. How much do you know about Kymira Corporation?

JEFF

Not much. They make a bunch of stuff. And some people think they're evil. But that applies to about every other major corporation today, doesn't it?

GRAYSON

It does. But, Kymira Corporation is different and the people who think it's evil are different too. Oh, some of the information you see out there is focused on the fact that they indeed are a massively powerful corporation and subject to the same resentment that gets applied to big oil or to big drug companies. But, there is an underground movement against Kymira Corporation unlike anything I've ever seen.

JEFF

What do you mean?

GRAYSON

Well, most of it takes place on the dark web. Are you familiar with the term?

JEFF

A little bit. I read an article about it a while back.

GRAYSON

All I can say is that if you're looking to put some of that mystery back into your life, you should really check out Kymira Corporation and this underground resistance movement. It could give you a new direction to take things.

JEFF

Well, I could use a new direction.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

GRAYSON

Let's face it. The UFO phenomenon has been mined to death, and with computers it's so easy to come up with fake UFO footage that people are a lot harder to dazzle than they used to be. But Kymira Corporation's products are all around us, so if you can figure out a way to tap into the paranoia about Kymira you might be able to create a whole new income stream for yourself.

INT. FRANKLIN LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gordy carries in a box of canned food and sets it down beside another box and suitcase next to the front door. He turns to find Tyler leaning in a doorway watching him.

TYLER

I can't believe you won't let me go with you. It just isn't fair.

GORDY

I'm sorry, son, but we talked about this. I need you to stay here and help your mother. If things work out I might be able to get your grandad transferred someplace nearby and you can visit him then.

Nicole comes in carrying another box of food.

GORDY (cont'd)

Okay, that should be plenty. I won't be gone that long.

NICOLE

Well just promise me you'll stop and buy something if you need it. You've got the safe groceries list, don't you?

GORDY

I do. Tyler, help me get this stuff to the car.

EXT. GRAYSON BLACKHEART'S HOUSE - DAY

The cabin door opens and Jeff Wade steps out onto the porch carrying a small duffel bag. Grayson follows him out and they talk for a bit before shaking hands.

Then, Jeff gets in his car and pulls away from the cabin.

Grayson stands on the porch watching the car drive away. He pulls out a cell phone and punches in a number.

GRAYSON
(into phone)
Yes, Bennett Coates, please.

GRAYSON (cont'd)
(into phone)
Bennett! How are you? Oh, fine, just fine. Listen, I was just talking with someone that I think you might find useful.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. LOS ANGELES FREEWAY - DAY

Heavy traffic moving east as Gordy's car comes into view in the distance.

INT. GORDY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Gordy drives with both hands on the wheel, his face fixed in determination. He drives in silence for a few seconds before...

LOGAN
I would offer to take turns with the driving, but--

GORDY
But, you don't drive. Yeah, you told me already. It's okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOGAN

I don't need to drive, see? I've got everything I need within a few blocks, and I can get anywhere I need to go on my bicycle or a skateboard.

GORDY

I've got to tell you, you're nothing like you come off in your videos.

LOGAN

What do you mean?

GORDY

I don't know. Maybe I wasn't expecting some aging surfer dude living at the beach and riding a bicycle around to pick up sushi or buy more rolling papers.

LOGAN

I don't use rolling papers.

GORDY

I mean I guess I pictured somebody who was serious about going up against Kymira Corporation to try to stop them from whatever it is they're trying to do.

LOGAN

I'm not even sure anybody can stop them after what they've achieved so far.

GORDY

But, are enough people listening to what you're saying for us to even have a chance? You said yourself that your audience is made up of conspiracy nuts and people who don't have anything better to focus on.

LOGAN

Well if you just look at the volume of goods moving on the black market you can see that a lot of people are looking for products that they know Kymira Corporation hasn't tainted. People are getting the message.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GORDY

I hope so. If people knew what I know about Bennett Coates from personal experience they would be terrified of what he might be doing. I guess I was just hoping you would be more like the leader you act like online.

LOGAN

Listen, Gordy. I know I come across different in my videos, but I need to. Otherwise people wouldn't listen to me. They'd look at me and see-- what'd you call me--an aging surfer dude?

LOGAN (cont'd)

I know the real me doesn't instill the kind of confidence needed for something as serious as reporting on Kymira, so I dress and act a little differently in my videos. But, I'm still just as committed to warning people about Kymira and trying to figure out how to stop them as the guy you first saw on your computer screen.

GORDY

But, how do we stop them?

LOGAN

By not letting them gain control.

GORDY

Gain control. Of what, the government?

LOGAN

Everything. You. Me. All of this.

GORDY

I don't know. Sometimes you talk in circles without ever really giving any answers about how we can fight back. How is it you think Kymira Corporation is taking control?

LOGAN

They do it one person at a time, in tiny incremental steps.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LOGAN (cont'd)

I don't know exactly how it works, but my theory is that they gain control starting on a cellular level. Maybe one of their food additives changes brain cells just slightly. And then an ingredient they created for the room freshener we use makes another tiny change when we breathe it in. And then the microchips they produce get put into our appliances and emit some kind of waveform that helps the change along. It's the cumulative effect of all these little atomic level changes that add up to Kymira gaining control of things.

GORDY

But what can we really do about it? Besides try to resist exposure to all of those things?

Logan stares at him blankly.

LOGAN

I don't know. I don't know if there's anything we can do.

INT. AARON MCPHERSON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tyler Franklin and his friend AARON MCPHERSON are huddled around Aaron's laptop computer. Tyler controls the keyboard as Aaron watches.

AARON

Are you sure it isn't Carlsbad, California?

TYLER

No, it's New Mexico. Kymira Corporation is in New Mexico. Fortune, New Mexico. It doesn't really show up on the map until you really zoom way in, but it's sorta close to Carlsbad, New Mexico, so I'm sure this is it.

AARON

So, how many miles?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYLER

About nine-hundred and fifty,
depending on the route.

AARON

I dunno, Tyler. It sounds crazy to
me. What if you get stopped by the
cops along the way? Or, what if the
car breaks down?

TYLER

I told you, it'll be fine. No big
deal.

AARON

Your dad is gonna kill you. And your
mom will probably help him.

TYLER

He should have listened when I tried
to get him to let me go with him. He
knows it isn't fair to leave me
behind.

EXT. INTERNATIONAL UFO MUSEUM - ROSWELL UFO FESTIVAL - DAY

The festival is in full swing and the street is filled with
creatively costumed aliens and vacationing families. Vendors
are set up in the center of the street selling T-shirts,
alien masks, and all sorts of UFO-related paraphernalia.

Jeff Wade is sitting at one of a group of portable tables
set up on the sidewalk outside the International UFO Museum,
eating lunch from a Styrofoam box.

Jeff's table has neat stacks of his books and a stand-up
advertising placard.

The other tables are filled with various books, DVD's and
other items for sale, and manned by other featured speakers
at the festival.

Jeff concentrates on his eating while the crowd mostly
drifts by the book tables without pausing.

Holly Pollard approaches Jeff's table just as he is closing
the Styrofoam container and putting it away. She's dressed
very attractively in shorts and a T-shirt, with a pair of
alien antennae on her head.

JEFF

Hi!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY
Hi, I heard you speak earlier.

JEFF
Oh, you did?

HOLLY
Your story is amazing. I've heard about you before. I was hoping you'd sign a book for me.

JEFF
Of course.

Holly picks up a copy of one of Jeff's books and hands it to him.

JEFF (cont'd)
Who should I make it out to?

HOLLY
Make it out to Holly Pollard. That's me.

JEFF
Holly Pollard.

As he starts to sign, he glances up and pauses when he notices her T-shirt.

It features a design modeled after the UFO poster on Fox Mulder's office wall from the TV show The X-Files. It shows a flying saucer above a group of trees. But, instead of the familiar words "I WANT TO BELIEVE", it reads: "THE TRUTH ABOUT KYMIRA CORPORATION IS OUT THERE".

JEFF (cont'd)
Kymira, huh? I keep hearing about them.

HOLLY
Really? What are you hearing?

JEFF
That the truth about them is out there somewhere.

HOLLY
It is. Somewhere. If you know where to look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JEFF

And, do you know where I should look,
Holly Pollard?

HOLLY

I do.

He finishes signing and holds the book out to her.

HOLLY (cont'd)

I can show you if you're interested.

INT. GORDY'S CAR - NIGHT

It's late and traffic in the Arizona desert is lighter than
it was in L.A. during daylight hours.

LOGAN

You haven't really told me about your
history with Bennett Coates.

Gordy is quiet for a few seconds before he answers.

GORDY

Like I said, I grew up in Fortune.
Back before there even was a Kymira
Corporation. When I was a teenager,
Bennett Coates bought a bankrupt
oilfield chemicals company that he
ran out of an old metal shop building
not far from where we lived. At that
time, oil prices were down and when
oil prices are down the work around
Fortune dries up. It's always been
that way. Boom and bust. When oil
doesn't sell for enough per barrel to
make it worthwhile to drill for it,
the activity in the oilfield comes to
a screeching halt. But this time,
when the oilfield slowed down,
Bennett Coates' company just kept
chugging right along, hiring more
people all the time.

LOGAN

But, I thought you said it was an
oilfield chemicals company?

GORDY

It was. Or, at least that was what
the company was making before Bennett
took it over.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GORDY (cont'd)

Afterwards? I don't know. He put up a big fence with razor wire around the building, and it had a locked gate to keep out everybody but the employees. The people who went to work there wouldn't talk about what went on inside.

LOGAN

How many people worked there?

GORDY

Oh, I don't know. Probably around a dozen. You've got to remember there weren't very many people who actually lived in Fortune. During the oil booms there would be companies who had operations with offices in Fortune, but the people who worked in them mostly lived in nearby towns and drove in to work every day.

LOGAN

It sounds like Bennett Coates' company hired a pretty sizable chunk of the local labor force.

GORDY

Yeah, it did. And a lot of the people who went to work for him seemed to change.

LOGAN

What do you mean?

GORDY

Well, it was like they lost all of their personality when they went to work there. Maybe not to the extreme that you've described in your broadcasts, but they just seemed to be, I don't know. Duller? Emotionless?

Logan nods along as he listens. He's heard this described before.

LOGAN

I hear you, man. So, did you ever try to get a job there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GORDY

No, I was still pretty young when all this was taking place, and I had to help out around the diner my dad operated.

EXT. HAMBONE'S CAFE - DAY

We're outside Hambone's Cafe during Gordy's teenage years. There are only two cars parked in front of the cafe, and the highway is quiet.

GORDY (V.O.)

My mom worked at the cafe too, but when the oilfield slowed down the business at the cafe fell off to nothing. There weren't any oilfield crews coming to town, and the people who went to work for Bennett Coates stopped eating in the cafe. Mom decided to get a job at Coates Chemco, which is what Bennett Coates called his company.

EXT. COATES CHEMCO BUILDING - DAY

EVELYN FRANKLIN (48) pulls up and parks in the dirt parking lot that sits outside the fence surrounding the corrugated metal building that houses Coates Chemco. She walks tentatively toward the locked gate as Bennett Coates (at age 27) exits the metal building and meets her from the other side of the gate. He unlocks the gate and ushers her in. He appears to be giving her an orientation talk as they walk toward the building.

GORDY (V.O.)

She only spent one day inside that building. And she never did talk about what happened or what she saw inside.

EXT. COATES CHEMCO BUILDING - NIGHT

A dazed Evelyn Coates slowly walks away from the gate to her car.

GORDY (V.O.)

But, she never went back. And, whatever she saw while she was inside there changed something in her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXT. HAMBONE'S CAFE - DAY

The area surrounding the cafe is quiet and deserted. Then there is the low growl of a diesel engine as a big rig truck shifts through its lower gears, picking up speed as it nears the cafe.

GORDY (V.O.)

It was less than a week after that
when she...

Suddenly, the door to Hambone's Cafe flies open and Evelyn Franklin strides out, wearing an apron that she removes as she walks. She drops the apron on the dirt parking lot as she marches toward the highway that runs in front of the cafe, her arrival on the asphalt perfectly timed with the approach of the now-speeding big rig.

GORDY (V.O.) (cont'd)

...walked in front of a truck.

INT. HAMBONE'S CAFE - CONTINUOUS

NORMAN FRANKLIN, Gordy's father stands in the kitchen and watches in horror through the pass-through opening at the scene unfolding beyond the cafe's front window as the big rig's tires shriek and its horn gives a lengthy blast.

INT. DENNY'S CAFE - ROSWELL, NEW MEXICO - NIGHT

Another truck horn blast, this one on Main Street, outside the Denny's Cafe in the middle of the UFO Festival activities.

Jeff Wade sits across from Holly Pollard as a waitress approaches and delivers their food.

JEFF

So, you're a reporter?

HOLLY

Yeah. Mostly freelance, but right now I'm out here on assignment for Wired Magazine.

JEFF

What, another story about the 1947
UFO crash?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY

No, it's a story about Kymira Corporation. The company headquarters is only a couple of hours away, and when I found out the UFO Festival was taking place I couldn't resist stopping over to take it in.

JEFF

There are some pretty wild conspiracy theories about Kymira and their involvement in the manufacturing process of so many other companies' products. And, they're so secretive. I didn't think they even allowed the press to visit any of their locations. Are you going in there undercover?

HOLLY

No, Bennett Coates actually reached out to Wired and said he would like to do an in-depth interview. I guess maybe he's decided it's time to quash some of the rumors about the Company.

JEFF

Well, I say it's about time. It seems like an entire industry has grown up around stoking people's fears of some kind of mysterious plot to take over the world. If so many companies are using Kymira to help make their products better, then they must be doing something right.

EXT. JEFF WADE'S HOTEL ROOM - ROSWELL - DAY

The door to Jeff Wade's hotel room opens and Holly Pollard emerges first, still dressed in the same clothes she was wearing at the UFO Festival, but with her hair pinned back.

Jeff follows, wheeling his suitcase and loading it into the back of his car beside several cases of his books.

Holly unlocks the car parked next to Jeff's and drops her purse in the passenger seat and then meets him at the back of his car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY

Okay, follow me. I'm at the Holiday Inn. It's out on North Main. I'll just grab a quick shower and change and then we can get on the road. We're only a couple of hours away.

JEFF

So, you really don't mind me tagging along?

HOLLY

No, I'd love the company. I honestly don't know what to expect once we get there. My editor just said that Bennett Coates was willing to do a sit-down interview, which is something he's never done before.

JEFF

Okay, if you really don't mind.

HOLLY

Jeff. I really don't mind. Honest

JEFF

Well, if you're sure. And thank you for inviting me. People are always telling me that I need to shake things up. I guess I just need a little push now and then.

She smiles and then reaches out and gives him a slight push as they share a laugh.

EXT. HIGHWAY OUTSIDE FORTUNE, NEW MEXICO - DAY

The highway leading to Fortune is a narrow, two-lane blacktop surrounded by desert covered in low mesquite bushes and dry prairie grasses.

The back side of a large billboard sits beside the highway as Gordy's car comes into view and approaches. The car slows and pulls to the shoulder.

From Gordy and Logan's point of view we see that the billboard has an image of several smiling men and women wearing lab coats and protective eyewear as they examine beakers of colorful liquids.

And, lettered above the smiling scientists the message:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

"We're changing things... For the better!"

And in smaller letters: "Kymira Corporation"

Gordy pulls out his phone and checks it.

GORDY

I need to check in with Nicole to let her know we got here.

He fiddles with his phone and holds it up several different directions.

GORDY (cont'd)

I'm not getting a signal. Can you try yours?

LOGAN

What? Oh, I don't carry a phone. They're too easy to track.

GORDY

Great.

He puts the car in gear and pulls back onto the highway.

EXT. FORTUNE, NEW MEXICO - DAY

The modern-day Fortune looks like someone took a polished, modern west coast tech company campus and plopped it down in the middle of the scrubby New Mexico desert.

As Gordy and Logan slowly roll through on the highway, Gordy spots the only feature he recognizes: Hambone's Cafe, which looks like a brand-new retro version of the old cafe that Gordy's father operated decades earlier.

Through the front windows of the cafe, diners appear to be eating and holding conversations with each other.

Shifting to a point of view inside the cafe, the only sound is the steady rhythmic thump of a ceiling fan, even though the mouths of the patrons continue to mimic the motions of normal conversation.

Once Gordy's car has rolled past the front windows and out of sight, the diners' animated movements cease and their faces lose all expression.

INT. FRANKLIN HOME - DAY

Nicole Franklin stands at the living room window, holding the corded telephone receiver as she looks out at the empty space beside the driveway where the Volkswagen was parked. The canvas tarp lies to one side.

NICOLE

(into phone)

No, that's okay. I just thought that maybe your phone might be able to reach him better than this one.

NICOLE (cont'd)

Well, I talked to him last night, but that was before Tyler left.

NICOLE (cont'd)

I don't know. They had a big fight before Gordy left and I guess Tyler decided he would just follow Gordy out to New Mexico.

NICOLE (cont'd)

Okay, I will. Thank you.

INT. RECEPTION AREA OUTSIDE BENNETT COATES' OFFICE - DAY

Holly and Jeff stand at a wall of windows near a reception desk, talking quietly. Behind them, a RECEPTIONIST is talking on the phone.

HOLLY

It will be fine. I'll just introduce you and if he's not cool with you staying, then you can wait out here until I'm finished.

JEFF

Okay. I just didn't want to mess up your chance to get an interview since he wasn't expecting me to come along.

The receptionist hangs up the receiver and turns to them.

RECEPTIONIST

You can go in. Mr. Coates will see you now.

INT. BENNETT COATES' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Holly and Jeff enter the office as Bennett stands from behind his desk and walks to greet them. Holly steps up to Bennett, who embraces her and gives her a kiss on the cheek.

BENNETT

Holly! I trust you had an enjoyable journey.

HOLLY

Very much so. I'd like to introduce Jeff Wade. Jeff, this is Bennett Coates.

Bennett shakes hands with Jeff, who is a little confused by the familiarity between Holly and Bennett.

JEFF

But, I didn't know--

HOLLY

That Bennett and I already knew each other? I'm sorry, but I guess I left that part out.

BENNETT

I should be the one apologizing, Jeff. I asked Holly to let me be the one to explain our relationship to you.

Jeff looks extremely uncomfortable.

JEFF

Um, I don't really--

BENNETT

(laughs)

Oh, that sounded weird didn't it. Relationship. No, it isn't like that.

Bennett puts an arm around Holly and pulls her close.

BENNETT (cont'd)

You see, Jeff, Holly is my daughter.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. KYMIRA CORPORATION HEALTH CENTER - DAY

Gordy and Logan stand waiting as three women wearing scrubs confer among themselves behind a large reception counter.

GORDY

I don't understand. Can't you just tell us where his room is? Norman Franklin. He was transferred here from the hospital in Carlsbad.

One of the women steps to a phone and discreetly speaks into it as she glances at Gordy and Logan.

LOGAN

(to Gordy)

Come on, dude. We can find him on our own.

He starts toward a bank of elevators, but as he does, two burly security guards emerge from a nearby door.

Logan sees them and turns the other direction, where he sees another pair of security guards approaching from the entrance.

INT. BENNETT COATE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jeff sits trying to process why Holly didn't reveal she was Bennett's daughter.

JEFF

So, you're not actually here to work on a story.

HOLLY

No, I'm afraid not.

Holly's phone chimes and she quickly glances at it.

HOLLY (cont'd)

I'm sorry, but if you'll excuse me, I'm needed elsewhere.

They watch as she exits.

BENNETT

As you know, Jeff, at Kymira Corporation we maintain a high level of confidentiality about what we do.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BENNETT (cont'd)

It's one of the reasons we've been able to be so successful and grow so quickly.

JEFF

I guess the mystique of people not knowing exactly what you do adds to the allure. A peek behind the curtain might spoil your image.

BENNETT

(laughs)

Well, I assure you, I'm nothing like the Wizard of Oz. But, it has served us well to maintain a high level of secrecy while we've been making preparations for what comes next.

JEFF

What? A new product? Some kind of merger with a bigger company?

BENNETT

You're tantalizingly close when you say merger. In fact, I refer to it as The Merge. As in, the merger to end all mergers.

Bennett stands and walks to the windows and stands looking out for a few seconds, then turns to face Jeff. The manicured grounds and concrete walkways outside Bennett's windows are empty.

BENNETT (cont'd)

Perhaps the best way to explain what lies ahead is to give you a demonstration. If you'll indulge me.

JEFF

Sure.

Bennett indicates an array of several business magazines neatly arranged on a coffee table fronting a couch at the side of the room.

BENNETT

Would you mind selecting a magazine and looking through it?

Jeff gets up, retrieves a magazine and returns to his chair. He begins paging through it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BENNETT (cont'd)
As you're looking, select an image
you see and hold it in your mind.

Bennett turns back to face the windows again.

BENNETT (cont'd)
When you find an image to concentrate
on, please continue flipping but hold
that image in your mind.

JEFF
What is this? Some kind of magic
trick?

BENNETT
Something like that.

Jeff pages through the magazine slowly. He pauses slightly at an advertisement for Emirates Airlines. The full-page photo features a line of pretty flight attendants wearing uniforms that include a distinctive red hat with a flowing cream-colored scarf that drapes down the front of their blouses. Jeff continues to flip through the magazine until he reaches the end, but it's clear to us that he's selected the Emirates Airlines image.

JEFF
Okay, I've got something.

As Jeff looks up from the magazine, the concrete walkways outside Bennett's office begin to quickly fill with people moving hurriedly from building to building, like a stream of cars in bumper-to-bumper traffic on an expressway.

And, each person, no matter how otherwise dressed, has something red on top of their head.

A maintenance worker in tan khaki wears a red plastic bowl on his head as he trails a woman in a white lab coat who is carefully balancing a red clipboard on her head, like a trained seal.

A dignified man in a business suit wears a bright red basketball shoe on his head.

A thin middle-aged woman in an ill-fitting dress has a red stapler balanced on her head and has made herself look even more like the photograph by draping several feet of adding machine tape across her left shoulder, in almost perfect imitation of the flowing silk scarves worn by the Emirates flight attendants.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Jeff is dumbfounded.

Bennett, still facing the window, smiles.

BENNETT

Very good, Jeff! Although I've never been on board an airplane myself, I've been told that the cabin service aboard Emirates Airlines is superb.

JEFF

But, I don't--

All at once, all of the people outside the windows stop moving and their makeshift hats tumble to the ground.

Then, in unison, the members of the crowd begin walking back towards the buildings they emerged from, leaving the grounds outside the windows littered with a wide variety of red-colored items.

A lone strand of adding machine tape flutters across the carefully manicured lawn in the breeze.

EXT. HIGHWAY OUTSIDE FORTUNE, NEW MEXICO - CONTINUOUS

The highway is deserted as the sun glints off the windshield of a vehicle in the distance. It disappears momentarily and reappears moments later as the highway follows the natural contours of the land. As it draws nearer and passes the Kymira billboard that Gordy and Logan saw earlier, we see it has the unmistakable silhouette of a Volkswagen Beetle.

INT. HOLLY POLLARD'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Holly Pollard's office isn't nearly as large as Bennett Coates', but it bears the same ultra-modern decorating touches.

Gordy and Logan sit in chairs facing an unoccupied desk as the office door opens and Holly enters.

HOLLY

I apologize for keeping you gentlemen waiting. I'm Holly Pollard.

GORDY

What's the problem here? Why won't you let me see my father?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOGAN

Yeah. We came a long way to get here.
Like, in a car.

GORDY

Wait, did you say your last name is
Pollard?

HOLLY

Yes, why?

GORDY

Oh, nothing. That was my mother's
maiden name. Now, why is there a
problem with my seeing my father?

Holly sits down behind the desk.

HOLLY

There isn't any problem, and I assure
you that you will be able to see your
father. Very soon.

GORDY

What's his condition? Has he gotten
any worse?

HOLLY

Oh, no. On the contrary, he's shown
great improvement since being
transferred here from the Carlsbad
facility.

GORDY

Then what's the hold up?

HOLLY

Let me ask you this. I know you left
Fortune a number of years ago. When
was the last time you actually saw
your father?

GORDY

When I was eighteen.

HOLLY

And you're how old now?

GORDY

Forty-two.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOLLY
Twenty-four years. That's a long
time.

GORDY
It is. We had a falling out and never
resolved things.

HOLLY
Do you think your father might have
changed some in those years?

GORDY
I guess. Sure. We've both gotten
older. He's in his eighties now. He
was drinking a lot when I left here,
so I can't imagine his health has
been very good.

HOLLY
I think you should prepare yourself--

The door to Holly's office opens and Gordy turns as his
father, NORMAN FRANKLIN enters, looking unchanged from the
way he looked at age forty-five in the photograph that Gordy
showed Tyler earlier.

NORMAN
Hello, son. It's been a long time.

INT. KYMIRA CORPORATION HEALTH CENTER - CONTINUOUS

A road-weary Tyler Franklin walks through the front
entrance. As he approaches the reception desk, a man
standing in front of the desk turns to face him. It's
Bennett Coates.

BENNETT
Tyler! I'm so glad to see you've
arrived safely. We've been waiting
for you.

END ACT FIVE